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Національної академії педагогічних наук України
04070, вул. Андріївська, 15, м. Київ, Україна
E-mail: info@sppstudios.com.ua
<https://sppstudios.com.ua/uk>

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Editors office address:

Institute of Social and Political Psychology
of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine
04070, 15 Andriyivska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine
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Digital transformation era: Impact of cybersecurity on workplace mental health

Oleh Starovoitenko*

PhD in Psychological Sciences, Senior Researcher
Institute of Social and Political Psychology of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine
04070, 15 Andriivska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2886-1626>

Abstract. The digital transformation of workplaces has profoundly impacted organisations around the world, introducing not only new efficiencies but also significant psychological and psychosocial risks for employees. While cybersecurity has traditionally been considered as a technical concern, it increasingly poses mental health challenges for both IT professionals and general staff, particularly in the context of remote work and complex security protocols. This study aimed to identify and systematise common mental health issues related to cyber threats in organisational settings and to explore viable strategies for their prevention and mitigation. Combining a literature review with a targeted empirical survey, the research offered a view of the interaction between cybersecurity and employee well-being. Participants were non-cybersecurity professionals tasked with responding to cyber threats, providing unique insight into the mental strain associated with such responsibilities. Using inductive qualitative analysis and Likert-scale-based statistical evaluation, the study reveals that systemic, organisational-level interventions – such as clear cybersecurity policies, fairness in breach response, and appropriate training – are perceived as more effective in supporting mental health than individual psychological support services. These findings highlighted the urgent need to frame cybersecurity not only as a technical challenge but also as a core psychosocial issue. The research contributes to the growing field of cyberpsychology and offers practical recommendations for enhancing both digital and psychological resilience in modern organisations

Keywords: technostress; cyber threat; emotional stress; burnout; information overload

INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of the workplaces has fundamentally reshaped the modern world. New technologies, practices, and paradigms for organisational functioning are being introduced at unprecedented and alarming speed. On the one hand, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and remote work infrastructures have created opportunities for increased efficiency, innovation, and global connectivity. On the other hand, these technological advancements also introduce significant psychological

and psychosocial risks for employees, particularly when they are implemented without appropriate consideration of human factors and cybersecurity threat landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic also made a great contribution into the widening gap between growing demands to the employees to cope with cyberthreat induced stress and their ability to do so. For instance, M. Vasilenko *et al.* (2020) analysed the cybersecurity and privacy concerns arising from the shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic and identified

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*Corresponding author

new risks, including heightened stress, and the adoption of surveillance technologies, which can compromise employee privacy and well-being.

As organisations invest heavily in digital infrastructures, they become increasingly vulnerable to cyber threats such as data breaches, ransomware attacks, phishing schemes, and many other threats that in addition to technical and financial risks also contribute to heightened psychological strain on employees tasked with safeguarding digital assets. Frontline cybersecurity professionals often experienced chronic stress, burnout, and “alert fatigue” due to the high-stakes and fast-paced nature of their work environments; however, non-technical employees also suffered from anxiety, confusion, or technostress when required to comply with complex security protocols or adapt to rapidly changing digital tools (Atrian & Ghobbeh, 2023). With non-professionals being affected with cybersecurity threats, it has now become obvious, that cybersecurity has already transitioned from a technical issue to a core organisational concern bringing new psychosocial risks, as employees across all sectors are exposed to cyberthreats such as phishing, data breaches, ransomware, and cyber harassment. Furthermore, digital transformation, stimulated by high pace of progress, COVID-19 pandemic and other global factors, such as current geopolitical situation are adding more and more weight to the role of cybersecurity domain in defining aggregate security and well-being of the humans. This makes the problem of interrelations between the manner in which cybersecurity is handled in organisations and mental health of the employees more and more essential.

Study by S. Arora & J.D. Hastings (2024) surveyed 50 cybersecurity professionals, revealing that 44% experienced severe work-related stress and burnout. The demanding nature of cybersecurity roles, coupled with unrealistic expectations and unsupportive organisational cultures, were identified as primary stressors. Notably, 66% of respondents perceived cybersecurity jobs as more stressful than other IT positions, with 84% facing additional challenges due to the pandemic and recent high-profile breaches. Based on the respondents' feedback, the researchers recommended fostering supportive work environments and implementing mindfulness programs to address these issues. One of the traditional ways for creation of supportive environments is the integration of cybersecurity awareness with organisational psychology strategies – for example, embedding emotional resilience and digital mindfulness in cybersecurity training. Moreover, mental health support services tailored to employees affected by data breaches or cyberbullying are emerging as best practices in high-risk sectors such as finance, health, and education (Ivanova *et al.*, 2024). However, there is also evidence, that active exposure to cybersecurity training and simulated threats (e.g., phishing simulations) can induce a sense of hyper-vigilance and lead to “security fatigue”,

a condition where individuals feel overwhelmed and disengaged from secure behaviour.

A study by S. Khadzhiradieva *et al.* (2024) analysed cyber-psychological protection programs within Ukraine's education system. The research highlighted the importance of these programs in enhancing awareness among students, educators, and administrative staff regarding potential cyber threats. The study, among other things, recommended exploring external resources, fostering collaboration, and establishing standardised measures to ensure effective cyber-psychological protection in education. K. Ihnatenko & S. Sadzaglishvili (2023) examined how Ukrainian organisations adapt to digital transformation during the war, emphasising the psychological toll on employees. The research found that the shift to remote work, coupled with constant cyber threats and physical dangers, led to increased stress and burnout. One of the key responses to the threat became organisations reintroducing psychological support services, including online counselling, to help employees cope with the heightened pressures. Recent studies emphasise the psychological burden of cybersecurity threats on employees. Cyberattack exposure, or even the perceived risk of being hacked, has been associated with increased levels of stress, anxiety, and reduced job satisfaction (Hadlington, 2017).

Based on the study of existing research, the aim of the article was to identify and systematise typical mental health problems observed among employees of various organisations in connection with cyberthreats and cybersecurity tasks, as well as to identify and systematise different solutions to prevent these issues. By conducting a survey of employees from various Ukrainian companies and organisations, aimed to validate the results of the literature review within the context of society. Analysing data on the relationship between cybersecurity and mental health in organisations would improve the systematisation of knowledge, highlight existing gaps, and outline future research areas in this field. Addressing this task will undoubtedly helped resolve various mental health problems associated with cybersecurity issues and suggest ways to improve cyber defence systems in modern organisations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The proposed study combines theoretical and applied parts aiming to identify typical mental health problems associated with cybersecurity issues, along with typical solutions. To achieve the declared research goal, a review of relevant and significant studies on mental health issues related to cybersecurity was conducted. The list of analysed studies included those published over the last 15 years. This allowed to identify key issues and potential solutions. The study was focused on publications that examined both the issues and potential solutions. Only studies published in English were selected. All studies underwent inductive

qualitative analysis to identify sets of typical mental health problems related to cybersecurity and possible coping solutions.

Based on these sets, there was conducted a survey of government employees and employees of commercial companies regarding their experiences with cyber threats and the related mental health challenges. The study participants included 20 employees from various Ukrainian public organisations and private companies who, according to their job responsibilities, are required to respond to cyber threats and make appropriate decisions, although they are not cybersecurity professionals. In the course of the study, compliance with ethical standards was ensured in accordance with American Sociological Association's Code of Ethic (1997). The study employed inductive qualitative analysis and the psychometric Likert scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The way an organisation handles cyber incidents plays a crucial role in shaping employees' psychological responses. A lack of transparent communication, poor incident response management, and blaming culture can aggravate emotional distress, decrease organisational trust, and increase attrition risk. Conversely, psychologically safe environments foster resilience and quicker recovery after cybersecurity incidents. The issue of mental health and cybersecurity interplay, there exists a significant body of research executed within certain theories and frameworks originating from the organisational psychology domain. For instance, the E. Demerouti *et al.* (2001) model, has become a central framework in occupational health psychology to explain how job demands lead to burnout and how job resources support engagement and well-being. Scholars increasingly more often have begun integrating cybersecurity-related stressors into this model, examining how cyberthreats – such as phishing, ransomware, surveillance, and digital overload – function as novel job demands that deplete employee resources and contribute to negative mental health outcomes.

Cyberthreats also lead to a state of hypervigilance, where employees experience a perceived constant risk of attack, which consumes emotional and attentional resources. According to N.S. Safa & R. Von Solms (2016), this state can activate a threat appraisal response, increasing the risk of psychological strain, especially when organisational support is lacking. Several studies emphasised the absence or insufficiency of job resources – such as supportive leadership, clear communication, digital autonomy, and psychological safety – in the face of cyberthreats. This imbalance fosters resource depletion, as outlined in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, and leads to burnout, disengagement, and role ambiguity (Robert & Karasek, 1979). On the positive side, research within the JD-R framework also highlighted that psychosocial

and organisational resources – such as informational transparency, cybersecurity self-efficacy, participative decision-making, and mindfulness training – can buffer the effects of cyber demands.

The Job Demand-Control (JDC) model by R. Karasek (1979) suggests that psychological strain arises when job demands are high and decision latitude (control) is low. In this framework, cybersecurity threats act as modern, high-stakes demands that tax cognitive and emotional resources, especially in digitally intensive work environments. When employees have little control over how to manage these cyber-demands or lack adequate support, the risk of mental health deterioration (e.g., anxiety, depression, burnout) increases. The JDC model predicted strain when employees face high demands with low control – a frequent scenario in cybersecurity compliance. Employees often reported: no influence over security policies; limited autonomy in handling risky situations; punitive consequences for small security lapses, and the research showed that this combination leads to occupational strain, increased anxiety, and in some cases, withdrawal behaviours (D'Arcy *et al.*, 2014).

R.W. Rogers (1975), posits that individuals adopt protective behaviours when confronted with perceived threats, especially if they believed in the severity of the threat, their vulnerability, the efficacy of the recommended protective behaviour, and their self-efficacy to carry it out. Fear is seen as a motivating emotion, prompting protective behaviour if cognitive appraisals align positively. In the context of organisations, cybersecurity threats – such as phishing, ransomware, data breaches, and insider threats – have become salient stressors. PMT provided a useful framework to understand how cyberthreat-induced fear impacts employees' mental states and behavioural responses. A large body of research has applied PMT to evaluate the effectiveness of fear-based cybersecurity messages. While fear appeals can be an effective motivator, PMT research warns that over-reliance on threat-based communication may backfire. Prolonged exposure to cyber fear stimuli without proper support mechanisms may lead to techno-anxiety, job dissatisfaction, and mental fatigue. Cybersecurity communication strategies must balance threat salience with empowerment, aligning with employee mental health needs.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) suggested that workplace relationships are governed by reciprocal exchanges between employees and their organisations. When employees perceive fair and supportive treatment, they are more likely to demonstrate loyalty, commitment, and well-being. Conversely, when the exchange is perceived as imbalanced, coercive, or unsafe, employees may experience emotional exhaustion, withdrawal, and mental distress. In the context of cybersecurity, organisations increasingly demand employees' vigilance, compliance, and adaptability – often without

offering corresponding support, autonomy, or emotional compensation. This perceived breach of the psychological contract can lead to stress-related outcomes. When employees perceive these demands as excessive or unjustified, especially in the absence of adequate training or appreciation, the perceived reciprocity diminishes. This perceived imbalance can foster emotional exhaustion and diminished well-being. SET-related studies showed that when employees feel exploited or under-supported, especially in high-risk environments like cybersecurity, they may experience: anxiety and helplessness, due to unclear expectations or blame for breaches; job dissatisfaction, due to the coercive or punitive culture of security enforcement; withdrawal behaviour, including burnout and reduced organisational citizenship behaviour. Studies by C. Posey *et al.* (2011) and N. Safa & R. Von Solms (2016) illustrated how trust erosion in cybersecurity policies leads to resistance, disengagement, and stress symptoms.

Technostress theory refers to the stress experienced by individuals due to their inability to cope with information and communication technologies (ICTs) in a healthy manner. First introduced by C. Brod (1984), technostress definition has evolved to include dimensions such as techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, and techno-uncertainty. There is a growing body of research showing that emergence of cyberthreats – including phishing, data breaches, ransomware, and insider threats – has intensified technostress in organisations. Employees are increasingly required to comply with cybersecurity protocols, remain vigilant, and adapt to rapidly evolving digital environments, which may result in both negative psychological strain and positive adaptation outcomes. Technostress was studied, for instance, by A. Atrian & S. Ghobbeh (2023) as a stress induced by rapid technological changes in the workplace. Their research highlighted that technostress adversely affects job performance, leading to decreased productivity and increased turnover intentions. However, it is worth mentioning, that despite its negative framing, technostress also has positive facets, such as techno-eustress, which refers to

stress that leads to growth, adaptation, and improved performance (Tarafdar *et al.*, 2019). Employees may develop cyber-resilience, improve technical competence, and gain a stronger sense of digital self-efficacy in response to cyberthreats when appropriate support and training are provided.

Organisational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1987) refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in workplace processes, distributions, and interpersonal interactions. The theory comprises three main components: distributive justice – fairness in resource allocation (e.g., who bears cybersecurity responsibilities); procedural justice – fairness in decision-making processes (e.g., how cybersecurity policies are developed and enforced); interactional justice – fairness in interpersonal treatment and communication (e.g., respectful and clear cybersecurity communication). When justice is perceived as lacking – particularly during the implementation of cyber-related procedures – psychological strain and mental health consequences can arise. Several studies have demonstrated that perceptions of low fairness in security demands result in: increased emotional exhaustion; higher anxiety levels in high-surveillance digital environments; feelings of helplessness and role ambiguity, especially among non-IT staff (Johnston *et al.*, 2016). Employees who perceive greater justice in security policies – through transparent communication, employee participation, and supportive culture – report lower psychological strain and higher engagement. Summing up the recommendations developed within the organisational justice theory, the following steps will be recommended to mitigate mental health risks linked to cyberthreat-related practices: involving employees in cybersecurity policy development (Herath & Rao, 2009); communicating decisions with empathy and clarity; ensuring fairness in responsibility assignment and response to breaches (Cheng *et al.*, 2013). Inductive qualitative analysis was applied to all of the aforementioned studies with the aim of developing sets of typical mental health problems related to cyberthreats and possible solutions to them. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Typical mental health issues connected with cyberthreats and typical solutions to prevent health issues connected with cyberthreats

higher anxiety	<i>constructive feedback on cyberthreats and cyber incidents</i>
psychological strain	
mental stress symptoms	<i>moderate level of cybersecurity demands</i>
increased emotional exhaustion	<i>ensuring fairness in responsibility assignment and response to breaches</i>
burnout	
increased cognitive load	<i>involving employees in cybersecurity policy development and relevant decision-making</i>
vigilance fatigue	
fear of making security mistakes or cyber anxiety	<i>clear cybersecurity policies and protocols</i>
job dissatisfaction	<i>empathetic leadership: communicating decisions with empathy and clarity</i>
decreased productivity	

Table 1, Continued

<i>feeling of role ambiguity or role conflict</i>	<i>provision of appropriate support and training</i>
<i>defensive avoidance</i>	
<i>withdrawal behaviour or disengagement</i>	<i>psychological support services in organisations</i>
<i>feelings of helplessness</i>	

Source: compiled by the author

Next, there was conducted a survey of 20 employees from various Ukrainian public organisations and private companies whose job responsibilities involve responding to cyberthreats and making corresponding decisions. Each participant was asked to evaluate each mental health problem related to cybersecurity using a rating scale similar to a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5: never encountered, occasionally encountered, periodically encountered, frequently encountered, constantly encountered. They were also asked to rate each of the proposed solutions to

mental health problems related to cybersecurity using a similar 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 to 5: not efficient, rather not efficient, possibly efficient, rather efficient, definitely efficient. The scores were then summed, and the average values were calculated and presented in Figures 1 and 2. The problems and solutions were ranked based on their average scores, which were interpreted as indicators of the probability of a particular issue and the efficiency of a particular solution as perceived by the participants of the survey.

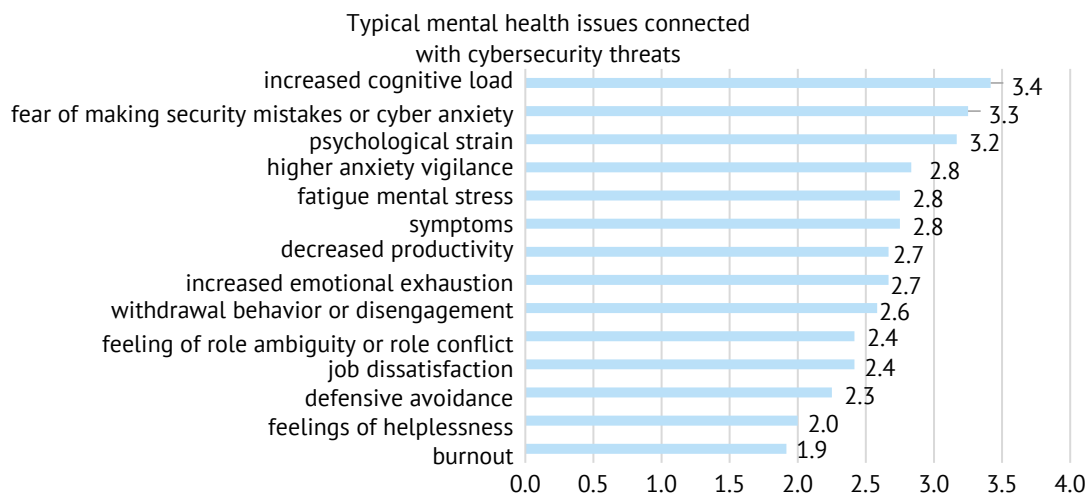


Figure 1. Probability of typical mental health issues connected with cyberthreats based on the results of the empirical study

Source: compiled by the author

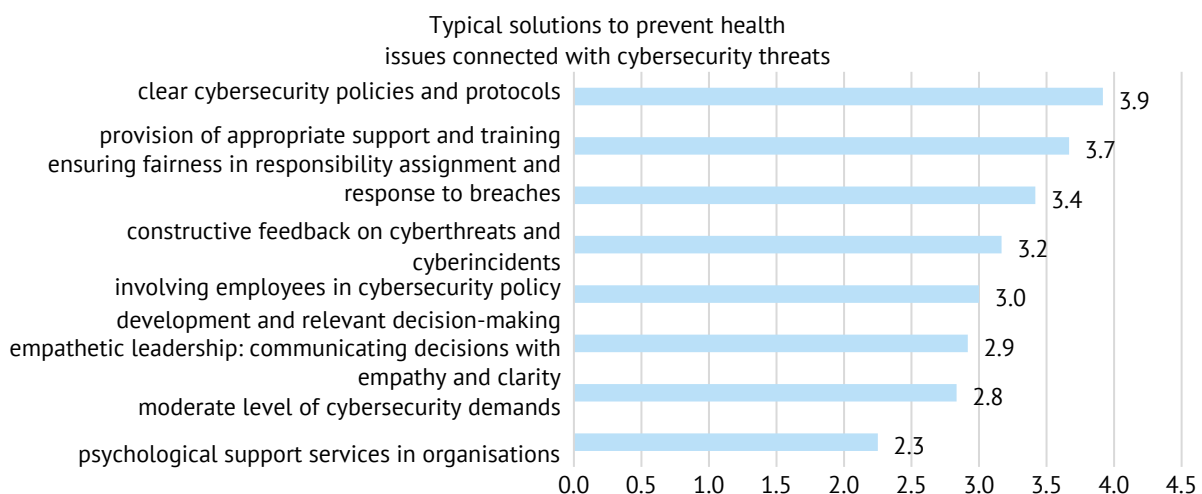


Figure 2. Expected efficiency of typical solutions to prevent health issues connected with cybersecurity threats based on the results of the empirical study

Source: compiled by the author

Overall, the obtained survey measurement results were assessed as consistent with the findings of the reviewed research literature and as interpretable in a clear and straightforward manner. Most typical issues and possible solutions received sufficiently high average scores, which supports the interpretation of these results as evidence of the content validity of the theoretical part of study. The scores indicate how frequently employees in cybersecurity-sensitive roles encounter specific mental health challenges. These results reveal a clear gradient in perceived impact, ranging from frequently encountered experiences such as increased cognitive load (mean = 3.4) to lower-intensity issues like burnout (mean = 1.9). High-scoring issues, or those frequently experienced, included increased cognitive load (3.4); fear of making mistakes/cyber anxiety (3.3); psychological strain (3.2). The high score on cognitive load reflects the mental intensity required to maintain security vigilance and decision-making under pressure. Moderate-scoring issues (periodic issues) included mental stress symptoms, vigilance fatigue, and anxiety (2.8); emotional exhaustion and reduced productivity (2.7); disengagement/withdrawal (2.6); role ambiguity/conflict (2.4); job dissatisfaction (2.4) clearly demonstrate that continuous alertness demands in cybersecurity-connected roles are taking a psychological toll. The relatively low scores of defensive avoidances (2.3); feelings of helplessness (2.0) and burnout (1.9) suggest that complete emotional exhaustion and disengagement are not typical for the participants of the survey, which lets presume that mental health issues connected with cyber threats are not overwhelming for the participants. On the other hand, there is a clear trend toward cognitive and emotional overload, with high scores in anxiety, cognitive strain, and psychological stress.

Based on the survey results provided, also conducted an analysis regarding organisational preferences for addressing mental health issues related to cyberthreats. The data represents mean scores of perceived efficiencies (assumed to be on a Likert scale, where a higher score reflects a greater perceived efficiency). Survey indicated that among solutions to potential mental health issues connected with cyberthreats in organisations the top-rated are: the availability of clear cybersecurity policies and protocols (3.9); provision of support and training (3.7); fairness in breach response (3.4). All belong to formal, organisational group of solutions, aimed at systemic, organisation-wide approach. The moderately high scores for fair responsibility assignment (3.4) and constructive feedback (3.2) indicate a preference for transparent, fair, and practice-oriented approaches to managing incidents, which is consistent with high scores of organisational groups of solutions. These middle-range scores of employee involvement (3.0) and empathetic leadership (2.9) imply that while empathy and inclusion are valued, they are seen as

supplementary, not central. Survey participants might appreciate these features but may not view them as strong mitigators of mental health stress arising from cyberthreats. A surprisingly low score for psychological support services (2.3) might suggest either stigma, still surrounding psychological help organisational cultures, or preference for being focused on coping with the root problem, that is with the cyber threats, instead of trying to remediate their impact on mental health.

Recent research shows that cybersecurity incidents and related organisational vigilance measures (e.g., frequent password changes, phishing simulations, digital surveillance, zero-trust policies) are increasingly perceived by employees as cognitive and emotional job demands. These demands increase workload, decision fatigue, and techno-stress, all of which are strongly associated with emotional exhaustion – a core component of burnout (Molino *et al.*, 2020).

For instance, when employees receive clear protocols and emotional support after a cyber incident, the risk of burnout significantly decreases (Sonnentag *et al.*, 2021). Leadership also plays a crucial role. Transformational leadership styles have been associated with higher engagement and lower stress levels in cyber-vulnerable sectors like finance and healthcare (Ayyagari *et al.*, 2011). Digital transformation has introduced new occupational stressors stemming from increased exposure to cyberthreats, such as: constant vigilance for phishing or malware; mandatory compliance with stringent cybersecurity protocols; regular password changes, two-factor authentication, and security audits; fear of human error leading to security breaches. Studies showed that these activities represented a cognitive and emotional burden, especially when perceived as mandatory and inflexible (Hadlington, 2017). It is worth mentioning that digital surveillance and monitoring, common in cybersecurity regimes, can further reduce perceived control and increase psychological tension. Empirical research (Moore *et al.*, 2018) shows that cybersecurity systems often operate with limited transparency, contributing to a culture of fear and eroding trust in management. Studies by P. Ifinedo (2012) and A. Johnston *et al.* (2016) found that moderate levels of fear, when accompanied by high efficacy messages, are effective in promoting secure behaviour. However, if fear appeals are too intense or frequent, they may induce learned helplessness, anxiety, or disengagement, especially when organisational support is perceived as low.

Research showed that frequent exposure to cyber-threat-related communications – such as simulated attacks or alerts – can heighten perceived vulnerability and trigger chronic fear, which is associated with emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and cognitive overload. S.R. Boss *et al.* (2015) demonstrated that employees' protective behaviour is significantly influenced by both perceived threat severity and psychological costs, such as fear of blame or punishment after a breach.

The mental health impact of fear-based cybersecurity interventions is mediated by self-efficacy and organisational safety culture. H.-S. Rhee *et al.* (2009) founded those individuals with high cybersecurity self-efficacy are more likely to react constructively to fear appeals. Conversely, when self-efficacy is low, fear leads to defensive avoidance and mental strain, especially in high-stakes environments like healthcare and finance. Supportive environments that offer clear protocols, psychological safety, and constructive feedback reduce the risk of fear-induced burnout or stress (Söllner *et al.*, 2016). However, strategic interventions, such as training programs and supportive leadership, can mitigate these negative effects.

Cybersecurity practices, such as mandatory multi-factor authentication, complex password requirements, security awareness training, and email vigilance, can contribute to techno-overload and techno-complexity. Studies J.R.C. Nurse *et al.* (2021) showed that such demands increase cognitive load, role conflict, and emotional exhaustion – predictors of burnout and reduced job satisfaction. However, strategic interventions, such as training programs and supportive leadership, can mitigate these negative effects. Cybersecurity practices, such as mandatory multi-factor authentication, complex password requirements, security awareness training, and email vigilance, can contribute to techno-overload and techno-complexity. Studies (Ragu-Nathan *et al.*, 2008) showed that such demands increase cognitive load, role conflict, and emotional exhaustion – predictors of burnout and reduced job satisfaction.

J. D'Arcy *et al.* (2014) highlighted how increased cyber risk awareness and fear of making security mistakes may cause techno-insecurity, especially in sectors with high compliance pressure such as healthcare, finance, and education. Prolonged exposure to cyber risk scenarios may contribute to cyber anxiety, vigilance fatigue, insomnia, and techno-phobia. These effects are especially pronounced among older employees or those with lower digital literacy (Salanova *et al.*, 2013). Recent studies during the post-COVID remote work transition (Spagnoli *et al.*, 2020) showed that the intensification of digital surveillance and cybersecurity monitoring has led to perceptions of techno-invasion, affecting work-life balance and psychological well-being. A supportive organisational climate can moderate the negative mental health outcomes of technostress. Clear cybersecurity policies, empathetic leadership, employee involvement in decision-making, and flexible response protocols are associated with reduced anxiety, higher compliance, and lower technostress levels. Conversely, ambiguity in cybersecurity communication, frequent software updates, or alarmist messaging can increase techno-uncertainty and foster a culture of fear and disengagement (Maier *et al.*, 2015). Employees exposed to moderate cybersecurity demands, accompanied

by clear communication and autonomy, reported higher engagement and adaptive coping mechanisms, such as proactive learning and collaboration with IT departments. The data obtained in this study showed that the results did not fully align with the findings of other researchers. This partial discrepancy indicated the complexity of the issue under investigation and pointed to the necessity of conducting more in-depth research to explore the underlying factors, refine existing approaches, and expand the current understanding of the subject matter.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, based on the survey results it was assumed employees prioritise clarity, fairness, and competency-building over reactive or emotional support. They seek predictability and preparedness in their work environment as buffers against cyber-related psychological stress.

From a psychological perspective, employees favour pragmatic, system-wide strategies that increase their sense of control, predictability, and fairness in responding to cyberthreats. The data demonstrated that formal organisational solutions – such as clear cybersecurity protocols, targeted training, and fair distribution of responsibility – were evaluated as more effective than psychological counselling or emotional support services. This tendency might reflect an embedded organisational culture that values direct competence-building over remedial interventions.

While psychological strain, cognitive overload, and cyber-related anxiety emerged as frequently experienced issues, severe outcomes such as burnout or complete disengagement received notably lower ratings. This indicated that although cybersecurity-related stress was present, it had not yet escalated into chronic dysfunction for most respondents. Nevertheless, the consistent presence of emotional tension underscored the need for more resilient and supportive frameworks. Survey participants also associated higher perceived effectiveness with fairness in breach responses, constructive feedback, and access to training. Conversely, emotional or psychological support services received lower efficiency scores, which may indicate residual stigma or a preference for proactive, embedded resilience strategies.

In summary, the study confirmed the importance of aligning cybersecurity management with mental health safeguarding through transparent communication, fair governance, and participative approaches. Organisational resilience in the cybersecurity domain should integrate both technical and psychosocial resources to address the multifaceted nature of cyber-related mental strain. Future research might include collecting expert opinions on mental health issues connected with cyberthreats in organisations and possible solutions to them, inclusion of more

participants into survey, and studying correlations between identified issues and solutions.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Ера цифрової трансформації: вплив кібербезпеки на ментальне здоров'я в організаціях

Олег Старовойтенко

Кандидат психологічних наук, старший науковий співробітник
Інститут соціальної та політичної психології Національної академії педагогічних наук України
04070, вул. Андріївська, 15, м. Київ, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2886-1626>

Анотація. Цифрова трансформація робочих місць глибоко вплинула на організації по всьому світу, запровадивши не лише нові можливості для підвищення ефективності, але й значні психологічні та психосоціальні ризики для працівників. Хоча кібербезпека традиційно розглядається як технічна проблема, вона все частіше створює виклики для психічного здоров'я як для ІТ-фахівців, так і для загального персоналу, особливо в контексті віддаленої роботи та складних протоколів безпеки. Це дослідження мало на меті визначити та систематизувати загальні проблеми психічного здоров'я, пов'язані з кіберзагрозами в організаційному середовищі, а також дослідити життєздатні стратегії для їх запобігання та пом'якшення. Поєднуючи огляд літератури з цільовим емпіричним опитуванням, було запропоновано погляд на взаємозв'язок між кібербезпекою та благополуччям працівників. Учасники дослідження, які не були фахівцями з кібербезпеки, мали завдання реагувати на кіберзагрози, що дозволило їм отримати унікальне уявлення про психологічне навантаження, пов'язане з такими обов'язками. Використовуючи індуктивний якісний аналіз і статистичну оцінку за шкалою Лайкерта, дослідження показало, що системні заходи на організаційному рівні – такі як чітка політика кібербезпеки, справедливе реагування на порушення і відповідне навчання – сприймаються як більш ефективні для підтримки психічного здоров'я, ніж індивідуальні служби психологічної підтримки. Ці висновки підкреслили нагальну потребу розглядати кібербезпеку не лише як технічний виклик, а й як ключову психосоціальну проблему. Дослідження є внеском у розвиток кіберпсихології та пропонує практичні рекомендації щодо підвищення як цифрової, так і психологічної стійкості в сучасних організаціях.

Ключові слова: технострес; кіберзагроза; емоційний стрес; вигорання; інформаційне навантаження

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Digital well-being of Ukrainians experiencing full-scale war: A cross-sectional study

Maryna Dvornyk*

PhD in Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor, Senior Researcher

Kyiv School of Economics

03113, 3 Mykoly Shpaka Str., Kyiv, Ukraine

Institute of Social and Political Psychology of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine

04070, 15 Andriivska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1505-0169>

Mykola Sliusarevskyi

PhD in Psychological Sciences

Institute of Social and Political Psychology of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine

04070, 15 Andriivska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4038-5668>

Abstract. While the rapid digital transformation in Ukraine allows the development of numerous online services, the focus on digital well-being to preserve citizens' health and life due to the excessive exposition of numerous tragic events in digital space stays mostly uncovered. The purpose of the work was to measure the significant peculiarities of digital well-being manifestation among different sections of sociodemographic characteristics, healthy lifestyle outlook, and wartime experiences of Ukrainians. An online survey and non-parametric analysis of variance were conducted, with a sample of 6,042 cases. The study revealed that younger respondents, women, and those involved in humanitarian and educational spheres demonstrated higher sensitivity to digital boundaries and emotional saturation of online content. Individuals who experienced forced migration or lived under occupation reported lower indicators of overall digital well-being, particularly in the domains of focus and purpose. Conversely, those engaged in health-related and volunteer activities exhibited higher levels of digital purpose and meaningful connection, highlighting the protective effect of active civic engagement during the war. The results suggested that targeted support for vulnerable groups and integration of digital hygiene into public health policy are crucial for fostering resilience in the digital space. The features of the manifestation of digital well-being components (overall well-being, boundary, communication, focus, connection, purpose) were configured according to the following parameters: socio-demographic indicators (gender, age, education level, employment field, residence, living conditions, income level); attitudes towards healthy lifestyle (stage of greatest difficulty, combination of practices, degree of adherence); specific experiences during a full-scale invasion (forced migration, combat experience, providing medical care, human rights activities, living under occupation, experiencing shelling, experiencing flooding). The practical value of the study is seen in the perspective of developing a digital well-being promotion strategy on a national level

Keywords: digital engagement; psychological security; socioeconomic status; healthy lifestyle; Russian-Ukrainian war; war experiences

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*Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

The full-scale war in Ukraine, which began in 2022, has profoundly altered the daily lives of millions of citizens, highlighting the importance of not only physical but also psychological security. In the context of ongoing stress, information overload, and traumatic content widely disseminated in the digital environment, the need to study digital well-being as a crucial factor in maintaining the population's mental health is growing. Digital well-being is not only about technical hygiene or controlling time spent online, but also about an individual's ability to maintain psycho-emotional balance, foster constructive online communication, and build resilience in the digital space. Ukraine's modern digital transformation has enabled the development of numerous online services that allow people to stay connected, access education, medical care, and other vital resources, even in crisis conditions. At the same time, continuous exposure to streams of war-related news, images of destruction, and human suffering increases anxiety, leads to digital burnout, reduces life satisfaction, and complicates recovery from psychological trauma. Certain population groups – such as women, young people, internally displaced persons, and individuals with combat or medical experience – are particularly vulnerable. Despite this, the issue of digital well-being in the context of war remains insufficiently explored both in domestic and international academic discourse. The relevance of the proposed study is driven by the need for a systematic analysis of the manifestations of digital well-being among Ukrainians with varying socio-demographic profiles, lifestyle characteristics, and wartime experiences. The results of this research may serve as a foundation for developing a national strategy for digital hygiene and the mental protection of the population in the context of hybrid warfare and digital threats.

During the modern Russian-Ukrainian war, the idea of psychological security arises with great power. The need for security is basic in A. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs and occurs immediately after physiological needs, such as food, sleep, etc. E. Namani & M. Bagherian Kakhki (2019) and F. Greco & A. Polli (2021) studied that human security was usually considered in the context of personal psychological well-being, as its parameter, condition, factor, component, indicator, or criterion. It was emphasised by B. Vermote *et al.* (2022) that the need for security is especially actualised when people experience adversity, seeing that events are not happening as expected and that the conditions of their lives, which until now seemed *a priori*, have been violated. As noted by R.B. Persaud (2022), along with a person's confidence in a future, security also includes civil peace, personal physical safety, a safe legal environment, access to justice, etc. Although these security parameters are constantly violated during wartime, it can be agreed that a person's psychological security is the protection of psyche from destructive external and internal influences

(Sliusarevskyi, 2020). Because during the war network communication is mostly preserved on the territory of Ukraine, and the Internet is also available to Ukrainians evacuated abroad, it is not easy to protect the psyche of citizens who are exposed to numerous tragic scenes of war not only in real life but also in digital space. The researchers R.R. Thompson *et al.* (2019) and M.C. Cavallini *et al.* (2023) studied that the rapid online spreading of information, especially with a low trauma-sensitive approach of media, constantly keeps the users anxious and can cause severe mental health problems.

As L. Damant *et al.* (2016) argued that digital engagement is adopting information and communication technology such as the Internet, mobile phones, and computers into daily lives. The latest research showed both positive and negative impacts of digital engagement on users' quality of life and well-being. On the one hand, many users believe that they spend too much time in front of a screen, and a significant proportion of them desire to reduce this time. On the other hand, those who do not use gadgets at all have generally lower levels of psychological well-being than those who use digital media moderately. So, the balance between using and not using electronic devices, being connected and disconnected to the network is important to maintain the population's health and wellbeing. C. Burr *et al.* (2020) studied that the new term "digital well-being" refers to such balance, to the impact of digital technologies on what it means to live a life that is good for a human being in an information society. Digital well-being covers digital interfaces that foster human flourishing, personalised human-computer interaction, and software that support users' autonomy and self-determination. Moreover, an individual's ability to achieve digital well-being is related to how personal characteristics, devices, and contexts interact, not just simple judgments on screen time. Because a large part of traumatic events spread precisely through virtual space during the war the concept of digital well-being is crucial in preserving and restoring the health and life quality of Ukrainians. The purpose of the study was to identify the peculiarities of digital well-being among Ukrainians experiencing a full-scale war and to analyse the impact of socio-demographic characteristics.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study is a part of the broader project "Healthy lifestyle of Ukrainians during the war" (Dvornyk *et al.*, 2024), aimed at exploring the multi-dimensional effects of wartime conditions on citizens' well-being. The research was conducted from September 2023 to January 2024 using an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The study included both random and panel samples of Ukrainian citizens living within the country and abroad, yielding a total of 6,042 valid responses for analysis. Statistically

significant differences in the level of expression of the digital well-being scales by key sociodemographic indicators, healthy lifestyle outlooks, and war experiences were obtained as a result of non-parametric analysis of variance.

It must be mentioned that the sample consisted of 60% males, average age – 38 years. Half of the sample is people with a complete higher education, approximately 20% each have incomplete higher or secondary special education and complete secondary education. The largest professional representation belongs to specialists in civil security (44.6%) and social and behavioural sciences (17.9%). Geographically, 57.6% of respondents live in regions far from the frontline zones, and more than 20% live in regions close to the front-line. The largest number of respondents have families, more than 40% of them live in couples with a child or children, almost 22% live purely in a couple, and 13.2% of respondents live alone. 60% of the sample rate their monthly income somewhat low compared to average wages in Ukraine for 2023.

The central focus of the current study was to examine the digital well-being of Ukrainians in the context of a full-scale war. Digital well-being was operationalised using a structured questionnaire embedded in Block 5 of the general survey. This section included 18 items distributed across six thematic subscales, reflecting the multidimensional structure of digital well-being (e.g., screen time awareness, digital boundaries, emotional impact, digital-social balance). The instrument was developed on the basis of the Digital well-being self-assessment tool by Sentient Digital & Mind over Tech (2021), and included a 10-item self-assessment scale to capture respondents' personal evaluation of their digital habits and psychological states related to technology use. In addition to digital well-being, the study considered several other variables drawn from different sections of the survey:

Block 1: General sociodemographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, occupation, current location (in Ukraine or abroad), and self-reported income.

Block 2: Healthy lifestyle practices during the war, including perceived challenges, priorities, and subjective adherence to a healthy lifestyle.

Block 3: War-related experiences, such as forced displacement, military service, medical assistance provision, law enforcement engagement, survival under occupation, exposure to shelling, and natural disasters (e.g., flooding).

The questionnaire was pilot-tested and refined to ensure clarity, cultural appropriateness, and relevance to wartime conditions. Given the non-normal distribution of most variables and the ordinal nature of responses, non-parametric statistical methods were applied. In particular, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to examine differences in digital well-being scores across various socio-demographic and war-experience groups. Data processing and statistical analysis were conducted using SPSS software (version 23.0). Ethical considerations of the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) were taken into account: the participation was anonymous and voluntary, informed consent was obtained at the beginning of the survey, and data were stored securely.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To better understand the manifestation of digital well-being, which is used to balance the positive and negative impacts of digital engagement on war-affected users' quality of life, the comparison of the Kruskal-Wallis H test statistics was conducted. The results, presented in the tables, outline the indicators with the highest or lowest mean ranks for the compared items. Table 1 shows significant variability in the components of digital well-being across different sociodemographic groups, reflecting how various factors such as age, gender, and personal experiences during the war influence the way digital well-being is experienced.

Table 1. Empirical values by Kruskal-Wallis H test between Digital Well-Being scales and General Data block

Dependent variables	Sex	Age	Education	Occupation	Residence	Living conditions	Income
Well-being	31.91 (p = 0.00)	54.61 (p = 0.00)		48.12 (p = 0.00)	26.05 (p = 0.00)	44.12 (p = 0.00)	38.8 (p = 0.00)
Boundary					12.32 (p = 0.031)	19.84 (p = 0.00)	41.81 (p = 0.00)
Communication		61.29 (p = 0.00)		29.81 (p = 0.00)	15.71 (p = 0.008)	33.76 (p = 0.003)	17.08 (p = 0.00)
Focus	46.64 (p = 0.00)		46.49 (p = 0.00)	25.2 (p = 0.001)	34.72 (p = 0.00)	27.54 (p = 0.00)	20.34 (p = 0.00)
Connection	134.8 (p = 0.00)	41.84 (p = 0.00)	59.43 (p = 0.00)	52.7 (p = 0.00)	40.47 (p = 0.00)	27.52 (p = 0.00)	14.67 (p = 0.00)
Purpose		66.82 (p = 0.00)	42.56 (p = 0.00)	52.3 (p = 0.00)	24.04 (p = 0.00)	32.68 (p = 0.00)	19.88 (p = 0.00)

Source: developed by the authors

In sex differences was outlined the strong women's (in comparison to men's and non-binary's) tenden-

cy to feel more positive about their phones as a tool to achieve their needs and desires (Connection scale,

$H = 134.8, p = 0$). Women are also more likely to feel that their gadgets are positively affecting their overall well-being (Well-being scale, $H = 31.91, p = 0$). These results are somewhat controversial with the Western countries' tendency where extensive digital engagement is associated with lower well-being among females (Svensson *et al.*, 2022; So *et al.*, 2023). This can be caused by the opportunities of Ukrainian women, unlike men, to choose "non-military" life and, therefore to use their tech in creating the space and conditions for themselves to connect with self, inspire themselves, and learn new things. At the same time, the feature of non-binary persons in the study is that they demonstrate a better ability to focus on their work and personal lives while creating distance with their devices (Focus scale, $H = 46.64, p = 0$). This can be explained by more efforts of non-binaries to meet health and well-being needs exactly through technology, and therefore their better ability to combine digital engagement and real-world practices (Wilcox *et al.*, 2023). The youngest respondents (16-24 y.o.) expectedly have higher indicators than other age groups in Purpose ($H = 66.82, p = 0$), Communication ($H = 61.29, p = 0$), Well-being ($H = 54.61, p = 0$), and Connection ($H = 41.84, p = 0$) scales of digital well-being. Moreover, the older respondents are, the lower level in these scales they demonstrate: their current technology is not very successful in supporting them to achieve their goals and aspirations, to stay connected and informed, to improve their well-being, and to be in touch with themselves. This is associated with the recent studies on digital exclusion of older people, especially in low- and middle-income countries, who are likely to develop functional dependency and lose the benefits of digital engagement to crucial social services (Lu *et al.*, 2022).

Differences in educational level are significant for Connection ($H = 59.43, p = 0$), Focus ($H = 46.49, p = 0$), and Purpose ($H = 42.56, p = 0$) scales: the higher level of education (including doctoral degree) respondents have the higher ability to use smartphones for improving their awareness, focus, and purposefulness they show. This does not match the results of the study of M.H. Nguyen *et al.* (2024), where no differences in disconnection motivations and practices by education level were found. Apparently, in the Ukrainian context education level can matter because of generally lower digital literacy among the population. In the occupational differences of authors' sample, the most significant for digital well-being are the representatives of information technologies and engineering, and military service. The tech representers are better than others in using gadgets to stay aware of their needs (Connection scale, $H = 52.7, p = 0$), to improve their overall well-being (Well-being scale, $H = 48.12, p = 0$), and to create

distance between online and real life (Focus scale, $H = 25.2, p = 0.001$), while militaries are more successful at using their phones to achieve their goals and aspirations (Purpose scale, $H = 52.3, p = 0$) and to sustain relationships (Communication scale, $H = 29.81, p = 0$).

The differences by place of current residence are important for every digital well-being scale. However, the strongest is the difference in the Connection scale ($H = 40.47, p = 0$): Ukrainians living abroad show better ability than those living inside the country in using their tech to create the space and conditions to connect with themselves, inspire themselves, and learn new things. Maintaining overall well-being (Well-being scale, $H = 26.05, p = 0$) and being clear on goals and purpose while using tech (Purpose scale, $H = 24.04, p = 0$) are the most represented among Kyiv and Kyiv region residents. The lowest levels in the Focus ($H = 34.72, p = 0$) and the Communication ($H = 15.71, p = 0.008$) scales while the highest levels in the Boundary scale ($H = 12.32, p = 0.031$) are presented among those who refused to identify their place of residence. Living conditions also play a part in differentiating digital well-being features. The strongest differences are observed in the Well-being scale ($H = 44.12, p = 0$): those who live with their parents tend to be better at supporting their physical and mental well-being by using gadgets. Living with parents also seems to be an important condition for more qualitative digital communication ($H = 33.76, p = 0.003$), and digital support of life purpose ($H = 32.68, p = 0$). Those who share their living space with roommates are the least able to reduce distraction from their phones (Focus scale, $H = 27.54, p = 0$), and the least worried about setting boundaries to get the best from their tech (Boundary scale, $H = 19.84, p = 0$). The least ability to use gadgets for inspiration and self-learning is represented among those living in big families (Connection scale, $H = 19.84, p = 0$).

Every digital well-being scale also has differences in the monthly income level of respondents. Thus, the indicators of Boundary ($H = 20.34, p = 0$), Focus ($H = 20.34, p = 0$), Purpose ($H = 19.88, p = 0$), and Communication ($H = 17.08, p = 0$) scales are higher among those who reported their monthly income as higher than average. In comparison, those with precisely high income are more successful at using their tech to maintain overall well-being (Well-being scale, $H = 38.8, p = 0$), and to create the space and conditions for self-connection (Connection scale, $H = 14.67, p = 0$). Generally, the discussion that people's socioeconomic background is an important factor in digital well-being experiences (Nguyen *et al.*, 2024) is approved by the study. Separate indicators of block 2 "Healthy Lifestyle" (Table 2) also divided sample into significantly different subgroups.

Table 2. Empirical values by Kruskal-Wallis H test between digital well-being scales and healthy lifestyle block

Dependent variables	Adaptation syndrome	Bad habits rejection + current habits maintaining + new habits acquiring	Healthy lifestyle adherence
Well-being		26.44 ($p = 0.00$)	48.13 ($p = 0.00$)

Table 2, Continued

Dependent variables	Adaptation syndrome	Bad habits rejection + current habits maintaining + new habits acquiring	Healthy lifestyle adherence
Boundary			94.86 (p = 0.00)
Communication	103.39 (p = 0.00)	25.83 (p = 0.00)	80.55 (p = 0.00)
Focus	28.87 (p = 0.00)	43.71 (p = 0.00)	69.66 (p = 0.00)
Connection	31.37 (p = 0.00)	35.8 (p = 0.00)	54.45 (p = 0.00)
Purpose	15.69 (p = 0.028)	19.16 (p = 0.00)	25.84 (p = 0.00)

Source: developed by the authors

The division by the question “At what stage of the full-scale invasion did you experience the greatest difficulties in maintaining a healthy lifestyle?” (adaptation syndrome) was made in 8 variants of answers. Those who didn’t feel any difficulties at all or didn’t mention them showed the highest rank in the Communication scale of digital well-being ($H = 103.39$, $p = 0$), so their information sharing and relationship sustaining appeared as noticeably higher than in those who felt their lifestyle is at risk. The least ability to use tech in reducing distraction and to be present with day-to-day activities (Focus scale, $H = 27.54$, $p = 0$) is shown among those who had the greatest difficulties at the Resistance stage (June 2022–February 2023). Both the Resistance and Exhaustion (March 2023–survey time) stages were the least favourable for maintaining self-connection due to smartphone usage (Connection scale, $H = 31.37$, $p = 0$). However, respondents who felt the greatest difficulties with their healthy lifestyle during the Alarm (February–May 2022) and Resistance stages benefited from their tech to support the accomplishment of their, apparently, short-lasting goals. These results reflect and clarify the previous works on how distress is fuelled by undeveloped components of personal digital well-being (Thompson *et al.*, 2019; Büchi, 2024).

The choice to combine the practices of bad habits rejection, current habits maintaining and new habits acquiring in comparison to the choice to refuse such combination is associated with all the digital well-being

scales, except the Boundary scale. It means that respondents who are action-oriented in their healthy lifestyle are more likely to use their devices to stay present in daily activities (Focus scale, $H = 43.71$, $p = 0$), connected to their needs (Connection scale, $H = 35.8$, $p = 0$), to support their physical and mental well-being (Well-Being scale, $H = 26.44$, $p = 0$), sustain healthy relationships (Communication scale, $H = 25.83$, $p = 0$), and accomplish meaningful goals (Purpose scale, $H = 19.16$, $p = 0$). On the contrary, the Boundary scale showed a strong division by the answer distribution to the question “Do you think that you currently follow a healthy lifestyle (as you understand it)?”. The most certain respondents in their current healthy lifestyle maintaining show the highest ranks in upholding boundaries with digital space ($H = 94.86$, $p = 0$). Less certain respondents whose answer to the question was “Rather so” was the highest in the remained scales, so their digital well-being is represented by using tech to communicate effectively (Communication scale, $H = 80.55$, $p = 0$), reduce distractions (Focus scale, $H = 69.66$, $p = 0$), support general well-being (Well-being scale, $H = 48.13$, $p = 0$), and accomplish personal goals (Purpose scale, $H = 25.84$, $p = 0$). Such findings clarify and complement the discussion on the place of digital well-being in the personal healthy lifestyle (Smits *et al.*, 2022). Following Table 3 there are some differences in digital well-being components among those who had various war experiences.

Table 3. Empirical values by Kruskal-Wallis H test between Digital Well-Being scales and War Experiences block

Dependent variables	Forced migration experience	Combat military experience	Medical help providing	Law enforcement activity	Living under occupation	Shelling survival	Flood survival
Well-being		5.51 (p = 0.019)	7.54 (p = 0.006)			7.1 (p = 0.008)	
Boundary					8.05 (p = 0.005)		
Communication	22.63 (p = 0.00)		9.78 (p = 0.002)				5.8 (p = 0.016)
Focus	24.17 (p = 0.00)	16.79 (p = 0.00)	7.98 (p = 0.005)			4.18 (p = 0.041)	
Connection		17.65 (p = 0.00)	18.21 (p = 0.00)		8.59 (p = 0.003)	12 (p = 0.001)	
Purpose				8.98 (p = 0.003)			

Source: developed by the authors

Respondents with forced migration experience are significantly less likely to use their devices for meaningful communication ($H = 226.3$, $p = 0$) and focus on everyday activities ($H = 24.17$, $p = 0$). This implies the extensive usage of digital space by Ukrainian refugees to emotionally regulate themselves, make significant contacts with other people, and maintain their identity (Khvorostianov, 2023; Reva & Titova, 2024). Combat military experience predicts fewer digital well-being possibilities to support self-connection ($H = 17.65$, $p = 0$), reduce distraction from daily life ($H = 16.79$, $p = 0$), and maintain general well-being ($H = 5.51$, $p = 0.019$). Also, providing medical help due to the consequences of shelling or other war consequences is connected with lower levels of self-connection ($H = 18.21$, $p = 0$), productive communication ($H = 9.78$, $p = 0.002$), focus on daily routines ($H = 7.98$, $p = 0.005$), and general well-being ($H = 7.54$, $p = 0.006$) while using smartphones. On the contrary, law enforcement activity predicted a higher level of ability to follow a purpose as a component of digital well-being ($H = 8.98$, $p = 0.003$). Those who reported living under occupation have higher levels of digital well-being on the Connection scale ($H = 8.59$, $p = 0.003$) and lower levels on the Boundary scale ($H = 8.05$, $p = 0.005$). Shelling survival is related to higher self-connection ($H = 12$, $p = 0.001$) and focus on daily activities ($H = 4.18$, $p = 0.041$), but lower general well-being maintenance by using devices ($H = 7.1$, $p = 0.008$). Finally, those who reported flood survival after the terrorist act at Kakhovka Dam scored lower on the Communication scale of Digital Well-Being ($H = 5.8$, $p = 0.016$).

As the digital well-being is only taking its place in the science of qualitative life, the phenomenon of digital escapism occurs more frequently to cope with war-related stress (Katerynych, 2024). But there is also a great perspective of a remote format to educate and assist (Zakirova, 2023), to ensure physical (Tilikina *et al.*, 2024) and psychological safety, enhancing mental health and well-being of Ukrainians (Dvornyk, 2019). While the digital transformation activity in Ukraine gives an opportunity to re-adapt remote work practices from the pandemic, handle infrastructure damages, enhance cybersecurity protection, and develop new online services to reach out to customers (Lindström *et al.*, 2024), the personal responsibility of citizens how to deal with their gadgets stays mostly uncovered. Thus, the results of the study revealed that the digital well-being of Ukrainians in the context of war is largely shaped by a combination of sociodemographic characteristics, attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle, and specific experiences gained during the full-scale invasion. Women, technical specialists, residents of Kyiv, individuals with higher levels of education and income, as well as those living with their parents, demonstrate higher indicators of digital well-being. At the same time, certain war-related experiences – such as forced migration, combat participation, exposure to shelling or occupation – may

either strengthen or undermine particular aspects of digital well-being, such as self-connection, focus, communication, and overall mental and physical balance. The most resilient digital practices are shown by those who actively follow a healthy lifestyle by combining the rejection of harmful habits with the formation of new ones. Therefore, a comprehensive consideration of the identified factors allows for a deeper understanding of Ukrainians' digital behaviour during wartime and provides a foundation for developing effective national strategies to promote digital well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that women tend to use gadgets more effectively for self-development and maintaining well-being, while non-binary individuals demonstrate a stronger ability to focus on activities outside their smartphones. Older users experience more difficulty in using technology to achieve personal goals, meet their needs, and foster positive communication and overall well-being. A higher level of education correlates with greater self-connection, concentration, and goal orientation through screen-based practices. In terms of employment, technical specialists are more adept at maintaining self-connection, ensuring overall well-being, and distancing themselves from screens. Military personnel, on the other hand, tend to use smartphones more successfully for achieving goals and maintaining relationships with significant others. Place of residence also plays a role: Ukrainians living abroad report higher self-connection, while residents of Kyiv and its region show higher levels of general well-being and goal pursuit facilitated by technology. Residential status influences digital habits as well. Individuals living with their parents are more proficient in using smartphones for well-being, meaningful communication, and life goals, while those living with roommates tend to struggle more with focusing on life beyond smartphones and setting healthy digital boundaries. People living in large families use gadgets the least for self-connection. Income level is another significant factor, with higher income predicting stronger digital well-being components such as boundary-setting, focus, purpose, and communication, along with greater success in maintaining overall well-being and establishing self-connection through smartphone use.

Attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle also affect digital well-being. Those who did not encounter difficulties in adhering to a healthy lifestyle during the full-scale invasion – or did not mention any – use their gadgets most effectively for positive communication. In contrast, individuals who faced the greatest difficulty during June 2022 to February 2023 exhibit the lowest capacity to use technology to reduce distractions and remain present in daily activities. The combination of lifestyle practices plays a significant role: those who simultaneously abandon harmful habits, maintain current

healthy behaviours, and adopt new positive routines report the highest scores across all digital well-being measures. Moreover, respondents with high confidence in their healthy lifestyle display the strongest adherence to boundaries within the digital space.

Specific wartime experiences have also shaped digital well-being. Forced migration is associated with lower scores in positive communication and focus during smartphone use. Individuals with combat experience show a reduced ability to use technology for self-connection, often prioritising real-life interactions and overall well-being. Those involved in providing medical care also report lower levels of self-connection, communication, concentration, and well-being. In contrast, those working in law enforcement display a stronger ability to pursue goals via digital tools. People who lived under occupation have higher self-connection scores and fewer difficulties with digital restrictions. Survivors of shelling events demonstrate a greater capacity for self-connection and focusing on what matters, although their overall digital well-being is lower. Meanwhile, those who experienced flooding report diminished ability to maintain positive communication in digital environments. These identified characteristics of digital well-being – based on sociodemographic

factors, healthy lifestyle attitudes, and lived experiences during the full-scale invasion – should inform more tailored and effective health promotion campaigns. Further research is required to develop a comprehensive national strategy for supporting digital well-being in Ukraine.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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Цифровий добробут українців, які переживають повномасштабну війну: перехресне дослідження

Марина Дворник

Кандидат психологічних наук, доцент, старший науковий співробітник

Київська школа економіки

03113, вул. Миколи Шпака, 3, м. Київ, Україна

Інститут соціальної та політичної психології Національної академії педагогічних наук України

04070, вул. Андріївська, 15, м. Київ, Україна

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1505-0169>

Микола Слюсаревський

Кандидат психологічних наук

Інститут соціальної та політичної психології Національної академії педагогічних наук України

04070, вул. Андріївська, 15, м. Київ, Україна

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4038-5668>

Анотація. Стрімка цифрова трансформація в Україні уможливила розвиток численних онлайн-сервісів, проте питання цифрового благополуччя задля збереження здоров'я та життя громадян через надмірну експозицію численних трагічних подій у цифровому просторі залишається майже не висвітленим. Метою роботи було виміряти суттєві особливості прояву цифрового благополуччя серед різних зрізів соціально-демографічних характеристик, поглядів на здоровий спосіб життя та досвіду воєнного часу українців. Було здійснено онлайн-опитування та непараметричний дисперсійний аналіз, вибірка включала 6042 випадки. Дослідження виявило, що молодші респонденти, жінки, працівники гуманітарної та освітньої сфер демонструють вищу чутливість до цифрових кордонів та емоційної насиченості онлайн-контенту. Особи, які пережили вимушену міграцію або жили в умовах окупації, повідомили про нижчі показники загального цифрового благополуччя, особливо у сферах фокусу та мети. І навпаки, ті, хто займається медичною та волонтерською діяльністю, продемонстрували вищі рівні цифрової мети та значущих зв'язків, що підкреслює захисний ефект активної громадянської позиції під час війни. Отримані результати свідчили про те, що цільова підтримка вразливих груп населення та інтеграція питань цифрової гігієни в політику громадського здоров'я мають вирішальне значення для формування стійкості в цифровому просторі. Особливості прояву компонентів цифрового благополуччя (загальне благополуччя, межа, комунікація, фокус, зв'язок, мета) конфігурувалися за такими параметрами: соціально-демографічні показники (стать, вік, рівень освіти, сфера зайнятості, місце проживання, умови проживання, рівень доходу); ставлення до здорового способу життя (етап найбільших труднощів, поєднання практик, ступінь дотримання); специфічний досвід під час повномасштабного вторгнення (вимушена міграція, бойовий досвід, надання медичної допомоги, правозахисна діяльність, життя в умовах окупації, досвід обстрілів, досвід затоплення). Практична цінність дослідження вбачається в перспективі розробки стратегії сприяння цифровому добробуту на національному рівні

Ключові слова: цифрова залученість; психологічна безпека; соціально-економічний статус; здоровий спосіб життя; російсько-українська війна; досвід війни

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Parameters of self-healing subcultural life-making in wartime conditions

Tetiana Tytarenko*

Doctor of Psychological Sciences, Leading Researcher
Institute of Social and Political Psychology of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine
04070, 15 Andriivska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8522-0894>

Abstract. The aim of the work was to determine the parameters of life-making as targets of influence on the self-healing of the age subculture in war conditions. Methodology of the study included narrative analysis of life stories and modelling. Sample were 431 civilians and military personnel. War conditions were considered as a trigger for testing the appropriate strategies of self-healing: for the youth subculture – an existential strategy aimed at the responsibility of the community for survival; for the subculture of early maturity – a care strategy aimed at the responsibility for preserving the weaker ones; for the subculture of middle and late maturity – a service strategy aimed at the responsibility for preserving the sovereignty of the country. In the course of the study, the key parameters of subcultural life-making that contribute to community self-healing were clarified. It was found that subculture served as a means of individual identification with a particular social group, while age-related subculture directed the planning of a healthy lifestyle in both the present and the future. Particular attention was given to landscape strategies both revolutionary and evolutionary, which shaped the scenarios of community development. The lifestyle within the subculture formed a corresponding configuration of self-healing strategies and self-preservation practices. Furthermore, subcultural capital played a crucial role in ensuring the community's security, adaptive style, and identity-based functioning. The practical value of the work lies in providing opportunities for multi-step target prophylactic of the healthy lifestyle with its specifics in different age subcultures by determining the mutual influences of the parameters of subcultural life-making

Keywords: community life-making; self-recovery context; age subculture; landscape strategies; community practices; subcultural lifestyle; modes of subcultural capital

INTRODUCTION

In an era of upheaval, cataclysms and military trials, when the value of individual life is growing significantly, studying the process of life-making is an important and timely scientific task. The focus is on the dynamics of personal changes, the process of creating both the individual and a new stage of life. People are in a wartime reality for a very long time, which requires changes in lifestyle, interaction with the environment, and the formation of complex modes of adaptation. External conditions during the hot phase of the war are such that

practically no one feels safe, which negatively affects well-being, working capacity, and life prospects. This applies to both those who feel a real threat every day as a result of numerous shelling, the approach of the front line, and those who were forced to leave their homes. Research into changes in life-making that would ensure a person's readiness and ability to adapt to external challenges, to be fulfilled in their profession, to take effective care of their family and themselves, is becoming an urgent life task. After all, the pursuit of healthy living

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*Corresponding author

ensures the preservation and restoration of psychological health and well-being, which implies a person's ability of a person to perceive the military situation flexibly and realistically and supports the readiness to change one's life in search of greater inner well-being, even in difficult and unpredictable circumstances.

The question is how it is possible to get closer to such a life-creating activity that involves attention to one's own health without postponing this decision until the end of the war. Based on previous research, it can be understood life-making as one of the most complex types of human creativity, which implies a willingness to change the direction of movement along the path of life, the speed of moving forward, taking into account spontaneous, intuitive, unconscious influence. As were studied by Y.D. Gundertailo *et al.* (2016), during life-making, a person not only designs life, but also tests, implements, adjusts of updated life projects. A person makes balanced life choices, tries out plans in the form of specific life tasks and implements them through practice in familiar, habitual and unfamiliar, unexpected situations. Even in such catastrophic situations as war.

The impact of the war on the process of personal life is to increase the non-linearity, and unpredictability of movement in the space of individual and cultural self-constitution, the reconstruction of the space of interaction with an extremely dangerous society, a new configuration of values and meanings on the historical distance that has to be overcome. Finding support in extreme conditions, trying to preserve strength and restore health requires new resources to stabilise life. That is why people turn to significant environment, groups and communities, of which they feel a full member. Having a high degree of autonomy and a certain level of self-organisation, a personality does not exist in isolation from society, and during war, the interpersonal manifestations become more important than intrapersonal ones. As established by V. Gorbunova (2016), constant interaction of the individual with the social environment, especially in difficult life circumstances, the vision of a meaningful environment as a nourishing environment, most effectively contributes to supporting a person, facilitating adaptive changes in their perception of the world. That is why, during war, it is advisable to consider life-making primarily in the context of group and community activity, as war endangers threatens and changes the lives and health of representatives of different communities in a specific way.

In order to study community life, it is advisable to turn to subculture that generally reflects a system of humanitarian values. Among such values, subculture researchers V. Sudakov & V. Lapina (2021) named the values of nonconformism, resistance, protest, freedom of choice, self-expression, which in a certain way form and characterise people's critical attitude to existing social. In different subcultural contexts, the value of health and health maintenance varies. For example,

the meaning of such human characteristics as being overweight or obese is interpreted differently, and sometimes their meaning of these characteristics may even be opposite of what is generally accepted. The findings of subcultural research such as Y. Miyamoto & C.D. Ryff (2022) helped to improve the effectiveness of health promotion interventions targeting members of each subculture. In addition, as noted by J. Liu & Y. Zhang (2025) it is possible to eliminate the stigma of discriminated cultural groups, which certainly has a positive impact on psychological health. In the context of this study, when talking about age subculture, it will be focus primarily on the freedom of expression, the freedom of people of a certain biological age to choose the age subculture whose values they share and with whose representatives they identify. The purpose of the article was to determine the parameters of age-related subcultural life-making as targets of influence one self-healing in wartime conditions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used a qualitative method of narrative analysis, which allowed for a deeper understanding of the subjective experience of respondents in the context of war. Qualitative methods made it possible to identify an individual vision of traumatic experience and trace the consequences of its comprehension, in particular in the form of somatisation, post-traumatic stress disorder and chronic PTSD. The sample included civilians aged 18 to 75 who described their experiences online (n 169) and military personnel who wrote their stories on paper (n 262). Narratives were received from two groups of military personnel: those with extensive experience of military service (n 167) and recently mobilised people without sufficient experience (n 95 individuals). All respondents, civilians and military personnel, were asked to identify themselves as belonging to a certain group and write stories on the topic of "My Life During the War" following the suggested framework.

1. How has the war changed your life (relationships, values, activities)?
2. What was/is the most traumatic experience during the war for you? And what was resourceful, life-affirming?
3. How did you overcome and are overcoming the negative consequences of your traumatic experience?
4. How did the war affect your vision of the future (your own, your family's, your country's)?

The descriptive analysis of the full texts made it possible to identify significant semantic elements of the stories related to changes in life-making, and then, using interpretive analysis, to identify the parameters of self-healing life-making common in the respective age subcultures. The study was conducted in compliance with all the norms of the Declaration of Helsinki (2013), and the participants also agreed to use the information they provided for the purposes of the study.

An addition to the narrative analysis, the study employed a multi-phase data collection approach, which ensured a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' experiences. First, a thorough preliminary survey was conducted to collect demographic data, including age, gender, occupation, and the specific experiences of war (such as military service, displacement, or civilian exposure). This initial data helped to contextualise the narratives and allowed for the identification of potential patterns related to age, military experience, and the civilian-military divide. The participants were encouraged to elaborate on specific themes in their narratives, including emotional responses, coping mechanisms, and changes in their worldview. To ensure accuracy and depth, each respondent had the opportunity to revise and expand on their initial responses, fostering a more reflective and open account of their experiences. The resulting narratives were then categorised based on shared themes, such as trauma, recovery, and changes in relationships or values. The use of qualitative methods allowed for a nuanced exploration of trauma and healing in the context of war. By focusing on the lived experiences of individuals, the study aimed to uncover the intricate, personal dimensions of war-time life-making, beyond the statistics and broad trends often discussed in quantitative research. This approach not only provided valuable insights into the psychological and emotional impact of the war but also highlighted the diverse ways in which different age subcultures adapt and heal during such extreme circumstances.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

War jeopardises and changes the lives of people in entire countries, affecting various communities. Trying to adapt to the everyday life of war, people look for new possibilities for new ways to interpret it, for available resources, and assess their own strengths and possible threats. All of this complex activity takes place in the communities to which a person belongs. Such communities include numerous subcultures, whose common value and semantic characteristics set the strategic directions of wartime and post-war life, including in the field of self-healing.

The analysis revealed a complex portrait of age-related subcultural life-making during wartime. Despite different roles, experiences, and worldviews, the texts reflect consistent configurations of meaning that point to specific self-healing mechanisms within each age group. In the youth subculture, the dominant strategy is existential survival, accompanied by a search for identity. Young respondents describe the loss of routine life as both traumatic and an opportunity for reformatting their sense of self. Phrases such as "I finally saw who I am" or "the world became more real" indicate a shift in values – from hedonism towards responsibility. Self-support practices include physical activity, helping others, peer communities, and volunteering. The most traumatic experiences involve farewells, the loss

of loved ones, and the collapse of plans. Yet, through these disruptions, young people activate inner resources – spontaneity, adaptability, solidarity – that form part of their subcultural capital.

Among those in early adulthood (mainly aged 30-45), a care-based strategy prevailed. For this age group, war means the mobilisation of responsibility – for children, families, colleagues, and subordinates. Their narratives revolved around the theme "I must endure for the sake of others". Frequently mentioned are descriptions of a new lifestyle – from evacuation to domestic adaptation. Attempts to regain control over life are evident through household routines, religion, and daily rituals. Self-healing practices focus on stabilisation: cooking, prayer, physical work, and caregiving. At this age, a deeper appreciation of community and family ties emerges, forming a distinct type of subcultural capital – emotionally connective, where support and mutual presence take precedence.

People in middle and late adulthood (aged 46 to 75) exhibit a landscape-based strategy of service. Their stories are filled with reflection, attempts to place the war in historical context, and comparisons with past traumas in their families or the country. Narratives often include motifs of sacrifice: "I've lived my life, now it's their turn", or "I must pass on my experience". Their subcultural capital lies in wisdom, memory, and generational continuity. Self-healing occurs through knowledge transfer, participation in educational, volunteer, or humanitarian activities, as well as through spiritual routines. The most painful experiences include helplessness in the face of others' suffering, the inability to help, and the exacerbation of chronic conditions. Yet, this age group demonstrates the highest resilience – grounded in composure, spiritual grounding, and a holistic worldview.

Military personnel with extensive combat experience represent a subculture defined by functional heroism. Their texts are dry, restrained, focused on practical details, with minimal emotional exposure. For them, war is a daily job where there is no room for excess sentiment. Their self-support practices are highly structured: sleeping when possible, automatic drills, strict routines. They rarely complain, but their narratives show high levels of latent trauma. Their subcultural capital manifests in internal discipline, brotherhood, and a wordless readiness to support one another (Shevchenko & Varina, 2025).

Recently mobilised individuals, by contrast, display a markedly different state. Their stories are filled with fear, disorientation, and a search for meaning. Many describe the early months as a period of "falling out of oneself", of identity loss. Self-healing efforts revolve around understanding their new role and finding emotional anchors – often family letters, comradeship, and prayer. They frequently refer to the future – "after victory I'll start living differently", "I'll value the simple things". In this search, a new form of subcultural capital is emerging – transitional and full of open potential.

Thus, the results of the study indicate that age-specific subcultural life-making during wartime possesses clearly defined stylistic, value-based, and practical characteristics, which simultaneously act as targets for influencing self-healing processes. The subcultural capital of different age groups is expressed as a system of internal resources – meaningful, emotional, and organisational – that enables not only survival but also adaptation, mutual support, and recovery after loss.

The article focused on self-healing subcultural life-making, which implies the dominance of the value of health in the value hierarchy of the community. The value of health is embodied in the setting of health-related life goals, finding ways to comprehend and accept the past, structuring the future, and practicing in the present. According to research, self-healing life-making involves the use of appropriate life strategies that are revolutionary or evolutionary in nature (Tytarenko, 2022). A revolutionary strategy is usually a strategy that is tested by an unexpected, prolonged and intense traumatic event, a crisis situation. External conditions, as well as internal contradictions, become a significant impetus for reconsidering one's own life goals and ways to achieve them. Previously established value-meaning, prognostic-action and other internal connections are destroyed, stimulating intuitive, impulsive modelling of new ones. A person faces an urgent need to quickly adapt to extreme life circumstances and to organise life in response to ongoing traumatising. After a forced appeal to revolutionary strategies, a person usually tries to return to a more balanced, reflective life-making as soon as possible. Within the framework of evolutionary strategies, the transformation of socio-cultural and individual-psychological meanings, which entail changes in activities and interaction with the environment, are much calmer and slower. Each next step is comprehended, reinterpreted, tested, verified and, if necessary, corrected. A person makes life choices with alternatives in mind, differentiating priorities and synthesising ways to achieve goals (Reva & Titova, 2024).

Health-related behaviours, including risky lifestyles, differs between people of different age groups. People who identify with the youth subculture behave differently than people who identify with the adult subculture. Subcultural identity creates a unique social context that is important both for the health of like-minded people and for targeted external interventions to preserve and restore community health. An age subculture is a transmission link of a certain value-semantic context between generations. At the same time, each age subculture creates, tests, and accumulates its own worldview orientations and preferences, as well as strategies for self-healing life. It was defined the landscape of subcultural life-making as a certain conditional territory of the life of a given community, which is built by it in accordance with the basic value-semantic vector that is relevant for it at the present time and the near

future. Guided by the leading values, the community transforms its composition and significant environment at each new stage of its development, changes its attitude to the meanings it has previously focused on, sets forecast horizons and tests and adjusts a new vector of self-development. In this way the landscape strategies of life-making change, and staying within the new landscape will continue as long as the chosen vector of movement meets the actual life tasks of the respective subculture in its interaction with the wider society.

If analyse the context of self-healing, then the experience of overcoming danger and opportunities for self-preservation of a certain age subculture during the war, its worldview, prevailing in the attitude to health, become the foundation of strategic life-making. The new territories that a person builds during the war for the purpose of self-preservation include landscapes common to a certain age subculture with their hitherto unfamiliar value-semantic and style configurations. Strategic landscape life-creation within an age subculture can be understood as the community's inherent identification with a specific set of value priorities, normative constraints, and stylistic preferences endorsed by the group. These elements define the horizons for forecasting a shared future and determine the actual trajectory of movement towards it (Tilikina *et al.*, 2024). The age subculture exists in different value-semantic territories, overcomes different life landscapes. Changes in landscape strategies are not so noticeable in times of repetitive everyday life, which is poor in new, unexpected events. The everyday, routine life of the community can continue within a single value-semantic continuum shared by most, until difficult times come. The war, with its extreme, often tragic events, losses and injuries, forces to choose new priorities, becomes a trigger for the subculture to search for new adaptive possibilities, to test new strategies of life-making.

An integral indicator of the community's life landscape is the value-semantic configuration of the life of the vast majority of its representatives in a new or partially renewed territory, which is formed as a result of joint life-making. An analysis of the community's temporal orientation – covering past, present, and future – and the identification of dominant values such as self-preservation and renewal makes it possible to distinguish the following common types of landscape strategies: existential, care, service, self-development, and societal strategies. The existential landscape strategy of life-making is aimed primarily at strengthening the community's responsibility for avoiding destruction and survival. The insufficient productivity of the strategy is due to unwillingness to comprehend and internalise traumatic experience; excessive focus on suffering, tragic, victimised life contexts; predominantly pessimistic vision of future prospects.

The landscape strategy of care is a life-making approach grounded in the community's responsibility for

each of its members, including their families, fellow villagers, colleagues, and others. Its effectiveness depends on several factors. It involves mutual readiness to accept and understand new and difficult experiences, and it emphasises the creation of a safe and supportive environment, grounded in an optimistic perspective that fosters hope and psychological well-being. The landscape strategy of service focuses on the community's duty to preserve national sovereignty. Its success relies on the capacity to process traumatic experiences, strong dedication to volunteer work supporting the military and national survival, and confidence in the country's long-term recovery. This strategy is sustained by a collective optimism regarding post-war renewal, including economic stability and the restoration of human potential (Nazar, 2024).

The landscape strategy of self-development is a life-making approach that centers on the community's responsibility for revitalisation and recovery. The productivity of this strategy depends on the community members' readiness to integrate the positive experiences gained from post-traumatic growth. Additionally, it emphasises the development of new competencies related to self-preservation. The strategy is driven by an optimistic perspective on the potential for full recovery, with the goal of returning to a state of thriving as a community. This societal landscape strategy of life-making is built on the collective responsibility for ensuring a healthy future for the country. The effectiveness of this strategy is shaped by the readiness to understand and embrace the positive experiences of different communities. It also involves a broad focus on social contexts, such as political, economic, and security factors, which contribute to the larger societal well-being. The strategy is propelled by a shared optimism about the community's contribution to the overall welfare of the people. According to data obtained at the first stages of the full-scale invasion (Slyusarevsky, 2020), the most common existential landscape strategy of life-making for the youth subculture is the one that indicates

a lack of experience in overcoming difficult life situations, ignorance of one's own resources, and adaptive capabilities. These data are in line with recent research showing that young Ukrainians experience higher levels of depression symptoms during wartime than other age groups. At the same time, high personal resilience reduces the risk of depression symptoms (Ellis *et al.*, 2024). The least common among young people is the societal landscape strategy, with its ability to study and borrow the experience of other age subcultures.

The landscape strategy of caring for the immediate environment, one's own children and parents, the need to provide them with daily support, help them adapt to the living conditions changed by the war, and ensure the most positive future for them is most typical for the early maturity subculture. The two landscape strategies are the least common: societal and self-development, the first of which requires expanding responsibility to other age subcultures, and the second, on the contrary, narrowing responsibility to one's own opportunities for recovery. Among the representatives of the middle and late maturity subculture, the landscape strategy of service prevails, when the readiness to be selflessly useful to the army, internally displaced persons, wounded combatants, and residents of their native village or city comes to the fore. The least widespread are landscape strategies of self-development and societal, as in the previous age subculture.

The configuration of the main landscape strategies contributes to greater self-determination and self-awareness of the subculture at a certain stage of its development, its integration as a large group that reproduces the main values and style priorities of its members. The differences between subcultures in landscape life-making are most clearly demonstrated by the strategies typical for each of them, the most widespread ones, which define the subcultural lifestyle. The category of subcultural style is used by D. Hebdige (2002) who wrote about subcultural lifestyles that can have both functional and dysfunctional manifestations.

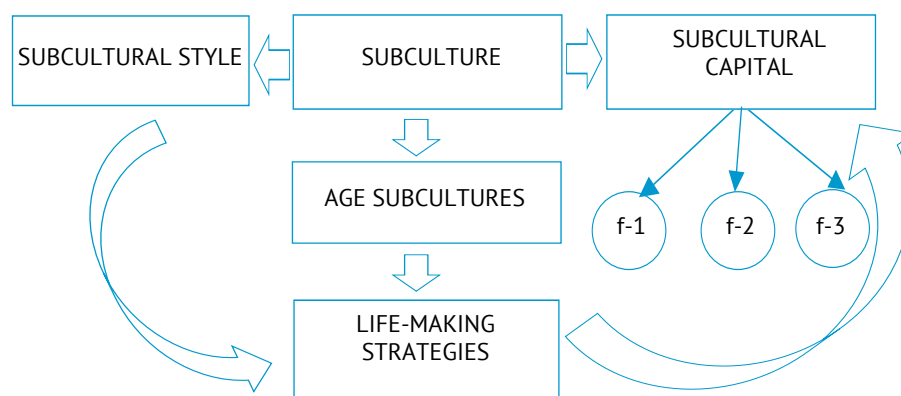


Figure 1. A model of self-healing life-making characteristic of age subcultures (modes of functioning of subcultural capital: f-1 – safety-self-preservation; f-2 – adaptation-style; f-3 – identification)

Source: developed by the authors

It can be said that in times of war, the style characteristics of the youth subculture are primarily defined by the existential landscape strategy, for the early maturity subculture – by the landscape strategy of care, and for the middle and late maturity subculture – by the landscape strategy of service. In the postwar period, it is quite likely that the style characteristics of subcultures will change. Among the indicators of the style inherent in various subcultures, one should also mention practices as methods of daily life construction that are manifested as acceptable and necessary for the community. Landscape strategies are manifested, specified, and implemented through certain sets of practices, including self-healing practices (Tytarenko, 2024; Kondratyuk-Antonova *et al.*, 2024). Different age subcultures have different configurations of healthy lifestyle practices. For young people these are practices of healthy lifestyles that ensure professional success, self-realisation, and unlocking of one's own potential; for mature people, these are practices that guarantee an increase in social significance, competitiveness, and maintain an appropriate level of psychological well-being; for late adulthood, these are practices of maintaining physical activity, restoring emotional stability, family and friendship support, and timely treatment and rehabilitation after illnesses.

Subcultural lifestyles in general are the leading form of community life, a way of manifesting one's own originality and dissimilarity to other communities, which it reproduces on a daily basis. The characteristics of lifestyle in different age communities include, for example, orientation to certain group norms, habits, preferences, models of the future, intensity of self-expression, unique age pace, recognisable language and other features. Representatives of different subcultures usually have different ideas about the role of life-making in maintaining psychological health and ways of self-healing during war. This is due to both value orientations and the prevalence in each subculture of a certain generally accepted set of healthy and unhealthy lifestyle practices. A more widespread category is social capital, which is possessed to a greater or lesser extent by every person, according to philosophers, sociologists, and cultural critics, starting with the classic works of Pierre Bourdieu. Social capital determines a person's belonging to a group and is a network of connections that can only be used through family, friends, church, sports or cultural clubs, etc. Speaking of cultural capital, attention is focused primarily on the availability of intangible resources such as education, knowledge, competences, social status, and cultural practices, that affect a person's social mobility and recognition in society. A person is usually identified with certain subcultures, professional, religious, regional, ethnic and accordingly possesses both general cultural capital and subcultural capitals. The term "subcultural capital" was introduced into scientific circulation by the British

sociologist and ethnographer S. Thornton (1997), who believed that subcultural capital has a pronounced creative potential associated with the peculiarities of internalising cultural norms.

The concept of psychological capital is also found in modern literature. According to the concept of psychological capital, it consists of four main resources: the ability to withstand challenges (self-efficacy); a positive attitude towards current and future success (optimism); the ability to create paths to success (hope); and the ability to recover from setbacks and move on (resilience) (Newman *et al.*, 2018). According to Polish researchers I. Grabowska *et al.* (2023), the psychological capital of Ukrainian migrants can be viewed as the interaction of resilience, self-efficacy, optimism and hope. The authors paid special attention to resilience as its important component. Based on these approaches, subcultural capital will be considered an important parameter of self-healing life, outlining the relevant identification characteristics of the community, ensuring its adaptation to military realities and relatively optimal functioning. The existence of subcultural capital indicates the accumulation and preservation of subcultural achievements, the possibility of their use and retransmission (Lewis, 2002). Capital is multiplied by enriching the traditions of the community, if the style configuration of strategies and practices chosen by its representatives meets the needs of the subculture and the requirements of reality.

The capital of the age community as the main resource and guarantor of self-identification sets the conditions for its self-preservation and further reproduction, and provides the opportunity to successfully withstand negative influences. Recovering after extreme tests, the age subculture heals itself and replenishes its own resources. Untimely and insufficient replenishment of subcultural capital threatens the psychological well-being of the community and even its further existence. Three main modes can be distinguished in the structure of subcultural capital: identification, adaptation and style and security-self-preservation. During the war, the security-self-preservation mode becomes the leading one in close interaction with others. It is the subcultural capital, accumulated in certain value-semantic and instrumental-style characteristics of the community's life-making, that determines and directs its vital activity (Sudakov, 2020). Although the modelling of subcultural self-healing life-making will be useful for psychologists, social and medical workers, and a wide range of humanities scholars, the characterised parameters of life-making in wartime are based on a number of results found in relatively small samples and cannot be extended to a large population of war-affected people. In addition, the network method of data collection somewhat reduces the significance of the findings. A strategic approach to self-healing life in war conditions has been scientifically substantiated

and modelled; a set of socio-psychological strategies for the formation of a healthy lifestyle, characteristic of certain age subcultures during the war, has been empirically verified, which will provide opportunities to stimulate the internal resources of each community, accumulate its subcultural capital, and increase the level of psychological well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

The study led to the construction of a model of self-healing life-making, which consists of several interconnected parameters, each playing a crucial role in shaping the community's adaptive strategies in wartime conditions. The study also emphasised the importance of age subcultures, where the belonging to a specific age group directed the community's life toward a dynamic synthesis of value priorities, lifestyle characteristics, normative constraints, and the planning of a healthy future. This age-specific guidance helped to define the vector of movement towards a healthier life, with a particular focus on health preservation and recovery in the context of war. Landscape strategies were identified as pivotal elements in the adaptation of communities during wartime. The research distinguished between revolutionary strategies, which are used in extreme conditions to quickly adjust value priorities and meet basic needs, and evolutionary strategies, which are employed to transform socio-cultural and individual psychological meanings in the more stable context of military everyday life. These strategies shape the ways in which communities adapt to the changing environment and maintain their collective resilience.

It was found that a key aspect of self-healing life-making was found to be the subcultural lifestyle, which encompasses a configuration of self-healing strategies and self-preservation practices. These practices act as methods for constructing daily life within the community, ensuring that members are equipped to cope with the stresses of war and maintain their mental and physical well-being. The lifestyle of the subculture is thus a critical factor in the process of sustaining health and ensuring continuity in the face of adversity. Subcultural capital was recognised as an essential resource for community self-identification and survival. This resource facilitates the safety and self-preservation of the community, ensuring the continued functioning of its identification processes and its ability to adapt to changing conditions. Subcultural capital contributes to the community's long-term life-making by providing the necessary tools for dealing with external and internal challenges. Further study of ways to optimise the community value of a healthy lifestyle and community style orientations of self-healing will contribute to the effective promotion of an ecological lifestyle. The potential of subcultural capital for mutual conversions with personal capital requires further study.

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Параметри самовідновлення субкультурного життєтворення в умовах воєнного часу

Тетяна Титаренко

Доктор психологічних наук, провідний науковий співробітник
 Інститут соціальної та політичної психології Національної академії педагогічних наук України
 04070, вул. Андріївська, 15, м. Київ, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8522-0894>

Анотація. Метою роботи було визначення параметрів життєтворчості як мішеней впливу на самовідновлення вікової субкультури в умовах війни. Методологія дослідження включала нарративний аналіз життєвих історій та моделювання. Вибірку склали 431 цивільний та військовослужбовець. Умови війни розглядалися як тригер для апробації відповідних стратегій самоцілення: для молодіжної субкультури – екзистенціальна стратегія, спрямована на відповідальність спільноти за виживання; для субкультури ранньої зрілості – стратегія турботи, спрямована на відповідальність за збереження слабших; для субкультури середньої та пізньої зрілості – стратегія служіння, спрямована на відповідальність за збереження суверенітету країни. У ході дослідження було з'ясовано ключові параметри субкультурного життєтворення, які сприяють самовідновленню спільноти. Виявлено, що субкультура слугує засобом ідентифікації особистості з певною соціальною групою, а вікова субкультура спрямовує планування здорового способу життя як у теперішньому, так і в майбутньому. Особлива увага приділялася ландшафтним стратегіям як революційним, так і еволюційним, які формували сценарії розвитку спільноти. Спосіб життя в межах субкультури формував відповідну конфігурацію стратегій самовідновлення та практик самозбереження. Крім того, субкультурний капітал відігравав вирішальну роль у забезпеченні безпеки, адаптивного стилю та ідентифікаційного функціонування спільноти. Практична цінність роботи полягає у забезпеченні можливостей для багатокрокової цільової профілактики здорового способу життя з урахуванням його специфіки в різновікових субкультурах шляхом визначення взаємовпливів параметрів субкультурного життєтворення

Ключові слова: життєтворчість спільноти; контекст самовідновлення; вікова субкультура; ландшафтні стратегії; практики спільноти; субкультурний стиль життя; модули субкультурного капіталу

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A phenomenological inquiry of stressful life events, personality factors and mental illness contributing to suicidality among youth in Khyber Pakhtukhwa, Pakistan

Nasar Khan*

PhD in Sociology, Lecturer
University of Buner
27130, Dewana Baba Rd., Swari, Pakistan
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2452-184X>

Imran Ali

Master
Quaid-i-Azam University
45320, University Rd., Islamabad, Pakistan
<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4577-9457>

Arab Naz

Professor
University of Malakand
18800, University Rd., Alamast, Pakistan

Sohima Aznak

Senior Assistant Professor
Baharia University
E-8/1E8/1E-8, Shangrilla Rd., Islamabad, Pakistan
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3761-5983>

Abstract. Relevance of the issue of suicidal behaviour among youth had been underscored by its growing prevalence and the lack of comprehensive studies into psychological factors within specific cultural and regional contexts. Particular attention had been needed to explore the subjective experiences of individuals who had encountered suicidal ideation. The aim of this study had been to identify psychological factors contributing to suicidality among youth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, through the analysis of personal experience. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, semi-structured in-depth interviews had been conducted with 19 purposively selected participants. An interview guide had been used for data collection, while thematic analysis had been applied to identify recurring themes within the participants' narratives. It had been found that external stressors – such as romantic failures, poor academic achievement, and job loss – had played a significant role in triggering suicidal tendencies among young individuals. Personality traits including impulsive aggression, neuroticism, and perfectionism had also been identified as influential contributors. The analysis had further revealed the prevalence of symptoms commonly associated with mental health disorders, such as persistent sadness, hopelessness, agitation, and mood instability, which collectively had heightened the risk of suicidality. These findings had reflected the intricate interplay between environmental stressors, individual personality characteristics, and emotional distress in the development of suicidal behaviour. The practical value of the study had lain in its applicability for mental health professionals, social workers, and

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*Corresponding author

educators in identifying at-risk youth and designing targeted prevention and intervention strategies tailored to their psychological and cultural context

Keywords: personality traits; psychological distress; psychopathology; suicidal behaviour; self-destructive behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Suicide has existed as a social problem throughout human history; however, it is relative in terms of its rates, causes, and consequences. A key dimension of suicidality involves framing it through various perspectives – personal, psychological, and socio-cultural. Sociologically, suicide is seen as a social phenomenon. Researcher J.J. Macionis (2012) argued that suicide should be understood through the lens of sociological imagination. Similarly, scholars N. Khan *et al.* (2017) have highlighted the importance of sociological perspectives in interpreting suicide. Psychological factors also play a critical role in understanding suicidality.

According to psychological literature, major life crises can significantly contribute to the development of mental illnesses, which may lead to suicidal behaviour. Researchers in the United States have found that individuals who attempt suicide often report more stressful life events compared to those who do not. These include events such as the sudden death of a parent or spouse, economic losses, and interpersonal relationship problems. A study conducted under the Canterbury Suicide Project, as reported by N. Khan *et al.* (2017) and A. Anjum *et al.* (2020), concluded that individuals undertaking medically serious suicide attempts had a significantly greater history of stressful life events in the year preceding the attempt, especially in the domain of interpersonal relationships and conflict. In a comprehensive study, L. Osvath *et al.* (2008) determined that 80% of suicide cases were preceded by a recent stressful event, such as job-related issues, family discord, somatic illness, financial problems, unemployment, separation, or the death or illness of a family member.

The same study also found that psychosocial stressors – including financial loss, family and marital conflict, broken engagements, failed romantic relationships, and major illness – were significantly more common among attempters than among controls. Researchers S. Goldsmith *et al.* (2002) identified suicide as the third leading cause of death among young people aged 15-24. More recent estimates by N.A. Anjum *et al.* (2020) reported approximately 800,000 global deaths by suicide annually, according to the World Health Organisation. Researcher S. Shekhani *et al.* (2018), noted that information on suicidal behaviour in Pakistan remains scarce. Importantly, fewer than five peer-reviewed publications and several secondary reports dominate the discourse, contributing to a lack of research. Researcher M. Kiani (2017) argued that Pakistan's prolonged political instability and poor governance have led to persistently weak social and

health indicators since its independence. This study aimed to explain the psychological factors contributing to youth suicide in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, based on experience.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was a qualitative phenomenological study. The logic behind the choice of a qualitative phenomenological study was that statistical studies have shown a significant correlation between stressful life events, personality factors and mental illness and suicidal intent. However, there was a lack of experience-based research. Therefore, qualitative research was used as a methodological approach to identify and highlight subjective experiences. In accordance with the research design, qualitative open-ended interviews with 19 participants from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan were used. The choice of a small sample size was guided by methodological considerations, according to which qualitative research requires an in-depth study of individual experience and, as noted by L. Neumann (2006), does not require a large number of participants. The collected data were analysed using the methods of thematic analysis by V. Braun & V. Clarke (2006). In accordance with the Ethical principles and code of conduct for psychologists (2017), confidentiality was ensured, informed consent was obtained, and harm to participants was avoided. For anonymity of the participants and confidentiality a coding technique has been devised, for example, R-D-13: R represents Respondent; D is the initial of the name of respondent; 13 is the number of interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Stressful life events and suicide. Stressful life events that are important empirical indicators for suicidality. A stressful event simply is a major crisis in an individual's life. It is a well-researched aspect in studies relevant to suicide that individuals with suicidal ideation have a higher number of stressful life events (Turecki & Brent, 2016). Individuals with suicidal ideation have confronted events of broken relationships, failure in love, loss of family members and friends, loss of job, and severe disagreements with family members resulting in fights. Field information shows the role of stressful life events in suicide attempts is significant. In this context, all the participants expounded that they attempted suicide due to stressful life events. However, the type of such events varied from participant to participant. The stressful events were major ones, i.e., love failure, poor

educational achievements and loss of jobs. In addition, the impact of stressful events has similar as well as varied impacts, i.e., quarrelling, family negation and depressive symptoms were common impacts.

Validating failure in love as a major stressful life event in a suicide attempt, an extract from an interview is:

"The main reason due to which I attempted suicide was my engagement without my consent. My parents and family didn't allow me to engage with a guy whom I loved which created a lot of stress and tension in my life..." (R-D-13).

Further, explaining unemployment and financial problems as stressful events in one's life, a participant stated that:

"The main reason for my suicide attempt was unemployment. I completed Masters in 2007 and remained unemployed for 5 years which made me depressed due to rude behaviour of my father..." (R-N-10).

In addition, failure in education is one of the important major stressful life events where an extract from an interview is:

"The main reason of attempt to kill myself was getting low marks in F.SC exam due to which my father didn't talk to me for three month. My mother taunted me a lot that after studying in such expensive college I was not able to get good grades..." (R-A-8).

The role of personality factors in suicide. Individual characteristics such as behavioural, temperamental, emotional and mental characteristics which make the personality play an important role in suicidality. In this regard, impulsive aggression, which is a personality disorder, is correlated with suicidality. Impulsive aggression is noted among one-third of the attempters particularly among the adolescents (Brent *et al.*, 1994), (Kingsbury *et al.*, 1999). Impulsive aggression means how a person responds to frustration, provocation or hostility (Levi *et al.*, 2008) which has been consistently implicated in phenomenology, neurobiology and studies that are related to familial transmission of suicidal behaviour (Mann *et al.*, 1999). Further, research shows that most of the adolescent suicide attempts show lack of planning and timing, which highlights their impulsive aggression (Hawton *et al.*, 2003). In this context, majority of the participants explained that they experienced impulsive aggression since their early adolescence. The method of attempt of most of the participants indicates a lack of proper planning to attempt suicide where their suicide attempt was influenced by impulsive aggression rather than rational thoughts.

Regarding impulsivity and its role in suicidality, an extract from an interview is:

"I really get annoyed and frustrated at various situations where my friends and family members remain normal such as when meal at home is not of my choice. Further, my friends tease me during gossips because they say that I get angry easily, and yes, I get angry easily as compared to my friends..." (R-A-34).

Another participant stated that:

"...I am easily provoked, and I cannot control myself in situations whereby I am frustrated. I believe that my decision to attempt suicide was due to a lack of controlling situation..."

Studies explain neuroticism as one of the significant factors regarding suicidality in youth. Neuroticism is a personality trait where one experiences prolonged and severe range of negative effects in response to stress (Enns *et al.*, 2003). Further, lower self-esteem is strongly associated with youth suicide attempts however such association may be reduced in strength after controlling depression and hopelessness (Lewinsohn *et al.*, 1994). Furthermore, perfectionism, particularly the perception that others have unrealistically high expectations has been reported as a risk factor for youth suicide attempts (Goldstone & Bantjes, 2017). In this regard, field information concludes similar results in terms of neuroticism and hopelessness as causative factors of suicide attempts.

In this regard, a participant stated that:

"I didn't saw any other way to get rid of tension and stress besides attempting suicide. I was hopeless and was sure that it is now almost impossible for me to get a job for a long time, I was struggling to get a job, and the stress was increasing day by day..." (R-F-19).

A participant explained that:

"...I want myself to be perfect such as having good job, earning a lot of money, and enjoying good status. However, life situations were different. After completing my education, I was unable to meet my expectations, and I was stressed for long time. I became hopeless..."

Mental illness and suicide. Mental illness is one of the important factors associated with suicidality. It increases the risk of suicide in comparison to physical illness. According to H. Hendin (1998), 95% of suicide attempt survivors have visited doctors for some psychiatric issue; however, these statistics are more valid for individuals over the age of 50. H. Hendin (1998) also noted that individuals with depression develop suicidal ideation due to a lack of familial support. Mental illness, while studying suicide, has its own dimensions and variables. In this respect, depression is the most important one. H.G. Sánchez (2001) reported that 5% of people with major and untreated depression die by suicide, highlighting the crucial role of depression in suicide attempts. Suicidal ideation is quite common in patients with depression and depends upon the severity of the condition. Mood disorders are widely linked with suicide, particularly during mixed states of mania and depression, which are high-risk periods for suicidal behaviour. Concerning schizophrenia, C.B. Caldwell & I.I. Gottesman (1990) found that lifetime suicide rates among patients range from 10% to 13%, with increased risk especially present during the first ten years of the illness and particularly among youth. H.Z. Reinherz *et al.* (1995) suggested that mood disorders increase the suicide risk for both

genders, and P.M. Lewinsohn *et al.* (1995) emphasised the importance of bipolar disorder in suicide attempts.

Substance use disorder also contributes significantly to suicide risk, especially among older adolescent males, as shown in the findings of P. Allebeck & C. Allgulander (1990). Conduct disorder and antisocial behaviour play a vital role in suicide attempts, according to the same study. Anxiety disorders are also associated with suicide attempts, although mood disorder management can partially control anxiety symptoms. Still, D.J. Pilowsky *et al.* (1999) warned that panic attacks remain particularly dangerous in the context of suicide. In a school-based study, H. Reinherz *et al.* (1995) concluded that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is associated with a lifetime risk of suicide among children under the age of 14, even after depression treatment. D. Brent & J. Mann (2005) found that psychotic individuals are at increased risk of both suicide and attempted suicide, although suicide does not commonly occur in psychotic individuals until young adulthood.

Eating disorders also contribute significantly to suicide risk. According to D. A. Brent *et al.* (1996), children aged 8-14 with eating disorders are eight times more likely to attempt suicide. These researchers also highlighted that psychological autopsy studies have demonstrated that up to 70% of youth who commit suicide have multiple co-morbid disorders. The risk of completed suicide increases with the number of co-occurring mental health conditions. Relevantly, field information shows resemblance to peer-reviewed information where majority of the participants experienced mental health issues, i.e., participants suffered from anxiety and depressive states since long and reached the level of attempting suicide. Information collected through in-depth interviews validates that at the time of attempting suicide, participants were experiencing depressive symptoms. The major symptoms such as headaches, extreme sadness, hopelessness, insomnia, aggression and loss of appetite were evident.

In this context, an extract from an interview says:

"I visited doctor several times to treat exacerbating tension. I had lost interest in spending time with friends, playing cricket and even there was a gradual decrease in my appetite (symptoms of depression). I felt good for few days with medications. However, when medicine finished, the sadness restarted and finally I was so tensed (depressed) that I attempted suicide...." (R-F-19).

A participant stated that:

"...a week before I started to experience fast heart-beat (palpitations) with a sort of fear and then I lost interest in eating and remained sad for 4 days....".

A participant explored that:

"...I had several panic attacks, and I remained agitated for months before attempting a suicide. I did a mistake by starting drugs with a friend to solve my issues....".

Further, participants R-R-5, R-U-2, R-T-12 and R-F-19 visited doctors to treat their tension, stress

and depressive symptoms. Besides, regarding schizophrenia field information do not show any evidence; however, substance use disorder i.e., use of anxiolytics and alcohol was contributed factor where R-R-5, R-U-2, R-D-13, R-N-18, R-T-12, R-F-09 and R-W-16 have used these substances without doctor's prescription. Psychosis and co-morbid disorders also were not observed among the participants.

CONCLUSIONS

The principal findings of the study demonstrated that suicidal behaviour had been shaped by the interaction of stressful life events, individual personality characteristics, and underlying mental health conditions. Participants had reported experiencing events such as romantic rejection, educational failure, unemployment, and conflicts within the family. These experiences had produced considerable psychological strain and had led to common emotional outcomes, including withdrawal from family, persistent arguments, and symptoms of depression. Although the types of stressful experiences had varied, they had shared a consistent emotional burden that had contributed to suicidal ideation. Personality traits had also played a significant role in the emergence of suicidality. A notable number of participants had exhibited impulsive aggression and emotional reactivity from adolescence. These traits had often resulted in unplanned suicide attempts, driven more by immediate emotional responses than by long-term intent. Perfectionism, low self-esteem, and hopelessness had further intensified psychological distress and had made individuals more vulnerable to suicidal behaviour.

Mental health issues had been a central factor across the cases. Participants had frequently experienced symptoms such as anxiety, sadness, insomnia, appetite loss, and panic attacks. Although no evidence of psychosis or schizophrenia had been observed in the sample, the use of substances such as anxiolytics and alcohol without medical prescription had been reported and had contributed to the overall risk. Long-standing emotional suffering had been present in most cases. Future research should investigate the role of social and familial support in reducing suicide risk, as well as examine the potential of early psychological interventions for individuals with impulsive traits or perfectionist tendencies, particularly in socioeconomically vulnerable populations.

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Феноменологічне дослідження стресових життєвих подій, особистісних факторів та психічних захворювань, що сприяють самогубствам серед молоді в провінції Хайбер-Пахтунхва, Пакистан

Насар Хан

Доктор філософії у галузі соціології, викладач
Університет Бунера
27130, вул. Девана Баба, м. Сварі, Пакистан
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2452-184X>

Імран Алі

Магістр
Університет Каїд-і-Азам
45320, вул. Університетська, м. Ісламабад, Пакистан
<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4577-9457>

Араб Наз

Професор
Університет Малаканда
18800, вул. Університетська, м. Аламат, Пакистан

Сохіма Азнак

Старший Асистент Професора
Університет Бахарія
Е-8/1Е8/1Е-8, вул. Шангілла, м. Ісламабад, Пакистан
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3761-5983>

Анотація. Актуальність проблеми суїцидальної поведінки серед молоді підкреслюється її зростаючою поширеністю та відсутністю комплексних досліджень психологічних чинників у конкретних культурних та регіональних контекстах. Особливої уваги вимагало вивчення суб'єктивного досвіду осіб, які стикалися з суїцидальними думками. Метою цього дослідження було виявити психологічні чинники, що сприяють самогубствам серед молоді в провінції Хайбер-Пахтунхва, Пакистан, через аналіз особистого досвіду. Використовуючи якісний феноменологічний підхід, було проведено напівструктуровані глибинні інтерв'ю з 19 спеціально відібраними учасниками. Для збору даних було використано посібник для проведення інтерв'ю, а для виявлення повторюваних тем у розповідях учасників було застосовано тематичний аналіз. Було виявлено, що зовнішні стресові фактори – такі як невдачі в романтичних стосунках, погана успішність і втрата роботи – відіграли значну роль у виникненні суїцидальних тенденцій серед молодих людей. Особистісні риси, такі як імпульсивна агресія, невротизм і перфекціонізм, також були визначені як фактори, що впливають на схильність до самогубства. Аналіз також виявив поширеність симптомів, які зазвичай асоціюються з розладами психічного здоров'я, таких як постійний смуток, безнадія, збудження і нестабільність настрою, що в сукупності підвищують ризик суїцидальності. Висновки відобразили складний взаємозв'язок між стресовими факторами навколишнього середовища, індивідуальними особливостями особистості та емоційним дистресом у розвитку суїцидальної поведінки. Практична цінність дослідження в тому, що його результати можуть бути використані фахівцями в галузі психічного здоров'я, соціальними працівниками та педагогами для виявлення молоді з груп ризику та розробки цільових стратегій профілактики та втручання, адаптованих до їхнього психологічного та культурного контексту.

Ключові слова: особистісні риси; психологічний дистрес; психопатологія; суїцидальна поведінка; саморуйнівна поведінка

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Development of existential subjectivity of youth: Testing of the logotherapeutic training “Ways to the Future”

Olena Ronzhes*

Postgraduate Student
V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University
61022, 4 Svobody Sq., Kharkiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3260-8996>

Nataliia Khmelyova

President
Ukrainian Association of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis
49051, 1 Zhurnalistic Str., Dnipro, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3062-4806>

Abstract. The relevance of the research was determined by the necessity to develop in young people the ability to consciously and responsibly choose a life path based on personal values and meanings, maintain an active civic position, and remain internally oriented toward values, particularly under conditions of growing social polarisation, loss of meaning, and global challenges. The purpose of the study was to analyse the effectiveness of the programme “Ways to the Future: A Country for Happiness” as a tool for fostering personality development and civic maturity through engagement in meaningful reflection and purposeful action. To achieve this aim, an original youth training programme was implemented based on Viktor Frankl’s logotherapeutic approach. The methodology involved the application of group logotherapeutic methods, including self-transcendence exercises, value reflection, future visualisation, logodialogue, metaphorical projection, and the stimulation of personal responsibility. The effectiveness of the programme was evaluated using qualitative research methods, such as participant observation, content analysis of written reflections and creative outputs, and interpretation of the dynamics of changes in participants’ value and meaning orientations. The following results were established: the relevance of the logotherapeutic approach for use in educational and social interventions was substantiated; the effectiveness of logotherapeutic techniques as a means of fostering subjectivity, responsibility, and existential maturity was confirmed; key transformations in the participants’ worldview orientations were identified; and a practical model of educational and social training focused on meaning, values, and civic subjectivity was developed. This model integrated the logotherapeutic framework with elements of civic education. The practical value of the research lay in its applicability by professionals in the fields of education, youth development, and social work, who may employ the proposed model to strengthen civic engagement and existential resilience among young people

Keywords: meaning of life; self-transcendence; civic maturity; meaningful life education; happiness

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the crisis of meaning as a challenge for the younger generation, logotherapeutically oriented programmes are important for determining individual meanings and attitudes towards the present and future

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*Corresponding author

of citizens. They were found to contribute to the formation of subjectivity and responsibility, the understanding of happiness as an effect of meaning rather than an end in itself, provided prevention of psychological burnout and isolation, and supported integration into society through values. Such programmes were shown to help young people not merely adapt to a complex world, but also find their place in it, their meaning – and transform the world through themselves.

In the context of political polarisation, uncertainty, and military conflict, as well as the loss of trust in institutions and a crisis of meaning, approaches focused on the existential and value subjectivity of youth were considered of particular importance (Wong, 2020; Lahti & Seppälä, 2024). Modern youth lived under conditions of information overload, existential uncertainty, war, climate anxiety, and digital fragmentation (Karger *et al.*, 2025). This often led to a loss of internal orientation, increased anxiety, escapism, or apathy, which were recognised as signs of existential frustration or existential crisis (Gawda & Korniluk, 2024). According to O.A. Slobodskiy & V.V. Balakhtar (2024), logotherapy provided an internal point of support through meaning – something that did not depend on external circumstances. The approaches and techniques of existential analysis, which focused on the superiority of spiritual dimensions over physical and emotional ones (Yalanska, 2023), were applied to educational programmes and trainings for young people. These aimed to spread a culture of conscious meanings, self-distancing, self-transcendence, and protection of values, the highest of which in the logotherapeutic dimension was unconditional love for oneself and the world around. Referring to J. Vos *et al.* (2022) the main components of logotherapy held significant importance in the context of modern society, crises, wars, and uncertainty, where existential challenges for the individual, especially adolescents and young people, had increased. The spread of existential vacuum was regarded as a consequence of social transformations, crises, and technological progress, which intensified the need for the search for meanings among young people (Sachko, 2022). The growing role of the will to meaning and the meaning of life, as well as human free will for an increasing number of individuals, were considered signs of the evolution of humanity (Faye, 2024; King & Hicks, 2021). Under modern conditions, the need was acknowledged to create societies based on principles close to logotherapeutic ones, in which a person would develop their uniqueness and will to meaning in harmonious interaction with others and with society (Lazer *et al.*, 2021). Thus, logotherapeutic principles acquired new significance not only as a tool for overcoming crisis and suffering but also as a paradigm that fostered a positive momentum of global purpose.

The novelty of the study was seen in the introduction of a logotherapeutic approach into a civic-oriented educational programme that regarded happiness not as

a goal, but as an effect of a meaningful life. The objectives of the study were: to conduct an analysis of significant youth programmes for the development of public and individual subjectivity; to describe the theoretical basis of the “Paths to the Future” programme from the perspective of logotherapy and the concept of eudemonistic happiness; to present the methodological principles and structure of the programme; to conduct an empirical analysis of the case of the programme’s implementation in Germany; to determine the potential of the programme for further implementation in formal and non-formal education.

Unlike existing programmes that developed political or social activism, the “Paths to the Future” programme emphasised meaning as the basis of subjectivity, integrated logotherapy techniques into group training work, and offered a model for forming a “meaningful citizen” as a response to social crises. The study demonstrated the possibility of using logotherapy not only in individual psychological practice, but also in a socially oriented educational context. The purpose of the study was to analyse the description of the creation and testing of the author’s logotherapeutic educational programme for youth, “Paths to the Future”, aimed at the formation of a responsible, meaning-oriented personality capable of reflection, co-creation, and sustainable development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article discusses the “Ways to the Future” programme was implemented in Germany as a week-long training course during 2023-2024 ($n = 42$): ($n_1 = 14$, 20-24 years old, Cologne, October 2023; $n_2 = 10$, 14-19 years old, Cologne, May 2024; $n_3 = 9$, 14-19 years old, Düsseldorf, September 2024; $n_4 = 9$ 15-21 years old, Düsseldorf, October 2024). The participant groups varied in age, language proficiency, and socio-cultural background, allowing the programme to be tested in different contexts. The programme used methods of logotherapy, future planning, communication, and digital competence development. To assess the effect, the following were used: surveys, observations, thematic content analysis of the work, and interviews with participants. The analysis was conducted according to the following criteria: level of reflection of meanings, responsibility, sense of belonging to something greater, changes in attitude towards oneself and society.

The study employed a qualitative methodology to analysed the impact of the logotherapeutic educational programme “Ways to the Future: A Country for Happiness” on the existential subjectivity and civic maturity of young people. The methodological foundation was based on Viktor Frankl’s logotherapy and existential analysis, which focused on self-transcendence, the will to meaning, and value orientation. To develop the programme’s conceptual structure, a comparative analysis of seven youth initiatives in Ukraine and Europe was conducted. These included Ukraine national identity

through youth (n.d.) (UNITY), UActive (Spirit of America) (Empower Ukrainian..., n.d.), UPSHIFT (n.d.) (UNICEF), European youth parliament Ukraine (n.d.) (EYP Ukraine), Get Political (Get Political..., n.d.) ABCDemocracy (ABCDemocracy..., n.d.), and Shout Out UK (Countering disinformation..., n.d.). This programme was focused on youth, had a component of value development, and were recognised in the educational or public field (implemented by leading public organisations, international institutions or supported by the government, which ensured their relevance and influence). The selection criteria also included the focus on political literacy, development of subjectivity, value orientation, and civic engagement. The analysis revealed a gap in existing initiatives, namely, the lack of integration between civic education and value-based personal development through meaning-oriented practices.

On the basis of this analysis, the “Ways to the Future” programme was designed and implemented as a week-long training that combined educational, creative, and experiential methods. The programme incorporated logotherapeutic exercises (self-transcendence,

self-distancing, Socratic dialogue), tools for future design (mind maps, De Bono’s “Six Thinking Hats”, brainstorming), communication practices (nonviolent communication, metaphorical projection), and development of digital competencies. Participants engaged in role-play as “ministers” of a hypothetical country and took responsibility for creating and managing a society oriented towards happiness and meaning. Tasks included daily project work, reflective exercises, social simulations, value analysis, and the creation of a collective “Code of the Future”.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Programmes for the development of political literacy and subjectivity of youth

The selected programmes demonstrated various approaches to the development of political literacy and subjectivity, including educational courses, projects and participation in simulations of political processes. Table 1 provided a comparison of the features of the selected programmes, their emphases, including values and meanings.

Table 1. Comparison of youth programmes

Programme name	Country	Focus	Political literacy	Values and meanings
Unity (UNITY) / IREX	Ukraine	Civic skills, identity, community participation	✓	Ukrainian identity, cohesion, responsibility
UActive / Spirit of America	Ukraine	Leadership, communities, social initiatives	–	Activism, collaboration, self-realisation
UPSHIFT / UNICEF	Ukraine	Social innovation, entrepreneurship	–	Social responsibility, innovative thinking
EYP Ukraine	Ukraine	Debate, European Parliament, intercultural interaction	✓	Democracy, participation, European values
Get Political	EU	Political education, youth participation	✓	Active citizenship, democracy
ABCDemocracy / SALTO	EU	Interactive education about democracy	✓	Freedom, human rights, democracy
Shout Out UK	Great Britain	Political and media literacy	✓	Awareness, critical thinking, responsibility

Note: data provided is current as of June 2025

Source: compiled by the authors of this study

This approach provided an opportunity to analysed the correlation of programmes with a logotherapeutic approach to meaningful development. Programmes in Ukraine: IREX’s UNITY: A six-year programme that supports youth leadership, fosters Ukrainian identity, civic skills, and engages youth in community decision-making; Spirit of America’s UActive: A programme that develops leadership, entrepreneurial, and civic skills in high school students, especially in conflict-affected regions. Participants develop projects to improve their schools and communities. UNICEF’s UPSHIFT: A programme that supports adolescents and youth in developing social

innovation, entrepreneurship, and civic skills through workshops and mentoring.

European Youth Parliament – Ukraine (EYP Ukraine): the programme provides young people with a platform for debate, intercultural exchange and participation in simulations of the work of the European Parliament, contributing to the development of civic awareness. Programmes in Europe: “Get Political”: an international initiative aimed at increasing political literacy and active participation of young people in political processes through educational activities, trainings and interaction with political institutions; SALTO’s “ABCDemocracy” Toolkit: an educational resource that improves political

literacy of young people through interactive materials, including videos, podcasts and online games aimed at understanding democracy and active citizenship; “Shout Out UK”: a British social initiative that offers political and media literacy courses for young people, organises debates and campaigns to engage young people in the political process. Analysed of sources describing programmes showed that they develop activity, knowledge, skills, but do not work with the meaningful orientations of young people. Most programmes are focused either on personal development and the development of soft skills, or on civic activity, but do not combine these two dimensions systematically. These initiatives sometimes appeal to well-being or well-being, but superficially, teach “how to be active”, but do not answer the question “who am I, why, and where are my meanings?”, none of them addresses the phenomenon of happiness or psychological well-being and is not based on the logotherapeutic paradigm. Thus, the lack of a programme that would be a bridge between psychology, education and civic formation was revealed. The need to develop a youth training programme that puts the issue of meaning, value choice, inner freedom at the centre, helps young people find their meaning in society and realise their subjectivity not only as a voice in elections, but as a carrier of a unique contribution to the public good. Such a programme should be distinguished by its existential depth and focus on the meaning of life; combine civic and personal dimensions; rely on happiness as an indicator of meaning, not a goal; conceptually distinguish between hedonic happiness and eudemonistic happiness (as a side effect of a meaningful life), which corresponds to logotherapy; and consciously combine them not only at the level of lectures, but through experience, reflection, and exercises.

Training programme “Ways to the Future” for youth

According to the specified criteria, the programme “Ways to the Future: A Country for Happiness” was developed to form in young people the experience of building a society according to logotherapeutic principles (Ronzhes, 2025). “Ways to the Future” is an educational group project that aims to develop a culture of peace, critical thinking, and conscious, meaningful existence. It not only teaches professional skills and social realisation, but also forms ethical values and strategies for peaceful coexistence that can serve as a safeguard against the radicalisation of society and the growth of aggression and violence.

The basis is the development of self-awareness, the formation of life values and meaningful intentions, as well as social responsibility and empathy. The programme included the development of digital and AI competencies, namely, working with technology as a tool for self-realisation and creativity, which supports individual subjectivity and choice. Education and project activities with youth have a unique opportunity to

become a platform for the development of a culture of peace, critical thinking and meaningful existence. Programmes that teach not only professional skills, but also ethical principles, values and strategies for peaceful coexistence can serve as a safeguard against further radicalisation of society and the increase in aggression and violence. The “Ways to the Future” programme is an original educational group project, which uses a logotherapeutic approach to develop young people as active citizens capable of responsible and meaningful life in a society of change. It is aimed at supporting young people through the development of social awareness, critical thinking, understanding of personal values, professional opportunities and digital skills. The programme combined educational and entertainment elements (edutainment), which increases the involvement of participants, promotes empathy, trust and teamwork. The logotherapeutic functions of the programme consisted of identifying internal landmarks through the formation of one’s own vector; acts of kindness; expressing meaning in words and finding the connection between meaning and action; co-creating a valuable vision of the future. Discussion and reflection provided practice in self-distancing, forming a position and defending one’s choice.

The main goal of the programme is to visually and verbally form an image of the future according to the principles of a meaningful life, both individual and social. To achieve this goal, the project creates a safe environment where people realised their potential and build a prototype of a society based on dignity, responsibility and development. The task is to create a concept of a society where the happiness of its inhabitants is the main value. Special attention is paid to youth, since they are the basis of the future of society. Happiness plays an important role in this context. It does not have a single universal definition, and each person can interpret it differently. In the project, reliance was placed on the logotherapeutic understanding of happiness: it was not regarded as the ultimate goal or a self-sufficient value, but rather as a “by-product” of a meaningful life, unity with others, an understanding of one’s purpose, and the experience of self-realisation. Participants do not just gained knowledge, they learned to consciously shape their future, both personal and social. The programme combines modern educational methods, interactive activities and logotherapeutic approaches that help participants develop critical thinking, empathy and the ability to make thoughtful decisions even in difficult situations (Table 2). By integrating these principles and methods, the programme aimed to help young people overcome life’s challenges, encouraging them to find meaning in their experiences and thereby increasing their psychological resilience. The flexible structure of the programme allows it to adapt to different formats – from short seminars to long-term educational courses.

Table 2. Methods and techniques used in the “Ways to the Future” programme

Field	Methods and techniques used in the programme
Logotherapy	Self-transcendence (training days: 1, 2); Self-distancing (training days: 1, 2); Socratic dialogue (training days: 1); “Tree of values” (training days: 1); Author’s methodology “Choice” (training days: 1, 2); Reflection and dereflection (training days: 4, 6)
Designing the future	Mind maps (training days: 2, 4); Edward De Bono’s “Six Hats” (training days: 4); “Sets” – Venn diagrams (training days: 3); Brainstorming (training days: 3); “Codex” (training days: 5); Tips for monetising relevant skills (training days: 6)
Communication	Circle of acquaintances (training days: 1); “Nonviolent communication” by Marshal Rosenberg (training days: 1-6); Author’s method “Mailboxes” (training days: 1-6); Social adaptation through communication in society (training days: 1-6); Interaction in board games (training days: 1-6)
Digital competences	Application of digital methods to perform their tasks as ministers (voice recorder, photo and video shooting, video editor, music & video platforms, messengers, Canva, AI services etc.): Working with information (training days: 1-6); Communication (training days: 1-6); Content creation (training days: 1-6); Data security (training days: 1-6)

Note: a description of the methods and instructions were provided during the lectures, practical work was carried out by the participants independently after the lecture material, and the results were discussed on the same day

Source: compiled by the authors of this study

The programme involved a game simulation of creating a society as a self-organising system, which has certain elements and rules: “cabinet of ministers”; project leaders as representatives of hypothetical citizens of the country; installations for everyday life and communication; “postal station”. In “Cabinet of ministers” each participant was a minister in their field. Each participant took on the role of a minister, based on their strengths, skills or interests. For example: a child or young adult who is passionate about nature becomes the Minister of Ecology; a participant who loves art becomes the Minister of Culture and Arts; a participant passionate about technology becomes the Minister of Digital Development, etc. There can be from one to three ministers in one position, and one participant can hold from one to three positions. Ministers could invite other participants to perform certain tasks. Tasks and responsibilities on the project were distributed by the project leader between the ministers according to which “cabinet of ministers” has gathered for this particular project. Ministers was trusted by the group as individuals who can developed their sector and independently find solutions for the future of society. This helped participants strengthen their talents and abilities, and teaches them responsibility, service to others, and society that they can take on in real life. Such dereflection helped shift their focus from problems to external activities or interactions, which helps to achieve a healthy perspective and reduces worries that can increase anxiety or distress. By participating in these community-oriented

initiatives, people embodied the essence of logotherapy: they seek not what can give them life, but what they can give back to life. This self-transcendent approach is important for both personal fulfilment and increased community resilience, illustrating the profound impact of sensory-oriented interventions in today’s society.

The “facilitator (project leader)” acts not as a traditional teacher, but as a moderator and hypothetical representative of the citizens whose happiness in the logotherapeutic sense should be a priority for the leadership (i.e. the cabinet) of the hypothetical country of the project. This allows participants to practice decision-making and experience building a social structure. This format helps participants realise their value in social processes and learn to interact constructively with others.

In “everyday life and communication” participants independently organised their daily routine according to the schedule of each day: preparing breakfast and lunch (every day is different – serving in the studio; cooking in the studio; ordering delivery; visiting the institution; picnic), booking tickets, planning routes, organising leisure activities, managing the budget. This promotes independence, responsibility and adaptation to the real world. The first half of the day, educational and project-based, is conducted by a facilitator according to the topic of the day: lecture material, acquaintance and application of techniques, practical work; discussion.

“Postal station” is a special element of the programme is the “Secret Mail” system. A postal station (individual mailboxes) is opened throughout the day,

where participants leaved messages individually for everyone in the group every day. Thus, each person received several notes per day. The established rules for the mailbox are: write at least one individualised message to each participant; use complete sentences; be meaningful and respectful. Such mail was an alternative to digital communication, teaching participants to express their thoughts thoughtfully, deeply, personalised and without a digital footprint. At the end of the day, participants read their mail, which gave them a vision of themselves from others, which brought them closer to self-distancing.

The programme involved changing venues, which helps participants adapt to different environments. However, the daily schedule remained stable: the beginning of the day for educational and project activities took place in the project premises (e.g., a studio); lunch – according to the project plan; the end of the day for completing tasks and free communication or games – in other locations according to the plan (natural or cosy urban locations are recommended). This combination of a dynamic environment and a stable schedule helped participants develop adaptability, while maintaining a sense of security and organisation.

An important part of the programme was the development of digital skills and the use of modern technologies throughout the project. This formed an attitude towards technology as a convenient powerful tool or assistant for achieving one's own goals and self-realisation both in real and digital spaces. It contributed to the development of subjectivity and the realisation of one's own choice. Participants learned to structure their thoughts and ideas in digital format; create text and video reports; use artificial intelligence to correct grammar, translate text, create infographics, etc. All these actions were integrated into the workflow, improving creativity, data processing skills and adaptability to the digital world.

Structure of the “Ways to the Future” programme

The programme was implemented in the format of a weekly group project, which includes training and practical activities. Participants went through several stages of training and practice: lectures, interactive methods, games and projects. Logotherapeutic methods, future design methods and communication practices were used. Participants themselves organised their daily lives and interaction with society, which contributed to the development of subjectivity, responsibility and adaptation to real life. The first half of the day was devoted to educational classes led by a facilitator, where lecture material is worked out and methods are practiced. The metaphor of the “Cabinet of Ministers” of a hypothetical country of the future was introduced, where each participant is responsible for a certain vital area based on their talents and capabilities. This helped to realise their own influence and role in common life, forming an

existential sense of responsibility and self-transcendence. The final result of the group's work was the joint creation of a value vision of the future, expressed in the “Code of the Future”.

Day 1. The project was introduced with the theme of the day: “What is happiness?” and “How to choose your path?”. The lecture material addressed the idea that a choice was made at every moment. Life was imagined as a scheme in which the present – the here and now – served as the centre point, reached by each participant through a unique path. From this point, numerous future directions could be chosen or constructed, each leading to a different outcome. The choice of direction was guided by individual landmarks: values and meanings. Values functioned as a kind of neural map, determining the direction of movement from past to future. In the absence of clear values, goals lost their significance and development became disorganised. The realisation of personal identity and life path was considered more effective within a resonant space, so efforts were made to create a supportive environment and community. At the beginning of the project, the group was transformed into the Cabinet of Ministers of a hypothetical country of the future.

Tasks of the day (methods of the day are given in brackets): choose a name, image, introduce yourself (self-distancing, circle of acquaintances); determine how everyone understands happiness (Socratic dialogue); Individually determine your values (“Tree of Values”); understand your individual path (self-transcendence, schemes according to the author's “Choice” method); create a project playlist (three music tracks from each participant); form a cabinet of ministers and define tasks (conscious responsibility as a counterweight to freedom, discussion). Daily tasks for the cabinet of ministers: Ensuring compliance with the schedule, readiness of materials; ensuring well-being (including food and hygiene); visual recording of events (photos, videos); memorisation of experience (narrative recording of impressions); ensuring logistics; ensuring economic stability (budget); organising leisure (games, music, recreation); all other tasks additionally defined by a specific group.

Day 2. Social needs for creating conditions. Topic of the day: “How to create conditions in the country for the realisation of happiness and choice, individual and common?”. Topic of the lecture material: Happiness in the logotherapeutic sense is not an end in itself and not a complete synonym for well-being, but a feeling of meaningful fulfilment of one's life, consonance with one's values and meaningful interaction with others, for others and mutual assistance, the ability to receive and give. On each path there may be conditions that contribute to the effective achievement of goals, or hinder them. The determination of necessary, important, pleasant, or significant conditions, as well as the awareness of their features, was found to facilitate the creation or

search for the environment and surroundings that were being sought. It also facilitated understanding with others, the search for like-minded individuals, and the ability to consciously choose what corresponded to the chosen vector and specified conditions.

A mental “rising” above one’s own map of the path from the past to the future and full presence in the here and now led to an initial act of self-distancing. When rising above one’s path, like a bird or an aeroplane, it became possible to see one’s life task more clearly and to reduce emotional tension. In the case of awareness and acceptance of the perceived task, self-transcendence was achieved and the experience of one’s highest ideals was made possible. The tasks of the day focused on deepening the understanding of happiness in the context of logotherapy. Participants analysed their personal interpretations of happiness, formulated on the first day of training, and reflected on the alignment or divergence from the logotherapeutic perspective (Socratic dialogue). They examined their individual “Choice” method schemes for consistency with the logotherapeutic concept of happiness. Each participant developed a personal vision of the conditions that would promote happiness in the logotherapeutic sense for the country’s residents through self-realisation (mind map). The group also planned the next day’s cooking session in the studio, deciding what each person would prepare, composing a menu, and allocating the daily food budget among all participants (self-transcendence – think about others and the process). Additionally, two rounds of the “Life” game were played to encourage awareness and reflection on individual choices and their implications.

Day 3. Coincidences and discrepancies. Topic of the day: “How to determine priority metathemes in a community?”. Topic of the lecture material: Any society consists of individuals, each of whom has their own will to meaning, the meaning of life and freedom of will. In a community, they can differ significantly, so it is not always easy to create a generalised and acceptable concept for everyone. The combination of individual positions, as elements of a set, their (non)coincidence in content or the intersection of sets allows to structurally and consciously take into account all the topics raised and systematise them into a single concept.

The task of the day focused on collective analysis and synthesis of ideas related to the concept of a country for happiness. Participants wrote on sticky notes each of the important conditions identified in their individual maps from the previous day. New conditions were added if necessary. All notes were placed on the studio wall. The group then carefully analysed the collected notes and organised them into cloud sets based on similarity and proximity in content. Each cloud set was examined to determine the values it represented. Intersections, coincidences, and differences between the sets were outlined using chalk (analysis of the

brainstorming results according to Vance diagrams). Two rounds of the game “Life” were played to reflect on and better understand personal choices. Additionally, an establishment was selected for ordering food delivery for the following day. A list of orders was compiled for each participant, keeping the total budget in mind.

Day 4. Advantages and disadvantages, after the “equator” (middle of the training). Topic of the day: “Does what we have planned and the path we are currently taking correspond to the values and meanings that are important to us?”. Topic of the lecture material: during detailed operational planning and analysis (as working with sets of numerous conditions on the previous day), following a certain path, one’s strategic path according to one’s own meaning of life (see day one), or losing the preservation of one of the values may be lost. Developing the skill of self-distancing helps to see the strengths and weaknesses of a plan, phenomenon or idea, and make timely adjustments (if possible) or identify the necessary new knowledge, skills or other resources for optimisation.

Tasks of the day (the day’s methods are given in brackets): thoroughly analyse the value sets created on the previous day and create a common concept of the country for the happiness of its inhabitants (mind map), it is convenient to do this with chalk on the studio wall; critically analyse the created concept, distributing roles for different approaches to analysis (de Bono’s “Six Hats” methodology) (De Bono, 1985) if necessary, jointly make adjustments to the concept (discussion); report on the effectiveness of the fulfilment of the duties and tasks of the ministers, especially on the completeness of the archive of photos, videos and memories and impressions; the training was “equator”, that is, half the days-modules. Determine the compliance of the training course with your own expectations, note and discuss possible adjustments (discussion); determine which institution the group will go to for lunch tomorrow, calculate the order according to the budget for the day, find the best route and, if necessary, public transport.

Day 5. Code of the Future. Topic of the day: “How to formulate a certain common vision of the concept, conditions, values, meanings and aspirations in a single, understandable set of rules, regulations and explanations of the deep meanings of each of them?”. Topic of the lecture material: Each community is based on something common, recognised by all its participants. Such a code of honour, principles and values, which is relied on when creating new plans or setting their own goals. Special attention requires understanding how and in what cases important values will be protected. For countries, such a code is a constitution, for different communities it can be a charter, for an individual – their own internal spiritual and moral guidelines.

The task of the day involved several creative and reflective activities aimed at synthesising the experience gained during the project and preparing for its conclu-

sion. Participants were asked to create a “Code of the Future” or a “Country Code for Happiness” in accordance with the common concept and intelligence map agreed upon the previous day. This task required outlining the key principles of a desirable society, focusing on strategies for ensuring self-realisation, shared values and meanings that shape the purpose of such a society, civil rights and responsibilities, principles of social interaction, approaches to governance, and conflict resolution strategies. Participants were encouraged to make an audio recording using a dictaphone, transcribe it into text, and then edit and refine the content into a final document. An archive of photos, videos, memories, and impressions was to be created. Participants were expected to document their experiences by making notes about the day and conducting video or audio interviews with each participant to capture personal reflections and highlights. The task involved preparing a final video about the project, to be presented the following day. This video aimed to serve as a way of memorising and preserving the experience. It included audio recordings of each group’s “Code of Happiness” being read aloud. Finally, participants were asked to discuss and decide who would bring what to the picnic planned for the next day. The goal was to contribute items that would bring joy and comfort to others, fostering a spirit of generosity and care within the group.

Day 6. Self-realisation here and now. Topic of the day: “How to socialise what I know how to do, and the finale of the project”. Topic of the lecture material: a short final speech about the unique features of this particular group; analysis of the code; viewing the final video. Reminder of the main logotherapeutic principles: freedom of will, will to meaning, meaning of life. Transition from the social to the personal through the theme of synergy and the importance of balance between the external and internal, private and public, etc. A strong, good, wise society was understood to consist of strong, good, wise individuals, so the process began with the self. It was considered desirable to understand one’s own skills and to find ways to apply them immediately within society in order to achieve both self-realisation and the application of one’s talents and abilities, as well as gratitude for them from society. This contributed to a sense of one’s own unique value and the unique value of others.

The task of the day aimed to encourage reflection on personal strengths and their potential contribution to society. Participants identified at least three of their current skills or abilities by answering the questions “What am I good at?” or “What can I do for others?”. Each skill was written in the centre of a separate A4 sheet within a circle (reflection). These sheets were then circulated around the group, and each participant added at least one idea branching from the circle. The ideas focused on how the listed skills could be applied in a useful way, how they might be implemented in society

at present, and for what contributions people would be willing to express gratitude, including financially. This activity supported the emergence of hyper intention – an increased desire to do something useful to receive rewards – and dereflection – a reduction of excessive attention to personal struggles by focusing on positive aspects of life. As a result, each participant received a set of feedback ideas from others, helping them to understand how they might begin earning resources immediately by engaging in meaningful work that also benefits others (self-transcendence) (mind map). The day concluded with the finalisation of the project. Participants reviewed the digital products created during the course of the project, took part in a discussion circle to exchange conclusions and impressions, and provided feedback to the project organisers.

Testing of the “Ways to the Future” programme

The results showed that different groups created different concepts of the future that reflected the unique needs of the participants. However, all groups shared a common goal: to build a humane, strong, and compassionate society. It was determined that each group demonstrated a need for a society similar to a “healthy family” – a place with support for a unique personality and self-realisation (as in logotherapy is not a key task, just like happiness, but comes by itself if a person follows the meaning and does something out of self-transcendence), responsibility for personal actions and protection of basic rights. Each group also developed its own “Code of the Future Society”. Comparing these codes was particularly insightful, as they revealed both differences and universal values in all groups. It was interesting to compare them, because, despite the differences, they all had common principles: respect for human rights, responsibility for one’s actions, peaceful conflict resolution, opportunities for realising one’s uniqueness. In the future, these codes can be explored as qualitative data for understanding the vision of the future of modern adolescents and youth.

One of the most illustrative cases of the programme’s implementation was the project in Cologne, 28.05.-02.06.2024, carried out with the financial support of the NGO LIFE Cologne e.V. The group consisted of 10 participants aged 14-19, of whom 6 are in Germany in evacuation due to the war in Ukraine (from the western regions), but there were also participants born in Cologne in families of Ukrainian (1 participant), mixed Ukrainian-African (1 participant) and mixed Ukrainian-Russian origin (2 participants). This created some initial tension, as the context of the war was deeply felt. In total, the participants spoke nine different languages (native and learned). This initially complicated communication, but also contributed to the development of unique mechanisms of mutual understanding and support, the development of such spiritual abilities as self-distancing and self-transcendence. Cul-

tural differences initially created certain barriers, but thanks to nonviolent communication methods and joint work on the project, a trusting and pleasant atmosphere was successfully established.

During the programme, participants developed mental maps in which they outlined what they considered important for the future of society. This collective reflection allowed the group to identify a set of core values that, in their view, should underpin a desirable and sustainable social order. The key values highlighted included freedom of will, the ability to make independent and conscious choices and a meaningful life, characterised by diversity, richness, and alignment with personal interests. Love was understood as a vital emotional force experienced through relationships with loved ones, family, friends, and colleagues. Nature was recognised as a priority, with emphasis on ecological awareness and planetary protection. Freedom, both personal and political, was regarded as fundamental. Strength was valued not as a tool for aggression, but as a means of ensuring protection and stability. The group emphasised creativity as a condition for self-expression and highlighted sport as part of a healthy lifestyle. Animals were included as a focus of responsibility and care, reflecting a broader ethical stance. Kindness was named as a guiding principle in human interaction, based on ethics and mutual support. The participants also stressed the importance of free access to education and healthcare for all, as well as meaningful interaction for adults and the elderly, to ensure the social integration of all age groups. Finally, they underlined the importance of technological development, provided it served the well-being of society and individuals and adhered to a clear code of ethics, and safety in all dimensions physical, mental, and psychological as a condition for a stable and supportive environment. Discussions helped to develop empathy, self-awareness, social responsibility, altruism and directions for individual growth of participants.

Special attention was paid to discussing the need to be able to protect values from external or internal aggression and threats (against the traumatic experience of the horrors of war). It was established that one must constantly have and develop strength and the ability to be self-sufficient in order to minimise or stop the aspirations of those who intend to harm or destroy the country of happiness. One particularly important aspect is the role of strength. The war in Ukraine has demonstrated that peace and security are impossible without the ability to protect them. Strength is not the opposite of good – it is its guarantee of safety and protection. The participants emphasised in their reflections: love and kindness are important, but they must be supported by both internal and external stability and power. Some feedback from participants: “This is the first time I have openly talked about my values. I never thought about how important they are”; “I really liked the part

about showing uniqueness. I found that my skills can be useful right now”; “I was afraid that it would be difficult to communicate due to cultural differences. But this project helped me see that we are similar in what is really important”; “I liked that I was able to speak without fear and that everyone had the opportunity to be heard”. They noted that there is a risk of militarisation of the country in the event of too strict control of the inhabitants. They mentioned the example of the principle of multi-stage complex choice of leadership of the Venetian Republic, noted its success, but not full relevance to modern conditions. They emphasised that it is extremely necessary for the country's leadership to be at a high existential level of consciousness, love in the logotherapeutic sense and good strength. They also noted the need to regularly analyse the compliance of the current state with a common code, which takes into account both individual and social values and meanings, for example, as was done during the training using the “Six Hats” methodology.

V. Frankl (1969) identified three main components at the heart of philosophy: the belief that every person has a healthy core, the importance of finding meaning even in suffering, and the idea that people can choose their attitude in any circumstance. Author articulates the basic tenets of logotherapy: free will (people have the ability to choose their responses to life's challenges), the will to meaning (the driving force behind human action and the primary motivation in life), and the meaning of life (the unique responsibility of each person to their own life and to the world, which is realised through creative activity, love, relationships, and a dignified attitude toward suffering and crises) (Frankl, 2006). The concept of happiness in logotherapy is understood differently than in general perception: not as hedonistic pleasure and an end in itself, but in a eudaemonistic sense (Olianytska, 2017; Karhina, 2019) through the prism of perceived meaning and self-realisation (Costello, 2015). For effective work with broad groups of people, the assimilation of abstract logotherapeutic concepts should begin with an individual understanding of the feeling of happiness, as more familiar to different audiences despite the lack of a single accepted definition of the concept of happiness in society (Bentsak, 2023). According to T.T.W. Wan (2023) in some countries, the concept of happiness, or well-being in a synonymous sense, is used at the constitutional level (20 countries – “happiness”, 110 countries – “well-being”), mostly in the formulation of “the pursuit of happiness”.

In the vast majority of such examples, the concept of happiness is understood in a hedonistic approach, which distinguishes the current implementation of happiness in state policy from the meaningful and eudemonistic. Self-transcendence and self-distancing lead to finding one's own, high and deep, meaning of life. As well as to the voluntary choice of serving others.

logotherapeutic approach, but the idea of using happiness as a key orientation of the country is not new. In the context of existential analysis, self-transcendence is understood as a person's ability to go beyond themselves, their interests, emotions, and pain, and to direct themselves towards something greater: towards meaning, values, another person, a cause, or God. This is a fundamental principle of logotherapy, which emphasises that a person is most authentic when they surrender to something outside themselves (Batthyány, 2016). Self-distancing is understood as a person's ability to look at themselves from a distance and not identify completely with their emotions, fears, body, or suffering, which allows a person to maintain inner freedom even in the most difficult circumstances.

CONCLUSIONS

The feasibility of integrating logotherapeutic principles into youth educational projects to strengthen existential subjectivity and social integration has been revealed. Programme "Ways to the Future" for the existential development of youth according to the principles of logotherapy and implemented in Germany has demonstrated effectiveness in forming a sensory-oriented way of thinking and a responsible attitude to the lives of participants. Happiness, as a side effect of meaningful implementation, can be considered as an indicator of the success of such programmes.

The results of the testing of the programme "Ways to the Future" indicate qualitative changes in the semantic representations of the participants. An increase in the frequency of use of the concepts "meaning", "responsibility", "value", "choice" in daily discussions and surveys was recorded. Participants noted the emergence of "inner support" and "awareness of why I live", as well as increased empathy for others. According to self-assessment, the feeling of satisfaction with life increased as a result of participation in the programme. This is in line with the logotherapeutic principle: happiness

does not arise as a goal, but as an effect of meaningful activity. Exercises related to self-transcendence were particularly effective: most participants recalled a new experience of seeing themselves as part of a broader context and noted the appropriateness of subjectivity for a meaningful life and achieving happiness. Participation in the programme also influenced attitudes towards social problems: the willingness to participate in volunteering and projects increased. Thus, the logotherapeutic approach proved effective both in developing personal reflection and in shaping civic maturity.

Person is not only an object of external influences, but a subject capable of consciously responding to challenges. A programme based on logotherapy helps young people feel like creators of their own lives, not victims of circumstances. This approach fosters inner responsibility, resilience, and the ability to make meaningful choices. The programme helps to find one's own values, to establish a connection with others through authentic communication and empathy. This is important in conditions of increased social anxiety, depression, as well as a decrease in "live" social contacts among young people. Prospects for further research include scaling up the programme, analysing its long-term effect, and developing visual and digital logotherapeutic tools for young people. A need was identified for developing a diagnostic method for a meaningful life in relation to self-esteem of happiness, which is also recommended for further research.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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Розвиток екзистенційної суб'єктивності молоді: апробація логотерапевтичного тренінгу «Шляхи в майбутнє»

Олена Ронжес

Аспірант
Харківський національний університет імені В.Н. Каразіна
61022, пл. Свободи, 4, м. Харків, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3260-8996>

Наталія Хмельова

Президент
Українська асоціація логотерапії та екзистенційного аналізу
49051, вул. Журналістів, 1, м. Дніпро, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3062-4806>

Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена необхідністю розвитку у молоді здатності свідомо та відповідально обирати життєвий шлях на основі особистих цінностей і смислів, зберігати активну громадянську позицію, внутрішньо орієнтуватися на цінності, особливо в умовах зростаючої соціальної поляризації, втрати сенсу життя та глобальних викликів. Метою дослідження було проаналізувати ефективність програми «Шляхи в майбутнє: Країна щастя» як інструменту сприяння розвитку особистості та громадянської зрілості через залучення до осмисленої рефлексії та цілеспрямованої дії. Для досягнення цієї мети було реалізовано оригінальну програму молодіжного тренінгу, засновану на логотерапевтичному підході Віктора Франкла. Методологія передбачала застосування групових логотерапевтичних методів, зокрема вправ на самотрансценденцію, ціннісну рефлексію, візуалізацію майбутнього, логодіалог, метафоричну проекцію та стимулювання особистої відповідальності. Ефективність програми оцінювалася за допомогою якісних методів дослідження, таких як спостереження за учасниками, контент-аналіз письмових рефлексій і творчих робіт, а також інтерпретація динаміки змін у ціннісно-смыслових орієнтаціях учасників. За результатами дослідження обґрунтовано актуальність застосування логотерапевтичного підходу в освітніх та соціальних інтервенціях; підтверджено ефективність логотерапевтичних технік як засобу розвитку суб'єктності, відповідальності та екзистенційної зрілості; визначено ключові трансформації світоглядних орієнтацій учасників; розроблено практичну модель освітньо-соціального тренінгу, орієнтованого на смисложиттєві орієнтири, цінності та громадянську суб'єктність. Ця модель інтегрувала логотерапевтичні засади з елементами громадянської освіти. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в тому, що його результати можуть бути використані фахівцями у сфері освіти, молодіжного розвитку та соціальної роботи, які можуть застосовувати запропоновану модель для посилення громадянської активності та екзистенційної стійкості молодих людей

Ключові слова: сенс життя; самотрансценденція; громадянська зрілість; смисложиттєва освіта; щастя

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The role of the family in the reintegration process

Dmytro Tkach*

Doctor of Political Sciences, Professor
"KROK" University of Economics and Law
03113, 30-32 Tabirna Str., Kyiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6947-2036>

Abstract. The relevance of this study is driven by the increasing need for effective social adaptation strategies, where the family serves as a key support factor in the reintegration of individuals following social isolation or challenging life circumstances. The aim of the study was to identify the mechanisms of family support in the reintegration process and to develop recommendations for optimising this process. The research employed methods of systematic analysis, synthesis of scientific sources, structural-functional analysis, and modelling of social interactions within the family environment. The study examined the impact of emotional support, collaborative problem-solving, and stable family bonds on the restoration of social skills and self-esteem among reintegrated individuals. It established that family cohesion enhances psychological resilience and reduces stress levels during adaptation. The study analysed the role of extended family support and identifies variations in family assistance across different sociocultural contexts. The findings were synthesised into recommendations for improving family support effectiveness through open communication, the creation of a supportive psychological environment, and family involvement in rehabilitation programmes. The practical significance of this research lies in its applicability for social workers, psychologists, rehabilitation specialists, and family members seeking to enhance the reintegration of individuals returning to active social life

Keywords: social adaptation; emotional support; social support; psychological adaptation; family relationships

INTRODUCTION

The role of the family in the reintegration process is one of the most pressing topics in contemporary research in the fields of social psychology and rehabilitation. Amid global challenges in recent years, the issue of restoring social ties and personal adaptation after traumatic experiences has gained particular importance. Recent studies demonstrated that the family serves as a crucial factor in the successful reintegration of individuals into society.

An analysis of recent publications highlighted growing interest in studying the mechanisms of family support in the context of reintegration. The role of family dynamics in shaping individual development and

social adaptation has been widely explored. I. Matviienko (2019) examined the historical evolution of gender roles within the family, emphasising their fluidity and dependence on societal transformations. The study highlighted how changing perceptions of masculinity and femininity influence family interactions and identity formation. V. Blikhar (2024) analysed the impact of family upbringing styles on children's anxiety during wartime, revealing that high parental control, particularly from authoritarian and authoritative mothers, increases childhood fear. Conversely, emotional support and lower control levels were linked to reduced anxiety, reinforcing the protective role of family in crisis situations.

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*Corresponding author

O. Vovchenko (2021) investigated the role of family upbringing in shaping self-esteem among adolescents with developmental disabilities. The study identified parental archetypes that influence self-perception, with paternal figures associated with both positive (strength, justice) and negative (aggression, pressure) traits, while maternal figures contributed to emotional sensitivity and fluctuating self-esteem. L. Piankivska (2022) examined social support in war conditions, demonstrating that family serves as a primary source of psychological resilience. The study highlighted the role of close relationships in mitigating trauma, while broader social networks also contribute to personal recovery and reintegration. The purpose of the study was to identify key mechanisms of family support in the reintegration process and to develop practical recommendations for optimising family assistance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a combination of theoretical and empirical methods. Theoretical methods included a systematic analysis of scientific literature, synthesis, and generalisation of existing approaches to studying the family's role in the reintegration process, as well as a comparative analysis of domestic and international research on the subject. To process and interpret the collected data, methods of abstraction, formalisation, and systematisation were applied, enabling the identification of key patterns in the phenomenon under study. A dialectical method was used to uncover contradictions in the reintegration process, while structural-functional analysis helped determine the interconnections between components of the family system. Additionally, a modeling method was employed to develop a theoretical model of family support. The methodological foundation of the study was the systems approach, which allowed for the examination of the reintegration process as a holistic phenomenon interconnected with its constituent elements. The research adhered to the principles of systematicity, objectivity, and validity of scientific inquiry. The representativeness of the sample and adherence to research procedures ensured the reliability of the obtained results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The family plays a key role in the reintegration process of returnees, as it serves as the primary social environment capable of providing support, stability, and security during adaptation to new life conditions. Returning home after an extended period abroad is often accompanied by emotional difficulties, and family support can significantly ease this process. The family can provide emotional support, which is critically important for returnees experiencing stress and anxiety during adaptation. Support from loved ones can significantly ease the adaptation process, helping to overcome emotional difficulties and restore a

sense of stability in new conditions. The family can create an atmosphere where returnees feel safe. For example, shared dinners or family gatherings can become moments when individuals can openly discuss their experiences and fears. It is important for family members to accept the changes that have occurred in returnees. For example, if a veteran returns from war with new values or perspectives on life, the family should be ready to accept these changes without judgment. Open communication is a key element of support. Family members can ask about the returnee's experiences and listen without interruptions. This helps individuals feel that their feelings are valued and that they are not alone in their struggles.

Organising joint walks or sports activities can help reduce stress levels for returnees. For example, the family might go for a walk in the park or engage in sports together, improving mood and strengthening bonds. If a returnee experiences a panic attack, family members can help by staying close and calming them down. They might suggest breathing exercises or simply remind them of their presence: "I'm here with you, everything will be fine". Creating an atmosphere of trust is important for open discussions about problems. Family members can ask how the day went or whether something is troubling them. This can help the returnee open up and share their feelings. Family members may also experience stress due to their own experiences of war or the loss of a loved one. It is important to recognise that they, too, require support and understanding. Sometimes family members may not understand the returnee's experiences, leading to conflicts (Without Barriers, n.d.). For example, if one family member cannot understand the reasons for a veteran's behavior changes, this may cause tension. Adaptation requires time, and family members must be prepared for the process to be lengthy and challenging. They should show patience and support the returnee in their efforts to adapt to new conditions. Emotional support from the family is critically important for returnees in the adaptation process after returning home. Creating an atmosphere of trust and understanding helps individuals cope with stress and anxiety while restoring a sense of stability in their lives. Family members must be ready to accept changes and provide support during this difficult period of adaptation.

The family can also play a key role in the social integration of returnees, helping them establish connections with the local community and make new friends. This is especially important when adapting to new life circumstances, as returnees often face difficulties in forming social relationships. Below is a detailed analysis of this issue with examples. The role of the family in social integration. Supporting the establishment of new connections. The family can encourage returnees to participate in local events such as festivals, fairs, or cultural activities. For example, if the family organises

attendance at a local celebration, it can provide an excellent opportunity for the returnee to meet new people and integrate into the community. Engagement in social groups. The family can assist returnees in finding interest-based groups, such as sports teams, hobby clubs, or volunteer organisations. For instance, if a family member is already part of a volunteer organisation, they can invite the returnee to join, helping them expand their social circle.

Interacting with neighbors. The family can initiate introductions with neighbors and other community members. For example, by hosting a shared dinner or barbecue, they can create a friendly atmosphere and facilitate contact between the returnee and their neighbors ("Scientific Papers. Political Science"). Examples of support. Shared activities. If the family participates in sports or creative endeavors, they can invite the returnee to join these activities. For instance, participating in yoga or painting classes can not only improve mood but also help meet new people.

Language learning support. If the returnee struggles with the language, the family can help them learn the local language through joint lessons or conversations at home. This will not only enhance language skills but also boost their confidence in communicating with others. Organising meetings with compatriots. The family can help find other returnees or compatriots in the new area through social networks or local communities. For example, they can organise a gathering to discuss shared challenges and exchange adaptation experiences.

Emotional family support is critically important for successful social integration. A sense of acceptance. Returnees may feel more accepted and understood due to the support of their loved ones. Stress reduction. When the family actively involves the returnee in social activities and supports their adaptation, it helps reduce stress and anxiety levels. Formation of a new identity. Family support can foster the development of a new social identity for the returnee as part of the new community. The family plays a vital role in the social integration of returnees, as it can help them establish connections with the local community and make new friends (Zhu, 2024). Through support in building relationships and providing emotional encouragement, the family can significantly ease the adaptation process and improve the quality of life for returnees in a new environment. Support in resolving everyday issues is an essential aspect of social integration for returnees, helping them adapt to new living conditions. The family and loved ones can provide this support in various ways, significantly simplifying the adaptation process. Types of Support in Solving Household Issues. Financial support. Family can help repatriates with financial expenses for housing, utilities, or food. For example, if a repatriate cannot find a job, their family can temporarily cover housing or food expenses, allowing them to focus

on job hunting. Help with household tasks. Family members can assist with household chores, such as cleaning, cooking, or childcare. For example, a grandmother can help take care of grandchildren, allowing parents to focus on work or studies. Household organisation. Family can assist repatriates in organising their household, such as finding new housing or processing documents.

For instance, if a repatriate returns without documentation, the family can support them in obtaining new documents or accessing social benefits. Psychological support. Emotional support from the family is crucial for overcoming stress and anxiety. Talking about experiences and discussing problems can help the repatriate feel more confident in new conditions. For example, regular family dinners can provide an opportunity for open discussions about problems and experiences. Examples of support. Assistance in job searching. If a repatriate has difficulties finding employment, the family can help them look for job openings or prepare a resume. For instance, a brother or sister might offer their contacts in companies where they work. The family can organise joint purchases of groceries or necessary household items, which not only reduces financial burden but also creates opportunities for communication and strengthens bonds. The family can encourage the repatriate to participate in local events or community meetings. For example, if a family member is involved in volunteer projects, they can invite the repatriate to join, helping them meet new people. If the repatriate needs to process documents (such as a passport or registration), family members can accompany them to the relevant institutions and help fill out forms. Support in solving household issues is critically important for repatriates in the process of adapting to new living conditions. Family assistance in financial matters, household organisation, and emotional support contributes to successful integration and improves the quality of life for those returning home after a long stay abroad. This not only makes their lives easier but also strengthens family ties and creates a sense of stability during challenging times.

The Role of Family in the Psychological Rehabilitation of Repatriates Family can play a vital role in the psychological rehabilitation of repatriates, especially those returning from combat (Christian Psychology, n.d.). The psychological adaptation of servicemen and their families is a complex process that requires support from loved ones. Below are some aspects and examples of this process. The importance of family in rehabilitation. Emotional support. Family can provide essential emotional support, which is critically important for the adaptation of veterans to civilian life. Returning from war is often accompanied by stress and trauma that can affect all family members (Hrydkovets, 2018). For example, military spouses may experience similar stress due to worrying about their husbands' safety, which also requires attention from

psychologists. Role changes. When a serviceman returns home, role changes occur within the family.

Women often took on the role of the head of the family during their husbands' absence, and now they must adapt to the new dynamics. This can lead to conflicts and tension, making it important for families to receive counseling on addressing these issues. Examples of support programs. Psychological training. Programs exist that teach military families to understand psychological trauma and ways to overcome it. For example, programs like "Psychological Counseling" provide knowledge on how to support loved ones in crisis situations. This includes training in relaxation and self-regulation techniques. Support groups. Creating support groups for the families of veterans helps them share experiences and receive emotional support. Such groups can be organized based at psychological centers or volunteer organizations. Participants learn to constructively resolve conflicts and overcome depressive thoughts. Specific examples. The "Molfa Hub" program. This project offers free psychological assistance not only to servicemen but also to their families. The program includes individual consultations and group sessions to improve mental health (Molfa Hub, 2022).

Family counseling: psychologists conduct specialized consultations for the wives and children of servicemen to help them understand behavioral changes in veterans after returning from war. This includes training on how to recognize symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and respond to them. Thus, the family is an essential resource for the rehabilitation of repatriates, providing emotional support and helping them adapt to new living conditions. Psychological programs and support groups can significantly ease this process. Family members play a crucial role in the decision-making process regarding the repatriate's future, as their support and involvement can substantially influence the success of adaptation and reintegration after returning. Here are several aspects and examples that illustrate this importance. Family involvement in decision-making. Psychological support. Family can provide emotional support, which is critically important for repatriates who may face PTSD or other psychological issues. For instance, if a serviceman returns home from war, his wife can help him adapt to new conditions by understanding his experiences and needs. Joint decision-making. It is important for family members to participate in the decision-making process concerning the repatriate's future. This may include choosing a career, a place to live, or even medical care. For example, if a repatriate intends to change professions after returning, discussing this with the family can help find optimal options and avoid conflicts (Yankovska *et al.*, 2019). Examples of family involvement family consultations. Psychologists recommend conducting family consultations where all family members can express their thoughts and feelings about the repatriate's return. This creates an open

dialogue and reduces tension. For example, as part of the "Psychological Counseling" program, training sessions are held for military families, providing them with knowledge on how to support their loved ones. Joint therapeutic sessions. In some cases, joint therapeutic sessions are held for repatriates and their families.

These sessions allow participants to better understand each other and learn to resolve conflicts constructively. For instance, such sessions may address adaptation issues and role changes within the family after a military member's return. The importance of preparation for return. Family members should be prepared for changes in the repatriate's behavior. Understanding how war can affect a person's psyche enables them to better understand their loved one's reactions and provide necessary support. For example, if a husband becomes more withdrawn or aggressive after returning, his wife can use the acquired knowledge to avoid taking it personally and find ways to help. The family can create a supportive environment for the repatriate's adaptation by organizing joint activities or leisure. This might include family trips or participating in sports together, strengthening bonds and improving the emotional state of all family members. Thus, involving family members in the decision-making process is an important aspect of the rehabilitation of repatriates. Working together on problems and supporting each other can greatly ease adaptation to new living conditions (Potapchuk & Pastoshchuk, 2024). Rebuilding family ties is an important aspect of the reintegration process for repatriates, especially those returning from combat or prolonged stays abroad. This process involves not only restoring personal relationships but also adapting to new living conditions, which can be a challenging task for all family members. The importance of restoring ties. Emotional support. After returning, repatriates often face emotional challenges such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Family members can provide the necessary support to help them cope with these challenges. For example, a wife might organize family meetings to discuss experiences and seek solutions together.

Changes in family roles. During the repatriate's absence, other family members often take on additional responsibilities. After their return, it is important to discuss new roles and responsibilities to avoid conflicts. For instance, if the mother assumed the role of head of the family during the father's absence, it might be difficult for her to return to a traditional role, requiring clear communication and compromises. Examples of restoring ties. Regular family meetings can help strengthen bonds and create a trusting atmosphere. These can be simple activities like family dinners or outings in nature. For example, the "Psychological Counseling" program recommends organizing such activities to improve communication and strengthen emotional connections among family members. Joint

therapeutic sessions. In some cases, involving the whole family in therapy can be beneficial. This allows all participants to express their feelings and experiences in a safe environment. For instance, family therapy can help resolve conflicts arising from changes in relationship dynamics after the repatriate's return (Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, n.d.).

Strategies for Strengthening Bonds Joint activities. Involving all family members in joint activities can significantly improve mutual understanding. These activities may include sports games, cultural events, or even cooking together. Such initiatives foster trust and enhance communication. Open dialogue. It is essential to create an atmosphere of open dialogue where everyone can express their thoughts and feelings. This approach helps to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. For example, establishing specific communication rules during discussions can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak without fear of judgment. Rebuilding family ties is a critical stage in the reintegration process of repatriates. Engaging family members in this process through open dialogue, joint activities, and therapy can greatly ease adaptation and foster a healthy family atmosphere. The family plays a significant role in the reintegration process of repatriates in Ukraine. Emotional support, social integration, practical assistance in addressing everyday issues, and involvement in decision-making all contribute to the successful adaptation of newcomers to their new living conditions. Family support is essential for overcoming the challenges of adaptation and ensuring stability in the lives of repatriates.

CONCLUSIONS

The family is the primary source of support for individuals who have experienced social isolation or

challenging life circumstances, contributing to their emotional stability and social adaptation. However, effective reintegration requires comprehensive support, including government and community initiatives. Specifically, research by the Ukrainian Veteran Foundation under the Ministry of Veterans Affairs highlights the importance of state involvement at all stages of veterans' reintegration by providing opportunities and support. It is crucial to develop and implement programs that provide families with knowledge and resources to support their loved ones during the reintegration process. These programs may include education, psychological assistance, and access to social services. Engaging state and community organisations in the development of such programs is necessary for the successful adaptation of individuals to normal life in society. Future research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of existing support programs, studying the specific needs of different categories of individuals and their families, and developing new approaches to social rehabilitation and integration. Special attention should be given to studying the role of the state in the reintegration process and developing recommendations for improving public policy in this area.

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Роль родини у процесі реінтеграції

Дмитро Ткач

Доктор політичних наук, професор
Університет економіки та права «КРОК»
03113, вул.Табірна, 30-32, м. Київ, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6947-2036>

Анотація. Актуальність дослідження обумовлена зростаючою необхідністю ефективних стратегій соціальної адаптації, у яких родина виступає ключовим фактором підтримки під час реінтеграції осіб після соціальної ізоляції чи складних життєвих обставин. Метою роботи було визначення механізмів родинної підтримки в процесі реінтеграції та розробка рекомендацій для оптимізації цього процесу. У дослідженні використано методи системного аналізу, узагальнення наукових джерел, структурно-функціональний аналіз, а також моделювання соціальних взаємодій у сімейному середовищі. Було досліджено вплив емоційної підтримки, спільного вирішення проблем та стабільних сімейних зв'язків на процес відновлення соціальних навичок і самооцінки реінтегрованих осіб. Встановлено, що сімейна згуртованість сприяє психологічній стійкості та зменшенню рівня стресу під час адаптації. Проаналізовано особливості підтримки з боку розширеного сімейного кола, а також визначено відмінності родинної допомоги у різних соціокультурних контекстах. Узагальнено рекомендації щодо підвищення ефективності родинної підтримки шляхом формування відкритої комунікації, створення сприятливого психологічного середовища та залучення членів сім'ї до реабілітаційних програм. Практична цінність роботи полягає у можливості застосування отриманих результатів соціальними працівниками, психологами, спеціалістами з реабілітації та членами родин для покращення реінтеграції осіб, що повертаються до активного суспільного життя.

Ключові слова: соціальна адаптація; емоційна підтримка; соціальна підтримка; психологічна адаптація; сімейні відносини

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Reception of television series characters by school audiences: Methodological and organisational bases of the study

Liubov Baz*

Senior Researcher

Institute of Social and Political Psychology of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine

04070, 15 Andriivska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8522-3847>

Abstract. The relevance of the topic stems from the growing role of streaming platforms and personalised media consumption, which amplifies the influence of TV content on adolescents' views of social norms, acceptable behaviour, and coping strategies. The study aimed to investigate a model and tools for analysing students' identification with destructive television characters and assessing the impact on their perception of aggression, suicidal tendencies and social adaptability. A set of methods (identification test in the form of a semi-standardised questionnaire, NOBAGS scale, general viability scale, social adaptability scale, family environment conflict scale) and a methodology for conducting an experiment with the participation of two groups of high school students in grades 9-11 are proposed. The methodological basis of the study combines quantitative methods (correlation, regression, factor analysis) and qualitative methods (narrative analysis). The data obtained during the pilot study indicate that: the suitability of the procedure and set of methods for further research; a higher level of identification with the characters among high school students who watched the entire series, rather than just a single episode; a significantly higher level of the overall indicator of normative attitudes towards aggression and a slightly lower overall level of vitality in both experimental groups immediately after watching the episode of the series selected as stimulus material; a high level of the overall indicator of normative attitudes towards aggression and a high overall level of vitality in students who identify with negative characters, and a low level on both scales in those who identify with positive characters. The practical value lies in the potential of the proposed approaches, methods, and model to support further research on the impact of destructive media content on youth

Keywords: identification; normative aggression beliefs; suicidal tendencies; bullying tendencies; media literacy; digital transformation

INTRODUCTION

In the context of digital transformation of society, the media space is increasingly shaping young people's perceptions of social norms, behaviour patterns and values. Among the various genres of media content, television series on school topics occupy a special place, as they combine emotionally charged storylines with relevant socio-psychological issues of adolescence, such as conflicts,

bullying, self-identification, family relationships, aggression and suicidal experiences. The series "School" and "Early Swallows" are striking examples of such media products that have gained widespread popularity among students in grades 9-11. The characters in these series often demonstrate deviant behaviour, hint at bullying or openly violate the boundaries of what is acceptable.

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*Corresponding author

American psychologists and researchers of aggressive behaviour L.R. Huesmann *et al.* (2021) studied the impact of media violence on the development of aggression, especially among children and adolescents. In particular, author analysed how exposure to violence through various media, as well as in the environment (neighbourhood, family), is associated with the subsequent use of weapons by young people. The researchers found that exposure to violence in the media, combined with the influence of family and social environment, significantly increases the likelihood that adolescents will start using weapons. The study highlighted the complex nature of the formation of aggressive behaviour and the need to take into account different contexts of media influence in the prevention of violence among young people.

In scientific discourse in Ukraine, considerable attention is paid to the influence of media content on young people, exploring various aspects of media reception, media literacy and media creativity. In particular, L.A. Naidyonova (2020) developed an experimental textbook to develop critical thinking skills in high school students in relation to media products. It contains theoretical and practical assignments, discussion questions and creative exercises that contribute to the development of youth media culture through individual and group work. O.L. Voznesenska (2018) drew attention to media creativity as an important means of forming social optimism among young people in conditions of media traumatising. The author emphasised that social optimism is a component of personality stability that counteracts negative media influences. Through media creativity, young people developed the ability to self-regulate, tolerate uncertainty and actively counteract the destructive influences of the information space, which is confirmed by empirical data on the relationship between social optimism, locus of control and media activity.

T.V. Kacherska (2024) studied initiatives and practices for introducing media education into the professional training of higher education teachers in Ukraine. Author emphasised the multifunctionality of media education programmes, which not only teach how to use media resources but also shape media literacy as a higher level of personal media culture. The motivational, integrative and developmental potential of such training, which contributes to the comprehensive improvement of the quality of professional activity of teachers in the digital age, was also noted. S.M. Geiko *et al.* (2023) analysed the peculiarities of media practices among young people in the context of military confrontation, emphasising the value conflicts that arise in media discourse during hybrid warfare. The researcher pointed out that the media were used as a tool for shaping public opinion, intensifying or mitigating military aggression by appealing to young people, which manifests itself in calls to resist or refrain from resistance. This context

of media reception requires new approaches to media education and psychological and pedagogical support for the younger generation.

A separate issue is the impact of television series on young people. The American series “13 Reasons Why”, which received widespread publicity in 2017, has been the subject of intense analysis due to its depiction of suicide. According to research, after the series was released, there was a 28.9% increase in suicidal tendencies among teenagers, indicating the possibility of romanticising and modelling behaviour related to mental health under the influence of content (Huesmann *et al.*, 2021). Similar results highlighted the need for a critical approach to media products that deal with sensitive psychological issues. Despite longstanding interest in media influence on youth, contemporary research lacks comprehensive studies combining content analysis of TV series with the socio-psychological mechanisms of character perception. Questions about students’ identification with characters, the impact on beliefs about aggression and suicide, and the role of social adaptation and family environment remain underexplored. There is a need for an integrated research system with tools to assess emotional and value-based attitudes, identification, and the influence of destructive media content on adolescents’ social norms and behaviour. In Ukraine, the lack of such targeted studies highlights the urgency of addressing how TV narratives shape youth worldviews amid ongoing social and political change. The purpose of the article was to discuss methodological approaches and organisational principles for studying the reception of television series by young audiences, in particular high school students, in the context of digital transformation of society.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The experiment was preceded by the selection of stimulating material and a survey of future participants about their experience of watching this material. The stimulus material was one of the episodes of the first season of the Ukrainian series “Early Swallows” which is popular among high school students and is dedicated to school topics. This episode was selected based on the results of a content analysis of the series. To conduct the experiment, a set of methods was developed, which included the following aspects.

The Identification Test (a semi-standardised questionnaire) is designed to determine the parameters of identification of the student audience with the characters of TV series that demonstrate bullying and suicidal behaviour. Initially, J. Cohen (2001) 10-point identification scale, which demonstrates the overall level of audience identification with a particular character, was considered for this purpose. However, since the author does not provide data on the validity of this scale, it was decided to use a semi-standardised questionnaire instead, hoping to obtain detailed answers from high

school students. It was assumed that this would compensate for the lack of validity through qualitative analysis of the responses. Within the questionnaire, the degree of identification is measured by analysing the answers to an open question: "You have just watched an episode of the series. Did you see a character in this episode that you would like to be like? Why?". Also analysed the answers to a supplementary (clarifying and partly control) question: "What advice would you give to the authors of this series?".

The Normative Beliefs about Aggression Scale (NOBAGS), developed by L.R. Huesmann, & N.G. Guerra (1997) to measure normative attitudes towards aggression, aims to determine the likely impact of students' identification with certain television characters on their bullying tendencies. The scale contains 20 items that make it possible to determine the level of normative acceptance of aggression. Within the study, the scale is used in its entirety, without changes. The reliability and validity of the scale have been tested by its authors in numerous studies since 1989 (M scale = 1.92, q = 0.55, Cronbach's α = 0.90, where M is the mean value for the group and q is the standard deviation). The original version of the scale was written in English, so it was adapted and translated into Ukrainian. The Ukrainian version was tested in a large-scale representative survey conducted by the Institute of Social and Political Psychology of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine in October-November 2021 among teachers in the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions controlled by the Ukrainian government (Naidyonova *et al.*, 2022). To determine the probable impact of students' identification with certain TV characters on their suicidal tendencies, the general life energy scale proposed by L.A. Naidyonova (2020) was used. This scale is much more suitable for conducting the experiment than, for example, the M. Hamilton (1966) Depression Scale, which is used in clinical interviews. The general vitality scale contains 13 questions. The methodology is recognised as valid in the official recommendations of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine (Naidyonova, 2020). Its diagnostic capability, confirmed on a sample of Ukrainian high school students, has psychometric indicators and is based on data from a large-scale study. The methodology is used as a tool for assessing the psychological well-being of adolescents in the context of bullying. Within study, the scale is applied in its entirety, without changes.

Social adaptability scale was considered a moderating variable for determining the nature of the probable relationship between identification with media characters and the propensity for bullying and aggression among high school students. The commonly used life satisfaction scale (Diener *et al.*, 1985) was not suitable for this purpose because it contained too many questions that could burden high school students. The social adaptability scale consists of 25 items. The object

of measurement can be a person's adaptation to any type of activity (work, study), family, place of residence, economic and political systems, and life in general. The results of the measurement make it possible to predict a person's behaviour for a period of up to 1.5 years while solving the most important problems in their life. When applying the methodology to large samples (i.e., representative groups of respondents in terms of number and diversity), a stable distribution of adaptation profile types was found, indicating the reliability and repeatability of the results.

The scale of conflict potential of the family environment, created by R.H. Moos (1990). It allows determining the extent to which open expression of anger, aggression and conflictual relationships in general is characteristic of the respondent's family. It should be noted that the entire Moos scale covers 10 scales and contains an excessive number of questions, which would burden the participants of the experiment and could negatively affect the results of the study. Therefore, it was decided to choose one scale – the conflict potential of the family environment. It contains 9 items. The degree of conflict in the family environment is used in the study as a moderating variable to establish the nature of the relationship between identification with media characters, normative attitudes towards aggression and suicidal tendencies. The items on the selected scale provide an insight into the biopsychosocial models of high school students. The family environment conflict scale has acceptable construct and criterion validity: it correlates consistently with indicators of distress (psychological symptoms, problematic behaviour of children) and differentiates between "normal" and clinical families (higher conflict scores in distressed families). Since Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.70$, the reliability is considered "adequate" (Moos, 1990). As part of the study, the original English-language scale of conflicts in the family environment was translated into Ukrainian. The Ukrainian version was tested during a survey conducted in October-November 2021 at Lyceum No. 13 "USPIKH" of the Poltava City Council. The survey was conducted on a sample of 100 people representing students in grades 9-11. The data obtained using the Ukrainian version do not differ from the data of the English version at a statistically significant level. The methods are summarised in the Table 1.

Prior to the experiment, based on the results of a survey of prospective participants, they are divided into three groups of 20-25 students in grades 9-11 of general secondary education institutions: experimental group No. 1, which watched the entire first season of the series "The Early Swallows" and, during the experiment, participates in viewing an episode selected as stimulus material; experimental group No. 2, which has not seen any episodes of the first season of the series "Early Swallows" and only participates in viewing the episode designated as stimulus material during the experiment;

a control group that has not seen any episodes of the first season of the series “Early Swallows” and does not

participate in watching the episode designated as stimulus material during the experiment.

Table 1. Methods for studying the reception of television series characters by an audience of high school students

Nº	Method	What does it show
1	Identification Test	Presence/absence and modality of the schoolchild's identification with characters in television series who exhibit aggressive and suicidal behaviour
2	NOBAGS scale	The schoolchild's normative ideas about aggression
3	General Vitality Scale	The schoolchild's suicidal tendencies
4	Social adaptability scale	The schoolchild's adaptation to the social environment
5	Scale of conflict potential in the family environment	Degree of expression of anger, aggression and conflictual relationships in the student's family
6	Methods of mathematical data processing	Probable connections between the observed variables

Source: compiled by the author

The episode was showed offline using a laptop and a projector. Before the episode is shown, students received four questionnaires: the NOBAGS scale; the general vitality scale; the social adaptability scale; the scale of conflict potential in the family environment. After watching the episode, the high school students received the first two questionnaires again to record any possible impact, as well as an identification test. The identity of the student who fills out the questionnaires again is established using the same code words indicated on the answer sheets at the top. The data is processed by means of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Qualitative (narrative) analysis of the answers to open-ended questions in the questionnaire makes it possible to identify the themes, images and emotional accents that most often appear in the students' answers, as well as to determine the degree and nature of identification with the TV characters. Mathematical methods are used to establish the probable influence of identification parameters on students' normative beliefs about aggression and their suicidal tendencies, as well as the effect of moderating variables. The above procedure was tested during a pilot study conducted in December 2021 at the Financial Lyceum in the Podil district of Kyiv. Two experimental groups and one control group of 25-26 students each were formed from students in grades 9-11. The study adhered to the ethical principles of The Declaration of Helsinki (2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

If they identify with characters who exhibit deviant behaviour, such as bullying or suicidal behaviour, adolescent viewers may experience a shift in their perception of the acceptability of violence or self-destruction as a normative way of responding to stress or social conflict. High school students who are in a period of active identity search may be particularly vulnerable to such influences. Therefore, it seems reasonable to

assume that there is a link between identification with TV characters and changes in the emotional and behavioural sphere of adolescents. In this context, particular attention should be paid to television series on school topics, as they create the most realistic picture of social interactions, conflicts and role models with which adolescents can directly identify. Such series often reflect typical situations in school life: bullying, social isolation, rivalry, romantic relationships, and conflicts with adults. The visualisation of these situations through attractive, emotionally deep characters can promote intense identification, especially when the characters are portrayed as victims or avengers and their actions are not condemned or even romanticised.

In addition, school themes are often combined with the dramatisation of serious psychological problems such as suicide, depression, and self-harm. It can therefore be assumed that this content is capable not only of evoking emotional resonance, but also of changing beliefs about the acceptability or normality of destructive forms of behaviour. Thus, it is precisely TV series aimed at school-age youth that can have the greatest psychological effect due to identification, emotional involvement, and perceived similarity to the viewer's experience. It was taken into account that, in addition to the influence of media content, the level of social adaptation and conflict in the family environment may also influence adolescents' identification with certain characters and their bullying and suicidal tendencies. Based on this, it was developed a course of action that covers several interrelated stages. They involve a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, allows for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of the reception of television series characters by the student audience. Below is a conceptual model of the study (Fig. 1), as well as a description of its methodological tools, procedure and sequence of implementation.

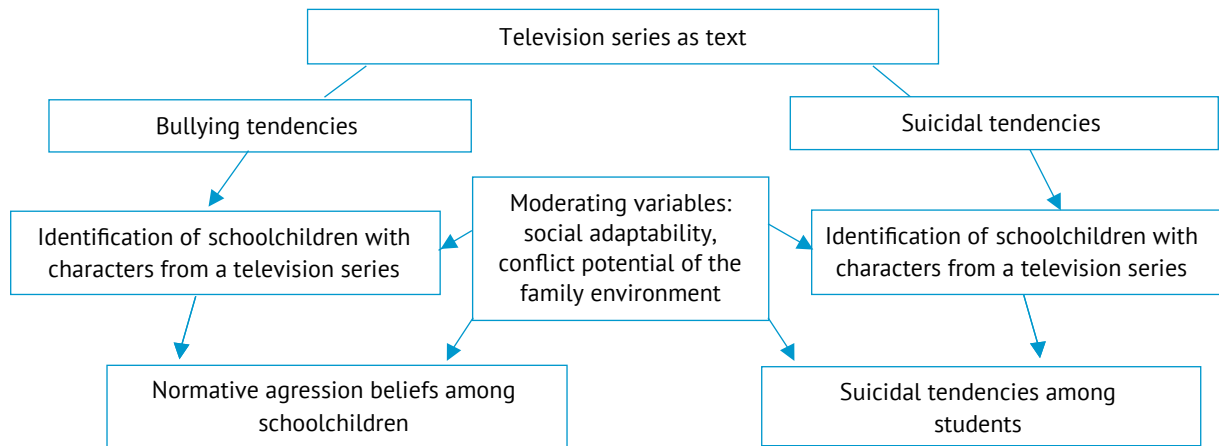


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study

Source: compiled by the author

This determines the need to study their reception using methods capable of identifying the link between viewing content, changes in normative beliefs and behavioural tendencies. The validity of the selected set of methods and the organisation of the laboratory experiment itself was confirmed. Testing of the methods showed that they were well understood by senior school students. The majority of participants also expressed a positive attitude towards the experiment procedure. The optimal amount of time for the experiment was established: an average of two 40-45-minute lessons, which is sufficient to complete four questionnaires, view the stimulus material (a complete episode of the first season of the series "Early Swallows"), well as to complete the two questionnaires again and write answers to the semi-standardised questionnaire. These lessons should be consecutive, rather than taking place on different days or even weeks, when teenagers may have already forgotten the episode they watched, especially if they have not seen the series before. A "repeated exposure effect" was observed: participants in experimental group 1, who had previously watched the first season of the series "Early Swallows", answered the semi-standardised questionnaire questions about identification with TV characters much more confidently than participants in experimental group 2. They knew the characters better, their stories, even their names, confidently compared themselves to them and wrote more detailed answers. In other words, the degree of identification was higher. This is evidenced, for example, in the answer: "I would like to be like Nick. In the series, Nick is determined and kind. But at the same time, he resents his grandfather and grandmother, especially his grandfather, for not looking after Nick's younger sister. Nick is raising money for his sister's surgery to remove scars from dog bites".

After watching the episode, there is a significant increase in aggression. In both experimental groups, this indicator was 17.7% before viewing the stimulus

material, and 49.3% after viewing. That is, this indicator increased almost threefold. In contrast, in the control group, the level of normative acceptance of aggression does not exceed 19%. Overall vitality showed a slight downward trend: in the control group, the overall indicator was 69.2%, in both experimental groups before viewing the stimulus material – 71.4%, and after viewing – 66.1%. However, no significant difference was observed between those who saw the episode for the first time and those who had watched the entire series in the past. This may be explained by the insufficient size of the sample of respondents. An equal number of participants in the experimental groups identified themselves with positive characters (who do not exhibit aggressive or depressive tendencies in the stimulus material) and with negative characters (with bullying or suicidal tendencies). Those who associate themselves with negative characters have a higher level of general approval of aggression and, at the same time, a higher level of general vitality. Identification with positive characters gives diametrically opposite results: a lower level of general approval of aggression and, at the same time, a lower level of general vitality. No significant changes were found in the retest of these indicators. Their absence may be explained by the influence of moderating variables, but verification of this assumption requires the use of broader empirical data.

Scientific research on the impact of media content on young people has focused on the following key areas: its impact on their mental health, academic performance (Kuş, 2025) and the formation of social values. Empirical data collected indicate a complex interaction between the digital environment and youth development, which requires a comprehensive approach to understanding the challenges and finding answers to them. This was indirectly consistent with the findings of the study, as the digital environment has been shown to have a significant impact on the cognitive and behavioural aspects of adolescents' development, which

is consistent an approach to assessing media content reception. W. Liu (2024) study on the formation of social values under the influence of educational content on social media confirms the key hypothesis of work: media products can change adolescents' perceptions of social norms and acceptable behaviour. This correlates with findings on the change in normative attitudes towards aggression depending on the type of character with which the respondent identifies.

A systematic review of the literature conducted by A.M. Khalaf *et al.* (2023) found a statistically significant association between social media use and symptoms of depression among young people, especially adolescent girls. This review highlighted the need for further research to develop appropriate models and hypotheses, as well as the importance of qualitative methods for understanding the impact of media resources on youth mental health. This study partially confirmed the empirical evidence that shows a decrease in the level of vital energy after watching an episode of a TV series containing destructive content. R. Plackett *et al.* (2023) analysed the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving mental health through changes in the frequency of social media use. The results showed that therapeutic approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy were more effective in improving mental well-being, especially in reducing symptoms of depression, compared to limiting or completely abstaining from media consumption. These conclusions do not contradict the present findings, though the emphasised here is placed on character identification as a key mediating factor in adolescents' emotional responses.

A meta-analysis conducted by L. Fassi *et al.* (2025) found that social media use is associated with internal symptoms such as anxiety and depression in adolescents in both clinical and general samples. This correlated with the observed trends in vitality scores and supports the view that media exposure contributes to psychological vulnerability in adolescents. A. Üstündağ & Ö. Doğan (2021) conducted a content analysis and found a significant impact of TV series popular among Turkish teenagers on the social and emotional development of young people, as well as on the formation of perceptions of violence. This work emphasised that media content not only reflects social norms but also actively shapes the behavioural attitudes and emotional responses of adolescents. M. Sliusarevsky & I. Revera (2019) is particularly noteworthy, as it sheds light on the likely transformation of mass culture, particularly television series, as a result of political repression as a form of mass violence, and the hypothetical impact of these television series on changes in the level of everyday crime.

According to J. Cohen *et al.* (2017), the key role in understanding how media influences the emotional state, behaviour and worldview of young audiences is played by the viewer's identification with characters,

particularly those in television series that they actively consume. This psychological mechanism allows young people to temporarily identify with fictional characters, adopt their thoughts, emotions and behaviour patterns, which, as research has shown, has the potential to influence the formation of their emotional sensitivity, normative beliefs and social attitudes. These findings are in full agreement with the present study, validating identification with characters as a central mechanism of media influence on youth. The results demonstrated a clear association between adolescents' identification with destructive television characters and changes in their normative attitudes towards aggression and vitality levels. These findings confirm the psychological impact of media content on young audiences and highlight the importance of considering character perception in the analysis of media influence.

CONCLUSIONS

The study showed that the methodological tools and experimental procedure developed can be used for further research to identify the psychological effects of media content on high school students. The applied set of methods proved to be understandable for adolescent participants and was perceived positively by the majority of them. The research design, which included both pre- and post-viewing assessments and a semi-standardised identification questionnaire, made it possible to trace the short-term psychological dynamics associated with exposure to destructive media content. The results obtained in the pilot study cannot, of course, be considered sufficiently reliable, as the study covered a relatively small number of respondents and was conducted in one educational institution. However, these results still give some idea of the trends that undoubtedly need to be confirmed through broader empirical verification.

High school students who watched the entire series, rather than just one episode, demonstrated a higher level of identification with TV characters, which may be explained by their deeper familiarity with the characters' backgrounds and story arcs. These students provided more detailed, confident responses when describing characters and comparing themselves to them, indicating a stronger emotional and cognitive engagement. In the experimental groups, after watching the stimulus episode, a marked increase in the normative acceptance of aggression was recorded – from 17.7% to 49.3% – suggesting a temporary normalisation of violent behaviour as a possible reaction to stress or injustice portrayed in the media. At the same time, a slight decrease in the overall level of vitality was observed (from 71.4% to 66.1%), which may reflect emotional tension or psychological fatigue caused by the content. Thus, the data obtained have brought at least partially closer to solving the research tasks and confirmed the feasibility and validity of the proposed methodological approach.

The integration of quantitative indicators (aggression norms, vitality, adaptability, family conflict) with qualitative data (narrative identification responses) provided a comprehensive perspective on how adolescents process and internalise media representations. The results highlighted the relevance of analysing identification not only as a media effect but as a psychological mechanism that influences belief systems and behavioural tendencies. Prospects for further research are to expand the empirical base, which involves conducting a laboratory experiment in different

regions of Ukraine and types of settlements according to a certain procedure.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Рецепція учнівською аудиторією персонажів телевізійних серіалів: методично-організаційні засади дослідження

Любов Базь

Старший науковий співробітник

Інститут соціальної та політичної психології Національної академії педагогічних наук України

04070, вул. Андріївська, 15, м. Київ, Україна

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8522-3847>

Анотація. Актуальність теми впливає з росту ролі стримінгових платформ та персоналізованого споживання медіа, що посилює вплив телевізійного контенту на погляди підлітків щодо соціальних норм, прийнятної поведінки та стратегій подолання труднощів. Дослідження мало на меті вивчити модель та інструменти для аналізу ідентифікації студентів з деструктивними телевізійними персонажами та оцінки впливу на їхнє сприйняття агресії, суїцидальних тенденцій та соціальної адаптованості. Запропоновано комплекс методів (тест на ідентифікацію у вигляді напівстандартизованого опитувальника, шкала NOBAGS, шкала загальної життєздатності, шкала соціальної адаптивності, шкала конфліктності сімейного середовища) та методика проведення експерименту за участю двох груп старшокласників 9-11 класів. Методологічна основа дослідження поєднує кількісні методи (кореляція, регресія, факторний аналіз) та якісні методи (нарративний аналіз). Дані, отримані під час пілотного дослідження, свідчать про такі результати: придатність процедури та набору методів для подальших досліджень; вищий рівень ідентифікації з персонажами серед учнів старших класів, які переглянули весь серіал, а не лише один епізод; значно вищий рівень загального показника нормативного ставлення до агресії та дещо нижчий загальний рівень життєвої енергії в обох експериментальних групах одразу після перегляду епізоду серіалу, обраного як стимулюючий матеріал; високий рівень загального показника нормативного ставлення до агресії та високий загальний рівень життєвої енергії у учнів, які ідентифікують себе з негативними персонажами, та низький рівень за обома шкалами у тих, хто ідентифікує себе з позитивними персонажами. Практична цінність полягає в потенціалі запропонованих підходів, методів та моделі для підтримки подальших досліджень впливу деструктивного медіа-контенту на молодь

Ключові слова: ідентифікація; нормативні уявлення про агресію; суїцидальні нахили; схильність до булінгу; медіаграмотність; цифрова трансформація

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Національної академії педагогічних наук України
04070, вул. Андріївська, 15, м. Київ, Україна
Тел.: +38(044) 425-24-08
E-mail: info@sppstudios.com.ua
<https://sppstudios.com.ua/uk>

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