

PECULIARITIES OF THE PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL STATE OF UKRAINIANS DURING WAR

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПСИХОЕМОЦІЙНОГО СТАНУ УКРАЇНЦІВ В УМОВАХ ВІЙНИ

The article examines the characteristics of the psycho-emotional state of different groups of the population of Ukraine during the war: residents of front-line territories, internally displaced persons (IDPs), Ukrainian refugees who went abroad. It has been determined that in conditions of war, a person's psycho-emotional state is characterized predominantly by negative emotions (high levels of anxiety, depression, despair, negative perception of the environment, etc.) and has a destructive effect on the mental activity of an individual located in a zone of armed conflict, the consequence of which is growth risk of post-traumatic, depressive and behavioural disorders. A psychodiagnosic study of the characteristics of the psycho-emotional state of the Ukrainian population revealed the following: 1) the population has a predominant level of psychological well-being below average, and among the low indicators, the most important components are personal growth, environmental management and goals in life; 2) the emotional state of the population of Ukraine is associated, on the one hand, with the experience of anxiety, frustration and tension and the predominance of positive affect, on the other, which can act as a resource for an optimistic focus on the future; 3) the main emotions that prevail in the mood of Ukrainian citizens are tension, hope, fatigue, anger, pride, fear, which is associated with the level of satisfaction of security needs and belonging to a similar social community.

Key words: war, psycho-emotional state, emotions, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychological well-being.

У статті досліджено особливості психоемоційного стану різних груп населення України в умовах війни, а саме: мешканців прифронтових територій, внутрішньо переміщених осіб (ВПО), українських біженців, які виїхали за кордон. Визначено, що в умовах війни психоемоційний стан людини характеризується переважно негативними емоціями (високий рівень тривожності, депресія, відчай, негативне сприйняття оточення тощо) і має деструктивний вплив на психічну діяльність особистості, яка знаходиться в зоні збройного конфлікту, наслідком якого є зростання ризику виникнення посттравматичних, депресивних і поведінкових розладів.

Психодіагностичне дослідження особливостей психоемоційного стану населення України дозволило виявити таке: 1) у населення переважає рівень психологічного благополуччя нижче середнього, а серед низьких показників більше всього мають такі складники, як особистісне зростання, управління середовищем і цілі в житті; 2) емоційний стан населення України пов'язаний, з одного боку, із переживанням тривожності, фрустрації і напруженості, з іншого боку, з переживанням позитивного афекту, що може виступати як ресурс оптимістичної спрямованості у майбутнє; 3) основними емоціями, які переважають в настроях громадян України, є напруженість, надія, втома, гнів, гордість, страх, що пов'язано із рівнем задоволеності потреб у безпеці і приналежності до схожої соціальної спільноти.
Ключові слова: війна, психоемоційний стан, емоції, внутрішньо переміщені особи (ВПО), біженці, посттравматичний стресовий розлад (ПТСР), психологічне благополуччя.

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Statement of the problem in general terms.

War as a stress factor is fraught with catastrophic consequences for any society and is reflected in the spread of destructive psycho-emotional states both at the individual and at the collective (at the level of the entire society) levels.

The negative experience of war entails the spread among the population of a high level of anxiety and social tension, depressive and behavioural disorders, post-traumatic stress syndrome, increased intensity of psychological and social fears, disrupts the psychological well-being of children who have experienced aggression, violence, loss of loved ones [13], as a consequence, quite have a long-term impact on a generation exposed to the negative experience of armed conflict – being under occupation, torture and violence, being in captivity, losing loved ones, forced displacement and loss of home [6].

Full-scale Russian armed aggression on February 24, 2022 disrupts the economic and social development of the state and has a catastrophic negative impact on the life and health of citizens. The consequences of war cause lasting physical

and psychological damage to adults and children. The number of segments of the population affected by the fighting has increased significantly, among which the most affected are: 1) internally displaced persons (IDPs), who suffered both material and psychological losses, which affected their level of psychosocial well-being; 2) children with traumatic experiences (being in occupied territories, war zones, loss of loved ones and parents, violence from the occupiers), for whom the risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is quite high; 3) combatants, for whom the incidence of PTSD is even higher [7, p. 5]; 4) Ukrainian refugees abroad (of which there are already more than 5 million people), who are faced with the acute problem of socio-psychological adaptation and social integration in the new socio-cultural environment. Therefore, of particular relevance for Ukraine is the creation of an effective system for overcoming the negative psychosocial consequences of military aggression, which involves taking into account and analysing the social and psychological problems faced by Ukrainian society, the destructive influence of

psychological changes in the emotional state of different categories of the population of Ukraine.

Analysis of the latest research and publications. Among domestic researchers studying the problem of the influence of negative psychosocial and psycho-emotional consequences of a full-scale war in Ukraine, the following should be noted: A. Golotenko, A. Dovgan, A. Evdokimova, Y. Korokhod, V. Lefterov, I. Nechitailo, M. Slyusarevsky, V. Tyurina, L. Solokhina, A. Umanets, S. Shostakovskaya, A. Chaban, A. Khaustova, V. Yushchenko and others.

Statement of the objectives of the article.

The purpose of the study is to identify the characteristics of the psycho-emotional state of different groups of the population of Ukraine: residents of front-line territories, internally displaced persons (IDPs), Ukrainian refugees who have travelled abroad.

Presentation of the main research material. In modern psychological science there is no single definition of the concept of “psycho-emotional state,” but many researchers identify key features: the emotional response of the individual according to the dominant type; arises as a result of the interaction of the individual with the environment (in conditions of war, the environment is considered as a threat at the biological, psychological and social levels); may not be realized by a person due to the catastrophic stress load on the psyche; depends on the development of emotional intelligence [8; 10]. Consequently, the basic category of the concept of “psycho-emotional state” is “emotion” or “emotional state”.

As V. Gavrilkevich and A. Firstova note, “the emotional state of a person is an internal emotional situation, conditioned by certain circumstances and conditions; a set of emotional signs, traits that characterize a person at a given moment in accordance with certain requirements for quality, degree of readiness, etc.; emotional well-being or mood of an individual. This definition reflects the formal characteristics of an emotional state, namely that each emotional state is manifested in two aspects, such as: external (external manifestations that both the person and other people can evaluate in accordance with certain requirements) and internal (internal manifestations that which only the personality itself perceives with its consciousness through its feelings and describes its emotional state as its mood)” [1, p. 43].

The full-scale war in Ukraine that began on February 24, 2022 had a significant impact on the psycho-emotional state of Ukrainian society. As Ukrainian scientists note, with the duration of hostilities, the psycho-emotional state of the population goes into a depressive phase with the dominance of such states as a constant feeling of anxiety, apathy, pessimism, hopelessness [9, p.89]; increased panic. The negative impact of the armed conflict acutely affected the psycho-emo-

tional state of the population of Ukraine, which is reflected as a loss of autonomy, subjectivity, violation of identity, a feeling of insecurity, the state of the victim, PTSD [4, p. 291].

The main and widespread consequence of war is a decrease in the level of psychological well-being of the population. In conditions of emergency situations and military conflict, the homeostatic state of personality functioning is disrupted and the level of psychological well-being decreases and the positive subjective attitude towards oneself and others changes, and at the objective level, living and activity conditions worsen. In modern psychology, a multidimensional model of psychological well-being was proposed by K. Rieff, in which psychological well-being concerns both the organization and content of a person’s inner world, as well as his behaviours and activities that determine this feeling and illustrate his experiences [12, p. 719–727]. Modern concepts of psychological well-being are aimed at integrating two approaches that combine in the concept of psychological well-being the emotional aspect (satisfaction with life, positive perception of reality) and the activity-semantic aspect (meaningfulness of life, self-actualization, focus on activity-based transformations of oneself and the world around us). The situation of the unfolding of an armed conflict is characterized by high stress and poses a serious threat to the psychological well-being of the population, especially those forced to leave their usual places of residence to escape the military threat.

In war conditions, a person’s psycho-emotional state is characterized predominantly by negative emotions (high levels of anxiety, depression, despair, negative perception of the environment, etc.) and has a destructive effect on the mental activity of an individual located in a zone of armed conflict, which results in an increased risk of post-traumatic, depressive and behavioural disorders. An individual’s response to emergency and stressful situations associated with combat operations may entail an increase in the level of anxiety, manifestation of aggression, frustration as emotional and volitional tension due to blocking of the basic needs of the individual, rigidity as non-recognition of war as a reality and changes in one’s own situation.

To study the psycho-emotional state of Ukrainians during the war, a psychodiagnostics examination was conducted through the social network Facebook (September 2023 – January 2024). The sample of respondents was 62 people. Of these, 41 are women and 21 are men. The sample of respondents is represented by the following categories: 1) 25 respondents are residents of the front-line city of Zaporizhzhia (the average age of respondents is 32.4 years, of which 62% are women and 38% are men); 2) 21 respondents are internally displaced persons (the average

age of respondents is 42.1 years, of which 69% are women and 31% are men); 3) 16 forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine who received temporary protection status in Germany and Poland (the average age of respondents is 39.8 years, of which 74% are women and 26% are men). The sample is random, formed according to the criterion of accessibility and the established level of confidence.

The main parameters and psychodiagnostics methods of the study were:

1) level of psychological well-being – Methodology “Psychological Well-Being Scale” (K. Rieff). A version of the questionnaire the scale of psychological well-being, adapted by M. Lepeshinsky and translated into Ukrainian by S. Karskanova [3]. There are several options for the questionnaire. In this study, we use the most common and recognized version with 84 questions reflecting different components of psychological well-being. This technique consists of six scales that make up the components of psychological well-being according to K. Rieff: self-acceptance, autonomy, goals in life, personal growth, positive relationships with others (positive relationships), environmental management;

2) emotional state of the civilian population: a) Scale of positive and negative affect [13]. This technique was developed based on the PANAS technique and is aimed at diagnosing positive and negative emotional states. The theoretical basis of the PANAS scale is the hierarchical model of emotions by D. Watson and A. Tellegen, the upper level of which includes two factors that correspond to two signs of the valence of emotions (negative and positive), and the lower level includes factors corresponding to emotions of different content.

(hostility, joy, fear, despondency, etc.). According to D. Watson, positive and negative effects are a subjective reflection of the actions of two separate, albeit interrelated systems of behaviour control; b) results of the questionnaire; c) method “Self-assessment of mental states” by G. Aizenko.

3) Assessing the level of psychological well-being (Methodology “Psychological Well-Being Scale” (K. Rieff). In general, for the entire group of respondents, the level of psychological well-being is below average – 335 points. Among the low indicators, the components that have the most are personal growth, environmental management and goals in life Figure 1 shows the distribution of groups of respondents according to the scales of the methodology (in %).

The results we obtained do not reflect an assessment of the level of psychological well-being at the national level, but their trend coincides with the results of a study by the Institute of Social and Political Psychology of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, carried out using an online survey on the Kantar Ukraine online panel, covering people aged 18–55. years in Ukrainian cities with a population of more than 50 thousand [2]. So, the psychological consequences of war include a long-term negative impact on the psycho-emotional well-being and purposeful activity of the individual against the background of disorders of social adaptation and social behaviour.

In Figure 2 presents a comparative analysis of psychological well-being indicators (based on low levels of severity) among different categories of respondents.

The results of the study indicate that among internally displaced persons (IDPs) low indicators

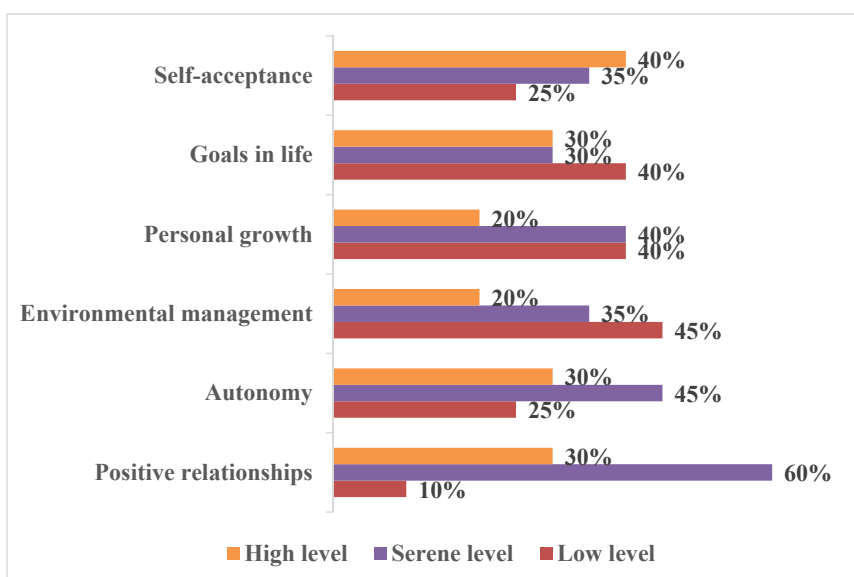


Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents` groups according to the scales of the psychological well-being method by K. Ryff (in%)

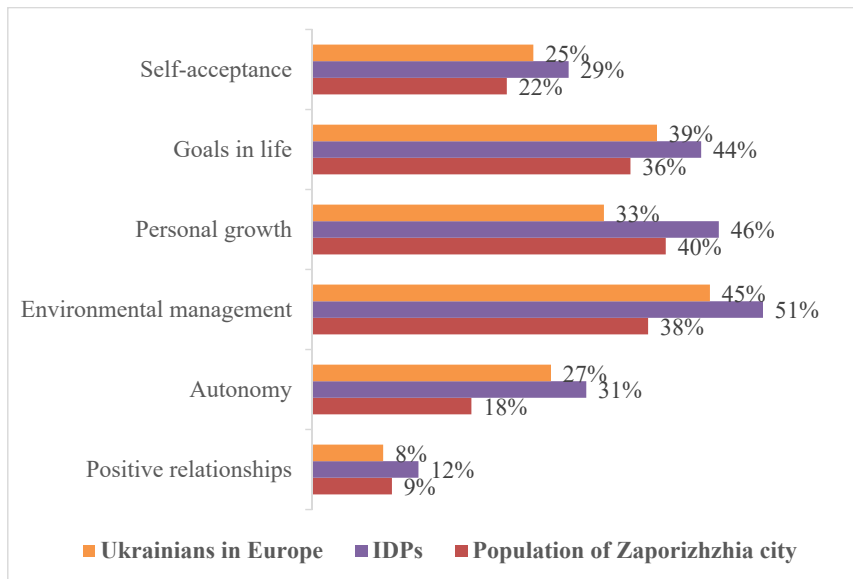


Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents' categories according to the scales of K. Ryff's psychological well-being method by low level of severity (in%)

of the components of psychological well-being dominate, and most of all this concerns the processes of social and psychological adaptation in newsocial conditions (environmental management, personal growth, goals in life). Among forced migrants in Europe, there are also problems with reintegration into a new sociocultural environment, which is reflected in the subjective assessment of life satisfaction. Residents of Zaporizhzhia are more optimistic, despite the relative proximity to the zone of active hostilities.

The results on the Positive and Negative Affect Scale indicate the predominance of positive emotional states of Ukrainians (Fig. 3).

To determine the characteristics of the psycho-emotional state of the population under martial law, Aizenko's "Self-Assessment of Mental States" technique was used. The Figure 4 shows the levels of expression of indicators (in % of respondents) for all respondents.

According to the results of the study, the highest indicator of psycho-emotional state is anxiety, manifested in a feeling of anxiety, danger and uncertainty in the future. Almost half of the respondents showed an average level of anxiety, which was predominantly situational in nature. The frustration indicator is also more pronounced, which indicates the impossibility or complexity

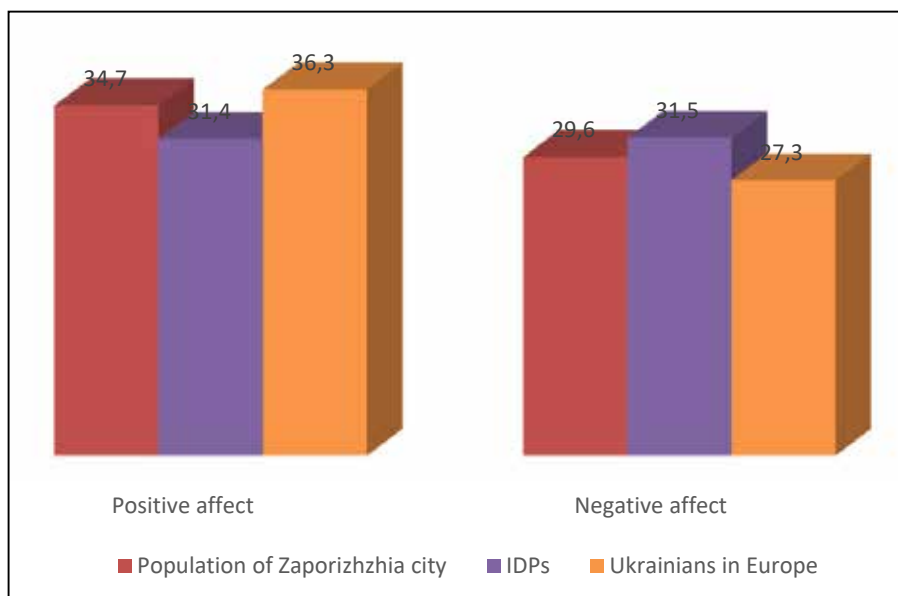


Fig. 3. Average indicators of positive and negative emotional states of different categories of Ukrainians surveyed

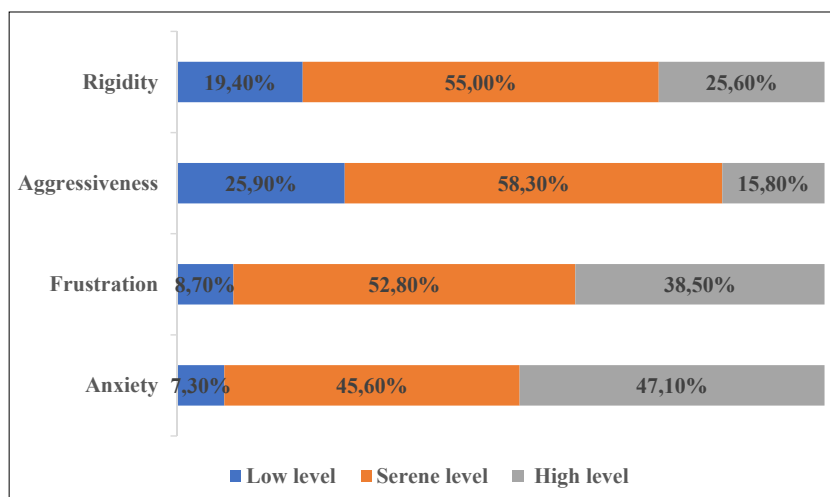


Fig. 4. Indicators of the psycho-emotional state of the civilian population according to the results of the “Self-assessment of mental states” method by G. Aizenko (% of respondents)

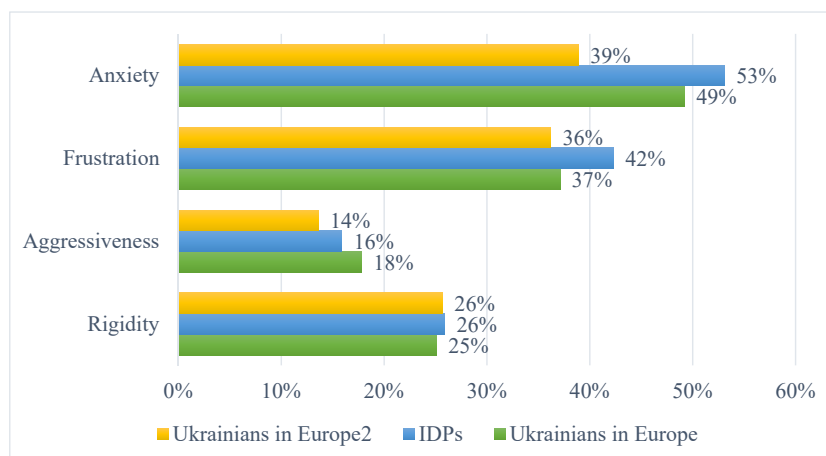


Figure 5. Indicators of the psycho-emotional state of citizens of Ukraine according to the results of the “Self-assessment of mental states” method by G. Aizenko, depending on the groups of respondents

of satisfying needs. Aggression as an indicator of psycho-emotional state has average values, although 12–15% of respondents show a high level of aggression in their environment. Rigidity as an emotional rejection of war and changes in one’s own situation is demonstrated by 25.6% of respondents, which indicates the inability to experience stress and the inability to independently find internal resources (individual resilience) to reassess one’s attitude towards oneself, other people and the world as a whole.

The Figure 5 presents the results of a survey of different groups of Ukrainian citizens on high indicators of the methodology scales. Thus, among the population of Zaporozhzhia, a high rate of aggressiveness was found, among IDPs – anxiety and frustration, among refugees in European countries – rigidity.

As can be seen from the results of the study, the main emotions that prevail in the mood of Ukrainian citizens are tension, hope and fatigue, coinciding

with the results of the study “Mental health and the attitude of Ukrainians to psychological help during the war”, conducted in September 2022 by Gradus Research Company. It should be noted that there is a high level of anger and at the same time pride, which is associated with fatigue and stress from the duration of active hostilities (almost 2 years).

It should be noted that there are some differences in the experience of emotions among different groups of respondents. Thus, for the population of Zaporizhzhia and IDPs, the dominant emotions of experiencing war are tension, fatigue, irritation, fear and caution, and for people who went abroad – hope, pride, loneliness. In our opinion, this distribution of emotions is associated with the level of satisfaction of the needs for security and belonging to a similar social community.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Based on the results of a psychodiagnostics study of the characteristics of

the psycho-emotional state of the population of Ukraine, the following conclusions were made:

– firstly, in the entire group of respondents, the prevailing level of psychological well-being is below average, and among the low indicators, such components as personal growth, environmental management and goals in life are the most important, with the lowest indicators among IDPs and Ukrainian refugees abroad. associated with the processes of socio-psychological adaptation in new socio-cultural conditions;

– secondly, the emotional state of the population of Ukraine is associated, on the one hand, with the experience of anxiety, frustration and tension and the predominance of positive affect, on the other, which can act as a resource for an optimistic focus on the future;

– thirdly, the main emotions that prevail in the mood of Ukrainian citizens are tension, hope, fatigue, anger, pride, fear (for Ukrainian refugees abroad, a more optimistic and positive emotional orientation should be noted), which is associated with the level of satisfaction of needs in security and belonging to a similar social community.

A promising direction for further research could be constant monitoring of the psycho-emotional state of the population of Ukraine, depending on the socio-economic and socio-political situation in the country and in the combat zone.

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