

DOI: 10.31548/hspedagog14(4).2023.172-179

UDC 159.944.4-053.6:355.01

SPECIFICITIES OF STRESS RESILIENCE IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS LIVING UNDER THE MARTIAL LAW

SHEVTSOVA O. M., PhD of Psychological Sciences,

Associate Professor Department of Psychology

*National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine*E-mail: o.shevtsova@nubip.edu.ua<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0604-1789>

AREFIEVA M. G., Master's Degree Hopeful, Specialty 053 Psychology

*National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine*E-mail: marefeva@ukr.net

Abstract. *The article is dedicated to analysis of scientific research on specific characteristics of psychological resilience university students develop when living under the military law. Resilience to stress is viewed as comprehensive personal attribute, which is composed of the following individual psychological components, i.e., low personal and situational anxiety, low level of neurological and psychological stress, adequate self-esteem, high level of ability to work, emotional stability. These components provide for effective achievement of goals, and are realized in personal cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral areas. Based on theoretical research, it is concluded that higher resilience in individuals is facilitated by the following personal characteristics, such as flexibility, abstract thinking, cognitive style of field independence, developed perceptual, mnemonic and intellectual abilities, attentiveness and observation, ability for self-concentration, emotional stability, optimism, adaptability, and subjective self-control. The article is a summary of empirical study results focused on specific characteristics of resilience Ukrainian university students demonstrate under the stressful conditions of military law. Compensating mechanisms of psychological defense of students are identified as projection and compensation. Key strategies of overcoming behavior in individuals with high resilience levels are identified as approval of responsibility, self-control, and planning for problem solving. Key strategies of overcoming behavior in individuals with low resilience levels are identified as confrontation, avoidance and seeking social support.*

Key words: *resilience, stress, stress situation, overcoming behavior, coping strategy, students, young people, military law.*

Introduction. The topic of psychological aspects of stress origination, development and dynamics is being researched by domestic and foreign researchers through decades. Relevance of this research is increasingly high under the current environment which is characterized by rapidly changing conditions some of which may become strong stress generators, e.g., emerging stress situations in any sphere of human life, increased necessity to adequately react to stress situations, higher demand for resilience. In today's Ukraine, the phenomenon of resilience demonstrated by young people during the

war is not researched enough. Specifically, more research is required on emerging disharmonic and deforming factors which have negative effect on quality of life of Ukrainian students and their professional development. Thus, influence of war on psychological specifics of stress resilience of university students requires additional scientific research and clarification.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. Researchers pay special attention to identifying determinants of resilience to psychological stress, as well as their manifestations in educational and

© Shevtsova O. M., Arefieva M. G.

HUMANITARIAN STUDIOS: PEDAGOGICS, PSYCHOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY Vol 14(4) 2023

professional activities of students. These topics are covered in works of domestic and foreign authors, i.e., I. Vashchenko, G. Meshko, N. Onishchenko, O. Timchenko, R. Lazarus, S. Folkman, L. Pearlin, S. Kobasa etc. [1-8]. The researchers conclude that stress resilience of students is dependent on a group of factors, e.g. psychological and pedagogical culture of teachers, professors and parents; individual level of empathy; availability of mutual understanding in subject-to subject interactions; availability of knowledge, techniques and skills required to cope with a stressful situation.

Stress resilience in learning activities is predominantly viewed as comprehensive personal attribute including such individual components as low personal and situational anxiety, low level of neurological and psychological stress, adequate self-esteem, high level of ability to work, emotional stability. These components provide for effective achievement of learning goals and are realized in cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral spheres of individuals. [1; 4; 6; 7]. Besides, researchers highlight a group of psychological factors which inhibit development of stress resilience mechanisms. These factors typically include experience of distress, expectation of a failure, health issues, low self-esteem, lack of time, etc. [4; 6].

In general, researchers agree that individual stress resilience plays a role in preventing the development of negative stress consequences [1; 3; 5]. Individual stress resilience is a 'buffer function' which neutralizes stressors that exist objectively; this allows retain good physical and mental health even in prolonged difficult life situations. In current situation, especially during the war and limitary law enforced, the intensity of stress is permanently increasing; therefore, it is especially important to protect and shape high individual level of stress resilience of each person.

Aim. The article aims to demon-

strate the results of theoretical and empirical research on psychological specificities of stress resilience developed by students living under the martial law.

Materials and methods. Methods utilized: general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, generalization, comparison), empirical (questionnaires and tests based on the Questionnaire by Plutchik - Kellerman – Conte), Personal Questionnaire by G. Levik, Test WCO by R. Lazarus adapted by T. Kryukova and mathematical statistics. Participants of the empirical part of the research are undergraduate students at National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine and Ukrainian State University named after Myhaylo Dragomanov. Student participants age from 18 to 22 years and are majoring in humanitarian field. In total, research sample consists of 48 individuals.

Results. Analysis of scientific research for coverage of individual stress coping resources allows us to conclude that personal awareness of available multiple resources under stressful conditions along with skills to employ such resources under stressful conditions facilitate the development of sense of control over the stressful situation. As a result, individual can solve problems arising from difficult or crisis circumstances. [1; 2; 5]. Two types of personal stress coping resources most well studied in modern psychology are psychological defense and stress-coping behavior; both resources are referred to as 'coping strategies' and are focused on processing individual negative experience and emotions [4; 5; 8].

Theoretical analysis allows us to define a set of individual psychological characteristics connected to stress resilience, including cognitive-intellectual and emotional-personal sub-sets.

Personal *cognitive* characteristics facilitating the development of high level of stress resilience are the following [1; 2; 5; 6]:

- *Flexibility of thinking* as ability to quickly adjust perception, imagination, and thoughts to a changing situation, as well as timely and adequate decision making in a changing situation. Flexibility of thinking is linked to the ability to change interpretation of situation's characteristics and perform qualitative intellectual transformation of the stressful situation.

- *Abstract thinking* as ability to generate innovative ideas based on previous experience. The ground foundation of abstract thinking are psychological processes of differentiation and integration; highest level of abstract thinking presupposes high levels of integration and differentiation. Individuals owning these characteristics tend to be independent from immediate characteristics of the situation, are oriented on inner experiences, flexible, creative, etc.

- *Field independence* as indicator of personal unique way of processing information. Field independence/dependence is a cognitive style based on dominant tendency of a individuals to solve problems referring to other people or to themselves.

- Developed *perceptive abilities*, i.e., perceptive attention, ability to observe, etc.

- Developed *mnemonic abilities* i.e., operational memory, ability to memorize productively through intermediaries.

- Developed intellectual abilities, i.e., operational thinking, ability to concentrate, ability to differentiate the important from secondary, ability to identify connections between things, etc.

Emotional - personal characteristics facilitating the development of high level of stress resilience are the following [1; 2; 5; 7; 8]:

- *Emotional resilience* as ability to overcome the state of excessive emotional agitation when performing complex activities

- *Optimism* as ability to feel prevailing positive emotions and be in a

good mood which helps individual to self-organize emotionally under stressful conditions because forecasting future situations will be happening in a positive light.

- *Medium level of personal anxiety* as optimal level of personal readiness to apply purposeful efforts to adapt to stressful situations.

- *Medium level of aggression* as adequate level of response to conditions threatening to person's vital interests, which is sufficient for effective support of personal physical and mental health under stressful conditions.

- *Internal locus of control* as internal orientation and ability to accept life events as results of personal controllable actions. Internally oriented individuals have more distinct tendency to create specific action plans in different life situations which allows them to influence meaningful life situations and overcome stressful situations more successfully.

- *Availability of set of leading motivational factors*, such as *personal well-being* (steady desire to maintain physical and psychological comfort); *desire to interact with people* (pleasure from social contacts, receiving information from others); *achievement of goals* as means of self-expression and self-assertions.

- *Optimal behavioral activity* as effective assessment of behavioral options under the stressful conditions.

The results of empirical research identified the following specifics of resilience employed by university students: mechanisms of psychological defense under stressful conditions (based on Questionnaire by Plutchik – Kellerman – Conte); individual personal characteristics (based on personal questionnaire by G. Levik); and coping strategies (based on test WCQ by R. Lazarus adapted by T. Kryukova).

Representation of stress reduction mechanisms among respondents is the following:

- Dominant mechanism of *projection* (43 % of respondents), which indicates that students are willing to

project causes of their own problems and unsatisfaction on other people. Projection provides temporarily relieve from negative emotions but at the same time makes the person accessively suspicious or accessively careless.

- Mechanism of *compensation* (18 % of respondents). Compensation happens when students attempt to replace personal characteristic necessary to achieve success in the desired area, and which they do not possess, for personal characteristics they already have and which can bring success in any other area. This mechanism creates compensation for the feeling of being non-successful in the desired area.

- Mechanism of *rationalization* (16 % of respondents) indicates that students are trying to rationalize their own action of lack of such by means of logical reasoning.

- Mechanism of *rejection* (12 % of respondents) which means that students reject their own mistakes and difficulties.

- Mechanism of *regression* (6 % of respondents) is characterized by infantile behavior, retreat to a more comfortable state which is irrelevant to real life situation.

- Mechanism of *suppression* (3 % of respondents) is characterized by suppression of problems and transferring those to subconsciousness.

- Mechanism of *hypercompensation* (1,5 % of respondents). Students with this dominant mechanism aim to develop personal characteristics which they lack for successful achievement of their objectives.

- Mechanism of *replacement* is least represented in the research, only 0.5% of respondents have this type as dominant.

So, each student in critical or stress generating situations employs certain set of psychological defense mechanisms. Employing these mechanisms, students

achieve reconciliation with reality by constant twisting of perceptual and judgemental information.

Empirical measurements of individual psychological characteristics impacting stress resilience of students resulted in the following conclusions:

- In factor A (closed – open to communication) very low level of openness prevails. This is characterized by closedness, isolation in a group, low communicational activity, attempts to do everything by themselves.

- In factor H (reserved – active in social contacts): prevailing trend is reserved in social contacts, experiencing difficulties with contacts, careful with choosing partners, shy, not trusting anyone, low self assurance.

- In factor Q2 (conformity – nonconformity): most respondents are conforming, dependant, tend to agree with the group, easy to influence, easy to compromise in questionable situations.

- In factor L (trust – suspiciousness): trust other people, easy adapt to a group, understand other people, caring about other people forgetting about themselves.

- In factor N (simplicity – sophistication of behavior): low level prevails which indicates straightforward communications, simple behaviors, lack of tactfulness, inability to think clearly, inability to understand other people behaviours.

- In factor F (lack of emotional reactions – rich and diverse emotional reactions): limited external manifestations of emotional reactions, mostly look calm, silent, serious and at times apathical.

- In factor I (emotional sensitivity): most respondents have good imagination and aesthetic taste.

- In factor O (self-confidence – lack of self-confidence): self-confidence shows medium level.

- In factor Q4 (feeling relaxed – feeling tensed): high level of feeling

relaxed which is characterised by indifference to success, achievement and failures.

- In factor C (lack of self-control – control of emotional reactions): low level of emotional control, impulsive, inability to reserve emotions, cannot tame emotions and calm down, cannot assume responsibility over completion of actions, quickly changing moods, unstable interests.

- In factor G (discipline) data shows medium level which is characterized by being moderately disciplined and responsible.

- In factor Q3 (self-control): medium level of self-control and will-power.

- In factor E (submissiveness – dominance in a group): medium level, which indicates that respondents are moderately submissive, moderately independent and self-confident. Power and leadership characteristics are at moderate level.

- In factor B (logical thinking): data shows logical thinking and intellectual abilities are high that average, quick thinkers, are very good at solving abstract problems.

- In factor M (practical thinking – dreaming thinking): most students combine both styles, i.e. allocate sufficient time to casual routine practical tasks, live both in the present and in the future.

- In factor Q1 (conservative – willing to explore the new): most students are very conservative, tend to stick to existing conditional social systems and norms.

- In factor LA (level of aspirations) data shows moderate level, students stand up for the rights of the

group.

- In factor LG (level of goal setting): low level which indicates that goals are contradictory and unclear. Students have vague understanding how to achieve their goals and apply insufficient effort to achieve them.

- In factor EW (enjoying work): data shows students do not like working, do not enjoy the process of work, do not see perspectives of career growth, do not see future profession as matching their personal aptitudes and characteristics.

- In factor PC (psychological climate in the group): unpleasant atmosphere in the group, disrespect to group mates, highly individualistic attitude.

- In factor RP (relationship with the leading professor): lack of mutual understanding, hidden dissatisfaction, lack of fairness.

- In factor RF (relationships in family): average level, relationships are prone to changes, lack of understanding, lack of trust between family members

- In factor IE (introversion – extraversion): most respondents are introverted, tend to spend time alone, closed to communications, experience difficulties with social adaptation.

- In factor An. (anxiety): heightened level of anxiety, lack of self-confidence, reserved in communications with other people, stressed, agitated, tend to perceive all situations as a source of anxiety.

- In factor FI (flexible – rigid) most respondent experience difficulties adjusting to new circumstances and switching from task to task.

Summary of empirical research on coping strategies employed by students is presented in the table below:

Table 1**Average Quantitative Expression of Coping Behavioural Strategies Employed by Students**

<i>Coping Behavioural Strategy</i>	<i>High resilience</i>	<i>Medium resilience</i>	<i>Low resilience</i>
Confrontational Coping	9,2±1,6	13,0±1,1	15,8±2,9
Distancing	4,9±0,6	7,8±1,4	12,5±1,2
Self-Control	12,7±1,1	15,2±0,9	4,8 ±1,3
Seeking Social Support	10,3±1,1	6,8±1,0	14,1±1,5
Approval of Responsibility	14,6±0,8	6,8±0,9	4,6±0,9
Avoidance, Escape	5,8±1,1	9,0±0,9	14,9±1,2
Planning for Problem Solving	12,6±0,1	8,4±0,1	5,2±0,1
Positive re-evaluation	11,6±0,3	8,7±0,2	9,6±0,2

So, respondents with *high level of stress resilience* often choose such coping strategies as Self-Control (12,7±1,1), Approval of Responsibility (14,6±0,8), Planning for Problem Solving (12,6±0,1). Thus, it can be expected that representatives of this category tend to control their emotions and behaviors; are able to recognize and analyze their own mistakes with purpose to adjust behaviors in future similar situations; tend to develop precise action plans which is deemed necessary in stress-generating situations of any nature.

Respondents with *medium level of stress resilience* often choose Self-Control (15,2±0,9) and Confrontational Coping (13,0±1,1), which in combination with data from other scales may be interpreted as tendency to de-personalize danger and hyper control over emotions and behaviors. This may result in chaotic aggressive reactions in stress generating situations.

Students with *low level of stress resilience* demonstrate low ability to identify correlations between their own actions and meaningful life situations. This group of respondents most often choose the following coping strategies:

- Approval of Responsibility (4,6±0,9), which manifests as tendency to interpret most events as accidents or outcomes of other people actions
- Distancing (12,5±1,2)
- Self-Control (4,8 ±1,3)

- Planning for Problem Solving (5,2±0,1) which manifests as unwillingness to recognize their own actions as crucial factor of life and to apply efforts to change stressful situations.

These specifics of cognitive evaluation of situation and behavioral reactions cause active Seeking of Social Support (14,1±1,5) as means to avoid responsibility (Avoidance, Escape: 14,9±1,2). On the other hand, such specifics cause non-motivated aggressive reactions (Confrontational Coping: 15,8±2,9).

Discussion. So, prolonged, and intensive impact of stress generating factors on personality may result in personality changes such as closedness, distancing, alienation, sense of inadequacy of reality, self-doubt, social inadaptability, psychological asthenia, stronger affective reactions, heightened emotional sensitivity, dissatisfaction with subject-to-subject relationships, etc. University students living in chronical stress under the military law experience longer periods of mental strain, higher levels of verbal and non-verbal aggression, emotional instability, higher levels of conformity, suspiciousness, feeling of guilt, impulsiveness in decision-making, impulsiveness of actions, etc. These psychological outcomes of prolonged stress generating factors can be prevented or corrected by developing stress resilience in students, specifically by means of social

and psychological training. During these trainings, students focus on learning relaxation techniques, developing positive emotional experience, learning technics of self-regulation and self-control. These personal qualities form the ground foundation of individual resistance to stress factors caused by the war.

References

1. Vashchenko I., Antonova O. (2018). *Konflikt. Posttravmatychnyi stres: shliakhy yikh podolannia*. Kyiv: Znannia, 289 s. [in Ukrainian]
2. Meshko H. M. (2018). *Formuvannia profesiinoi stresostiikosti u maibutnikh pedahohiv*. Visnyk Cherkaskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni Bohdana Khmelnytskoho. Seriya: Pedahohichni nauky. Vypusk 89. Cherkasy. S. 74-79. [in Ukrainian]
3. Onishchenko N. V. (2019). *Ekstrena psykholohichna dopomoha postrazhdalym v umovakh nadzvychnoi sytuatsii: teoretychni ta prykladni aspekty: monohrafiia*. Kh.: Pravo. 584 s. [in Ukrainian]
4. Profilaktyka posttravmatychnykh stresovykh rozladiv: psykholohichni aspekty (2021). Upor.: D. Romanovska, O. Ilashchuk. Chernivtsi: Tekhnodruk. 133 s. [in Ukrainian]
5. Timchenko O.V. (2018). *Syndrom posttravmatychnykh stresovykh porushen: kontseptualizatsiia, diahnostyka, korektsiia ta prohozuvannia: monohrafiia*. Kharkiv: Vyd-vo Un-tu vnutr. sprav. 268 s. [in Ukrainian]
6. Timchenko O.V. (2021). *Suchasni pidkhody do klasyfikatsii stresu*. Visnyk Kharkivskoho derzhavnoho pedahohichnoho universytetu im. H.S. Skovorody. Psykholohiia. Kharkiv, KhDPU. Vyp. 6. S.194-199. [in Ukrainian]
7. Shevtsova O. M. (2018). *Profesiina Ya kontseptsiiia yak metarezultat rozvytku autopsykholohichnoi kompetentnosti maibutnikh fakhivtsiv*. Naukovyi visnyk Mykolaivskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni V. O. Sukhomlynskoho. Seriya «Psykhologichni nauky». Vyp. 2(20). Mykolaiv, S. 91-95. [in Ukrainian] <https://pj.journal.kspu.edu/index.php/pj/article/view/543/506>
8. Shevtsova O. M., Arefieva M. H. (2023). *Psykhologichni osoblyvosti stresostiikosti molodi v umovakh viiny. Prodovolcha ta ekolohichna bezpeka v umovakh viiny ta povoiennoi vidbudovy: vyklyky dlia Ukrainy ta svitu: mater. mizhnar. nauk.-prakt. konf. (25-26 travnia 2023 r., m. Kyiv), sektsiia 4: Yakist osvity ta humanitarna nauka v umovakh viiny ta hlobalnykh vyklykiv*. Kyiv: NUBiP Ukrainy. S. 170-171. [in Ukrainian] https://nubip.edu.ua/sites/default/files/u381/sekciya_4.pdf

Список використаних джерел

1. Ващенко І., Антонова О. Конфлікт. Посттравматичний стрес: шляхи їх подолання. Київ: Знання, 2018. 289 с.
2. Мешко Г. М. Формування професійної стресостійкості у майбутніх педагогів. *Вісник Черкаського національного університету імені Богдана Хмельницького. Серія: Педагогічні науки*. Випуск 89. Черкаси, 2018. С. 74-79.
3. Оніщенко Н. В. Екстрена психологічна допомога постраждалим в умовах надзвичайної ситуації: теоретичні та прикладні аспекти: монографія. Х.: Право, 2019. 584 с.
4. Профілактика посттравматичних стресових розладів: психологічні аспекти. Упор.: Д. Романовська, О. Ілашук. Чернівці: Технодрук, 2021. 133 с.
5. Тімченко О.В. Синдром посттравматичних стресових порушень: концептуалізація, діагностика, корекція та прогнозування: монографія. Харків: Вид-во Ун-ту внутр. справ, 2018. 268 с.
6. Тімченко О.В. Сучасні підходи до класифікації стресу. *Вісник Харківського державного педагогічного університету ім. Г.С. Сковороди. Психологія*. Харків, ХДПУ, 2021. Вип. 6. С.194-199.

© Shevtsova O. M., Arefieva M. G.

7. Шевцова О. М. Професійна Я-концепція як метареzультат розвитку аутопсихологічної компетентності майбутніх фахівців. *Науковий вісник Миколаївського національного університету імені В. О. Сухомлинського. Серія «Психологічні науки»*. Вип. 2(20), 2018. Миколаїв, С. 91-95. <https://pj.journal.kspu.edu/index.php/pj/article/view/543/506>

8. Шевцова О. М.,

Ареф'єва М. Г. Психологічні особливості стресостійкості молоді в умовах війни. *Продовольча та екологічна безпека в умовах війни та повоєнної відбудови: виклики для України та світу: матер. міжнар. наук.-практ. конф.* (25-26 травня 2023 р., м. Київ), секція 4: *Якість освіти та гуманітарна наука в умовах війни та глобальних викликів*. Київ: НУБіП України, 2023. С. 170-171. https://nubip.edu.ua/sites/default/files/u381/sekciya_4.pdf

СПЕЦИФІКА ПРОЯВІВ СТРЕСОСТІЙКОСТІ У СТУДЕНТСЬКОЇ МОЛОДІ В УМОВАХ ВІЙНИ

Шевцова О. М., Ареф'єва М. Г.

Анотація. У статті здійснено аналіз наукових джерел з проблеми особливостей психологічних проявів стресостійкості у студентів в умовах війни. Стресостійкість студентів розглядається як комплексна особистісна властивість, яка включає такі індивідуально-психологічні компоненти: низька особистісна та ситуативна тривожність, низький рівень нервово-психічної напруги, адекватна самооцінка, висока працездатність, емоційна стійкість, що забезпечує успішне досягнення мети діяльності та реалізується в когнітивній, емоційній, мотиваційній та поведінковій сферах особистості. На основі теоретичного аналізу визначено, що підвищенню стресостійкості сприяють особистісні якості: гнучкість і абстрактність мислення, полenezалежність як когнітивний стиль, розвинені перцептивні, мнемічні й інтелектуальні здібності, спостережливість, внутрішня зосередженість, емоційна стійкість, оптимізм, адаптивність, внутрішній суб'єктивний контроль тощо. У статті представлено результати емпіричного вивчення особливостей проявів стресостійкості в українських студентів, обумовлених стресовими ситуаціями воєнного стану. Визначено, що пріоритетними механізмами психологічного захисту у студентів в умовах війни є проекція та компенсація, а провідними стратегіями долаючої поведінки: ухвалення відповідальності, самоконтроль та планування вирішення проблем – у осіб з високою стресостійкістю; конфронтація, уникнення та пошук соціальної підтримки – у осіб з низькою стресостійкістю.

Ключові слова: стресостійкість, стрес, стресові ситуації, долаюча поведінка, копінг-стратегії, студенти, молодь, умови війни.