



Psychosocial impact of war on Ukrainian youth: Analysis of resilience, social adaptation, and civic engagement

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Abstract. The relevance of the work is due to the growing psychological consequences of war for children and youth in Ukraine, which has created an urgent need to examine their psychoemotional state and develop comprehensive support measures. The purpose of the study was to examine the psychological impact of military events on young people aged 15-24 years and determine the mechanisms of trauma, ways to overcome it, and develop resilience. A set of methods was used to achieve this goal: questionnaires with the inclusion of closed and open questions, analysis of scientific sources, quantitative data processing, as well as comparative analysis to identify patterns and differences between different age and social groups. In the course of the study, theoretical approaches to post-traumatic stress disorder, social adaptation, and resilience were reviewed, which formed a conceptual basis for analysing the real experience of young people. The features of psychoemotional reactions of young people were established, including increased anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and the need for a stable social and educational environment. The survey data were analysed, providing for the assessment of the level of social support, participation in social activities, and volunteer initiatives. General trends and differences between different groups were summarised, and comparison with the results presented in publications by other authors confirmed the reliability and relevance of the conclusions obtained. The results of the study have direct application for improving comprehensive support for children who have experienced war. The practical value of the paper lies in the possibility of using its results by psychologists, social workers, teachers, and local self-government bodies to improve programmes of comprehensive psychosocial support for children and youth who experienced the war, promote the development of their internal stability and social activity

Keywords: children of war; identity in wartime; psychological stability of young people; post-traumatic stress disorder; post-traumatic development; stress coping mechanisms; social support practices

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Introduction

The full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, launched on February 24, 2022, led to one of the largest humanitarian disasters of the 21st century in Europe. Its consequences were most acute for children who faced a complex of threats – from psychological trauma to violation of basic rights and restriction of educational opportunities. The investigation of the phenomenon of “war children” is becoming extremely relevant since it is necessary not only to assess the scale of the impact of armed conflict on the child population but also to develop effective strategies for psychosocial support and rehabilitation. An integrated approach to the examination of this problem allows systematising the psychological and behavioural features of children’s reactions to military events, assessing the social consequences of the conflict, and determining ways to protect children’s rights in modern Ukrainian realities.

Modern research on the phenomenon of children in armed conflict is formed in several key areas. The interdisciplinary approach is represented by papers devoted to the phenomenon of children born of war and a comprehensive examination of the social, psychological, and legal aspects of childhood in conflict zones, emphasising the importance of an integrated analysis of social, legal and cultural factors. J. Bogart (2023) examines both the psychological consequences of war for children and the social conditions of their development, in particular, the impact of stigmatisation and discrimination on the formation of social identity. The medical-psychological focus is on the effects of war trauma on children’s physical and mental health. B. Carpiniello (2023) highlights the high risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depressive disorders, along with specific behavioural responses such as sleep disturbance, aggressiveness, and isolation. A. Tokarchuk & I. Koval (2024) add that prolonged stress and loss experiences can slow down children’s cognitive and emotional development, creating long-term risks to social

adaptation. The authors demonstrate the importance of early psychological diagnosis and comprehensive psychosocial support for children in conflict zones, in addition to the need to train specialists working with traumatised children.

The humanitarian-political direction includes an analysis of legal mechanisms for the protection of children during conflicts, issues of violations of children’s rights, deportations, occupation practices, and the activities of international organisations. T. Skrypchenko (2023) and N. Vahidniya *et al.* (2024) reviewed the effectiveness of existing international standards to protect children from armed recruitment, sexual violence, and violence in general. H. Cai *et al.* (2022) analysed children’s access to education and health in conflict zones, underlining the role of humanitarian aid and international support programmes. Research in this area shows that in practice, children are often ignored by state and international institutions, which requires strengthening human rights work and creating mechanisms for monitoring violations of children’s rights during war.

The cultural-memorial approach focuses on the experience of children in war as part of the collective memory of society. H. Miskov (2024) stresses that cultural narratives and intergenerational memory of war affect the formation of the identity of children and young people, their mechanisms of psychological protection. Special attention in modern studies is paid to the issues of age, gender, and regional specifics of experiencing trauma. A paper authored by Yu. Nazar (2024) indicates that children’s responses to war vary significantly depending on age, social environment, and the availability of support from the family or community. The use of empirical data obtained by interviewing children enables a better understanding of the specific features of the impact of military operations on the psyche and social functioning of minors, helping to determine effective interventions for different age categories.

The study aimed to systematically analyse the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the

mental, behavioural, and social functioning of children of different ages and genders, determine the specifics of their experience in war conditions, and justify effective approaches to their psychosocial support. The objectives of the study included, but were not limited to, the analysis of scientific approaches to the assessment of the impact of war on children, including psychological, social, legal, and cultural-memory aspects: to identify the features of psychological, behavioural, and social reactions of children of different ages and genders to war events, considering regional contexts; investigate the role of the family, school, and community in shaping the resilience and adaptation of children in the pursuit of peace.

Literature Review

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it became obvious that armed conflicts remain a global problem: more than twenty conflicts continue in the 21st century. War causes huge human losses: during the 20th century, armed conflicts claimed the lives of hundreds of millions of people, mostly civilians. In addition to mortality, the mental health of survivors is immensely affected. High levels of stress, traumatic events, loss of loved ones, housing, and financial stability leave lasting consequences for the lives of civilians, especially children. According to the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University in Sweden, as of the end of 2021, almost 90 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to conflict, violence, and persecution (Davies *et al.*, 2025). About 60% of them remained within their home country as internally displaced persons, while the rest sought protection abroad as refugees or asylum seekers (Showalter & Royde-Smith, 2025).

For children, these circumstances are accompanied by a high risk of injury: life-threatening, physical injuries, sexual violence, loss of family and social support, limited access to education, health services, and basic resources such as food and water. Living in refugee camps or temporary shelters adds an extra layer of stress and

socio-economic constraints, which substantially affects children's physical, mental, and social well-being. The analysis of modern publications points to a growing scientific and practical interest in the problem of the psychological impact of war on children and young people. A notable part of the work is focused on the development and implementation of methods of psychological assistance. In particular, N. Atamanchuk (2023) suggests using art therapy techniques to overcome children's fears that have arisen as a result of military events, emphasising the effectiveness of creative practices in the process of social adaptation. A similar practice-oriented focus is found in the work of H. Miskov (2024), which highlights the experience of emergency care for children, including those with special educational needs. A. Tokarchuk & I. Koval (2024) showed an increased level of anxiety in children and adolescents, which confirms the scale of the psychoemotional consequences of war and the need for comparative analysis to determine forecasts of their development. O. Bondarchuk & L. Karamushka (2023) devoted their study to analysing the psychological health of the individual in the conditions of war and post-war times. The aspect of identity formation highlighted in the paper of V. Zhelanova (2023), which outlines the psychological determinants of national and cultural stability of the individual, is also important. O. Luchaninova *et al.* (2025) summarise the current experience of psychosocial support, complementing the research with practical recommendations.

From studies conducted in medical institutions in Germany, the scientific argument is based on the need for international recognition and the development of comprehensive mechanisms for supporting and protecting such children (Delić *et al.*, 2014). The authors interpret this category of children as globally vulnerable, as they experience discrimination, isolation, and sometimes loss of rights and social rejection. An important point of reference was to identify the real stories of children in Bosnia and Herzegovina: from children of victims of human trafficking to children

from interethnic marriages, as the constant ethnic policy caused them various problems related to their mixed origins. It tracks a broad definition of the category “children born of war” – children from enemy soldiers, occupation forces, peacekeepers, girl soldiers, and children from interethnic marriages in conflict conditions. The second category of the sample of publications presents an analysis of articles that have extensive data on the physical and/or developmental consequences associated with armed conflict in children under the age of 18, and therefore, the evaluation of the impact of war on children requires the integration of the latest data analysis methods (questionnaires, social networks, psychological tests), and approaches at the intersection of artificial intelligence and bibliometry were promising in this case, as such studies had a diverse focus, having variations in the reporting of results (Anayat & Rasool, 2024). Interesting works were devoted to “identifiers” of the main consequences of the impact of armed conflicts on the health and development of children (Kadir *et al.*, 2018). Conflict accompanied by the use of weapons, violence, or force – whether within or outside state borders, and regardless of the involvement of state or non-governmental actors – is defined by the authors as “the acute and chronic impact of armed conflict on the health and well-being of children”, which constitutes one of the most serious violations of the rights of the child in the 21st century.

According to research, the Ukrainian-Russian crisis, which worsened in early 2014, fully erupted during the COVID-19 pandemic, radically changing the mental health of Ukrainian youth (Chaaya *et al.*, 2022; Palshkov *et al.*, 2024). Consequently, the materials on international cooperation to address the mental health crisis among refugee children and adolescents during the Russian-Ukrainian war, asylum seekers, and those living in war zones highlight the critical need for integrated approaches including psychological support, access to education, social integration and trauma prevention measures (Cai *et al.*, 2022). Research S. Li *et al.* (2016) show that

post-migration stress in refugees significantly increases the risk of developing anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder, which requires attention to living conditions after displacement and integration. In addition, the category “children born in war” identifies a group of children who face special socio-psychological challenges, including trauma and social stigma (Ingvill, 2018). Together, these studies stress the need for nationally and internationally coordinated support programmes that provide comprehensive protection of the mental health of children and adolescents in the context of war. Therefore, timely care can greatly reduce the negative effects of war on children’s emotional and cognitive development.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted between March 2023 and August 2024, covering both the immediate consequences of a full-scale war after February 24, 2022, and the period of adaptation of children to a long-term stressful environment. The sample was formed using a random survey during the specified time, which provided up-to-date empirical data on the psychological, behavioural, and social responses of children of different ages and genders. Within the framework of this work, the questionnaire method was used, which refers to quantitative methods of collecting primary sociological information. This choice is due to the fact that the survey allows quickly reaching a relatively large number of respondents, getting generalised data, and identifying the main trends in the attitude of young people to these issues. In addition, this method provides an opportunity to compare responses between different groups of respondents and improve further statistical analysis of the results obtained.

The questionnaire was developed specifically for this study, accounting for the goals and objectives set. It included closed (e.g., Did your behaviour change during the war (irritability, isolation, anxiety)? Yes or no) and semi-closed questions (e.g., What do you think children need most during the war? Emotional support; safe space;

quality training; social contacts; other). Closed questions provided structured information that is easily quantifiable, while semi-closed questions provided an opportunity for respondents to express their opinions within the proposed options. Special attention was paid to the formulation of questions in a neutral style, to avoid imposing certain answers.

The survey was conducted among young people aged 15 to 24 years. The sample population was 49 people, enabling generalised conclusions about trends in a certain age category. The method of targeted sampling was applied since the study is aimed at a specific social group – young people who are most sensitive to social changes and therewith demonstrate a high level of adaptability. Data was collected in a remote format using online tools (Google Forms) to reach respondents from different regions for the convenience of survey participants. Anonymity of the survey was guaranteed, which increased the level of sincerity of responses and reduced the risk of socially desirable responses. After collecting the data, all questionnaires were checked for completeness and correctness of filling out. Further processing of the results was performed using descriptive statistics: frequency counting, percentage ratios, and comparative analysis between subgroups. This allowed obtaining a systematic picture and drawing reasonable conclusions in accordance with the purpose of the study. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics (2018).

The second important method was the review and analysis of scientific literature, which covered works on psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and the humanities. The involvement of scientific sources allowed summarising preliminary results, identifying key research areas, and outlining the scientific tradition of studying the problem. This method provided a theoretical basis for interpreting the data obtained as a result of the survey. Literature analysis showed that publications do not always reflect different social and cultural

contexts to the same extent, which may lead to a certain one-sidedness in conclusions. Secondly, most of the work was based on research materials conducted in countries that have experienced prolonged armed conflicts or humanitarian crises, in particular: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Lebanon and Colombia, the United States, Poland, Bosnia, Canada, and Germany. The inclusion of these contexts helped analyse the psychological, social, and educational consequences of war for children, but their direct transfer to Ukrainian realities is difficult due to differences in the cultural, social, and legal environment. It was the lack of Ukrainian empirical research at the time of the start of work that determined the need to develop a methodology for collecting data and conducting adapted surveys. The third method was comparative analysis, used to compare the results of the findings of the study with data from scientific sources and statistical studies on the impact of war on children. This increased the scientific reliability of the study and contributed to the formation of sound recommendations for supporting children who experienced war.

Results and Discussion

Psychological, social, and educational consequences of war for children and youth: Results of previous research

A paper of Yu. Shevchenko *et al.* (2025) on the psychological impact was based on several key theoretical approaches that allow for a better understanding of the mechanisms of trauma and ways to overcome it. The conceptual framework consists of theories of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), resilience, and social adaptation. Each of them not only explains the nature of mental damage but also points out potential ways to overcome it. Classic work of B. van der Kolk (2015) laid the foundation for understanding that trauma leaves a deep mark on the mental perception of reality and the physiological level. The author proved that the horrors of war experienced can manifest themselves in children through nightmares, panic attacks, problems with

concentration, and emotional numbness. For example, a child who has witnessed shelling may lose the ability to play, which is a natural mechanism for learning from experience. Their brain and body are in a constant state of expectation that something unusual is about to happen that interferes with normal development and learning.

J. Herman (1997), in a paper on recovery from trauma, presented an essentially revolutionary approach that went beyond the standard understanding of PTSD, focusing on complex trauma. The researcher distinguishes between two types of trauma (simple and complex), which not only cause symptoms of different types of anxiety, but are also aggravated by nightmares, and, as a result, there are profound changes in the personality, when it is difficult to manage and cope with one's own emotions, a feeling of helplessness is declared, actions become impulsive, and distrust is born in relationships. It is possible to overcome them with the "recovery" laid down in the so-called therapeutic protocols – a sense of emotional and physical security that should be imprinted in the memory (and not pushed out of it) and restore one's social connections in new realities: in playing, training, communicating with peers – to feel needed by someone.

B. van der Kolk (2015) explored how trauma affects the brain and nervous system on a biological level in addition to the psyche. He proves that traumatic experiences are not always verbally processed because speech and the rational part of the brain (cortex) can be "turned off" during a traumatic event. It is necessary to release emotions through the body to overcome the trauma that blocks speech; that is, conduct therapy through various modulations of sensory systems, forcing the body to "work" and release the pain to the outside. This is especially true for the youngest, who, not having enough words in their arsenal, demonstrate it by their behaviour.

Research on resilience has shown that it is a key element of positive psychology. This is not some rare and exceptional quality, but the result of restoring human resources that exist in the

mind, body, families, and communities. Although the term itself came to psychology almost by accident, it has become a powerful metaphor borrowed from physics. However, just as in physics, material can absorb the energy of impact and return to its original shape without permanent damage, the human psyche also has the ability to withstand the pressure of traumatic experience and recover. By analogy with the physical concept, stability does not mean the complete absence of deformation, but rather the ability to adapt and return to balance. This connection between physics and psychology helps to better understand why, even after the most severe shocks, a child's psyche can maintain its integrity if its main pillars – relationships, security, and community – remain strong. Thus, the theory of resiliency, which has received wide publicity in scientific discourse, explains the ability of children to adapt and recover from trauma.

Resiliency is not an innate trait, but a dynamic process supported by both internal and external resources. For example, a child who has kept in touch with a caring adult (mother, grandmother, teacher) who has given them a sense of security during the war has a much higher chance of successfully overcoming a traumatic experience. This support creates a buffer that protects the psyche from complete destruction and allows the child to regain a sense of control over their own life. A. Masten (2001) describes the recovery process that occurs due to basic human adaptation systems. Resilience and a natural ability to recover can develop in most children under certain conditions: if they receive sufficient support. For example, a child who has survived a bombing but knows that after each attack, their mother will hug them, calm them down, and tell them that everything will be fine has a much higher level of resilience. This is a minimal but extremely powerful protective factor that helps the child regain their sense of security and trust in the world. Even in temporary conditions (for example, in a shelter or after an evacuation), continuing to study according to the usual programme provides

children with a sense of stability and routine. School becomes for them an island of normalcy in chaos. This allows them to shift their attention from traumatic memories to learning and communicating with their peers, which is a key adaptive mechanism. Play therapy, drawing, music, or writing stories are all natural ways for children to process their traumatic experiences. When a child draws destruction, they unconsciously “release” their fear and pain. This is not just entertainment, but an important stage of psychological recovery that helps integrate traumatic memories without the need to verbalise them. Thus, the theory of A. Masten shows that complex and expensive interventions are not always necessary to support children who have survived war. It is often enough to focus on simple but effective protective factors that will help activate their natural potential for resilience.

Finally, the theory of social adaptation examines how a child integrates into society after experiencing trauma. It focuses on restoring social connections and trust, which are critical to normal development. A displaced child who has lost their usual social circle and finds themselves in a new team may face difficulties in communication, which leads to isolation. In this case, psychologists work to help restore interaction skills, in particular through play therapy and group sessions. Such activities help children to feel part of the community again, which is a necessary condition for their psychological recovery. M. Rutter (1985), who is considered the initiator of the resiliency study, proposed a theory that explains how social and family factors affect children's resilience. His work was one of the first to shift the focus from examining pathologies to the forces that help children adapt.

Therefore, stable relationships with adults, positive social connections, and the opportunity to acquire new knowledge are protective factors. Having at least one reliable person to provide support and care is crucial for a traumatised child. This can be a mother, father, teacher, or relative whose constant presence creates a sense of

security. Thus, the contribution of M. Rutter (1985) is that he provided concrete evidence that resiliency is not just an abstract quality, but the result of the action of very specific, measurable social factors. His research has formed the foundation for the development of programmes aimed at strengthening families and communities to help children cope with the negative effects of stress and trauma.

The material proposed by T. Skrypchenko (2023) on the basis of three sociological surveys conducted in 2023 indicates the deep impact of war on the educational environment and the psychoemotional state of children of different age groups. Younger children most often react with fear of loud sounds, express traumatic experiences through play or creativity, trying to make sense of events and regain a sense of control. Adolescents and older students experience irritability, apathy, problems with sleep and concentration, and anxiety about the future. They become more aware of the consequences of war, lose confidence in the world, and are forced to take on additional responsibility for the family, which creates an excessive burden during the formation of their identity. The closure of educational institutions in the frontline territories, the lack of qualified teachers, and the lack of stable access to electricity and the Internet significantly complicate obtaining high-quality education. Especially vulnerable are high school students who are on the verge of completing their school education and, at the same time, are forced to adapt to new conditions. This creates additional role tension and uncertainty about the future for them, which increases stress and reduces learning motivation. A comprehensive analysis of these three approaches allows not only to state the fact of traumatising but also to identify key mechanisms that help children survive in conditions of extreme stress. This allows developing more effective support programmes aimed at preserving and strengthening their psychological health.

The impact of war on the psychological state and development of children is one of the most

acute problems in scientific discourse. One of the most common consequences is anxiety, feelings of loneliness, and insecurity, which can lead to high rates of depression and anxiety disorders. Loss of homes, forced relocation, and separation from family and friends create a sense of constant threat in children. Children are forced to immerse themselves in their own world, and trauma leaves a deep mark with long-term consequences. Interpretation of C. Catani (2018) is based on the latest neurobiological research on stress/distress and its consequences, which is combined into a holistic concept related to violence: there is a direct link between the types of violence experienced, the duration of military conflict, and the severity of mental disorders. The longer and more intense a child is exposed to traumatic events, the more likely they are to develop serious mental health problems. However, symptoms can accumulate and worsen over time, making children, especially school-age ones, particularly vulnerable. Importantly, the impact of trauma goes beyond specific diagnoses – it covers a wide range of child development issues that compromise peer and family relationships, school performance, and overall life satisfaction. That is, such types of trauma have a cumulative effect, and their consequences can manifest and worsen over time, so they require long-term monitoring and support.

The collection of the Museum of War Childhood, established in Sarajevo in 2015, documents events related to the long-term effects of violence, which leads to “the risk of developing numerous and sometimes long-lasting forms of biopsychosocial maladjustment”. In August 2025, a Global Advisory Council was established at the museum. The museum’s collections are replenished with new artefacts – personal belongings, video and audio messages, which record childhood in all its negative manifestations of the Russian-Ukrainian war. A research team from the Islamic University of Azad and the Quazvin University of Medical Sciences in Tehran analysed the impact of fighting and forced displacement on children’s mental health and concluded that long-term health

planning is necessary to overcome the negative effects of war on children’s mental health, which will last for decades of recovery from armed conflict, as children have not just experienced trauma, they have suffered PTSD, depression, distress, and aggressive behaviour. Therefore, to a greater extent, under the influence of stressful factors, vulnerability can be transformed into various types of psychological swings: sexual violence, harassment, and early marriage (Vahidniya *et al.*, 2024).

Thus, the source base covers both theoretical concepts and empirical research, along with the practical methods and regulatory documents. This creates an opportunity for a comprehensive analysis of the problem of war children, where individual psychological, socio-cultural, and institutional dimensions are combined. Survey data also indicate significant changes in children’s social connections. The dominant emotions in the respondents were anxiety, fear, and confusion, with only a small proportion feeling hopeful or calm. Most young people were forced to change their place of residence and take on additional responsibility in the family, which increases the psychological burden. Thereby, most of the respondents are involved in volunteer activities and family support, which indicates a high level of social activity and resilience. A comprehensive analysis of these results demonstrates that effective support for war children requires an integrated approach that combines psychosocial interventions, strengthening family and peer ties, adapting the educational process, and engaging children in community and volunteer initiatives. The results of the study highlight the importance of long-term programmes that account for the psychological, social, and educational needs of children and contribute to their comprehensive recovery.

Experience of Ukrainian youth during the war: Emotions, adaptation, and support

That is, analysis of the demographic profile of respondents. The survey included 49 young people (61% belong to the age group of 18-20 years, 28% – 15-17 years, and 11% – 21-24 years. The

vast majority of respondents are girls (84%), which may have influenced some aspects of the responses since gender differences can influence the types of traumatic experiences experienced and how to overcome them (Fig. 1).

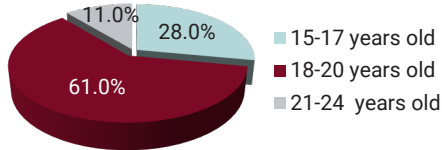


Figure 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Source: compiled by the author based on the conducted study

All respondents live in different regions of Ukraine, with the highest concentration in Kyiv and Kyiv region (25%), as well as in Dnipro and Dnipropetrovsk region (20%). This reflects the broad geographical scope of the impact of war. At the time of the start of the full-scale invasion,

the majority of respondents were teenagers (14-17 years old), which is a critical period for psychosocial development. The war profoundly changed the lives of young Ukrainians. This negative experience has inevitably influenced the geography of displacement. Two-thirds of respondents (61%) were forced to change their place of residence, which highlights the scale of internal and external population displacement. Approximately a third (33%) of respondents moved abroad. At the beginning of a full-scale invasion, the vast majority (80%) of young people were not morally, psychologically, or informationally ready for war and experienced shock and confusion. This is a clear confirmation that war is fundamentally changing the social ecology of the child and the infrastructure that supports its development. Most strikingly, 82% of respondents reported substantial changes in their families during the war, including separation from loved ones, loss, or staying in the occupied territory (Fig. 2).

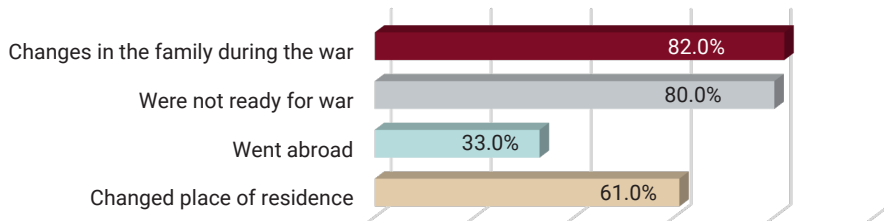


Figure 2. Socio-psychological consequences of the war for the youth of Ukraine

Source: compiled by the author based on the conducted study

The issue of separation from parents is one of the most significant trials of war. The family should act as a protective factor that shields children. However, in many cases, changes on a psychoemotional level have also occurred. The survey data clearly point to the deep psychological impact of war. The dominant emotions experienced by respondents during the events of the war were anxiety, fear, and confusion (49%) (Fig. 3). A significant proportion also felt angry (12%) and sad (8%). Only a small proportion mentioned hope (6%) or relative calm/indifference (8%).

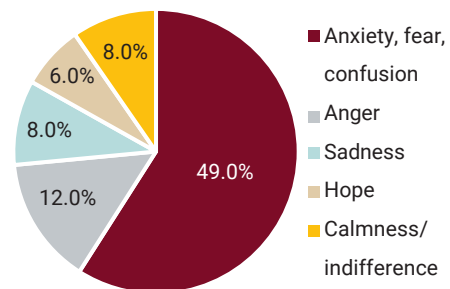


Figure 3. Dominant emotional responses of war-affected children

Source: compiled by the author based on the conducted study

These findings are consistent with broader studies that point to a high prevalence of PTSD, depression, and anxiety among children in conflict zones. Almost half (41%) of respondents said that their mood or well-being has changed in the direction of increasing anxiety, stress, or paranoia since the beginning of the war. Other negative changes include feelings of anger, loss of self, increased tearfulness or aggressiveness (20%). Therefore, the long-term psychological impact of war, which can lead to chronic anxiety and uncertainty, can be stated. Despite the high level of emotional stress, only 14% of respondents reported working with a psychologist. In

other words, there is a certain barrier – it could be access to professional psychological help or stigma, being labelled for seeking such support. However, 88% of respondents talked to someone about their feelings about the war, which highlights the importance of informal support networks. Social connections play a crucial role in overcoming trauma. The survey showed (Fig. 4) that young people most often turn to friends for support (49%), followed by their parents (41%). During difficult periods, respondents were helped to feel better: family/parents/relatives (43%), friends (39%), and favourite activities/hobbies/creativity (31%).

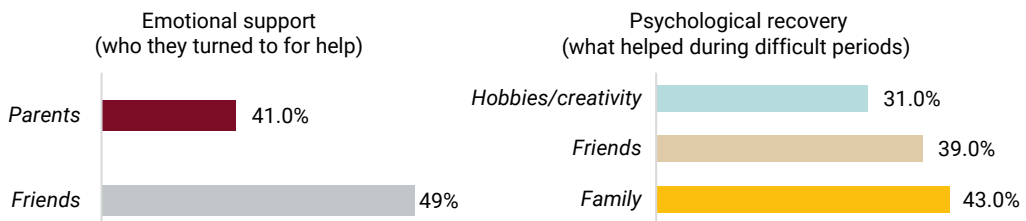


Figure 4. Basic social and personal resources of young people in war conditions

Source: compiled by the author based on the conducted study

The survey is consistent with research showing that a positive parenting style, warmth, and social support contribute to moral resilience during the hours, months, and years of war trials. More than half (55%) of respondents have a favourite place where they feel safe, but a considerable part (45%) do not, which can increase the sense of vulnerability. Communication with

relatives and acquaintances has changed in 41% of respondents. These changes ranged from less frequent communication and worse relationships (24%) to increased trust and rapprochement (17%). This reflects the complexity of the impact of war on social media, where some connections are broken, and others are strengthened (Fig. 5).

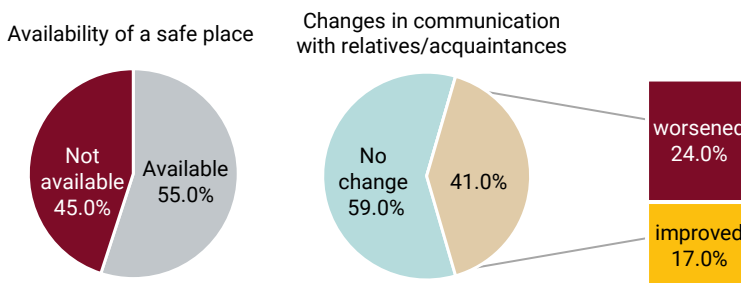


Figure 5. Dynamics of social connections and respondents' assessment of physical/psychological security

Source: compiled by the author based on the conducted study

When it comes to education, it has not been spared by the war either: 88% of respondents reported changes in their school or learning format. This is consistent with nationwide data that millions of children in Ukraine have impaired education due to infrastructure damage, displacement, and learning disruptions. More than half (55%) of respondents took on new responsibilities in the family during the war, such as helping their parents, caring for younger siblings, self-care, or work. In other words, there has been an increase in the burden on young people and changes in family roles, which can affect their psychological state and access to free time. Ukrainian youth demonstrate a high level of civic consciousness and activity. More than half (57%) of respondents participated in volunteer activities, including netting, donations, charity events, and assistance to humanitarian organisations. An even higher percentage (82%) participated or had their families participate in fundraising for the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Fig. 6). This is a powerful prosocial behaviour and resilience seen among children who experienced war.

The vast majority (80%) of respondents directly encountered dangerous situations, such as shelling. The most memorable moments of the war are direct traumatic events: shelling/explosions (33%), moving/leaving home (14%), and losing loved ones (6%). This highlights the ubiquitous nature of the threat and the deep footprint it leaves. Almost all respondents (92%) experience injustice due to the events of the war,

which indicates the deep moral and ethical impact of the conflict. After the war ends, young people's dreams are focused on a peaceful and quiet life in Ukraine, returning home, and normalising their lives (31%) (Fig. 7). Dreams of studying, travelling, and a happy life are also mentioned. This reflects a deep desire for stability and recovery. When asked what needs to be done to help children cope with the events of war, respondents most often mention psychological support, counselling, and art therapy (20%), and more communication and support from parents (12%). This confirms the critical need for psychosocial interventions and strengthening family ties. The most sought-after form of assistance that respondents would like to receive now is psychological support (29%), followed by financial/material assistance (6%).

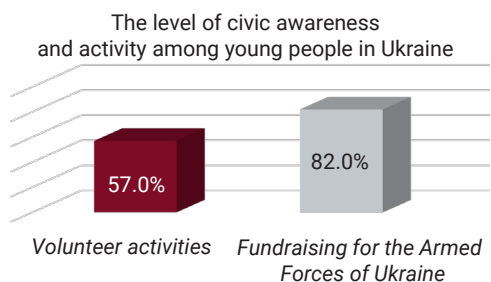


Figure 6. The level of civic activity of young people in Ukraine

Source: compiled by the author based on the conducted study

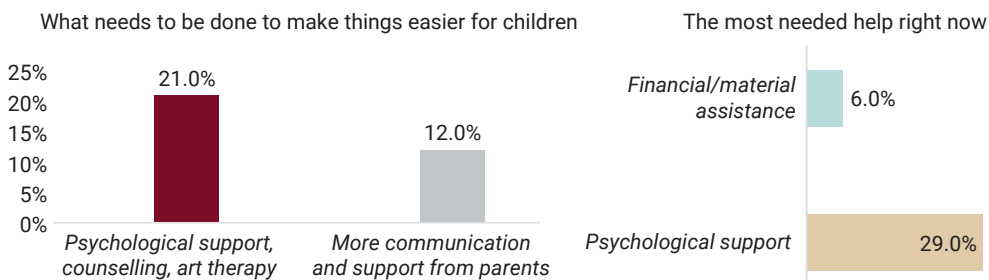


Figure 7. Helping children during the war

Source: compiled by the author based on the conducted study

The survey shows that Ukrainian youth are experiencing the profound and multifaceted consequences of war, covering their physical and mental health, education, and social relationships. High levels of anxiety, fear, confusion, significant changes in family life and the educational process have become the dominant challenges. The results of the survey indicate a clear demand for psychological assistance and open dialogue, confirming the opinion of V. Carpinello (2023) on the need for systematic approaches to ensuring the mental health of the younger generation. Thus, the results of the study can serve as a basis for the formation of state and public strategies aimed at supporting war children and ensuring their harmonious development in the face of long-term social challenges.

Conclusions

Since several complementary methods were used in the process, this allowed for a multifaceted view of the problem. The main tool for data collection was a questionnaire, which made it possible to directly involve respondents in the study. The level of anxiety, depressive states, and stress is shown, but the role of emotional regulation and resistance of children to the negative effects of war is also evaluated. The survey allowed collecting information about the experience, attitudes, and emotional experiences of participants, revealing individual differences in the perception of the impact of war and social changes. The results obtained became the basis for further generalisation and identification of the main trends. However, it is important to note that the use of this method has certain limitations. In particular, respondents' answers may be subjective and depend on their emotional state. In addition, a limited sample creates difficulties in ensuring representativeness, and some participants may tend to give socially desirable responses.

The method of comparative analysis revealed common patterns and differences among different age and social groups, and also helped to assess the consistency of the results obtained

with general trends recorded by other authors. Thus, the methodology provided the necessary balance between theoretical and practical approaches, which increases the reliability and scientific value of the results obtained. The study also demonstrated that war affects children in a multidimensional way, covering psychological, social, legal, and cultural aspects. The psychoemotional and behavioural reactions of children of different ages and genders vary significantly: younger children often experience fear and anxiety and revert to earlier patterns of behaviour, while older children may isolate themselves, become irritable, and distance themselves from their surroundings. Regional characteristics and living conditions significantly influence the intensity of these responses, which highlights the need to take local context into account in support programmes. Family, school, and community play a key role in shaping children's resilience and adaptation. Those who receive stable emotional support from parents and mentors, have the opportunity to participate in school and extracurricular activities, and feel the care of the local community, demonstrate a higher level of psychological resilience, better social adaptation, and the ability to overcome difficulties.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that comprehensive support, which combines psychological, social, and educational activities, is an effective mechanism for reducing the negative impact of war on children and helps restore their sense of security, confidence, and desire for peace. Practical recommendations include the organisation of individual and group psychological support programmes, the development of social-educational initiatives, and regular monitoring of children's psychoemotional state to respond to their needs in a timely manner. It is advisable to expand the sample to obtain more representative data, conduct long-term monitoring of the psychoemotional state of children, introduce innovative methods for assessing resilience and adaptation, and evaluate the

effectiveness of various forms of psychosocial support and educational programmes in different regions of Ukraine. Important areas for further intervention should include the development of psychosocial support programmes, strengthening the institutional capacity of the education system and civil society organisations, and creating a safe space for expressing emotions and discussing experiences.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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Психосоціальний вплив війни на українську молодь: аналіз резильєнтності, соціальної адаптації та громадянської активності

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Анотація. Актуальність роботи зумовлена зростанням психологічних наслідків війни для дітей та молоді в Україні, що створило нагальну потребу у вивченні їх психоемоційного стану та розробці комплексних заходів підтримки. Метою роботи було дослідження психологічного впливу воєнних подій на молодь віком 15-24 років та визначення механізмів травми, шляхів її подолання та розвитку резильєнтності. Для досягнення мети було використано комплекс методів: анкетування з включенням закритих і відкритих питань, аналіз наукових джерел, кількісну обробку даних, а також порівняльний аналіз для виявлення закономірностей та відмінностей між різними віковими і соціальними групами. У ході роботи було досліджено теоретичні підходи до посттравматичного стресового розладу, соціальної адаптації та резильєнтності, що сформувавши концептуальну основу для аналізу реального досвіду молоді. Було встановлено особливості психоемоційних реакцій молодих людей, серед яких підвищена тривожність, емоційне виснаження та потреба у стабільному соціальному та освітньому середовищі. Було проаналізовано дані анкетування, що дозволило оцінити рівень соціальної підтримки, участь у громадській діяльності та волонтерських ініціативах. Було узагальнено спільні тенденції та відмінності між різними групами, а порівняння з результатами наукових досліджень інших авторів підтвердило достовірність та актуальність отриманих висновків. Результати дослідження мають безпосереднє застосування для удосконалення комплексної підтримки дітей, які пережили війну. Практична цінність роботи полягає у можливості використання її результатів психологами, соціальними працівниками, освітянами та органами місцевого самоврядування для удосконалення програм комплексної психосоціальної підтримки дітей і молоді, які пережили війну, сприяння розвитку їх внутрішньої стійкості та соціальної активності

Ключові слова: діти війни; ідентичність у воєнний час; психологічна стійкість молоді; посттравматичний стресовий розлад; посттравматичний розвиток; механізми подолання стресу; соціальні практики підтримки