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WAR AS A FACTOR OF STRESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN UKRAINE

ВІЙНА ЯК ЧИННИК ВИНИКНЕННЯ СТРЕСУ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ В УКРАЇНІ

Kryvoshei K. Yu. Кривошей К. Ю.

*PhD student at the Department of
Educational Sciences, Digital Learning, and
Academic Entrepreneurship
V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University
Kharkiv, Ukraine*

*аспірант кафедри освітніх наук,
цифрового навчання та академічного
підприємництва
Харківський національний університет
імені В. Н. Каразіна
м. Харків, Україна*

The outbreak of large-scale military aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine has deprived Ukrainian students of their usual and safe way of life. The loss of comfortable study conditions occurred regardless of personal characteristics, social status, academic achievements, political views, and economic conditions of higher education students. War always creates factors that suggest danger to one's own life. Because of this, war is a supernormal extreme situation. Extreme factors require the mobilization of the students' additional mental and physical resources. These additional resources are needed to overcome an external threat that leads to the development of stress. This makes the military actions in Ukraine an intense and long-term objective cause of stress. The existence of long-term stress among higher education students due to the military conflict is a huge challenge for the modern Ukrainian education system.

By changing the usual way of life of students, the war interferes with the normal professional and personal development of the individual. This happens because long-term intense stress leads to a deterioration in cognitive functioning, depletion of physical resources, and the development of fatigue. In other words, a stressful state can have a serious negative impact on the ability to learn. This not only negatively affects the person's performance, but can also cause serious mental and even somatic disorders [1, p. 92].

Stress is the body's reaction to a certain threat, challenge, or physical or psychological barrier. In psychology, stress is considered as a feeling of emotional tension and pressure that arises in a person [2, p. 58]. Adaptation, which protects the body from threatening influences, is the main biological function of stress. Thus, stress is a specific psychophysiological state that functions as a protective reaction of the body to threatening or harmful influences, both mental and physical. A complex of certain reactions of the

body's systems, primarily the nervous and hormonal systems, characterizes stress.

Stress is associated with the emergence of negative feelings such as fear, despair, sadness, anxiety, helplessness, depression, apathy, etc. In a state of stress, students memorize and reproduce information worse; it is more difficult for them to make decisions; their concentration, attention span and volume deteriorate; their ability to perceive and think decreases, etc [2, p. 61]. Current research on the level of stress among the population of Ukraine shows us disappointing data. The impact of at least one war-related stressor is experienced by all respondents; a large number of respondents have symptoms that meet the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder or complex post-traumatic stress disorder [3, p. 281]. Common stressors are factors such as hearing an air raid siren, financial difficulties, the need to stay in a shelter, hearing and seeing shellings. In addition to the usual symptoms of stress, a significant part of the Ukrainian population has certain manifestations of anxiety, depression, and insomnia [3, p. 282]. Due to the state of stress, Ukrainians suffer from memory impairment, appetite problems, fatigue, increased irritability, insomnia, and nightmares [1, p. 94]. In wartime conditions, the number of stressors affecting students and not related to the learning process has increased significantly. The war has had a significant impact on the psychological state of students, reducing their ability to withstand stress and increasing the intensity and frequency of stress. According to the researches, more than half of the students affected by the war experience stress, and almost two-thirds say that it is difficult for them to overcome this stressful state [4, p. 131].

The stage of studying at a higher education institution is an extremely important period of a young person's life. The period of studying at a higher education institution is characterized by the continuation of active emotional, volitional and intellectual development. Studying at a higher education institution is also associated with changes in the structure of the personality. The driving force behind these changes is the need to adapt to new, broader and more diverse social communities, learn new social roles, form educational and professional activities, and enter a new stage of life [5, p. 33]. The student years are a critical period of professional competence formation. Today, higher education students need special attention to their mental health, as well as comprehensive support from lecturers in protecting themselves. Not only the psycho-emotional state of students depends on this support. Today, many internal features of the applicant and external factors determine the effectiveness and success of development and learning. The issue of creating social, psychological, and pedagogical conditions for learning in higher education is becoming increasingly relevant. The purpose of targeted creation

of these conditions is to improve students' academic performance through harmonization of the learning process.

Thus, even before the outbreak of the full-scale war, studying in higher education institutions was accompanied by various stressful situations. A full-scale war has become a threatening circumstance that creates preconditions for the development of stress in students. Today, stress has a long-term effect on students. In addition, stress has a negative impact on the state of students, leading to behavioral, emotional, cognitive and physiological changes. These changes have a negative impact on academic performance, personal and professional development of higher education students. In addition to a negative impact on learning, stress can lead to exacerbation of health problems and deterioration of well-being, reduced productivity, and increased irritability. Given the complexity and urgency of the problem of teaching in the wartime education, we see further research in analyzing and justifying the learning environment and curricula that take into account the need for a positive impact on the psycho-emotional state of higher education students.

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