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# PSYCHOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF VOLUNTEERS' STRESS RESILIENCE DURING THE MARTIAL LAW PERIOD

У статті представлено результати теоретико-емпіричного дослідження психологічних особливостей стресостійкості волонтерів у період воєнного стану. Розкрито сутність стресостійкості як інтегративної особистісної властивості, що забезпечує здатність індивіда ефективно функціонувати, зберігати емоційну рівновагу та адаптуватися до впливу стресогенних чинників. Наголошується, шо волонтерська діяльність у сучасних умовах супроводжується значними психоемоційними навантаженнями, необхідністю швидкого прийняття рішень і постійною взаємодією з людьми, які перебувають у кризових ситуаціях, що підвищує ризики емоційного виснаження. Стресостійкість визначається як провідний чинник психологічного благополуччя волонтерів, тісно пов'язаний із когнітивною гнучкістю, емоційною саморегуляцією, рівнем самодовіри, соціальною підтримкою та здатністю до позитивного переосмислення складних життєвих обставин. Узагальнено наукові підходи до розуміння феномену стресостійкості та наведено результати емпіричного аналізу її структурних компонентів і рівнів вираженості серед волонтерів, залучених до гуманітарної діяльності під час воєнного стану. Встановлено, що більшість досліджуваних характеризується середнім рівнем стресостійкості, що свідчить про достатній потенціал адаптації до напружених соціально-психологічних умов. Виявлено позитивний зв'язок між показниками стресостійкості, копінг-стратегіями «концентрація на емоціях і їх активне вираження», «використання заспокійливих засобів» та рівнем довіри до світу. Кореляційний аналіз виявив певну суперечливість копінг-механізмів: поряд із конструктивними способами подолання напруження деякі волонтери застосовують неадаптивні стратегії емоційної регуляції, що свідчить про потребу у розвитку психологічних навичок самоконтролю. Позитивний зв'язок між рівнем стресостійкості та довірою до світу засвідчує, що оптимістичне сприйняття соціальної реальності виконує функцію внутрішнього психологічного ресурсу, який підвищує адаптивність особистості та знижує рівень тривожності. Така довіра сприяє формуванню впевненості, внутрішньої стабільності й стійкості до дії кризових факторів. Отримані результати акиентують на необхідності організації системної психологічної підтримки волонтерів, орієнтованої на формування навичок емоційної саморегуляції, розвитку самодовіри та підвищення психологічної стійкості. Формування стресостійкості розглядається як багатовимірний процес, що інтегрує когнітивні, емоційні та поведінкові компоненти й забезпечує збереження психологічного здоров'я та ефективності діяльності волонтерів у період воєнного стану.

**Ключові слова:** стресостійкість, волонтери, воєнний стан, копінг-стратегії, довіра, психологічне благополуччя.

The article presents the results of a theoretical and empirical study of the psychological features of stress resistance in volunteers during martial law. It reveals the essence of stress resistance as an integrative personality trait that ensures an individual's ability to function effectively, maintain emotional balance, and adapt to the influence of stressors. It is emphasized that volunteer activity in modern conditions is accompanied by significant psycho-emotional stress, the need for quick decision-making, and constant interaction with people in crisis situations, which increases the risk of emotional exhaustion. Stress resistance is defined as a leading factor in the psychological well-being of volunteers, closely related to cognitive flexibility, emotional self-regulation, self-confidence, social support, and the ability to positively reinterpret difficult life circumstances. Scientific approaches to understanding the phenomenon of stress resistance are summarized, and the results of an empirical analysis of its structural components and levels of expression among volunteers involved in humanitarian activities during martial law are presented. It

has been established that most of the subjects are characterized by an average level of stress resistance, which indicates sufficient potential for adaptation to stressful socio-psychological conditions. A positive correlation was found between stress resistance indicators, coping strategies such as "focusing on emotions and their active expression" and "use of sedatives," and the level of trust in the world. Correlation analysis revealed a certain inconsistency in coping mechanisms: along with constructive ways of overcoming stress, some volunteers use maladaptive strategies of emotional regulation, which indicates a need to develop psychological self-control skills. The positive relationship between stress resistance and trust in the world shows that an optimistic perception of social reality acts as an internal psychological resource that increases personal adaptability and reduces anxiety. Such trust contributes to the formation of confidence, internal stability, and resistance to crisis factors. The results obtained emphasize the need to organize systematic psychological support for volunteers, focused on the formation of emotional self-regulation skills, the development of self-confidence, and the enhancement of psychological resilience. The formation of stress resistance is seen as a multidimensional process that integrates cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components and ensures the preservation of psychological health and the effectiveness of volunteers during martial law.

**Keywords:** stress resistance, volunteers, martial law, coping strategies, trust, psychological wellbeing.

**Introduction.** Stress resistance is an important personal characteristic that reflects an individual's ability to maintain effectiveness and psycho-emotional balance in conditions of intense stress, uncertainty, and increased emotional pressure. During martial law, volunteers are often on the front lines of humanitarian efforts, where they face high levels of stress, psychological exhaustion, and the risk of emotional burnout. Scientists emphasize that the development of stress resistance contributes to the preservation of psychological health, increases the ability to adapt, self-regulate, and interact productively with other people. According to recent studies, in particular by A. Lushchyk, S. Melnychenko, S. Ozharyvska, O. Savychenko, N. Slobodyanik, E. Shunevych, and others, stress resistance is an important component of volunteers' psychological health, along with flexibility, self-acceptance, and the ability to positively reframe difficult life situations. It is the level of stress resistance that determines the effectiveness of overcoming emotional tension, the ability to maintain a stable emotional state, and avoid manifestations of emotional burnout.

Psychological studies show that volunteers with high stress resistance demonstrate better adaptation to crisis conditions, use coping strategies more constructively ("planning," "positive rethinking," "active self-control") and have higher indicators of psychological well-being. Stress resistance helps volunteers maintain inner balance, provides control over emotional reactions, reduces anxiety and fear of rejection, which is especially important during martial law, when mental resources are under constant pressure. The development of stress resistance is a complex and multidimensional process that encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of personality. It is formed through awareness of one's own resources, maintenance of social connections, development of self-regulation skills, and use of effective coping strategies. In volunteer work, stress resistance is not only a means of maintaining psychological health, but also a guarantee of effective help to others, since a psychologically stable volunteer is able to convey a sense of security, support, and hope to people who need it.

Thus, stress resistance during martial law is a determining factor in maintaining the psychological health of volunteers, ensuring their ability to adapt to difficult circumstances, overcome emotional exhaustion, and maintain inner balance in situations of uncertainty.

Theoretical foundations of research. A volunteer is a person who consciously and selflessly participates in socially useful activities, guided by the principles of solidarity, humanism, and responsibility. The motivation for volunteering combines altruistic desires to help others, socially oriented motives for interaction and self-realization, as well as personal needs for communication, recognition, and development [2]. In this context, the study of the phenomenon of stress resistance is of particular importance, as it allows for a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms of maintaining inner balance and emotional well-being of people involved in volunteer activities. In conditions of constant tension, uncertainty, and high moral and psychological stress, stress resistance is a key factor in the effectiveness of volunteer activity, ensuring the ability of the individual to act productively, adapt to change, and maintain psychological health.

According to N. Slobodyanik, stress resistance is "a psychological resource of an individual in a situation of change, which determines a person's ability to effectively overcome difficulties without negative consequences for physical and mental health" [8, p. 91]. It is also an integrative property of the

individual that ensures effective functioning in conditions of psychotraumatic factors without significant disturbances of emotional balance, traditionally considered as a system of cognitive, emotional-volitional, and behavioral mechanisms that allow a person to mobilize resources to overcome stress when necessary. The author points out that in most scientific approaches, stress resistance is interpreted as an integral part of the process of personality adaptation, which determines its relationship with emotional stability and the ability to self-regulate emotions. At the socio-psychological level, stress resistance manifests itself in the preservation of social adaptation potential, the maintenance of constructive interpersonal relationships, the realization of life goals, and self-actualization. A key indicator of this phenomenon is the ability of a person to effectively adapt to complex, changing, and stressful environmental conditions.

Research by O. Savichenko and colleagues emphasizes that stress resistance is formed through the interaction of three systems: cognitive, emotional-volitional, and motivational. A high level of stress resistance is associated with flexibility of thinking, the ability to reflect, and an optimistic acceptance of difficulties. For volunteers, this means the ability to understand the meaning of their activities, maintain internal motivation, help others, and not lose faith in their abilities even in situations of emotional exhaustion [7]. It has been established that high levels of psychological well-being among volunteers are determined by established stress management skills, the ability to regulate emotions, and post-traumatic growth [9]. Volunteers who provide support to the military are characterized by a developed range of emotional regulation strategies, but prolonged exposure to stressors leads to gradual emotional exhaustion. Volunteers who support the civilian population typically experience symptoms of depression and sleep disorders, but their adaptive resources are manifested in a rethinking of life priorities and the discovery of new opportunities for self-realization. Summarizing the results, it was found that the mental well-being of volunteers directly correlates with the development of personal and social resources that ensure effective coping with stressful situations.

The work of L. Kolomiiets, G. Shulga, and I. Lebed focuses on the correlation between self-confidence and stress resistance. Self-confidence acts as a kind of buffer that ensures a harmonious combination of rational assessment of the situation with emotional stability. The authors emphasize that low self-confidence is accompanied by insecurity, inadequate self-esteem, and communication difficulties, which obviously reduces the overall ability of the individual to respond adequately. On the other hand, a high level of self-confidence, self-assurance, and self-acceptance contributes to maintaining psychological well-being and life satisfaction even in crisis situations, such as martial law. The authors state that individuals "who experience psychological well-being, are responsible, focused on their own strengths, take responsibility for successes and failures, are focused on achievement and self-realization have a higher level of interpersonal trust" [3, p. 11]. Interpersonal trust is an important psychological resource for volunteers, as it supports stress resistance, promotes effective teamwork, mutual support, and the ability to maintain emotional balance in conditions of high tension and uncertainty.

Stress resistance is not an innate characteristic—it is formed in the process of personal development through the understanding of one's own emotions. Developed stress resistance allows volunteers to maintain emotional balance, reduce anxiety and fear of rejection, and promotes the development of self-determination—the ability to act consciously, purposefully, and autonomously. The ability to regulate one's emotional reactions will contribute to the long-term performance of volunteer activities without negatively affecting mental health and well-being, increase the effectiveness of assistance, and contribute to maintaining emotional stability and sustained motivation for further activity [4].

In this context, the study of the phenomenon of stress resistance is of particular importance, as it allows for a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms of maintaining inner balance and emotional well-being of people involved in volunteer activities. In conditions of constant tension, uncertainty, and high moral and psychological stress, stress resistance is a key factor in the effectiveness of volunteer activity, ensuring the ability of the individual to act productively, adapt to change, and maintain psychological health.

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preservation of social adaptation potential, the maintenance of constructive interpersonal relationships, the realization of life goals, and self-actualization. A key indicator of this phenomenon is the ability of a person to effectively adapt to complex, changing, and stressful environmental conditions.

The purpose of the article is to determine the characteristics of stress resistance in volunteers during martial law.

**Methods.** To determine the characteristics of stress resistance in volunteers during martial law, an empirical study was conducted using the following psychodiagnostic methods: "Stress Resistance" by S. Maksimenko, L. Karamushka, T. Zaychikova to assess the level of individual stress resistance of volunteers, the characteristics of their emotional stability, tolerance to frustration, and ability to mobilize resources in stressful situations [5, pp. 15-16]; method for diagnosing coping strategies (SOPE) by C. Carver, M. Scheier, and D. Weintraub to determine the frequency of use of constructive or destructive strategies [1, pp. 180-184]; methodology of trust/distrust of the world, other people, and oneself by A. Kuprichenko, adapted by O. Savchenko, which allows identifying and verifying the relationship between the level of self-confidence and the ability of volunteers to maintain balance in stressful situations [6]. Empirical indicators were processed using the SPSS ver. 16.0 statistical software package.

**Sample.** The sample of the empirical study consisted of individuals involved in volunteer activities, of whom 70% were women and 30% were men. The average age of the sample was 27.6 years, and the average length of volunteer activity was 2.6 years.

**Results and discussion.** The analysis of the results of the ability to maintain emotional balance and productivity of volunteers is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Primary statistics of indicators according to the "Stress Resistance" methodology, S.

Maksimenko et al.

Indicator	M	Me	SD	SE	Min	Max
Stress resistance	33,8	35	3,62	0,694	28	45

Notes: M – mean value; Med – median; Mo – mode; SD – standard deviation; SE – standard error; Min – minimum value, Max – maximum value.

According to the results of descriptive statistics, the "stress resistance" indicator is characterized by a predominance of the average level of severity, which indicates the sufficient ability of respondents to effectively cope with stressful situations and maintain adaptive behavior under stress. Quantitative analysis of the obtained indicators allowed us to identify three levels of stress resistance among volunteers. The largest number of volunteers – 83% – fell into the average level, indicating their ability to maintain psychoemotional balance and productivity under conditions of short-term exposure to stress factors. We assume that prolonged or excessive stress can lead to decreased performance, mood swings, and difficulties in performing tasks. Fourteen percent of the subjects were classified as having a high level of stress resistance. They have developed skills of self-regulation, confidence, adaptability, and the ability to mobilize resources to overcome difficulties. A low level of stress resistance was identified in 3% of volunteers, indicating reduced emotional control, a tendency to anxiety, emotional instability, and avoidance of difficult situations in volunteer work.

The descriptive statistics of coping behavior are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

## Primary Statistical Indicators According to the "COPE" Method by C. Carver et al.

Indicator	M	Me	SD	SE	Mi	Max
Indicator					n	
Positive Reinterpretation	14,65	15,5	1,82	0,353	9	16
Mental Disengagement	10,4	10	2,43	0,479	6	14
Focus on and Venting of Emotions	10,4	11	1,81	0,356	5	16
Use of Instrumental Social Support	12,2	12	2,47	0,472	7	16
Active Coping	13,6	14	1,78	0,344	10	16
Denial	8,6	9	2,61	0,514	4	15
Turning to Religion	9,3	9	4,58	0,92	4	16
Humor	13	12	2,49	0,489	6	16

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Behavioral Disengagement	10	10,5	2,22	0,366	5	13
Restraint Coping	12,2	12,5	2,015	0,383	7	16
Use of Emotional Social Support	10,6	10,5	3,04	0,598	4	16
Substance Use	7,6	6,5	2,725	0,496	4	16
Acceptance	13	13	2,185	0,435	8	16
Suppression of Competing Activities	13	13	1,71	0,324	8	16
Planning	13,5	13,5	1,845	0,345	8	16

Summarizing the results of descriptive statistics, it can be noted that the sample of volunteers demonstrates a relative homogeneity in the use of most coping strategies, indicating the formation of similar ways of responding to stressful situations. At the same time, certain differences are observed in the scales related to the emotional sphere and the ways of seeking support, which may suggest varying approaches to managing tension and alleviating emotional strain. The general tendency indicates a balanced use of both emotion-focused and behavior-oriented coping strategies, which ensures an adequate level of adaptability among volunteers under stressful conditions.

A qualitative analysis of the obtained indicators shows that the most frequently used strategy is "Positive Reinterpretation and Growth" (M=14.65), which indicates a well-developed ability for self-regulation and self-actualization, readiness to accept professional challenges, and the capacity to constructively reframe stressful situations—perceiving difficulties as opportunities for personal growth and the development of new skills. The strategies "Planning" (M=13.5) and "Active Coping" (M=13.6) are also often employed by the respondents, suggesting responsibility, the ability to quickly orient themselves in a situation, make decisions, and act under uncertainty. These strategies promote effective organization of activities, coordination of team actions, and maintenance of collective motivation. They help volunteers rationally allocate time and resources, reduce the impact of stress factors, and maintain confidence and psychological balance.

Next in frequency are the coping strategies "Humor" (M = 13), "Suppression of Competing Activities" (M = 13), and "Acceptance" (M = 13), which enable respondents to maintain a positive attitude, reduce tension, and foster an optimistic outlook on their experiences; they help focus on priority tasks, enhance performance, and decrease stress levels; they also ensure adaptation to unpredictable circumstances, assist in focusing on controllable aspects of the situation, and promote inner equilibrium. Awareness and flexibility in responding to stressful events strengthen psychological resilience and contribute to the emotional well-being of volunteers.

Less frequently used strategies include "Instrumental Social Support" (M = 12.2), "Restraint" (M = 12.2), "Emotional Social Support" (M = 10.6), and "Focus on and Venting of Emotions" (M = 10.4). This suggests a prevailing tendency toward independent problem-solving and avoidance of external support, which may lead to overload, emotional exhaustion, and an increased risk of professional burnout. The least used strategies are "Mental Disengagement" (M = 10.4), "Behavioral Disengagement" (M = 10), "Turning to Religion" (M = 9.3), "Denial" (M = 8.6), and "Substance Use" (M = 7.6). These strategies are generally considered ineffective, and their infrequent use indicates the respondents' orientation toward constructive ways of coping with stress.

The results of the coping strategy analysis demonstrate that volunteers predominantly employ constructive stress-coping strategies, reflecting their organization, goal orientation, responsibility, and capacity for self-control. Such behavior indicates an optimistic perception of difficulties and the ability to rationally structure their activities for effective problem-solving. In the course of volunteer work, emotional self-regulation and the ability to be aware of and express one's emotions play an important role. Experience in volunteer initiatives influences the ways of seeking support and the tendency toward a more conscious, organized approach to task performance. The obtained results indicate the maturity of personal resources and the ability to adapt under stressful conditions.

The descriptive statistical indicators of the participants' trust are presented in Table 3.

Primary statistical indicators according to A. Kupreichenko's method of trust/distrust of
personality toward the world, others, and oneself

Indicator	M	Me	SD	SE	Min	Max
Trust toward the World	10,1	10	1,86	0,356	5	14
Trust in Other People	9,8	9,5	1,89	0,373	5	13
Self-Trust	14,6	12,5	5,17	0,984	6	26

The analysis of the obtained results indicates differences in the levels of manifestation of this phenomenon. In particular, regarding the indicator "trust in the world," a tendency toward an average level is observed; for "trust in other people," a tendency toward a high level is evident; whereas "trust in oneself" is characterized by lower values compared to the other aspects. These results reflect a general variability in the structure of trust and indicate that volunteers are generally inclined toward a positive perception of their social environment, while at the same time demonstrating a certain lack of confidence in their own abilities and potential.

Quantitative analysis of the scales reveals that an average level prevails for "trust in the world" in 69.5% of respondents, which contributes to a realistic perception of events and balanced decision-making in volunteer activities. A portion of participants (23.7%) with a low level of trust demonstrate increased caution, anxiety, and a tendency toward pessimism, which reduces their activity and effectiveness. Only 6.8% of respondents show a distinctly positive attitude toward the world, openness, and psychological resilience.

For the parameter "trust in other people," a high level prevails among 69.5% of individuals, which indicates the sample's orientation toward social interaction, positive attitudes toward others, and readiness for cooperation, mutual support, and the establishment of constructive interpersonal relationships. In contrast, regarding "trust in oneself," a low level predominates in 79.7% of volunteers. This reflects a tendency toward self-doubt, insecurity about personal competence, fear of making mistakes or not meeting others' expectations, a tendency to underestimate one's achievements, heightened self-criticism in failure situations, dependence on external approval, increased anxiety, and unstable self-confidence.

The next stage of the study involved identifying the features of volunteers' stress resistance during martial law. To achieve this, a correlation analysis was conducted using Spearman's correlation coefficient. The results indicate statistically significant correlations between the level of stress resistance and certain coping strategies employed by volunteers when managing stressful situations.

In particular, a positive correlation was found between the "level of stress resistance" and the coping strategies "focus on and venting of emotions" (r = 0.506; p < 0.05) and "substance use" (r = 0.380; p < 0.05). Volunteers are capable of recognizing and openly expressing their emotions, which serves as a means of emotional release and tension reduction. Such behavior helps maintain inner balance, decreases internal strain, and prevents the accumulation of negative experiences. However, some volunteers tend to alleviate emotional tension through external, not always constructive, means of state regulation—using certain "calming" substances for temporary relief. This strategy is compensatory in nature but does not support long-term adaptation, as it merely masks emotional difficulties without addressing their causes.

A positive correlation was also identified between "stress resistance level" and "trust in the world" (r = 0.380; p < 0.05), which holds important psychological significance for understanding the internal resources of volunteers during martial law. A higher level of stress resistance is associated with a stronger capacity to trust the surrounding world and perceive it as relatively safe and predictable. Such volunteers tend to evaluate events more optimistically, adapt more easily to changes, and maintain emotional stability even in complex or crisis situations. It can be assumed that trust in the world functions as an internal psychological resource that supports stress resistance. A positive perception of reality lowers anxiety levels, facilitates better control of emotional reactions, and promotes effective coping with life's difficulties.

Thus, the results of the correlation analysis indicate that volunteers with higher levels of stress resistance tend to engage both in constructive emotional self-expression and in quick methods of tension reduction, reflecting the ambivalent nature of their coping mechanisms. A positive worldview strengthens their ability to withstand stress, while developed stress resistance fosters the formation of a stable and secure attitude toward the world.

The findings emphasize the need for psychological support and the development of constructive self-regulation skills that allow individuals to effectively cope with stress without resorting to potentially harmful strategies.

**Conclusions.** Stress resistance is a key factor in maintaining the psychological health and effective functioning of volunteers during martial law. It determines the individual's ability to preserve inner balance, emotional stability, and productivity under conditions of high workload, uncertainty, and continuous exposure to stressors. The results of the empirical study demonstrated that most volunteers exhibit an average level of stress resistance, which ensures adaptive behavior in short-term stressful situations.

A high level of stress resistance is associated with well-developed self-regulation skills, cognitive flexibility, an optimistic perception of difficulties, and readiness to mobilize resources to overcome tension. Volunteers who demonstrate high stress resistance more frequently use constructive coping strategies such as "positive reinterpretation," "planning," and "active coping," which facilitate effective problem-solving, maintain psychological well-being, and prevent emotional burnout.

At the same time, the revealed correlations point to the ambivalence of coping mechanisms: some volunteers, alongside constructive strategies, resort to maladaptive forms of state regulation, such as the use of "calming" substances, indicating a need for developing emotional self-regulation skills. The positive relationship between stress resistance and trust in the world suggests that a positive perception of reality serves as an internal psychological resource that supports adaptability and reduces anxiety. Such trust promotes the formation of an optimistic attitude toward events, sustaining confidence and resilience in crisis conditions.

Therefore, stress resistance among volunteers during martial law represents a complex characteristic that integrates cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of personality. It ensures the ability to adapt to extreme circumstances, control emotional reactions, maintain constructive social relationships, and effectively provide assistance to others.

**Perspective for Further Research.** Future research should focus on studying the dynamics of volunteers' stress resistance in prolonged crisis situations; analyzing gender, age, and professional differences in coping strategies; and exploring the relationship between stress resistance and other components of psychological health—such as emotional intelligence, reflexivity, self-trust, and social support. The development of these directions will deepen the understanding of psychological mechanisms of volunteer adaptation and contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of their activities under martial law conditions.

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