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SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF THE MANIFESTATION OF «SOFT SKILLS» IN STARTER SCHOLAR'S IN WAR TIME

У статті досліджуються психологічні особливості прояву та розвитку «soft skills» (гнучких навичок) у старших школярів в умовах воєнного часу, коли традиційне освітнє середовище зазнає суттєвих трансформацій, а психоемоційний стан підлітків перебуває під постійним впливом стресогенних чинників. Актуальність теми зумовлена потребою в адаптації освітніх стратегій до нових реалій, а також необхідністю формування в молоді ключових життєвих компетентностей, що сприяють не лише успішній соціалізації, а й психологічній стійкості в умовах кризи. Метою дослідження є виявлення специфіки прояву таких «soft skills», як емоційний інтелект, комунікативні вміння, критичне мислення, адаптивність, стресостійкість та навички командної взаємодії серед старших школярів, які навчаються в умовах часткової або повної дистанційної освіти, евакуації, переміщення чи загальної нестабільності, викликані воєнними подіями. У роботі застосовано комплекс емпіричних методів дослідження, зокрема анкетування, тестування та спостереження, що дало змогу визначити рівень сформованості гнучких навичок у вибірці респондентів. Автор аналізує взаємозв'язок між рівнем розвитку «soft skills» і психологічною адаптованістю школярів до умов воєнного стану, а також вплив соціального оточення, підтримки з боку родини й освітнього середовища на активізацію внутрішніх ресурсів учнівської молоді. Результати дослідження свідчать про зростання значущості саме гнучких навичок у процесі подолання труднощів, збереження психічного здоров'я та побудови ефективної комунікації в умовах стресу. У статті також запропоновано практичні рекомендації для педагогів, психологів та батьків щодо цілеспрямованого розвитку «soft skills» у старшокласників з урахуванням специфіки воєнного часу.

Дослідження психологічних особливостей прояву "soft skills" у старших школярів в умовах воєнного часу є необхідним для розуміння не лише їхніх індивідуальних характеристик, а й для розробки ефективних освітніх програм, які можуть сприяти розвитку цих навичок у молоді в умовах стресу та змін. У даній роботі будуть проаналізовані особливості формування «soft skills» у контексті війни, що дозволить краще зрозуміти потреби учнів та знайти шляхи їхньої підтримки.

В статті акцентовано увагу на тому, що розвиток soft skills у старшокласників під час війни є критично важливим для їхнього емоційного здоров'я та життєвої стійкості. Педагоги мають формувати критичне мислення і командні навички через практичні завдання та підтримку взаємодії. Психологи повинні допомагати підліткам управляти емоціями, адаптуватися до змін і розвивати гнучкість мислення. Батьки, у свою чергу, мають бути живим прикладом стійкості, підтримувати ініціативність і залучати дітей до конструктивної комунікації.

Результати дослідження сприятимуть створенню адаптивних освітніх і психологічних програм, спрямованих на розвиток креативного мислення, підвищення емоційної стійкості та адаптивності підлітків. Це, у свою чергу, допоможе зменшити негативний вплив стресу на навчання й особистісний розвиток учнів, сприяючи їхній успішній інтеграції в суспільство та підготовці до майбутнього життя в умовах невизначеності.

Ключові слова: старші школярі, soft skills, гнучкі навички, психологічна адаптація, воєнний стан, емоційний інтелект, стресостійкість, комунікативні вміння, критичне мислення, дистанційне навчання.

The article explores the psychological features of the manifestation and development of «soft skills» in high school students in wartime, when the traditional educational environment is undergoing significant transformations, and the psycho-emotional state of adolescents is under constant influence of stress factors. The relevance of the topic is due to the need to adapt educational strategies to new realities, as well as the need to develop key life competencies in young people that contribute not only to successful socialization but also to psychological stability in times of crisis. The aim of the study is to identify the specifics of the manifestation of such soft skills as emotional intelligence, communication skills, critical thinking, adaptability, stress resistance and teamwork skills among high school students studying in conditions of partial or full distance education, evacuation, displacement or general instability caused by military events. The paper uses a set of empirical research methods, including questionnaires, testing, and observation, which made it possible to determine the level of flexible skills in the sample of respondents.

The author analyzes the relationship between the level of development of soft skills and the psychological adaptation of schoolchildren to martial law, as well as the impact of the social environment, family support, and the educational environment on the activation of students' internal resources. The results of the study indicate the growing importance of flexible skills in the process of overcoming difficulties, maintaining mental health and building effective communication under stress. The article also offers practical recommendations for teachers, psychologists, and parents on the targeted development of soft skills in high school students, taking into account the specifics of wartime. The study of the psychological characteristics of “soft skills” in high school students in wartime is necessary to understand not only their individual characteristics, but also to develop effective educational programs that can help develop these skills in young people under stress and change. This paper will analyze the peculiarities of soft skills development in the context of war, which will allow us to better understand the needs of students and find ways to support them.

The article emphasizes that the development of soft skills in high school students during war is critical for their emotional health and resilience. Teachers should develop critical thinking and teamwork skills through practical tasks and supportive interaction. Psychologists need to help adolescents manage emotions, adapt to change, and develop flexible thinking. Parents, in turn, should be a living example of resilience, support initiative and engage their children in constructive communication.

The results of the study will contribute to the creation of adaptive educational and psychological programs aimed at developing creative thinking, increasing emotional stability and adaptability of adolescents. This, in turn, will help reduce the negative impact of stress on students' learning and personal development, contributing to their successful integration into society and preparation for a future life of uncertainty.

Key words: high school students, soft skills, flexible skills, psychological adaptation, martial law, emotional intelligence, stress resistance, communication skills, critical thinking, distance learning.

Problem statement. In today's world, the ability to communicate, work in a team, adapt to change and solve problems is an integral part of personal and professional development. These so-called «soft skills» are becoming increasingly important, especially in the context of global challenges and instability we face in modern society. In wartime, the psychological peculiarities of the manifestation of these skills in high school students are of particular importance, because it is during this period that young people experience numerous stresses, changes in the social environment and personal challenges. The relevance of the study lies in the fact that military conflicts affect the psychological state of students, creating new needs and challenges in the process of learning and socialization. Children and adolescents are forced to adapt to new conditions, which is often accompanied by feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and stress. This, in turn, affects their ability to develop and implement soft skills, which are critical for their socialization and further integration into society. Therefore, the study of psychological characteristics of soft skills in high school students in wartime is necessary to understand not only their individual characteristics, but also to develop effective educational programs that can promote the development of these skills in young people under stress and change. This paper will analyze the peculiarities of soft skills development in the context of war, which will allow us to better understand the needs of students and find ways to support them.

The analysis of the scientific and pedagogical literature allows us to note that the problem of forming soft skills in higher education students is quite new, which explains the small number of studies, but extremely interesting. Some aspects of the problem under study are considered in the scientific works of foreign scientists. For example, researchers from higher education institutions in Poland and Romania presented the results of a quantitative study on the integration of educational games into the subject of project management. Scientific research was aimed at developing soft skills that can be developed in students by involving them in educational games and project activities (Toader, C. S., Brad, I., Rujescu, C. I., Dumitrescu, C. S., Sîrbulescu, E. C., Orboi, M. D., Gavrilă, 2023).

The purpose of the article. The purpose of the article is to analyze the psychological features of manifestation and the level of soft skills development in high school students in wartime, as well as to identify the impact of crisis circumstances on the development of flexible skills that promote adaptation, emotional stability and effective interaction of adolescents in difficult life situations.

Presentation of the main material. The study of the psychological characteristics of soft skills among high school students in difficult wartime conditions requires the use of specific methods that allow us to assess the key aspects of soft skills, their relationship with motivational and personal factors, and the impact of stressful situations on their development. Several proven and adapted tools were used in the course of the study. The methodology for identifying communication and organizational tendencies (KOS-2) made it possible to determine the level of students' leadership and communication skills, which are important for their participation in group activities. This tool revealed the extent to which high school students are able to organize teamwork, take responsibility, and interact effectively with their peers. The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of developing recommendations for optimizing the process of forming soft skills in high school students in wartime. The results of the study will contribute to the creation of adaptive educational and psychological programs aimed at developing creative thinking, increasing emotional stability and adaptability of adolescents. This, in turn, will help reduce the negative impact of stress on students' learning and personal development, contributing to their successful integration into society and preparation for a future life of uncertainty.

The sample of subjects consisted of 60 high school students. Cognitive skills encompass intellectual abilities that ensure effective solution of complex tasks and adaptation to new conditions. Critical thinking is the main component of this group and involves the ability to analyze information, assess its reliability, identify logical errors and make rational decisions. Creativity is also an important element of cognitive skills and is characterized by the ability to generate new ideas, use non-standard approaches and create innovative solutions. This skill is especially relevant in the modern world, where creative problem-solving is a competitive advantage. Adaptability, which is the ability to respond quickly to changes, learn new things and adapt to new conditions, completes the list of key cognitive skills. Soft skills can be classified according to different criteria, depending on their functional focus and the environment in which they are used. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the nature of these skills, their role in various spheres of life, and the specifics of their formation and development [2].

Classification by functional focus. Effective communication skills. This category includes the ability to establish contact with interlocutors, convey information in an understandable and accessible form, show active listening and empathy, and use both verbal and non-verbal means of communication. Communication skills are of universal importance because they are the basis for successful interaction in both educational and professional environments.

The study of communicative and organizational tendencies of high school students was conducted using the KOS-2 methodology aimed at assessing the level of leadership and communication skills of students. The purpose of the study was to determine how well students are able to effectively interact with others, organize joint activities, and take responsibility, which is an important aspect of developing soft skills in adolescents. Since these skills are important not only in the educational process but also in the context of social changes related to the war, the study is particularly relevant. As for organizational skills, about 40% of the participants demonstrated a high level of development of these skills. They effectively planned and coordinated joint activities, distributed responsibilities and managed the work of the group, which allowed them to achieve high results [4]. However, the remaining 30% of students had a low level of organizational skills. This indicates that not all adolescents are confident in their leadership skills and they need more practice to develop such qualities as initiative, planning and decision-making. One of the important aspects of the study was to examine the impact of stress factors on the development of communication and organizational skills. The results showed that students who demonstrated a higher level of development of these skills also showed greater resilience to stressful situations. This confirms the

relationship between the level of soft skills development and psychological resilience to stress. Those participants who had greater communication and organizational skills coped better with tense situations, maintaining productivity and a positive attitude to the tasks that arose [10].

D. Johnson's creativity questionnaire was used to assess the level of creative thinking of high school students. This tool allowed not only to identify the ability of students to generate new ideas, flexibility of thinking and search for non-standard solutions, but also to assess the numerical indicators of these qualities. The methodology involves a number of tasks that help identify individual creative traits, such as originality, flexibility, associative thinking, and the speed of response to creative tasks. The results of the study showed that most students have an average level of creative thinking, with some of them demonstrating high levels of originality and the ability to quickly adapt their ideas to new conditions. A certain number of high school students showed low results in the category of «flexibility of thinking», which may indicate difficulties in adapting to non-standard situations or insufficient experience in finding alternative solutions.

According to the test results, only 25% of students demonstrated a high level of creativity, showing both the ability to generate non-standard ideas and flexibility in solving problems. 40% of students had average scores, indicating a moderate ability to think creatively, but with some difficulty in finding new solutions. The remaining 35% of students showed low levels of creativity, particularly in terms of flexible thinking and adaptability. The Smekal-Kucher personality orientation test was used to determine whether high school students are oriented toward personal or collective goals, which is an important component of their behavior in groups and society. This methodology allowed us to identify whether students are oriented toward individual achievement or team success, which is key to assessing their social skills, ability to cooperate and interact in a group.

The process of applying the methodology consisted in offering students a number of situations where they had to choose between decisions related to personal or collective goals. The test also used questions that required them to assess their preferences for teamwork or achieving personal results. Depending on their choice, students received a score that reflected their orientation toward individual or group goals [9].

Quantitative indicators were obtained by counting the answers that demonstrated a preference for individual or collective achievement. In particular, a scale was used for the assessment, where each answer was scored according to the extent to which it contributed to either personal or group development.

The results of the study showed that the majority of students, namely 60%, show a tendency to focus on collective goals, which indicates a high level of ability to cooperate and interact in a group. 30% of students had a clear focus on personal achievement, which may indicate their independence and desire to succeed at their own expense. Only 10% of students showed a mixed orientation, which indicates their ability to adapt to different conditions and change their priorities depending on the circumstances.

The T. Ehlers Achievement Motivation Diagnostic Tool was used to assess high school students' desire to succeed, their desire for self-realization, overcoming difficulties, and achieving high results. This tool allows us to find out how determined students are to achieve their goals, as well as what internal motives drive them to action.

Quantitative indicators were obtained by counting the number of responses indicating high achievement motivation, as well as by using a scale that assessed students' desire to succeed, ability to overcome difficulties and achieve desired results. In the case of high motivation, a student received a high score, and in the case of low motivation, a low score. The results of the study showed that 70% of students demonstrated high achievement motivation. They expressed a desire to achieve high results, were ready to overcome difficulties and take responsibility for their achievements. 20% of students showed an average level of motivation, showing interest in success, but with some doubts about their abilities or readiness to overcome difficulties. 10% of students had a low level of achievement motivation, which may indicate their low self-confidence or lack of results orientation.

These results indicate that the majority of high school students have a high level of achievement motivation, which is important for their development, especially in the context of stress and unpredictability characteristic of wartime. At the same time, students with a low level of motivation should be given more attention, in particular through psychological and pedagogical interventions that will help increase their self-confidence and ability to overcome difficulties [11].

In wartime, traditional channels of communication often become limited due to physical and technical difficulties, requiring adolescents to adapt to new forms of interaction. Today's adolescents experiencing armed conflict are developing effective communication skills through online channels, mobile applications, social media, and other digital tools. These skills are extremely important for future professional activities, as the modern labor market is increasingly focused on remote work, as well as on

effective online communication in conditions of limited physical contact. Teenagers who learn to communicate effectively through these tools develop the ability to quickly adapt to new conditions, which is an important aspect in the professional field. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively with other people, even in the absence of face-to-face meetings, becomes a necessary skill for professional growth and for maintaining the necessary connections in the business environment, education or other fields. War creates conditions in which adolescents must learn to be flexible and adaptive to rapid changes in the labor market, technology, and social structures. In such conditions, adaptability becomes one of the key skills needed to develop a career in a constantly changing world [5, p. 64].

Table 1.

Research results using the following methods

Methodology.	Assessable aspects of “soft skills”	Results and conclusions
Methodology for identifying communication and organizational aptitudes (KOS-2)	Leadership skills, communication skills, organization of work in a group	High school students showed a high level of communication skills, especially in group tasks. Leadership qualities are found in 40% of the participants, which indicates the potential for leadership development in teamwork.
The D. Johnson Creativity Inventory	Creative thinking, flexible thinking, generation of new ideas	A high level of creativity (80% of participants) allows students to generate non-standard ideas, but some participants had difficulty implementing these ideas in practical settings.
Methods of studying personality orientation Smekal-Kucher	Focus on personal or collective goals	60% of students are focused on collective goals, which contributes to their effective work in groups. The other 40% have a more individual approach to achieving goals, which affects their working methods.
T. Ehlers' method of diagnosing achievement motivation	Striving for achievement, self-realization, overcoming difficulties	75% of students are highly motivated to succeed, demonstrating perseverance and readiness to overcome obstacles on the way to their goals.

Based on the correlation analysis, the results of which are presented in the form of a diagram, a number of important conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between the psychological characteristics of the personality studied using four methods: KOS-2 (Communicative and Organizational Aptitudes), D. Johnson's Creativity Inventory, Smekal-Kucher's methodology, and T. Ehlers' methodology. All correlations were evaluated using Pearson's coefficient (r), and the results are presented as a percentage equivalent (i.e., $r \times 100$), which allows for better visualization of the degree of correlation.

The highest correlations are observed between achievement motivation and other variables. In particular, according to the KOS-2 methodology, communication skills demonstrate a strong positive correlation with achievement motivation ($r = 0,56$; $p < 0,01$), and organizational skills are even higher ($r = 0.61$, or 61%). This indicates that the higher the level of achievement motivation, the more actively an individual demonstrates social initiative, the ability to influence others and take responsibility in joint activities. Similarly, the positive correlations of organizational and communication skills with leadership qualities (59% and 47%, respectively) confirm that effective organization and interpersonal communication are closely related to leadership potential.

The Johnson Creativity Questionnaire revealed strong positive correlations between creative thinking and achievement motivation ($r = 0,67$; $p < 0,01$), which can be interpreted as evidence that people with a high level of achievement motivation tend to be more intellectually flexible, search for original solutions and non-standard approaches to activities. Also significant is the relationship between flexibility of thinking and adaptability ($r = 0,61$; $p < 0,01$), which demonstrates that people with developed cognitive flexibility are better able to navigate change and easily adjust to new environmental requirements.

According to the Smekal-Kucher methodology, it was found that self-orientation is closely correlated with achievement motivation ($r = 0,63$; $p < 0,01$) and creativity ($r = 0,59$; $p < 0,01$). This suggests that individuals who are focused on their own needs, goals, and self-realization demonstrate a higher level of

intellectual activity and desire to succeed. On the other hand, orientation toward others is more related to sociability ($r = 0,51$; $p < 0,01$), which is logical, since this motivational attitude involves attention to interpersonal relationships and interaction with others.

T. Ehlers' methodology confirms the leading role of motivational factors in the development of other psychological qualities. In particular, the indicator of «striving for success» has strong relationships with sociability ($r = 0,63$; $p < 0,01$) and emotional stability ($r = 0,58$; $p < 0,01$), which may indicate that self-confidence, endurance, and internal focus are integral components of the person's achievable potential. The indicator of «overcoming difficulties» showed strong links with creativity ($r = 0,60$; $p < 0,01$) and emotional stability ($r = 0,61$; $p < 0,01$), which once again confirms the role of cognitive flexibility and internal balance in overcoming life challenges.

Thus, the results of the analysis suggest a systemic nature of the relationships between motivational, communicative, creative, and organizational characteristics of the individual. The most stable correlations are observed between achievement motivation and other variables, which indicates its fundamental role in shaping social efficiency and adaptive potential. Positive relationships between communication skills, leadership, organizational skills, and emotional stability indicate the integrated nature of the psychological functioning of the individual, where individual traits mutually reinforce each other. Thus, the correlation analysis confirms the inter-parametric interdependence of key psychological characteristics, which is an important basis for further applied and theoretical research in the field of personality psychology.

To support high school students on this path, teachers, psychologists, and parents can target key soft skills, taking into account the specifics of wartime.

Teachers should focus on developing critical thinking, as the ability to analyze facts and draw independent conclusions is vital in an information war. Students should be given tasks that require comparison, justification, and defense of their own position. In addition, it is important to encourage teamwork through mini-projects, discussions, and joint problem solving, as cohesion helps to survive in crisis situations. It is equally important to introduce elements of stress resistance into the educational process: short calming practices, breathing exercises, and grounding can be a great start or end to lessons [3].

Psychologists should pay special attention to the development of emotional intelligence in adolescents. Learning to recognize and safely express emotions helps to reduce the level of internal stress and avoid emotional outbursts. It is also extremely important to develop self-regulation and self-support skills: students should have simple but effective methods of reducing anxiety or overcoming panic. In addition, adaptability and flexibility should be prioritized. Through exercises on accepting change and planning in the face of uncertainty, psychologists can prepare young people to respond adequately to unforeseen circumstances.

Parents, in turn, play the role of living examples. Teenagers perceive not words, but actions. Therefore, the resilience and flexibility of adults at home should not only be topics for conversation, but a lifestyle. It is important for parents to involve high school students in family discussions and planning, stimulating the development of communication skills, critical thinking and responsibility. It is worth supporting the initiative of teenagers even in cases where their ideas seem «dizzying» to adults. Let young men and women make mistakes, learn and act - because today it is more important to teach them to be flexible and courageous than infallible. Thus, the targeted development of soft skills in high school students in war conditions is not a systematic and comprehensive work of all participants in the educational process. And each adult who joins this process becomes a kind of «architect of resilience» of the new generation [8].

Conclusion. The study found that in wartime, flexible skills play a particularly important role in ensuring psychological resilience, adaptation, and personal development of high school students. In today's environment, when the educational environment is being significantly transformed and adolescents are experiencing chronic stress, uncertainty, and loss of security, soft skills are becoming a tool for overcoming life challenges. These skills were most prominent among students who had support from family, teachers, or peers, which demonstrates the importance of a positive social environment. In contrast, students who experienced evacuation, loss of housing, or prolonged isolation showed a decrease in communication, anxiety, and decreased self-confidence. The study confirmed that the development of «soft skills» in high school students is not an automatic process, but requires targeted psychological and pedagogical support, especially in times of war. This applies, in particular, to critical thinking, decision-making skills, and effective teamwork, components that are formed in conditions of stability but require special support in times of crisis.

The importance of “soft skills” in the lives of adolescents has also been studied in the context of their impact on the effectiveness of learning, communication and vocational training. It was found that the development of such skills as emotional intelligence, stress resistance and the ability to communicate effectively play a key role in the social adaptation of young people, help in solving difficult situations and facilitate professional orientation in the future. Particular attention was paid to the impact of wartime on the development of soft skills. It was found that in times of war, adolescents face new challenges that require them to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. This requires the development of stress resistance, the ability to make quick decisions, leadership skills and cooperation in difficult conditions.

Developing soft skills in high school students during war is critical for their emotional health and resilience. Teachers should develop critical thinking and teamwork skills through practical tasks and supportive interaction. Psychologists need to help adolescents manage emotions, adapt to change, and develop flexible thinking. Parents, in turn, should be a living example of resilience, support initiative and engage their children in constructive communication.

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