

COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE OF UKRAINIANS IN UKRAINE AND LITHUANIA

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Abstract. *This study investigates the psychosocial effects of war and forced displacement on Ukrainians, comparing the experiences of those residing in Ukraine with Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania. Utilizing standardized psychological indicators, including personal anxiety, reactive anxiety, and positive mental health, the research establishes significant differences between the two groups. Ukrainian refugees exhibit higher levels of personal and reactive anxiety, suggesting increased stress associated with adapting to a new environment. Despite facing challenging circumstances, both groups maintain an average level of positive mental health, emphasizing their resilience. The findings underscore the complexity of the situation and highlight the critical need for comprehensive psychological support for both refugees and the population in Ukraine, with potential implications for the development of targeted interventions and long-term support strategies. Further research avenues include exploring adaptive strategies, examining the impact of traumatic events on children, and developing social support programs to enhance psychological well-being in the context of conflict and displacement.*

Keywords: *psychosocial impact, war, forced displacement, Ukrainians, refugees, Lithuania, personal anxiety, reactive anxiety, positive mental health, resilience, psychological support, adaptive strategies, traumatic events, social support programs.*

The state of study problem. In today's world, where globalization and international conflicts lead to mass population movements, the psychological state of refugees and those remaining in their country of origin becomes increasingly critical. Ukraine, a nation with a complex historical and contemporary context, faces challenges that profoundly impact its citizens' psychological well-being. This issue is particularly pertinent to Ukrainians residing within Ukraine and those compelled to emigrate, notably to Lithuania.

This article aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the psychological state of two groups of Ukrainians: those living in Ukraine and those who, as refugees,

have settled in Lithuania. The primary focus is on examining various aspects of psychological well-being, including trait and state anxiety and positive mental health.

The significance of this issue stems from the need to understand the specific psychological changes that occur in people amid migration processes and socio-economic instability. The research aims not only to identify key differences in the psychological states of these two groups but also to contribute to the development of effective strategies for psychological support and adaptation for both refugees and those remaining in their country of origin.

Analysis of the latest research and

publications. Military conflicts have far-reaching consequences that extend beyond the immediate loss of life. They lead to higher mortality and disability rates and significantly impact both physical and mental health. Conflicts destroy social structures and economies, resulting in long-term issues, including internal displacement, rising poverty, and chronic malnutrition. The declaration of war induces a profound crisis state, influencing the long-term development of society and leaving marks in history, shaping the perceptions and realities of generations that have experienced its aftermath. Military conflicts in various countries significantly increase the incidence of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse [1]. There are a number of classic scientific papers on the impact of war on mental health [2, 3, 4]. According to the World Health Organization, in situations of armed conflict, approximately 10 % of people who have experienced traumatic events face serious mental health problems, and another 10 % develop behavioral disorders that impair their ability to function effectively, including depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic issues [5, 6]. The large-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, which began on February 24, 2022, has significantly impacted the mental health of the population, particularly affecting the youth, who are most vulnerable to the psychological effects of the conflict. The continuous stress, instability, and uncertainty characteristic of life in conflict conditions have led to an increase in mental disorders, necessitating immediate research and response from both government and non-governmental organizations capable

of providing appropriate psychological support [7]. In a study by L. A. Lyubinetz, G. P. Shveda, and M. O. Kachmarska, medical workers exhibited significantly high levels of reactive and trait anxiety, indicating a moderately high state of stress. Men and women both showed high anxiety, but women had higher trait anxiety, suggesting deeper emotional involvement in their work. These findings highlight the need for specialized mental health support programs for medical professionals, especially in dynamic and challenging work conditions [8]. O. L. Turyinina's study used the Traumatic Stress Assessment Scale to compare the psychological impact of trauma between young adults and the elderly. Young adults displayed moderate to high trauma impact, with no individuals at a low impact level, indicating a pronounced reaction to trauma. The elderly showed even greater trauma effects, with 90% in the high impact range, highlighting their vulnerability.

Both age groups experienced high overall anxiety, affecting their daily functioning and social interaction. The study suggests that while young people adapt better to traumatic events and their aftermath, the elderly struggle more with anxiety and discomfort, leading to difficulties in adapting and a decrease in life quality.

The findings underscore the need for age-specific mental health support programs, emphasizing the importance of individualized approaches that include cognitive-behavioral therapy and social support strategies to address the emotional and psychological needs resulting from trauma [9]. V. V. Predka and O. O. Somova's study outlines stress factors for Ukrainians during the war, showing higher stress levels in women, especially

those connected to combat zones. Symptoms like irritability and sleep issues are common, with work, hobbies, and volunteering noted as effective stress relief methods. The findings underscore the need for targeted psychological support and adaptive strategies during wartime [10]. The study by G. O. Slabkyi, A. R. Ivats-Chabyna, and V. Z. Cherpak reveals that mental exhaustion can lead to a high desire for alcohol use (47.8 %) and self-destructive behavior (34.3 %). The authors suggest establishing a public health system providing round-the-clock psychological support to the entire population as a solution. The findings highlight the link between mental burnout and increased risky behaviors, emphasizing the urgent need for infrastructure to offer continuous psychological support to mitigate the adverse effects of mental exhaustion on individual and public health [11].

The psychological exhaustion affecting the population in conflict zones does not only impact local residents but also those who have been compelled to leave their native places. Displaced persons, experiencing stress from the loss of home and the necessity of adapting to new conditions, face additional challenges. Their experience requires special consideration and inclusion in the development and implementation of effective psychological support and social adaptation programs.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, «refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country» [12]. While important historical, cultural, political, geographical, and socio-economic factors differentiate the experiences of refugees around

the world, refugees also have unique experiences because they:

- are civilians without self-defense resources, open to war injuries,
- have a repetitive cumulative effect on such injuries,
- suffer enormous personal, material, psychosocial, literal and symbolic losses, including family members and loved ones, homes, socio-economic status and memories,
- experience cumulative psychosocial stress, economic hardship, and lack of resources during the escape and years after displacement. War stress itself often continues due to exposure to the news, worries about family members, or the loss of family members still living in the conflict zone. All of this can cause a high level of psychological impact.

Although post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is often considered the main consequence of forced migration, depression and anxiety disorders are other very common severe consequences. Depending on the context, prevalence varies considerably between studies. However, average estimates indicate that approximately one-third of refugees cross the diagnostic threshold for post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety disorders [13]. Although there are no specific data on the war in Ukraine, one large preliminary study of internally displaced Ukrainians indicates a similar impact among them [14]. Thus, a greater number of people than the above will potentially need psychological help to varying degrees.

In the work of L. M. Karamushki and T. V. Karamushki, the mental health issues of displaced persons in war conditions are discussed, including high levels of fear, panic, reduced activity in

professional and social life, and family conflicts. Despite these challenges, there are weak manifestations of apathy and depression and a loss of life's meaning, but with a strong need for social support and interaction, indicating a generally positive outlook among the displaced.

The conclusion is drawn that despite serious mental health challenges faced by displaced persons due to war, such as fear, panic, and conflicts with loved ones, there is a tendency to maintain a positive worldview. This is evident in their pronounced need for social interaction and emotional support. Providing adequate assistance and support to this group is crucial to minimize the negative impact of war on their mental health and to facilitate their integration and return to normal life [15].

The purpose of the research work is to analyze and compare the psychological states, including aspects such as anxiety and overall mental health, of Ukrainians residing in their home country and those who have emigrated to Lithuania as refugees, in order to understand the impact of migration and socio-political factors on their psychological well-being.

Presentation of the main material. The study was conducted on the basis of the educational and scientific laboratory «Center for Social and Psychological Adaptation of Personality» of the Department of Psychology of Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University (<https://phil.donnu.edu.ua/czentr-soczialno-psychologichnoyi-adaptacziyi-osobystosti/>) and the Institute of the Union of Scientists of Lithuania (MSI) (<http://msi.lms.lt/>).

The study involved 120 people (60 permanently residing in Ukraine, 60 living in Lithuania and considering themselves forced migrants. The average calendar age in both groups was 26 years.

The following methods were used in this study:

- State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) [16];
- The Positive Mental Health Scale (PMH-scale) (J. Lukat, J. Margraf, R. Lutz, W. M. van der Veld, & E.S. Becker) [17].

The results of the study show that, on average, personal anxiety among people living in Ukraine during the war has an indicator of 44.87, and among Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania – 46.49. (fig. 1).

The average value of personal anxiety among Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania is 46.49, which is above the limit of the average level and indicates a high level of anxiety on the established scale.

The average level of reactive anxiety in Ukraine is 41.82, which indicates the average level on the rating scale. Refugees in Lithuania have a higher average reactive anxiety score of 43.29, which is also at the average level, but close to the upper limit of this category.

Personality anxiety often reflects a stable level of anxiety that an individual experiences in daily life, while reactive anxiety is usually associated with specific stressful events or situations. The high level of personal anxiety among refugees in Lithuania may be the result of:

- long-term stress from the need to adapt to a new environment, loss of habitual lifestyle and social connections;
- psychological reactions to traumatic events, such as the loss of a home or a witness to hostilities;
- constant uncertainty about the future and stability of living conditions.

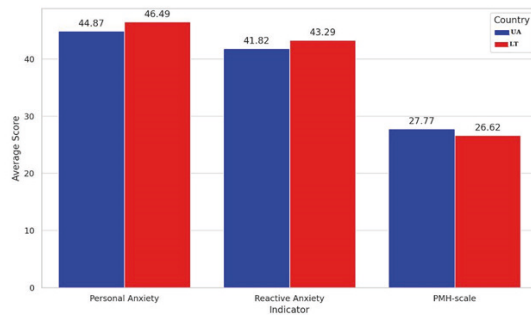


Figure 1. Average values of psychological indicators between Ukrainians in Ukraine and Lithuania

The average level of personal and reactive anxiety in Ukraine may be associated with:

- the direct impact of war, a constant threat to personal safety and well-being;
- stress from coping with wartime conditions, economic hardships, and social instability on a daily basis;
- the impact on mental health from the constant feeling of insecurity and inability to plan for the future.

In addition, the difference between personal and reactive anxiety scores may indicate that refugees face additional challenges in adapting to new living conditions, which increases their vulnerability to stress. Meanwhile, the population remaining in Ukraine may experience higher reactive anxiety, which is associated with direct hostilities and a constant threat to life and health.

Higher rates of personal anxiety among refugees may also be related to feelings of loss of control over their own lives and uncertainty about what the future will bring, especially when they are in a country where new ways to live, as well as social and cultural connections, need to be sought.

Overall, the results of the study highlight

the critical need for a deep understanding of the psychological impacts of war and forced displacement. This requires not only immediate psychological help, but also the development of long-term support strategies that can help people adapt to new living conditions, regain a sense of control and build a new beginning, whether they stay in Ukraine or move to other countries.

Positive mental health (PMH) reflects not only the absence of mental disorders, but also the presence of emotional well-being, life satisfaction, a sense of purpose and direction, and the ability to effectively cope with life's difficulties and stress. It encompasses aspects such as positive relationships with others, personal growth, autonomy, self-actualization, and emotional stability.

In the context of this study, the PMH results show that the average for refugees in Lithuania is slightly lower (26.62) compared to those in Ukraine (27.77). Both indicators refer to the average PMH level on a set scale (25-29 points), which may indicate the following:

- people in Ukraine and refugees in Lithuania, despite difficult life circumstances, still maintain a certain degree of psychological well-being;

- An average PMH level may indicate the availability of resources that help them maintain psychological balance and some optimism despite the stresses associated with war or relocation;

- slightly lower PMH rates among refugees may be due to particular adjustment challenges in a new country, where they may face cultural and language barriers, difficulties in finding work, and creating new social connections.

The high level of personal anxiety of Ukrainian refugees (in 54.7 % of refugees) indicates deep psychological difficulties associated with forced migration, loss of the usual way of life and uncertainty of the future (Fig. 2).

The high reactive anxiety level (37.61 %) reflects a strong emotional response to current stressful events and adjustment challenges in a new environment.

In Ukraine, 43.6 % of people have a high level of personal anxiety. This can indicate the impact of hostilities, the constant threat and uncertainty affecting the psychological state. The level of high reactive anxiety in this group (33.33 %) reflects the response to immediate stress from war, including fear, loss, and socioeconomic hardship.

Thus, Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania and the population staying in Ukraine face high levels of personal and reactive anxiety. This reflects the complexity of the situation in which they find themselves, on the one hand, due to the impact of the war and the change in the familiar environment, and on the other hand, due to the constant uncertainty and stress in the context of the conflict. These findings highlight the critical need to provide comprehensive psychological support and resources for both groups, as they both require specialized interventions to reduce anxiety and improve overall psychological well-being. An effective intervention should include not only psychotherapeutic care, but also social support, adaptation and integration assistance, as well as resources to deal with practical issues of daily life.

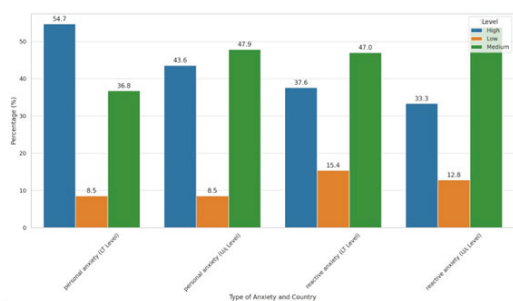


Figure 2. Comparative characteristics of personal and reactive anxiety between Ukrainians in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania

Positive mental health is not only the absence of mental disorders, but also the presence of well-being, the ability to effectively cope with stress, realize one's potential, work productively, and contribute to one's society. In the context of refugees and people living in conditions of war, this is especially important as they face major challenges that can seriously affect their psychological well-being.

From the results of the study, it can be seen that in Ukraine a higher percentage of people have a high level of PMH (41.03 %), compared to Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania (38.46 %). This may indicate that, despite the war conditions, part of the population in Ukraine still retains resilience and the ability to adapt psychologically. Perhaps this is due to strong social ties, a sense of solidarity and community support, which is often seen in crisis situations.

At the same time, Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania have a slightly higher low PMH (34.19 % vs. 26.50 % in Ukraine), which may indicate difficulties associated with the migration experience, including th

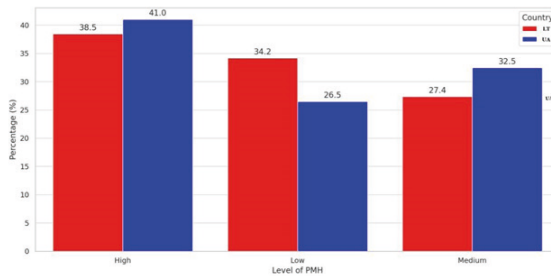


Figure 3. Comparative characteristics of Positive Mental Health (PMH) between Ukrainians in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania

These results point to the need to provide effective support to increase the level of positive mental health among both groups. Particular attention should be paid to programs of psychological assistance and social adaptation for refugees, who may face more complex challenges in the context of integration into a new environment. It is also important to provide ongoing psychosocial support for those who remain in Ukraine, where they may be facing the immediate consequences of the war.

The data highlights the importance of paying attention to mental health in crisis situations, both for people directly in the conflict zone and for those who have been forced to flee their homes and seek safety and shelter.

Conclusions. The study reveals a notable disparity in anxiety levels between Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania and residents in Ukraine. Ukrainian refugees exhibit higher personal and reactive anxiety scores, indicating elevated stress and uncertainty associated with forced migration. The findings emphasize the challenges refugees face in adapting to new environments.

Potential contributors to heightened personal anxiety among refugees include prolonged stress from adaptation, loss of familiar lifestyles and social connections, and psychological reactions to traumatic events. In contrast, individuals in Ukraine experience anxiety directly linked to the ongoing war and daily hardships.

Regarding Positive Mental Health (PMH), both Ukrainians in Ukraine and refugees in Lithuania maintain an average level. The slightly lower PMH among refugees may

stem from adjustment challenges in a new country, such as cultural and language barriers. Notably, a substantial percentage of Ukrainian refugees experience high personal and reactive anxiety, indicating profound psychological difficulties associated with forced migration.

In terms of PMH, a higher percentage of people in Ukraine demonstrate a high level compared to Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania. This suggests that, despite war conditions, a segment of the Ukrainian population retains resilience, possibly due to strong social ties and community support.

These findings underscore the complexity of the situation for both groups, necessitating comprehensive psychological support. Effective interventions should encompass psychotherapeutic care, social support, adaptation and integration assistance, and resources for daily life challenges. The data emphasizes the significance of addressing mental health in crisis situations, whether for individuals in conflict zones or those forced to flee their homes in search of safety and shelter.

The prospects for further research encompass an in-depth exploration of adaptive strategies employed by refugees, an examination of the impact of traumatic events on children, and the development of social support programs. Additional investigations may delve into the efficacy of adaptive strategies utilized by Ukrainian refugees in foreign countries. A more comprehensive analysis of the repercussions of traumatic events on the mental health and development of children and adolescents could yield critical insights for the formulation of targeted intervention programs. Furthermore, ongoing research into the

realm of social support may unveil the necessity and effectiveness of programs designed to alleviate psychological stress and facilitate social adaptation among both refugees and the resident population in Ukraine.

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ПОРІВНЯЛЬНА ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОГО СТАНУ УКРАЇНЦІВ В УКРАЇНІ ТА ЛИТВІ

Боярська Зорина, Боярський Назарій, Оверчук Вікторія

Анотація. *Це дослідження показує психосоціальні наслідки війни та вимушеного переміщення для українців; порівняння досвіду тих, хто проживає в Україні, з українськими біженцями в Литві. З урахуванням стандартизованих психологічних показників, зокрема особистої тривожності, реактивної тривоги та позитивного психічного здоров'я, у дослідженні встановлено значні відмінності між двома групами. Українські біженці демонструють вищий рівень особистої та реактивної тривоги, що свідчить про підвищений стрес, пов'язаний з адаптацією до нового середовища. Незважаючи на складні обставини, обидві групи зберігають середній рівень позитивного психічного здоров'я, підкреслюючи свою стійкість. Отримані результати показують складність ситуації та критичну потребу в комплексній психологічній підтримці як біженців, так і населення в Україні, що може мати наслідки для розробки цільових втручань та довгострокових стратегій підтримки. Подальші напрями досліджень передбачають вивчення адаптивних стратегій, вивчення впливу травматичних подій на дітей та розробку програм соціальної підтримки для покращення психологічного благополуччя в контексті конфліктів та переміщення.*

Ключові слова: *психосоціальний вплив, війна, вимушене переміщення, українці, біженці, Литва, особиста тривога, реактивна тривога, позитивне психічне здоров'я, стійкість, психологічна підтримка, адаптивні стратегії, травматичні події, програми соціальної підтримки.*

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РЕЗИЛІЄНТНІСТЬ ОСОБИСТОСТІ: ПОНЯТТЯ, МОДЕЛІ ТА ТЕХНІКИ ПЛЕКАННЯ

***Анотація.** У статті здійснено теоретичний огляд досліджень резильєнтності особистості та визначено, що резильєнтність розуміється як індивідуальна характеристика, як динамічний процес та як здатність. Охарактеризовано моделі резильєнтності особистості вітчизняних та зарубіжних науковців, а саме: модель соціальної резильєнтності Е. Міллер-Карас (Community-Resiliency-Model-NAC), модель ризику та стійкості В.Данієль та С. Вассел (Risk and Resilience Model), екологічна модель резильєнтності У. Бронфенбреннер (Ecological Model of Resilience), модель стресу та копіngu (Stress and Coping Model), модель п'яти аспектів резильєнтності (Five Cs Model), теоретико-методологічна модель резильєнтності Г. Лазос, модель резильєнтності за О. Романчуком, модель резильєнтності за О. Чиханцовою.*

Визначено основні аспекти резильєнтності особистості. До них відносимо: емоційну регуляцію (здатність розуміти та контролювати емоції, здатність повертись до позитивних емоційних станів після негативних емоційних станів тощо); когнітивну гнучкість когнітивна гнучкість (здатність адаптувати своє мислення та ставлення до ситуацій, здатність до когнітивної реструктуризації); соціальна підтримка (наявність та використання ресурсів підтримки з боку сім'ї, друзів, громади, суспільства); цілепокладання та планування (здатність ставити перед собою мету і впевнено рухатися до неї, не зважаючи на перешкоди); ефективні копінг-стратегії (здатність знаходити конструктивні способи вирішення складних ситуацій). Запропоновано техніки плекання резильєнтності