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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HARDINESS AS A FACTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND PERSONAL MATURITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

### ABSTRACT

The article presents the results of theoretical analysis and empirical research on the resilience and personal maturity of higher education students, future psychologists, in conditions of stress caused by global transformational processes and the war conflict initiated by the Russian Federation in Ukraine.

The aim of the study is to determine the features of the relationship between resilience of higher education students with different levels of personal maturity. The research found that resilience is a psychological factor of personality resilience, allowing individuals to cope with stressful and complex life situations by demonstrating "strength". Empirically, a direct correlation was found between indicators of personal maturity and resilience, namely: the ability to psychologically connect with another person and take risks; life attitudes and enthusiasm, and indicators on the "Control" scale. Thus, hardiness and resilience are integral characteristics of personal maturity. A mature personality copes better with life challenges, difficult situations, using difficulties as opportunities for growth.

### KEYWORDS

hardiness, resilience, personal maturity, higher education students.

Today, in the conditions of a long military conflict, which led to significant human, material, and financial losses, Ukrainian society is experiencing socio-political tension, deterioration of the socio-economic situation, which has triggered the process of transformation of personal beliefs, reassessment of values, ideals. The answer to these serious challenges can be the ability of the individual to adequately assess and perceive the real situation, to actualize their own resources, to apply mature and constructive forms of regulation [6, 9, 10]. It is worth noting that not only material factors [11], but to a large extent the psychological stability and personal maturity of a person affect the quality of life of a person and, especially, a young person. In this context, there is an urgent need to study hardiness and psychological resilience as key factors, essential resources for overcoming complex crisis situations by individuals.

Psychologists such as S. Bogdanov, O. Zaleska, V. Klimchuk, M. Markova, V. Predko, L. Stepanenko, T. Tytarenko, O. Chykhantsova, E. Anthony, T. Betancourt, J. Williamson, and others formulated the definition of hardiness and resilience, identified their structural components, features of formation at different age stages of development, investigated the influence of external factors and internal determinants.

The works of V. Yehorova, O. Konovalova, L. Kuznetsova, L. P'yankivska, O. Yakimets, and others are devoted to the study of hardiness and psychological resilience in the context of various psychological phenomena in youth. According to the researchers, the ability to independently solve problems and determine constructive ways of solving them is key for a young person who seeks self-realization, learns, acquires professionally important competencies, and experiences personal growth.

O. Konovalova and S. Bykova emphasize the relevance of this issue, especially considering the ongoing impact of Russia's military aggression and the imposition of martial law in Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Today, nearly every Ukrainian citizen experiences a constant state of stress, anticipating unforeseen and inevitable events [7].

Anxiety and chronic stress contribute to feelings of uncertainty, exacerbated by the constantly shifting geopolitical landscape. Ukrainians are emotionally immersed in the heroic and tragic events unfolding in their country, often through continuous exposure to news and political analysis. This collective experience forms a psychological trauma known as the "witness of trauma", impacting individuals' psychological and mental well-being, their ability to make decisions, and adapt to new realities.

Research into the problem of personality maturity was initiated by American scientists, in particular representatives of humanistic psychology (E. Erikson, A. Maslow, G. Allport, K. Rogers). In the research of these scientists, personal maturity is considered both as a certain age period in a person's life – adulthood, and as a characteristic of a fairly high level of mental and social development, regardless of age. However, as T. Tytarenko rightly observes, a person can be biologically not young, but psychologically still quite infantile, or, on the contrary, at a fairly young age, surprise others with professional, civic, and personal maturity [12].

In Ukrainian psychology, the issue of personal maturity has been emphasized in the works of M. Boryshevskyi, Y. Hilbukh, N. Didyk, O. Zavhorodna, O. Shtepa, and other scholars. Researchers define maturity as a personality trait that determines one's pathways to self-actualization and organizational direction, regulating relationships with the surrounding world and oneself. Maturity characterizes an individual as

a holistic, constantly evolving system. It represents a complex formation that cannot be reduced to its structural components or the characteristics of its individual aspects. These principles form the foundation of our research.

The integration of health programs, physical activity and psychological support contributes to a comprehensive approach to strengthening the mental and physical health of young people [3, 4].

Despite the large number of studies on the above-mentioned issues, the peculiarities and interrelationships of hardiness as a factor of psychological resilience with personal maturity among students of higher education remain insufficiently studied.

**The research** aims to analyze the relationship between hardiness and levels of personal maturity among higher education students.

Foreign scientists (S. Kobasa, S. Maddi, K. Eschleman, N. Bowling, G. Alarcon) define hardiness as one of the factors of psychological resilience [1, 2]. However, in our opinion, although hardiness and resilience have similar connotations, there are some differences in the meaning of these concepts.

Hardiness is an internal resource of the individual, an integral property. It includes such qualities as self-confidence, independence, faith in oneself and one's own abilities, the ability to see meaning in the challenges that arise in life, to find ways to overcome difficulties [8]. Therefore, hardiness is more related to internal 'strength' and endurance of the individual in difficult conditions.

Resilience is rather a response of the psyche to various difficulties, ranging from current everyday troubles to important life events. Resilience is perceived as a process, and not as a personal trait; it is more related to the adaptability of the individual, which allows them to find ways out of complicated and crisis situations. The main aspects of resilience include flexibility in thinking and actions, a positive attitude toward life, the ability to find solutions in difficult situations, as well as the ability to use support from the social environment, etc. Resilience helps a person not only to survive difficult circumstances but also to emerge from them stronger.

A psychologically mature person is a self-actualizing subject in the world, capable of self-determination, self-acceptance, self-development, and self-realization. The structural components of psychological maturity are as follows:

- Personal maturity: A set of psychological properties that characterize a person as capable of responsible autonomy, self-determination, and self-acceptance, and open to new experiences („I know who I am, what I am, what I want, and what I can do; I am the master of my destiny”).
- Intellectual maturity: A set of psychological properties that characterize a person as capable of cognition, using acquired knowledge in subject activities, logical thinking, reflection, and creativity („I am interested in what I do not yet know; I can apply my knowledge, make balanced and reasoned decisions, analyze mistakes, and am interested in creating something new and improving”).
- Emotional maturity: A set of psychological properties that characterize a person as capable of feeling and controlling emotions, exhibiting adequate spontaneity and conscious self-regulation of emotional manifestations („I have the right to my own emotions; I know exactly what emotions I can experience and their causes; I can control my emotions”).

- **Social maturity:** A set of psychological properties that characterize a person as capable of effective interaction with others in a system of interpersonal relationships based on humanistic principles, without leading to depersonalization or loss of individuality by the person themselves („I understand people and know how to behave with them; I feel connected to them, they arouse my interest, I wish them well, and I am ready to help them”) [5].

Personal maturity is a dynamic quality that evolves over time. Each person has their own individual level of personal maturity. For a person to navigate through difficult times with dignity, they need to learn how to solve their problems even during such periods. It is necessary to cultivate qualities that foster internal growth, to view crises as new opportunities, enabling not only the maintenance of productivity but also the construction of a new identity, thereby opening new opportunities for oneself.

**The aim** of the empirical research is to examine the hardiness indicators of individuals varying in their level of personal maturity.

The empirical study was conducted at Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University (Zaporizhzhia); Kyiv University of Intellectual Property and Law of National University «Odesa Law Academy» (Kyiv); Academy of the State Penitentiary Service (Chernihiv); and the Horlivka Institute for Foreign Languages, Donbas State Pedagogical University (Dnipro).

The sample was made up of 70 full-time graduates of higher education, future psychologists, aged from 24 to 48 years old.

A set of psychodiagnostic methods relevant to the study's objectives was employed to accomplish the tasks: the „Self-Assessment of Hardiness” questionnaire (adapted by T. Larina); a short version of the „Viability Test” (adapted by V. Olefir); and the test-questionnaire of personal maturity (developed by Y. Gilbukh).

The research was conducted online using a Google form. Mathematical and statistical analysis was carried out using the SPSS Statistic 23 program.

The first stage of the research involved collecting empirical data and diagnosing the indicators of hardiness and personal maturity among the surveyed higher education students. The subsequent stage enabled the identification and description of relationships between the indicators of the studied properties through correlation analysis. Qualitative analysis using the „method of aces” allowed for the examination of hardiness characteristics among groups of individuals with varying levels of personal maturity.

The results of viability diagnostics showed the following.

The respondents recorded average indicators on the „Involvement” scale ( $\Sigma=9.4$ ). This suggests that the respondents are generally satisfied with the activities they are engaged in. Although some situational difficulties occasionally reduce the feeling of satisfaction, they do not significantly impact the overall attitude. It should be noted that all the respondents are second level (master's) higher education students. Therefore, we can infer that they are satisfied with the educational activities at their current stage, despite understanding the complexities associated with the introduction of martial law in Ukraine. We believe that this indicator is also associated with satisfaction regarding educational achievements and academic success.

According to the „Control” scale, the indicator is  $\Sigma=8.05$ . This indicates the fact that respondents are generally able to manage their own lives and have developed regulatory autonomy.

On the „Risk Acceptance” scale, slightly increased indicators are observed ( $\Sigma=9.53$ ). This indicates that the respondents perceive their path and educational activities as a means of acquiring relevant competencies and life experience. Respondents of this group are ready to take risks, to act without reliable guarantees of success. That is, they tend to adhere to the opinion that personal and professional development is possible through active assimilation of knowledge, acquisition of experience and further use of it.

The integral level of hardiness among respondents is at an average level ( $\Sigma=28.83$ ), which indicates the situational nature of manifestations of the components of resilience, however, the respondents are at the age to work and develop skills of control, involvement, and the ability to take risks and accept risks. (Table 1).

Table 1. Hardiness indicators of the researched individuals (in points), n=70

Scales	M $\pm$ $\sigma$	$\Sigma$
Involvement	7,8 $\pm$ 2,6	9,4
Control	6,8 $\pm$ 2,4	8,05
Risk Acceptance	8,7 $\pm$ 1,98	9,53
Level of hardiness	26,2 $\pm$ 2,3	28,83

In addition, the levels of manifestation of the integral indicator of hardiness and its individual components were determined.

Thus, it was established that 56 people (80% of the total sample) have a general integral indicator of hardiness within the normal range, however, the levels of expression of individual hardiness components differ.

In 28 individuals, representing 40% of the sample, a low level of involvement was determined according to the „Involvement” scale; 11 individuals (15.7% of the total sample) exhibited a high level, while 44.3% showed an average level. Although 60% of respondents demonstrate interest in educational activities, acquiring professionally important and personal competencies, and actively engaging in studies at institutions of higher education, some 40% of students appear to lack interest. This discrepancy may suggest an experience of identity crisis, a search for oneself, one’s purpose, and one’s place in life.

Regarding the indicators on the „Risk Acceptance” scale: 26 individuals (37.14% of the total sample) exhibit a high level, 38 individuals demonstrate an average level, and 6 individuals (8.57% of the total sample) show a low level. This suggests that the surveyed respondents, who are students, are inclined to take risks, are open to new experiences, can assess potential consequences, and make bold decisions even in challenging situations. Risk-taking plays a significant role in various aspects of life, including personal and professional development, business ventures, and strategic decision-making.

Regarding the indicators on the „Control” scale: 13 individuals, representing 18.57% of the total sample, exhibit a low level. This may suggest challenges in self-control, managing actions, and regulating emotions within this subset of the sample. We believe

this could be attributed to the chronic stress experienced due to the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine. A high level on this scale was observed in 11 individuals (15.71% of the total sample), while an average level was noted in 46 respondents (65.7%). These findings are reasonable given the challenges posed by martial law. Furthermore, it's noteworthy that the participants in this empirical study are future psychologists, which likely influences their inclination towards self-improvement and utilization of various self-help strategies during their academic training.

The results of diagnostics based on the questionnaire test of personal maturity (methodology of Y. Gilbukh) allowed to establish the level of formation of personal maturity.

To a high level of personal maturity, people who scored the highest scores (4th quartile of the distribution of values) on all scales of the specified methodology were classified; persons who scored the lowest values on all scales of the specified methodology (1st quartile of the distribution of values) were classified as having a low level of personal maturity.

As a result of the diagnosis, the following groups of respondents were determined according to the above criteria: 13 respondents (18.57% of the total aggregate sample) were assigned to a high level of personal maturity; 10 people (14.28% of the total aggregate sample) are assigned to the low level and 47 people (67.14% of the total aggregate sample) to the average (Figure 1).

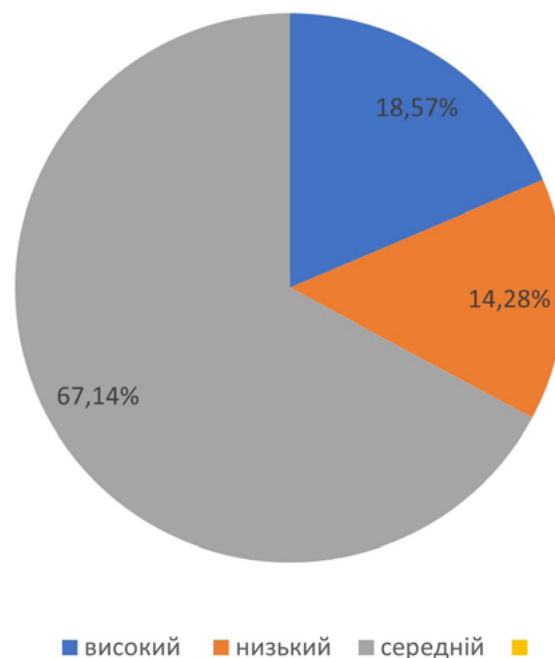


Figure 1. Correlation of indicators of personal maturity

Individuals with a high level of personal maturity are distinguished by the focus of their activities on significant life goals, strive for maximum self-realization, independence, initiative, show clear leadership qualities aimed at achieving high results. They are also characterized by self-confidence, their own capabilities, they are satisfied with their natural data: abilities, character, and skills, at the same time they have adequate self-esteem, they are characterized by high demands on themselves, modesty, respect for other people. This group of respondents is characterized by patriotism, interest in the phenomena of social and political life, a sense of responsibility, the need for communication, and the desire to work in a team. They are emotionally balanced, prudent, show kindness to people, empathy, the ability to listen, have a need for spiritual intimacy with other people.

People with a low level of personal maturity are characterized by lack of initiative, they are afraid to take responsibility, they do not strive for self-realization. Such people are often unsure of their abilities, constantly see their own shortcomings, and have low self-esteem. They do not show interest in the phenomena of social and political life, it is difficult for them to cooperate in a team. Such people are sometimes impulsive, emotionally unbalanced. They are characterized by the emergence of psychological barriers in communication with close people.

The method of correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the obtained indicators of hardiness and personal maturity (Table 2).

Table 2. Significant correlation coefficients between indicators of personal maturity and hardiness (n=70)

Hardiness indicators	Life settings	Ability to psychological closeness	Validity of disagreements
Delight	320	-	p < 0,01
Control	395	-	p < 0,01
Acceptance of risk	-	397	p < 0,05

The results of the analysis indicate the presence of positive correlations between the ability to psychologically close with another person and risk acceptance (p < 0.05); life attitudes and delight (p < 0.01) and indicators on the „Control” scale (p < 0.01).

It has been established that individuals with a high level of personal maturity are not afraid to set goals, make plans, and control the process of their achievement. They consider their own life meaningful and productive.

Individuals with a low level of personal maturity do not believe in their ability to control their own life and consider it meaningless and ineffective.

Persons with a high level of personal maturity feel satisfied with the work they do, have a positive attitude. They do not stop at problems but try to solve them. At the same time, such individuals understand that not all their endeavors will be successful, but they feel that they are obliged to at least try and do their best. They try to learn a lesson from any life situation and perceive failure not as a tragedy, but as a necessary life experience. Such personalities do not depend on situational experiences, they are able to activate in a situation of uncertainty and the need to make a choice.

People with a low level of personal maturity can be thrown off balance by any failure. In stressful situations, they develop internal tension that prevents them from solving the problem. Such individuals, when obstacles arise in their way, give up, believe that they will not succeed, that they cannot influence the situation and improve it in any way. In addition, such people do not get satisfaction from what they do, it seems to them that life is passing them by.

Thus, differences in the manifestation of hardiness of persons differing in the level of personal maturity were determined. It has been established that people with a high level of personal maturity enjoy life, they are not afraid of difficulties, they are able not to lose control in difficult life situations; persons with a low level of personal maturity do not believe in their own strength, any failure can throw them off balance, it seems to them that life is passing them by.

The results of the correlation analysis demonstrated the presence of statistically significant relationships between indicators of personal maturity and hardiness.  
Conclusions.

A complex combination of attitudes, called „hardiness”, is defined by scientists as allowing a person to cope with stressful, complicated life situations, showing „strength”. Hardiness is a psychological factor of individual resilience.

Resilience is the ability to cope with difficult life circumstances, a person’s understanding of the essence of a difficult situation and, at the same time, the awareness that there is a way out of it, but certain efforts must be made. In addition, the resilience that develops in a person allows her to carry out her intended life strategy, despite obvious obstacles, to accumulate life experience and move forward.

Hardiness and resilience are integral characteristics of personal maturity. Since resilience is a psychological factor of personal resilience, which allows not only to cope with difficult situations, but also to strengthen one’s own resources, to acquire valuable life experience, which means to form personal maturity, these conclusions are very important precisely currently – in the period of war in Ukraine.

Prospects for further research are the analysis of gender differences in vitality, resilience, and personal maturity among students of higher education and the development of ways and means of their development among students of higher education during martial law.



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## WZAJEMNY ZWIĄZEK ŻYWOTNOŚCI JAKO CZYNNIKA REZYLIENCJI PSYCHOLOGICZNEJ Z DOJRZAŁOŚCIĄ OSOBOWOŚCIOWĄ STUDENTÓW SZKÓŁ WYŻSZYCH

### STRESZCZENIE

W artykule przedstawiono wyniki analizy teoretycznej i badań empirycznych, dotyczących witalności i dojrzałości osobistej przyszłych psychologów w warunkach stresu, którego przyczyną są globalne procesy transformacyjne oraz konflikt zbrojny, rozpętany przez Federację Rosyjską na terytorium Ukrainy.

Celem badań jest określenie specyfiki powiązań witalności wśród studentów szkół wyższych o różnym poziomie dojrzałości osobistej. W wyniku przeprowadzonych badań ustalono, że prężność jest psychologicznym czynnikiem odporności osobowości, który pozwala człowiekowi radzić sobie w stresujących i skomplikowanych sytuacjach życiowych, wykazując się „siłą”. Empirycznie ustalono bezpośrednią korelację pomiędzy wskaźnikami dojrzałości osobistej i witalności, a mianowicie: zdolnością do psychologicznej bliskości z inną osobą i podejmowaniem ryzyka; postawy życiowe i entuzjazm oraz wskaźniki na skali „Kontrola”. Dlatego witalność i odporność są integralnymi cechami osobistej dojrzałości. Dojrzała osobowość lepiej radzi sobie z wyzwaniem życiowymi i trudnymi sytuacjami, wykorzystując trudności jako szansę na rozwój.

### SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

witalność, odporność, dojrzałość osobista, studenci szkół wyższych.



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