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RESILIENCE OF JUNIOR SCHOOLCHILDREN IN THE THIRD YEAR OF WAR

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Summary. *The article focuses on studying the psychological resilience of younger schoolchildren during wartime. The authors analyze the impact of stressful situations on children's development, identify factors that promote adaptation, and outline the role of adult support in maintaining the psychological well-being of students. Utilizing the Child & Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-R), the study assesses resilience levels among students of different grades and demonstrates how this ability evolves under prolonged instability and stress.*

War creates an atmosphere filled with stress and instability, which can significantly affect the psychological development of children who are in an important period of personality formation.

Researching the mechanisms of psychological resilience is extremely important in modern conditions, as it helps not only to understand how to support children in adapting to difficult circumstances and maintaining mental health, but also serves as a basis for creating supportive programs that will promote their mental well-being and development in extreme situations.

Psychological resilience is seen as an important ability that protects children from the negative impact of stressors and factors and provides effective coping strategies [1, 2].

In psychology, resilience is defined as the ability to maintain a stable level of psychological and physical functioning in adverse situations, to overcome such

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situations without persistent disorders, and to successfully adapt to adverse changes [3]. Resilience is an ability that develops through human interaction with the environment. It is not just a product of the environment or an innate quality. The presence of innate abilities and the influence of the environment are only conditionally separated, as these aspects complement each other.

In our work, the Child & Youth Resilience Measure-Revised (CYRM-R) [4] was used to study the psychological resilience of primary school students in war conditions. The questionnaire consists of seventeen questions and is a self-report measure of socio-environmental resilience. Statements such as “Do other children like to play with you?” were scored on a three-point scale:

1. No -1 point,
2. Sometimes - 2 points,
3. Yes - 3 points.

The answer to each question falls into one of 5 scales representing different factors of resilience:

1. Self-confidence 2,10,14,16
2. Parental support 4,5,6, 8, 11, 15
3. Feeling of happiness 13,17
4. Communication 3,7,9,12
5. Helping others 1

Or two subscales:

1. Personal traits 1,2,3,7,9,10,12,14,16
2. Relationship with parents or guardians 4,5,6,8,11,13,15,17

The result of using this tool is to determine the levels of students' resilience:

- 47-51 points - “High”,
- 40-46 points - “Medium”,
- 17-39 points - “Low”.

The study sample consisted of 104 students (49 boys and 55 girls) from a private school in Kyiv. In particular, 1st grade students (n=30); 2nd grade students (n=33), 3rd grade students (n=33), 4th grade students (n=8). The age group of respondents is from 7 to 10 years old.

The results of the study are presented in the table (Table 1).

Table 1.

Resistance levels of primary school children

Grade	Levels of resilience		
	high	medium	low
Grade 1	37%	53%	10%
2nd grade	33%	55%	12%
3rd grade	58%	39%	3%
4th grade	50%	50%	0%

As we can see from the table, the levels of resilience of first and second graders are not very different: 37% of first graders and 33% of second graders have a high level of resilience, 53% of first graders and 55% of second graders have an average level, and 10% and 12% have a low level, respectively.

The reason for this coincidence of results is that some first-graders entered school at the age of 7, while some children started school at the age of six. Therefore, the ages of first and second grade students may be the same. Due to the hostilities, many families were forced to move and transfer their children to new schools. It was the second grades that received the largest number of IDPs. As a result, many children in the first and second grades may have a long period of adaptation.

Among children in first and second grades, the biggest problems were communication and self-confidence.

Thus, as many as 14% of children answered “no” to the question “Do other children like to play with you?”, 33% answered “not always”, and only 53% of the first graders surveyed were confident. The results of second graders are slightly higher: 3%, 40% and 57%, respectively.

To the questions “Do you have friends who are interested in how you are doing?” and “Do you think your friends care about situations when you are having a hard time?” 77% and 43% of first graders and 71% and 43% of second graders, respectively, answered in the affirmative.

Younger students usually make friends with loyal and smart peers who help them during the classes, share school supplies, and are usually of their own gender. The choice of a friend is also based on a geographical principle: classmates, neighbors, or children who attend the same clubs. Friendship is perceived as mutually beneficial cooperation, without the need for a deep understanding of the friend's interests. Boys tend to establish business-like relationships, while girls emphasize interpersonal trusting relationships. Although most children have friends and friendships can be quite strong, they are usually not long-lasting.

To the question “Do you feel like your parents always know where you are and what you are doing?” 43% of first graders answered in the affirmative, while only 33% of second graders did. Younger children feel more controlled by their parents than older children. This may be due to the fact that first graders are not yet as independent as second graders, and parents monitor them more closely. On the other hand, second graders may already have more freedom and independence, which reduces their sense of constant parental control.

Among 3rd graders, 58% of children were found to have a high level of

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resilience, 39% of third graders had an average level, and 3% had a low level of resilience. In many aspects, third graders feel more confident, but the problems they experience in communicating with friends remain. For example, only 36% of third graders answered positively to the question “Do you think your friends care about situations when you are having a hard time?” compared to 43% of students in grades 1-2. The decrease in the percentage of positive responses among third graders (36%) compared to students in grades 1-2 (43%) may indicate a change in the perception of social support with age. Perhaps younger students are more open in expressing their emotions and are more likely to believe that their friends care about them. While with age, children may become more independent or less inclined to openly discuss their problems, which affects their assessment of peer care.

During the survey of fourth graders, a high level of resilience was found in 50% of children, while the other 50% received an average level. Fourth graders are more confident in themselves, rate their friends' interest in them more highly, and feel happier than students in grades 1-3.

Conclusions. Thus, we can state that the resilience (psychological stability) of younger students increases significantly with age. We believe that this is due to the development of their social, emotional, and cognitive skills, as well as the accumulation of life experience that helps them cope better with difficulties. Classroom relationships are an important element of students' psychological resilience.

Thus, building resilience is a dynamic process that takes into account the specifics of the situation, the nature of life's difficulties, and available resources. Resilience develops through human interaction with the environment, combining innate abilities and environmental influences. The resilience of primary school children increases significantly with age.

In the third year of the war, the resilience of primary school children underwent significant changes. Children show more resilience in overcoming difficult situations, developing adaptive mechanisms to constant stress. At the same time, these changes can be accompanied by increased anxiety and emotional vulnerability. It is important to note that support from adults and an appropriate environment play a key role in maintaining their psychological resilience.

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