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Universitatea Liberă Internațională din Moldova**



**Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences
Facultatea Științe Sociale și ale Educației**

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**ANXIETY AS A PERSONAL ADAPTIVE RESOURCE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN
CONDITIONS OF MARTIAL LAW**

**ANXIETATEA CA RESURSĂ ADAPTIVĂ PERSONALĂ LA ADOLESCENȚI ÎN
CONDIȚII DE LEGE MARȚIALĂ**

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Abstract. *The study examines the psychological characteristics of adolescents' anxiety under martial law as a factor of their psycho-emotional adaptation. The relevance of the study is determined by the increasing level of psycho-emotional tension resulting from the prolonged impact of wartime stressors. Theoretical approaches to understanding anxiety as a multidimensional psychological phenomenon that can perform both adaptive and maladaptive functions are identified. An empirical study was conducted on a sample of adolescents using the Kondash Social-Situational Anxiety Scale and H. Eysenck's "Self-Assessment of Mental States" test. The findings indicate that the overall level of anxiety among participants remains within the normative range; however, certain types of anxiety, particularly school-related anxiety, demonstrate relatively higher levels. It was found that the majority of adolescents exhibit moderate levels of anxiety, frustration, aggression, and rigidity, indicating the presence of adaptive resources. At the same time, a group of adolescents with elevated anxiety levels was identified, suggesting a risk of emotional maladjustment. The study concludes that anxiety under martial law is predominantly situational in nature and highlights the need for targeted psychological support for adolescents within the educational environment.*

Keywords: *anxiety; adolescents; martial law; psycho-emotional state; psychological adaptation; school-related anxiety; educational environment.*

Rezumat. *Studiul examinează caracteristicile psihologice ale anxietății la adolescenți în condiții de lege marțială, în calitate de factor al adaptării psiho-emoționale. Actualitatea cercetării este determinată de creșterea nivelului de tensiune psiho-emoțională generată de expunerea prelungită la stresori specifici situațiilor de război. Sunt analizate principalele abordări teoretice privind anxietatea ca fenomen psihologic multidimensional, care poate avea atât funcții adaptive, cât și dezadaptive. A fost realizat un studiu empiric pe un eșantion de adolescenți, utilizând Scala de anxietate socio-situatională (Kondash) și*

testul de autoevaluare a stărilor psihice elaborat de H. Eysenck. Rezultatele indică faptul că nivelul general de anxietate al participanților se încadrează în limite normative, însă anumite forme, în special anxietatea școlară, prezintă valori mai ridicate. Majoritatea adolescenților manifestă niveluri moderate de anxietate, frustrare, agresivitate și rigiditate, ceea ce sugerează existența unor resurse adaptative. În același timp, a fost identificat un grup de adolescenți cu nivel crescut de anxietate, ceea ce indică riscul unei dezadaptări emoționale. Concluziile studiului evidențiază faptul că anxietatea în condiții de lege marțială are predominant un caracter situațional și subliniază necesitatea intervențiilor psihologice țintite în mediul educațional.

Cuvinte-cheie: *anxietate; adolescenți; lege marțială; stare psiho-emoțională; adaptare psihologică; anxietate școlară; mediu educațional.*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of anxiety among children and adolescents in wartime has become one of the most pressing concerns in contemporary psychological science due to the prolonged impact of stressogenic factors that negatively affect individuals' psycho-emotional well-being and increase the risk of developing anxiety, depressive symptoms, and trauma-related disorders. Wartime conditions create a state of chronic psycho-emotional tension associated with threats to life, disruption of the sense of safety, forced displacement, loss of habitual social practices, and uncertainty about the future. Research indicates that adolescents' anxiety levels largely depend on the degree of war exposure and the social context in which they live (Kremen, 2024; Panok, 2023; Prorok et al., 2023; Romanovska, 2022; Goto et al., 2024; Pfeiffer et al., 2025). Key challenges related to the safety and accessibility of the educational environment under martial law include decreased motivation and educational quality, limited opportunities for organizing learning activities, instability of learning conditions, and the unstable psycho-emotional state of both students and teachers (State Service for Education Quality of Ukraine, 2023).

According to a study conducted within the framework of the All-Ukrainian mental health program "How Are You?", nearly one in three adolescents in Ukraine exhibits signs of depression or anxiety disorders, while approximately 40% experience psychological trauma related to the war. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that nearly every second adolescent experiences sleep disturbances, and one in five suffers from intrusive thoughts and memories (UNICEF, 2024).

Adolescence is a sensitive developmental period characterized by identity formation, fluctuations in self-esteem, and increased sensitivity to social evaluation. During this stage, anxiety may perform both adaptive and maladaptive functions. On the one hand, it facilitates the mobilization of personal resources; on the other, it may complicate processes of socialization and learning. Contemporary studies demonstrate the heterogeneity of adolescents' psycho-emotional responses to wartime conditions, ranging from elevated levels of anxiety to relative emotional stability. Such differences can largely be explained by the influence of protective factors, particularly social support and the maintenance of stable educational routines (Kremen, 2024; Prorok et al., 2023; Stoliarchuk, 2022; Storozh, 2022; Shistko, 2022; Pfeiffer et al., 2025).

Ukrainian researchers emphasize that adolescents' anxiety under wartime conditions is often situationally determined and manifests primarily in school-related,

interpersonal, and self-evaluative domains rather than as a stable pathological condition (Minenko, 2024; Palko & Travina, 2024; Stoliarchuk, 2022; Shumeiko, 2023).

Within the present study, anxiety is considered in relation to frustration, aggression, and rigidity as components of a broader psycho-emotional profile of the adolescent. A moderate level of frustration is associated with limited opportunities to satisfy personal needs during periods of social instability, whereas aggression is generally situational and relatively controlled in nature.

In psychological science, anxiety is viewed as a multidimensional construct that may manifest either as a situational emotional state or as a relatively stable personality trait. A moderate level of anxiety performs an adaptive function, whereas excessive manifestations may lead to emotional maladjustment and disturbances in social relationships (Maksymenko, 2024; Omelchenko & Balynska, 2025; Palko & Travina, 2024; Prorok et al., 2023; Stoliarchuk, 2022; Shistko, 2022).

Existing studies have identified a number of protective factors that reduce the risk of elevated anxiety among adolescents living under wartime conditions. These include stable daily routines, support from family and school, positive interpersonal relationships, as well as well-developed emotional regulation and stress-coping skills (Panok, 2023; Tytarenko, 2024; Goto et al., 2024; Tol, Song, & Jordans, 2013). A recommended approach involves a multi-level system of psychosocial support that combines preventive measures within educational settings with targeted assistance for at-risk adolescents and the implementation of evidence-based psychotherapeutic interventions when necessary (Prorok et al., 2023; Romanovska, 2022; Pfeiffer et al., 2025).

Under martial law, adolescents' anxiety acquires particular significance as an indicator of psycho-emotional well-being and adaptive capacity. At the same time, contemporary research points to the complex and sometimes ambiguous nature of anxiety manifestations, which, under certain conditions, may perform not only a maladaptive but also an adaptive function by facilitating the mobilization of psychological resources. This necessitates a deeper examination of the psychological characteristics of adolescents' anxiety in the context of war, taking into account its situational nature and its relationship with other mental states.

Accordingly, the aim of the present study is to identify the levels and structural characteristics of adolescents' anxiety, as well as its relationship with other mental states (frustration, aggression, and rigidity) as indicators of adaptation under martial law.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The empirical study involved 40 adolescents aged 12–13 years who were enrolled in lyceums in the city of Kyiv. The research was conducted in 2025 under martial law conditions, which contribute to chronic psycho-emotional tension and heightened uncertainty in adolescents' daily lives.

To achieve the aim of the study, the following psychodiagnostic instruments were employed:

- the Kondash Social-Situational Anxiety Scale (Lemak & Petryshche, 2012), which enables the assessment of the overall level of anxiety as well as its specific forms, including school-related, self-evaluative, and interpersonal anxiety;

- H. Eysenck's *Self-Assessment of Mental States* test (Lemak & Petryshche, 2012), designed to measure levels of anxiety, frustration, aggression, and rigidity.

The combined use of these instruments ensured a comprehensive assessment of both situational manifestations of anxiety and adolescents' subjective psycho-emotional states. The application of the Kondash scale is particularly appropriate in the context of martial law, as it focuses on the evaluation of potentially anxiety-provoking situations, thereby reducing the influence of adolescents' self-reflective biases and increasing the objectivity of the obtained results.

RESULTS

The analysis of group mean scores (Table 1) showed that the overall level of anxiety among adolescents was 36.9 points, corresponding to the normative range. All specific types of anxiety also remained within normative limits: school-related anxiety (13.5), self-evaluative anxiety (10.65), and interpersonal anxiety (12.75).

Table 1. Mean Group Indicators of Adolescents' Anxiety According to the Kondash Social-Situational Anxiety Scale

General Anxiety	School-Related Anxiety	Self-Evaluative Anxiety	Interpersonal Anxiety
36.9	13.5	10.65	12.75
Normative level	Normative level	Normative level	Normative level

These findings indicate the absence of a pronounced increase in anxiety at the sample level and suggest a relatively adequate psychological adaptation of most adolescents to the educational environment under martial law conditions.

The distribution of overall anxiety levels and its specific forms (Table 2) provides a more detailed picture of the structure of adolescents' social-situational anxiety. The majority of participants (75%) demonstrated a normative level of overall anxiety, whereas 10% showed slightly elevated anxiety and 15% exhibited excessively low anxiety levels. This pattern reflects a generally stable emotional state among most adolescents. At the same time, the presence of a subgroup with elevated anxiety indicates the need for targeted psychological support for certain individuals.

Table 2. Distribution of Adolescents' Anxiety Levels (%) According to the Kondash Social-Situational Anxiety Scale

Type of Anxiety	Excessively Low Level (%)	Normative Level (%)	Slightly Elevated Level (%)
General Anxiety	15	75	10
School-Related Anxiety	5	85	10
Self-Evaluative Anxiety	25	70	5
Interpersonal Anxiety	5	85	10

The analysis of specific anxiety domains revealed that school-related anxiety was the most pronounced form. A normative level was observed in 85% of adolescents, while 10% demonstrated slightly elevated anxiety. This may be associated with the

demands of the educational process under martial law, particularly in the context of distance and blended learning formats.

Self-evaluative anxiety appeared to be the least pronounced dimension. A normative level was identified in 70% of participants, an excessively low level in 25%, and a slightly elevated level in only 5% of adolescents. These findings may indicate a relatively stable self-concept and an adequate level of self-confidence despite increased social tension. At the same time, elevated self-evaluative anxiety among a small proportion of respondents may reflect heightened sensitivity to situations involving evaluation, comparison, and self-presentation. Conversely, excessively low levels may indicate either emotional stability or the operation of defensive mechanisms such as emotional avoidance or reduced sensitivity to external evaluation.

The analysis of interpersonal anxiety showed that its level fell within the normative range for the majority of adolescents (85%), while 10% demonstrated slightly elevated levels and 5% exhibited excessively low levels. This distribution suggests that interpersonal interactions are not a major source of emotional tension for most participants. Nevertheless, elevated interpersonal anxiety among some adolescents may be associated with increased sensitivity to social evaluation, fear of rejection, or concerns regarding negative reactions from peers and adults.

To obtain a comprehensive assessment of adolescents' psycho-emotional state, H. Eysenck's *Self-Assessment of Mental States* test was administered. This instrument allows the evaluation of anxiety, frustration, aggression, and rigidity as indicators of adolescents' adaptation to conditions of chronic stress.

The analysis of mean group scores (Table 3) revealed that all examined mental states fell within the moderate range: anxiety (8.5 points), frustration (8.05 points), aggression (8.3 points), and rigidity (10.25 points). These findings suggest a relatively stable psycho-emotional state among the participants and the absence of pronounced maladaptive manifestations.

Table 3. Mean Group Indicators of Adolescents' Self-Assessment of Mental States According to H. Eysenck's Test

I - Anxiety	II - Frustration	III - Aggression	IV - Rigidity
8.5	8.05	8.3	10.25
Moderate level	Moderate level	Moderate level	Moderate level

A moderate level of anxiety may be regarded as a normative response to martial law conditions, which are characterized by heightened uncertainty and emotional tension. Similarly, a moderate level of frustration reflects an age-appropriate sensitivity to obstacles in goal attainment. Moderate aggression suggests the predominance of controlled emotional reactions without a tendency toward destructive behavior. The highest mean score was observed for rigidity, which may indicate certain difficulties in flexibly adjusting behavior and emotional responses to the rapid and unpredictable changes associated with wartime conditions.

The percentage distribution of mental state levels (Table 4) provides additional insight into individual differences within the sample. A high level of each of the four assessed states was identified in only 5% of participants. Anxiety was characterized by a predominance of the moderate level (65%), whereas 30% of

adolescents demonstrated a low level. These results suggest that most participants experience a moderate degree of emotional tension, while only a small proportion exhibit anxiety levels that may interfere with effective adaptation.

Table 4. Distribution of Mental State Levels (%) Among Adolescents According to H. Eysenck's Test

Mental State	Low Level (%)	Moderate Level (%)	High Level (%)
Anxiety	30	65	5
Frustration	45	50	5
Aggression	45	50	5
Rigidity	25	70	5

Frustration and aggression displayed a similar distribution pattern: 50% of adolescents demonstrated moderate levels, 45% low levels, and only 5% high levels. This suggests that the majority of participants are capable of responding relatively constructively to obstacles and limitations without exhibiting pronounced aggressive tendencies. Nevertheless, the presence of a subgroup with elevated frustration and aggression highlights the need for individualized psychological support for certain adolescents.

The analysis of rigidity revealed that 70% of adolescents demonstrated a moderate level, 25% a low level, and 5% a high level. This pattern may reflect a moderate tendency toward behavioral stereotypization and difficulties in adapting to new or stressful circumstances, particularly under martial law conditions. Reduced psychological flexibility appears to be one of the key challenges faced by adolescents experiencing prolonged stress and should therefore be taken into consideration when designing preventive and corrective psychological programs.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that adolescents' anxiety under martial law conditions is predominantly situational in nature and generally does not develop into stable maladaptive forms. The predominance of normative anxiety levels indicates the presence of sufficient adaptive resources that enable most adolescents to maintain emotional stability despite prolonged exposure to wartime stressors.

At the same time, a subgroup of adolescents with elevated anxiety levels was identified, reflecting increased sensitivity to situations involving social evaluation, academic demands, and interpersonal interactions. This finding highlights the significant role of the educational environment as a factor influencing adolescents' emotional well-being and psychological adjustment.

Moderate levels of frustration and aggression observed in the sample point to the predominance of constructive coping mechanisms and adaptive patterns of responding to stress. In contrast, the relatively higher level of rigidity may indicate difficulties in behavioral and emotional flexibility when confronted with rapidly changing and unpredictable circumstances characteristic of martial law conditions.

The results underscore the importance of systematic psychological monitoring of schoolchildren's emotional states, particularly anxiety, as well as the implementation of preventive and supportive interventions aimed at reducing emotional tension, strengthening resilience, and promoting effective adaptation.

The findings are consistent with contemporary research emphasizing the heterogeneity of adolescents' psycho-emotional responses to wartime conditions and their dependence on the interaction between risk and protective factors (Minenko, 2024; Palko & Travina, 2024; Stoliarchuk, 2022; Shumeiko, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the empirical study indicate that most adolescents demonstrate normative levels of social-situational anxiety and its specific forms, reflecting relative emotional stability and the availability of adaptive resources under martial law conditions. Nevertheless, a proportion of participants exhibited elevated levels of school-related and interpersonal anxiety, suggesting increased sensitivity to academic demands and social interactions.

The findings obtained through H. Eysenck's *Self-Assessment of Mental States* test complement these results by revealing predominantly moderate levels of anxiety, frustration, aggression, and rigidity. Overall, anxiety appears to be primarily situational in nature and does not manifest as a stable maladaptive condition among the majority of adolescents.

At the same time, the identification of a subgroup characterized by heightened psycho-emotional tension underscores the need for targeted psychological support and preventive interventions. The study confirms the importance of applying a comprehensive diagnostic approach to the assessment of adolescents' psycho-emotional functioning in crisis social conditions and highlights the necessity of systematic psychological monitoring within educational settings.

The findings also emphasize the role of the school environment as an important resource for maintaining adolescents' emotional well-being and strengthening their capacity for adaptation under conditions of prolonged social stress.

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During the editorial preparation of this volume, artificial intelligence-based tools were used for editing, linguistic and stylistic proofreading, translation, terminology verification, and manuscript formatting. The use of these tools served exclusively as technical and editorial support.

Responsibility for the scientific content, accuracy of data, interpretation of results, formulation of conclusions, and compliance with academic ethics standards rests entirely with the authors of the published works.

The volume editors reviewed, peer-reviewed, and validated all materials included in the publication prior to its release.

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În procesul de pregătire editorială a prezentului volum au fost utilizate instrumente bazate pe inteligență artificială pentru activități de redactare, corectură lingvistică, stilistică, traducere, verificare terminologică și formatare a manuscriselor. Utilizarea acestor instrumente a avut exclusiv rol de suport tehnic și editorial.

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