

# PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL DEPENDENCY IN ELDERLY PEOPLE DURING THE FIRST MONTHS OF RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim.** The aim of the research is to identify changes of psychological determinants of elderly people's inclination to social dependency during the first month of Russian-Ukrainian war in comparison with peace time.

**Methods.** The research uses methodologies of inclination to demanding behaviour by Hrabovska (2005), emotional intelligence by D. Luisin (2006), personality volitional qualities by Chumakov (2006), adaptive stress abilities by Rozov (2006), psychological well-being by Ryff as adapted by Shevelenkova and Fesenko (2005).

**Results.** It is identified that during the first months of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, inclination of elderly people, who stay in relatively safe conditions in Ukraine, to social dependency does not undergo significant changes in comparison with peacetime. There are changes in the vector of emotional regulation of social dependency: from intrapersonal in pre-war time into interpersonal during the wartime, when importance in understanding the emotions of other people is high consequently, it results in a more active life stance in the elderly. Initiative becomes



a leading will regulator, shows far-sightedness of a person. There is activation of coping mechanisms, related to adaptive thinking, sleep and somatic regulation, and they can be considered vital resources for stable mental health preservation at the beginning of a war.

**Conclusions.** It is recommended to provide psychological support to seniors in finding occupations that help them to realize their capacity for self-sufficiency and create conditions for personal responsibility and assertiveness as the ability to stand for their own rights without violating other people's resources.

**Keywords:** social dependency, demanding behaviour, adaptation to stress, elderly age, Russian-Ukrainian war.

## INTRODUCTION

Current life circumstances, marked by the military invasion of the Russian Federation in the territory of sovereign Ukraine, create for its people a subjectively difficult situation, related to experiencing real threat to life and health, worry about one's compatriots, fearing the unknown, changes in lifestyle and quality of life, as well as in relationships with social surroundings. Adaptive abilities of a person are not unlimited, and as they become exhausted, physical and mental health deteriorates, and thus there is a need for psychological assistance in difficult life situations: to enhance resistance and support psychological well-being. The research focuses on one of the most vulnerable layers of the population: elderly people who at the moment the research was conducted were not in the epicentre of combat, however they were constantly under threat of rocket strikes, which were announced several times a day via loud speakers, and had to go to the bomb shelters several times a day, were, and still remain, absorbed in tragic events, highlighted by mass media. At in late adulthood people become particularly vulnerable to changes, and that causes them bad physical feelings, emotional instability, low spirits, lack of desire to be active, decrease in social contacts with other people (Nezhenseva, 2017).

Tetiana Tytarenko stresses that by bringing into person's life damaging consequences, traumatic events can also become catalysts of the so called posttraumatic growth: positive changes in personal fields, strengthening and deepening of relationships, changes in life positions, developing constructive coping, etc. As it was shown, post-traumatic growth does not have a direct link to such characteristics as age (Tytarenko, 2018), so it can become a great value to enhance life resistance in people of elderly age, who have been traumatised by war.

Under conditions, when control over one's own personal events is weakening, when it is more and more difficult to control stability of life, an elderly person may feel helpless and unprotected. The state of long-lasting passiveness in certain situations, appearing due to constant failures caused by complicated obstacles, can cover different areas of life and get transformed into the condition of learned behaviour. Mechanisms of learned

behaviour, when a person loses control over the consequences of his/her actions, has to ask others for help or surrender under the circumstances, promotes a mindset for social dependency (Klimanska, 2003).

Social dependency as a personal mindset, and demanding behaviour as its manifestation, does not contribute to post-traumatic growth, but vice versa, suppress activity, creativity and self-reflection. The position of socially dependent person, may be due to certain life circumstances and can remain in this position for a long period of time, and does not necessarily result in the formation of a stable personal tendency to cultivate helplessness, passiveness and demanding mindset. When a person tends to demonstrate demanding behaviour, there are risks that this tendency will be strengthened under condition of abrupt tragic changes in their lifestyle. In this context research of psychological determinants of inclination to social dependency in the wartime, manifesting itself in demanding behaviour of a person, is highly topical, as it will set the foundation for work on positive changes and post-traumatic growth achievement, elimination of negative personal tendencies that hamper these processes.

The goal of the research was to identify whether there were any changes in psychological determinants of elderly people's inclination to social dependency during the first months of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war in comparison with peacetime. To achieve this goal the following tasks were specified: first of all, to understand whether during war circumstances in comparison to peacetime there were any changes in the inclination to social dependency in people aged 60+; secondly, to identify emotional and volitional resources that result in the decrease in the inclination of person to demanding behaviour; thirdly, study how adaptive abilities to stress during the first months of war is related to the inclination to social dependency; fourthly, to show how the inclination of the elderly people to social dependency is related to their psychological well-being.

### **Literature Overview**

Social dependency is a specific attitude of a person to the social environment which manifests itself in his/her mindset and behaviour, aimed at obtaining maximum gain for oneself using other people and society in general (Yaremchuk, 2014). Demanding behaviour is a tool of implementing such attitude – it is “a paradoxical active social inactivity, as any activity should end in creation of a certain product, be result-oriented, while demanding behaviour is aimed only at use and consumption” (Hrabovska, 2005, p. 90).

Inclination to demanding behaviour can be interpreted as a personal quality, when a person is characterised by deep feeling of one's dignity, uniqueness, excessive expectations from others and understanding that this person deserves positive results more than others (Campbell et al., 2004; Grubbs et al., 2018). People with attitudes of social dependency tend to use their difficult situations to demand various compensations, they focus on suffering, helplessness and infantilism. Facing difficult life circumstan-

ces, they demonstrate a passive-defensive position, use non-constructive coping behaviour in the form of emotional instability, decrease self-control and self reflection, reinforced by external locus of control and inadequate self-evaluation. It results in decrease in or lack of responsibility for one's life combined with demanding shifting of responsibility on to others: to acquaintances or unknown people, society, state institutions, etc (Kovalenko & Verkhovod, 2017).

People with high psychological entitlement more frequently get angry due to their own troubles, which they directly live through, remember or imagine, in comparison with people, who are not inclined to demanding behaviour, in particular, in cases, when a failure was of accidental nature or was not caused by actions of other people. In conditions when other people failed, people inclined to demanding behaviour, did not show frustration or disappointment (Zitek & Jordan, 2020). In general, they are characterised as more selfish, focused on their own gain, less sensitive and less socially responsible (Daddis & Brunell, 2015). The researches reveal that people with inclination to demanding behaviour, show motivation for domination and seeking status in society, though in reality these people rarely get status advantages (Lange et al., 2019). It may be related to the distorted idea that they already have this advantage and there is no need to spend their efforts on this goal. They will also try and get higher status by showing domination and exerting pressure on others, which results in resistance and the reverse effect.

In Joshua B. Grubbs and Julie J. Exline's model inclination to demanding behaviour is considered a cognitive and personal precondition that strengthens vulnerability of a person to distress, as such people have inflated expectations of the society towards themselves and often deal with mental tension, caused by frustration from unmet expectations and experiencing "injustice" (Grubbs & Exline, 2016). Life satisfaction in such people is lower in comparison with people with lower psychological entitlement (Stronge & Sibley, 2021; Žemojtel & Piotrowska et al., 2017). This peculiarity manifests itself in early adulthood and weakens with age (Stronge & Sibley, 2021). It should be stressed that demanding behaviour bears risks not only for mental but also physical health as it increases risks to get infected with potentially serious diseases, for example, with Covid-19 due to non-adherence to safety issues (Zitek & Schlund, 2021). In general, the majority of the researches focusing on the aspects of psychological entitlement were conducted on the materials of early and middle adulthood, not taking into account specificity of this phenomenon in elderly people. It is observed that inclination to demanding behaviour decreases as the person gets older (from early to late adulthood) (Stronge et al., 2018). The scientists have stated the following: if one can talk about certain functionality of a demanding behaviour and its adaptive role in the life of a young person, then in older age these functions do not work (Stronge & Sibley, 2021).

Taking into account the aforementioned, one can assume that demanding behaviour complicates the way of finding resources to restore psychological well-being, in particular, during the war and during the post-war period. According to Mariia Dvornyk, positive relationship with other people, contributes to the well-being of others, feeling of competence, capacity to take reasonable actions and responsible attitude to one's own life become the resources and simultaneously components of personality psychological well-being during the transition period from war to peace (Dvornyk, 2020). Thus, knowledge of social and psychological factors of appearance and increase in psychological entitlements in elderly people, both under peace and war conditions, will enable us to build a model of psychological support to prevent the development of the social dependency mindset in elderly people as an ineffective coping behaviour.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Context and Participants

The participants of the research were 86 elderly people. 43 respondents (20 men and 23 women, of average age is 65,3 years) examined before the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war; 43 respondents (20 men and 23 women, the average age is 65,5 years) – one to three months after the beginning of the combat activities (in March-April 2022), who were living in a relatively safe place, at a distance and were not internally displaced people. In the group of respondents examined before the invasion there were 58% persons with higher education, 28% with secondary professional education and 14% with secondary education; in the group examined after the invasion, 65% respondents had higher education, 28% – secondary professional education and 7% secondary education. According to Student's T-tests, these groups are not different in terms of age and education. They also show no difference as to the number of children and grandchildren. Subjective evaluation of their material independence was mainly evaluated as "rather independent", while satisfaction with material condition fluctuated within the range from "satisfied to 50 %" to "rather satisfied than dissatisfied". 63% respondents in each group are employed, 37% – are not. As to these demographic indicators, there are no differences between these groups.

Cronbach's alpha (with  $\alpha > .65$ ) was used to check the internal consistency of the indicators of the used instrument and its reliability. To diagnose the object of the research – social dependency – the methodology of inclination to "demanding behaviour" by Sofiiia Hrabovska was used, which enables us to identify the general level of social dependency, as well as such factors as "extortionist-egoist" (shows inclination to social dependency in situations of direct interaction with other people), "extortionist-egocentric" (identifies inclination to social dependency, related to the possibility to go beyond

one's SELF) and "extortionist-external" (inclination to social dependency is based on the principle "Give") (Hrabovska & Klimanska, 2006). The reliability of this instrument is sufficient (Cronbach's alpha: 0.695).

Emotional resources were diagnosed by means of emotional intelligence methodology by Dmytrii Liusin, which defines interpersonal emotional intelligence as understanding and managing the emotions of other people; intra-personal emotional intelligence as understanding and management of one's own emotions and control of expression; total emotional intelligence of a person as a sum of inter- and intrapersonal emotional intellect (Liusin, 2006). The internal consistency of the indicators of this test turned out to be very good (Cronbach's alpha: 0.910). Methodology by Mykhailo Chumakov defines such volitional qualities of a personality as responsibility, initiative, decisiveness, independence, self-control, perseverance, energy, attention, determination and total indicator of volitional qualities (Chumakov, 2006). The reliability of the Mykhailo Chumakov test is good (Cronbach's alpha: 0.850).

Adaptive ability to stress was identified on the basis of Vitalii Rozov's methodology, which includes the following indicators: optimism, social support, adaptive thinking, sleep regulation, confidence, management of psycho-physiological state, somatic regulation, self-organization of life time (Rozov, 2006). This technique measures the above indicators very well (Cronbach's alpha: 0.951). At the same time, they can be considered indicators of inclination to certain coping mechanisms. To identify psychological being of the respondents psychological well-being scale by Carol Riff (as adapted by Tatiana Shevelenkova and Pavel Fesenko) was used, which diagnoses the following indicators: relations with others, autonomy capabilities, management of the surroundings, personal growth, ability to set life goals, self-perception and general indicator (level of psychological well-being) (Shevelenkova & Fesenko, 2005). The used version of the Carol Riff method is a reliable instrument for measuring psychological well-being (Cronbach's alpha: 0.829).

The data was analysed separately for the two groups mentioned above. Reliability of the results obtained was checked by means of such mathematical and statistical analysis as: comparative (Student's T-tests with  $p < 0.05$ ), correlational - according to r-Pearson (with  $p < 0.05$ ). In order to build a factor structure of the data for a more meaningful explanation of the obtained correlations, an exploratory factor analysis (with  $> .50$ ) was conducted with rotation of factors by the Varimax normalized method.

## RESULTS

### **Inclination of Elderly People to Social Dependency: Peacetime vs. Wartime**

Are the elderly people living in Ukraine inclined to social dependency? It should be remembered that the average age of the research participants is about 65 years, meaning they were born in the 50-60's of the 20th cen-

tury. The growing-up period came at the end of the 60–70's, i.e. the period where Ukraine was part of the USSR. However, starting with early adulthood, their perception of the world was forming under the influence of ideas about an independent Ukraine. It is evident that historic and social and political changes, which happened at that time both in Ukraine and worldwide, left them with some ideas what they should give to society and what they might expect from it. It is shown that among elderly people, who were examined before the beginning of the combat actions, a low level of social dependency is present in 51.2% respondents, median – 48.8%. February 2022 could significantly change this distribution due to the Russian aggression. In the group examined after the beginning of the war, the number of people with low level of social dependency fell to 39.5%, and with median – grew to 60.5%. There were no people with high level either in the first or in the second group. Average group indicators of inclination to social dependency in both respondent groups fell in the low boundary of medium values ( $M_{\text{before}} = 6,348$ ;  $M_{\text{after}} = 6,627$ ), and there were no statistically credible differences found between them. Thus, during the first months of the Russian-Ukrainian war the level of social dependency in elderly people had not changed as compared to the pre-war time. Lack of changes can be explained, first of all, by the fact that during the adaptation period to new military circumstances people so far have been aware what in this situation can be obtained from the state, where the martial law period is announced, as well as from the other people surrounding them, who are mainly lost and are under stress. Secondly, the respondents examined by us were in a relatively safe place and did not experience additional stress from the evacuation. Thus, change of social and political situation during the first months of war did not lead to social and psychological changes in personality. Under condition of a long-lasting war inclination to social dependency can be growing, which can be evidenced by the increase in the number of people with the medium level of social dependency during the first months of the war. However, this assumption requires empirical verification.

For the group of the respondents that were examined during the pre-war time, it was found that social dependency indicators did not depend on the marital status, education, number of children and grandchildren, material independence, satisfaction with one's material condition and duration of employment. However, during the war inclination to social dependency has become more expressed in those elderly people, who were materially dependent ( $r = 0.331$ ) and had more children ( $r = 0.365$ ). Under stressful conditions, related to the beginning of the war, there will be more demands on the surrounding people mainly from materially insecure elderly people who have two and more children. There is no such tendency during peace time.

Thus, irrespective of the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion in the territory of Ukraine elderly people who are in relative safety at the rear,

do not significantly change their egocentric attitude, position of the external or egocentric with regards to social dependency as compared to the pre-war time. Such changes can happen under conditions of a long-lasting war. The probability of this can be proved by the fact that already during the first months of war, when satisfaction of the basic needs was under threat, unresolved material problems start provoking demanding behaviour. However, this statement requires empirical verification.

### **Emotional and Volitional Resources for Regulation of „Demanding Behaviour” in Late Adulthood**

Is the inclination to social dependency related to the emotional and volitional qualities of a person, and are there changes in wartime compared to peacetime? The psychological content of social dependency is related to a person's different social position: active in the case of decreasing tendency to demanding behaviour and passive in the case of its increase. It is an active position that is an important condition for maintaining productive aging. One of the tasks of the study was to identify emotional and volitional resources for the regulation of demanding behaviour in the first months after the beginning of Russia's military aggression and to compare them with the pre-war period. It turned out that in wartime, the emotional and volitional support of such behaviour in elderly people has significantly decreased. This is proved by the results of the correlation (Table 1) and factor analyses.

All the emotional intelligence indicators both in peacetime and wartime are at the lower threshold of the medium level. There were no differences established before and after the beginning of the military action, at the same time different connection with social dependency was identified. During the peaceful time persons with more developed intrapersonal emotional intelligence were less inclined to demonstrate demanding behaviour ( $r$  within the range from -0.307 to -0.427). Primarily it is about the ability to preserve one's positive emotions and control negative ones. These abilities create possibilities for decentration and taking efforts to improve one's material well-being, and consequently reducing inclination to the position of extortionist-egocentric ( $r = -0.384$ ) and extortionist-external ( $r = -0.314$ ). Overcoming the egocentric position of the extortionist is also facilitated by the ability to recognise and verbalise one's emotions ( $r = -0.385$ ), which seems logical: ability to analyse one's experience promotes inclination to self-analysis of one's motivation and behaviour, while the position "Give!" does not look attractive.



Table 1

Correlation between demanding behaviour (DB) and emotional-volitional field of elderly people in peacetime and wartime ( $p < 0.05$ )

Indicators	Peacetime (N=43)				Wartime (N=43)			
	General level of DB	Extortionist-egoist	Extortionist-egocentric	Extortionist-external	General level of DB	Extortionist-egoist	Extortionist-egocentric	Extortionist-external
<b>Emotional field</b>								
Understanding emotions of others					-0.315	-0.300		
Managing emotions of others					-0.365	-0.393		-0.302
Understanding one's own emotions	-0.384		-0.385					
Managing one's own emotions	-0.307		-0.384	-0.314				-0.329
Interpersonal emotional intelligence					-0.394	-0.400		
Intrapersonal emotional intelligence	-0.344		-0.427	-0.329				
General indicator	-0.347		-0.366					
<b>Volitional field</b>								
Initiative					-0.305			
Independence			-0.328					
Self-control	-0.513	-0.513	-0.447					
Energy							-0.328	
Determination	-0.359		-0.433					
General indicator	-0.347		-					

Source. own research

During the wartime emotional determinants of social dependency in elderly people undergo changes. Interpersonal emotional intelligence comes to the forefront ( $r$  within the range from -0.300 to -0.400). The ability to understand the emotional condition of other people and compassion towards them significantly weakens the position of the extortionist-egoist, and that results in cooperation with others considering their interests ( $r = -0.300$ ). This behaviour is also favoured by the ability of a person to reduce the intensity of other people's negative feelings ( $r = -0.393$ ), which is very important in war time. It is easier to influence the emotions of others for those who are able to resolve their own problems and do not expect others to do it ( $r = -0.302$ ).

In relatively peaceful time to imagine the situation other people are in, resolve their issues considering the interests of others, the elderly people, first of all, have to understand their own feelings and learn to manage their own emotions. When there is war, a person can protect his/her own ideas and rights in cooperation with others, taking into account their interests, or a person can do it from the position of an egoist. In the first case one can trace decrease in the social dependency level, and it happens, as it turned out, when one understands the feelings of other people and can influence them.

Volitional qualities of the respondents, irrespective of the fact whether it is peacetime or war time, is at the medium level. There are differences for the decisiveness, which at the beginning of the war decreased in elderly people and came close the low level ( $t = 2.236$ ;  $p = 0.027$ ). This decrease is a logical consequence of the beginning of the combat actions, when feelings of insecurity for one's own life and lives of one's relatives is growing even at the rear. There was no relation between this volitional quality and social dependency.

There are interesting relations between certain indicators of the respondents' volitional field and their inclination to demanding behaviour (Table. 1). In peacetime this tendency is less characteristic of those elderly people, who have self-possession and self-control, who can control their feelings and thoughts that prevent them from achieving their goals ( $r$  within the range from -0.447 to -0.513), and also of those who have very distinct life goals ( $r$  within the range from -0.359 to -0.433). The volitional qualities are the most effective in regulating the position of extortionist-egocentric, which noticeably reduced in independent ( $r = -0.328$ ), determined ( $r = -0.433$ ) and self-composed ( $r = -0.447$ ) elderly people. Particular role of self-composure and self-control for this group of respondents is also indicated by factor analysis, for which we have singled out all volitional qualities, indicators of psychological well-being, social dependency, age and education of the respondents. A 5-factor model was built, which accounts for 70,26% from general dispersion of data. Volitional quality self-control (0,518) together with all the indicators of social dependency - general level of DB (-0,940), extortionist-egoist (-0,821), extortionist-egocentric (-0,746),

extortionist-external (-0,529) – became part of the second factor “The role of self-control in overcoming social dependency in pre-war time” (15.00% variance), which pinpoints its particular role in combatting social dependency in a peaceful period. The other factors are not related to the volitional determinants demanding behaviour.

During the wartime volitional support of the demanding behaviour is decreasing: its general level decreases in more proactive individuals ( $r = -0.305$ ), and the position of the extortionist-egocentric – in more energetic, active and optimistic ( $r = -0.328$ ), for whom it is easier to go beyond one’s SELF. Based on the factor analysis, a 5-factor model was built, which covers 70.31% of the data dispersion. The volitional quality of self-control (0.756) together with independence (0.565) and attentiveness (0.535) was included in the fifth factor “The role of self-control, independence and composure in wartime” (8,26 % variance). The main scales of social dependency stood out in the second factor “Demanding behaviour during the war” (12.33% variance): general level of DB (0.957), extortionist-egoist (0.810), extortionist-egocentric (0.713). Other factors are not related to the tasks of this study. So, the factor analysis confirmed the results of the correlation about the weak integration of volitional qualities of the elderly during the war and their tendency to social dependency. In wartime, other volitional determinants of social support become relevant in comparison with peacetime. Determination and self-control lose their leading role, as with the beginning of the war, a person’s life goals change, and patience is streamlined elsewhere. Foresight and initiative come to the fore, with the help of which it is easier to predict probable benefits from others in new conditions. An important determinant of demanding behaviour can be a person’s ability to adapt to stressful conditions.

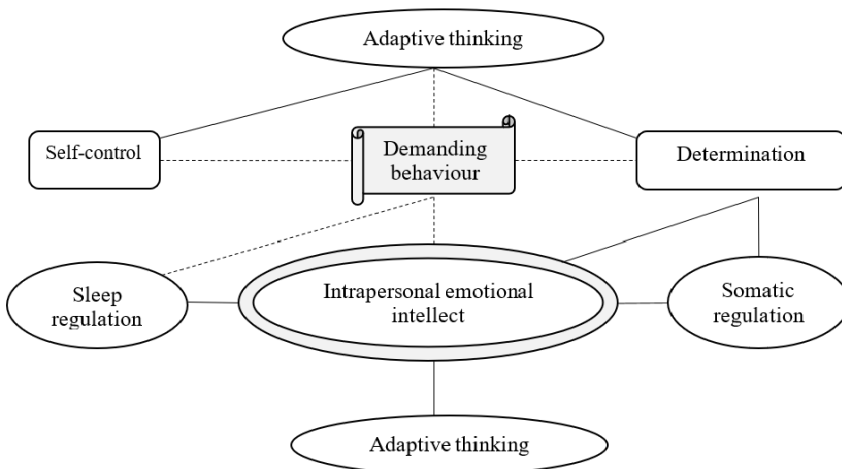
### **Social dependency and adaptive stress ability**

It has been shown above that influencing intrapersonal emotional intellect, self-possession and determination can reduce the overall level of social dependency in peacetime, and correcting interpersonal emotional intelligence and initiative – in wartime. How do such changes relate to the adaptive stress ability, as they become especially important during the threat of military aggression?

Let us consider this issue only in relation to those adaptive abilities that have undergone changes since the beginning of the war, and only those emotional and volitional qualities that are directly related to social dependency. This is primarily about the ability of the elderly people, who have experienced stress as a result of a full-scale military invasion, to better distance themselves from traumatic events through adaptive thinking ( $t = 3.073$  at  $p = 0.002$ ), to develop sleep regulation skills ( $t = 2.730$  at  $p = 0.007$ ) and to maintain better somatic regulation ( $t = 2.509$  at  $p = 0.014$ ) than was the case in pre-war times. At the beginning of the war, these abilities remained at the level of average indicators, but started playing a greater role

than it was in the pre-war time. This may be due to the activation of the unconscious protective mechanisms of the individual, but this assumption needs empirical verification.

Let us analyse the tendency of elderly people to social dependency in pre-war time in connection with emotional and volitional qualities and adaptive stress ability (Figure 1). Individuals prone to reflexivity and flexibility of thinking can more easily overcome the problems associated with social dependency ( $r = -0.327$ ). On the one hand, adaptive thinking is enhanced by the increase in self-control and patience ( $r = 0.351$ ) and determination ( $r = 0.453$ ), which, as noted above, are important volitional resources for reducing the inclination to extortion. On the other hand, this coping is more typical of those individuals who tend to understand and manage their own emotions ( $r = 0.410$ ). It should be noted that interpersonal intelligence also contributes to the adaptive thinking of the elderly in pre-war time ( $r = 0.349$ ), but due to the fact that its role in overcoming social dependency was not revealed, this connection is not reflected in Figure 1.



**Figure 1**

*Demanding behaviour of elderly people in pre-war time in connection with emotional and volitional qualities and adaptive stress ability*

Note. A straight line (—) means direct connections, an dashed line (- - - -) indicates reverse connections

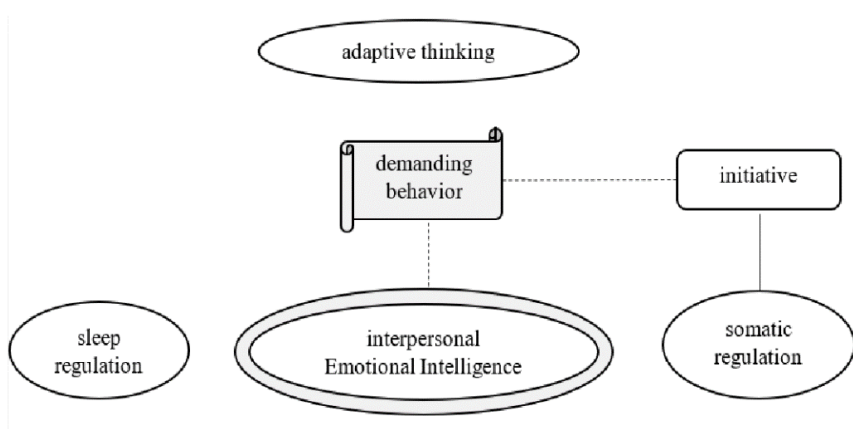
Source. Own research.

Another important coping mechanism that is worth analysing is sleep regulation skills. Sleep optimisation, analysis and awareness of dreams will not only reduce the propensity for demanding behaviour ( $r = -0.357$ ), but will also contribute to a better self-analysis of their emotional conditions ( $r = 0.323$ ).

Factorisation of human volitional qualities, indicators of adaptive ability to stress, social dependency, age and education of respondents made it possible to build a 5-factor model that explains 65.81% of the dispersion. The interdependence of adaptive thinking and volitional qualities of a person is indicated by the first factor "The role of volitional qualities in overcoming stress by elderly people in peacetime" (16.97% variance), which combined adaptive thinking (0.521), optimism (0.563) and self-confidence (0.828), as well as a number of volitional qualities: independence (0.847), determination (0.639), perseverance (0.637), attentiveness (0.575) and overall indicator (0.675). Positive thinking strengthens active life position, social courage and self-confidence, it is directly related to the volitional sphere of a person, and due to such volitional qualities as independence, self-control and determination, elderly people manage to overcome their tendency to social dependency.

If such coping techniques, as adaptive thinking and sleep regulation, are directly related to "demanding behaviour," somatic regulation has an indirect connection, contributing to the growth of determination ( $r = 0.306$ ) and intrapersonal emotional intelligence ( $r = 0.427$ ).

Thus, social dependency is closely connected not only with the emotional and volitional sphere of the elderly, but also with their ability to adapt to stress in peacetime. Let us analyse how these relationships change in the conditions of wartime stress (Figure. 2).



**Figure 2**

*Demanding behaviour of elderly people in pre-war time in connection with emotional and volitional qualities and adaptive stress ability*

Note. A straight line (—) means direct connections, an dashed line (- - - -) indicates reverse connections.

Source. Own research.

During the war, the connection between the inclination to social dependency, adaptive ability to stress and emotional and volitional qualities of a person are noticeably weakened. It may be related to a change in human behavioural strategies during the war, which require restructuring. In the first months of the war, direct links between propensity for demanding behaviour and coping are being destroyed, and new ones have not been formed yet. There are still connections mediated by the volitional sphere. Improvement of somatic regulation in the first months of war contributes to the growth of initiative ( $r = 0.415$ ), which can be implemented, for example, in volunteer activities or other types of social activity. This, in turn, will inhibit the inclination to demanding behaviour.

Factor analysis has broadened the perception of the role of initiative in stimulating coping. The first factor, "The role of initiative in overcoming stress by elderly people in wartime" (21.38% variance), of the 6-factor model, which covers 68.67% of the data dispersion, pointed to a significant contribution not only of initiative (0.755), but also of determination (0.874), perseverance (0.652), and energy (0.636) in overcoming wartime stresses. To do this, it is necessary to acquire the skills of somatic regulation (0.582), adaptive thinking (0.590), develop self-confidence (0.829) and maintain optimism (0.624).

We have stated that in peacetime and the first months of wartime, various psychological determinants of social dependency get more intense. Next, we will find out how this affects the psychological well-being of the elderly.

### **Psychological Well-Being of the Elderly with Different Inclinations to Social Dependency**

Psychological well-being of the elderly both in peacetime and in the first months of wartime remains at an average level. No significant changes have been identified since the beginning of Russia's military intervention. However, the relationships of psychological well-being with the tendency to social dependency are changing.

Table 2 shows the relationships between demanding behaviour and the psychological well-being of the elderly in peacetime and wartime. As can be seen from the presented results, in pre-war times less demanding from others are those people who have trusting relationship with others, showing openness and empathy ( $r = -0.421$ ), who are competent in their activities ( $r = -0.435$ ). A person's positive attitude to himself/herself, understanding of his/her weaknesses and strengths contributes to the prevention of the egocentric position ( $r = -0.317$ ). If in the pre-war time an elderly person had a clearly outlined life perspective, this contributed to a decrease in the probability of producing a demanding motivation ( $r = -0.435$ ), and especially a narrowly functional attitude towards others ( $r = -0.476$ ).

**Table 2**

Relationship between demanding behaviour (DB) and psychological well-being in peacetime and wartime ( $p < 0.05$ )

Indicators	Peacetime (N=43)				Wartime (N=43)			
	Total DB level	Extortionist egoist	Extortionist-egocentric	Extortionist-external	Total DB level	Extortionist egoist	Extortionist-egocentric	Extortionist-external
Psychological well-being								
Positive relationships with others	-0.421		-0.472				-0.335	
Autonomy								-0.358
Managing others	-0.435	-0.396	-0.317					
Personal Growth								
Life Goals	-0.435	-0.476			0.336		-0.337	
Self-acceptance			-0.317					
General indicator	-0.344		-0.307					

Source. own research.

In the first months of the war, from all the markers of psychological well-being, the goals of life remain relevant ( $r = -0.336$ ): people with a more clearly outlined life scenario will be less inclined to the position of the demander, as in the pre-war time, but in this case it will relate more to the position of the extortionist-egocentric ( $r = -0.337$ ), the ability to imagine oneself in somebody else's position. With this position of decentration, relationships with others will also improve ( $r = -0.335$ ), which will ultimately contribute to the perception of oneself as a psychologically prosperous person.

Thus, one of the psychological determinants of the decline in the propensity of the elderly to social dependency is the enhancement of their psychological well-being. This is especially evident in peacetime: a person who, at the age of 60+, believes that his/her life has "turned out well", who has trusting relationship with others and believes that the world is "under control", does not feel the need to take a dependent position. However, with the outbreak of war, everything changes. And only those elderly people who have preserved the time perspective and are convinced that their lives make sense will not take the position of „Give!". Other determinants of social dependency that were relevant in peacetime are retreating into the background.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the first months of the Russian-Ukrainian war the inclination to social dependency in the elderly people, who are in relatively safe conditions in Ukraine, does not undergo significant changes compared to peacetime. In order to avoid demanding behaviour, it is advisable to maintain a pre-war level of material independence, which may be threatened by the departure of children and the unstable economic situation in the country.

Psychological determinants of a decrease in the inclination to social dependency in the elderly people are associated with their emotional and volitional and adaptive resources. In peacetime, the leading emotional regulator of social dependency focuses on the intrapersonal sphere and is determined by the degree of awareness and management of one's experiences. The main volitional resource is associated with self-control, which indicates the patience and prudence of a person, and determination, which is determined by the presence of clear goals in life. To reduce the propensity of the elderly person to social dependency in peacetime, it is advisable to work with the intrapersonal component of the emotional sphere, and this applies to a greater extent to the egocentric position of a person. It is advisable to combine this with the correction of impatience and the activation of determination. The psychocorrective effect of reducing social dependency will be more noticeable if a person feels psychologically safe and acquires the skills of self-control when the surrounding world becomes predictable and the environment is controlled. Adaptive resources for reducing social dependency in peacetime are the elderly's adaptive thinking and sleep regulation skills. It is these copings that are becoming the leading ones.

In the first months of the war the vector of emotional regulation of the social dependency level changes from intrapersonal to interpersonal, and this, first of all, concerns the selfish position of the extortionist. In the new situation, a good orientation in the experiences of other people becomes important, which ultimately leads to a more active life position in older age. The leading volitional regulator is initiative, which indicates the farsightedness of a person. The elderly people start using coping related to adaptive thinking, sleep regulation and somatics, which can be considered important resources for maintaining a stable mental state at the beginning of the war. However, they have no direct connection with the demanding behaviour. This is partially compensated by connections mediated by human volitional qualities. The actual determinant of social dependency decrease in the first months of the Russian-Ukrainian war for the elderly of Ukraine remains presence of life goals that should be preserved, despite the fact that the war began. Other determinants of psychological well-being are significantly weakened.

War brings new realities one should adapt to. The search for new resources begins. The structure built in peacetime, which linked the tendency to social dependency, emotional and volitional qualities of a person, features



that contributed to the adaptation to stress in peacetime and the experience of psychological well-being, collapse. Instead, there should emerge a new structure and new social dependency determinants, relevant for wartime. In the first months of the war, the old structures collapsed, and the new ones have not yet been formed. Therefore, we observe a significant reduction in the psychological determinants of social dependency.

The relationships between the motivation for “demanding behaviour” and the components of the emotional and volitional sphere revealed in the present study suggest that the phenomenon under study can be attributed to the coping strategies of the individual: searching for protection from a complex, tense, not simply uncertain situation, but a real threat to which a person feels helpless. The effectiveness of such a copying strategy depends primarily on the environment, which can adopt the “rules of the game” of the extortionist and provide for his (her) needs and desires. Especially when it comes to helping and caring for the elderly, whose autonomy and self-reliance naturally decrease with age.

This study confirms the possibility of typology of individuals’ character according to the criterion of opposite motivational vectors “self-sufficiency and the desire for independence – dependency on others”. If we take these guidelines for opposite poles of the motivational scale, we have at least three categories of persons: “constant demanders” – persons prone to demanding behaviour in almost any situation, dependent on the environment and/or trying to depend on the environment, completely shifting the responsibility for meeting their needs on other people (institutions, authorities, the state, etc.); situational demanders – the most adapted persons who, if necessary, act independently, but at times use the resources of others; “non-extortioners” – self-sufficient, independent, responsible persons who are not prone to the position of social dependency. It can be expected that this scale will correspond to the law of normal distribution: the poles of the scale are usually not very “populated”, and the majority of people lie in the middle and situationally reveal self-sufficiency and independence and dependency in a broad sense as a desire to use the resources of others, to exist at their expense (depending on the circumstances, well-being, assessment of the availability of their own resources for self-sufficiency, etc.).

The above-mentioned reflections give grounds to outline certain actions that could promote prevention of the motivational vector “Give!” in the elderly and guide them to a more productive motivation:

- assistance in finding tasks that make the elderly people more aware of their ability to self-sufficiency, effectiveness of their own actions, sufficiency of their resources for a fully-fledged life;
- creation of conditions for the elderly person to understand and practice responsibility for himself/herself, his/her life and behaviour;
- creation of conditions for the elderly people to exercise assertiveness as an ability to defend their rights in order to meet their needs without relying on other peoples’ resources;

- formation of the ability of tolerance and empathy, respect and acceptance of others as subjects and equal partners in communication and solving life problems.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The results obtained in the study reveal a range of problems and prospects for further research: it is desirable to determine whether the interpersonal intellect of a person affects his/her propensity for “demanding” behaviour; which motivational vectors guide the activities of an elderly person who assesses his/her life as fulfilled/not fulfilled depending on the subjective assessment of the person’s realization of his/her life goal, assessment of his/her material situation, assessment of his/her relationship with the family, etc.; an interesting research area seems to be the problem of the interrelationship of the inclination to demanding behaviour with other coping strategies and protective mechanisms.

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