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Stress resistance of young students in the context of their interaction with religious communities

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This article presents the
conclusion of the research
which is carried out in
accordance with the theme of
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"Religious Communities as a
Factor of Forming Stress
Resilience of Young
Students".

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The article presents the results of the study of stress resistance of the student's youth in the context of its interaction within their religious communities. It is assumed that in order to improve the psychological and the pedagogical process of shaping the stress resistance as an important life competency of schoolchildren, it is important to consider the influence on the students' personalities and their well-being of their religious activities. It is speculated that stressful situations may be related to the learning process, interaction with peers / friends, various relations within the family, extra-curricular activities, expectations about themselves and their future.

Also, there is a greater range of circumstances in family relationships may appear stressful for students. It is noted that most students of different ages experience the feeling of stress in situations related to the process of learning and knowledge exams (test works, surveys, waiting for a knowledge exam during final assessments and the ITA. The same type of situations can be stressful for students of all ages and evoke strong emotions. However, there are numerous ways of dealing with them, which is largely related to social factors such as a religious community. There are dominant coping strategies, levels of the ability to withstand stress, features of behavior under stress, types of prerequisites of the resistance to it: 1) actively involved in the life of a religious community, 2) somehow involved in the life of the religious community, 3) not involved in life and activities of a religious community. It is concluded that the ability of students to cope with stressful experiences and be stressed out is conditioned by the degree of their inclusion in the life and activities of their religious community which gives a sense of support and hope, shows an example of resilience of an individual in stressful conditions.

Keywords: *stress resistance; young students; religious communities; interaction within religious communities; development of stress resistance.*

Introduction

The high level of stress and pace of the real life leads to an increased level of stress and emphasizes the necessity to be able to cope with stress in order to ensure the functionality and an the mental well-being of the youth. The stress resistance is very important for the child from the very first days of schooling and until its completion

Schooling always provides the child with an opportunity to make a step beyond his or her "comfort zone" and to gain new competences. In addition, the student's personality is constantly involving in interpersonal interaction and in many social networks, in which he or she is constantly influenced, which may proof to excessive. During the school period, the intensive formation and development of the psychological properties of the individual, his behavior

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models and a response in case a stressful situations occurs. Developed and fixed psychological features of the individual also affect the specifics of his adaptation to different situations in real life.

In the modern scientific psychological literature, there are many extensive studies of the stress resistance of an individual (V. Korolchuk, P. Kupriyanov, Y. Kuzmin, N. Brezhnev, M. Bilov, etc.). It is considered as a structural-functional, dynamic, integrative property of an individual as a result of the transactional process of encountering an individual with a stress factor, which also contains the process of self-regulation, cognitive behavior, objective characterization of the situation and personal requirements (V. Korol). These studies establish an idea of integration of emotional, volitional, intellectual, and motivational components of human mental activity in order to ensure an optimal response in stressful circumstances. However, the influence of a person's outlook on the level of his or her resilience, the systemic nature of which determines its generalized influence on the perception and the assessment of the environment and behavior is still not well understood. In our opinion, it affects the outlook of an individual and the stress resistance, in particular, his / her belonging to and interaction with a particular religious community.

In the process of improving the psychological and pedagogical process of forming stress resistance (as a vital competence of the students), it is important to consider the influence of these religious communities as social groups that regulate deep subconscious psychological mechanisms of behavior.

The purpose of the article is to outline the prospects of organizing activities to increase the resilience of young students, taking into account the identified peculiarities of

their relationship with stress and the psychological characteristics of their interaction with religious communities.

Research methods. In order to understand the characteristics of the relationship of stress resistance of students with the psychological characteristics of their interaction with religious communities the following tools were used: questionnaire for the identification of school students' stressful situations (author's primary source), questionnaire for identifying the involvement of the student in religious communities (author's primary source), test Copygamer Indicator test developed by D, Amirhan and adapted by N.A. Sirota, V.M. Yaltonsky, the method "Man in the rain", the method "Do not let the person fall", the technique "Tree" [1-4]. the methods of mathematical statistics were used in order to obtain the results, for instance, frequency analysis, Fisher's φ * factor for angular transformations.

An empirical study was conducted in 2019. Respondents were students of 4-10th grades of Makariv, Barbiv, Gorondov and Zaluzhany secondary schools of the Trans-Carpathian region with a total number of 224 respondents (56 students of 4, 6, 8 and 10 grades).

Results. The application of the above methods made it possible to identify situations that are stressful for primary school children (see Table 1.2) the extent of their involvement in religious communities (see Table 3) the characteristics of students' well-being and stress in strive to find resolutions, strategies and the ability to withstand stress (see Table 4-7) and to test the correlations between the characteristics of students' stress resilience as they become involved in religious communities.

Table 1
Results of Frequency Analysis of Respondents' Response to the Questionnaire to Identify Stressful Situations of children in primary school, n = 224

№	Stressful Situations	Frequency of the respondents choice	
		Relative frequency %	frequency (f)
1	2	3	4
1	Exam	20%	44
2	Questioned by a teacher when he or she does not know the answer	28%	62
3	Waiting for results and grades (DPA, ZNT)	24%	54
4	Negative reaction from a teacher	11%	26
5	Issues with parents (quarrel, misunderstanding)	6%	13
6	Issues with siblings (quarrel, misunderstanding, jealousy, physical aggression)	8%	18
7	Issues with friends (quarrel, misunderstanding, hardships)	11%	24
8	Negative behavior of the peers towards the respondents. (False claims, upset, not accepted, bullying, jealous)	8%	17
9	Issues with parents	14%	32
10	Waiting for a negative reaction from the parents	10%	22
11	Loss of a close person	4%	8
12	Sick family member	5%	11
13	New family member (stepfather)	3%	7
14	Parents' divorce	7%	16
15	Information about danger towards relatives	6%	14
16	News on the Internet	5%	12
17	Broken heart	6%	14
18	Change in physical appearance (haircut, maturity)	4%	8
19	Understanding the vanity of desires (lack of money, special circumstances)	4%	9
20	Physical damage	3%	6

The list of stressful situations reported all the cases mentioned by the students as having a major impact (including the time of the survey). Among them, we can conditionally distinguish the following groups of stressful situations: 1) Cases related to the learning process (1,2,3,4), 2) Cases related to the interaction with peers/friends (7,8), 3) Cases related to interactions within the family (5,6,9,10,11,12,13,14,15), 4) Cases related to extra-curricular activities of the students (16, 20), 5) Cases related to expectations about yourself and your future (17, 18, 19). The number of types of stressful situations is dominated by a third group. That is, we can state that there is a greater range of situations in family relations that can be stressful for students. However, as seen on the Table 1, students are most likely to experience stress in situations related to the process of learning and knowledge tests (surveys, knowledge exams, expectations during final assessments and ZNT). In this case, according to Table 2, this tendency is observed in students from different classes.

According to Table 2, despite the presence of common stressful situations for students of different classes, we can also trace the similarity of the least common stressful situations among the students of all ages (these stress factors, whose incidence is relatively low in the study group, are noted by the students of different classes, except for "failures in love" among the fourth graders).

This indicates that the same type of situations can be stressful for students of all ages and cause them to

experience strong emotions. However, it is likely that the ability to cope with them is not the same.

The data in Table 3 indicates that all those surveyed are involved in celebrating religious holidays in one way or another (which is largely due to the peculiarities of the culture of the region's population); However, within each indicator there is a uniform distribution by age groups.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the researches were conditionally divided into 3 groups:

1) students who actively participated in the life of the religious community (32% of those surveyed, which revealed all 6 indicators of involvement in the activities of religious communities: the presence of activity combined with the activities of the religious community in their free time, celebration of religious holidays together with family relatives, church visits by family members, visiting a church regularly with family members, attending a church school classes, going on pilgrimage with relatives),

2) students, who to some extent are involved in the life of their religious communities (48% of those surveyed with 2-3 indicators of involvement in the life of the religious community);

3) students not involved in the life and activities of the religious community (20% of those surveyed, who only know about religion, religious holidays, but neither their close relatives nor themselves are involved in the life of their religious community in the area).

Table 2
Results of Frequency Analysis of Answers of Respondents of Different Classes on Questionnaire to Identify Stressful Situations of the Primary School Children, n =160

№	Stressful Situations	Frequency of the respondents choice (f)			
		4 grade	6 grade	8 grade	10 grade
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Exam	13	12	11	8
2	Questioned by a teacher when he or she does not know the answer	16	18	14	14
3	Waiting for results and grades (DPA, ZNO)	22	-	8	24
4	Negative reaction from a teacher	9	6	7	4
5	Issues with parents (quarrel, misunderstanding)	1	5	4	3
6	Issues with siblings (quarrel, misunderstanding, jealousy, physical aggression)	5	4	3	6
7	Issues with friends (quarrel, misunderstanding, hardships)	3	7	6	8
8	Negative behaviour of the peers towards the respondents. (False claims, upset, not accepted, bullying, jealous)	2	4	6	5
9	Issues with parents	9	12	5	6
10	Waiting for a negative reaction from the parents	6	7	5	4
11	Loss of a close person	2	1	3	2
12	Sick family member	3	4	3	1
13	New family member (stepfather)	1	1	2	3
14	Parents' divorce	5	3	4	4
15	Information about danger towards relatives	4	5	3	2
16	News on the Internet	1	6	3	2
17	Broken heart	-	-	6	8
18	Change in physical appearance (haircut, maturity)	1	2	3	2
19	Understanding the vanity of desires (lack of money, special circumstances)	1	2	2	4
20	Physical damage	2	2	1	1

We assume that the ability of students to cope with stressful experiences and experience stress is conditioned by the extent to which they are included in the life and activities of the religious community, which gives a sense of support

and hope, exemplifies the resilience of the individual in stressful conditions.

To check the involvement of students in the life of the religious community, we analyzed the data from Table. 3.

Table 3
Results of the questionnaire aimed at the detection of students' involvement in the life and activities of religious communities, n=224

№	Indicator of students' involvement in religious communities	Number of respondents				
		4 grade	6 grade	8 grade	10 grade	Total %
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Presence of activities related to a religious community in free time	19	23	24	26	41%
2	Celebrating religious holidays	56	56	56	56	100%
3	Visits to a church of family members	41	38	42	36	70%
4	Visits to a church together with family members					
	Often	18	21	14	19	32%
	Occasional	9	12	15	9	20%
	Rare	6	4	3	7	18%
5	Following courses in a church school	32	33	25	26	52%
6	Pilgrimage together with family	17	18	20	21	34%

The analysis of the indicators of the peculiarities of behaviour in stressful situations was carried out within each of the selected group of subjects.

Indicators of dominant coping behaviour (see Table 4) indicate that a group of respondents actively involved in the life of the religious community has a choice of coping strategies aimed at solving the problem and seeking social

support, with several students (in 28) both strategies are equally expressed. Respondents who are somewhat involved in the life of the religious community are also dominated by the choice of strategies mentioned above. Researchers who are not involved in the life and activities of the religious community are dominated by the choice between problem-solving coping strategies and an avoidance coping strategies.

Table 4
Results of frequency analysis of respondents' answers according to the test "The indicator of coping strategies" by D. Amirhan adapted by N.A. Sirota, V.M. Yaltonsky, n = 224

Respondent groups	The frequency of the application of coping strategies, f (relative frequency, %)		
	Aimed at problem-solving	Looking for social support	Aimed at avoiding
Group 1	47 (65%)	53 (74%)	-
Group 2	33 (31%)	47 (43,5%)	28 (26%)
Group 3	21 (47%)	-	24 (53%)

Comparison of relative frequency indicators (%), indicators of choice of coping strategies by different groups using the Fisher angle transformation test shows that the first group is significantly more frequent than the second ($\varphi_{\text{em}} = 3.05$; $p \leq 0.001$) and the third ($\varphi_{\text{em}} = 1.9$; $p \leq 0.028$) is dominated by a coping strategy aimed at the problem-solving. Also, the first group was significantly more likely than the second ($\varphi_{\text{em}} = 3.15$; $p \leq 0.001$) to apply a coping strategy aimed at seeking social support. In the third group, compared to the second group, the coping strategy of avoiding the problem ($\varphi_{\text{em}} = 2.02$; $p \leq 0.021$) is much more dominant. The frequency of dominance of coping strategies aimed at solving the problems of the second and third groups did not demonstrate a significant difference ($\varphi_{\text{em}} = 1.44$; $p \leq 0.075$).

The choice of behavior in a stressful situation is accompanied by various feelings, that is why the projector

method "Man in the rain" was used. According to this technique, the following dichotomous data was obtained: "determination" - "anxiety", "internal readiness to act" - "escape or need for protection", "feeling of an internal ability to combat difficulties" - "dependence on the elders or denying the need of support." The combination of these three indicators was studied: "determination", "internal willingness to act", "feeling of an internal resource to deal with difficulties". The result was regarded by us as a manifestation of their high level of ability to withstand stressful circumstances. The combination of two positive indicators (from above) of the ability to withstand stress was regarded as an average level, and, accordingly, the manifestation of only one positive such indicator - as a low level. Therefore, within the selected study groups, the frequency of these levels of ability to overcome adverse situations was shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Results of frequency analysis of respondents' answers by the method "Man in the rain", n=224

Respondent groups	Frequency of levels of ability to overcome adverse situations, f (relative frequency, %)		
	High level of ability to withstand stressful situations	Medium level of ability to withstand stressful situations	Low level of ability to withstand stressful situations
Group 1	57 (79%)	15 (21%)	-
Group 2	39 (36,5%)	54 (50,5%)	14 (13%)
Group 3	12 (26,5%)	21 (47%)	12 (26,5%)

Comparison of relative frequency indices (%) of the ability to withstand stress situations in the different groups studied through the Fisher Angle Transformation Test indicates that the first group of the respondents is significantly more frequent than the second ($\varphi_{emn} = 4.3$; $p \leq 0.001$) and the third ($\varphi_{emn} = 3.49$; $p \leq 0.001$) to be dominated by a high level of ability to withstand stressful situations. Furthermore, in the first group there is no reduced level of ability to withstand stressful situations.

For the diagnosis of behavioural characteristics of subjects under unexpected shocking circumstances, the method "Do not let a person fall" was used. According to this method, the following opposite indicators were revealed: "determination" - "waiting until everything is resolved by

itself", "predictability" - "not regulating the situation", "ability to take control of the situation and lead others" - "tendency to trust others, carelessness." Accordingly, the combination of the two positive indicators is researched: "determination" and "predictability", or "determination" and "the ability to take control of the situation and bring others", or just "the ability to take control of the situation and lead others" is assumed by us to be a manifestation of decisive activity in the behaviour of the subject. The absence of these combinations of indicators in the figures was regarded as a manifestation of indecision and passive behaviour. The indicators of the behaviour of students in stressful situations are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Results of frequency analysis of respondents' answers using the method "Do not let a person fall", n =224

Respondent groups	Frequency of students' particular behaviour f (relative frequency, %)	
	Decisive activity	Patience, passive attitude
Group 1	57 (79%)	15 (21%)
Group 2	59 (55%)	48 (45%)
Group 3	18 (40%)	27 (60%)

According to Table. 6, in the first two groups, the indicators of decisive active behavior in stressful situations prevail. The comparison of indicators of relative frequency (%) of behavior characteristics in stressful situations of the different groups is studied with the help of the criterion of φ - angular Fisher transformation. As a result, in the first group it is significantly more frequent than in the second ($\varphi_{emn} = 2.95$; $p \leq 0.001$) and the third ($\varphi_{emn} = 4.23$; $p \leq 0.001$) The group was dominated by strong and active behavior.

In addition to identifying dominant coping strategies, experiences, and behaviors of the young students in stressful situations, it was also important for us to find out that their state and the state they are seeking is an important prerequisites for their ability to withstand stressful situations. To diagnose the features of adaptation of the subjects we used projective technique "Tree". The indicators obtained by this method were grouped as follows:

1) Positive prerequisites for stress resistance: the presence of such indicators or a combination of them in two choices: "comfortable conditions, normal adaptation" (respondent choice №10,15), "sociability, friendly support"

(respondent choice №1,19,18,11,12), "obstacle overcoming conditioning" (respondent choice № 1,3,6,7);

2) Good prerequisites for stress resistance: the presence of such indicators and their combination in two elections or in combination with one of the indicators of the first group: "stability of the situation (desire to succeed, without overcoming difficulties)" (respondent choice # 4), "motivation for entertainment" (respondent choice №9);

3) prerequisites for reducing stress: the presence of such indicators and their combination in two elections, or in combination with one of the indicators of the other two groups: "fatigue, general weakness, general weakness, shyness" (respondent choice # 5), "Detachment, seclusion, anxiety" (respondent choice №13,21), "detachment from the educational process, departure from oneself" (respondent choice №8), "critical situation, falling into the abyss" (respondent choice №14), "overestimation" self-esteem" (respondent choice №20).

The frequency of diagnosis of these groups of prerequisites for stress resistance of the subjects is given in Table. 7.

Table 7

Results of frequency analysis of respondents' answers by the method of "Tree", n =224

Respondent groups	Frequency of diagnosis of types of preconditions of stress resistance, f (relative frequency, %)		
	Positive prerequisites for stress resistance	Good prerequisites for stress resistance...	Prerequisites for reduced stress resistance
Group 1	63 (87,5%)	9 (12,5%)	-
Group 2	38 (35,5%)	54 (50,5%)	15 (14%)
Group 2	16 (35,5%)	13 (29%)	16 (35,5%)

As shown by the data in Table 7, the first group is dominated by positive preconditions for stress resistance and no prerequisites for reduced stress resistance. In the second group, there are often cases of good preconditions for stress resistance, but there are also cases of preconditions with reduced resistance. According to the study of the third group with the same relative frequency as

in the second, there are positive prerequisites for stress resistance, but at the same time with no less relative frequency and prerequisites for reducing stress.

Comparison of indicators of relative frequency (%) of diagnosing types of preconditions of stress resistance of the studied different groups by means of the Fisher angle transformation test shows that the investigated first group is

significantly more frequent than in the second ($\varphi_{\text{emp}} = 5.55$; $p \leq 0.001$) and the third ($\varphi_{\text{emp}} = 4.07$; $p \leq 0.001$) the group was dominated by positive preconditions for stress; the frequency of diagnosing good prerequisites for stress resistance and prerequisites for reducing the stress resistance of the second and subgroup friction are not significantly different ($\varphi_{\text{emp}} = 1.44$ and $\varphi_{\text{emp}} = 1.42$, respectively, indicating that $p > 0.05$).

Discussion. Based on the empirical evidence obtained, it can be theorized that situations for young students may be stressful due to the learning process, interaction with peers / friends, family relations, extracurricular activities of students, expectations about themselves and their future. At the same time, there is a greater range of situations in family relationships that can be stressful for students. Students of all ages experience stress in situations related to the learning and knowledge control processes (test works, surveys, knowledge exams, expectations during final evaluations and ZNO). The same type of situations can be stressful for students of all ages and cause them to experience strong emotions. However, the ability to deal with them is different throughout different respondents, which is largely influenced by a social factor such as the religious community.

With the impact of the religious community on students, there are three groups of students: 1) students who are actively involved in the life of a religious community, 2) students, to some extent involved in the life of a religious community, 3) students who are not involved in the life and activities of a religious community. Students who are actively involved in the life of the religious community are significantly more likely to choose coping, problem-solving and social support strategies in stressful situations, or to combine both of these strategies and not favor a strategy for avoiding a stressful situation. Also, such students are significantly more likely than others to have a high level of ability to withstand stress and do not have a reduced level of ability to withstand stressful situations.

Individuals who are actively involved in the life and activities of religious communities are significantly more likely than others to exhibit decisive and active behavior in stressful situations and demonstrate positive prerequisites for stress tolerance (comfortable conditions, sociability,

willingness to provide and receive friendly support, self-conditioning to overcome obstacles).

Conclusion

The foregoing suggests that students' ability to cope with stressful experiences and be resilient is conditioned by their involvement in the life and activities of the religious community, which gives a sense of support and hope and exemplifies the resilience of the individual in stressful conditions.

Given the peculiarities of students' stress tolerance, depending on the extent of their involvement in life and activities of religious communities, the prospect of further research in the chosen direction is the development of special activities of religious communities for students to promote the development of their stress tolerance and the development of a personality as a whole.

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