



Gender determinants of psychological well-being among psychologists of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine

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◆ **Abstract.** In conditions of martial law, psychologists of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SES) experience increased professional stress, the course and consequences of which are significantly modified by gender-determined models of emotional regulation, professional socialisation, and expectations regarding roles and resilience. Gender determinants influence access to support resources, ways of coping with cumulative trauma, and risks of emotional exhaustion, which directly affect professional resilience and the effectiveness of psychological assistance. The aim of the study was to theoretically substantiate and systematise the gender factors of psychological well-being among psychologists of the SES, as well as to analyse the mechanisms of their influence on the professional functioning of specialists in conditions of martial law. The study used theoretical analysis and generalisation of scientific sources and a comparative-analytical method to compare approaches to studying gender aspects of well-being in the helping professions. It also uses structural-functional analysis and an integrative approach that combines the eudaimonic concept of well-being, the model of professional requirements and resources, and the theory of resource conservation. It is substantiated that the psychological well-being of psychologists of the SES is a dynamic, multidimensional process that is formed in the interaction of individual-personal, professional-operational and sociocultural factors. It is shown that gender is not a direct causal factor, but a contextual moderator of the relationship between professional requirements, resources, and psychological consequences of activity. A conceptual model was proposed, within which gender determinants are realised at the individual-personal, professional-operational and sociocultural levels, determining the specifics of emotional regulation, the nature of emotional labour and the availability of social support. The practical value of the study lies in the possibility of using the theoretical provisions obtained as a methodological basis for the development of differentiated, gender-sensitive programmes of psychological support and prevention of professional burnout among psychologists of the SES. The results can be applied in the system of psychological support, training and professional development of psychologists, as well as in further empirical studies of the problems of professional well-being of subjects of extreme activity

◆ **Keywords:** mental health; traumatic experience; emotional regulation; extreme conditions of activity; professional demands; psychological resources

◆ Introduction

The conditions of martial law in Ukraine have significantly transformed the professional activities of civil protection specialists, greatly complicating the performance of their duties. Constant threats to life, massive destruction of

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infrastructure, significant human losses and prolonged uncertainty have led to a sharp increase in psychological stress for all participants in rescue operations, including psychologists from the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SES). SES psychologists are involved in the elimination of the consequences of emergencies, within which they perform the functions of psychological support for emergency rescue operations, provide emergency psychological assistance to the affected population and support personnel. These tasks are carried out in conditions of high-intensity professional activity, emotional overload and regular contact with traumatic experiences, which, as emphasised by L. Piankivska (2022), significantly increases the risks to the mental health of the specialists themselves. In such a situation, SES psychologists find themselves in a position of double vulnerability: on the one hand, they are providers of psychological assistance, and on the other, they themselves are under the influence of powerful psychotraumatic factors of emergency situations, which significantly increases the risks of emotional exhaustion, secondary traumatic stress and professional deformation. Research by I.V. Ponomarenko (2024) has shown that in conditions of prolonged crises, the psychological well-being of specialists in helping and extreme professions ceases to be a stable individual characteristic and acquires a procedural, dynamic character, reflecting the balance between growing professional demands and available recovery resources. At the same time, H. Varina & S. Shevchenko (2024) noted that it is gender-determined models of professional socialisation, emotional regulation and resource use that significantly modify this balance, determining individual trajectories of preservation or depletion of psychological well-being in extreme conditions of activity. The gender dimension of the psychological well-being of SES psychologists is particularly relevant, as gender roles and professional expectations influence ways of experiencing stress, cognitive interpretation of danger, the nature of emotional labour, and willingness to acknowledge one's own vulnerability and seek psychological help. A. Alexeeva (2020) found that men and women in the civil protection system differ not so much in their level of psychological stress as in the ways they regulate it: men more often use strategies of emotional restraint and distancing, while women make greater use of social and emotional resources, while remaining more vulnerable to cumulative emotional exhaustion.

In the work of O.V. Zavorodnia & M.V. Shepelova (2025), psychological well-being was considered as an integral indicator of positive personality functioning, covering the meaningful, emotional, social and professional dimensions of life. For psychologists of the SES during wartime, this phenomenon is of particular importance, as it mediates not only the preservation of the mental health of the specialist, but also the quality of the psychological assistance provided. In this context, gender determinants act as systemic regulators of access to well-being resources, modifying the implementation of such components as professional autonomy, self-efficacy, meaningful engagement

and the ability to self-regulate, as emphasised by R. Fida *et al.* (2023). Resource and organisational-psychological approaches play an important role in explaining the gender specificity of psychological well-being, within which professional burnout is interpreted as a consequence of an imbalance between the intensity of demands and the availability of resources. Under martial law, this imbalance is compounded by gender-differentiated organisational expectations, norms of professional behaviour, and informal demands for "endurance", which affect men and women differently. V. Bosniuk *et al.* (2025) emphasise that the effectiveness of resource-oriented psychological support programmes largely depends on taking into account gender-specific patterns of experiencing stress and seeking help.

Thus, a synthesis of contemporary scientific approaches allows to conclude that the psychological well-being of SES psychologists is shaped by a complex interplay of professional demands, resources, and sociocultural norms, among which gender plays a key role in moderating professional resilience and vulnerability. At the same time, the problem of gender determinants of psychological well-being of psychologists of the SES in conditions of martial law remains insufficiently conceptualised, which determines the relevance and scientific expediency of this study. The aim of the study was to conceptually analyse and systematise gender-determined factors of psychological well-being among psychologists of the SES, as well as to identify ways in which they influence the effectiveness of professional activity in conditions of martial law. In accordance with the aim, the following objectives were set: to theoretically analyse contemporary approaches to the study of the psychological well-being of specialists in extreme situations from a gender perspective; to conceptualise the gender determinants of the psychological well-being of psychologists of the SES at the individual-personal, professional-operational and sociocultural levels; to substantiate the resource and organisational mechanisms for maintaining the psychological well-being of psychologists of the SES, taking into account gender characteristics in conditions of martial law.

◆ Materials and Methods

The work was theoretical and analytical in nature and focused on the systematisation and conceptual analysis of gender-determined factors of psychological well-being of SES psychologists in the context of martial law. The chosen research design was determined by the complexity and multidimensionality of the phenomenon under study, as well as the need to integrate multi-level theoretical approaches to the analysis of psychological well-being in extreme conditions of professional activity. The methodological basis was provided by interdisciplinary provisions of modern psychology of well-being, extreme and crisis psychology, psychology of professional activity, as well as gender psychology. Psychological well-being was considered as a dynamic, procedural and multidimensional phenomenon, formed in the interaction of individual-personal, professional-operational and sociocultural factors and mediated

by gender-determined models of professional socialisation, self-regulation and resource use. The research materials included scientific publications on psychological and professional well-being, quality of professional life, emotional burnout, secondary traumatisation, and gender aspects of the functioning of specialists in helping and extreme professions, in particular A.B. Bakker & E. Demerouti (2007), B.H. Stamm (2010) and N.V. Volynets (2020). Particular attention is paid to works representing the eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being, in particular the concept of C.D. Ryff (1989), according to which well-being is defined as the integration of the meaningful, emotional and social dimensions of positive personality functioning. The study also employed the theoretical principles of the Job Demands-Resources model, which made it possible to interpret professional well-being as the result of dynamic interaction between the intensity of professional demands and the availability of support resources. The source base also included S.E. Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory, within which psychological well-being is viewed as a process of loss, mobilisation and restoration of personal and social resources in response to prolonged stressors. An additional conceptual basis was provided by the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) model, which covers both the positive and negative consequences of professional activity in the field of care. To achieve the set goal, a set of theoretical methods appropriate to the tasks and nature of the study was applied. The method of theoretical analysis and a comparative-analytical approach were used to comprehend contemporary concepts of psychological well-being, professional quality of life, and gender determinants of activity in extreme conditions. Structural and functional analysis, as well as methods of generalisation and conceptualisation, were used to identify the levels of implementation of gender factors and to form the author's vision of the psychological well-being of psychologists working for the SES.

◆ Results and Discussion

The theoretical study showed that the issue of psychological well-being in modern psychological science occupies a special place in connection with the transformation of ideas about professional effectiveness, mental health and resilience of specialists whose activities are carried out in conditions of increased danger. In conditions of martial law, this issue becomes particularly relevant for psychologists of the SES, who are under double pressure – as providers of professional assistance and as participants in a shared traumatic experience. Psychological well-being is increasingly interpreted not as a static characteristic or the sum of positive states, but as a complex multidimensional process that is formed through the interaction of individual resources, environmental demands and the sociocultural context (Hupalovska, 2010). One of the most influential theoretical approaches is the eudemonistic concept of psychological well-being proposed by C.D. Ryff (1989), in which well-being is interpreted as the realisation of personal potential and includes components such as autonomy,

purposefulness, positive relationships, personal development, self-acceptance and control over the environment. For specialists in extreme situations, this model is methodologically significant because it allows to go beyond the narrow understanding of well-being as the absence of symptoms of exhaustion or distress. At the same time, in the context of prolonged stress, cumulative trauma and emotional labour, the resource-oriented approach presented in S.E. Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory is becoming increasingly important. According to this approach, stress arises from the loss, threat of loss, or insufficient restoration of significant resources, and psychological well-being is viewed as a dynamic balance between the processes of resource mobilisation and depletion. In the professional activities of SES psychologists, such resources include emotional stability, professional identity, a sense of purpose, social support, and organisational conditions of service. Even with a high level of job satisfaction, psychologists of the SES remain vulnerable to emotional burnout and secondary traumatic stress, especially when exposed to traumatic experiences for a long time (Stamm, 2010). Short-term effective strategies of emotional distancing or depersonalisation reduce the intensity of experiences, but when used for a long time, they contribute to professional deformation and a decrease in the quality of psychological assistance. Gender-determined models of professional socialisation modulate the implementation of these resources: a focus on control and restraint increases the subjective feeling of manageability, but reduces the willingness to recognise one's own limitations and seek support; a focus on emotional openness and interpersonal interaction increases access to social resources, but increases the risk of emotional exhaustion.

The imbalance between “effort invested” and “rewards received”, as well as tension in the “psychological field of life time” – the assessment of the past, present, and future, particularly in professional terms – are additional predictors of a decline in subjective stability and a sense of control (Volynets, 2020). This is especially true for psychologists working for the SES, whose activities during wartime are associated with chronic uncertainty and delayed rewards in a broad sense – from recovery and safety to the predictability of work results. Under such conditions, the classic logic of “demands – resources” is complicated by a prolonged lack of time for recovery and social pressure for continuous professional involvement, creating a chronic background of tension even in the presence of internal resources. According to N.V. Volynets (2020), in addition to individual resources, the key link in regulating psychological well-being is the organisational context: satisfaction with the content of work and achievements, organisational culture of relationships, relationships with management and colleagues, working conditions and management practices that can either support resourcefulness or increase feelings of exhaustion. For psychologists of the SES, this means that professional resilience depends not only on individual training, but also on organisational service

regimes and the availability of systemic recovery mechanisms. In addition, gender and age, in combination with length of service and official status, modify the components of well-being – self-efficacy, harmony, competence, motivation, development and achievement – and, accordingly, the structure of the experience of well-being in professional communities with high normativity and risk exposure. At the professional-operational level, gender determinants adjust the relationship between the intensity of emotional labour, cumulative trauma, and professional functioning resources. A significant addition to these approaches are contemporary gender-sensitive interpretations of psychological well-being, in particular G. Goren *et al.* (2025) and C. Palomino-Suárez & M.E. Aparicio García (2025). Within these approaches, gender is considered not as a formal socio-demographic indicator, but as a socio-culturally determined factor that determines acceptable ways of experiencing stress, regulating emotions, seeking help, and performing professional roles. This is particularly important for civil protection specialists, as the professional environment of the SES is traditionally characterised by high expectations of resilience, self-control and emotional restraint. Thus, the analysis of contemporary theoretical approaches has allowed to conclude that the psychological well-being of SES psychologists should be viewed as a procedural, contextually sensitive phenomenon that is formed

at the intersection of individual, professional, and sociocultural factors and undergoes significant transformations in conditions of martial law.

Based on the theoretical analysis and generalisation of contemporary scientific approaches within the framework of this study, the author has developed a concept of the psychological well-being of psychologists working for the SES, which is based on understanding it as a gender-mediated, multi-level dynamic system. The proposed concept allows to overcome reductionist approaches to well-being and reflect the complex interaction between professional requirements, resources, and the psychological consequences of activities in conditions of martial law. The central position of the concept is the idea of psychological well-being as an unstable balance between professional effectiveness and the risks of psychological exhaustion. In conditions of prolonged danger, high-intensity emotional labour and cumulative trauma, this balance cannot be considered a stable state, but rather a dynamic process of constant renewal, compensation and adaptation. Gender in this system acts as a moderator that determines the available strategies for regulation, interpretation of professional experience and use of resources. Within the developed concept, gender determinants of psychological well-being were systematised at three interrelated levels (Fig. 1).

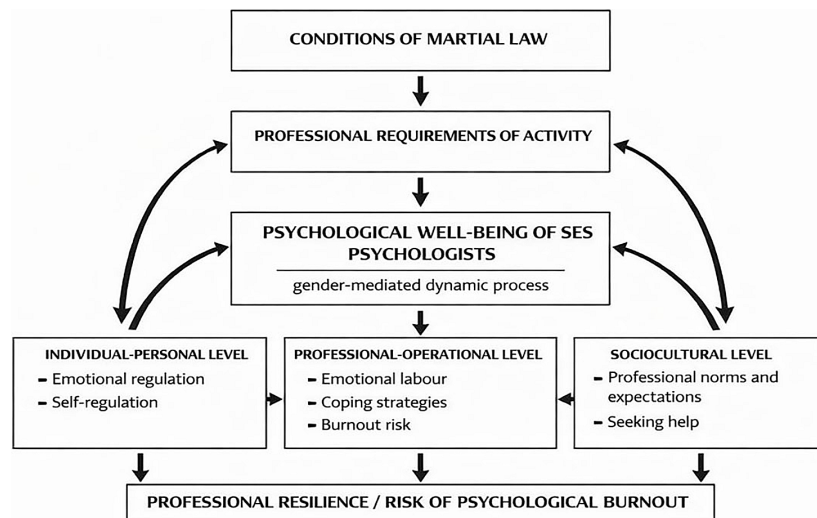


Figure 1. Structural model of psychological well-being of psychologists of the SES in conditions of martial law

Source: developed by the authors

Figure 1 demonstrates a model of the impact of martial law conditions and professional requirements on the psychological well-being of SES psychologists, taking into account three levels of this impact: individual-personal, professional-operational, and sociocultural. At the individual-personal level, gender differences manifest themselves through the characteristics of emotional regulation, self-regulation strategies, and attitudes towards psychological vulnerability. In particular, internal prohibitions on showing weakness or emotional fatigue can complicate the timely restoration

of resources and contribute to the accumulation of tension. At the professional-operational level, gender determinants are related to the specifics of performing emotional labour, the choice of coping strategies, and the risks of developing emotional burnout and secondary traumatic stress. The vulnerability of SES psychologists in this context is due to the need to be in prolonged contact with the traumatic experiences of others while having limited resources for recovery. At the sociocultural level, gender determinants are mediated by norms of professional behaviour, expectations

of resilience, and the acceptability of seeking psychological help in the workplace. It is at this level that the social context is formed, which either supports the psychological well-being of specialists or increases their vulnerability by stigmatising the need for support. Organisational conditions of professional activity, in particular service regimes, the degree of standardisation of activities, management practices and the availability of recovery resources, occupy a special place in the concept. It has been established that the effectiveness of mobilising these resources largely depends on gender-determined models of professional socialisation, which act as systemic moderators of the interaction between professional requirements and the psychological consequences of activity. Thus, the psychological well-being of SES psychologists is a gender-mediated, multi-level dynamic system that is formed as a result of the interaction of professional requirements, resources, and psychological consequences of activities and determines the professional stability and effectiveness of specialists' work.

The results of the study on the impact of gender factors confirm and expand on the findings of previous studies, emphasising their importance for the professional resilience and effectiveness of SES psychologists. A.B. Bakker & E. Demerouti (2007) emphasised that the psychological well-being of SES psychologists during a period of martial law has a processual, dynamic and multidimensional character, and is formed through the complex interaction of individual-personal, professional-operational and sociocultural determinants. According to B.H. Stamm (2010), the military context leads to a significant increase in professional demands related to cumulative trauma, high intensity of emotional labour and a shortage of recovery resources, which directly affects the level of psychological well-being. The results of a study by D. Gómez-Baya *et al.* (2018) also confirmed that in conditions of prolonged crisis, well-being ceases to be a stable characteristic and acquires the features of an unstable balance between professional effectiveness and increasing psychological exhaustion. An important empirical confirmation of the multi-level nature of well-being among security and defence sector professionals is the publication by N.V. Volynets (2019), dedicated to the personal well-being of the personnel of the State Border Service of Ukraine, in which well-being is operationalised as a holistic subjective reflective experience of the positivity and significance of one's own "self-existence" as a whole, as well as through the prism of life fulfilment in professional activity and the organisational environment. The proposed focused-holistic model with three focuses (personal, professional and organisational) is methodologically consistent with the thesis of the multidimensionality of psychological well-being and at the same time clarifies the role of the organisational context as an independent dimension in the maintenance or depletion of resources. Empirical data from M.V. Horenko & K.P. Radzivil (2023) further confirmed that the military context exerts powerful psychological pressure even on individuals who are only preparing for professional activity in the field of psychology, which

indicates the systemic nature of the destructive impact of war on the well-being of helping professionals at various stages of professional development. The multifactorial nature of psychological well-being was also emphasised by M.I. Marushchak *et al.* (2025), who viewed it as a central link in personal potential, determined by a combination of external, personal, interpersonal and subjective-personal factors. In this process, gender determinants are of particular importance, acting as systemic regulators and determining how professional stress is transformed into psychological consequences – the preservation of well-being, the development of exhaustion or the formation of professional deformation. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of R.K. Purvanova & J.P. Muros (2010). It has been found that gender differences in the helping professions manifest themselves not so much in levels of stress or burnout as in ways of experiencing it, coping strategies, and attitudes towards psychological help. At the individual and personal level, gender determinants manifest themselves through the characteristics of emotional regulation, the nature of self-regulation strategies, the level of empathic involvement, and ways of experiencing professional responsibility (Cilar Budler, 2025). In the context of the eudaimonic approach, professional autonomy, a sense of self-efficacy and life purpose are of key importance for SES psychologists, as they ensure the preservation of professional identity and meaningful engagement in conditions of danger and uncertainty. According to T.V. Danylchenko (2021), the professional dimension of well-being can be specified by indicators of professional competence and self-actualisation, professional and organisational motivation, professional development and achievements; at the same time, the very structure of the experience of well-being differs in different professional communities depending on the specifics of the activity and its psychological "weight" in the life of the individual. Such typological differentiation is also important for understanding psychologists of the SES as a separate professional group within the extreme profile.

◆ Conclusions

The theoretical and analytical study conducted made it possible to conceptually deepen the understanding of the psychological well-being of SES psychologists as a complex, multidimensional and dynamic phenomenon that is formed in conditions of martial law under the influence of a combination of individual-personal, professional-operational and sociocultural factors. It is argued that the military context significantly transforms the conditions of professional activity of psychologists of the SES, increasing the intensity of emotional labour, the level of responsibility and cumulative trauma. Under such conditions, even a high level of professional motivation, job satisfaction and meaningful engagement is not a sufficient guarantee of psychological well-being in the absence of systematic resource restoration. The key theoretical result of the study was the substantiation of the role of gender determinants as systemic moderators of the psychological well-being of SES

psychologists. Gender in the proposed conceptual model was not considered a direct causal factor of well-being, but it determines the ways of experiencing professional stress, the nature of emotional regulation and self-regulation strategies, the willingness to seek psychological help, as well as the availability of social and internal resources. It is shown that gender-determined models of professional socialisation mediate the choice of coping strategies and determine differences in the trajectories of resource preservation or depletion under conditions of prolonged stress. Conceptually, three interrelated levels of realisation of gender determinants of psychological well-being have been identified. At the individual-personal level, well-being is supported by professional autonomy, self-efficacy, and meaningfulness of activity, but their implementation may be limited by socially approved norms of restraint, over-responsibility, or increased emotional involvement. At the professional-operational level, the vulnerability of SES psychologists to the development of emotional burnout and secondary traumatic stress in conditions of prolonged contact with traumatic experiences and a lack of time for recovery is conceptually justified; in this context, short-term effective defensive

strategies of emotional distancing may, in the long term, increase the risks of professional deformation and a decline in the quality of psychological assistance. At the sociocultural level, norms and expectations regarding the acceptability of vulnerability, open discussion of psychological difficulties, and seeking support are crucial, as they directly influence the availability of social support and the quality of professional interaction within groups. The generalisations obtained open up prospects for further research on the development of resource-oriented and gender-sensitive support programmes for SES psychologists for the systematic restoration of resources, the development of self-regulation and the optimisation of organisational conditions of service.

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✦ **Анотація.** В умовах воєнного стану психологи Державної служби України з надзвичайних ситуацій (ДСНС) зазнають підвищеного професійного стресу, перебіг і наслідки якого суттєво модифікуються гендерно зумовленими моделями емоційної регуляції, професійної соціалізації та очікувань щодо ролей і витривалості. Гендерні детермінанти впливають на доступ до ресурсів підтримки, способи переживання кумулятивної травматизації та ризики емоційного виснаження, що безпосередньо позначається на професійній стійкості й ефективності психологічної допомоги. Мета дослідження полягала у теоретичному обґрунтуванні та систематизації гендерних чинників психологічного благополуччя психологів ДСНС, а також аналізі механізмів їх впливу на професійне функціонування фахівців в умовах воєнного стану. У дослідженні застосовано теоретичний аналіз і узагальнення наукових джерел та порівняльно-аналітичний метод для зіставлення підходів до вивчення гендерних аспектів благополуччя в допомагаючих професіях. Також використано структурно-функціональний аналіз і інтегративний підхід, що поєднав евіденційну концепцію благополуччя, модель професійних вимог і ресурсів та теорію збереження ресурсів. Обґрунтовано, що психологічне благополуччя психологів ДСНС є динамічним, багатовимірним процесом, який формується у взаємодії індивідуально-особистісних, професійно-діяльнісних і соціокультурних чинників. Показано, що гендер виступає не прямим каузальним чинником, а контекстуальним модератором взаємозв'язку між професійними вимогами, ресурсами та психологічними наслідками діяльності. Запропоновано концептуальну модель, у межах якої гендерні детермінанти реалізуються на індивідуально-особистісному, професійно-діяльнісному та соціокультурному рівнях, визначаючи специфіку емоційної регуляції, характер емоційної праці та доступність соціальної підтримки. Практична цінність дослідження полягає у можливості використання отриманих теоретичних положень як методологічного підґрунтя для розробки диференційованих, гендерно чутливих програм психологічного супроводу та профілактики професійного виснаження психологів ДСНС. Результати можуть бути застосовані у системі психологічного забезпечення, підготовці та підвищенні кваліфікації психологів, а також у подальших емпіричних дослідженнях проблем професійного благополуччя суб'єктів екстремальної діяльності.

✦ **Ключові слова:** військовослужбовці; бойова психічна травма; когнітивна сфера; пізнавальні процеси; психічні стани