



The core of resilience as a concept of personal integrity under conditions of external pressure

Olena Sek*

Postgraduate Student
V.I. Vernadsky Taurida National University
03040, 33 John McCain Str., Kyiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5703-1292>

◆ **Abstract.** In the context of war and forced isolation, there is a growing need to conceptualise personal resilience as the capacity to preserve psychological and existential integrity and to remain oneself under conditions of extreme traumatic pressure. The aim of the article was to provide a theoretical substantiation of the author's concept of the core of resilience as a deep integrative structure of personality that ensures self-preservation under conditions of moral, physical, and existential threat. Within the study, a generalisation of empirical observations obtained through work with individuals who have experienced captivity, isolation, and repression was carried out. The research also employed the method of phenomenological analysis, elements of logotherapeutic and existential approaches, a cognitive-ethical paradigm, and an interdisciplinary interpretation of psychological mechanisms for maintaining integrity. As a result of the theoretical analysis, a structure of the core of resilience was proposed, comprising four key components: psychophysiological (bodily integration and regulation), cognitive (reflectivity and the capacity to think under crisis conditions), moral (internal ethical boundaries and principles), and spiritual (the ability to rely on meaning that transcends physical survival). It was emphasised that the presence of such a structure enables an individual not only to maintain functional activity but also to preserve dignity, value orientations, and a meaningful trajectory of existence even in the most difficult circumstances. The distinction between the core of resilience and other psychological constructs lies in the fact that it performs not only an adaptive but also an ontological function – it protects identity in boundary situations. The core of resilience emerges as a mechanism of existential self-defence grounded in integrity, dignity, and indestructible meaning. The practical value of the study lies in the application of the concept of the core of resilience as a diagnostic and intervention tool for the rehabilitation of former captives, veterans, and victims of extreme violence, as well as for the training of military personnel and specialists through the development of bodily, cognitive, moral, and spiritual resilience

◆ **Keywords:** existential identity; continuity of meaning; subjectivity; ethical-value vertical; spiritually oriented model; ontological system; forced isolation

◆ Introduction

The issue of maintaining psychological resilience and personal integrity in the face of external pressure is one of the central concerns in contemporary humanities. In the context of military conflict, captivity, prolonged isolation, significant loss and profound traumatic experiences, psychology faces the task not only of describing the mechanisms of adaptation to stress, but also of identifying the

deep-seated internal structures that ensure a person's moral, spiritual and existential self-preservation. The growing scientific interest in the phenomenon of resilience stems from the need to understand how a person is able to remain true to themselves – to preserve their identity, sense of purpose and dignity – even in situations of extreme vulnerability (Slezackova *et al.*, 2024). Contemporary science has

Suggested Citation:

Sek, O. (2026). The core of resilience as a concept of personal integrity under conditions of external pressure. *The Bulletin of National Defence University of Ukraine*, 21(2), 90-98. doi: 10.33099/2617-6858-26-21-2-90-98.

Article's History: Received: 13.11.2025; Revised: 26.02.2026; Accepted: 30.03.2026; Published: 16.04.2026



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*Corresponding author

significantly expanded the understanding of resilience, moving beyond the classical adaptive approach. In particular, G.A. Bonanno *et al.* (2024) interpreted resilience as a complex system of a person's internal organisation, integrating biological, cognitive, ethical and spiritual dimensions. The concept of post-traumatic growth, developed by T. Brus (2025), demonstrated that the consequence of a traumatic experience may not be the destruction of the personality, but rather the formation of a new depth of self-understanding, a re-evaluation of life priorities and the discovery of a deeper meaning of existence.

Humanistic and existential traditions view resilience as a manifestation of personal maturity. Humanistic psychology describes a self-actualised person as one who maintains inner balance through an awareness of their own worth and responsibility for their life, and psychological integrity as the result of unconditional acceptance of one's own experience in all its fullness. Existential psychology, in turn, links true resilience to an honest and courageous confrontation with the inevitability of death and the absurdity of existence. M.V. Khyzhniak's (2025) study emphasised that at the heart of these concepts lies the human being as a unity of values, meaning and potential. This is precisely why, in this study, resilience was considered not merely as a psychological trait or a set of adaptive skills, but as a form of ontological presence grounded in freedom, meaning and authenticity. Empirical data confirmed this theoretical and conceptual perspective. S. Kimhi *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that during the war in Ukraine, the resilience of the population was largely determined by internal beliefs – a sense of control over the situation, hope, and faith in justice. A.S. Troy *et al.* (2023) and S. Shorer *et al.* (2024) emphasised the role of moral meaning and social responsibility in shaping the resilience of volunteers and military personnel. P. Russo-Netzer *et al.* (2025) demonstrated that humanistic values within educational communities during military operations contribute to the preservation of personal integrity. I. Kozlovskiy (2024) identified dignity as the spiritual core of resilience: truthfulness and self-loyalty create an inner freedom that cannot be destroyed by any external coercion. Similar conclusions are found in the work of M.U. Slahi (2024), where it was shown that survival in conditions of isolation depends primarily on the ability to preserve humanity and a sense of purpose. N. Yavorska (2024) noted that emotional self-regulation, control over one's inner state and a steadfast sense of duty ensure the preservation of soldiers' agency even in captivity.

Thus, an analysis of contemporary academic discourse has revealed a shift from understanding resilience as a purely adaptive response to interpreting it as an internal integrative process. This process organically combines cognitive orderliness, moral steadfastness, spiritual orientation and psychophysiological self-regulation. Resilience determines not only how a person withstands extreme circumstances, but also who they remain in those circumstances. In situations of captivity, isolation or prolonged external pressure, the core of resilience functions not as a set of

instrumental skills, but as a fundamental internal support that allows one to maintain subjectivity, retain the capacity for free choice and sustain a sense of inner integrity even amidst external disorganisation and chaos. Thus, the study of the core of resilience opens up the prospect of moving from a description of reactions to stress to a deep understanding of the mechanisms of self-preservation of the personality as a unified, holistic system. The aim of this article was to conceptualise and theoretically substantiate a model of the core of resilience, viewed as a fundamental integrative component of the personality that ensures its preservation and stability in the face of multi-level threatening influences. To achieve this aim, the following objectives were set: to analyse contemporary theoretical approaches to understanding resilience; to identify the structural components of the core of resilience; to compare it with existing models of resilience, stress resistance and coping; to explore the moral, ethical and spiritual aspects of resilience as the foundation of personality integrity.

◆ Materials and Methods

The study was conducted as a theoretical and conceptual analysis aimed at constructing a systemic model of the core of resilience as an integrative mechanism for preserving personal integrity under conditions of intense external pressure. The methodological framework was based on phenomenological, existential, logotherapeutic and cognitive-ethical approaches. Their combination enabled the phenomenon of resilience to be examined in the context of psychophysiological, cognitive, moral and spiritual components. Qualitative content analysis of textual data was employed for the empirical verification of theoretical propositions.

The empirical material comprised public interviews with individuals released from Russian captivity between 2022 and 2025, published in the media and on open information resources. The sample included interviews containing detailed personal accounts of the experience of captivity, the experience of isolation and internal processes of self-preservation. Materials were selected based on the criteria of authenticity of statements (direct speech of respondents), richness of content (presence of descriptions of internal experiences, decisions and meanings) and relevance to the research topic. The analysis was conducted in accordance with the principles of qualitative content analysis with elements of thematic coding. In the first stage, open coding of the texts was carried out, identifying units of meaning that reflected methods of self-regulation, cognitive organisation of experience, moral stance and spiritual support. In the second stage, the codes were grouped into thematic categories corresponding to the structural components of the theoretical model of the core of resilience: psychophysiological, cognitive, moral-ethical and spiritual. In the third stage, the data obtained were interpreted from the perspective of a phenomenological approach, with an emphasis on the meanings that respondents attributed to their own experiences. To enhance the reliability of the

analysis, a comparison of recurring patterns of meaning across different interviews was employed, which enabled the identification of typical manifestations of resilience under conditions of forced isolation. The results obtained do not claim statistical representativeness, but they have significant heuristic value as an empirical illustration of the proposed theoretical model and for revealing the underlying mechanisms of preserving personal integrity in extreme conditions. The theoretical part of the study comprised three consecutive stages:

1. During the first (analytical) stage, a critical review was conducted of contemporary academic literature on psychological resilience, post-traumatic growth, logotherapy and the existential approach, including the works of V. Frankl (2020), R.G. Tedeschi *et al.* (2025) and O.O. Belov *et al.* (2025). At this stage, the conceptual limitations of traditional models of resilience and coping were identified, primarily their predominant focus on behavioural and emotional-regulatory aspects.

2. The second (synthetic) stage involved a comparative analysis of humanistic and phenomenological approaches to understanding personal integrity (Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1995; May, 2025). Based on this analysis, four key levels of inner resilience – psychophysiological, cognitive, moral and spiritual – were identified, and the need to consider them as a single integrative system was substantiated.

3. At the third (conceptual-generalising) stage, based on a synthesis of theoretical sources and the results of interdisciplinary research, a model of the core of resilience was developed, which describes the mechanisms of moral and meaningful self-preservation under conditions of extreme stress.

L. Binswanger's (1963) phenomenological approach was used to describe the subjective dimension of the crisis experience and to analyse the inner experiences of a person facing an existential threat. This approach made it possible to avoid reducing human experience to behavioural reactions and to reveal it as a unique way of "being-in-the-world". Existential psychology, in particular the approaches of I. Yalom (2009) and R. May (2025), enabled to analyse resilience as a manifestation of spiritual maturity, freedom of choice and responsibility for one's own existence, as well as to describe the mechanisms of internal resistance to dehumanisation and loss of meaning. The logotherapeutic approach of V. Frankl (2025) and S.M. Southwick *et al.* (2014) was applied to explain the meaning-creating function of resilience. Logotherapy views the experience of trauma not only as a source of destruction, but also as an opportunity to rethink life and form a higher level of spiritual integrity, thereby providing a basis for understanding the moral and meaningful core of the personality. The cognitive-ethical approach was used to analyse the processes of self-reflection, moral choice and the meaningful integration of experience. It allowed resilience to be viewed not merely as a psychological trait, but as an ethical structure in which knowledge, values and action are organically integrated.

The theoretical conclusions were based on an interdisciplinary analysis of over 30 academic sources – monographs, articles, reports and memoir-psychological texts. Key works utilised include those on positive psychology by M. Seligman (2022), biopsychosocial theory by G. Fava & N. Sonino (2017), existential analysis by L. Binswanger (1963), as well as contemporary Ukrainian military psychology, notably V. Koval *et al.* (2024), and I. Kozlovskyi's concept of spiritual dignity (2024). The methodological strategy was based on the principles of integrity, integrativity and meaning-making. These principles made it possible to combine various scientific dimensions – from psychophysiological to moral and spiritual – within a single analytical model. The logic of the analysis involved a progression from describing individual forms of resilience (endurance, resilience, coping) to developing a generalised concept of the core of resilience as a multi-level system of internal self-regulation and moral steadfastness. Thus, the methods employed provided a comprehensive theoretical foundation for the phenomenon of the core of resilience and enabled its exploration as an ontological component of personal integrity – a structure that defines the boundaries of the human "self" in the process of encountering the destructive forces of the external environment.

◆ Results and Discussion

As a result of theoretical and conceptual analysis, a model of the "core of resilience" has been developed as an integrative system of internal mechanisms that ensure the preservation of personal integrity in the face of external pressure. The findings of A.S. Masten (2024) confirmed that resilience is not merely an adaptive trait, but a form of ontological self-preservation in which cognitive, moral, spiritual and psychophysiological regulation are combined. The concept of the "core of resilience" represents not only the individual's capacity for functional recovery following exposure to stressors, but above all their internal, value-driven existential steadfastness. This phenomenon goes beyond adaptive models, as it is not reducible to automatic adaptation to the environment. On the contrary, in a number of extreme situations, it is precisely the deliberate refusal to adapt in order to preserve moral identity that is a sign of mature resilience. The core of resilience is neither an isolated character trait nor a set of situational coping strategies. It is an integrative system of interrelated qualities, including:

1. Psychophysiological foundations: the neurophysiological capacity to withstand stress, the autonomy of the nervous system in response to challenges, somatic resilience, and homeostatic recovery (Grossman & Christensen, 2023; Poludonna & Tymoshenko, 2025).

2. Cognitive capacities: self-awareness, reflection, ethical judgement, critical thinking, the capacity for conscious choice and sustained focus on existential goals (Main *et al.*, 2023).

3. Moral and value-based guidelines (moral resilience): stability of beliefs, fidelity to ideals, an internal moral

compass, and the capacity for ethical resistance to destruction (Kharytonova, 2023; Kozlovskiy, 2024).

4. Spiritual integration: reliance on meanings transcending utilitarian needs; the capacity for prayer/meditation/service as forms of meaning-making.

Taken together, these levels form a deep structure of subjectivity, realised as a strategy of “holding oneself together” in dehumanising conditions. Unlike situational adaptive responses, the core of resilience has the character of an ontological constant, rooted in fundamental values and meanings. External pressure does not destroy this core as long as the subject does not renounce themselves in the meaningful, moral or spiritual dimension. The core of resilience functions as an internal subjective centre that structures experience under destructive influences (physical, informational, moral-psychological). Fear, pain and doubt are not eliminated, yet they do not lead to internal disintegration; what occurs is not passive defence, but an active ethical stance. The concept also includes a temporal dimension: it concerns the long-term ability to maintain a connection with meaning and value orientations, rather than a one-off act of will. It is important that the core of resilience is not a static or purely innate formation. It is formed gradually – through the experience of moral choice, overcoming losses and trials, the development of bodily self-awareness, and reflection on one’s own limits and vulnerabilities (Belov *et al.*, 2025). This construct is most fully revealed in borderline situations, when the familiar order is disrupted and responsibility for “being oneself” cannot be delegated. Thus, the essence of the core of resilience lies in the existence within the subject of a deep integrative structure that ensures meaningful continuity and moral constancy in the face of a rupture with basic forms of external support. The core allows not only for survival, but also for the preservation of subjectivity where its existence is called into question.

At the physiological level, resilience is grounded in the capacity of the neural and endocrine systems to adapt to stress without tipping into distress. Somatic stability provides a platform for maintaining psychological integration. This concerns the body’s ability to “hold” a meaningful identity, not merely to reduce arousal. The body emerges as a subject of regulation, sustaining the stability of the personal structure through the subtle functioning of interoception, breathing, sleep-wake rhythms, and muscle tone. Central to this is bodily competence – the capacity to engage with the body as an active participant in self-preservation. Practices such as mindful breathing, sensorimotor techniques, and simple rhythmic movements support the integrity of experience (“being present in the body”), reduce the risk of dissociative breakdowns, and help preserve conscious ethical behaviour despite pain or fear. Testimonies of former captives indicate that simple bodily rituals (counting steps, regulating breathing) served as tools for maintaining presence and will. Thus, the psychophysiological foundation is not an autonomous function but an element of a holistic integrative system in which the

body, psyche, and moral dispositions operate as a unified field of inner resistance. The cognitive component constitutes the structural framework of the core of resilience: it ensures orientation in reality, reflective comprehension of events, the meaningful organisation of experience, and moral judgement. This component includes several inter-related aspects:

- ✦ reflexivity – the capacity to comprehend not only external events but also one’s own modes of experiencing them (inner speech “names” experience and thereby significantly limits its destructive potential);
- ✦ metacognition – awareness of one’s own cognitive strategies and their conscious modification in accordance with value-based criteria;
- ✦ the transition from impulsive reaction to ethically grounded choice;
- ✦ cognitive flexibility – the ability to sustain multiple perspectives without losing a coherent picture of the world, reducing the risk of catastrophisation and enabling the search for meaning even within a fragmented reality;
- ✦ moral judgement – a cognitive function of evaluating situations from the standpoint of internal principles rather than fear or expediency, serving as an important indicator of preserved subjectivity and responsible choice;
- ✦ stability of the self-image – the ability to maintain a sense of a continuous “self” despite the loss of social roles, status, bodily integrity, or public recognition (Klymenko, 2024; Belov *et al.*, 2025).

Thus, cognitive capacities are not merely auxiliary tools but active mechanisms for preserving the value vector and the continuity of meaning. The central component of the core of resilience is the inner moral structure, which defines the boundaries of what is permissible, preserves dignity in inhumane conditions, and ensures ontological fidelity to oneself. This does not refer to external, conformist morality, but to existential responsibility towards oneself, others, and a higher meaning. A marker of moral resilience is steadfastness in fundamental matters – not as dogmatism, but as a form of integrity: a willingness to pay the price for fidelity to one’s principles (Zerach *et al.*, 2017). This includes an awareness of inviolable boundaries even in extreme situations; ethical tension and the capacity to endure conflict; resistance to “rational” compromise that preserves functionality but destroys the person. Moral principles function as a compass when all other reference points disappear, sustaining subjectivity even in the loss of voice or bodily freedom. The spiritual component is not reducible to religiosity; rather, it is an orientation towards transcendent meaning and a higher moral order that goes beyond utilitarian survival. It is here that an inner vertical is formed, enabling a person to endure when everything else collapses (Eger, 2020; Frankl, 2020). This involves faith (in God, truth, love, or an idea), dignity as the foundation of subjectivity, fidelity, self-sacrifice as a form of love, and the rejection of betrayal. Spiritual values are indestructible because they do not depend on external conditions; they determine the quality of inner life and

become the crystalline lattice of the psychological structure. If morality delineates boundaries, the spiritual dimension answers the question “for the sake of what”. In this way, cognitive activity does not turn into a rationalisation of capitulation, and somatic endurance does not become a “blind instinct”.

Unlike functional approaches to identity (roles, narratives, social markers), within an existential perspective identity is understood as a mode of being-in-the-world. It is precisely here that the core of resilience ensures the continuity of the “self” when external attributes disappear. In boundary states (captivity, illness, disasters), functional identity collapses, yet ontological identity remains – an inner testimony that “I am I”, despite loss. The core of resilience sustains the temporal unity of the subject between a traumatised past, an uncertain present, and an obscure future. It also counteracts depersonalisation, allowing one to maintain contact with emotional reality without losing control (Yalom, 2009; May, 2025). Thus, the core of resilience constitutes the existential substratum of personality – the precondition for any adaptation or therapy; without it, neither agency nor responsibility is possible. The concept of the core of resilience has been formulated in response to the limitations of traditional approaches to psychological

endurance under conditions of stress. It may be compared with related, yet distinct, categories:

1. Stress resistance. In applied fields, this is interpreted as the ability to maintain emotional balance and productivity under pressure; the criterion is functional effectiveness. Under prolonged dehumanising influences, this criterion is insufficient: the core of resilience expands the horizon from “I can act” to “I remain myself, even when action is impossible”.

2. Resilience. Contemporary models describe it as dynamic adaptation through the integration of internal and external resources (O’Leary & Ickovics, 1995). The core of resilience does not require successful adaptation: its essence lies in ontological presence and the preservation of dignity, even in the absence of “success”.

3. Coping strategies focus on behavioural and cognitive techniques for reducing tension (Folkman, 2013). The core of resilience does not prescribe forms of action; rather, it constrains them within ethically permissible boundaries.

Psychological flexibility emphasises acting in accordance with values despite pain or fear. This is close to the concept of the core of resilience; however, the core of resilience may function as a “silent centre”, sustaining value-based identity even in the absence of the possibility to act. Table 1 provides a brief description of the main concepts.

Table 1. Comparison of key concepts

Concept	Main focus	Effectiveness criterion	Role of functionality
Stress resistance	Psychophysiological functioning	Maintenance of control	Central
Resilience	Adaptation	Return to equilibrium	Important
Coping strategies	Behavioural regulation	Reduction of tension	Key
Psychological flexibility	Conscious orientation	Fidelity to values in action	Secondary to values
Core of resilience	Continuity of meaning	Preservation of identity	Independent of functionality

Source: compiled by the author based on V.E. O’Leary & J.R. Ickovics (1995), S. Folkman (2013), V. Frankl (2020)

Table 1 demonstrates the evolution of approaches to coping with stress – from physiological control and behavioural regulation to deeper meaning-based and value-oriented frameworks, reflecting a shift in emphasis from reacting to stress towards integrating experience into the structure of personality. At the same time, varying degrees of dependence on functionality can be observed: while in applied models functionality plays a leading role, in existential approaches it yields to the significance of identity and inner values. Within the study, an analysis of other concepts of preserving personal integrity in crisis was also conducted, particularly in terms of their capacity to interact with the concept of the “core of resilience”. According to the logotherapy of V. Frankl (2020), the primary motivational force of a person is the search for meaning, including the ability to sustain it under conditions of loss and humiliation. This idea is close to the core of resilience; however, it does not presuppose a multi-level integrative structure combining cognitive, affective, and bodily dimensions.

Humanistic and existential psychology emphasise authenticity, self-actualisation, and responsibility as conditions of personal integrity (Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1995; Yalom, 2009). However, these approaches focus primarily

on development, whereas the core of resilience emphasises the preservation of already established meaning and dignity under conditions of degradation. The theory of post-traumatic growth, represented by R.G. Tedeschi *et al.* (2025) and O.O. Belov *et al.* (2025), considers trauma as a catalyst for changes in values and spiritual development. It explains processes that occur “after” trauma, whereas the core of resilience describes ethical steadfastness precisely “during” the crisis, which precedes any transformations. Theories of moral development explain the motivation of ethical behaviour, yet often insufficiently account for the bodily-affective dimension in boundary states. The core of resilience integrates moral judgement with the bodily and emotional endurance necessary for the enactment of decisions in extreme conditions. Spiritually oriented models associate resilience with dignity and connection to a higher order, often in dogmatic categories. The core of resilience is understood as an existential fact that may include a spiritual dimension but is not reducible to it (Eger, 2022). Thus, the core of resilience synthesises individual ideas from these approaches, adding an emphasis on the preservation of inner integrity and an ethical stance precisely at the moment of active degradation. Existing approaches illuminate

important aspects – meaning, growth, authenticity, spirituality, and morality. However, none of them individually encompasses the bodily, cognitive, moral, and spiritual levels simultaneously as a unified ontological structure. For this reason, the core of resilience may be regarded as a metaconcept that integrates the deeper elements of various schools into a holistic explanation of the preservation of subjectivity under external pressure.

To verify the theoretical conclusions, a content analysis of public interviews with individuals released from Russian captivity between 2022 and 2024 was conducted. The materials obtained made it possible to identify empirical manifestations of the key components of the core of resilience. Most respondents emphasised the importance of psychophysiological regulation. They noted the necessity of controlling bodily reactions – “keeping one’s head together”, breathing calmly, and not allowing oneself to break. This indicates that even under extreme conditions, bodily discipline remains a fundamental form of self-preservation (Klimyk, 2024; Sampan & Svyanchuk, 2025). No less significant was cognitive capacity. Captives frequently resorted to internal monologue, keeping a diary, counting days, or mentally reproducing texts and poems. Such self-organisation helped to maintain a connection with reality under conditions of sensory isolation. In particular, L. Huseinova noted that writing down her thoughts was a way “not to lose her mind” (Tkachyk, 2025). Respondents repeatedly spoke of refusing humiliation, remaining faithful to personal principles, and preserving dignity even under the harshest circumstances. M. Butkevych expressed this as follows: “One can lose everything except oneself” (Khotyn, 2025). This position corresponds to V. Frankl’s (2020) idea of the residual freedom to choose one’s attitude towards circumstances. Spiritual support was also an important component. Many of those released identified prayer, faith, thoughts of loved ones, and of Ukraine as their main sources of life force (Yatskiv, 2025). I. Kozlovskiy (2024), who himself endured captivity, described spiritual resilience as a form of inner freedom that “cannot be taken away by any chains”. All these testimonies confirm that resilience in captivity is not merely psychological in nature, but fundamentally moral and existential. Those who survived describe not so much behavioural strategies as an inner act – a refusal to allow oneself to be destroyed. The empirical confirmation allows the proposed concept to be regarded as a universal framework for analysing human behaviour under conditions of the breakdown of social structures.

The results of this study expand upon the ideas of post-traumatic growth of M. Jukić (2023), demonstrating that inner transformation following extreme experience is possible not only through overcoming trauma, but also through sustaining meaning directly within it. Unlike the resilience models of S.R. Maddi (2006) or the coping frameworks of R. Lazarus & S. Folkman (1984), the “core of resilience” reflects not strategies of action, but a fundamental structure of being – an integrative wholeness of personality preserved under conditions of active degradation.

In the Ukrainian scholarly tradition, the issue of resilience acquires particular significance in connection with wartime experience and mass trauma. N.I. Pohorilska *et al.* (2024) describe post-traumatic growth as a process of identity reconstruction, particularly through the re-evaluation of values. H. Lazos (2016) outlines theoretical models of post-traumatic development associated with the activation of moral responsibility and meaning-making. V.O. Horych (2023) emphasises that post-traumatic growth emerges when the psyche is capable of withstanding tension and engaging in the process of making sense of experience.

Restoring a sense of control and meaning is a fundamental condition for stabilisation after captivity. I. Zoshii (2024) and P. Galanis *et al.* (2025) also note that psychological resilience is a key resource for adapting to wartime conditions and is determined by the interaction of stress-related, cognitive, biological, and personal factors. The proposed model has significant potential for practical application in psychological rehabilitation, psychotherapy, and the training of professionals working with veterans, former captives, and their families. Its use makes it possible to develop programmes for spiritual and moral stabilisation, to refine logotherapeutic methods of support, and to create educational modules aimed at fostering inner resilience among military personnel and civilian specialists. Thus, the findings of the study demonstrate that the “core of resilience” is a universal integrative system that determines a person’s capacity to preserve themselves under the most extreme circumstances. The theoretical model is supported both by scholarly sources and by empirical testimonies of individuals who have endured captivity, which lends it a high degree of validity and practical significance.

◆ Conclusions

In the proposed theoretical and conceptual study, the notion of the core of resilience is substantiated as a deep integrative structure of personality that ensures ontological self-preservation under the impact of external pressure. Unlike adaptive interpretations of stress resistance, resilience, and coping, the core of resilience is defined as an inner subjective centre that maintains the integrity of the “self” in situations where functional action is either impossible or ethically unacceptable. This centre integrates four interrelated levels: psychophysiological (bodily stabilisation and regulation), cognitive (reflection, metacognition, cognitive flexibility, and moral judgement), moral (inner boundaries and steadfastness in fundamental principles), and spiritual (orientation towards transcendent meaning, which establishes a vertical hierarchy of values). Within this configuration, psychophysiological processes support clarity of consciousness, cognitive organisation ensures the quality of ethical decisions, and spiritual orientation provides meaningful direction to the entire system.

The findings obtained are consistent, on the one hand, with the logotherapeutic thesis regarding the key role of meaning in survival and the preservation of dignity, and, on the other hand, they extend contemporary models of

post-traumatic growth by illuminating not only transformations “after” trauma, but also the mechanisms of value-based self-preservation during extreme experience. The inclusion of testimonies from individuals who have endured captivity demonstrates the empirical validity of the four-level model: the bodily rituals they describe, the tracking of time, inner monologue or prayer, and the refusal of humiliation or betrayal of personal convictions concretise the functioning of each level as elements of a unified system of inner resistance. Unlike models that focus on the restoration of functionality, the proposed framework describes the condition of possibility for both adaptation and post-traumatic growth: without a core of resilience, there is no subject capable of meaningful recovery. At the same time, it avoids reductionism – it does not reduce resilience to physiology, cognition, or spirituality alone, but emphasises their systemic interdependence.

The proposed concept is suitable both for the theoretical explanation of endurance in captivity and other boundary states, and for the practical design of interdisciplinary support programmes that integrate bodily regulation, cognitive organisation, moral steadfastness, and a spiritual value orientation.

◆ Acknowledgements

The author expresses gratitude to all the defenders of Ukraine who returned from captivity and shared their experiences of survival under conditions of forced isolation.

◆ Funding

None.

◆ Conflict of Interest

None.

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Ядро стійкості як концепція цілісності особистості в умовах зовнішнього тиску

Олена Сек

Аспірант

Таврійський національний університет імені В. І. Вернадського

03040, вул. Джона Маккейна, 33, м. Київ, Україна

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5703-1292>

♦ **Анотація.** У контексті війни та примусової ізоляції зростає потреба в осмисленні стійкості особистості як здатності зберігати психологічну та екзистенційну цілісність і залишатися собою в умовах граничного травматичного тиску. Метою статті було теоретичне обґрунтування авторської концепції ядра стійкості як глибинної інтегративної структури особистості, що забезпечує її самозбереження в умовах морального, фізичного та екзистенційного загрозливого впливу. У межах дослідження здійснено узагальнення емпіричних спостережень, отриманих у роботі з особами, що пережили досвід полону, ізоляції, репресій, а також використано метод феноменологічного аналізу, елементи логотерапевтичного й екзистенційного підходів, когнітивно-етичної парадигми та міждисциплінарну інтерпретацію психологічних механізмів збереження цілісності. У результаті теоретичного аналізу запропоновано структуру ядра стійкості, що включає чотири ключові компоненти: психофізіологічний (тілесна інтеграція і регуляція), когнітивний (рефлексивність, здатність до мислення в умовах кризи), моральний (внутрішні етичні межі та принципи), духовний (здатність спиратися на сенс, що виходить за межі фізичного виживання). Підкреслено, що наявність такої структури дозволяє особистості не лише зберігати функціональну активність, а й утримувати власну гідність, ціннісні орієнтири, сенсову лінію існування навіть у найважчих обставинах. Відмінність ядра стійкості від інших психологічних конструкцій полягає в тому, що воно виконує не лише адаптаційну, а й онтологічну функцію – захищає ідентичність у межових ситуаціях. Ядро стійкості постало як механізм екзистенційного самозахисту, в основі якого – цілісність, гідність і незнищений смисл. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в застосуванні концепції ядра стійкості як діагностичного та інтервенційного інструменту для реабілітації звільнених з полону, ветеранів і жертв крайнього насильства, а також для підготовки військових і фахівців через розвиток тілесної, когнітивної, моральної та духовної стійкості

♦ **Ключові слова:** екзистенційна ідентичність; сенсова неперервність; суб'єктність; етико-ціннісна вертикаль; духовно-орієнтована модель; онтологічна система; примусова ізоляція