

Lesia Filonenko

National Academy of the National Guard of Ukraine

PhD in Pedagogical Sciences, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Psychology (Ukraine)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1309-5761>

E-mail: filonenkolesa28@gmail.com

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF STUDYING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE FORMATION OF COMBAT READINESS IN SERVICEMEN OF THE LAND FORCES OF THE ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE

В статті розкривається сутність психологічної готовності як системного утворення, яке охоплює мотиваційні, волеві, емоційні та когнітивні компоненти особистості, розглядається взаємозв'язок між психологічною готовністю та бойовою ефективністю. Структурні компоненти якої виділяються основними складниками такими як мотиваційна установка на виконання завдання, емоційна стабільність, стресостійкість, рівень самоконтролю, оперативне мислення та адаптивні ресурси особистості. Аналізується вплив бойової обстановки на психічний стан військовослужбовця. Особливу увагу приділено психологічним навантаженням, які супроводжують виконання завдань в умовах загрози життю та здоров'ю. Розглядаються внутрішні (індивідуальні особливості, психофізіологічні характеристики) та зовнішні (організація служби, рівень підготовки, морально-психологічне забезпечення) чинники, що впливають на формування бойової готовності. Висвітлюється значення професійної роботи військових психологів і командного складу у створенні сприятливого морально-психологічного клімату та підвищенні готовності особового складу що є важливим внеском у науково-практичне розуміння психоемоційної підготовки військових, що є надзвичайно актуальним у сучасних умовах оборони України.

Ключові слова: психологічна готовність, військовослужбовці, Збройні Сили України, бойові завдання, мотивація, стресостійкість, саморегуляція, морально-психологічний стан, професійна підготовка, бойова ефективність.

The article reveals the essence of psychological readiness as a systemic construct that encompasses the motivational, volitional, emotional, and cognitive components of personality. It examines the relationship between psychological readiness and combat effectiveness. The structural components of readiness are identified as key elements such as motivational orientation toward task completion, emotional stability, stress resistance, level of self-control, operational thinking, and adaptive personal resources. The influence of the combat environment on the mental state of servicemen is analyzed. Particular attention is paid to psychological stressors that accompany the execution of tasks under life- and health-threatening conditions. The study also considers internal factors (individual traits, psychophysiological characteristics) and external factors (service organization, training level, moral and psychological support) that influence the formation of combat readiness.

The role of military psychologists and command staff is highlighted in creating a favorable moral and psychological climate and enhancing the readiness of personnel — a contribution that is of crucial importance for the scientific and practical understanding of psycho-emotional preparation of the military, especially under the current conditions of Ukraine's defense efforts.

Keywords: psychological readiness, servicemen, Armed Forces of Ukraine, combat missions, motivation, stress resistance, self-regulation, moral and psychological state, professional training, combat effectiveness.

Introduction. In the current context of armed aggression against Ukraine, the issue of combat readiness among servicemen of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is gaining particular importance. Among the various factors determining the army's ability to effectively accomplish combat tasks, psychological readiness of personnel plays a leading role. It is this readiness that shapes internal resilience, motivation, and the ability to act under conditions of high risk and uncertainty.

Studying the psychological foundations of readiness for combat assignments is crucial both for improving the training system of military personnel and for developing effective psycho-preventive and psycho-corrective measures. The theoretical comprehension of this phenomenon requires an

interdisciplinary approach that combines achievements in military psychology, pedagogy, sociology, and neuropsychology.

This article examines key theoretical approaches to understanding the psychological readiness of servicemen in the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, analyzes the factors influencing its formation, and outlines directions for further research in this area. **The psychological readiness of a servicemember to carry out combat missions is a complex integral construct that encompasses motivational, volitional, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components.** Several approaches to its definition have been developed within military psychology, each emphasizing a particular aspect of this phenomenon. In this context, psychological readiness is viewed as a stable personality trait that ensures effective functioning under stress, risk, and responsibility. The main focus is placed on individual qualities such as decisiveness, emotional stability, self-control, and goal orientation.

The **functional-dynamic approach** interprets readiness as a dynamic psychological state that forms immediately before mission execution and is characterized by an optimal level of internal resource mobilization. Important factors here include situational motivation, level of arousal, attention concentration, and psychological mindset. Thus, psychological readiness is considered a system that includes several interconnected levels — personal, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. The interaction of personnel within the team, support from commanders, the presence of well-practiced skills, and adaptation to the combat environment all play a significant role. In this context, psychological readiness is associated with achieving self-realization and unlocking the inner potential of the servicemember. Emphasis is placed on the development of self-regulation, reflection, and professional identity. All of these approaches highlight that psychological readiness is not only the result of training and instruction, but also an indicator of the servicemember's mental health, motivation, and inner maturity. Its development requires systematic work from psychologists, commanders, and an appropriate organizational and educational environment.

Theoretical foundations of research. The phenomenon of psychological readiness among servicemen of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to accomplish assigned combat tasks is multifaceted and requires comprehensive theoretical analysis. Psychological readiness is generally defined as a dynamic, integrative quality of the individual that ensures successful functioning in complex, high-stress, and potentially life-threatening situations. The theoretical basis for studying this phenomenon lies in several scientific domains [2, c.129-144]. First and foremost, military psychology provides fundamental concepts regarding stress resistance, volitional regulation, and motivational readiness for combat actions. In the context of military activity, the ability of a servicemember to function effectively under conditions of increased psycho-emotional stress, uncertainty, and life-threatening danger is of critical importance. Military psychology offers a range of fundamental concepts that reveal the psychological mechanisms of adaptation to combat environments.

Stress resistance is defined as an individual's ability to maintain performance, self-control, and constructive behavior under conditions of chronic or sudden stress. It is shaped by individual experience, nervous system type, level of training, and social support.

Volitional regulation encompasses the ability to overcome obstacles, mobilize internal resources, and make responsible decisions in critical situations. This component includes the development of such qualities as decisiveness, self-discipline, endurance, and the ability to act in accordance with combat orders, even in extreme conditions.

Motivational readiness for combat operations is manifested in the servicemember's internal disposition to fulfill tasks, awareness of the importance of their role in the combat situation, and the drive to achieve results. It depends on both personal convictions and external factors—such as the authority of the commander, unit cohesion, clearly defined goals, and positive feedback.

Overall, these three components form the foundation for building sustainable psychological readiness for participation in combat and are the subject of systematic analysis within military psychology.

In addition, general psychology contributes through models of mental adaptation, emotional regulation, and cognitive flexibility under pressure. Since the functioning of servicemen in combat conditions is inevitably influenced by numerous stress-inducing factors—including physical and emotional exhaustion, informational uncertainty, and the threat to life and health—mechanisms of **psychological adaptation, emotional regulation, and cognitive flexibility** play a crucial role in maintaining optimal combat effectiveness.

Psychological adaptation is viewed as a process of dynamic adjustment of the individual to new and challenging living conditions, accompanied by transformations in motivation, attitudes, and behavioral

strategies. Military environments demand the ability to swiftly switch between response modes, preserve the integrity of the self-concept, and develop stable coping mechanisms.

Emotional regulation ensures the ability to control the intensity and nature of emotional responses, thereby reducing the risk of behavioral disorganization during combat missions. The capacity to recognize and effectively manage one's own emotions is a key condition for maintaining inner balance and supporting team cohesion.

Cognitive flexibility is manifested in the ability to quickly adapt thinking to changing circumstances, find non-standard solutions, efficiently redistribute attention, and re-evaluate the situation in response to new information. A high level of cognitive flexibility helps mitigate the negative impact of stress on decision-making and supports rationality in extreme situations.

Thus, these three components form the functional foundation of a servicemember's psychological resilience, contribute to sustaining professional effectiveness, and are the subject of in-depth analysis within both general and applied psychology.

Social psychology offers insight into group cohesion, leadership dynamics, and interpersonal trust, which are crucial in the context of military units. Special attention should also be paid to the theories of personality and activity, which explain the mechanisms of internal motivation and goal-setting, as well as to neuropsychological studies addressing the physiological correlates of decision-making and stress responses [4, c. 657-692].

Since within the framework of the personality-based approach, psychological readiness is viewed as a reflection of stable individual traits—such as responsibility, self-reflection, internal locus of control, emotional stability, and professional identity—these characteristics determine the extent to which a servicemember is capable of consciously perceiving their role in a combat situation, anticipating the consequences of their actions, and making decisions aligned with their internal beliefs and value orientations[5, c.1106-1111] From the perspective of the activity-based approach, emphasis is placed on the structure of combat activity, particularly its motivational, goal-oriented, and operational components. In this context, psychological readiness emerges as the result of actively constructing the meaning of a given task, accepting it as personally significant, and forming internal dispositions aimed at achieving the objective.

What matters is not only the presence of motivation but also the presence of personal meaning in one's actions, which ensures internal engagement in mission execution and resilience to external destabilizing factors [6, c. 82-96] .Thus, personality and activity theories offer a comprehensive view of psychological readiness as a multidimensional phenomenon, integrating both the deep characteristics of the individual and their ability to act purposefully under conditions of risk, tension, and responsibility. Their application is a necessary prerequisite for the development of effective psychological training programs within the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Together, these approaches allow us to understand the structure, formation mechanisms, and influencing factors of psychological readiness as a critical component of combat capability. Establishing a clear theoretical framework is essential for developing effective training programs, psychological assessments, and intervention strategies within the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The purpose of the article. Is to conduct a comprehensive theoretical analysis of the psychological foundation underlying the formation of readiness among servicemen of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to carry out their assigned combat missions. In pursuing this goal, the study aims to examine scientific approaches to understanding the phenomenon of psychological readiness, identify key factors influencing its development, and outline conceptual foundations for further applied research in this field.

This article seeks to present a comprehensive theoretical analysis of the psychological foundations underpinning the formation of operational readiness among servicemen of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to fulfill their designated combat missions. The study is structured around the following objectives:

- to critically examine existing scholarly approaches to understanding the construct of psychological readiness within military contexts;
- to identify and systematize the key psychological and organizational factors that influence the development of such readiness;
- to outline a conceptual framework that may serve as a basis for future applied research in the domain of military psychology.

A comparative analysis was conducted to identify commonalities and differences among existing theoretical models of psychological readiness. In addition, a structural-functional approach was applied to examine the components, determinants, and mechanisms involved in the formation of psychological readiness among servicemen of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. As part of the study, content analysis was also used to assess military doctrine documents, training and methodological materials, and psychodiagnostic tools applied in preparing personnel for combat missions. The use of these methods made it possible to formulate the conceptual foundations of the research and to identify key psychological factors influencing readiness for combat deployment.

By addressing these components, the study aims to contribute to a more integrated understanding of the psychological mechanisms that enable effective task execution in the face of the challenges posed by modern warfare.

Methods. This study employs a theoretical and analytical methodology aimed at synthesizing existing scientific literature on the psychological readiness of military personnel. The primary methods used include theoretical analysis, systematization, and generalization of scientific sources in the fields of military psychology, general psychology, and behavioral sciences. This study employs a theoretical and analytical methodology aimed at synthesizing the existing body of scientific literature on the issue of psychological readiness among military personnel. The primary methods used include theoretical analysis, systematization, and generalization of scholarly sources in the fields of military psychology, general psychology, and behavioral sciences, encompassing contemporary approaches in these areas. The application of these methods made it possible to critically interpret and reconcile various theoretical concepts describing the psychological readiness of servicemen to perform combat tasks, as well as to identify the key determinants of its formation. This approach enabled the identification of essential factors influencing psychological readiness, taking into account the specific nature of professional military activity and both external and internal influencing conditions. A comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities and differences in existing theoretical models of psychological readiness. Additionally, a structural-functional approach was applied to examine the components, determinants, and developmental mechanisms of psychological readiness among servicemen of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The study also utilized the method of content analysis to evaluate military doctrine documents, training materials, and psychological assessment tools relevant to the preparation of military personnel for combat tasks. These methods allowed for the formulation of a conceptual framework and the identification of key psychological factors influencing readiness for combat deployment.

Conclusions. During the theoretical analysis of the issue of psychological readiness of military personnel to carry out combat tasks, it was established that this phenomenon is a multifaceted and dynamic construct that integrates a range of cognitive, emotional-volitional, motivational, and behavioral personality traits. Psychological readiness is not a static state but is shaped, transformed, and activated under the influence of specific conditions of professional military activity, particularly in the context of the ongoing military aggression against Ukraine. It changes depending on the intensity of combat workload, the level of threat, the characteristics of the command environment, and the emotional state of the personnel.

This issue becomes especially relevant in the context of the full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine, which has confronted military personnel with unprecedented challenges—high levels of stress, operational uncertainty, moral and psychological pressure, and prolonged deployment in combat zones. Under such conditions, psychological readiness becomes a critically important component of overall combat effectiveness, and its formation requires targeted training, continuous support, and scientifically grounded psychocorrectional interventions.

A comparative analysis of theoretical models has made it possible to identify a common core of psychological readiness components (motivation, self-regulation, stress resilience, professional competence), as well as to distinguish specific approaches to understanding the mechanisms of its formation. In particular, the structural-functional approach allows for a deeper understanding of the interconnections between internal mental states of the individual and the external conditions of combat activity. A common feature of almost all models is the conceptualization of psychological readiness as an integrative construct encompassing the motivational component, the emotional-volitional component (the ability to regulate emotional states and overcome difficulties), the cognitive component (task awareness, situational assessment, decision-making), and the behavioral component (willingness to act purposefully under conditions of risk and uncertainty).

At the same time, various scientific schools place emphasis on different aspects of this phenomenon. For instance, cognitive-behavioral models predominantly view readiness as a result of thinking strategies, prior experience, and learned responses to stressful events. In contrast, personality-oriented concepts focus on internal value orientations, levels of self-awareness, moral-volitional qualities, and the identity of the service member. Psychophysiological approaches emphasize the role of neuropsychological mechanisms, the state of the nervous system, and overall working capacity. Integrative (systemic) models strive to combine all of the above levels, treating psychological readiness as a complex interaction between the individual, the situation, and the social context.

A significant outcome of this analysis was the identification of limitations in certain models when applied to real combat conditions, as well as the determination of approaches that can be adapted to the current Ukrainian military context. Specifically, models that consider the socio-psychological dynamics within units, cultural codes of national resistance, and experience of adaptation to post-traumatic consequences offer greater potential for practical implementation in the training system of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

It was found that one of the key factors in readiness formation is the integration of moral and psychological qualities, professional motivation, and the ability to rapidly adapt to extreme situations. The importance of considering the socio-psychological climate in the unit, the leadership influence of commanders, and the effective use of psychological training during combat preparation was also substantiated.

The methodological basis of the study, which included the systematization of scientific sources, content analysis of military documentation, and psychodiagnostic materials, made it possible to develop conceptual foundations for further empirical research on this phenomenon and to identify directions for the practical implementation of psychological tools into the training structure of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Thus, the results of the conducted theoretical study serve as a solid foundation for the development of a comprehensive system of psychological and pedagogical support for military personnel during training, participation in combat operations, and reintegration into civilian life. Further research should focus on creating adaptive models of psychodiagnostics, individualized psychological intervention programs, and the development of stress-resilient competencies under wartime conditions.

References:

- [1] Britt, T. W., Castro, C. A., & Adler, A. B. (2006). *Military Life: The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat* (Vols. 1–4). Praeger Security International.
- [2] Bartone, P. T., Eid, J., & Johnsen, B. H. (2012). *Psychological Hardiness as a Resilience Factor in Military Contexts*. In R. R. Sinclair & T. W. Britt (Eds.), *Building Psychological Resilience in Military Personnel: Theory and Practice* (pp. 129–144). American Psychological Association.
- [3] McGurk, D., Cotting, D. I., Britt, T. W., & Adler, A. B. (2006). *Joining the Ranks: The Role of Indoctrination in Transforming Civilians to Service Members*. In T. W. Britt, C. A. Castro, & A. B. Adler (Eds.), *Military Life: The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat* (Vol. 2, pp. 13–31). Praeger.
- [4] Wong, L., Bliese, P. D., & McGurk, D. (2003). *Military Leadership: A Context Specific Review*. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(6), 657–692. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.08.001>
- [5] Hourani, L. L., Council, C. L., Hubal, R. C., & Strange, L. B. (2011). *Behavioral Health Training for Military Leaders: A Pilot Evaluation of “Leadership at a Distance”*. *Military Medicine*, 176(10), 1106–1111.
- [6] Mastroianni, G. R. (2011). *Occupations, Cultures, and Leadership in the Army and Air Force*. *Parameters*, 41(1), 82–96.
- [6] Adler, A. B., Bliese, P. D., McGurk, D., Hoge, C. W., & Castro, C. A. (2009). *Battlemind Debriefing and Battlemind Training as Early Interventions with Soldiers Returning from Iraq: Randomization by Platoon*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77(5), 928–940. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016877>

- [7] Reivich, K., Seligman, M. E. P., & McBride, S. (2011). *Master Resilience Training in the U.S. Army. American Psychologist*, 66(1), 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021897>
- [8] Castro, C. A., & McGurk, D. (2007). *The Intensity of Combat and Behavioral Health Status. Traumatology*, 13(4), 6–23.
- [9] Nash, W. P. (2006). *Combat/Operational Stress Adaptations and Injuries*. In C. R. Figley & W. P. Nash (Eds.), *Combat Stress Injury: Theory, Research, and Management* (pp. 1–18). Routledge.

Review received 16.12.2024