

Assessing Adolescents' Attitudes Toward Psychological Health: Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioral Indicators

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Abstract: *Adolescents today face increasing psychological challenges due to modern societal stressors, including uncertainty about the future, heightened anxiety, and emotional instability. These issues adversely affect their adaptability, self-regulation, and overall mental well-being. This study aims to identify key criteria and indicators that reflect adolescents' attitudes toward psychological health and assess their awareness of its significance. The research involved 112 students from Kamianets-Podilskyi Lyceums №1, №3, and №5. A multi-method approach was applied, including literature analysis, observation, questionnaires, interviews, and psychometric tools. Core evaluation criteria included cognitive (knowledge and values), emotional (self-assessment of mental states), and behavioral (healthy habits and risk avoidance) components. Findings indicate that adolescents' understanding of psychological health is often superficial, with many equating it solely to physical well-being. Emotional assessments revealed frequent signs of tension and instability, pointing to difficulties in self-regulation. Behaviorally, students showed limited motivation for personal growth and commonly practiced harmful habits, such as irregular sleep and excessive use of digital devices. Statistical analysis confirmed significant correlations between cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors, highlighting their interdependence. Adolescents with greater cognitive awareness tended to demonstrate better emotional control and healthier behaviors.*

Overall, the study concludes that adolescents' attitudes toward psychological health are insufficiently developed across all examined dimensions. These results emphasize the need for holistic educational and psychological interventions aimed at fostering a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of psychological well-being among youth.

Keywords: *psychological health; adolescents; cognitive component; emotional component; behavioural component; emotional stability.*

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Introduction

Psychological health is a crucial condition for the harmonious development and effective functioning of an individual throughout life. It encompasses a flexible set of mental traits that enable a person to align personal needs with societal demands and guide them toward achieving life goals. Psychological well-being allows individuals to fulfill their age-related, social, and cultural roles while continuously developing as a personality. Children and adolescents who experience microsocial conflicts at home or at school fall into a high-risk group for psychological vulnerability. Adolescents' psychological health is determined by their level of mental development, emotional comfort, social adequacy, self-awareness, ability to realize their potential, and sense of responsibility for their choices. A person's value-based attitude toward their own health is formed through cognitive, emotional, and motivational-behavioral components. Therefore, the study of adolescent psychological health is particularly important, as this age marks the foundation for self-awareness, the development of value-based attitudes toward oneself, and responsible life orientation choices.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine, characterized by military aggression and pervasive instability, has profoundly impacted the psychological well-being of its population, with adolescents being particularly vulnerable. Adolescents living under the constant stress of wartime conditions face heightened emotional and psychological risks, which may significantly impair their ability to adapt and develop healthily. Exposure to warfare, displacement, and the disruption of daily life have subjected Ukrainian youth to chronic stressors, leading to heightened risks of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Understanding how they perceive and value their psychological well-being becomes essential for providing targeted support and intervention.

Adolescents often exhibit acute sensitivity to uncertainties about the future, loss of familiar environments, and alterations in social dynamics. The constant influx of distressing information, coupled with emotional strain and concerns for personal and familial safety, exacerbates their psychological distress. Many lack awareness of coping mechanisms or access to mental health resources, further increasing their susceptibility to mental health disorders.

In light of these challenges, it is imperative to investigate adolescents' attitudes toward their psychological health and identify factors influencing their behaviors in this domain. Such research is crucial for developing

effective support and prevention strategies aimed at enhancing the mental resilience of youth in conflict-affected regions.

The purpose of the study is to identify the criteria, as well as quantitative and qualitative indicators, reflecting adolescents' attitudes toward their own psychological health. Additionally, it seeks to assess the levels of awareness among school-aged adolescents regarding the importance of maintaining their psychological well-being. By establishing these parameters, the research intends to inform the development of targeted interventions and preventive strategies to support adolescent mental health.

Literature review

Psychological health is increasingly conceptualized in modern scientific literature as a dynamic, integrative system that influences an individual's overall capacity for development, social adaptation, and fulfillment (Tytarenko, 2018; Moskalenko et al., 2022). This multidimensional construct encompasses emotional, cognitive, social, behavioral, and spiritual domains, serving as the foundation for self-realization, well-being, and effective functioning in society (Pasichnyk, 2024; Piaget, 1972; Saveliuk, 2022). Scholars agree that psychological health enables individuals to harmonize personal needs with societal demands, perform developmental and social roles, and strive toward life goals (Harkavenko & Sobkova, 2019; Ellis et al., 2009).

A recurrent theme in the literature is the emphasis on psychological health as a value-based orientation toward oneself and life (Bondarchuk et al., 2023). This orientation is considered vital for nurturing autonomy, creativity, self-confidence, and responsible decision-making (Kharchenko, 2017; Mróz et al., 2024). Key criteria include self-awareness, moral and spiritual growth, emotional stability, and constructive coping abilities – traits that collectively enable individuals to navigate challenges and maintain internal balance (Nicolini et al., 2021; Bennett et al., 2008).

Moreover, studies by Saveliuk (2022) have identified internal comfort, adequate social behavior, and self-understanding as core attributes of psychological well-being.

A relevant example is the research by Kichuk (2019) who considers psychological health as a multifaceted and complex phenomenon encompassing various aspects of personality. It is a dynamic state, evolving throughout an individual's life at a unique pace. Achieving harmony between individual aspirations and societal expectations is facilitated by a constellation of personal attributes such as self-respect, a sense of security,

stress resilience, social adaptability, and a well-defined value orientation. These characteristics collectively enable individuals to navigate life's challenges effectively and pursue self-realization (Harter, 2012; Yevtushenko, 2023).

The biopsychosocial model of health proposed by Engel (1977) remains influential in framing psychological well-being as a product of the interaction among biological, psychological, and social factors. This framework has evolved in recent years to include cognitive and motivational-behavioral components, aligning with contemporary theories that conceptualize mental health as a dynamic, evolving system (Kharchenko, 2017; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). These interconnected aspects influence an individual's ability to maintain mental balance, resist stress, and develop a coherent value system.

Mental well-being can be conceptualized as a dynamic and integrative system that ensures personal integrity, facilitates active engagement in life, and promotes effective interaction with the surrounding environment. This system encompasses interconnected components: cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and value-motivational. Such a multidimensional approach aligns with contemporary psychological theories that emphasize the interplay between various facets of mental functioning in maintaining overall well-being (Vlasenko et al., 2022).

Individual mental characteristics, the capacity to maintain health and overcome illnesses, lifestyle choices, and the awareness that health transcends physical condition to encompass a life strategy significantly influence this system. Transient mental states, which may arise spontaneously or due to external factors - including consciousness disorders, mood fluctuations, apathy, affective responses, and emotional tension - also play a crucial role. This perspective resonates with the biopsychosocial model of health by Maksymenko & Hryshko (2024), which posits that biological, psychological, and social factors collectively influence an individual's health status.

Key attributes of this integrative system include internal comfort, appropriate social behavior, self-understanding and understanding of others, capacity for self-realization, responsible decision-making, self-confidence, aspiration for personal development, and a caring attitude toward one's health, close relations, and environment. These attributes reflect the holistic nature of mental well-being, encompassing emotional, social, and moral dimensions.

These frameworks collectively underscore the multifaceted and dynamic nature of psychological health, shaped by individual traits,

environmental interactions, and value systems. Mental well-being is a fundamental prerequisite for the harmonious development and effective functioning of individuals throughout their lives. It encompasses a flexible constellation of mental traits that enable individuals to align personal needs with societal expectations, guiding them toward the achievement of life goals. This alignment facilitates the performance of age-appropriate, social, and cultural roles, fostering continuous personal growth.

Children and adolescents experiencing micro-social conflicts at home or in educational settings are particularly susceptible to psychological vulnerabilities. Their mental well-being is influenced by factors such as the level of psychological development, emotional comfort, social adequacy, self-understanding, potential realization, and accountability for personal choices. Research indicates that peer rejection and exclusion can cause significant psychological distress in adolescents, serving as risk factors for psychological disorders.

Despite this rich theoretical foundation, several gaps persist in the current literature. First, there is insufficient operationalization of psychological health indicators tailored specifically for adolescents. While some studies note the influence of micro-social conflict – such as family tension or peer rejection – on adolescent mental health (Ruggery et al., 2020), few provide comprehensive criteria that integrate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Furthermore, adolescents' own perceptions of psychological health remain underexplored. Many equate health with physical well-being, neglecting the psychological component altogether (Harkavenko & Sobkova, 2019).

In addition, the unique psychosocial challenges faced by adolescents in conflict-affected areas, such as Ukraine, are insufficiently addressed in existing research. Wartime living conditions – marked by chronic uncertainty, emotional trauma, and familial disruption – amplify the need for context-specific assessments and interventions. These environmental stressors significantly affect adolescents' emotional regulation, motivation, and overall self-perception, necessitating updated models of mental health that reflect these realities (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

The Health Belief Model, which posits that individuals' health behaviors are shaped by their perceptions of threats and benefits (Rosenstock, 1974; Kharchenko, 2017), supports the importance of adolescents' cognitive and emotional interpretations of health-related information. However, this model has not been widely applied to adolescent psychological health in the Ukrainian context, particularly under the stress of armed conflict.

Therefore, this study responds to these critical gaps by proposing an integrative model for assessing adolescents' psychological health through three key components – cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. This model is grounded in existing theoretical frameworks but expands them by incorporating value-based perspectives and environmental stressors relevant to wartime adolescence. The study also aims to assess adolescents' awareness of their psychological well-being, thereby contributing original insight into how youth understand and prioritize mental health.

Methodology

The research utilized a comprehensive methodological framework combining theoretical, empirical, and statistical methods to examine adolescents' attitudes toward psychological health. The study was conducted among a sample of 112 adolescent students aged 14–16 from Kamianets-Podilskyi Lyceums No. 1, No. 3, and No. 5. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation across different academic institutions in the city. Informed consent was obtained from both students and their legal guardians, and the research was conducted in accordance with ethical standards for psychological research involving minors, including anonymity, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any stage.

The theoretical component of the study involved a detailed analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature to identify the structural components and diagnostic criteria of adolescents' psychological health. This step helped to define the research variables and design the empirical tools used in the study.

The empirical methods employed included structured observation, surveys, testing, and semi-structured interviews. These methods were selected to capture a comprehensive picture of psychological health based on three criteria: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. Each component was measured using established and validated diagnostic tools:

The cognitive component was assessed through a custom-designed questionnaire titled *“What Do You Know About a Healthy Lifestyle?”*, which measured adolescents' awareness and understanding of psychological health, including definitions, contributing factors, and personal responsibility.

The emotional component was measured using H. Eysenck's *“Self-Assessment of Mental States”* method (Lemak & Petryshche, 2012). This tool evaluates emotional states such as anxiety, frustration, and rigidity, providing insight into adolescents' emotional regulation and self-perception.

The behavioral component was evaluated using O. Orel's method for identifying tendencies toward deviant behavior, as presented in the

manual *Psychology of Deviant Behavior* (Koshova & Kresan, 2021). This method helps identify risk behaviors and unhealthy lifestyle habits such as impulsivity, disregard for social norms, and addictive behaviors.

Data collection occurred over a six-week period during the academic semester, with researchers visiting each lyceum to administer the instruments in a classroom setting under the supervision of trained facilitators.

Quantitative and qualitative data were processed using SPSS 22.0 statistical software. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics ensured the validity of the findings. Student's t-test was applied to identify significant differences between subgroups, and Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to explore relationships between the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral variables.

Results

The study identified three primary criteria reflecting adolescents' attitudes toward maintaining psychological health: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components.

The cognitive component encompassed students' knowledge of the foundations of psychological well-being and their life-meaning orientations, which manifest in the conscious selection of personally significant life values. The emotional component of adolescents' attitudes toward maintaining psychological health involves self-assessment of one's emotional states, serving as a key indicator of emotional well-being. This self-evaluation reflects the individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions, which is essential for psychological resilience and overall mental health.

The behavioral component pertains to adherence to established norms and the avoidance of negative behaviors that contradict the principles of a healthy lifestyle. This includes engaging in constructive activities, resisting harmful habits, and demonstrating behaviors that promote psychological well-being.

Based on these criteria, adolescents' attitudes toward psychological health were categorized into three levels: high, medium, and low.

To assess the cognitive component of adolescents' attitudes toward maintaining psychological health, we utilized the "What Do You Know About a Healthy Lifestyle?" questionnaire. The data obtained (*Table 1*) indicated that adolescents predominantly equated a healthy lifestyle with physical health aspects, with 58.9% of respondents emphasizing this association. Specifically, participants emphasized the importance of "proper nutrition" (19.6%), "absence of harmful habits" (9.8%), "engagement in sports" (7.1%), and "lack of fatigue and overexertion" (27.7%).

These findings suggest that adolescents predominantly perceive the value of a healthy lifestyle through a physiological lens. However, a subset of respondents recognized psychological aspects, highlighting "healthy relationships with close ones" (17.9%) and "absence of conflicts" (20.5%) as integral components. Furthermore, 25.0% of adolescents identified emotional well-being- characterized by a positive mood - as crucial for success in various life domains.

The emotional component involved individuals' self-assessment of their emotional states, serving as a dominant factor in emotional well-being. The behavioral component pertained to adherence to norms and the avoidance of negative behaviors that contradict the principles of a healthy lifestyle.

Table 1. Levels of development of the cognitive component in adolescents' attitudes toward a healthy lifestyle (in %) (Authors' own contribution)

<i>Content Area</i>	<i>Prevalence rate (in %)</i>
Physical health	58,9
Proper nutrition	19,6
Absence of harmful habits	9,8
Engagement in sports	7,1
Absence of overexertion	27,7
Healthy relationships with close ones	17,9
Absence of conflicts	20,5
Emotional well-being	25,0

The emotional component of adolescents' attitudes toward psychological health was assessed using the Eysenck Self-Assessment of Mental States methodology. This instrument evaluates key emotional dimensions such as anxiety, frustration, aggression, and rigidity, providing insights into individuals' emotional well-being and stability. The results of this assessment are presented in *Table 2*.

Table 2. Quantitative indicators of adolescents' self-assessment of mental states (in %) (Authors' own contribution)

<i>Mental State</i>	<i>Level of manifestation</i>		
	High	Medium	Low
Anxiety	33,0	44,7	22,3
Frustration	30,4	62,5	8,2
Aggressiveness	38,6	44,5	16,9
Rigidity	8,2	43,4	57,4

The study's findings reveal that 33.0% of adolescents exhibit a high level of anxiety, potentially stemming from concerns about academic performance, social interactions, and interpersonal relationships. Such elevated anxiety levels can adversely affect both academic success and overall health. A medium level of anxiety was observed in 44.7% of adolescents, indicating a moderate state that may enhance alertness and positively influence performance. Conversely, 22.3% of adolescents reported low anxiety levels, characterized by self-confidence, composure, and emotional stability in interpersonal relationships.

Regarding frustration, 30.4% of adolescents demonstrated high levels, suggesting significant emotional distress that could negatively impact mental health. A medium level of frustration was found in 62.5% of adolescents, reflecting a capacity to manage challenges and pursue goals despite difficulties. Only 8.2% exhibited low frustration levels, indicating resilience and an optimistic approach to problem-solving.

The study results are consistent with global research indicating a rise in mental health challenges among adolescents. For instance, the World Health Organization reports that depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders are among the leading causes of illness and disability in adolescents. Additionally, relevant studies have shown that adolescents with anxiety disorders often experience significant problems in both social and academic functioning (Smáráson et al., 2024).

The prevalence of high anxiety and frustration levels underscores the need for targeted interventions to support adolescents' emotional well-being. Implementing programs that enhance coping strategies and resilience can be instrumental in promoting mental health among this demographic.

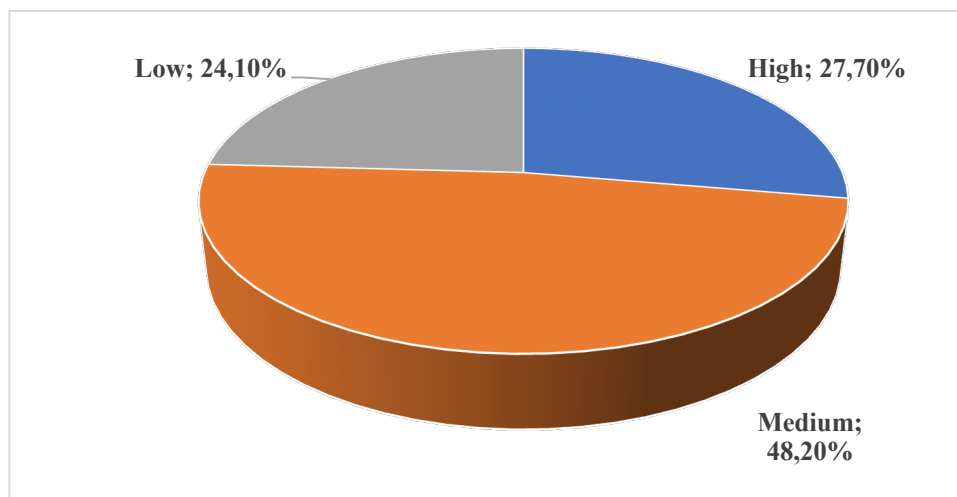
The assessment of adolescents' emotional states revealed that 38.6% exhibited high levels of aggression. This group often experiences emotional dysregulation, manifesting as overt hostility toward others or internalized self-devaluation. Moderate aggression levels were observed in 44.5% of participants, indicating occasional negative emotional expressions primarily directed inward. A low level of aggression was reported by 16.9% of adolescents, suggesting situational irritability without persistent aggressive tendencies. These individuals generally maintain emotional balance and demonstrate respect toward others.

Regarding rigidity, 8.2% of adolescents displayed high levels, indicating difficulties in adapting to changing environments and a lack of behavioral flexibility. Moderate rigidity was found in 43.4% of participants, reflecting an awareness of the need for change and the ability to adjust behaviors accordingly. A low level of rigidity was reported by 57.4% of

adolescents, signifying a high degree of adaptability and openness to modifying actions in response to evolving circumstances. Such flexibility is associated with increased activity levels and positively influences overall mental health.

Summarizing the findings on the emotional component of adolescents' value-based attitudes toward psychological health, we identified and analyzed distinct levels of its development, as illustrated in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1. Levels of Development of the Emotional Component of Adolescents' Value-Based Attitudes Toward Psychological Health (Authors' own contribution)



The study of the emotional component of adolescents' attitudes toward psychological health revealed that a majority of respondents (48.2%) exhibit a moderate level of emotional criteria. This suggests relative emotional stability, albeit accompanied by signs of tension, internal conflicts, and variability in emotional responses. A significant portion (27.7%) demonstrated high levels of emotional expression, potentially indicative of psychological stress, unmet needs, or the influence of external stressors. Conversely, only 24.1% of adolescents displayed low levels of emotional criteria, reflecting a smaller group with a stable and calm emotional background.

To assess behavioral tendencies affecting adolescents' psychological health, we employed O. Orel's methodology, "Determining the Propensity for Deviant Behavior." The results are presented in *Table 3*.

Table 3. Behavioral manifestations among adolescents (in %) (Authors' own contribution)

<i>Behavioral Manifestation</i>	<i>Level of manifestation</i>		
	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
Socially Desirable Responses	25,0	34,8	40,2
Tendency to Disregard Rules	7,1	37,5	54,5
Propensity for Addictive Behavior	9,8	50,0	40,2
Propensity for Self-Destructive Behavior	14,3	54,5	31,3
Propensity for Aggression	22,3	32,1	46,4
Volitional Control of Emotions	32,1	40,2	28,6
Propensity for Delinquent Behavior	17,9	48,2	34,8

Approximately 25.0% of adolescents demonstrated a high level of social desirability bias, striving to present themselves in a manner that aligns with perceived societal expectations. This inclination can lead to underreporting of undesirable behaviors, potentially skewing self-assessment results. A moderate level was observed in 34.8% of participants, indicating a balanced approach between self-presentation and authenticity. Conversely, 40.2% exhibited a low level of social desirability bias, suggesting a more candid self-representation.

The propensity to disregard established norms and rules was notably low among the majority of adolescents, with 54.5% exhibiting a low tendency. However, 7.1% displayed a high inclination towards rule-breaking behaviors, which may manifest as oppositional or defiant actions. Such behaviors are often linked to underlying psychological factors and can be precursors to more severe conduct issues if unaddressed.

The assessment identified that 9.8% of adolescents had a high propensity for addictive behaviors, indicating a significant risk for developing substance use disorders or behavioral addictions. A moderate level was observed in 50.0% of participants, suggesting a substantial portion of adolescents are susceptible to engaging in behaviors that could lead to addiction.

Approximately 14.3% of adolescents exhibited a high propensity for self-destructive behaviors, characterized by self-devaluation, self-blame, and harmful actions directed toward themselves. A moderate level was observed in 54.5% of participants, indicating tendencies toward risk-taking and a desire for intense experiences. Conversely, 31.3% demonstrated a low

propensity, reflecting a balanced self-assessment and a focus on self-improvement.

High levels of aggressive tendencies were identified in 22.3% of adolescents, suggesting aggressive interactions and the use of demeaning others to stabilize self-esteem. A moderate level was present in 32.1% of respondents, who could generally manage negative emotions but occasionally displayed aggressive behaviors. Low levels were found in 46.4% of students, indicating effective emotional control and problem-solving abilities.

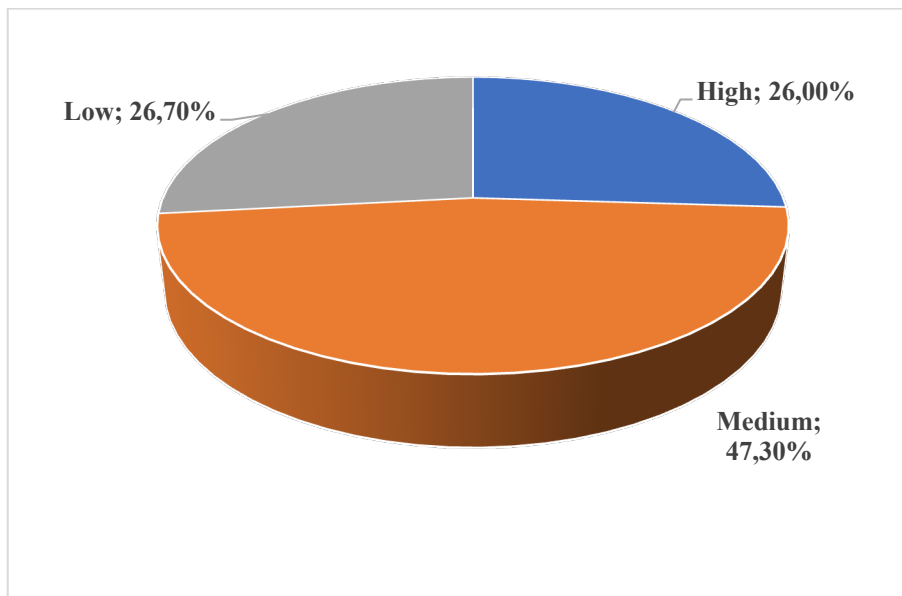
The assessment of volitional control over emotional reactions revealed that 32.1% of adolescents had high levels, indicating challenges in regulating emotions and behaviors. A moderate level was observed in 40.2%, suggesting general self-control with occasional difficulties in complex situations. Low levels were found in 28.6% of participants, reflecting strong self-discipline and a rational approach to problem-solving.

The study revealed that 17.9% of adolescents exhibited a high propensity for delinquent behavior, indicating a significant risk of engaging in actions that violate social norms and legal boundaries. A moderate level was observed in 48.2% of participants, suggesting a potential for delinquent manifestations under certain circumstances, while 34.8% demonstrated a low propensity, reflecting adherence to societal rules and norms.

The examination of the behavioral component of adolescents' value-based attitudes toward psychological health provided insights into their aspirations for self-actualization and the recognition of personal physical capabilities and psychological resources. This awareness facilitates continuous self-improvement, fosters positive relationships with others, and promotes a constructive engagement with the surrounding environment.

Summarizing the results of the study on the behavioral component of adolescents' value-based attitudes toward psychological health, we identified and analyzed the levels of its development (*Figure 2*).

Figure 2. Levels of development of the behavioral component of adolescents' value-based attitudes toward psychological health (Authors' own contribution)



In 26.0% of adolescents, a high level of development of the behavioral component of value-based attitudes toward psychological health was identified. These individuals exhibit a propensity for socially acceptable behavior, which includes maintaining a healthy lifestyle, abstaining from harmful habits, and engaging in high levels of physical activity. This confirms what earlier research by Watanabe et al. (2020) has proposed, namely that adolescents who prioritize intrinsic values, such as personal growth and well-being, are more likely to adopt health-promoting behaviors and exhibit better mental health outcomes.

A medium level was characteristic of 47.3% of respondents. These adolescents display partially formed motivation to realize their own potential and achieve success in activities. They tend to engage in socially acceptable behavior, although this does not preclude occasional deviation from a healthy lifestyle. Adolescents with a low level of the behavioral component (26.7%) exhibit unformed motivation to realize their potential and achieve success in activities. They are characterized by harmful habits and a lack of physical activity. Such students tend to reject socially acceptable behavior and forgo a healthy lifestyle.

As part of our study, we conducted a comparative analysis of manifestations of deviant behavior among adolescents with high and low levels of psychological states using Student's t-test.

The study identified statistically significant differences in the anxiety and aggression scales among adolescents, highlighting the impact of anxiety levels on various behavioral tendencies.

Tendency to Neglect Rules: Adolescents with high anxiety levels exhibited a greater propensity to disregard rules ($M = 14.2$) compared to their low-anxiety counterparts ($M = 11.8$). This suggests that elevated anxiety may be associated with difficulties in adhering to social norms and regulations.

Inclination Toward Self-Destructive Behavior: High-anxiety adolescents demonstrated a significantly higher inclination toward self-destructive behaviors ($M = 16.2$) than those with low anxiety levels ($M = 13.2$). This correlation underscores the vulnerability of anxious adolescents to psychological health issues, including depression and suicidal ideation.

Aggression Tendency: The average aggression scores were higher among adolescents with elevated anxiety levels ($M = 15.2$) compared to those with lower anxiety ($M = 13.8$). This indicates that anxiety may manifest as aggression, potentially serving as a coping mechanism for stress or as a response to perceived threats.

The study identified statistically significant differences in adolescents' tendencies to disregard rules and engage in delinquent behavior, contingent upon their levels of aggression.

Tendency to Disregard Rules: Adolescents exhibiting high levels of aggression demonstrated a greater propensity to neglect rules ($M = 16.2$) compared to their low-aggression counterparts ($M = 12.5$). This suggests a strong association between elevated aggression and non-compliance with established norms.

Inclination Toward Delinquent Behavior: Similarly, adolescents with higher aggression levels showed increased tendencies toward delinquent actions ($M = 15.9$) relative to those with lower aggression levels ($M = 14.3$). This indicates that aggression may serve as a significant predictor of delinquent behavior during adolescence.

These findings align with existing research on conduct disorder, a mental health condition characterized by a persistent pattern of antisocial behavior, including rule violations and aggression. Studies have shown that adolescents with conduct disorder often exhibit higher levels of aggression and are more prone to engage in delinquent activities. For instance, research by Farrell et al. (2024) indicates that conduct disorder is associated with increased risks of substance abuse, criminal behavior, and other forms of social maladjustment.

Understanding the link between aggression and delinquent behavior is crucial for developing targeted interventions aimed at mitigating these risks. Early identification and management of aggressive tendencies in adolescents may help prevent the escalation of delinquent behaviors and promote healthier social development.

The results of the conducted correlation analysis revealed the presence of the following relationships (*Table 4*).

Table 4. Matrix of correlations (Authors' own contribution)

Scales of the methods	Anxiety	Frustration	Aggressiveness	Rigidity
Tendency to Neglect Rules	0,223	0,569**	0,453*	0,298
Tendency toward Addictive Behavior	0,683*	0,233	0,490*	0,132
Tendency toward Self-Destructive Behavior	0,673**	0,196	0,661*	0,332
Tendency toward Aggression	0,226	0,221	0,765**	0,231
Volitional Control of Emotions	0,711**	0,195	0,114	0,488*
Tendency toward Delinquent Behavior	0,344	0,132	0,533**	0,099

A significant positive correlation was observed between levels of frustration and the tendency to disregard rules ($r = 0.569$, $p \leq 0.01$). This suggests that adolescents experiencing higher levels of frustration are more inclined to ignore established norms and behavioral guidelines.

A moderate positive correlation was found between anxiety levels and the propensity for addictive behaviors ($r = 0.683$, $p \leq 0.05$). This indicates that adolescents with elevated anxiety may be more susceptible to developing dependencies. Similarly, a moderate positive correlation was identified between aggressiveness and the tendency toward addictive behaviors ($r = 0.490$, $p \leq 0.05$), suggesting that more aggressive adolescents may be at increased risk for addiction.

A significant positive correlation was observed between anxiety levels and self-destructive behaviors ($r = 0.673$, $p \leq 0.01$), indicating that higher anxiety is associated with an increased likelihood of self-harm.

A moderate positive correlation was found between aggressiveness and self-destructive behaviors ($r = 0.661$, $p \leq 0.05$), suggesting that more aggressive adolescents may also be more prone to self-harming behaviors.

These findings underscore the complex interplay between emotional states and behavioral outcomes in adolescents. Understanding these relationships is crucial for developing targeted interventions aimed at mitigating risk behaviors and promoting psychological well-being among youth.

A strong positive correlation was found between anxiety levels and volitional control of emotions ($r = 0.711$, $p \leq 0.01$). This suggests that adolescents experiencing higher anxiety may exert greater effort to regulate their emotional expressions, potentially as a coping mechanism to conceal discomfort or conform to social expectations. This correlates with research indicating that anxious individuals often engage in heightened emotional regulation strategies to manage their internal distress (Padgaonkar et al., 2021).

A moderate positive correlation was observed between rigidity and volitional control of emotions ($r = 0.488$, $p \leq 0.05$). This implies that adolescents with more rigid cognitive and behavioral patterns may also demonstrate higher levels of deliberate emotional regulation. Such rigidity can be associated with a structured approach to managing emotions, which may serve as a protective factor against emotional dysregulation.

A significant positive correlation was identified between aggressiveness and the propensity for delinquent behavior ($r = 0.533$, $p \leq 0.01$). This indicates that adolescents exhibiting higher levels of aggression are more likely to engage in behaviors that violate social norms or laws. This finding is consistent with existing literature that links aggressive tendencies in youth to increased risk of delinquent activities (Iorio et al., 2022).

These correlations underscore the intricate relationships between emotional traits and behavioral outcomes in adolescents. Understanding these associations is crucial for developing targeted interventions aimed at promoting psychological well-being and reducing the incidence of maladaptive behaviors in this population.

Discussion

The present study elucidates the intricate interplay between cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components in adolescents' attitudes toward psychological health. Notably, the findings underscore the significant associations between emotional dysregulation and various forms of deviant behavior, aligning with existing literature in the field.

The observed correlation between high anxiety levels and increased tendencies toward rule-breaking and self-destructive behaviors corroborates prior research indicating that anxiety can impair adolescents' ability to adhere to social norms and manage emotional distress effectively. For instance, studies by Beauchaine & Cicchetti (2019) have demonstrated that elevated anxiety is linked to heightened impulsivity and risk-taking behaviors, which may manifest as rule violations or self-harm. The research empirical research underscores the importance of developing targeted interventions to enhance emotional regulation and reduce self-destructive and aggressive behaviors among adolescents. Implementing programs that focus on emotional intelligence, coping strategies, and resilience can contribute to improved psychological well-being in this population. These findings align with existing research indicating that anxiety in adolescents is associated with increased aggression and self-destructive behaviors. For instance, a study by Essadek et al. (2023) found that aggressive behavior was significantly associated with higher anxiety scores among adolescents. The problem behavior can be a symptom of anxiety, as some anxious children may exhibit anger or defiance as a means to escape uncomfortable situations. Understanding these associations is crucial for developing targeted interventions aimed at reducing anxiety and its related behavioral manifestations in adolescents.

Similarly, the association between aggression and delinquent behavior observed in this study is consistent with findings from previous investigations by Lee et al., (2023). Aggressive tendencies in adolescents have been identified as significant predictors of delinquency, with aggression often serving as a maladaptive coping mechanism in response to environmental stressors. Delinquent behavior is common during adolescence and may disrupt trajectories of labor market attainment. Estimates of the relationship between delinquency and employment are threatened by selection bias, as youth who engage in delinquency often differ substantially from youth who do not (Yilmaz & Duyan, 2024; Carter, 2019).

Moreover, the study also highlights the role of frustration in adolescents' behavioral outcomes. The significant correlation between frustration and rule-breaking behavior suggests that adolescents experiencing higher levels of frustration may resort to non-compliant behaviors as a means of expressing their emotional turmoil. This is consistent with the research by Crowell et al. (2009) and McKay et al. (2021) indicating that frustration can lead to externalizing behaviors, particularly when adolescents lack effective emotion regulation strategies.

Furthermore, the study contributes valuable insights into adolescent psychological health and aligns with global research trends. For example, the unexpected positive correlation between anxiety and volitional control may indicate adolescents' efforts to suppress emotional expression to conform with perceived social norms. While potentially adaptive in the short term, excessive emotional suppression has been linked to psychological distress and the risk of internalizing disorders (Beauchaine et al., 2017; Teh et al., 2023).

The high prevalence of aggression and rigidity further underscores the need for early interventions. Findings from Giroux & Guay (2021) and Üstündağ (2024) similarly highlight the role of emotional regulation and psychological flexibility in mitigating behavioral maladjustment among adolescents. These consistencies suggest that the results of the present study may be cautiously extrapolated to comparable adolescent populations facing psychosocial stress, particularly in post-conflict or high-risk environments.

The findings are consistent with global research and can be extrapolated to broader theoretical discussions on adolescent mental health. For example, the observed moderate or low behavioral engagement in psychological health practices echoes Takagaki et al.'s (2021) findings, which suggest that adolescents with underdeveloped value orientation or self-compassion are more vulnerable to deviant behaviors and emotional instability. This points to the need for interventions that focus not only on knowledge and behavior but also on internal motivational structures.

The study also aligns with Shams et al. (2024), who argue that external environmental and social factors – such as peer pressure, media influence, or familial instability – can diminish adolescents' motivation to engage in health-promoting behaviors. These findings reinforce the notion that psychological health promotion must address systemic and environmental factors, not solely individual deficiencies.

The assessment of adolescents' emotional well-being indicates that many experience moderate emotional stability, though this is often accompanied by signs of tension and internal conflict. A notable segment exhibits heightened emotional expression, potentially reflecting psychological stress or unmet needs, while a smaller group maintains a stable and calm emotional state. These variations underscore the importance of addressing emotional health to support adolescents' overall psychological resilience. These findings align with existing research on adolescent emotional development. For instance, studies by Martínez-Velázquez et al., (2024) have shown that adolescents often experience heightened emotional reactivity due to ongoing neurobiological maturation, particularly in brain

regions associated with emotion regulation. This developmental stage can lead to increased vulnerability to stress and emotional instability.

The study offers a significant contribution to the understanding of adolescents' psychological health by identifying and analyzing the interrelated cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that shape their attitudes toward mental well-being. The use of a multi-method approach and validated diagnostic instruments lends internal consistency and validity to the findings. However, several important limitations should be considered when interpreting the results.

Methodologically, the study relied heavily on self-report measures, which are inherently susceptible to social desirability bias – especially in adolescent populations. This limitation may have led to underreporting of undesirable behaviors or exaggerated positive responses, thus influencing the objectivity of some data. Additionally, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to infer causality between emotional states and behavioral patterns. The inclusion of longitudinal methods in future research would allow for a more dynamic understanding of how psychological health evolves during adolescence and how emotional regulation strategies impact behavioral outcomes over time.

The sample was limited to three educational institutions in Kamianets-Podilskyi, a city located in western Ukraine, relatively distant from the active warfront. While this location provides important insights into the psychological health of adolescents living in a country affected by ongoing conflict, it does not fully capture the experiences of youth residing in regions closer to the frontline, who are exposed to more immediate threats, displacement, and trauma. As such, the psychological responses and health behaviors observed in this sample may differ significantly from those of adolescents living under more intense wartime conditions. The generalizability of the findings is therefore constrained, as variations in proximity to armed conflict, educational infrastructure, and socio-economic stability across Ukraine – and in other conflict-affected regions globally – can shape adolescents' mental health outcomes in distinct ways. Future research should aim to include diverse geographic areas within Ukraine to better account for the psychological impact of war across varying contexts of exposure.

Despite these limitations, the results of this study resonate strongly with global trends. For instance, the prevalence of emotional dysregulation, high aggression, and low behavioral engagement in health-promoting activities aligns with international research findings on adolescent vulnerability and risk behaviors. These findings are further supported by studies indicating the role of external environmental and social factors –

such as peer pressure, media influence, and family dynamics—in moderating motivation and well-being.

An original contribution of this study is the integration of psychological health assessment with contextual realities specific to adolescents living in high-stress or post-conflict settings. This approach offers a nuanced understanding that is often underrepresented in global adolescent psychology literature. The proposed three-component model – encompassing cognitive awareness, emotional self-regulation, and behavioral engagement – provides a structured framework for evaluating mental health that can be adapted and applied in various socio-cultural contexts.

Conclusions

The study investigated the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components of adolescents' attitudes toward maintaining psychological health. The findings reveal that adolescents often equate psychological health with physical well-being, indicating a limited understanding of psychological health. However, some recognize the importance of emotional well-being and healthy interpersonal relationships, suggesting the emergence of a more holistic view of health.

The examination of the emotional component of adolescents' psychological health revealed a predominance of relative emotional stability, often accompanied by tension and inconsistent reactions. A significant proportion of respondents exhibited heightened emotional stress, whereas a stable emotional state was characteristic of a smaller subset of the study population. These findings underscore the importance of supporting emotional well-being and developing self-regulation skills among adolescents.

The study of the behavioral component of adolescents' attitudes toward maintaining psychological health revealed that while some students adhere to a healthy lifestyle and exhibit socially acceptable behavior, the majority demonstrate insufficiently developed motivation for self-realization. Certain adolescents display harmful habits, low physical activity, and deviations from a healthy lifestyle.

Statistical analysis indicated that adolescents' emotional states—particularly elevated levels of anxiety, aggression, frustration, and rigidity—have a significant positive correlation with destructive behaviors, including addictive, self-destructive, delinquent actions, and disregard for rules. This underscores the close interconnection between the emotional and behavioral components of psychological health and highlights the necessity of developing emotional regulation skills and adaptive coping strategies to preserve adolescents' psychological well-being.

In summary, the study concludes that adolescents' attitudes toward psychological health are underdeveloped across cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. This finding underscores the importance of selecting optimal methods to enhance these components, aiming to foster a comprehensive and proactive approach to psychological health among adolescents. The study provides insight into adolescent psychological health and offers a replicable model for future research. Its findings contribute to the broader literature by validating known global patterns and introducing context-sensitive variables that may inform future cross-cultural or policy-oriented work. Future research should aim to broaden the geographical and methodological reach of such studies, incorporate qualitative perspectives, and investigate long-term trends to inform effective, culturally adaptable interventions.

Statement on the Use of AI Tools | *In preparing the manuscript “Assessing Adolescents' Attitudes Toward Psychological Health: Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioral Indicators” the authors (Chaikowska O.M., Melnyk L.P., Kuzo L.I., Khrystuk O.L., Hevchuk N.S.) used artificial intelligence (AI) tools exclusively for language-related purposes. Specifically, AI-assisted translation ChatGPT was partly applied to convert the text from Ukrainian into English, with the aim of improving linguistic accuracy, style, and clarity. AI tools were also used to improve language clichés and to help generalize certain formulations throughout the text.*

No AI tools were employed for data collection, analysis, or interpretation during the research process. The intellectual content, structure, and conclusions of the manuscript are entirely the work of the authors.

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