Theoretical investigation of the features of current fears of modern young people...  

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Yuliia V. Tsurkan-Saifulina*, Yuliia D. Aksani  
Chernivtsi Institute of Law of the National University “Odessa Academy of Law”  
58000, 7 Skovoroda Str., Chernivtsi, Ukraine  

Theoretical Investigation of the Features of Current Fears of Modern Young People  

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Abstract. The relevance of the study is conditioned by the rapid indicators of fear among young people, which has a destructive effect on psychological health, physical condition, social and professional development. The purpose of the study is to analyse the concept of “fear”, investigate its forms and origin, identify current fears among modern youth, and interpret them. Determination of ways to prevent the occurrence of fear, disposal, and its control. To investigate the features of the manifestation of current fears of modern youth, methods are used that are qualitatively combined and form a common concrete result, namely: empirical (quantitative research using an online survey), comparative, introspection, and interpretation. The results of this study are aimed at clearly defining the concept of fear, exploring its varieties, and identifying forms of fear. Theoretically, it is presented how fear can affect the development of personality, influence view of life, values, and self-determination in the professional and social environment. With the help of theoretical analysis, the specific features of the manifestation of fear in young people are compared based on Ukrainian and international experience. The results of an empirical study are demonstrated, and the most common fears of modern youth are identified. The findings are aimed at identifying ways to prevent the occurrence of fear, using corrective techniques for internal control, and determining the physiological and psychological manifestations of fear that can be controlled by willpower. This paper is not only a theoretical explanation of the existence of fear, but also it has preventive significance for those who want to take control of their own emotions and displace those categories of fear that prevent them from living a full life.  

Keywords: self-regulation, control, psychocorrection, self-preservation, anxiety, prevention  

INTRODUCTION  
In today’s conditions, fear takes on atypical forms and can change in age stages, affecting important components of life. Modern young people at the stage of development and self-realisation have many fears that they can consciously recognise or, conversely, deny. Comparing the research and assumptions of psychologists and social scientists, it can be concluded that fear is not only a threat to the internal state, but also an instrument for the preservation of life. In what form it can manifest itself depends on the conditions in which the person is. A special philosophical contribution to the study of fear was made by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, who stated that fear is something “darker” than knowledge, while a person is able to show courage that preserves the idea of danger. Fear is an emotion that occurs in the event of a threat to biological or social existence, translated from Latin “propinqua” (fear) means “close”. Founder of psychoanalysis S. Freud, explained that fear is divided into several types depending on its manifestation, namely: “free fear”, timidity, phobia, and fright. Modern psychology uses the term “anxiety” to clarify “free fear” [1]. There are many fears, and it is almost impossible to clearly define the main ones, because everyone has an individual fear, and certain mental abilities and inclinations, but there are the most common ones that every second respondent can declare.  

Recently, in Ukraine and abroad, popular fears among young people have become: existential fear, which can partially lead to panic attacks, because young people are too vulnerable in terms of vision of the future, so the sense of their essence and meaning of existence is extremely
The main methods used to investigate and identify current fears among young people are: an empirical method that meets the requirements of the study and is valid, helps to collect facts, describe and summarise the data studied. The empirical method includes an online survey on social networks Instagram and Facebook among Ukrainians aged 16 to 28, both males and females, which collects information through numerical data, quantifying public opinion on the manifestation of specific fears. The survey includes a free answer to an open question, it does not have a specific framework that would limit the full answer or the desire to tell something more. Each respondent, based on self-observation and introspection, consciously talks about personal fears and identifies exactly those that currently “paralyse” life.

The study also uses the method of introspection, the purpose of which is to highlight the theoretical features of introspection that form consciousness and introspection, the ability to self-report. It is this method that will be included in the psychocorrective programme for regulating fears, controlling them, and in preventive methods at the initial stages of the identified problem.

The study also used the method of introspection, one of the foundations of which is the ability to clearly distribute attention. However, this method cannot exist in an independent version, so it will be harmoniously combined with previous methods and lead to a clear result. The interpretative method is aimed at a general conclusion as a result of information processing, identifies critical points and establishes a structural connection between practical and theoretical data. The presented research work is divided into three important stages that reveal the main essence in the study of the concept of fear and its natural properties, and the identification of current fears in modern youth.

At the first stage, the authors worked out the theoretical basis, key phenomena and psychological areas related to the problem of fear and represent the basis for future psychological research. At the second stage, the authors conducted research using basic psychological methods able to identify fears in young people and compare the obtained theoretical and practical data, identify the connection, and summarise the research. At the third stage, having received theoretical and practical data from psychological methods, the authors summarise the study, form conclusions about the result of their developments, and demonstrate the main psychological ways to prevent, correct, and control fear or panic attacks, develop skills for self-regulation.
RESULTS

After conducting an empirical study, namely an online survey among young people, the authors received responses from 136 people, according to statistics of social networks, these were respondents from the central and Western regions of Ukraine. Fig. 1 schematically shows the fears among young people that they most often noted in their responses, and their growth rate (%).

![Figure 1. Indicator of current fears of modern youth](image)

Analysing the data obtained, it is worth noting that fears in young people do not have pronounced gender differences and can manifest themselves at the same level, the degree of their manifestation depends on the situation in which the person is. Fears of modern youth occupy a more social category, where there is interaction and self-affirmation, fears that are not biologically protective, but are socially significant and gradually acquired due to the influence of negative factors or events of the present and a conscious assessment of certain circumstances.

The survey showed that the greatest indicator of fear among young people is the loss of loved ones, respondents say that losing an important person means losing themself, their desired future, and getting rid of their goal in life. The fear of loss has a wide scope, and it is extremely unlikely to correct it with advice alone. A significant number of respondents claim that they have an inspired fear of loss, while others have acquired it in reality. After an unpleasant experience, people claim that fear does not disappear anywhere, its strength remains the same as in the initial stages, but it partially subsides after realising the tragedy for a short period. Fear of change is equally important among young people and ranks second among the visual indicators of the data obtained. Respondents say that changes are debilitating and cause great concern. This refers to a typical comfort zone and the "emotional pain" of getting out of it. This type of fear has the scientific term “metaphysiophobia”, or “neophobia” - fear of everything new, a pronounced fear of unforeseen situations, in which a person is forced to adapt to new conditions anew, but the process of adaptation itself can be too exhausting and cause stress [3].

Fear of unemployment and fear of death are also among the highest rates among young people. Using the comparison method, the fear of death and the fear of unemployment have some common features. The fear of death indicates the fear of losing life, losing opportunities, not feeling all the joys that fate can offer, while the fear of unemployment is also a loss, but financial, which deprives physical and moral satisfaction, opportunities, and prospects to live better. During the survey, respondents paid special attention to the fear of failure and the fear of loneliness. Fear of failure has an impact not only on the image in society or the development of a general opinion about the individual, but also on self-esteem, self-confidence, and their capabilities. Therefore, fear blocks the desire to take responsibility for certain situations and distances a person from success and self-satisfaction. Having formed a premature scenario in their imagination, a person refuses to take specific actions or attempts, choosing the "stable present".

Respondents describe the fear of loneliness as uncertainty. On the one hand, they have too much respect for their own space, will, and carefree actions, but on the other hand, the fear of being alone and unwanted internally prevails. The fear of loneliness can evoke social stereotypes and the pressure of the close environment, pointing to a lonely life as a failure. There is a sense of guilt, especially in front of parents whose expectations are not met [4].

Respondents paid special attention to the fear of...
speaking out in public. Such fear indicates difficulties in self-expression and recognition among the public. This type of fear is strongly supported by physiological changes, such as trembling, low voice, increased heart rate, sweating palms, or even blushing. This type of fear does not allow a person to open up completely, blocks leadership qualities, and it is difficult for respondents to develop their potential. Graphical analysis of the data obtained shows that fear of being used, fear of cheating, fear of helplessness, and fear of parental dependence received a lower expression rate. According to the authors, this can be explained by the fact that these types of fear can be more easily brought under control, managed by emotions and awareness of the measure of the problem. Such types of fear can often arise internally, regardless of real circumstances, so the carrier has every opportunity to switch from obsessive thoughts and correct their weaknesses with the help of specialists.

After analysing the data obtained, the current fears of modern youth have a pronounced social character and can gradually develop depending on situations that have a rapidly changing impact. Factors of influence are diverse: interaction and relationships with a narrow group of people, social institutions and the political situation in the country, their own established life views and values that begin to develop in childhood.

**DISCUSSION**

To investigate the specific features of the manifestation of fear in modern youth, it is first necessary to define the concept of “fear”. Fear is an emotion that arises from a biological or social threat to life. The source of manifestation of fear can be both reality, that is, a real factor that can cause fear, and imaginary, when there is no physical impact, but the accumulation of certain emotions can internally cause fear, anxiety, panic, increasing the effect of imaginary danger. Fear is a state of tension, as a result of which a person expects danger or unpleasant events, as a result of which the autonomic system can be disrupted, emotional disorders occur, which are accompanied by psychosomatics [6].

Exploring the problem of fears, A.I. Zakharov determined that fear has no age restrictions and can occur in any age group [7]. The researcher points out that fears can also be mediated by animals, reinforcing behaviour with certain basic reflexes during a threat. Fears can be divided into three main categories: social, natural, and internal. Natural fears are present in almost every person, they are the main driving force that preserves life. Natural fears include atmospheric phenomena (fear of thunder, lightning), astronomical phenomena (fear of a solar or lunar eclipse, a comet falling, etc.), volcanoes and earthquakes, powerful hurricanes, and water eddies. Social fears arise from interaction and living in society. Unlike natural fears, social fears are more acquired and rooted in childhood, they begin with the first interaction of the child with the world. The most common social fears are: “fear of failure”, “fear of success”, “fear of criticism”, “fear of loneliness”, “fear of inconsistency”, “fear of change”, “fear of responsibility”, “existential fear”. Psychological literature often describes “fear of public speaking” or “fear of shyness” and the like. Close to the manifestation of social fears is the fear of judgment, namely, the reaction of people who are important to the personality and their further attitude [7].

There are fears created by a person, at the expense of imagination and fantasies, that is, it is a manifestation of fear of imaginary phenomena that do not exist in the real world. Usually, such fears arise in childhood, when there is a peak of strengthening of children’s fantasies, provoked to attract the attention of parents or the desire to achieve a goal. Internal fears are very powerful, such as fear of own thoughts, obsessive states that destroy the emotional state, causing resistance and conflicts. It is this group of fears that affects the development of a person, their spiritual growth and confidence, self-esteem, their willpower and courage, such fear can be detected as a result of observation, when a person becomes low in satisfaction with their own achievements, unwilling to contact the world around. Fear is a consequence of psychological trauma. By capturing a terrible moment in memory, a person is able to reproduce the events that caused the beginning of fear in their imagination, such memories induce fear. Having a favourable environment for its development among humanity, fear has acquired various forms that characterise its essence in detail [8].

The main forms of fear are:

- anxiety – a long-term, but vague fear, concern about future events. Anxiety occurs even when there is no real threat, but there is already a moment of waiting for danger or uncomfortable circumstances;
- nervousness – a similar option to anxiety, but there is a logical list of all future negative options for the development of a certain situation, during nervousness there is uncertainty, and it forces a person to think about troubles and how to cope with them;
- fright – a sudden fear that caused a strong unexpected stimulus;
- panic – a short-term, but very strong manifestation of fear that engulfs a person at the moment of a real or imaginary threat, panic is accompanied by physiological and behavioural changes that are not controlled at all or only partially;
- phobia – an obsessive fear that is too pronounced in its manifestations and does not have comprehensive logical explanations; as a result of such a mental manifestation, a person avoids objects, situations or activities that can provoke it.

K. Izard argues that fear is a basic emotion that has emerged as a result of biological and evolutionary development and is an important factor in successful adaptation to the surrounding world. Fear is able to activate internal resources and allows better remembering dangerous factors while maintaining mental health. Fear lasts from a few minutes to several hours, and can be present all life, the duration depends on the type of fear and the stimulus that causes it, and fear also has its own intensity of manifestation, that is, an active rapid phase (instant flash and quick stop) and a suppressed one, which finds a place in consciousness and manifests itself only under destructive influences [9].
American psychologists [16] have developed several basic ways to make life easier when fear takes hold: finding the cause of fear; recognising fear; accepting that life is not long-lasting or "fragile"; accepting fear as the price of progress; finding an internal incentive to overcome fear; focusing on the present. In the period of waiting for events that cause anxiety and fear for life, it is advisable to use the barrage method, which distracts attention from fear and focuses on analysing the factors of an extreme situation, from thinking about the future or risks. Such a method can mentally unload and does not encourage analysis or reflection. The barrage method includes watching light movies, cartoons, and listening to music that is specially selected by specialists.

A. Goloshchapov identified three main and successful factors of self-help [17]: perseverance – a persistent desire to gain internal control; regularity – constant repetition and
passing techniques for self-help, attending psychological trainings and consultations; support of the environment – important understanding of loved ones, moral support, lack of judgment.

In the studies on the fight against panic fears and obsessive states, P. Fedorenko identified key methods of working with panic. The researcher claims that the first thing a person should do is self-observation and keeping a diary of their states, observing how changes occur under the influence of negative factors. The second important feature is acceptance, because resistance drains the body, accepting fear is the first step to self-regulation. Special in the author’s research is the “twenty-five-second method”, the essence of which is an excessive imagination about all the most terrible consequences that can arise with a particular type of fear. After living through the scenario, respondents reported relief that was present for a long time, even with repeated exposure to the stimulus [18].

S. Jeffers argues that for a positive mood, it is important to make time for affirmations, especially in the morning and before going to bed. They have a relaxing effect not only on the emotional state, but also on the muscular system. It is only necessary to choose the right ones, not to contribute to nervous excitement. The author pays special attention to the prohibition of affirmations while driving [19].

An important role in ways to overcome fear is played by the “Sedon method” [20], which is aimed at getting rid of negativity. The method is effective for getting out of the psychoemotional pit and has a cumulative effect. It is used to overcome fears that are generated by social factors and have a negative impact on the achievement of goals and desires, own self-esteem. According to the method, without positive reinforcement of emotions, desires cannot be achieved, and fear will increasingly absorb its victim. Author of the method G. Dvoskin recommends that all attention to be focused on the future result, supporting it with the idea that the expected event has taken place. Thus, there is an internal motivation that encourages a person to achieve the desired result, displacing negative objects from thoughts. G. Dvoskin argues that positive thinking is the key to success, anchoring useful energy in the human quantum field, displacing negative views and inclinations, forming “pure consciousness” [20].

Therefore, to deal with existing fears, there are many methods that perform a preventive and psychocorrective function, but the above methods are not universal and can act individually. Starting with breathing exercises, affirmations, and an inner attitude to positive thoughts, a person is able to fight and eventually accept fear as an ally, using its presence as a weapon for a safe life in this difficult world.

CONCLUSIONS
The study of current fears among modern youth has yielded the following conclusions. Fear is an integral, biologically and socially induced part of emotions that acts not only destructively, but also has a protective effect that allows adapting and saving a life. American researchers suggest that fear should not be destroyed, it is worth learning how to manage it. Managing fear does not depend on age, willpower, courage, or physical fitness. To manage their own fear, a person should “hear” the internal dialogue and change it.

Comparing the research of American and Ukrainian psychologists, the fears of young people have common tendencies of expression. The only difference is that foreign youth have a more pronounced fear of crossing the border, obtaining visas, and unemployment, which hinders the creation of a family; Ukrainian youth are concerned about their own development, independence and leadership, and do not want to be used. Such results may depend on social circumstances and developments in the country. During the study, young people claimed that most of the fears were not permanent, but depended on specific situations, but they coped with their manifestations, others, on the contrary, had complaints that fear did not allow them to fully reveal themselves, isolation and distrust prevented it.

Respondents said that fears were more likely to increase in new life situations, and changes in their place of residence, relationships, or studies caused anxiety. The fear of death, the fear of losing a loved one, or the fear of helplessness receive significant results in the survey and exist deep in the minds of modern youth. Their main feature of fear is to “fall to the bottom” under favourable and convenient conditions and “rise” in the event of a negative stimulus.

The data of scientific research is not a final conclusion and tends to change. Young people develop and strive for their desired achievements faster, and their path to a better life is complex and creative. By changing externally, the younger generation receives changes internally, a new universe is formed, more stable principles and beliefs are established, and at the same time, barriers are formed that hinder and reinforce fear, which lengthens the path to achieving goals and self-improvement.

The generalised results obtained by the authors and the formed conclusions that give a general description of the problem can become a significant knowledge base for performing promising future studies of fear and its impact on society, identifying more effective ways to overcome it.

The survey conducted was limited by the number of respondents and the platforms on which it was conducted (Instagram and Facebook), so further study on the topic will involve a larger sample and other social media for the survey. Also relevant are studies concerning the consequences of a full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, in particular, its psychological aspects. A comparative analysis of youth fears by regions of Ukraine may become one of the future studies on the topic.

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Чернівецький юридичний інститут Національного університету «Одеська юридична академія»

Теоретичне дослідження особливостей актуальних страхів сучасної молоді

Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена стрімкими показниками прояву страху серед молоді, що деструктивно впливає на психологічне здоров’я, фізичний стан, соціальний та професійний розвиток. Метою науково-дослідної роботи є психологічний аналіз поняття «страх», дослідження його форм та походження, визначення актуальних страхів серед сучасної молоді, їх інтерпретація. Визначення способів профілактики виникнення та позбавлення страху, його контролю. Дослідження особливостей прояву актуальних страхів сучасної молоді використано методи, що якісно поєднують і формують загальний конкретний результат, а саме: емпіричний метод (кількісне дослідження за допомогою онлайн-опитування), порівняльний метод, метод інтерпретації.

Результати цього наукового дослідження спрямовані на чітке визначення поняття страх, вивчення його різновидів, виявлення форм страху. Теоретично представлено, як страх здатен корегувати формування особистості, впливати на життєві позиції, цінності, самовизначення в професійному та соціальному середовищі. За допомогою теоретичного аналізу порівняно особливості прояву страху в молоді на основі українського та міжнародного досвіду. Продемонстровано результати емпіричного дослідження, визначено найактуальніші страхи в сучасній молоді. Результати наукової статті спрямовано на визначення способів профілактики виникнення страху, використання корекційних методик для внутрішнього контролю, а також визначення фізіологічних та психологічних проявів страху, які можна контролювати силою волі. Дослідження націлено не лише на теоретичне роз’яснення існування страху, але й має профілактичне значення для тих, хто бажає взяти під контроль власні емоції та витіснити ті категорії страху, які заважають повноцінно жити

Ключові слова: саморегуляція, контроль, психокорекція, самоозбереження, тривожність, профілактика