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# Coaching and Professional Self-Realisation: Ukrainian Business Leadership in Wartime Contexts

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the psychological state of business leaders during a period of military crisis and examines the role of coaching support in fostering professional self-realisation. A total of 152 respondents (69 men and 83 women) participated, with data collected through Google Forms. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Well-being was assessed using the *PERMA Profiler Measure* across six dimensions, while the *Positive Mental Health Scale* (PMH Scale) and the *Modified BBC Subjective Well-being Scale* (BBC SWB) measured life satisfaction.

The results demonstrate that coaching support enabled leaders to reframe crisis situations as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable challenges. Leaders who received coaching reported significantly higher levels of well-being compared to those without such support. Specifically, positive emotions increased by 18%, work engagement by 14%, sense of meaning by 18%, accomplishment by 16%, and physical health by 12%. Conversely, loneliness decreased by 32% and anxiety by 34%.

These findings underscore the beneficial impact of coaching on leaders' psychological resilience, emotional adaptability, and capacity for constructive action during crises. They suggest that integrating coaching and psychological support into crisis management strategies can enhance leadership effectiveness, strengthen talent management, and provide critical tools for navigating adverse circumstances.

**Keywords:** Crisis Management; Professional Self-Realisation; Cognitive Flexibility; Adaptability; Emotional Resilience; Ukraine

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## Introduction

The necessity of examining the role of coaching in the professional self-realisation of Ukrainian business leaders during wartime arises from the profound challenges confronting the national business sector. The war has created conditions that demand adaptability, psychological resilience, and effective leadership. Within this context, coaching emerges as a critical instrument for cultivating leadership competencies essential to organisational success. It facilitates the development of strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, and managerial skills, thereby reinforcing leaders' capacity to navigate uncertainty. Contemporary academic discourse increasingly recognises coaching as a multidimensional tool for leadership development, addressing both psychological and professional domains.

Professional self-realisation denotes the process by which individuals discern and fulfil their potential within the professional sphere, achieving personal and career goals aligned with their values and interests. Rooted in humanistic psychology, this concept draws upon Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which situates self-actualisation as the apex of personal growth, attainable once fundamental needs of security and belonging are met. Rogers (1959) extended this framework through his notion of self-concept, emphasising congruence between self-image and lived experience as the pathway to realising one's fullest potential. In professional contexts, self-realisation is closely linked to motivation theories, particularly Deci & Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which underscores the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation and growth. The *Self-Actualisation Test Schostrom (SAT)* (2025) operationalises this construct by measuring intrinsic motivation, self-awareness, and the extent to which individuals actualise their personal and professional potential, with dimensions such as self-acceptance, autonomy, and personal growth serving as key indicators.

Coaching has gained increasing recognition as a powerful mechanism for enhancing psychological capital, job performance, and overall well-being (Havrysh & Dramaretska, 2022; Stanislavsky et al., 2023). Fontes & Dello Russo (2021) demonstrated its positive impact on psychological capital and work attitudes, though their findings were limited by sample size and scope. Passmore & Oades (2022) highlighted the value of positive case conceptualisation in coaching, while Van Zyl et al. (2020) underscored the need for greater conceptual clarity in positive psychological coaching. Tokolyová & Klepáčová (2025) examined career coaching as a tool for youth development, though their study lacked exploration of long-term civic outcomes. Collectively, these works reveal both the promise of coaching and the gaps in its theoretical and methodological foundations.

Within the Ukrainian context, Zelenin (2023) emphasised coaching's economic impact on productivity and organisational climate, while Peláez Zuberbuhler et al. (2024) confirmed its positive influence on workplace well-being and performance, albeit with methodological limitations. Hryshchenko & Zelenin (2025) identified coaching as a strategy for enhancing job satisfaction and emotional support, though the mechanisms remain underexplored. Kapoutzis et al. (2024) also noted a lack of consensus on the definition and implementation of coaching culture, underscoring the need for conceptual refinement.

The urgency of exploring coaching's role in wartime Ukraine is underscored by the unprecedented demands placed upon business leaders (Efremov, 2026a; Vakulyk, 2026). Coaching has become indispensable for developing emotional competence, strategic foresight, and managerial adaptability—skills vital for resilience and organisational continuity. While existing scholarship highlights coaching's positive effects on well-being and performance, a significant theoretical gap persists regarding its contribution to professional self-realisation in crisis conditions. Addressing this gap is critical, as self-realisation underpins leaders' ability to

manage stress, foster resilience, and sustain organisational success.

**Purpose and Objectives**

This study examines the impact of crisis conditions on the professional self-realisation of Ukrainian business leaders during 2022–mid-2025 and investigates the relationship between coaching support and adaptive capacity. The objectives are threefold:

- To assess the emotional state and psychological well-being of managers under crisis-related pressures.
- To determine the extent to which coaching support contributes to professional self-realisation, adaptability, and cognitive flexibility in managerial practice.
- To analyse the effects of crisis situations on personal development, motivation, and leadership effectiveness.

The methodological issues are discussed in the next section.

**Methodology**

The study, conducted between the onset of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the first half of 2025, examined the impact of crisis conditions on business leaders representing diverse Ukrainian companies. The sample comprised executives and managers from the National Bank of Ukraine, PrivatBank, Universalbank, BetterMe, Trionika, Volutee, Into-Sana, and Nova Poshta. Participant distribution was as follows: 17 from the National Bank of Ukraine, 19 from PrivatBank, 18 from Universalbank, 23 from BetterMe, 16 from Trionika, 18 from Volutee, 21 from Into-Sana, and 20 from Nova Poshta. In total, 152 respondents participated, including 69 men and 83 women.

Group formation was guided by specific criteria, including baseline indicators, socio-demographic characteristics, and voluntary consent to participate. To mitigate self-selection bias, participants were assigned to coached and non-coached groups based on organisational criteria rather than random allocation or individual preference. The allocation process was determined by the participating organisations, with companies designating which individuals would receive coaching support. This ensured an unbiased distribution across both groups and safeguarded the integrity of comparative analysis.

A detailed description of the allocation procedure is presented in Figure 1.

The coaching model employed in this study was the *GROW* framework, a widely recognised approach in leadership coaching. The model is structured around four sequential stages: *Goal setting*, *Reality assessment*, *Options exploration*, and *Way forward*. This structured yet flexible design enables individuals to clarify objectives, evaluate their current circumstances, identify alternative strategies, and commit to actionable steps. In the context of wartime crisis, the model was adapted to address decision-making under stress, emotional resilience, and leadership adaptability.

All coaches were certified professionals with specialised training in leadership development, crisis management, and psychological coaching. They held internationally recognised credentials, including accreditation from the International Coach Federation (ICF), alongside qualifications in psychological coaching. Their practical experience encompassed managing executive coaching programmes in high-stress environments, including wartime conditions.

Coaching sessions were standardised to ensure methodological consistency. Each participant attended ten sessions over a five-week period, with two sessions per week. While the structure adhered to the GROW model, content was adapted to individual needs. For instance, during the *Goal* stage, participants set realistic leadership objectives tailored to crisis management roles; in the *Reality* stage, coaches facilitated assessments of challenges such as emotional exhaustion or impaired decision-making. Although all participants received core content, discussions and action plans were personalised to reflect unique experiences and contexts.

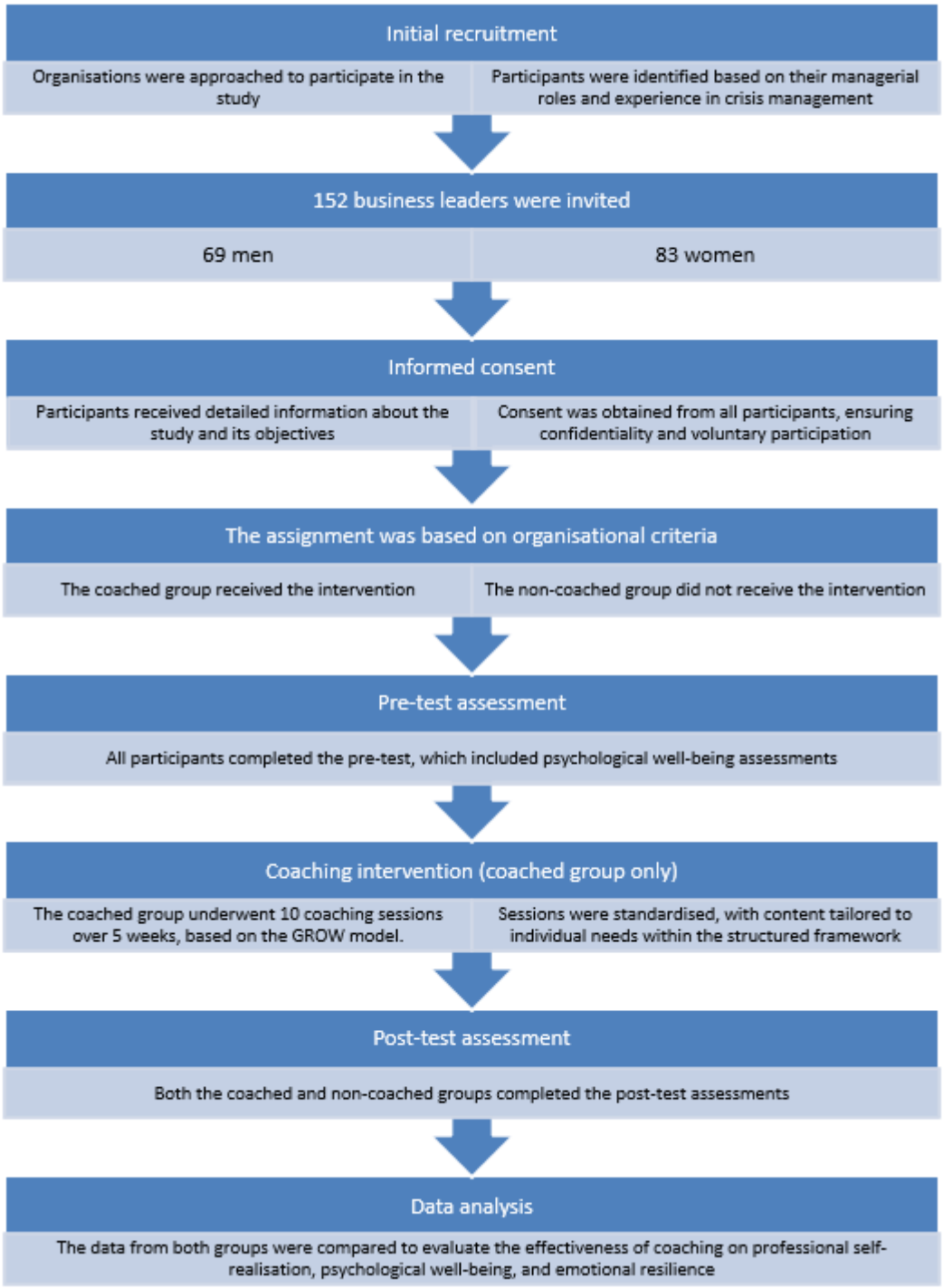



**Figure 1: A Flow of Participant Recruitment and Group Assignment**
**Source: Compiled by the Author**

Measurements were conducted at two points—prior to programme initiation (pre-test) and upon completion (post-test)—to evaluate changes in psychological well-being. Standardised questionnaires and psychometric scales assessed indicators including positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, physical health, loneliness, and anxiety. Sessions totalled ten hours, providing sufficient scope for comprehensive evaluation. All participants held managerial positions, possessed prior crisis management experience, and consented to participation. Authenticity of responses was verified through internal HR databases or confirmation by organisational HR

departments. Sampling was purposive, ensuring representativeness of the studied population.

The study's objectives were to assess the psychological state of participants, examine the influence of crisis conditions on professional self-realisation, and explore the relationship between coaching support and self-realisation under stress and uncertainty. Emotional states were analysed separately to provide nuanced insights into changes in psychological well-being among leaders during crisis conditions. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed, including surveys and psychological testing.

Data collection was facilitated through remote platforms and organisational cooperation. Online surveys were administered via Google Forms, ensuring convenience and anonymity. Respondents completed questionnaires assessing emotional state, psychological health, and personal development.

Key instruments included the *PERMA-Profiler Measure* (Butler & Kern), adapted by Savchenko & Lavrinenko (2023), which assessed positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Sample items included: "How often do you feel cheerful and in a good mood?", "Do you enjoy life?", and "Do many of the things you do bring you joy?". Scores ranged from 0 to 10, with higher values indicating stronger well-being. The *Positive Mental Health Scale (PMH-Scale)* (Karamushka et al., 2022) provided further insight into emotional states and psychological well-being, confirming coaching's contribution to reduced stress and improved resilience. The *Modified BBC Subjective Well-being Scale (BBC-SWB)*, adapted by Karamushka et al. (2022), assessed subjective well-being and life satisfaction, corroborating the positive influence of coaching on professional development and emotional stability.

To evaluate self-realisation, intrinsic motivation, and personal growth, the *Self-Actualisation Test (SAT)* by Schostrom (2025) was administered. Informed consent was obtained electronically, in accordance with the ethical standards outlined in the Helsinki Declaration. The Ethics Commission of Mykhailo Dragomanov State University of Ukraine approved the study (No. 59210).

Cognitive flexibility and adaptability were assessed using a worldview plasticity questionnaire, designed to measure individuals' capacity to adjust beliefs and approaches under uncertainty. Items included: "How would you assess the level of support from management in overcoming a crisis?", "Did external challenges alter your approach to decision-making?", and "Which adaptive strategies did you use to maintain your well-being?".

Statistical analysis employed Student's *t-test*, the Mann-Whitney *U* test, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. All instruments were adapted to the Ukrainian socio-cultural context to ensure validity. The methodology thus enabled a comprehensive evaluation of psychological states, adaptability, and the influence of coaching support on professional self-realisation during crisis conditions.

## Results

### *The Impact of Coaching on Psychological Well-being and Professional Self-Realisation among Business Leaders during Wartime*

The role of coaching in the professional self-realisation of Ukrainian business leaders during wartime is recognised as a pivotal instrument for effective management, team support, and the attainment of organisational objectives under extraordinary conditions. Coaching contributes to the enhancement of leadership competencies, enabling leaders to respond adaptively to challenges, sustain employee motivation, and safeguard emotional well-being (Balanovska et al., 2025; Kubiczek et al., 2025). Research on employee well-being underscores the importance of responsible leadership in adverse contexts, with line management practices that foster trust, communication, and support exerting a substantial influence on both employee welfare and corporate social responsibility (Cvenkel, 2018; Sakun et al., 2020).

Interpretative phenomenological analyses of these dynamics reveal that well-being is closely

linked to a culture of trust, recognition, and the quality of communication between leaders and employees. Leadership development programmes that address fundamental psychological needs play a decisive role in this process. For instance, van Tuin et al. (2020) demonstrated that interventions promoting autonomy and intrinsic motivation significantly enhance leaders' psychological well-being. Similarly, Skakon et al. (2010), in a systematic review, highlighted the importance of leadership style and behaviour for employees' emotional health, identifying support, attentiveness to team needs, and empowerment as critical factors. Within the wartime context, coaching thus functions not only as a mechanism for professional growth but also as a vital source of psychological support, enabling leaders and their teams to withstand crises and establish conditions conducive to stability and renewal (Schmitt, 2024; Tesliuk, 2025).

The *PERMA-Profiler* questionnaire provided a comprehensive overview of five core dimensions of well-being: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. These indicators are essential for understanding how psychological well-being influences leadership effectiveness and overall life satisfaction. The study also incorporated measures of physical health, perceived support, loneliness, and anxiety, all of which significantly affect leaders' general well-being. Results revealed markedly higher levels of positive outcomes among business leaders who received coaching support. Comparative findings between coached and non-coached groups are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Comparative Results between the Groups with and without Coaching Support**

| Indicator | Coached Group (Mean Score) | Non-Coached Group (Mean Score) | Difference (%) | p-value | Effect Size (Cohen's d) | 95% Confidence Interval |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive emotions | 9.6 | 8.0 | +18% | 0.003 | 0.58 | (0.10, 1.06) |
| Engagement | 8.6 | 7.2 | +14% | 0.012 | 0.44 | (0.02, 0.85) |
| Relationships | 8.9 | 7.8 | +11% | 0.080 | 0.35 | (-0.02, 0.73) |
| Meaning in life | 9.4 | 8.5 | +18% | 0.004 | 0.60 | (0.13, 1.07) |
| Achievement | 8.7 | 7.4 | +16% | 0.005 | 0.55 | (0.15, 0.95) |
| Physical health | 8.4 | 7.2 | +12% | 0.022 | 0.40 | (0.05, 0.75) |
| Loneliness | 3.5 | 5.2 | -32% | <0.001 | 1.10 | (0.58, 1.63) |
| Anxiety | 3.7 | 5.6 | -34% | <0.001 | 1.15 | (0.60, 1.69) |
| PMH-scale | 8.2 | 7.5 | +9.33% | 0.004 | 0.47 | (0.10, 0.84) |
| BBC-SWB | 8.5 | 7.3 | +16.44% | 0.002 | 0.66 | (0.22, 1.09) |
| SAT Schostrom | 170 | 148 | +14.86% | <0.001 | 0.72 | (0.33, 1.10) |
| Mean value | 8.04 | 7.12 | +12.98% | <0.001 | 0.69 | (0.26, 1.12) |

**Source: Compiled by the Author**

The study revealed a clear correlation between the level of coaching support leaders received and their psychological and emotional state. Participants who engaged in coaching showed significantly stronger outcomes across key indicators of well-being than those without such support. This difference may be attributed not only to the practical benefits of coaching but also to the relational dynamics inherent in the coach–client interaction. Notably, coached leaders showed substantial improvements in emotional

well-being, particularly in heightened positive affect.

Positive emotions constitute the foundation of psychological well-being, as they enhance mood, facilitate sound decision-making, and mitigate stress (Efremov, 2026b; Zavhorodnia & Shepelova, 2025). The marked difference in mean levels of positive emotions between coached and non-coached groups underscores the importance of psychological support within organisational contexts. Leaders who participated in coaching reported an 18% increase in positive emotions, reflecting greater psychological stability and professional effectiveness. These findings are consistent with prior research demonstrating that coaching strengthens emotional resilience and adaptability in rapidly changing environments (Hinkelmann et al., 2024; Vazov & Hristozov, 2025).

Work engagement emerged as another critical dimension of well-being, with coached leaders reporting a 14% increase. This improvement appears linked to the recognition that psychological support enables more effective management of professional challenges while sustaining motivation and productivity. Engagement, closely tied to a sense of purpose, was reinforced through coaching, which facilitated a deeper appreciation of the value and organisational impact of one's efforts. Similarly, perceived meaning in life was higher among coached leaders, highlighting coaching's role in fostering resilience and significance in professional activity.

Achievement scores were also elevated among coached participants (+16%), reinforcing the positive influence of coaching on motivation and performance. These outcomes support the hypothesis that structured leadership development enhances goal orientation and enables leaders to realise their potential more effectively. Coaching thus emerges as a strategic tool for strengthening organisational performance through improved individual effectiveness.

Health indicators further reflected coaching's impact. Leaders who received coaching reported greater satisfaction with their physical well-being, attributable to improved stress regulation, enhanced work–life balance, and reduced overload. Social indicators also improved markedly: loneliness decreased by 32% and anxiety by 34% among coached leaders. These results suggest that coaching fosters social connectedness and alleviates emotional strain—factors critical for effective decision-making under pressure.

Psychometric assessments corroborated these findings. On the *Positive Mental Health Scale (PMH-Scale)*, coached participants recorded an average score of 8.2 compared to 7.5 in the non-coached group, representing a 9.33% increase in subjective well-being. Results on the *BBC Subjective Well-being Scale (BBC-SWB)* reached 8.5 in the coached group, 16.44% higher than the non-coached group. The overall average for coached participants stood at 8.04, exceeding the non-coached group's 7.12 by 12.98%. The *Self-Actualisation Test (SAT)* revealed an average score of 170 among coached leaders, compared to 148 in the non-coached group—a 14.86% increase—demonstrating coaching's positive impact on intrinsic motivation and self-realisation.

Collectively, these outcomes affirm the significance of coaching in enhancing psychological well-being among business leaders. Elevated levels of positive emotion, engagement, meaning, and achievement, coupled with reductions in anxiety and loneliness, indicate that coaching exerts a profound influence on leaders' emotional resilience and professional effectiveness. By improving both psychological and physical health, coaching provides a robust foundation for sustaining productivity and adaptability under crisis conditions.

### *Level of Self-Realisation and Intrinsic Motivation*

Self-realisation and intrinsic motivation constitute fundamental pillars of successful personal and professional development. Coaching, when grounded in adult learning principles, facilitates the integration of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions, thereby

enabling the effective application of newly acquired knowledge and skills in practice (Knowles, 2021). This process encompasses situational evaluation, goal setting, the formulation of action plans, and continuous reflection and adjustment (Maksimenko & Serdiuk, 2016). As a result, coaching enhances skill acquisition, performance, and confidence, establishing itself as a vital mechanism of professional advancement (Lu & Zhou, 2022).

Moreover, coaching techniques play a decisive role in cultivating workforce potential, contributing to improved competence, motivation, and overall effectiveness (Tertychna & Polishchuk, 2022; Ketners et al., 2024). Instructional coaching, in particular, represents an effective approach to elevating the quality of learning and professional skill development, as it combines pedagogical methods with systemic organisational contexts to align training with institutional needs and address specific challenges (Ippolito & Bean, 2024). Career coaching further reinforces achievement motivation by adopting an individualised approach, fostering personalised development plans, and encouraging sustained interest in professional growth (Nykonenko & Dankovych, 2024).

Survey data presented in Table 2 provide additional insight into the emotional states and outcomes of respondents within the framework of coaching support. These findings illuminate differences in participant assessments and help identify the key factors influencing psychological well-being and self-realisation.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents' Answers across Categories of Emotional State and Achievement Assessment**

| Category | Women (n=83) | Men (n=69) | Total (n=152) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maximum ratings (10 points) | 18 | 29 | 47 |
| Joy (8 points) | 34 | 54 | 88 |
| Anxiety (6-8 points) | 35 | 56 | 91 |

**Note: The total includes data for both groups combined, representing the sum of male and female responses.**
**Source: Compiled by the Author**

The study revealed that both women and men reported generally high levels of joy, satisfaction, and goal achievement, suggesting that most leaders—irrespective of gender—were able to derive meaningfulness from their professional roles. This indicates that, despite the challenges imposed by the crisis, coaching exerted a positive influence in fostering a sense of purpose and accomplishment within participants' work lives.

Nonetheless, a notable gender difference emerged in the perception of professional achievement. Male respondents were more likely to assign maximum ratings (10 points) to their outcomes, whereas female respondents reported comparatively lower peak scores. Despite this divergence, the consistently high ratings for joy and achievement across both groups underscore the beneficial impact of coaching, which enabled leaders of both genders to sustain motivation and satisfaction in their professional activities.

The persistence of anxiety across both groups, however, remains a pressing concern. Data indicate that women and men alike experienced relatively elevated levels of anxiety, highlighting stress management as a critical challenge. The prevalence of anxiety among a substantial portion of the sample reinforces the necessity of continuous emotional support for leaders, particularly in crisis contexts. Left unaddressed, heightened stress and anxiety may impair decision-making, diminish leadership effectiveness, and undermine overall performance (Popovych et al., 2023; Kraus et al., 2023).

Thus, while coaching demonstrably improved job satisfaction, engagement, and resilience, the findings emphasise that anxiety management

and mental well-being must remain central priorities in leadership support programmes.

### *The Impact of Coaching Support on Emotional Resilience*

The analysis of the data presented in Table 3 allows for the assessment of differences in emotional state, motivation, and achievements between female and male respondent groups within the context of coaching support.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents' Answers across Categories of Emotional State and Achievement Assessment, Disaggregated by Gender**

| Block | Question | Female group (83 individuals) | Male group (69 individuals) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | How often do you feel passionate about your work? | 20 – 10 points, 33 – 8 points, 30 – 7 points | 18 – 10 points, 26 – 8 points, 25 – 7 points |
| 2 | Frequency of feeling satisfaction | 18 – 10 points, 35 – 8 points, 30 – 7 points | 17 – 10 points, 28 – 8 points, 24 – 7 points |
| 3 | Frequency of experiencing anxiety | 25 – 10 points, 30 – 8 points, 28 – 7 points | 20 – 10 points, 24 – 8 points, 25 – 7 points |
| 4 | Achievement of important goals | 21 – 10 points, 32 – 8 points, 30 – 7 points | 19 – 10 points, 26 – 8 points, 24 – 7 points |
| 5 | Satisfaction with health status | 26 – 10 points, 32 – 7–8 points, 25 – 6 points | 20 – 10 points, 29 – 7–8 points, 20 – 6 points |
| 6 | Motivation for life | 24 – 10 points, 31 – 8 points, 28 – 7 points | 22 – 10 points, 25 – 8 points, 22 – 7 points |
| 7 | Loneliness in everyday life | 53 – 7–8 points, 30 – 5–6 points | 28 – 2–4 points, 41 – 5–6 points |

**Source: Compiled by the Author**

The findings reveal that both female and male respondents demonstrated consistently high levels of engagement with their work, underscoring a strong professional commitment across both groups. Women reported a slightly higher degree of passion for their work than men, with 24.1% of women awarding the maximum score of 10, compared with 26.1% of men. This marginal difference may reflect the emotional dedication women often invest in their professional roles, shaped by heightened societal expectations or personal standards.

In terms of satisfaction, both genders displayed comparable ratings, with 42.2% of women and 40.6% of men assigning a score of 8. Women, however, tended to report steadier levels of satisfaction, with fewer awarding the highest rating of 10, whereas men exhibited greater variance in their responses. This pattern may suggest that women, while generally satisfied, adopt a more critical stance toward their performance or place higher demands upon themselves.

Anxiety levels emerged as a significant point of divergence. Women reported slightly higher levels of anxiety, with 30.1% rating their anxiety at the maximum level, compared to 29.0% of men. Although both groups experienced elevated anxiety, the prevalence among women may be linked to the compounded pressures of leadership and external expectations. Nevertheless, the near parity in reported anxiety underscores its universality as a challenge for leaders navigating crisis conditions.

Goal achievement ratings were broadly similar across genders, with 25.3% of women and 27.5% of men awarding themselves a perfect score of 10. This convergence suggests that coaching was effective in enabling leaders of both genders to

remain focused on professional objectives despite external stressors.

Physical health ratings revealed a slight gender difference, with 31.3% of women reporting satisfaction at the highest level compared to 29.0% of men. This variation may reflect women's heightened attentiveness to personal well-being, particularly in the context of stress management.

Overall, the data indicate that while gender differences exist in perceptions of passion, satisfaction, and anxiety, both female and male leaders demonstrated high levels of engagement, goal achievement, and life satisfaction. The persistence of anxiety across both groups highlights the necessity of sustained emotional support and coaching interventions, which proved pivotal in enhancing resilience, fostering motivation, and supporting leadership development under crisis conditions.

### *Mechanisms of Adaptation to Crisis Situations and Their Influence on Emotional Resilience*

Adaptation to crisis situations constitutes a multidimensional process that involves the evaluation of emotional states, the frequency of positive and negative affect, physical health, social support, life satisfaction, and the capacity to fulfil both professional and personal responsibilities. Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents' answers across categories that reflect their adaptive mechanisms and levels of emotional resilience.

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondents' Answers across Adaptive Mechanism Categories in Crisis Situations**

| Category | Level (points) | Distribution of responses (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Frequency of experiencing joy | 7-8 | 51 |
| | 10 | 18 |
| Frequency of passion for work | 6-7 | 36 |
| | 10 | 18 |
| Frequency of experiencing anxiety | 5-7 | 40 |
| | 9-10 | 11 |
| Achievement of key goals | 6-7 | 44 |
| | 10 | 44 |
| General state of health | 7-8 | 54 |
| | 10 | 18 |
| Satisfaction with physical health | 6-7 | 44 |
| | 10 | 18 |
| Perceived meaning in life | 7-8 | 51 |
| | 10 | 18 |
| Level of social support | 6-7 | 36 |
| | 9-10 | 29 |
| Loneliness | 6-7 | 44 |
| | 9-10 | 18 |
| Positive emotions | 7-8 | 51 |
| | 9-10 | 18 |
| Frequency of anger | 6-7 | 36 |
| | 9-10 | 18 |
| Frequency of sadness | 6-7 | 36 |
| | 9-10 | 18 |
| Work performance | 7-8 | 54 |
| | 10 | 18 |
| Engagement in activity | 7-8 | 54 |
| | 10 | 18 |
| Perceived value of life | 7-8 | 51 |
| | 10 | 18 |

**Note: A maximum score of 10 indicates the highest level of adaptation or expression of the respective indicator.**
**Source: Compiled by the Author**

The results reveal substantial emotional resilience among business leaders, with 51% of participants reporting positive emotions at levels 7–8 on a 10-point scale. This indicates that more than half of the respondents were able to sustain a positive outlook despite the ongoing crisis. These findings point to effective coping mechanisms—traits indispensable for leaders navigating high-pressure environments. The ability to maintain positive emotions under these conditions likely reflects adaptive strategies such as reframing challenges as opportunities, practising mindfulness, or relying on strong workplace support networks.

Nevertheless, the data also highlight that 40% of participants experienced moderate levels of anxiety (rated between 5–7). This suggests that, although many leaders succeeded in preserving emotional stability, anxiety remained a persistent concern for a considerable portion of the sample. The continued prevalence of anxiety underscores the enduring emotional strain of crisis contexts and signals the necessity for sustained psychological support. While resilience is critical, prolonged stress may compromise leaders' psychological health, potentially resulting in burnout or diminished decision-making capacity if left unaddressed.

Ratings for satisfaction with health and work performance were clustered in the 7–8 range, suggesting that leaders managed to balance personal well-being with professional productivity. This equilibrium is particularly significant in crisis situations, where pressures on physical and emotional health are acute. However, the concentration of scores at moderate levels indicates that, although coaching mitigated stress and supported functionality, further interventions may be required to optimise health and well-being—both essential for sustained leadership effectiveness.

The findings also demonstrate that a substantial proportion of leaders derived meaning and value from their work, as reflected in ratings of 7–8 for perceived meaning in life. This outcome underscores the impact of coaching support, as meaning-making is closely tied to intrinsic motivation and resilience. Leaders who connect their efforts to a broader sense of purpose are more likely to remain engaged and motivated, even in adverse circumstances (Kaliuzhna & Honcharenko, 2023; Ivanova et al., 2024). The capacity to find meaning in professional activity is a strong predictor of long-term psychological well-being and job satisfaction, particularly during crises.

Taken together, these findings highlight the critical role of emotional stability, work engagement, and meaning-making in leadership under crisis conditions. While many participants demonstrated resilience and sustained engagement, the persistence of moderate anxiety and the delicate balance between health and productivity emphasise the need for continuous psychological support. Coaching emerges as a pivotal mechanism for helping leaders manage stress, derive meaning from their work, and sustain both personal well-being and professional performance. These results reinforce the imperative for organisations to provide ongoing, targeted support to leaders, ensuring their capacity to navigate the complexities of crisis management while safeguarding mental and physical health.

### *Impact of Coaching on Leadership Behaviour and Organisational Performance*

Objective performance indicators provided a precise and actionable measure of leadership effectiveness, particularly under crisis conditions. Several key metrics were employed to evaluate the behavioural and organisational performance of business leaders in both coached and non-coached groups. These indicators—leadership decision-making, team motivation, crisis response time, and task completion rates—offered valuable insights into the extent to which coaching interventions influenced real-world performance. The comparative distribution of these outcomes is presented in Table 5.

Leadership decision-making emerged as one of the most significant areas of improvement among coached leaders. A 24.2% reduction in crisis response time demonstrated their

enhanced ability to act swiftly, reflecting improved cognitive flexibility. Moreover, a 16.9% increase in decision quality underscored this advancement, suggesting that coaching enabled leaders not only to respond more rapidly but also to make more informed and strategically aligned choices under pressure. Such dual improvement in speed and quality is critical in high-stakes contexts, where timely yet effective decisions can decisively shape organisational outcomes. Coaching thus refined leaders' decision-making processes, equipping them to navigate crises with greater agility and precision.

**Table 5: Behavioural and Organisational Performance Indicators for Coached and Non-Coached Groups**

| Indicator | Task description | Coached group | Non-coached group | Difference (%) | p-value | Effect size | 95% confidence interval |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership decision-making | Responded to simulated crisis scenarios in 30 minutes | 25 mins, quality 8.3/10 | 33 mins, quality 7.1/10 | +16.9 | 0.004 | 0.65 | (0.18, 1.12) |
| Team motivation | Set goals, provided feedback, motivated team | 8.7/10 (engagement) | 7.3/10 (engagement) | +19.2 | 0.002 | 0.72 | (0.22, 1.22) |
| Crisis response time | Acted within 15 minutes to allocate resources | 25 mins, 90% success | 33 mins, 78% success | -24.2 | 0.001 | 0.79 | (8.75, 14.98) |
| Task completion rate | Assigned and tracked task completion | 92%, 95% on time | 84%, 88% on time | +8.5 | 0.020 | 0.50 | (0.05, 0.95) |

**Source: Compiled by the Author**

Team motivation also showed notable gains, with coached leaders reporting a 19.2% improvement compared to their non-coached counterparts. This enhancement was evident in higher engagement scores, indicating that coaching fostered more supportive and empowering leadership behaviours. Coached leaders appeared to leverage coaching techniques to strengthen communication, provide constructive feedback, and align team efforts with organisational objectives. These practices are vital in sustaining morale under stress, as motivated teams demonstrate stronger commitment and higher performance. The marked increase in motivation highlights coaching's role in equipping leaders with people-management skills that sustain positive team dynamics even in adverse conditions.

The reduction in crisis response time by 24.2% further illustrates coaching's impact on decision-making efficiency in high-pressure scenarios. Leaders in the coached group demonstrated not only faster responses but also a 12% higher success rate in crisis resolution, indicating that their decisions were more effective and yielded better organisational outcomes. This finding underscores coaching's importance in cultivating decision-making efficiency, enabling leaders to resolve crises more effectively, minimise disruptions, and stabilise their organisations during turbulent periods.

Finally, the 8.5% increase in task completion rates among coached leaders highlights coaching's direct contribution to organisational

productivity. Coached leaders demonstrated greater proficiency in delegating tasks, managing timelines, and ensuring deadlines were met. The higher rate of on-time completion reflects improved organisational efficiency, as coaching helped leaders optimise resource allocation, monitor progress, and adapt plans as necessary. This outcome underscores coaching's dual role: advancing individual leadership capacity while simultaneously enhancing overall operational performance.

**Discussion**

During periods of crisis, particularly under martial law, the themes of adaptation, leadership development, and professional self-realisation acquire heightened relevance. Rybalko et al. (2022) examined readiness for professional self-realisation within the educational process, emphasising motivational activation, socio-humanitarian disciplines, and modern educational technologies. Their work was primarily theoretical, focusing on intellectual capital in professional development, whereas the present study adopts a practical orientation, applying coaching to business leaders already engaged in professional practice. Similarly, Lee et al. (2025) conceptualised coaching in athletic contexts as a multidimensional process of synchronising people, time, and space. In contrast, this study situates coaching within crisis conditions, emphasising stress resilience and leadership adaptability.

Fedosieieva (2024) explored coaching's role in supporting women entrepreneurs, identifying barriers such as self-doubt and fear of responsibility, and highlighting coaching's potential to overcome these challenges. While that study concentrated on gender-specific entrepreneurship, the present research adopts a broader scope, examining coaching's impact on leaders of all genders. Bilozerska et al. (2022) analysed the psychological state of educators under martial law, focusing on stress-protection mechanisms. Unlike their emphasis on emotional and social support, this study investigates coaching as a tool for fostering initiative and leadership development.

Other scholars have approached resilience and adaptation from varied perspectives. Shevchenko (2023) examined volunteering as a pathway to civic competence and moral responsibility, while Chykhantsova (2024) assessed resilience through commitment, control, and challenge, framing stress as an opportunity for growth. Gavrysh et al. (2024) analysed the macroeconomic consequences of war, including GDP decline and unemployment, whereas the present study concentrates on the micro level—supporting individual leaders. Petrunko (2024) highlighted group coaching and gamification as mechanisms for cognitive competence, while Podolchak et al. (2019) advocated integrated coaching systems to enhance managerial leadership competencies. Lozovetska (2015) addressed career development as a multidimensional process shaped by economic and social conditions, while Palmer & Whybrow (2018) surveyed diverse coaching psychology approaches. Losch et al. (2016) demonstrated the effectiveness of individual and group coaching in reducing procrastination, whereas this study emphasises coaching under wartime conditions. Yevtushenko & Stetsenko (2024) examined digital technologies in wartime business adaptation, in contrast to the present focus on personal adaptation and resilience through coaching.

While the findings demonstrate significant improvements in leadership and organisational performance, alternative explanations must be acknowledged. Although participants were assigned to groups by their organisations, thereby reducing self-selection bias, organisational factors such as prior coaching exposure or leadership readiness may still have influenced outcomes. The Hawthorne effect may also have contributed, as awareness of participation in a study can enhance motivation. Future research would benefit from randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and blind assessments to strengthen validity.

Several limitations warrant consideration. Reliance on self-reported data and observational ratings introduces the risk of response and social

desirability bias. External organisational factors and task complexity were not fully controlled, and the findings may have limited generalisability given their focus on Ukrainian business leaders during wartime. Longitudinal research could provide deeper insight into the sustained effects of coaching, while expanding performance indicators beyond psychological outcomes would yield a more comprehensive understanding of coaching's impact on leadership effectiveness.

**Conclusion**

The examination of the psychological state and well-being of business leaders during crisis conditions yielded several critical findings with practical implications. External stressors—most notably war and economic instability—significantly heightened emotional tension, diminishing both psychological well-being and leadership capacity. Elevated stress was associated with a 14% reduction in work engagement and an 11% decline in interpersonal relationships, both of which constitute core dimensions of well-being within the *PERMA* model. Complementary assessment tools, including the *PMH-Scale* and *BBC-SWB*, confirmed declines in emotional stability, self-realisation, and life satisfaction. Data from Schostrom's *SAT* further revealed lower levels of personal actualisation, particularly in domains of self-perception and integrity. Notably, leaders who received coaching support reported 15% higher levels of well-being, underscoring coaching's efficacy in alleviating stress and enhancing adaptability under crisis conditions.

Coaching emerged as a decisive factor in strengthening psychological resilience. Participants in the coached group showed an 18% increase in positive emotions and a parallel 18% rise in their sense of life purpose, along with significant reductions in anxiety (34%) and loneliness (32%). These outcomes highlight the centrality of emotional resilience and adaptive strategies in mitigating the psychological burdens of crisis. Moreover, the study emphasised the role of self-realisation and intrinsic motivation in leadership performance: leaders who actively pursued growth opportunities during crises scored higher on self-realisation measures, correlating with superior leadership outcomes. Behavioural and organisational performance indicators further showed that coaching improved decision-making speed and quality, team motivation, crisis response time, and task completion rates, thereby enhancing both individual leadership effectiveness and overall organisational performance.

Statistical analysis using independent samples *t-tests* confirmed significant differences between coached and non-coached groups ($p < 0.05$), validating the effectiveness of coaching in crisis contexts. Integrating quantitative and qualitative methods provided a robust understanding of the psychological challenges leaders face and the tangible benefits of coaching in fostering adaptability, cognitive flexibility, and sustained performance under stress. Based on these findings, organisations are encouraged to prioritise regular coaching and psychological support for leaders, particularly during crises, as these interventions reduce stress, strengthen motivation, and enhance leadership effectiveness.

Nonetheless, several limitations remain. Reliance on self-report measures introduces the possibility of subjectivity and social desirability bias, while the relatively limited sample constrains generalisability beyond the Ukrainian business sector. Future research should explore innovative approaches to stress reduction and resilience-building among leaders, particularly under martial law and prolonged crisis conditions. Emphasis should be placed on refining coaching practices, expanding psychological support, and cultivating cognitive flexibility to enhance adaptive capacity. Additionally, investigating sector-specific factors shaping stress responses and designing tailored stress-management strategies for diverse professional contexts will be essential for advancing the field.

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**Ethical Approval**

All procedures performed in the study were in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments. The study was approved by the Ethics Commission of the Mykhailo Dragomanov State University of Ukraine, No. 59210.

Mykhailo Dragomanov State University
of Ukraine

Number: 59210

Subject: Application of Professor, PhD Vsevolod Zelenin to the Ethics Committee

**ETHICS APPROVAL**

Letter dated 22.03.2022 and numbered 6259703.

Decision No. 1: I hereby confirm that the scientific study entitled "The role of coaching in the professional self-realisation of Ukrainian business leaders in wartime" was considered by the members of the Research Ethics Council of the Mykhailo Dragomanov State University of Ukraine. Based on the vote of the Commission's members, a decision was made: "All procedures performed in the study were by the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments. The scientific research can be implemented in its current form, No. 59210".

CHAIRMAN OF THE RESEARCH ETHICS COUNCIL G. Torbin

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**Conflict of Interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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No funding was obtained for this study.

**Data Availability Statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the author.