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The impact of psychological support on professional development in educational institutions in Ukraine

El impacto del apoyo psicológico en el desarrollo profesional en las instituciones educativas de Ucrania

Liudmyla Moskalenko[1] ⬤ ✉, Iryna Sereda[2] ⬤, Nataliia Lukianchuk[1] ⬤, Marharyta Panchenko[3] ⬤, Victoria Zlahodukh[4] ⬤

[1]Ukrainian Institute of Arts and Sciences, Department of Pedagogy and Psychology. Bucha, Ukraine.
[2]Admiral Makarov National University of Shipbuilding, V.O. Sukhomlynsky Educational and Scientific Pedagogical Institute, Department of Special and Inclusive Education. Mykolaiv, Ukraine.
[3]Mykhailo Dragomanov State University of Ukraine, Department of Psychology. Kyiv, Ukraine.
[4]State University "Kyiv Aviation Institute", Department of Pedagogy and Professional Education. Kyiv, Ukraine.

ABSTRACT

Objective: current trends in educational evolution increasingly incorporate the role of psychological services aimed at providing support to all participants in the educational process. Given the prolonged Russian-Ukrainian war, an essential question arises regarding the impact of psychological assistance on professional development within Ukraine's academic institutions. Accordingly, this study aims to assess the effect of professional psychological support on professional growth within contemporary Ukrainian educational institutions.

Method: an experimental study was conducted using control and experimental groups (n=60). A random sampling model with stratified elements was employed using questionnaires and standardised scales to measure stress resistance and anxiety. Questionnaires were administered exclusively among the experimental group to confirm the effectiveness of psychological support.

Results: the findings indicate that, within the context of professional development, psychological techniques targeted stress resistance enhancement, emotional competence building, motivation management, and the formation of communication skills and self-reflection. The methods demonstrated a positive impact on professional motivation. Participants in the experimental group particularly valued coaching techniques, mentorship, relaxation practices, and the introduction of art or music therapy. A significant correlation was observed between participation in psychological training sessions and reduced levels of anxiety and stress.

Conclusions: indicate that 70 % of the surveyed participants found psychological support compelling. Thus, adequate psychological support is vital in sustaining a proper educational environment and realizing the pedagogical process.

Keywords: Emotional Resilience; Mental Health Support; Pedagogical Innovation; Professional Growth; Psychosocial Adaptation.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: las tendencias actuales en la evolución educativa incorporan cada vez más el papel de los servicios psicológicos destinados a proporcionar apoyo a todos los participantes en el proceso educativo. Dada la prolongada guerra ruso-ucraniana, se plantea una cuestión esencial en relación con el impacto de la asistencia

psicológica en el desarrollo profesional dentro de las instituciones académicas de Ucrania. En consecuencia, este estudio pretende evaluar el efecto de la asistencia psicológica profesional en el crecimiento profesional dentro de las instituciones educativas ucranianas contemporáneas.

Método: se realizó un estudio experimental con grupos de control y experimentales (n=60). Se empleó un modelo de muestreo aleatorio con elementos estratificados utilizando cuestionarios y escalas estandarizadas para medir la resistencia al estrés y la ansiedad. Se administraron cuestionarios exclusivamente al grupo experimental para confirmar la eficacia del apoyo psicológico.

Resultados: los resultados indican que, en el contexto del desarrollo profesional, las técnicas psicológicas se centraron en la mejora de la resistencia al estrés, el desarrollo de la competencia emocional, la gestión de la motivación y la formación de habilidades de comunicación y autorreflexión. Los métodos demostraron un impacto positivo en la motivación profesional. Los participantes del grupo experimental valoraron especialmente las técnicas de coaching, la tutoría, las prácticas de relajación y la introducción de arteterapia o musicoterapia. Se observó una correlación significativa entre la participación en sesiones de formación psicológica y la reducción de los niveles de ansiedad y estrés.

Conclusiones: indican que el 70 % de los participantes encuestados encontraron convincente el apoyo psicológico. Así pues, un apoyo psicológico adecuado es vital para mantener un entorno educativo apropiado y realizar el proceso pedagógico.

Palabras clave: Resiliencia Emocional; Apoyo a la Salud Mental; Innovación Pedagógica; Crecimiento Profesional; Adaptación Psicosocial.

INTRODUCTION

The organization and implementation of psychological support are essential elements of the professional development of educational staff, as they have an impact on emotional well-being, intrinsic motivation, engagement in learning, and career development by the chosen specialization.[1] This issue is particularly relevant considering the current challenges facing Ukraine's educational system, where the need to create a psychologically supportive environment for educators is becoming increasingly acute. Recent studies emphasize that the educational environment should not only provide quality learning conditions but also support the adaptation of individuals to rapid social and institutional changes.[2,3,4] According to self-determination theory, meeting basic psychological needs (including autonomy, competence, and relatedness) is a vital part of maintaining intrinsic motivation and personal growth. On the other hand, the concept of resilience provides a valuable framework for understanding how people cope with stress, emotional exhaustion, and other adverse factors that are common in crisis situations, including armed conflict. Given the Ukrainian realities of today, psychological support should be viewed not only as a protective factor but also as a key subsystem for creating a sustainable and high-quality educational environment.

Considering previous considerations, the outlined problem has particular significance and relevance for Ukraine, where the educational system has undergone substantial transformations due to complex socio-economic and political changes. Furthermore, the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war has had a pronounced impact, resulting in increased digitalisation of the educational sector and a focus not only on physical but also on cybersecurity.[5,6,7] Developing effective psychological support mechanisms has thus become a top priority, enhancing working conditions for educators and improving their professional competencies. Consequently, research into the impact of psychological support on professional development within Ukrainian educational institutions is fundamental, as well-structured psychological assistance aids in professional growth. This study aims to conduct experimental research to identify effective practices and formulate recommendations for enhancing the educational process.

Contemporary scholars have characterised various components in forming adequate psychological support in modern educational institutions. Many current works have proven the importance of psychological support in maintaining mental well-being. Notably, scholars have begun to pay increased attention to psychological support with the large-scale digitalisation of the educational space. Researchers highlighted the need for professional support for students and lecturers in distance learning.[5,8,9] A significant trend emerged in the study of professional development using modern innovative technologies and methods.[10,11,12] Specifically, Zaitseva examined the issue of teachers' psychological readiness for the widespread use of digital technologies.[12] Crompton et al. identified the core psychological foundations for implementing innovative technologies in learning.[13] Androshchuk et al. demonstrated that creativity plays a crucial role in ensuring the psychological well-being of lecturers in contemporary educational institutions.[14] Specific contemporary pedagogical approaches to preparing future psychologists in higher education institutions were outlined in the study by Bilyk et al.[15] Bocheliuk et al. identified the critical psychological and pedagogical components of forming

social capital in modern universities.[16] Furthermore, Budnyk and Sajdak-Burska discussed the preparedness of contemporary lecturers to provide professional support to students under the challenging conditions of war.[17] Some theoretical aspects of psychological literacy are thoroughly presented in the research by Cranney et al.[18] Daniels et al. raised the critical issue of ensuring safety within the modern educational space, especially in the context of introducing digital tools to support the learning environment, as observed in the works of several scholars.[19,20,21] Modern educational institutions perform the professional function of psychological support, although this function has not always been permanent or constant in the education system. This is indicated by many current studies, which describe various challenges in providing professional psychological support in educational institutions both in Ukraine and globally.[22,23,24,25] However, modern researchers have also identified that this issue has become particularly urgent and significant because of war. Contemporary studies have demonstrated that during wartime, psychologists and psychological services in educational institutions carried out substantial and high-intensity work.[26,27,28] Furthermore, during wartime, psychological support is provided by in-house psychologists, administrative representatives, and lecturers. This system has become permanent, as indicated by current research.[29,30,31] Thus, modern scholars have characterised various aspects of implementing psychological support. However, these studies generally form only the theoretical basis and are primarily review-based or quantitative. Accordingly, there is a gap in contemporary pedagogical science about empirical (experimental) research on this issue. This study will address this gap, which aims to empirically describe the role of psychological support in modern educational institutions.

The study aims to define the role of psychological support in Ukrainian educational institutions. The following hypotheses are formulated to be confirmed or refuted in this research:

- Psychological support serves as an effective means for professional development.
- Respondents highly value psychological support in ensuring their mental safety.
- Psychological support contributes to increased motivation and confidence in professional growth.

METHOD

This experimental study collects data through surveys and assessments of current stress resistance scales. Consequently, the research employs an experimental design with control and experimental groups.

Sampling procedures

The final sample of survey participants was 60 people (n = 60). This size is justified based on precedents of similar empirical studies [4] that focus on psychological support and professional growth criteria. It is worth noting that the exclusion criteria included the presence of psychological disorders. Participants self-reported such cases, as this could hypothetically have an impact on psychological support interventions. To confirm this criterion, all respondents underwent a brief screening using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12. Only those respondents who had scores below the clinical threshold participated in the study. The sample includes teachers, administrative staff, and social educators drawn from institutions that also met the following criteria:

- Participants aged 25–65 years.
- At least two years of work experience.
- Voluntary consent to participate.

Exclusion criteria included:

- Inability to regularly participate in psychological support sessions (mainly affecting the experimental group).
- Existing psychological disorders.
- Withdrawal from the study at any stage.

Respondents were selected through primary screening and stratification. Potential participants were initially notified about the study via educational institutions. The selected participants were grouped based on profession, experience level, and length of service.

Participant characteristics

The sample includes a diverse group of educational institution staff in Ukraine, totalling 60 individuals, divided into two groups:

- Experimental group: Participants in this group received consistent psychological support, including regular individual or group sessions, stress and anxiety management training, and motivation enhancement practices.
- Control group: Participants in this group received no psychological assistance.

Both groups were stratified based on profession, length of service, and age. Table 1 presents detailed

participant information, including a total of 60 individuals.

Table 1. Participant data		
Profession	**N**	**%**
Lecturers	30	50 %
Administration	18	30 %
Social staff	12	20 %
Experience:		
From 2 – 7 years	18	30 %
From 7 to 15 years	30	50 %
From 15 and more	12	20 %
Gender:		
Female	38	63 %
Male	22	37 %

After stratification, participants were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group.

Procedures and instruments
    The research procedure can be divided into several stages, including the preparatory, primary, and final. At the preparatory stage, participants were gathered and informed about the study's primary aims and methods. Additionally, an initial assessment of respondents' emotional states was conducted.
    The main stage involved providing continuous psychological support to the experimental group over six months. This support included various forms of psychological assistance, such as sessions with a psychologist, group or individual therapy, anxiety-reduction therapy, and motivation enhancement practices. Meanwhile, the control group operated without professional psychological support during this period.
    In the final stage, all participants underwent a post-assessment, and the results between the experimental and control groups were compared.
    The instruments used in this study included questionnaires and standardised scales to measure stress resilience, anxiety levels, and other relevant factors. In particular, questionnaires were administered exclusively to the experimental group to evaluate the effectiveness of the psychological support provided. The primary questions related to demographic information, an evaluation of the support's effectiveness, and general impressions of the psychological support (table 2).

Table 2. Survey template	
Questionnaire section	**Questions**
Demographic data	1. Please indicate your age and gender 2. How many years have you worked in the field of education? 3. Please indicate your profession.
Effectiveness assessment	4. Please rate the effectiveness of psychological support (from 1 to 5) 5. Please rate the effectiveness of group classes, coaching, mentoring, art therapy, music therapy, relaxation practices, time management, problem-solving therapy, introspection and reflection techniques, etc. 6. Has your motivation for professional development improved? 7. Has psychological support influenced your professional development? Have you improved your own knowledge, in particular regarding the development of emotional intelligence?
Overall impression	8. Give your overall impression of participating in the experiment

    The study employed standardized and widely used psychometric tools, including the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item scale (GAD-7), the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), and the Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS). To ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness, validated Ukrainian-language versions of the GAD-7 and PSS were used, as established in previous research [3,12]. These versions demonstrated acceptable reliability and construct validity in Ukrainian samples.
    The level of anxiety was assessed using the generally accepted Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item scale (GAD-7). The GAD-7 scale demonstrates good reliability and validity. Scores on the GAD-7 range from 0 to 21. Specifically, scores between 0–5 indicate the absence of anxiety, 5–9 suggest mild anxiety, while scores

of 10-14 and 15-21 indicate moderate and severe anxiety, respectively. The level of acceptable stress was determined using the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). PSS scores range from 0 to 40, with scores between 0-13 corresponding to low or no stress, 14-26 indicating moderate stress, and 27-40 reflecting high stress. Additionally, the Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS) was utilised in this study, representing a five-item measure of social functioning, with a maximum score of 40 points. Higher scores indicate significant occupational impairments.

Data analysis

For analysis purposes, all data were initially categorized into two groups: survey data and data from standardized scales. Based on comparative analysis, it was possible to evaluate data obtained from both instruments and to determine the impact of psychological support on professional development. Furthermore, statistical analysis was conducted to compare the leading indicators of professional development and motivation in the two groups before and after the experiment. The results were summarised, interpreted, and used to draw key research conclusions.

RESULTS

Current trends in educational evolution consider the operation of psychological services, which are typically governed by specific strategies or foundational documents. The modern approach to supporting professional development includes a recalibration of some aspects within the national education system, including the renewal of existing algorithms of professional activity, a re-examination of methodological approaches in working with students, faculty, educational administration, and even parents.[32,33] Transformations are also underway regarding shifts in focus and priorities in achieving educational outcomes through effective methods of practical psychology and social support.

In the context of Ukraine, the decentralisation of educational management, increased opportunities for exercising rights and capacities within local communities, and their influence on the learning process enable psychological specialists to thoroughly reassess the content and direction of psychological and socio-pedagogical support for all participants in the educational process.[34] At the same time, the complex socio-economic conditions faced by Ukrainian society—primarily due to the Russian invasion and the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic—necessitate active involvement from psychological support staff to provide essential assistance to affected individuals, particularly in addressing the impacts of psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress.[7,35] In such circumstances, the effectiveness of educational reforms relies heavily on the capacity to provide adequate psychological support, which is equally crucial during crises for individual or group work with students and for regulating educators' mental well-being. In professional development, psychological techniques aim to increase stress resilience, foster emotional competence, manage motivation, and develop communication skills and self-reflection. Specifically, coaching and mentoring play a significant role by helping educators identify their professional goals and pathways to achieving them. Time management techniques aid in planning time effectively and setting life priorities appropriately. Stress management helps reduce stress levels, enhances concentration, and fosters emotional stability.[36,37,38] Problem-solving sessions enable participants to learn constructive approaches to tackling complex professional challenges. Table 3 describes critical contemporary psychological approaches that influence the development of professional competence.

Table 3. Selected techniques and their purposes in the psychological support system		
Name	Purpose	Techniques
Coaching	Help to determine professional goals and ways to achieve them	Questioning approach Conversations Sharing experience
Time management	Time management skills	Using time planning methods, in particular the Eisenhower matrix (prioritisation of tasks), the 80/20 rule
Development of emotional intelligence	Ability to manage emotions Understanding the emotions of other people	Training aimed at learning to recognise and manage emotions and empathy. Exercises for self-reflection and developing compassion
Problem-solving therapy	Skills for independent and constructive problem-solving	Case study Learning based on problem analysis
Art therapy, music therapy	Increasing creativity Reducing stress	Using art or drawing to explore the inner world

Overall, the significance of educational transformations largely depends on the effectiveness of psychological

support. Therefore, assessing the impact of psychological support on professional development within academic institutions in Ukraine requires further exploration, primarily through empirical data analysis. The primary analysis compared key indicators at baseline (Phase 0) and after six months. The study was conducted at the initial stage (two weeks before the experiment) and after six months. In this experiment, the analysis was carried out across both the experimental and control groups. At the start of the experiment, the mean GAD-7 score was 10,53, indicating moderate anxiety. The level of perceived stress was determined using the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). Overall, respondents displayed an average stress level (ranging from 14 to 26). When employing the Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS), it was evident that participants exhibited a low level of occupational impairments. Table 4 presents detailed data obtained for these indicators.

Table 4. Measurement analysis using selected scales (N=60)		
Measurement	**Period**	**Indicator**
GAD-7	Pre-intervention	10,53
PSS	Pre-intervention	22,35
WSAS	Pre-intervention	13,87

Following a comprehensive psychological support programme (including participation in personal development training, coaching, group sessions, art therapy, music therapy, relaxation practices, time management, problem-solving therapy, and techniques of self-analysis and reflection), the six-month follow-up analysis revealed notable changes in the indicators. According to the survey conducted among the experimental group, relaxation activities (rated 4,7) were identified as the most effective, as they foster psychological resilience and enhance stress management. Coaching, mentoring, and music therapy (or art therapy) received moderate scores (ranging from 4,2 to 4,5), which suggests their effectiveness, though they also require cautious application. For instance, mentoring and coaching need professional support from trained specialists, as their success is closely tied to the skill level of the mentor or coach. The lowest-rated methods included self-analysis, reflection, and stress management techniques (scoring between 3,2 and 3,3). Figure 1 illustrates the trend in ratings provided by respondents from the experimental group.
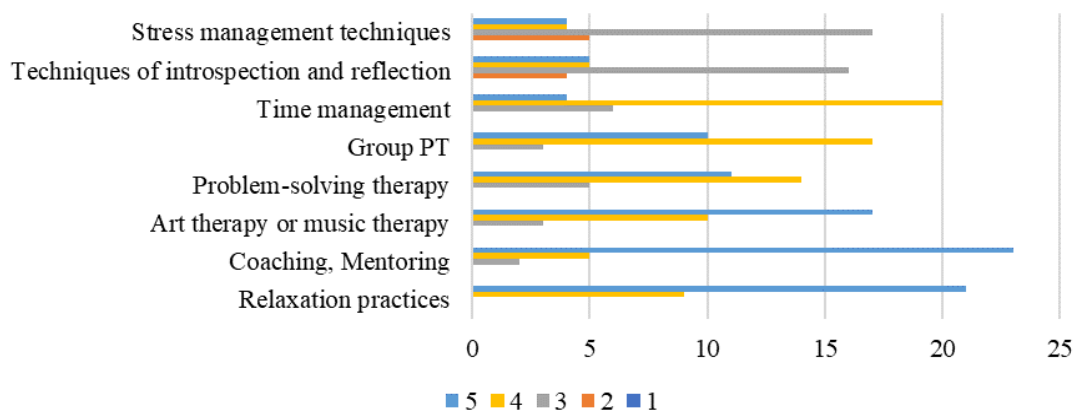

Figure 1. Dynamics of ratings by experimental group participants of psychological techniques (N=30)

Overall, participants in the experimental group rated coaching and mentoring techniques most highly, with 23 individuals awarding these methods the maximum score of 5, indicating their impact on professional growth. Additionally, relaxation practices were among the highest-rated techniques, with 21 participants scoring 5 on the Likert scale. Conducting supplementary relaxation practices, such as art therapy and music therapy, played a significant role in supporting current employees of educational institutions, as noted by 17 participants. Table 5 presents a detailed evaluation conducted among representatives of the experimental group (n = 30).

Table 5. Participant ratings of psychological techniques (N=30)					
Technique	1	2	3	4	5
Relaxation practices	0	0	0	9	21
Coaching, Mentoring	0	0	2	5	23
Art therapy or music therapy	0	0	3	10	17

Problem-solving therapy	0	0	5	14	11
Group PT	0	0	3	17	10
Time management	0	0	6	20	4
Techniques of introspection and reflection	0	4	16	5	5
Stress management techniques	0	5	17	4	4

After the psychological support (participation in personal development training, coaching, group sessions, art therapy, music therapy, relaxation practices, time management, problem-solving therapy, self-analysis and reflection techniques), the analysis conducted after 6 months demonstrated that the indicators had changed. Specifically, the GAD-7, which corresponds to the general level of anxiety, decreased to 7,09, indicating mild anxiety (in some cases, it's Absence). As measured by the PSS, the acceptable stress level was 10,87, indicating a low stress level. When using the Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS), it was noticeable that respondents maintained a consistently low level of professional disruptions. However, in the control group, specific indicators increased, specifically the GAD-7 and PSS. Table 6 presents a comparative analysis of the obtained indicators from the scales.

Table 6. Comparative analysis of the experimental and control groups (N=60)			
		Experimental group (N=30)	Control group (N=30)
Measurement	Period	Value	Value
GAD-7	Pre-intervention	10,53	10,53
	6 months later	7,09	12,35
PSS	Pre-intervention	22,35	22,35
	6 months later	10,87	27,56
WSAS	Pre-intervention	21,89	21,89
	6 months later	15,44	22,56

At the same time, the use of psychological support directly impacts the growth of motivation for professional development. Specifically, 19 respondents (63 %) noted a positive impact of psychological support on their professional development, including improvements in knowledge, emotional intelligence, and so on. Only 3 individuals (10 %) did not notice any difference. The remaining 7 experimental group participants did not provide a positive or negative response. Additionally, a positive trend was observed regarding the increase in the motivational component. 21 individuals (68 %) reported a rise in motivation due to psychological support, while only 1 respondent (3 %) disagreed with this trend. Although 8 individuals did not indicate any noticeable result, the positive role of psychological support should still be acknowledged (figure 2).
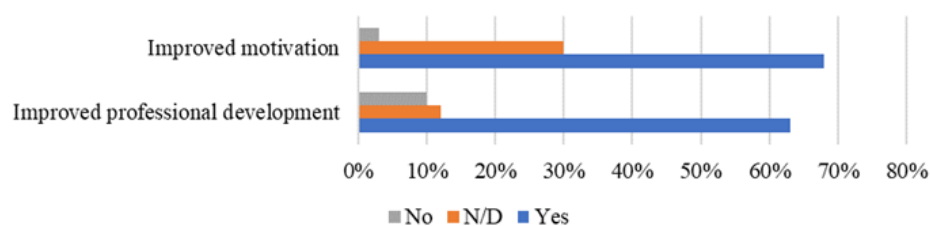

Figure 2. Dynamics of the impact of psychological support on motivation formation and improvement of professional development

As a result of the survey, it was established that the effectiveness of psychological support constitutes an essential element for maintaining an adequate educational environment, acquiring new knowledge, and facilitating the educational process. Psychological support was deemed effective by 70 % of the respondents from the experimental group—21 individuals. Only 20 % of the respondents (6 individuals) indicated its ineffectiveness. Meanwhile, 3 individuals, or 10 % of those surveyed, were undecided in their responses. Under these circumstances, the survey confirms that psychological support should be considered adequate. The variability in responses indicates the free expression of opinions by the experimental group members, enabling an interpretation of the results compared to the conclusions drawn by researchers. Therefore, considering the

current transformations in the Ukrainian education system and the challenges the war poses, ensuring adequate psychological support is a crucial direction that directly impacts the professional growth of all participants in the educational process.

DISCUSSION

Psychological support plays a significant role in the formation of a modern, comfortable, educational environment aimed at overcoming the negative consequences of psychological disorders of varying severity. This research aimed to analyse the role of psychological support in contemporary educational institutions in Ukraine. To this end, the following hypotheses were tested: psychological support is an effective tool for professional development; respondents highly evaluate the provision of psychological support for ensuring their mental stability; psychological support contributes to increased motivation and confidence in professional development.

The results confirm the first hypothesis, which concerns that psychological support plays a role as an effective tool for professional development. Specifically, the study demonstrated a paradigm shift in the attitude towards the process and significance of psychological support, aligning with the broader transformations in the humanisation of education and the development of new forms of interaction among all participants in the educational process. Due to the crisis in Ukraine, primarily caused by the full-scale Russian aggression, the provision of professional psychological assistance remains highly relevant in the academic environment. This is confirmed by conclusions drawn by scholars, who consider this aspect crucial for professional development within educational institutions.[39,40] These perspectives also support the second hypothesis, which states that psychological support ensures mental stability. At the same time, researchers identify various important issues and factors for modernising the provision of psychological assistance and the functioning of relevant services. In particular, discussions have taken place regarding steps to increase the effectiveness of psychological support for educational activities. Changes in the professional stance of educators have occurred during training, which also aims to alter attitudes towards learners, the content and forms of the educational process, and the prospects for evaluating the quality of education, etc.[41,42] Developing psychological competence among educators will be crucial for further regulation of psychological assistance in higher education institutions. Considering this process, one should agree with researchers who find the practice of interpersonal communication among all participants in the learning helpful process, as well as the application of principles such as openness, tolerance, equality, partnership, and professional development.[41,43,44]

The results indicated that relaxation-based activities (e.g., guided breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness techniques) were rated as the most effective forms of psychological assistance by participants. These methods consistently received higher subjective evaluations of impact on emotional regulation and immediate stress relief compared to other modalities. Coaching, mentoring, and music therapy (a form of art therapy) also demonstrated above-average effectiveness, particularly in supporting long-term motivation and self-awareness. The relative superiority of relaxation practices may be explained by their immediate physiological and psychological effects, such as reduction of cortisol levels and increased emotional calm, which are especially valuable in high-stress environments like those faced by educators during wartime. After conducting psychological support (participating in personal development training, coaching, group sessions, art therapy, music therapy, relaxation practices, time management, problem-solving therapy, self-analysis and reflection techniques), the results with a six-month follow-up showed changes in indicators. Specifically, the GAD-7 score decreased to 7,09 (indicating mild anxiety or absence), the PSS demonstrated low-stress levels, and the Work and Social Adaptation Scale (WSAS) showed low professional disruption. However, in the control group, some indicators increased, particularly the GAD-7 and PSS scores. Thus, it has been confirmed that the effectiveness of psychological support constitutes an essential element for maintaining an adequate educational environment, acquiring new knowledge, and facilitating the educational process.[45] The application of psychological support should be considered sufficient, as confirmed by the evaluations of the experimental group members. These data generally align with empirical findings from other studies.[4,46,47] Meanwhile, scholars positively characterise the consideration of individual characteristics of educators, social workers, and administrators to refine and enhance the effectiveness of pedagogical support.[48,49] The proposed direction should be recognised as promising for further study.

Finally, the research confirms the last hypothesis, which states that psychological support increases motivation and confidence in professional development. The survey results conducted with the experimental group indicated that psychological support directly influences the growth of motivation for professional development, as noted by 63 % of respondents. This supports the conclusions of researchers who emphasise the importance of this direction for ensuring the development of modern education and for creating an appropriate environment for the learning process.[50,51,52] At the same time, respondents noted a positive dynamic regarding the growth of the motivational component, as indicated by 68 % of the experimental group members. Motivation, as an integral element of the importance of psychological support, has also been repeatedly emphasised by

other researchers, which makes this aspect highly relevant for implementation in educational institutions. [52,53] Professional development depends mainly on the motivational component, so addressing these elements requires additional attention. Thus, the results of the study confirm the proposed hypotheses. It has been established that psychological support is an effective tool for professional development, and respondents generally highly evaluate the provision of psychological support to ensure their mental safety. It has also been proven that psychological support contributes to the growth of motivation and confidence in professional development, which defines the novelty and value of this work.

However, the methodology proposed in the study has limitations, which should be considered when interpreting the results further. Specifically, the survey method presents specific practical difficulties in its use. This refers to the subjectivity in evaluating phenomena, which occurs through the lens of individual experience. Given that the latter category may vary, the survey results may have minor correlations, although the primary vector will remain unchanged. Using standardised scales for measuring stress resistance and burnout also depends on subjective assessments, as respondents may answer biasedly to present themselves more favourably in the eyes of researchers. One limitation of this study is the potential influence of confounding variables that were not systematically controlled, such as the expertise and communication style of individual facilitators, the size and dynamics of participant groups, and the frequency or duration of psychological support sessions. Variability in facilitator training and experience may have affected participants' engagement and perception of intervention effectiveness.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the relevance of the impact of psychological support on professional development in educational institutions in Ukraine has been confirmed. It has been emphasised that psychological support is an effective tool for professional development. Participants in the educational process have highly evaluated the provision of psychological support to ensure mental safety. Psychological support also contributes to the growth of motivation and confidence in professional development. Specifically, in professional development, psychological techniques are predominantly aimed at enhancing stress resistance, developing emotional competence, managing motivation, and forming communication skills and self-reflection. This aligns with contemporary paradigms of changes in the educational sphere, which are driven by the need for reforms that directly point to the potential for ensuring effective psychological support technologies.

Under these circumstances, the positive role of relaxation activities has been highlighted, contributing to the formation of psychological resilience, coaching and mentoring, which are aimed at determining one's professional goals and methods of achieving them. After the provision of psychological support, the analysis with a six-month follow-up demonstrated a decrease in GAD-7 scores to a state of mild anxiety and low-stress levels. Psychological support increased motivation for professional development, as noted in the survey. Overall, the respondents mostly stated the effectiveness of psychological support in maintaining an adequate educational environment, acquiring new knowledge, and facilitating the educational process. On the other hand, some of them did not observe any positive effects of such practices. Therefore, considering the current transformations in the Ukrainian education system and the challenges the war poses, ensuring adequate psychological support is an important direction that directly influences the professional growth of all participants in the educational process.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION
Conceptualization: Lidia Spivak, Iryna Sereda, Nataliia Lukianchuk, Marharyta Panchenko, Victoria Zlahodukh.
Research: Lidia Spivak, Iryna Sereda, Nataliia Lukianchuk, Marharyta Panchenko, Victoria Zlahodukh.
Methodology: Lidia Spivak, Iryna Sereda, Nataliia Lukianchuk, Marharyta Panchenko, Victoria Zlahodukh.
Resources: Lidia Spivak, Iryna Sereda, Nataliia Lukianchuk, Marharyta Panchenko, Victoria Zlahodukh.
Software: Lidia Spivak, Iryna Sereda, Nataliia Lukianchuk, Marharyta Panchenko, Victoria Zlahodukh.
Validation: Lidia Spivak, Iryna Sereda, Nataliia Lukianchuk, Marharyta Panchenko, Victoria Zlahodukh.
Drafting - original draft: Lidia Spivak, Iryna Sereda, Nataliia Lukianchuk, Marharyta Panchenko, Victoria Zlahodukh.
Writing - proofreading and editing: Lidia Spivak, Iryna Sereda, Nataliia Lukianchuk, Marharyta Panchenko, Victoria Zlahodukh.