CREATING A COMFORTABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AND EDUCATION SEEKERS

CRIANDO UM AMBIENTE DE APRENDIZAGEM CONFORTÁVEL: O PAPEL DOS PROFESSORES E BUSCADORES DE EDUCAÇÃO

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Resumo. As principais tarefas do sistema educacional são garantir o cumprimento dos direitos humanos e liberdades dos alunos. Eles incluem o direito à educação, processo educacional seguro para a vida e a saúde e preservação e melhoria da saúde da geração mais jovem. Alunos e professores exigem um ambiente educacional onde se sintam fisicamente, psicologicamente, informacionalmente e socialmente seguros, confortáveis e bem-estar. Os participantes do processo educacional estão interessados em organizar um processo educacional o mais confortável possível, que possa fornecer condições adequadas e seguras para o aprendizado, a educação e o desenvolvimento das crianças. Todas as partes interessadas na educação devem contribuir ativamente para a educação dos alunos e desenvolver suas habilidades para criar um estilo de vida saudável e seguro para atingir esses objetivos. O artigo visa destacar as principais perspectivas apresentadas em pesquisas modernas por estudiosos de todo o mundo sobre as especificidades do papel do professor e do aluno na criação de um ambiente de aprendizagem confortável. O trabalho pretende revelar as características da influência dos alunos sobre a conveniência e eficiência do processo educacional. Durante a pesquisa, os autores aplicaram os seguintes métodos de processamento de dados: análise, síntese da informação, abstração, analogia e formalização dos resultados teóricos e práticos sobre o tema em questão. O estudo é baseado nos trabalhos de estudiosos de todo o mundo sobre a organização do ambiente de aprendizagem em vários níveis do processo educacional. Os resultados da pesquisa identificaram os aspectos teóricos fundamentais da criação de um ambiente de aprendizagem confortável do ponto de vista das condições psicológicas e sociais na organização do processo educacional. Durante o processo de pesquisa, os autores analisaram as especificidades das contribuições de professores e alunos para a criação de um ambiente seekers aprendizagem seguro.

Palavras-chave: Aprendizagem confortável, psicanálise, pedagogia psicanalítica, educação, condições pedagógicas, ambiente de aprendizagem

Abstract. The educational system's primary tasks are to ensure compliance with students' human rights and freedoms. They include the right to education, life and health-safe educational process, and preservation and enhancement of the younger generation's health. Students and teachers demand an educational environment where they feel physically, psychologically, informationally, and socially safe, comfortable, and well-being. Participants in the educational process are interested in organizing a maximally comfortable educational process that can provide proper and safe conditions for children's learning, upbringing, and development. All education stakeholders should actively contribute to students' education and develop their skills to create a healthy and safe lifestyle to achieve these goals. The article aims at highlighting the key perspectives presented in modern research by scholars worldwide on the specifics of the teacher's and student's role in creating a comfortable learning environment. The work intends to reveal the features of the learners' influence on the convenience and efficiency of the educational process.
Methodology. During the research, the authors applied the following data processing methods: analysis, information synthesis, abstraction, analogy, and formalization of the theoretical and practical results on the given topic. The study is based on the works of scholars worldwide on the organization of the learning environment at various levels of the educational process. The research findings have identified the fundamental theoretical aspects of creating a comfortable learning environment from the psychological and social conditions perspective in organizing the educational process. During the research process, the authors analyzed the specifics of teachers' and students' contributions to creating a safe learning environment.

Keywords: Comfortable learning, psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic pedagogy, education, pedagogical conditions, learning environment

INTRODUCTION

The educational environment influences the personal development of students and their learning outcomes. Scientists and education providers emphasize that the education system should become a place belonging to students. It should be comfortable for every pupil or student, whatever their physical or psychological characteristics. For this reason, today, there is a great emphasis worldwide on creating a comfortable educational environment. Its effective functioning relies on ensuring various pedagogical, psychological, and sociological conditions (National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, 2022) (Farhah, Saleh & Safitri, 2021).

The unstable economic and political situation in the world caused by the pandemic, social changes, Russia`s military actions in Ukraine and their consequences for many countries of the world, entails increased instability of economic, social-political, psychological and pedagogical nature in the educational sphere. This implies a certain range of threats related to the restriction of freedoms and the right to education. Given the above, ensuring psychological comfort and security of the information and educational environment of a modern educational institution is an urgent practical objective of the world educational system. A significant component of improving the quality of the educational process, in addition to one that can be used in planning the directions and educational process as well as the selection of teaching aids, is the study of ways and directions for making the learning environment more comfortable for both education seekers and teachers.

The choice of the research direction is dictated by the insufficient coverage of this issue in scientific works in recent years. Moreover, it should also take into account the increasing relevance of this topic due to the duration of hostilities in Ukraine and, accordingly, their negative impact on the psychological state of students and teachers, which requires the search for new tools and improvement of existing means of optimizing the mental state of participants in the educational process.

The theoretical part of this study substantiates the concept, components, and relevance of comfortable interaction between education participants. The paper focuses on the need to promote humanism, democracy, and respect for the rights and freedoms of each individual. The study also reveals the key theoretical aspects of the students' and teachers' participation in shaping a comfortable learning environment.

The practical part of the study includes an analysis of the viewpoints of various scholars on the concept and structure of the comfort of the learning environment. It also includes a practical assessment of the involvement of students and other educational process subjects in improving and revising educational programs as an essential aspect of the impact on learning efficiency and convenience.
The authors made conclusions on the issues raised based on the study results. In particular, the study found that even though, the role of students in shaping the educational process is not decisive, the importance of the influence of both teachers and students on improving the comfort of learning is extremely high. It requires studying and applying new communication and organizational tools to improve its effectiveness.

This study aims to identify the key trends in the works of scholars in the field of educational process design regarding various areas of improving the comfort of learning. A practical study is aimed at determining, by evaluating the research of various world scientists, the optimal ways to improve the comfort of the educational environment concerning the current challenges educators face and providing suggestions for applying ways to increase learning comfort.

LITERATURE REVIEW

First of all, in the context of the research topic, it should be noted that the comfort of learning involves considering the emotions, feelings, and dominant experiences in the interaction between adults and children in the educational environment of an institution. The poorly developed system of psychological assistance in educational institutions can lead to ineffective psychological actions toward children and emotional burnout of teachers, resulting in professional degradation. In both cases, there is a severe threat to both the health of individuals and the effectiveness of the educational system as a whole (Hamdan & Amorri, 2022), (Bovermann, Weidlich & Bastiaens, 2018), (Senoner, Netland & Feuerriegel, 2022).

In view of the considerable urgency of the problem, as noted above, the scientists consider the educational environment as a factor in the development of a child's personality. They state that the place of education encompasses natural, physical, and social objects and subjects that influence students' learning and contribute to forming their creative, professional, and personal abilities. It also fosters interpersonal interactions and person-centered communication in the learning process. The education environment

creates the conditions for comfortable interaction among participants within and beyond educational institutions (Valtonen et al., 2021), (Xiao, Tian & Xu, 2023).

In the face of rapid technological change and new social qualities, modern education should be based on innovative learning technologies. A significant level of mobility, universality, and fundamentality should mark it. New changes in the educational system require adaptation to new social conditions and mastering new types of communication. At the same time, it is necessary to create an atmosphere of well-being in the new digital environment within a very short time (Stoianet et al., 2023).

At the same time, significant contemporary reforms and educational modernization projects have revealed various educational problems. The change in development priorities has fundamentally altered the relationship between schools, families, and educational authorities. At the same time, the usual forms of interaction that seemed quite stable and organic are changing. Instead, there are new styles of relationships that involve active participation in learning by teachers, students, and other educational actors (Nguyen, 2022), (Falcon, Admiraal & Leon, 2023).

The modern approaches to organizing the educational process are based on humanism, democracy, and respect for the rights and freedoms of every individual. They do not depend on their physical or psychological characteristics. While studying the issue of a safe educational environment, modern researchers interpret this concept as a place with safe learning and working conditions and welcoming interpersonal interaction. The latter contributes to the emotional well-being of students, teachers, and parents while ensuring the absence of violence. It also has sufficient resources for its prevention and norms and rules for the physical, psychological, informational, and social safety of each participant in the educational process. Creating such an environment requires a systematic and continuous response to new conditions and the search for ways to implement humanitarian principles. Such principles include the supremacy of human life as the main value, as well as consideration of the principles of regional specificity, the possibility of assessing the danger (risks), and maximum efficiency in managing the system of activities and educational environment (Parry & Metzger, 2023), (Cipriano et al., 2019).

The opportunity to participate in creating a comfortable environment has a positive effect on students' inner motivation. It is determined by a sense of achievement and recognition of their own abilities, as well as the joy of learning. The ability to acquire knowledge at one's own pace, at a convenient time, and in a comfortable place ensures the successful personal development of students. Moreover, it encourages them to further self-development and a conscious, responsible, and independent life (Alghasab, Hardman & Handley, 2019), (Aryani, Umar & Kasim, 2020).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A practical study of current trends in exploring the role of teachers and students in creating a comfortable learning environment was conducted using comparison, elementary theoretical, and structural analysis. In addition, the data induction and deduction methods were used to evaluate statistical and analytical materials. The research is based on the survey results on the issue in democratic countries of Europe and the rest of the world. Also, the authors evaluated scholars' research on the features of participants' contributions to the educational process to improve the efficiency and comfort of the learning environment.

When choosing the literature for the research, specific attention was paid to the methodological guidelines for working psychologists in accordance with the curricula in general education institutions in order to assess the elements of improving psychological comfort in the educational process. In addition, conference reports on the research topic and articles by scholars who conducted surveys or considered practical aspects of their professional activities in terms of students' and teaching staff's contributions to improving the comfort of the educational environment were studied.

RESULTS

First of all, it is worth noting that a category of psychological comfort and safety of the educational process is considered in modern research by scientists from several aspects (Figure 1).

By emphasizing the integral nature of the psychological comfort and learning safety phenomenon, it is clear that it should be studied in an accurate information and educational situation as follows:

- as a process (created every time participants of the educational environment meet);
- as a state policy direction (ensuring the basic safety of the subjects of the information and educational environment);

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- as a personality trait (characterizing protection from destructive influences and internal resources of resistance).

In defining the essence of psychological comfort and security of the information and educational environment, the authors rely on a conceptual approach to understanding national security. They consider psychological security concerning the professional activities of people in the field of education and the characteristics of psycho-traumatic effects possible in pedagogical communication.

An essential characteristic of the impact of education seekers on the course and effectiveness of the educational process, as well as its comfort, is the existence of actively operating educational councils, systems for evaluating the work of teachers, and the right to choose conditions and directions of education.

While studying the practical aspects of the world's experience in forming a comfortable educational environment, it is primarily worth noting the current key areas of educational technologies application as a response to the challenges faced by the education system (Figure 2).
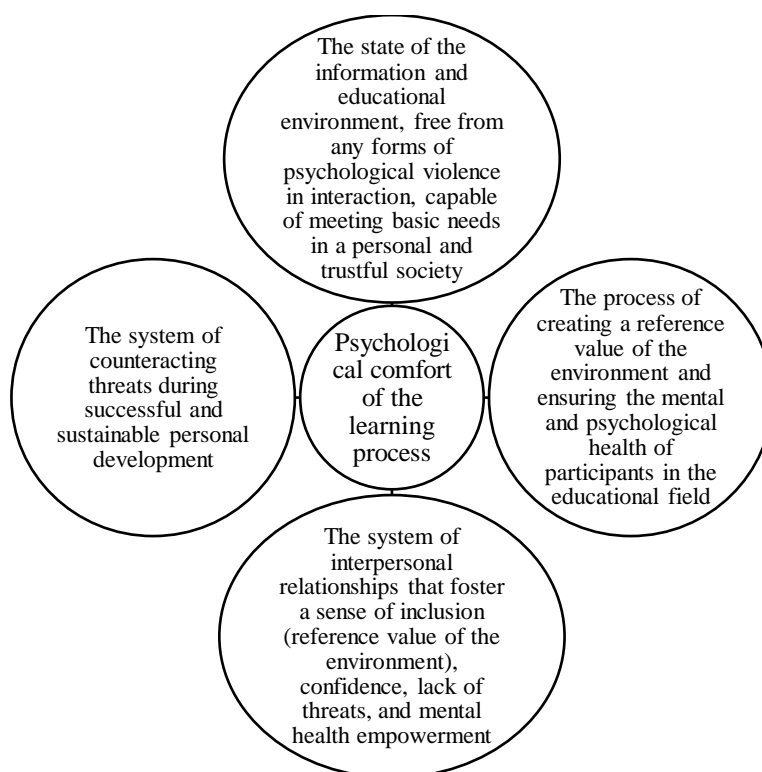
Figure 1. Perspectives on the category of psychological comfort of learning and safety in psychological research of the world's scientists. Source: compiled by the authors based on data from (Lokshyna et al., 2021) and (National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, 2022).

As seen in Figure 2, modern globalization is shaping a new worldview where technological progress is increasing challenges, making it necessary to introduce a new understanding of education. In particular, UNESCO defines population aging: in Europe, the share of the population over 60 years old is expected to increase from 22% in 2011 to 34% by 2050; in Africa, from 6% to 10%; in Asia and Latin America, from 10% to 20%.
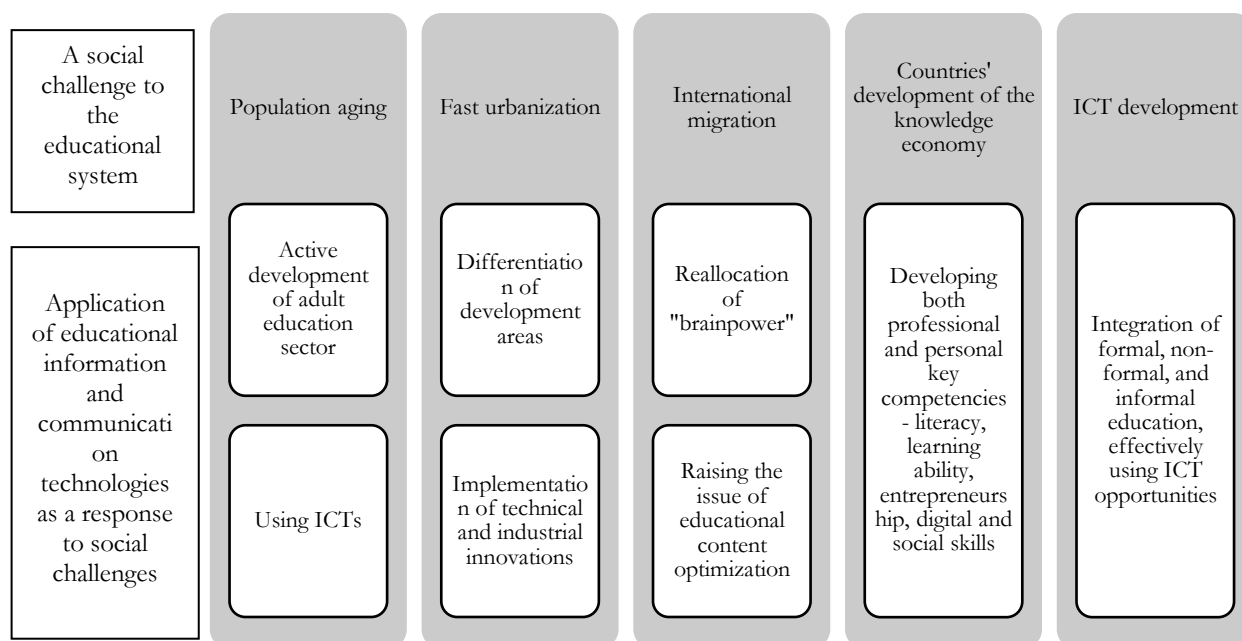
Figure 2. Modern key areas of educational technologies application to form a comfortable educational environment. Source: compiled by the authors based on data from (Kalashnikova et al., 2019).

This trend formulates the tasks of active development in adult education and the use of ICT. In the face of rapid urbanization, almost 4/5 of Europe and the United States live in cities. This necessitates changing approaches to organizing education towards differentiation and introducing innovations. The rapid development of ICT facilitates the integration of formal, non-formal, and informal education. It raises the issue of effective use of ICT opportunities in education and minimizing potential negative impacts (Lokshyna et al., 2021), (Kalashnikova et al., 2019).

An assessment of scientists' studies on this topic revealed the following primary obstacles to comfortable learning:

- physical and psychological violence and bullying,
- irresponsible use of the Internet,
- lack of readiness of educators to prevent and counteract violence and bullying (harassment) of educational process participants (Kalashnikova et al., 2019).

The challenges of students' participation in the management of higher education institutions have been at the center of scholars' attention for many years. For many years, scientists have been focusing on the following issues:

- equal opportunities for students to participate in management processes;
- solving real problems and, accordingly, developing critical thinking skills;
- students' acquisition of the necessary knowledge to make conscious decisions;
- students' and pupils' responsibility for their actions;
- the motivation of education seekers;
- the mechanisms and tools for students' feedback, etc.

In the context of this topic, the document "Making Student Engagement a Reality: Turning Theory into Practice" is of interest. This report has been developed by Guild HE in collaboration with TSEP (The Student Engagement Partnership), an organization established to support, develop and encourage active student participation in UK higher education. The report presents 12 case studies conducted primarily by staff and students from the Guild HE member universities. They examine current university practices of student engagement in learning management. In particular, the report emphasizes that the university has a clear commitment to strive for excellence in teaching and learning, enhancing the student experience. It is vital that all students have an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their academic experience during the educational process to ensure that the university maintains a high-quality education.

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For this purpose, the university works with its students through various mechanisms to respond to the students' viewpoints (individually, collectively, or through their representatives). The university staff cooperates with the students union aiming at the following:

- to give students a central role in the governance processes;
- to ensure their crucial place in the processes of improving education quality;
- to allow students to participate in the university's operations actively;
- to encourage cooperation between students and educators (Moscardini, Strachan & Vlasova, 2022).

Given the actual participation of students in ensuring comfortable learning conditions, the authors present the results of a study conducted by the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Ukraine. The study was conducted from October to November 2021 on the practice of questioning applicants in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ukraine.

As seen from Figure 3, within the survey conducted by the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Ukraine, the responses to the question, "By what principle are students and employers involved in discussing survey results, improving academic curricula, and revising educational programs?" indicated that 17% of issues are resolved through discussions with students and through student self-government bodies.

A specific question within the aforementioned survey was "Rate on a 5-point scale the influence of student self-government bodies on the content of the surveys conducted in HEIs, where 1 - no influence, 5 - maximum influence" (the maximum influence means that student self-government bodies independently shape the content of questionnaires).
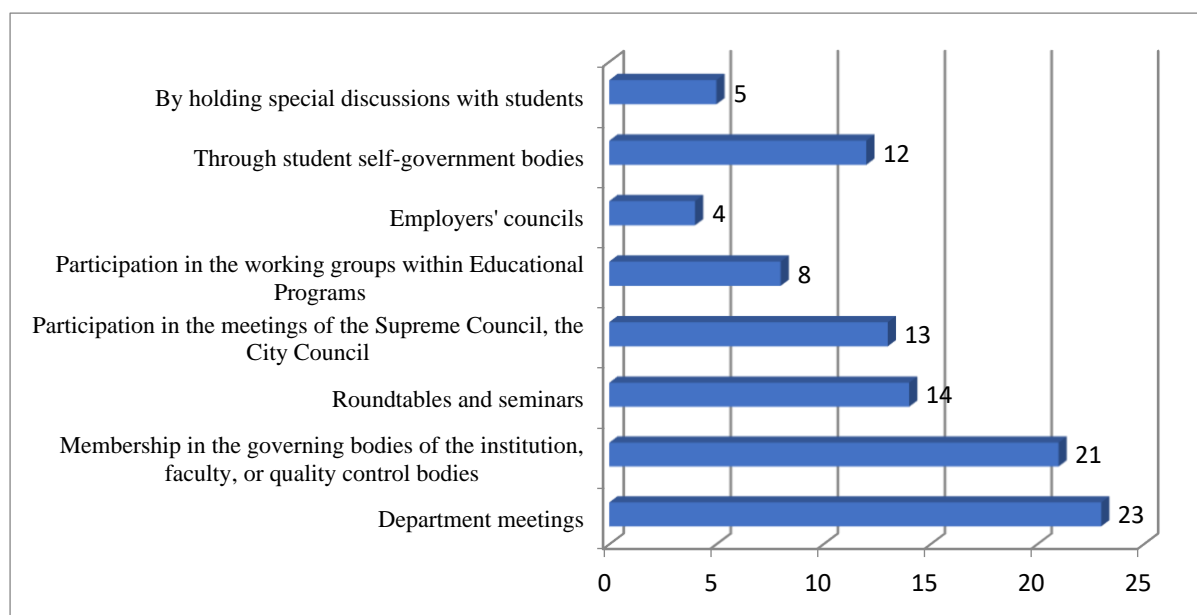
Figure 3. Engagement of students and other stakeholders in the educational process in discussing survey results, improving academic curricula, and revising educational programs, %. Source: compiled by the authors based on data from (the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, 2022) and (Kalashnikova et al., 2019).

The majority of respondents (69%) gave high ratings of "4" and "5," while only 4 participants in the survey (9.5%) gave low ratings. Overall, the average rating is 3.95 (Figure 4).
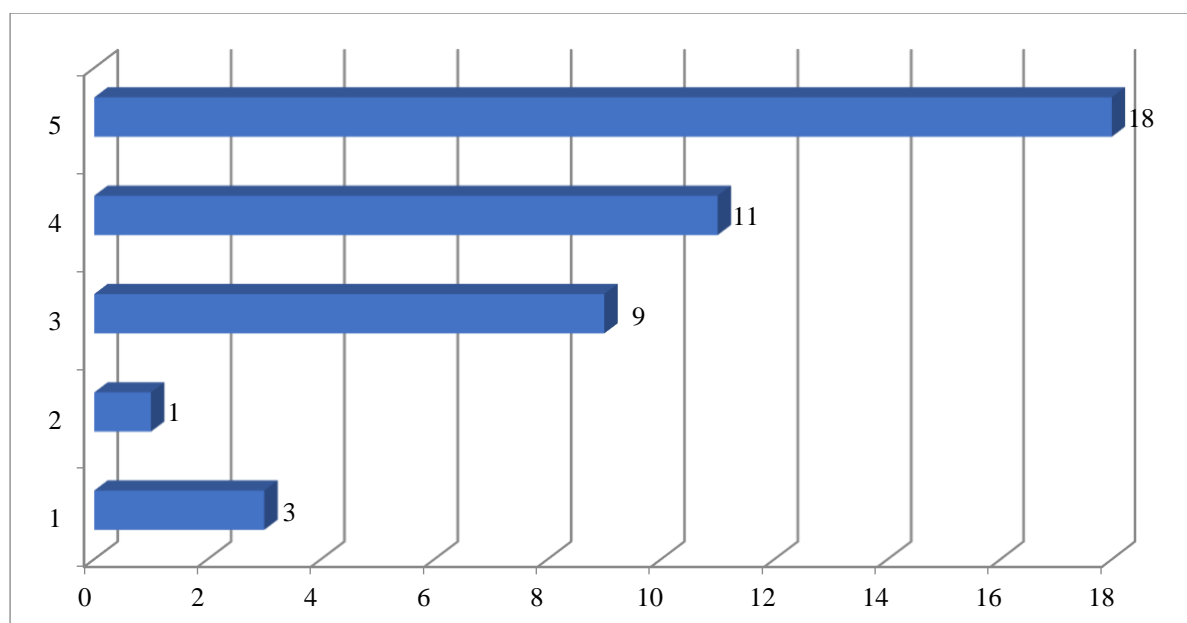
Figure 4. Influence of student self-government bodies on the content of surveys conducted in HEIs. Source: compiled by the authors based on data from (National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, 2022).

By studying the use of student surveys in educational institutions, an assessment of the experience of surveying students showed the following:

- 51.2% of respondents focus on changing the content of the educational program, curriculum, work programs, etc.;
- 25.2% make attempts to change the educational process procedures;
- 10.2% indicated that the survey results are primarily used to eliminate existing challenges (National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, 2022).

DISCUSSION

The educational institution's environment is not isolated from external and internal influencing factors in rapidly changing conditions. They can have both positive consequences and pose threats, dangers, and risks that may contribute to destructive changes in the educational system. The educational environment of the institution must be protected. It should have safe learning and working conditions and pleasant interpersonal interaction that promotes the emotional well-being of students, teachers, and parents, with no signs of violence and sufficient resources to prevent such changes. The rights and norms of physical, psychological, informational, and social security of each participant in the educational process must be respected (Dodd et al., 2021), (Farhah, Saleh & Safitri, 2021), (Hazen et al., 2018).

Each educational institution should form its own informational and educational environment, a culture of educational organization, teachers' and students' life and professional skills, and a system of academic achievement assessment. Each institution should apply the principles of ensuring the high-quality education of future specialists and a system of professional development of academic staff, i.e., to form a single high-quality educational system. Under these conditions, the teachers become facilitators, tutors, and carriers of their own competencies acquired in formal and non-formal education. It allows them to work in education and develop other competencies while forming important behavioral patterns for life. Basically, the teacher becomes a professional intermediary between the programs, digital resources, and students at all levels of education. In particular, this is based on using an open information and educational environment and the premise of creating psychological comfort and positive motivation for students (Ibaraki, 2022), (Smith & Firman, 2020), (Germain-Alamartine et al., 2021).

Along with this a considerable effort should be made to create and maintain a healthy and welcoming atmosphere in the classroom. Both trust and respect help to provide a supportive learning and mentoring environment for all students. This starts with getting to know each other on the first days of school and reflects in the schedule, in jointly created learning rules, in group activities for development, and in the children's actions. A feeling of community creates in students a desire to bring others to responsibility for

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their behavior during the learning process, at the same time fostering mutual respect and kindness (Granić & Marangunić, 2019), (Howe et al., 2021), (Hou et al., 2022).

These days, educators and students are faced with the tasks as creating psychologically comfortable interpersonal relationships in a digital society, creating conditions for self-development, facilitating the learning process, fruitful interaction with other people and adapting to the conditions of interaction with social and technical systems.

Therefore, it is crucial to ensure the quality training of future teachers in an open information-educational environment that considers the psychological characteristics of students and learners and their expectations, including the specificity of the object-subject thinking of the digital generation (Poots & Cassidy, 2020), (Cheung, Phusavat & Yang, 2021), (Cui, French & O'Leary, 2021).

In the context of the research topic, some scholars emphasize that the education, upbringing, and development of a child should take place in an atmosphere of safety, mutual respect, and psychological comfort. Trustful relationships and personal contacts during the joint learning organization with adults positively impact the content and form of students' activities. Since their active behavior expresses the essential personality traits necessary for self-education (independence, responsibility, justice, creativity, prudence, humanism, etc.), the discovery and implementation of such traits are gradually introduced into their lives (Beerkens, 2018); (Cano, Murray & Kourouklis, 2022); (Yanqing, Guangming & Edwards, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of scientific literature on the research topic has revealed that organizing the educational environment of a modern educational institution involves creating a comfortable atmosphere, ensuring the right to education, providing conditions for the personal development of each participant in the educational process. The reform of the education system requires updating approaches and implementing communicative innovations in creating the educational environment of an institution. It involves the multi-vector participation of learning subjects in the organization of studying.

As a result of the research conducted, it has been established the most effective strategy for teachers and lecturers to enhance the psychological comfort of the educational process is to create their own professional psychological training. Such training should focus on enhancing the psychological comfort of the educational process, specifically by utilizing the most recent educational and information and communication technologies. At the same time, education seekers can increase the degree of psychological comfort of the learning environment by taking the initiative on adjusting the content of the educational program, participating in the development of curricula in accordance with their own needs and future professional requirements, and being active in eliminating problematic phenomena in learning.

Given the above, the psychological aspects of learning, namely, comfort and high quality of the educational process, require special consideration by educational institutions where students have previously experienced or are currently experiencing the effects of the pandemic or economic and social factors caused by the war in Ukraine. Students who have experienced the impact of the educational system's shortcomings that arose during the above periods or are experiencing the consequences of such influence now require special attention and intensive work by the educational institution in the context of leveling such influence or minimizing it with a focus on the psycho-psychological development of the education seeker in the future.

It is worth noting a need for further investigations of the mechanisms of creating an educational environment and the theoretical and methodological basis of teachers' education for forming a comfortable and fruitful educational environment. In particular, it is necessary to develop the methods and instruments of its formation by various stakeholders in the educational process.

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