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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN THE CONTEXT OF A SAFE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract. This article examines the issue of ensuring the psychological well-being of learners and educators in the context of creating a safe digital educational environment. The relevance of this research stems from the rapid digitalisation of education, the widespread adoption of distance and blended learning, and the need to establish safe conditions for educational interaction in the digital space. The regulatory and international foundations for creating a safe digital environment are examined, and the role of digital competence, information literacy and digital ethics in ensuring the psychological safety of participants in the educational process is identified. The main digital risks, in particular cyberbullying, information overload and digital addiction, are analysed. It has been established that the creation of a psychologically safe digital environment contributes to the maintenance of emotional well-being, the development of digital culture and the enhancement of the effectiveness of the educational process.

Key words: psychological well-being, safe digital environment, digitalisation of education, digital competence, learners, teacher.

Introduction. The current stage of development in the education system is characterised by the active digital transformation of the educational environment, the integration of information and communication technologies into the learning process, and the expansion of opportunities for distance and blended learning. In such circumstances, the issue of ensuring the psychological well-being of learners and educators in the context of creating a safe digital environment takes on particular significance. The digitalisation of education creates new opportunities for organising the educational process, accessing information resources, developing digital competence and ensuring the continuity of learning; however, it simultaneously gives rise to a number of new challenges related to psychological safety, emotional well-being and the protection of participants in the educational process from digital risks. An analysis of scientific research suggests that, in the context of the modern information society, the digital educational environment is becoming an integral part of teachers' professional practice and the educational activities of learners (Shulha, 2023). The use of online platforms, social networks, digital services, cloud technologies, video conferencing and interactive educational resources is significantly altering the nature of interpersonal interaction within the educational space. Alongside the positive aspects of digitalisation, such as access to education, learning mobility and the personalisation of the educational process, issues such as information overload, digital addiction, cyberbullying, psychological exhaustion, emotional instability and a

decline in the psychological well-being of those involved in the educational process are becoming increasingly pressing.

Under the Law of Ukraine 'On Education', every learner has the right to a safe educational environment, free from violence, discrimination, psychological pressure and any form of threat. In today's context, the concept of a safe educational environment has expanded significantly and encompasses not only the physical space of the educational institution but also the digital environment in which educational interaction takes place. The National Strategy for the Development of a Safe and Healthy Educational Environment and the Concept of Safety in Educational Institutions emphasise the need to foster a culture of safety, develop mechanisms to prevent bullying, cyber threats and psychological violence, and create an effective system to support the psychological well-being of those involved in the educational process. In the international educational sphere, the issue of ensuring a safe digital environment also occupies an important place. Documents from UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Health Organisation, and the international initiatives 'Safe to Learn Initiative' and 'Comprehensive School Safety Framework' define the safety of the educational environment as a comprehensive system of interaction between physical, psychological, social and digital factors aimed at protecting the rights, health and well-being of all participants in the educational process. Therefore, digital safety is viewed not only as the technical protection of information, but also as the creation of a psychologically comfortable environment for learning, professional activity and interpersonal interaction.

The issue of the psychological well-being of those involved in the educational process takes on particular relevance in the context of social instability, martial law and the crisis-driven transformations of contemporary Ukrainian society. Military operations, forced displacement of the population, constant information pressure, emotional exhaustion and anxiety have a significant impact on the psychological state of learners and educators. In such conditions, the digital educational environment often becomes not only a tool for organising learning, but also a space for psychological interaction, support and social communication. At the same time, the active use of digital technologies is accompanied by the emergence of new risks to an individual's psychological well-being. An analysis of scientific research suggests that among the most common threats of the modern digital environment are cyberbullying, information overload, digital addiction, manipulative content, breaches of digital ethics, online aggression, emotional burnout and a decline in the level of interpersonal communication. Such phenomena can have a negative impact on students' emotional state, their level of academic motivation, psychological resilience and the effectiveness of educational activities.

An analysis of academic research and my own teaching experience leads to the conclusion that psychological well-being is regarded as an integrative characteristic of the individual, encompassing emotional well-being, psychological stability, the capacity for self-actualisation, a positive perception of oneself and one's surroundings, as well as a sense of security and social support. For educators, psychological well-being is directly linked to professional effectiveness, stress resilience, emotional state, and the ability to interact productively with learners. For students, psychological comfort is a key prerequisite for successful learning, the development of motivation, the formation of social skills, and adaptation to the digital educational environment (Shulha, 2023).

In contemporary scientific and pedagogical literature, a safe digital educational environment is defined as a systemic characteristic of the educational space that combines informational, psychological, social, technological and managerial conditions, within which the individual is protected from digital risks, psychological comfort is maintained, and conditions are created for the harmonious development of participants in the educational process. An important component of such an environment is the development of digital culture, information literacy, safe online behaviour skills and emotional intelligence.

It is worth noting that effectively promoting psychological well-being in a digital educational environment requires a comprehensive approach that involves the integration of pedagogical, psychological, IT and managerial mechanisms. Of particular importance is the development of teachers' digital competence, the introduction of psychological support technologies, the use of interactive educational platforms, the creation of systems for monitoring the psychological well-being of learners, and the fostering of a culture of safe digital communication. Furthermore, there is a growing need to develop new pedagogical strategies aimed at fostering psychological resilience among participants in the educational process, developing self-regulation skills, emotional literacy and the responsible use of digital technologies. In today's context, a safe digital environment must ensure not only the protection of information but also the creation of an atmosphere of trust, support, psychological comfort and constructive interaction among all stakeholders in education.

To summarise, the issue of ensuring the psychological well-being of learners and educators in the context of a safe digital environment is highly relevant and requires comprehensive interdisciplinary research. Its significance stems from the need to create an effective system of psychological support for participants in the educational process amidst the digital transformation of education, societal challenges and global changes in the modern information society.

The purpose of the study is to provide a theoretical justification of the nature of a safe digital educational environment and to analyse its impact on the psychological well-being of learners and educators, as well as to identify effective pedagogical and psychological conditions for ensuring the psychological safety of those involved in the educational process in the context of the digitalisation of education.

Main section. To achieve the stated objective, the following research tasks have been identified:

- To examine the regulatory, legal and international foundations for the creation of a safe digital educational environment.
- To substantiate the pedagogical and psychological conditions for ensuring the psychological well-being of participants in the educational process within a safe digital environment.
- To determine the role of digital competence, information literacy and digital ethics in the creation of a psychologically safe educational environment.

Materials and methods. The research involved the comprehensive application of competence-based, systemic and interdisciplinary scientific approaches, which ensured a holistic analysis of the research topic. Their integration made it possible to thoroughly examine psychological and pedagogical sources, in particular monographs, scientific articles, dissertations and contemporary scientific works devoted to the chosen topic. This approach facilitated a deeper understanding of the theoretical and methodological foundations of the research and the identification of the specific features of scientific concepts, approaches and perspectives regarding the problem under investigation.

Results and discussion. The creation of a safe digital educational environment is one of the key priorities for the development of the modern education system in the context of the global digitalisation of society. The relevance of researching this issue stems from a number of social, technological and educational factors. First and foremost, modern education systems require modernisation in line with the 'Education 4.0: Ukrainian Dawn' concept, which is based on the integration of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, automation, cloud services and intelligent educational platforms into the learning process. In such conditions, the creation of a secure digital space takes on particular significance, ensuring not only the effectiveness of educational activities but also the psychological comfort and protection of all participants in the educational process. An important factor in bringing this issue to the fore was the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a rapid transition by educational institutions to distance and blended learning. This process has demonstrated the significant potential of digital technologies to ensure the continuity of education; however, it has also revealed a number of problems related to cybersecurity, digital inequality, psychological overload, online violence and

the insufficient level of digital competence among participants in the educational process. That is why the issue of regulatory and legal safeguards for a secure digital environment has become one of the key priorities of state education policy.

In Ukraine, the fundamental principles for creating a safe digital educational environment are set out in the Law of Ukraine 'On Education', under which every learner has the right to safe and non-harmful learning conditions, and to protection from all forms of violence, discrimination and humiliation. In today's context, these provisions also apply to the digital educational space, where a significant part of educational interaction takes place. Other important regulatory documents include the Concept of Safety in Educational Institutions and the National Strategy for the Development of a Safe and Healthy Educational Environment in the New Ukrainian School. These documents emphasise the need to foster a culture of digital safety, prevent cyberbullying, develop digital literacy, provide psychological support to those involved in the educational process, and establish an effective system for responding to digital threats.

Of particular importance for the development of the digital educational environment are the state initiatives 'Digital Education' and 'Digital Transformation of Education and Science', which identify digital competence as one of the key competencies of the modern teacher and learner. These strategies provide for the development of digital infrastructure in educational institutions, the introduction of online platforms, interactive educational resources, e-learning systems and digital tools to support the educational process.

At the international level, the issue of creating a safe digital environment is addressed in a number of documents and programmes produced by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Health Organisation and the Council of Europe. In particular, the international initiatives 'Safe to Learn Initiative' and 'Comprehensive School Safety Framework' view the safety of the educational environment as a comprehensive system of interaction between physical, psychological, social and digital components. UNESCO documents emphasise that a safe digital educational environment must ensure the protection of personal data, the digital rights of those involved in the educational process, safe online communication, and the psychological well-being of learners and educators. Significant attention is paid to the development of digital literacy, media literacy and critical thinking skills as essential conditions for countering disinformation, manipulation and digital risks. In the European educational landscape, the DigComp and DigCompEdu digital competence frameworks serve as key guidelines, defining the core digital skills for educators and learners, including the safe use of digital technologies, ethical behaviour in the online environment, and the protection of psychological well-being.

We define digital competence as an individual's ability to use digital technologies effectively, safely and responsibly in educational, professional and social contexts. A high level of digital competence enables learners and educators to evaluate information critically, adhere to cybersecurity rules, protect personal data and avoid digital threats. Furthermore, well-developed digital skills help to reduce anxiety and psychological stress when working with digital resources, which has a positive impact on the psychological well-being of those involved in the educational process. Information literacy plays a key role in creating a safe digital environment; it involves a responsible attitude towards information, adherence to the principles of academic integrity, critical thinking, and the ability to counter disinformation and manipulative content. A well-developed information culture helps to foster skills for the conscious consumption of information and reduces the negative impact of information overload on an individual's emotional state. Digital ethics is no less an important component of a psychologically safe educational environment. It encompasses norms of behaviour in the online environment, principles of tolerant communication, mutual respect and the responsible use of digital technologies. Adherence to digital ethics helps prevent cyberbullying, online aggression, discrimination and other forms of psychological violence on the internet.

The active introduction of digital technologies, distance and blended learning, and the use of online platforms and social media are significantly changing the nature of educational interaction and affecting the emotional well-being of those involved in the educational process. This is precisely why it is crucial to create pedagogical and psychological conditions that ensure psychological safety, emotional comfort and support for personal development in the digital educational environment:

1. One of the key conditions for ensuring psychological well-being is the creation of a psychologically safe digital educational space. According to C. Ryff's concept of psychological well-being, an individual's psychological well-being encompasses self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, the capacity for self-actualisation, and a sense of control over one's environment (Ryff, Singer, 2013). In the context of the digital educational environment, this means creating conditions in which learners and educators feel emotionally secure, supported and able to communicate safely.

2. An important pedagogical condition is the development of digital competence among participants in the educational process. Researchers emphasise that well-developed digital skills not only contribute to improved academic performance but also have a positive impact on psychological well-being. In particular, a study by J. Gonzalez-Vasquez (Gonzalez-Vasquez, 2025) notes that the development of digital competences enhances students' ability to adapt to the digital environment, reduces anxiety and contributes to the development of their psychological resilience. It is emphasised that the development of media literacy, critical thinking skills and safe online behaviour is of paramount importance.

3. Another important factor is ensuring pedagogical support and positive communication between those involved in the educational process. Research by K. Hellfeldt, L. López-Romero and H. Andershed (2019) demonstrates that social support from teachers and families significantly reduces the negative impact of cyberbullying on the psychological well-being of learners and contributes to an increase in subjective well-being. This highlights the need to foster an atmosphere of trust, collaborative interaction and psychological support within the digital educational environment.

4. An important psychological consideration is the prevention of cyberbullying, digital aggression and information overload. Recent research confirms that cyberbullying negatively affects the psycho-emotional state of students, causing anxiety, depressive symptoms, reduced self-esteem and academic motivation (Kowalski et al., 2013). In this regard, educational institutions must implement systems for monitoring digital risks, psychological support programmes and mechanisms for responding to instances of online violence.

5. Equally important is adherence to the principles of digital ethics and the culture of online communication. Fostering a culture of safe behaviour in the digital environment involves developing skills in the responsible use of digital technologies, tolerant interaction and emotional self-control. It is digital ethics that ensures the creation of a favourable psychological climate in the online space and minimises the risks of conflict situations.

6. The use of adaptive digital platforms and interactive educational technologies also plays a significant role in ensuring psychological well-being. The digital educational environment can have a positive impact on students' psychological well-being provided a comfortable information space is created and personalised educational technologies are used, whilst interactive digital tools allow for individualised learning, reduce stress levels and ensure a smoother adaptation to the educational process.

7. An important prerequisite is the development of emotional intelligence, psychological resilience and self-regulation skills among those involved in the educational process. In an environment of information overload and constant digital interaction, the ability to control one's emotional state, manage stress and maintain emotional balance is a key factor in psychological well-being.

To summarise the above, ensuring the psychological well-being of learners and educators in a safe digital environment requires a comprehensive combination of pedagogical, psychological and organisational conditions. The effective functioning of the digital educational space is possible

provided that digital competence is developed, an atmosphere of psychological support is created, digital risks are prevented, digital ethics are observed, and modern technologies for the psychological support of participants in the educational process are implemented.

Conclusion. This study provides a theoretical justification of the nature of a safe digital educational environment and analyses its impact on the psychological well-being of learners and educators in the context of the digitalisation of modern education. It has been established that a safe digital environment is an important component of the modern educational space and encompasses a system of psychological, informational, pedagogical, organisational and technological conditions aimed at ensuring comfortable and safe interaction between participants in the educational process. The study analysed the regulatory and international foundations for the creation of a safe digital educational environment. It has been determined that Ukraine's current state education policy, as well as international documents from UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, emphasise the need to create a safe digital space, develop digital literacy, prevent cyberbullying and provide psychological support to participants in the educational process. It has been demonstrated that the digitalisation of education requires not only technical support for the educational process, but also the development of a system of psychological safety within the digital environment. The pedagogical and psychological conditions for ensuring the psychological well-being of learners and educators have been substantiated. It has been established that key factors in creating a psychologically safe digital environment include fostering an atmosphere of support and trust, developing psychological resilience, mitigating digital risks, utilising interactive technologies, and implementing psychological support mechanisms in the context of distance and blended learning.

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