

PEDAGOGICAL SUPPORT AS A MECHANISM FOR DEVELOPING ADOLESCENTS' EMOTIONAL STABILITY IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Summary

The paper examines the formation of adolescents' emotional stability in the contemporary educational environment through the prism of pedagogical support. It emphasizes that emotional stability is a key determinant of effective socialization, psychological well-being, and adaptation of students to changing life circumstances, particularly in the context of social crises and the Russian-Ukrainian war. The study focuses on the role of teachers in creating a safe educational environment that fosters the development of adolescents' self-regulation skills, emotional awareness, and the ability to build constructive relationships with others. The main areas of pedagogical support are identified, including the implementation of art therapy methods, cognitive-behavioral techniques, body-oriented practices, and the engagement of adolescents in social and creative projects. It has been established that these approaches enable adolescents not only to process complex emotional states but also to maintain a sense of inner balance, self-confidence, empathy, and social responsibility. Particular attention is given to the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war as a psychotraumatic factor that demands increased flexibility, tolerance, empathy, and readiness for psychological support within the educational environment. Under such circumstances, pedagogical support becomes not only a means of education but also an essential mechanism for stabilizing adolescents' emotional state, promoting their personal growth, resilience, and positive self-esteem.

Key words: adolescents, self-regulation, emotions, cognitive-behavioral methods, art therapy, digital technologies.

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1. Introduction

The current socio-cultural situation in Ukraine, complicated by the Russian-Ukrainian war, social instability, and the growing level of anxiety among children and youth, exacerbates the formation of adolescents' emotional stability as a vital component of mental health. Since adolescence is a period of personality development, it involves the intensive formation of the emotional sphere, value system, self-esteem, and social connections. However, the impact of military events leads to emotional destabilization, frustration of personal basic needs, aggressive reactions to stimuli, and impaired social interaction. Therefore, in this context, pedagogical support becomes crucial as a mechanism for helping adolescents restore internal balance, unlock personal resources, and develop emotional self-regulation skills.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in examining pedagogical support as an integrated system for developing emotional stability that combines traditional psychological and pedagogical methods with modern digital tools. Furthermore, the present paper draws on the findings of other scholars. In particular, N. Matsibora made a significant contribution by analyzing

the forms and methods of pedagogical support for developing responsibility in younger students; S. Antoshchuk explored the use of digital technologies in creating a favorable environment for professional development; O. Tarnovetska investigated the formation of adolescents' emotional stability as a key factor in maintaining mental health under conditions of social instability; the work by V. Panok, V. Rybalko, and S. Shandruk contributed to understanding the methodology of psychological follow-up for participants in the educational process amidst the Russian-Ukrainian war; T. Osypova examined pedagogical support as a condition for preparing future teachers for mentoring.

The study aims to provide a theoretical substantiation of pedagogical support as a mechanism for developing adolescents' emotional stability within the educational environment, specifying its conceptual components, psychological and pedagogical conditions, and technological tools for its implementation.

Accordingly, the main objectives of the research are as follows: to define the concept of "pedagogical support" in the context of adolescents' emotional development; to identify the key factors influencing emotional stability under modern conditions; to analyze effective methods and technologies of pedagogical support.

To achieve these objectives, methods of theoretical analysis of scientific literature, comparative and analytical approaches, generalization of empirical data, and modeling of pedagogical conditions for the formation of adolescents' emotional stability were applied.

2. Research results

Pedagogical support is understood as a system of professionally organized actions aimed at creating conditions for a child's self-development and assisting in addressing personal, social, and educational challenges. According to T. Yu. Osypova (*Osypova, 2013: 3*), pedagogical support represents the activity of professional teachers and psychologists focused on identifying, preventing, and providing timely assistance to students in solving personal issues related to physical and mental health, professional and interpersonal communication, academic progress, and life or professional self-determination.

The principle of pedagogical support lies not only in providing assistance but also in creating conditions for the adolescent's development of abilities and know-how, as well as self-regulation, self-knowledge, and self-improvement skills. In this context, the teacher acts as a partner and mentor who facilitates the student's search for inner balance, foster self-confidence, and ensures a sense of emotional security within the educational environment (*Matsibora, 2022: 317*).

In such circumstances, pedagogical support focuses on interaction between the school and the family, where the key functions are informational, educational and developmental, formative, health-improving, controlling, and routine.

The main areas of pedagogical support include:

- psychological first aid – a mandatory competence for every teacher, educator, and school psychologist;
- training sessions for educators on identifying anxiety, destructive behavior, and loss of interest in life;
- various therapeutic practices for the safe processing of traumatic experiences;
- mutual support groups among children, particularly those who are internally displaced or have experienced occupation;

– the presence of a stable, responsive adult (teacher, mentor, father/mother) as a crucial factor in maintaining a child's the emotional balance.

In the process of forming adolescents' emotional stability within the educational environment, the teacher is a key role in mitigating the negative impact of external factors, particularly military events, on students' emotional well-being. The Russian-Ukrainian war is a powerful stressor that activates latent internal conflicts, increases anxiety, and provokes maladaptive behaviors and psychosomatic reactions. As a result, the teacher's task is not only to educate but also to create a safe and stable environment that enables students to restore emotional balance and regain a sense of control over their own life.

One of the most significant consequences of military hostilities is the frustration of adolescents' basic needs for communication, self-realization, and recognition. As A. Maslow emphasized, the satisfaction of higher-level needs becomes possible only after the fulfilment of more basic, lower-level ones. Therefore, pedagogical support should be directed toward fostering a sense of safety, stability, and predictability within the school environment. Teachers promote this by engaging in empathic communication, encouraging teamwork, and organizing collective creative or volunteer projects that help restore students' trust in the world and in themselves.

In addition, the emergence of emotional stress and aggressive reactions is predictable and natural for a child who has experienced the traumatic effects of war. However, not every adolescent is capable of recognizing or adequately processing these emotions. Instead, suppression and non-constructive manifestation of aggression often lead to a certain "freezing" of such feelings as love, tenderness, and sensitivity. As practice shows, this emotional asymmetry considerably worsens relationships between parents and children, as well as between teachers and students, thereby hindering the emotional development of adolescents. Thus, pedagogical support in this context should include methods of emotional release, particularly art therapy, body-oriented practices, and reflective activities that help students to be aware of, accept, and safely work through their emotions (*Panok, 2023: 117-118*).

Accordingly, pedagogical support involves the creation of psychological and pedagogical conditions that promote adolescents' awareness of their own emotions and feelings, as well as the development of skills for their regulation and constructive expression.

In this process, teachers, assistants, educators, and practical psychologists should primarily consider the age-specific characteristics of students, since adolescence is marked by heightened emotional sensitivity to the evaluations of peers and adults, a strong need for recognition and acceptance, and a tendency toward abrupt mood changes, impulsivity, and protest behavior. Therefore, pedagogical support should be based on a strategic and integrated approach, which encompasses a range of psychological and pedagogical technologies aimed at fostering emotional resilience.

An effective component of such support is the application of cognitive-behavioral methods that help adolescents understand the interconnection between thoughts, emotions, and behavior, as well as develop the ability to replace destructive reactions with constructive ones. A significant role is also played by art therapy techniques which facilitate emotional release, self-expression, and the restoration of inner balance. In addition, teachers can employ body-oriented practices and neuropsychological exercises that enable adolescents to become more aware of their better bodily sensations, recognize stress signals, and master techniques for relieving tension.

An essential form of pedagogical support is the implementation of educational projects that allow adolescents to experience success, feel competent, and strengthen their confidence

in their own abilities. By participating in such projects, students develop skills of self-regulation, endurance, and constructive response to challenges. In addition, role-playing activities and collaborative projects that simulate complex life or communicative situations serve as effective tools of pedagogical support. During these sessions, adolescents learn to recognize their emotions, analyze the causes of their reactions, and find alternative behavioral strategies that emotional literacy and social competence. Group training sessions aimed at developing empathy also play a significant role in fostering adolescents' emotional resilience, as they teach how to empathize, accept different opinions, manage aggression, and cultivate tolerance. Thus, through dramatization, analysis of real-life situations and team-based exercises, teachers create a safe space where adolescents can safely explore their emotions and learn mutual respect and support.

A promising area of pedagogical support for adolescents involves the integration of digital technologies in the process of shaping their emotional resilience, as the modern educational environment increasingly incorporates digital tools that diversify learning and provide a deeper, personalized approach to the emotional development of students.

In particular, it is advisable to use platforms for creating discussion forums (such as Moodle, Tovuti LMS, Additio App), virtual boards (Padlet, Miro, IDroo, Twiddla, and others), and video message platforms (Flipgrid) (*Antoshchuk, 2024: 27-28*).

Interactive mobile apps for monitoring emotional state (MindDoc, Spring Health Mobile, Replika, BetterHelp) are becoming an important tool for self-reflection, shaping the skills of self-observation and emotional literacy, thereby helping adolescents to be aware of their feelings, track mood changes, record reactions to stressful events, and analyze their emotional experiences.

An equally important component of pedagogical support involves project-based activities, within which adolescents run their socially significant projects and initiatives, such as media campaigns on TikTok, videos on Instagram, or volunteer initiatives on Facebook or Threads. These activities form a sense of responsibility, agency, and perseverance, and the desire to contribute to the community. Moreover, participation in joint activities strengthens social bonds and enhances self-reflection, enabling adolescents to analyze their experiences, their emotional reactions, and trace positive changes occurring throughout the process.

It is expedient to incorporate courses and techniques that are focused on self-regulation skills, overcoming anxiety, and managing stress. An important component of such courses includes breathing exercises, relaxation practices, meditation sessions, and modules on positive thinking. These activities are particularly beneficial for adolescents due to their convenience, 24/7 accessibility, and engaging gamified format. For instance, the relaxing exercise "I Spy Something Green" combines elements of mindfulness and sensory grounding. During the activity students attentively examine their surroundings, identify green objects, name them aloud, describe their properties, and compare shades and shapes. This process helps to focus attention on the present moment, restore a sense of control over the situation, and reduce tension and internal chaos. If there are few objects indoors, the exercise can be continued outdoors, which also contributes to physical relaxation and contact with the natural environment.

From a pedagogical standpoint, such techniques are particularly important and relevant within the school environment, as they enable adolescents to cope with emotional overload independently, improve concentration, and reduce stress and anxiety. Accordingly, when teachers incorporate these exercises during classes or breaks, they create an atmosphere of psychological comfort and safety for adolescents, which contribute not only to the formation of emotional stability but also to the development of self-help skills and a sense of security, even during air raid alerts.

For adolescents, whose psychological distress often manifests through somatic symptoms, understand the connection between the body and emotions, recognize their body's signals, and restore internal balance.

An effective example of a tool for implementing this technique is VR training, which allows for the stimulation of socially and emotionally significant life situations. Through augmented reality, adolescents can safely "experience" challenging scenarios such as defending personal boundaries, counteracting bullying, adapting to a new team, or overcoming conflicts. A significant advantage of this technique lies in the opportunity for students to experiment with behavioral models within a virtual environment and to observe the consequences of their choices.

To foster adolescents' emotional resilience within the educational environment, it will be advisable to involve a psychologist capable of implementing art therapy methods which combine creative self-expression with a therapeutic effect. Such methods may include drawing, phototherapy, video therapy, and music-based practices which allow adolescents to express their complex emotions, thoughts, experiences in a safe and unobtrusive manner, verbalize internal conflicts, and reinterpret personal experiences. These activities contribute to the formation of a positive self-image, emotional intelligence, increased self-esteem, and awareness of individual resources.

Tarnovetska emphasizes that psychological initiatives in educational institutions play a crucial role in creating an atmosphere of support. The organization of resilience clubs, mental health weeks, training marathons, and interactive quests shapes self-regulation skills and a positive attitude towards psychological assistance as a resource rather than a sign of weakness. Such activities help reduce the prevalence of mental health problems among adolescents and integrate the topic of emotional well-being into the school culture. This is particularly important in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, when many adolescents are exposed to constant stress caused by ongoing danger, air raid alarms, shelling, and anxiety for mobilized relatives.

Considerable attention in educational institutions should be devoted to working with families, as the family is the primary environment in which a child's fundamental understanding of self, others, safety, and support is formed. Providing parents with guidance on fostering emotional stability, conducting joint master classes, psychoeducational sessions, and establishing parent clubs or mutual support groups help raise the level of psychological culture of adults and engage them as active participants in the child's development process.

An innovative area of modern psychological practice is the implementation of mindfulness techniques (conscious presence) aimed at reducing stress, developing self-reflection, and stabilizing the emotional state. Therefore, short daily practices, such as body scanning, mindful breathing, and observation of thoughts, contribute to the formation of adolescents' ability to interrupt the flow of anxious thoughts, remain focused on the present moment, and gain a deeper understanding of their emotions.

Accordingly, a comprehensive program for the formation of emotional stability among adolescents in the educational environment includes several interrelated levels of work:

- educational (classes devoted to understanding the nature of stress, self-regulation techniques, and recognizing one's emotions);
- training (group and individual sessions focused on practicing skills);
- project (application of the acquired skills in real-life contexts);
- reflective (analysis of personal experience, discussion of results, and adjustment of the action plan) (*Tarnovetska: 3*).

Studies by O.V. Tarnovetska have shown that in the daily activities of a school psychologist, training sessions based on cognitive-behavioral therapy are highly effective, as they help adolescents learn to recognize negative thoughts, critically evaluate them, and replace them with more constructive and realistic beliefs. During such sessions, students work with worksheets in which they record situations that provoke anxiety, their emotional reactions, and possible alternative ways of thinking. Additionally, exercises are used to create individual “recourse maps” – a list of people, activities, places, or thoughts that help restore emotional balance. An important component of these sessions also involves the development of problem-solving skills: specially designed tasks encourage adolescents to analyze situations from different perspectives, compare possible solutions, and assess risks and consequences, thereby enhancing their self-confidence and forming a sense of internal control.

Another effective area of practical work is the organization of short-term social projects within the community, city, school, which expand adolescents’ experience of positive social interaction, strengthen their sense of self-worth, and develop empathy, compassion, and internal resilience. At the final stage of such projects, the psychologist together with the teacher can organize reflective meetings during which adolescents discuss their experiences, share impressions, reflect on changes in their feelings, and identify new personal resources.

Combining such practical activities with online emotional state questionnaires and mood-tracking applications makes psychological support more flexible, engaging, individualized, and effective. This is especially important under modern conditions, when the development of emotional stability becomes a prerequisite for the harmonious formation of the adolescent’s personality.

3. Conclusions

Pedagogical support serves as a key mechanism for the formation of emotional stability of adolescents in the contemporary educational environment, ensuring a harmonious combination of educational and psychological assistance. It promotes the development of adolescents’ self-regulation skills, stress resistance, emotional awareness, and the ability to respond constructively to difficulties. In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, pedagogical support acquires particular significance as a means of preventing emotional disorders, facilitating adaptation to crisis situations, and maintaining mental health.

The study established that the effectiveness of pedagogical support increases with the integration of cognitive-behavioral, art therapy, body-oriented, and digital technologies into the system of educational work. Digital tools, VR training sessions, mobile applications, and online platforms expand opportunities for developing emotional literacy, self-reflection, and inner resilience among adolescents.

Therefore, psychological and pedagogical support should be viewed not only as a form of professional assistance but also as a new culture of interaction with children and adolescents in which every adult is emotionally literate, attentive, and trustworthy.

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