

ADAPTATION PECULIARITIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN CRISIS CONDITIONS

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Abstract. *Dramatic events related to the Russian-Ukrainian war shook up not only Ukraine, but the entire civilized world. The war exacerbated not only economic, political, and demographic problems, but also defined as priority tasks the physical rescue of a person, the preservation of his life and health, comprehensive assistance in migration, arranging life and living in critical conditions, overcoming fear and hopelessness. Russia broke all the rules of life on the planet and distinguished itself by atrocities, murders of civilians, looting, and rape. Ukrainians, who are faced with the challenges of life and death today, are looking for ways to preserve not only their territories, above all, their language, culture, education, and authenticity. Our desire for global and European values requires not only the support of the Armed Forces, but each person in his place to work to the best of his ability to support public life in all its dimensions. Education also requires new approaches to content, values, psychological and pedagogical principles, organizational forms, and tools to overcome the challenges facing Ukraine today. In the center of attention of the higher school now is the student whose life, in addition to traditional challenges, has been complicated by war, uncertainty about the future, confusion, despair, a difficult economic situation, the lack of an opportunity to provide basic needs, distance learning, etc. All this, as evidenced by our survey of students of higher education, often leads to maladaptation, depressive states, disappointment, apathy, anxiety, etc. Therefore, the stated situation actualizes the problem of finding optimal ways of adaptation of higher education students in crisis conditions, which will be outlined in our research. In order to identify the peculiarities of students' adaptation to crisis conditions, we conducted a study related to various aspects of their life. It included the possibility to receive psychological support during a crisis period. It is associated with a pandemic and war; awareness and understanding of external and internal factors of crisis conditions that influence student life; the process of adaptation to distance learning in crisis*

conditions; elucidation of the reasons that negatively influence/influenced the distance learning process in crisis conditions; determining positive potential of distance learning in crisis conditions; evaluation by students of educational process effectiveness in crisis conditions.

Keywords: *adaptation, crisis conditions, students, students of higher education, Ukraine, values, war.*

Introduction

The dramatic events that took place at the beginning of the 21-st century in Ukraine demonstrate the instability and precariousness of the modern world. This indicates the importance of wide implementation of such values as freedom, kindness, justice, humanism, honor and dignity. Today, we are observing the tendency of civilization to split into two parts, namely, the democratic world and Russia, good and evil, honor and dishonor, love and hatred. Ukraine is at the epicenter of this struggle. It acts as a guarantor of the victory of good over evil. There is a fierce struggle, the participants of which are men and women; mature, young and old, everyone who understands the importance of Ukraine's victory. We are fighting for life, truth, honor and unity on our God-given land.

The Russian-Ukrainian war exacerbated geopolitical, economic, and demographic problems. It also determined the priorities of human existence in modern realities, i.e. saving life, physical and mental health preservation, assistance to people during migration, arranging everyday life in critical conditions, organizing work, continuing education at various levels, etc.

Facing the challenges of life and death, Ukrainians are looking for ways to preserve not only their territories, mainly, authenticity, language, culture, and education. Our drive towards world and European values puts definite requirements on each person, including work to the best of their ability in order to support social life in all its dimensions. Education is the special component of human civilization that guarantees progress and development. Therefore, its perfect organization remains an important aspect of social life in wartime.

The problem of organizing the educational process in a crisis is not new. Based on interdisciplinary connection has been analyzed in various ways. Researchers substantiate theoretical and applied ways of overcoming the obstacles that appear before a person in a period of crisis. Ukrainian scientists offer real ways to overcome the life crisis of a person in wartime, constructively analysing and substantiating these issues. Thus, Dmitrieva T. & Sysiuk L. (2014) analyse the specifics, reasons and consequences of migration processes in Ukraine; Skotna N. & Pantiuk M. (2019), Kisarchuk Z., Omelchenko Ya. & Lazos P., et al. (2015) develop the concept of psychological and pedagogical support of people affected by migration processes under modern Ukrainian realities.

Issues related to psychological trauma and helping individuals to overcome it are absolutely urgent. In this area, the works of V. Klymchuk (2016) on post-traumatic human growth became important for our research. Larina T. (2012) researches vitality formation as a prerequisite for determining life tasks for progress. Tytarenko T. (2018) analyses the psychological health of a person and means of self-help in conditions of long-term traumatization. Stepanenko L. (2015) discusses peculiarities of the emotional state manifestation in migrant students.

Additionally, some studies are based on the spiritual paradigm and define it as the foundation for recovery from crisis and continuing the constructive search for life sense (Savchyn, 2010; Chykhantsova, 2016), etc.

The purpose of the article is to study the adaptive features and abilities of higher education students during crisis; to analyze external and internal factors that affect the personality in crisis conditions; to determine the difficulties and effectiveness of distance learning.

The theoretical basis of the study

Nowadays, higher education requires new approaches to the content, values, psychological and pedagogical principles, organizational forms and tools to overcome the challenges that emerged for Ukraine as a whole and each learner in particular. "Improving education in the broad sense of this concept is a priority task for those countries that follow the high living standards of their citizens" (Pantiuk, Bodak, Pantiuk, & Hamerska, 2021).

Special attention has been paid to students who face traditional challenges (change of status, place of permanent residence, rhythm of life, environment, communication, living conditions, etc.). In addition, their life has been complicated by war, uncertainty about the future, confusion, despair, difficult economic situation, lack of opportunity to ensure basic needs, distant learning, etc. All this, as our research shows, often leads to maladjustment, depressive states, disappointment, apathy, anxiety, fear, hopelessness, etc. That is why the new tasks of Ukrainian higher education consist in finding ways to adapt students to the dramatic conditions that have developed today. It concerns creating and maintaining a favorable psychological climate; adaptation of educational space to crisis conditions; providing competent professional assistance to higher education students in overcoming personal problems; organizing support for those who need a special individual approach; a professional approach to the implementation of the actual educational process for the professional development of an individual; improving everyday life of those who have lost their homes and are in long-term migration.

We consider the preservation of Ukraine's healthy demographic potential as one of the most important tasks in order to ensure its viability and prosperity

after the Victory in the future. Therefore, each student is treated as a unique personality who has higher calling in life. "Research shows that the main indicators of adaptation of displaced people are the ability to consciously build their lives in new conditions (awareness, reflexivity); the ability to rethink one's own sense of life and values, to develop and improve oneself; stable focus on spiritual and moral values; the ability to make strong-willed efforts to achieve goals; effectiveness. At the same time, this process involves a transition in the hierarchy of person's meaningful life orientations from the motivation to achieve egocentric values-goals to the motivation to achieve socially useful and significant goals. Of course, the needs and motives of personal importance become "embedded" into this structure" (Savchyn, 2016).

It should also be emphasized that people who have suffered from forced migration need psychological and psychotherapeutic help in order to overcome a life crisis and decide on new life priorities. Therefore, we interpret this problem as an interdisciplinary one, as it requires balanced and systematic philosophical, psychological, pedagogical, and medical approaches.

Adaptation of students in crisis conditions is closely related to the issues of organizational, pedagogical, psychological and economic support. In the Ukrainian educational system, a culture of psychological support for students is being formed in order to solve the tasks of adaptation and personal development in wartime conditions. The main goal of comprehensive support is to ensure the success of the adaptation processes, professional self-realization and socialization of students.

In order to identify the peculiarities of students' adaptation to crisis conditions, we conducted a study related to various aspects of their life. It included the possibility to receive psychological support during a crisis period associated with a pandemic and war; awareness and understanding of external and internal factors of crisis conditions that influence student life; the process of adaptation to distance learning in crisis conditions; elucidation of the reasons that negatively influence/influenced the distance learning process in crisis conditions; determining positive potential of distance learning in crisis conditions; evaluation by students of educational process effectiveness in crisis conditions.

Organization of empirical research and analysis of its results

We developed the questionnaire as a part of improvement of educational programs for students of Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University. The survey was conducted in the Google Forms format. The questionnaire reflected a wide spectrum of issues under study. This allowed realistic assessment of providing educational services to students; clarifying the points that require correction in the educational process; improvement of the content

and forms of online training format; realizing the problems that have not been adequately solved.

The research covered 170 respondents studying at Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, which is a sufficient basis for clarifying the main points of the research. The participants of the study were students aged 17 to 24 years. The age gradation of the respondents is shown in Figure 1.

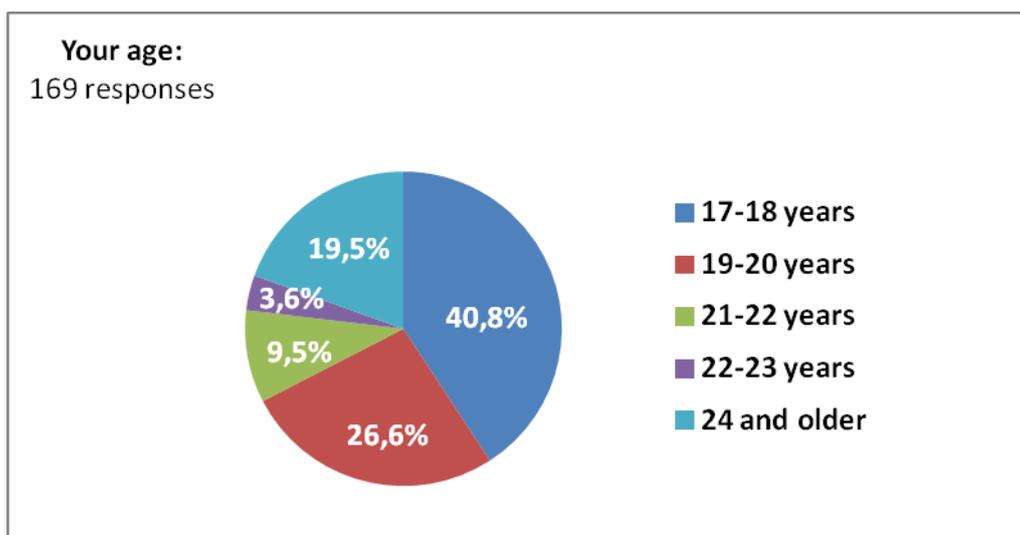


Figure 1 Age gradation of the respondents (created by the authors)

A separate question was about the students' place of residence during the crisis. Notably, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University is located in the west of Ukraine, where there are no active hostilities. That is why the majority of students (89.4%) live at home; only about 10% of students live abroad, in rented accommodation or in a dormitory.

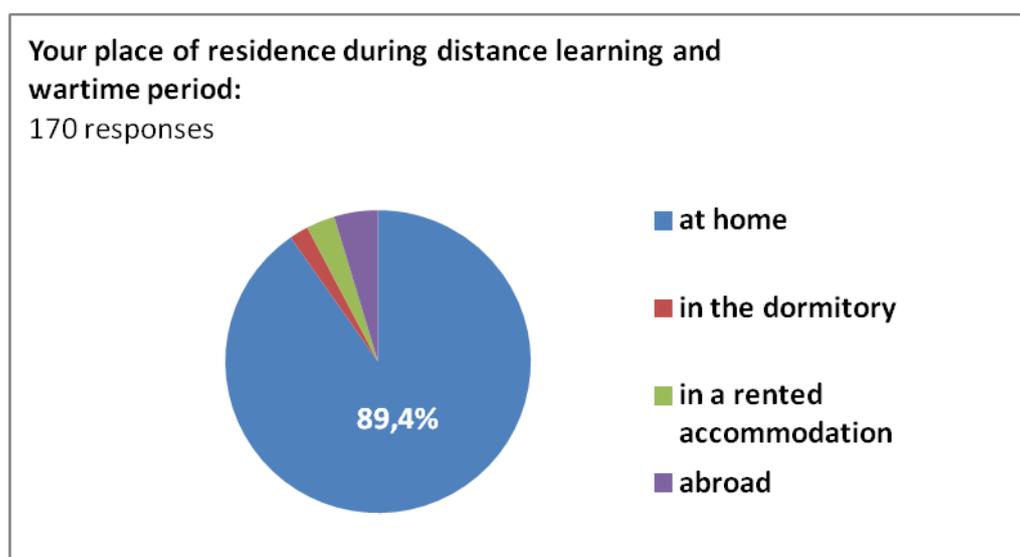


Figure 2 Place of residence of the respondents (created by the authors)

The study emphasized the importance and necessity of psychological support during the crisis period associated with the pandemic and war. The results of our survey, however, prove that only 24.6% of students had the opportunity to receive psychological support during the crisis. Almost half of the respondents (48.5%) did not have such an opportunity; 26.9% received partial and episodic psychological support. This demonstrates society's unpreparedness for such challenges and requires the development of a broad system of psychological support for students during the war.

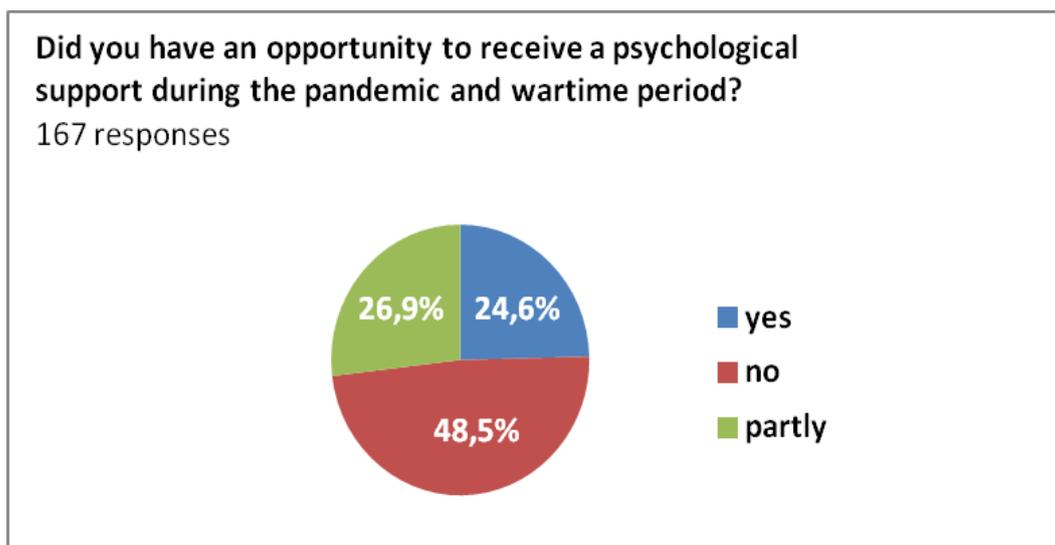


Figure 3 *Availability of psychological help for the respondents* (created by the authors)

Another question considered the impact of external factors in crisis conditions. The survey showed that the most negative factors included air raid alarms and alerts about missile attacks (70.4%); 46% of respondents were concerned about general public anxiety, about the war and had fear of it. Current events (43.8%) also became a significant traumatic factor.

A lot of respondents (40.2%) worried about the violation of their usual work and rest balance. Other factors are distributed as follows: social instability (32%); unpreparedness of surrounding for crisis conditions (17.2%); impossibility to study offline (13%); migration of citizens (11.2%).

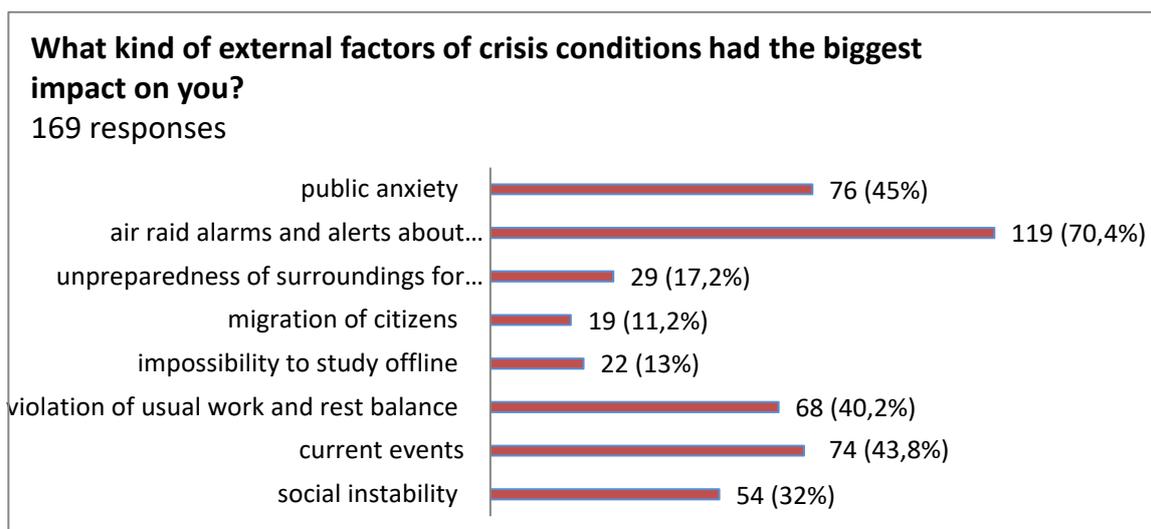


Figure 4 External factors affecting the adaptation process of the respondents in crisis conditions (created by the authors)

The study also analyzed the internal factors that significantly influenced the adaptation process of students in crisis conditions. Students had the opportunity to choose several factors. The survey proves that the most traumatic factors for students are the following: fear (61.4%); misunderstanding of the future prospects (57.2%); insecurity (39.2%); responsibility for relatives (38.6%); confusion about one's own life prospects (29.5%).

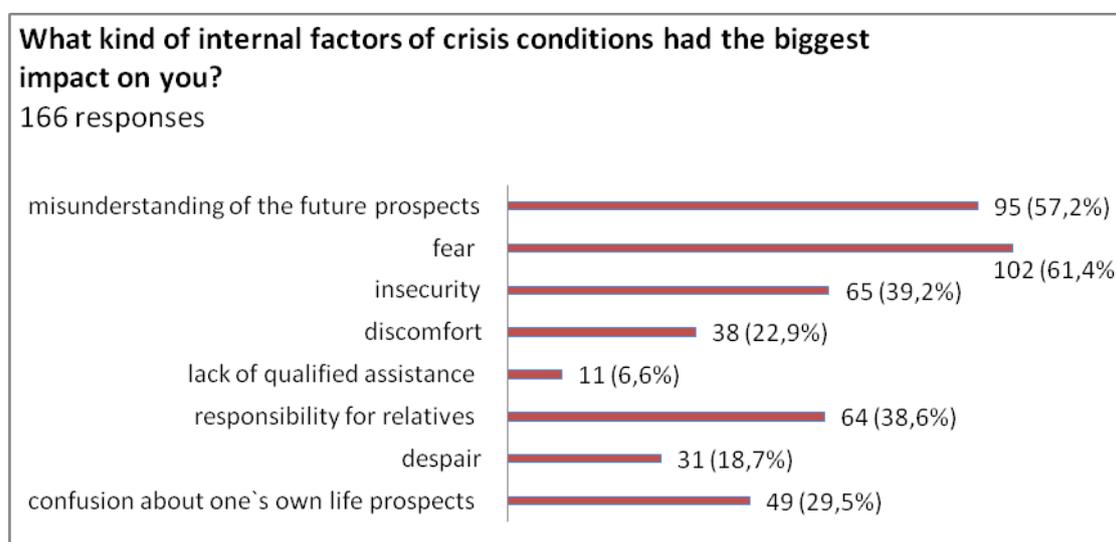


Figure 5 Internal factors affecting the adaptation process of the respondents in crisis conditions (created by the authors)

The research clarified the importance of students' adaptation possibilities to distance learning in crisis conditions. The results of the survey demonstrate high level of adaptability. Thus, 30.6% of students are absolutely adapted, 58.2% - "mainly". The total percentage of adaptation to online learning is 88.8%. We

claim that students can easily cope with educational tasks in distance learning conditions.

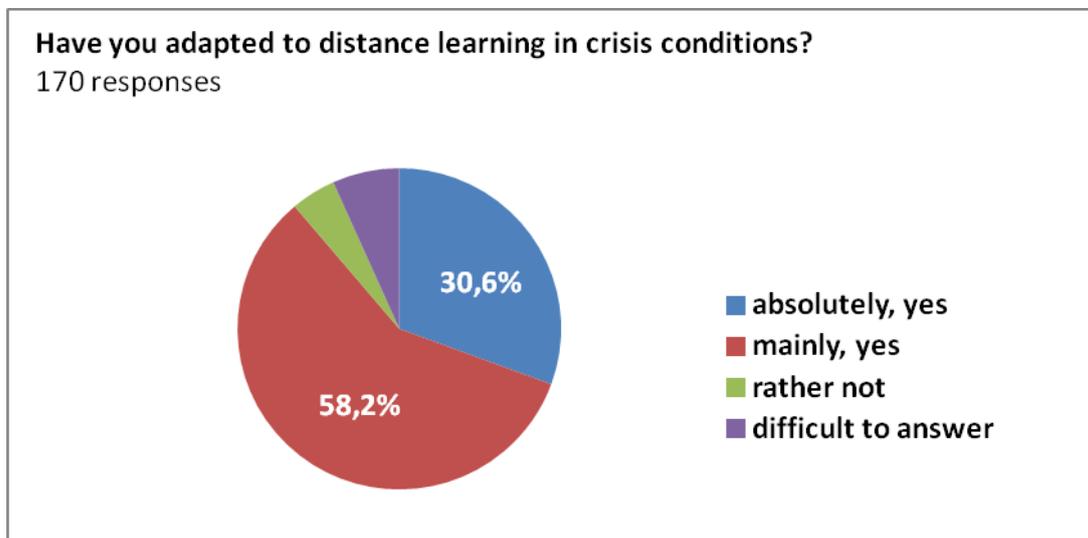


Figure 6 Adaptability of the respondents to distance learning conditions (created by the authors)

The most significant reasons that negatively affect the distance learning process in crisis conditions include technical problems (76.9%) and impossibility of "live" communication (31.4%). Students managed to overcome all other problems quite successfully, so they did not cause any particular discomfort.

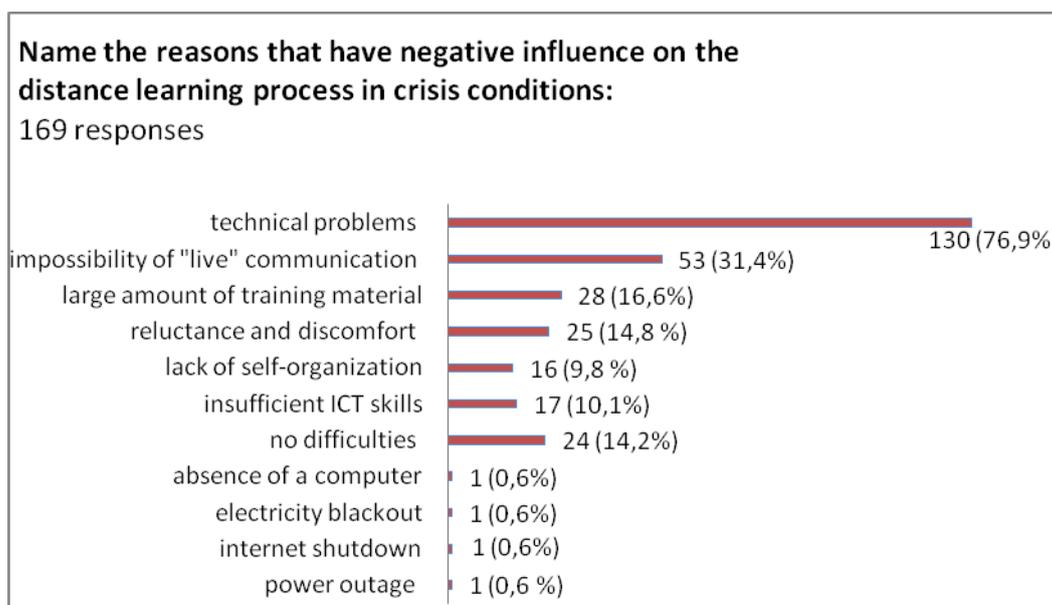


Figure 7 Factors affecting the distance learning process in crisis conditions (created by the authors)

Students also pointed to the significant benefits of distance learning in times of crisis. The advantages include a lot of free time (48.5%); 24-hour availability of educational material (46.7%), possibility to adjust one's workload (43.1%); wide opportunities for self-education (34.1%); realization of the subjectivity of the educational process (11.4%). This proves that students are able to work independently and can be responsible for the results of the educational process.

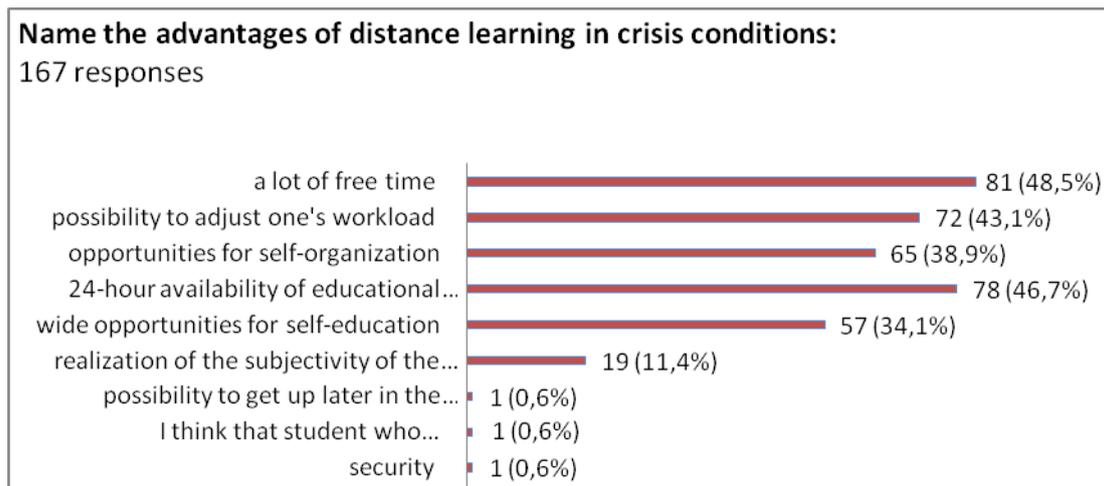


Figure 8 Advantages of distance learning in crisis conditions (created by the authors)

The evaluation of the educational process effectiveness in crisis conditions did not receive very high results (Fig. 9). It is obvious that these indicators are greatly affected by the instability of social conditions, misunderstanding of life prospects, fear and confusion, the need for adaptation and psychological support, disruption of the usual rhythm of peaceful life.

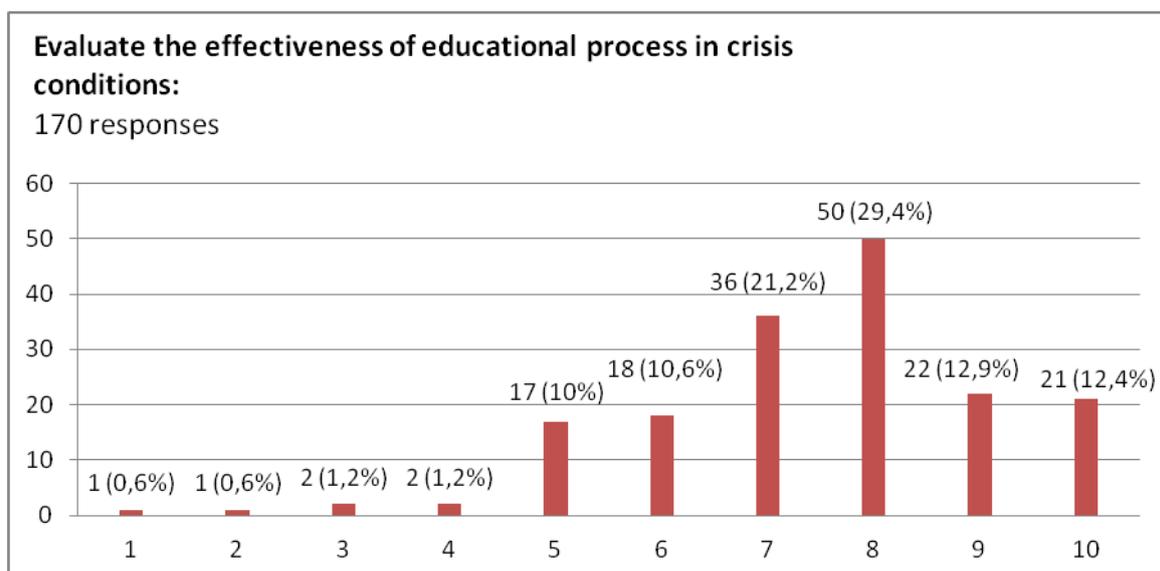


Figure 9 Educational process effectiveness in crisis conditions (created by the authors)

Conclusions

Thus, the new tasks of Ukrainian education consist in finding and implementing optimal ways of adapting higher education students to the conditions of war and social crisis. This concerns the creation of a special educational space; providing professional assistance in overcoming personal problems; systematic organization of support for those who need an individual approach; an innovative approach to the implementation of the educational process; improving and arranging everyday life of those who have lost their homes and are in migration, etc.

In the article, we analyzed adaptive features and abilities of higher education students in crisis conditions; studied external and internal factors that affected students in war conditions; established the difficulties and advantages of distance learning. It is concluded that today students suffer significantly from military actions, worry about the problems of life prospects, the future of their relatives and friends, experience mental and psychological discomfort, etc.

However, the research proves that young people are ready to continue their education. They are looking for opportunities of effective learning and are quite successful in using the advantages of distance learning for the sake of obtaining education and future professional realization. Therefore, Ukraine confidently follows the best European and world values, where education plays a priority role.

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