

DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGERIAL COMPETENCE OF HEADS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN CRISIS CONDITIONS

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Abstract. *In the crisis conditions of challenges and restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the martial law in Ukraine, it is important to ensure stability and efficiency in the management of educational institutions. It is possible due to the condition of development of managerial competence of managers. We consider the managerial competence of educational institutions leaders is a personal phenomenon. It combines psychological, theoretical and practical readiness for managerial activities in the specific conditions of the institution's existence. For the development of managerial competence, appropriate conditions are important, as well as an actual profile, the structure of which includes: development orientation; emotional intelligence; cooperation; ability to create a safe environment; organizational capacity. As a result of the actualization of the crisis situation, the public demand for managers-leaders is increasing, hence the need to analyze, develop a theory and use leadership strategies by the heads of general secondary education institutions, since they are the basis of the manifestation of their managerial competence in crisis conditions. Our research was organized during 2018/2021 (n 112.) It showed a contradiction between the need for development and the lack of managerial competence and leadership strategies among managers in the field of education. In order to develop this property, a program of psychological and pedagogical support was developed and implemented. The results of the program's implementation confirmed its effectiveness and made it possible to conclude that the development of managerial competence can effectively take place within the*

limits of individual trajectories of professional growth of heads of institutions in the field of education.

Keywords: *crisis conditions, leadership strategies, managerial competence, profile of managerial competence, psychological and pedagogical support.*

Introduction

Ukrainian education has undergone significant changes during the past year. The crisis situation that arose as a result of the beginning of the acute phase of the war with the Russian invaders threatens the destruction of education at all levels: from preschool to higher education. The lack of pedagogical management personnel, caused by the mass emigration of Ukrainians abroad, prevents the quality of education, the development of the New Ukrainian School, and the development of professional education. The consequences of such a situation may lead to the growth of a poorly educated generation of Ukrainian citizens. However, in contrast to this we can state the increasing of the heads of educational institutions' readiness to overcome the specified threats and challenges. Management competence is considered by us as an important property of every leader in modern Ukrainian education. In general, competence is a unit of measurement of education of a person, the ability to act in crisis and problematic situations, is a guarantee of transition from the "qualifying" model of professional development to the "competence" model.

The problem of the development of "competence education" is not new. It was first studied by scientists from the USA and Great Britain during the 60s of the last century. In the European Union, the competencies of managers are defined at two levels: the supranational and individual EU member states (the Netherlands, Poland, Estonia, Ireland, etc.). They are also defined in the countries of the Euro-Atlantic community, namely in Canada (Stoian, 2019). The issue of determining the components and designing the profile of managerial competence is considered to be important. In our previous publications, 5 main competencies are presented. They are based on the managerial activity of modern head of general secondary educational institution. These competencies are: orientation development; emotional intelligence; cooperation; ability to create a safe environment; organizational capacity. We have also developed and described a profile that specifies 20 main qualities of a competent head of a general secondary educational institution (Prystai, 2021). In this publication, we present the results of our latest scientific explorations.

The aim of research is to analyze the leadership strategies of the heads of general secondary educational institutions with different levels of managerial competence, which they choose in crisis conditions; to present the program of psychological and pedagogical support for the development of managerial competence of heads of educational institutions; experimental confirmation of the effectiveness of the specified program. To realize the goal and tasks of the

research, we used the following experimental methods: observation, questionnaire of D. Liusin's (Liusin, 2006) emotional intelligence, questionnaires, focus groups, clusters analysis. Experimental tests were also used in the research, namely: volitional organization of the individual by M. Hutkin, G. Mikhalchenko, A. Prudylo (Hutkin, Mikhalchenko, & Prudylo, 2000), creativity of Torrens (Torrance, 1974); V. Boyko's (Boyko, 1996) tests were used to diagnose empathy.

Theoretical basis of the research

In modern realities, the center of scientific consideration is management in crisis situations. Under the crisis situation, we understand the difficult transition situation, the sharp fracture that includes risk and threat of the system as a whole. S. Booth (2015) also considers the crisis not so much a problem, but rather "opening new opportunities and freeing innovative ideas." K. Zalohina defines a crisis as a point of bifurcation, which contains a potential of both destructive and constructive nature (Zalohina, 2004). Crises occur regularly; they are inevitable and are a part of development. However, they have many threats and challenges. In particular: new needs arise, but there are no obvious ways to satisfy them; previous experience is no longer relevant; uncertainty and instability prevail; there is a shortage of resources; emotional tension; the threat of destruction of the system. The crisis necessitates decisive constructive actions on the part of the management. And the field of education is no exception – the lack of effective actions by leaders can lead to the destruction of the system.

G. Meyers and J. Holusha (Meyers & Holusha, 1984) emphasize that the crisis sets the potential for constructive actions of the manager. He must make changes or restructure the organization's activities in order to overcome the crisis and enter the next stage of the educational institution's development. To implement this, it may be necessary to mobilize all unused or hidden resources of the system, to change fundamentally and restructure the organization of activities.

Komives and Wagner have similar positions in their 7C theory (Komives & Wagner, 2017). They believe that the crisis situation prompts educational organizations to search for leaders who: are aware of their beliefs, values and emotions (consciousness of self); behave sincerely, consistently and honestly (congruence); feel an obligation to serve the team, making intensive and long-term efforts (commitment); can cooperate with others (collaboration); work with common goals and values (common purpose); accepts that differences of opinion are inevitable, and that such differences should be discussed openly, but politely, with respect for others, willingness to hear each other's views, and restraint in criticizing the views and actions of others (controversy with civility);

connect to the community and society through leadership development activities, work for positive changes in society (citizenship).

D. Campbell et al. (Campbell, Dardis & Campbell, 2003) believe that in a crisis situation, the leadership of heads of educational institutions is based on their personal qualities (social activity, indifference to people); interpersonal traits (competence to win the trust, respect and loyalty of others); cognitive, communicative and specific skills. Challenges, crises, all kinds of threatening situations can contribute to the development of managerial competence of leaders.

We believe that a high level of managerial competence of managers in a crisis situation allows them to influence the development of individual crisis processes, and thus increase the overall quality of management. This is manifested in the clear definition of one's own zone of influence and activity within these limits; acceptance of life circumstances that cannot be changed; awareness of the crisis as an inevitable period that has its advantages; readiness for changes, search for new ideas and initiative support; able to organize and implement new processes; using empathy and self-empathy to build quality resource relationships. In our previous research we established that in a crisis situation, the leaders of educational institutions most often demonstrate a leadership "motivation strategy". It is based on systematic and transparent communication and a defined mission that unites team members for the sake of which they are ready to move forward despite all the challenges and problems (Miliaieva & Prystai, 2022). Such a strategy allows managers to emphasize the social significance of their own professional activity, which is reinforced by the system of values that they implement through the professional context.

Rarely, but quite often, the "strategy of responsibility" and "strategy of working with emotions" are manifested in the behavior of leaders. "Responsibility strategy" lies in the ability to take the initiative, make decisions, organize the process and control its implementation (namely take full responsibility for the organization's activities). "Strategy of working with emotions" includes the manager's ability to work with emotional manifestations of varying intensity, to show empathy in difficult situations and to preserve one's own resource as a means of self-empathy. The least expressed among the respondents was the strategy of "creativity" – the ability to find new ways to solve problems, original ideas and non-standard solutions.

With the help of cluster analysis, the relationship between the personal characteristics of the head of the general secondary educational institution and the choice of leadership strategy during a crisis situation was revealed. It was also confirmed that the effectiveness of the implementation of the leadership strategy depends on the level of managerial competence of the head (Miliaieva & Prystai, 2022).

Organization of empirical research and analysis of its results

The purpose of the psychological and pedagogical support program is to form and develop the key competencies and skills that are the basis of the managerial competence of heads of general secondary educational institutions. The program includes 4 modules, which are aimed at the development of competencies that are the basis of the head of general secondary educational institutions managerial competence profile.

Module 1. "Empathy as a management skill".

1. Professional and personal growth webinar training "Empathy in school communication". The aim: development of empathy of education leaders, highlighting the possibilities of using empathy in an educational institution and the managerial activities of the head of general secondary educational institutions, familiarization with the methodology of nonviolent communication. Contents: The first educational module is about the development of the managerial competence of the head of general secondary educational institutions. The members of school teams have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the methodology of M. Rosenberg (Rosenberg, 2020) and his book "Language of life. Nonviolent communication". The main principles of this approach is to analyze one's own level of empathy, share experiences, discuss certain situations and practice emergency response techniques in groups.

2. Master-class "Methodology of preparation of the project "Creation of an educational space at school". The aim: To provide participants with school commands algorithm of object development, actualization of the need of creation of an environment in educational institution. Contents: Each school team gets a task within the framework of the first module to develop the project "Creation of educational space in school". The participants of the master-class receive the algorithm of objects and the task development to implement the received knowledge in their school space. The work lasts for two months.

3. Presentation of the project "Creation of an educational space at school". The aim: exchange of ideas and experience between participants of different school teams; promotion of safe educational environment creation among educational institution. Contents: Within a month each school team presents its project, shares experience and ideas with colleagues. Educational leaders work in three directions: empathy in communication with colleagues, with students and with parents. Participants of the program rely on the needs of the educational institution, its development strategy and take into account the current situation in the educational sphere.

Expected results. The head is able to find partners and support effective cooperation with them; to understand someone else on the basis of empathy, feelings and thoughts; put himself in the place of the partner with whom he is communicating and consciously assess his inner world; to see and predict the

partner's behavior; to act in conditions of lack of initial information about him, relying on the experience stored in the subconscious; to predict his behavior and respond effectively to it; to create a safe empathic educational environment in the educational institution.

Module 2. «Creative thinking of the head of general secondary educational institutions».

1. Training of professional and personal growth "Creativity as a key skill of the 21st century". The aim: Development of creative thinking, search for unobvious ways of solution of the situation, withdrawal from stereotype. Contents: School team members reveal the concept of creative thinking, actualize the need to develop this skill, get acquainted with possible ways of developing creativity. Education leaders are able to perform tasks that promote the development of creative thinking individually and in teams. They can experience the necessity and resourcefulness of this skill in their own practice, as well as to analyze the factors that can be used to promote the manifestation of creativity in their school teams. Teams receive a list of recommended techniques that allow them to apply this type of thinking as a skill that helps them successfully respond to new social demands in education. 2. Self-introduction of creativity skills in personal and professional life of the leader of education. The aim: formation of creative thinking, looking for ways of its usage in professional activity. Contents: The task of the second module was to practice creative techniques regularly and record the results, as well as to choose one of the techniques and implement it in work with the personnel (on pedagogical or other working meetings). 3. Thematic circle "Ways of using creative practices in professional activity". The aim: sharing experiences and ideas among all participants. Contents: During the thematic circles there is a discussion: what is given easily; what difficulties arise; what changes can be noticed; where it is possible to apply new skills, etc. School teams can use the techniques of creative thinking development on lessons with pupils, which positively influence the educational process.

Expected results. The head can show self-awareness, uniqueness, and specificity of creative thinking when making and implementing managerial decisions in situations requiring new approaches and changes. He can allocate the main idea and understand the essence of the problem using synthesis and generalization. It is also necessary to be in search to make a mental leap and create original ideas. The head should develop and think in detail about the ideas and change his habits.

Module 3. "Emotional intelligence of the educational leader".

1. Webinar-training of professional and personal growth "Emotional literacy". The aim: acquainting the participants with the features of the functioning of the emotional sphere, providing educational leaders with tools for identifying their own emotional state. Contents: During the third module the

participants of the program work on the development of skills of emotional intelligence, which is formed from four interrelated skills. Therefore, the teams undergo 4 trainings, which alternately complement each other and reveal the topic of emotional intelligence of the educational leader. During the first training the heads of general secondary educational institutions become acquainted with the peculiarities of the functioning of the emotional and volitional sphere of the individual. They analyze the causes of various emotions and their impact on work processes or professional activity. Although the heads receive tools for identifying and verbalizing one's emotional state, as well as understanding the need to develop emotional literacy as a skill. 2. Professional and personal growth webinar training "Methods of effective management of one's own emotional state". The aim: acquaintance of heads of general secondary educational institutions with working instruments of influence on own emotional state, searching of ways of self-motivation. Contents: Participants practice in conscious and purposeful management of their own emotional state; learn to call and maintain positive emotions; keep under control negative ones; test various techniques and instruments of influence on the emotional-freedom sphere; study their own peculiarities of its functioning; determine personal resources, possibilities of their renewal, as well as ways of self-motivation and self-organization. 3. Webinar-training of professional and personal growth "Social understanding". The aim: development of social competence, skills of understanding the emotional state of the interlocutor. Contents: The leaders of education during the training carry out various practical tasks that stimulate the development of social competence. They practice better identifying and understanding of the needs and emotional states of interlocutors, identifying them and being able to describe them verbally. 4. Professional and personal growth webinar-training "Relationship Management". The aim: providing educational leaders with tools to influence the emotional and motivational sphere of other people. Content: Teams practice to induce certain emotional states in the surrounding people and influencing their manifestation and intensity; work in pairs and small groups, where they can analyze the impact; share impressions and receive feedback from colleagues. Also, the participants work in the field of motivation, looking for ways to motivate the team based on emotions.

Expected results. The head can realize his emotional state, understand the reasons for its occurrence and verbally describe it. He manages his emotional state, evokes and maintains positive emotions and keeps negative ones under control, and also restores the resources. The head understands the needs and emotional state of the interlocutor and identify them. He causes certain emotional states in the surrounding people and influences their manifestation and intensity. And also motivates himself and others.

Module 4. "Effective communication in managerial activity".

1. Webinar training "Communication tools for making effective management decisions." The aim: providing heads of general secondary educational institutions with tools for effective management communication. Contents: The fourth educational module of the program of psychological and pedagogical support for the formation of managerial competence of the heads of general secondary educational institutions is devoted to communication tools. Working at the training on the topic "Communication tools for making effective management decisions", the participants have the opportunity to get to know and master various communication techniques. In addition, educational leaders use already acquired knowledge and skills from previous modules. 2. Project activity "Determining the needs of school teams". The aim: application of the received knowledge and tools by the leaders of education; development of skills of effective communication; determination of questions and needs of school collectives. Contents: Participants of the program receive the task to define and work in teams dissatisfied with the needs of their colleagues. They should develop a system of measures of influence for their satisfaction and increase of non-material motivation of school employees. The school administration teams are developing a plan to implement these ideas, search for necessary resources, partners and investors. 3. Seminar-workshop "Methods of determining the needs of employees and increasing the non-material motivation of the team." The aim: presentation of own educational institution and results of work of school teams, exchange of experience and ideas with colleagues. Contents: Teams present their results and have the opportunity to receive feedback from their colleagues. They analyze school projects and challenges they face with, and also resources that help to cope with these challenges and continue their work. They also summarize the results of the program. Everyone has the opportunity to talk about their own experience, to be enriched by the ideas and practice of others. During the discussion, everyone has their own vision of creating conditions for the effective formation and development of managerial competence of educational leaders in a specific educational institution.

Expected results. The manager is able to: create a system of effective communication in the educational institution; present and popularize the educational institution; organize and provide communication with the public; ensure social protection of all participants in the educational process.

After completion of the study, an investigation of the development of managerial competence of the heads of general secondary educational institutions was conducted in order to determine its effectiveness. The total sample consisted of women (90.2%) and men (9.8%), totaling 112 people. By age respondents were divided as follows: 15,6% were under 30 years old, 45,8% were between 30 and 40 years old, 21,3% were between 40 and 50 years old, and 17,3% were over 50 years old. Among them: directors – 9%, deputy

directors – 33%, teachers – 44%, psychologists – 9%, social pedagogues – 3%, teacher organizers – 2%.

In order to minimize the influence of other variables, a control subgroup was formed among the participants of the school teams that took part in our research work (KpH). It included those leaders of education who did not attend trainings and were not participants of modular training. Since one of the tasks of the experiment was to study the presence of the formula influence, the control subgroup included respondents with the following characteristics (age, sex, position, work experience), as well as in the experimental group, except for the variable used up to the latter. Repeated psychodiagnosis was carried out in both subgroups (EpH n = 72, KpH n = 40) at the end of the program.

At the beginning and at the end of the training the comparative analysis of the control and experimental sub-groups research results allows to suppose the presence of positive influence of the psychological and pedagogical support of program implementation on the psychological properties development and demonstration, which are the basis of managerial competence of the institutions of general secondary education heads.

The comparative analysis of the obtained results of primary and secondary diagnostics shows that before the beginning of the psychological and pedagogical support program there are no significant differences in the indicators between the sub-groups. After the forming effect we see significant differences in the control and experimental sub-group (Fig. 1). In particular, those respondents who took part in the training and attended the trainings average indicator of the level of emotional intelligence development increased by 0,72, empathies – by 1,25, creative thinking – by 1,19 (from 5). In the control subgroup, after the secondary psychological diagnosis, a sufficient increase in the level of psychological properties is not observed.

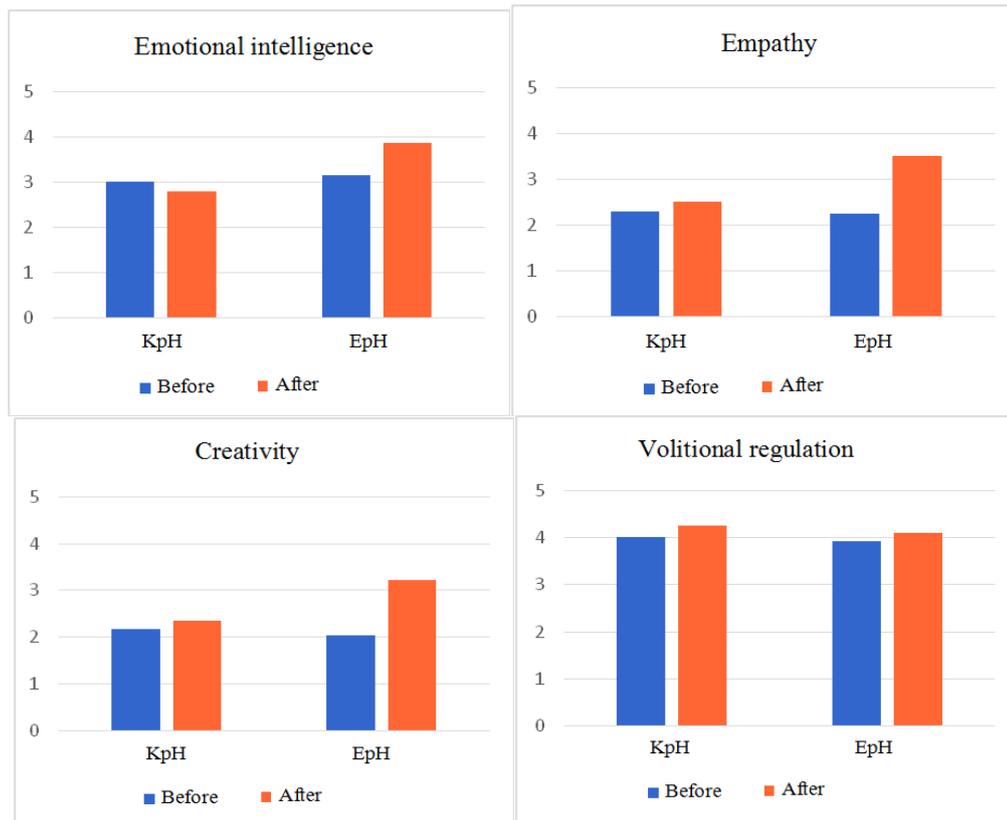


Figure 1 *Comparative analysis of research results of control and experimental subgroups at the beginning and at the end of training (created by the authors)*

Next, an analysis of the dynamic changes will be presented. It occurred in the experimental subgroup after the implementation of the psychological and pedagogical support program of managerial competence formation following the profile of the heads of general secondary educational institutions' competences. (Prystai, 2021). According to the results of the formative stage of the experiment, the general positive dynamics of the development of psychological properties were recorded. The psychological properties underlie the manifestation of managerial competence of those educational leaders who were participants in the experimental subgroup (Fig.2).

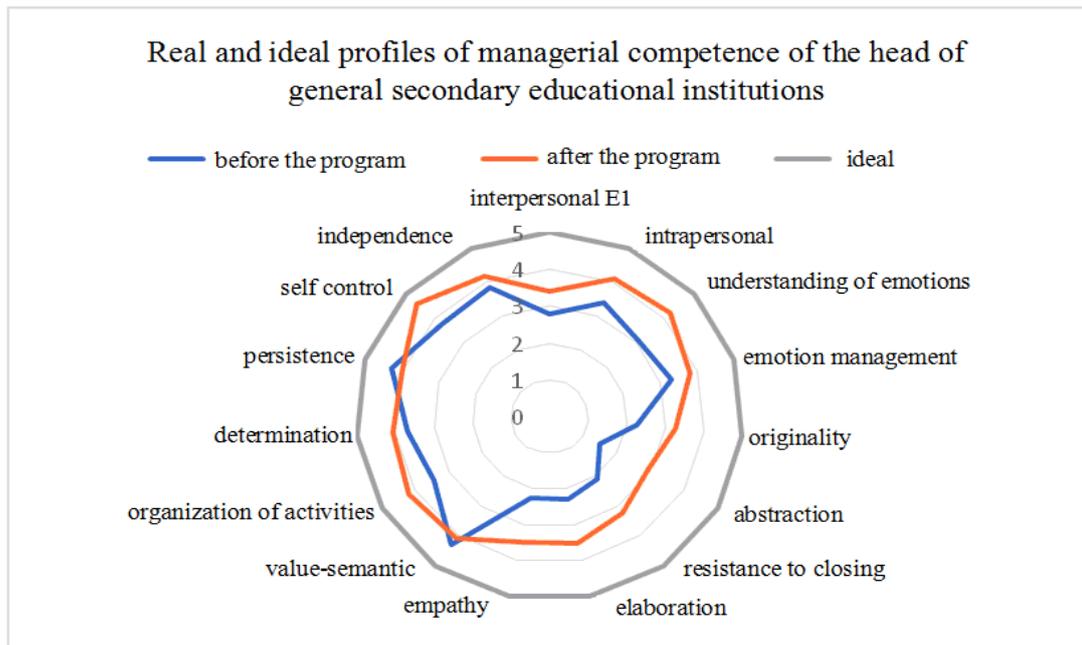


Figure 2 *Dynamic shifts that occurred in the experimental subgroup after the implementation of formative influence (created by the authors)*

Thus, in the experimental sub-group the average value of the indicator forming on each scale (max=5) has undergone the following changes: growth of interpersonal intelligence from 2,8 to 3,4; internal-personal emotional intelligence from 3,4 to 4,1; understanding of emotions from 3,1 to 4,2; managing emotions from 3,3 to 3,8; empathies from 2,25 to 3,5; originality of thinking from 2,27 to 3,27; abstract of thinking from 1,5 to 2,91; development of details from 2,3 to 3,52; resistance to coming from 2,1 to 3,22; self-control from 3,75 to 4,6; independence from 3,83 to 4,16; determination from 3,7 to 4,08; organization of activities from 3,46 to 4,2; reduction of indicators on scales persistence from 4,28 to 4,0; value-based orientation from 4,3 to 4,1. The obtained results are closer to the ideal indicators of the profile of the heads of general secondary educational institutions' managerial competence.

Testing the sample for normality distribution using the non-parametric Wilcoxon T-test. It is used for the statistical difference of indicators of emotional intelligence, empathy and creativity at the level $p < 0.01$. The statistical result of comparing the indicators of two independent samples (EpH and KpH) using the non-parametric U-Mann-Whitney test was also confirmed ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusions

Introduction of the program of psychological and pedagogical support for the development of managerial competence of the heads of general secondary educational institutions and confirmation of its effectiveness allowed us to make such conclusions.

The development of managerial competence of heads of general secondary educational institutions is not limited only by the assimilation of new knowledge. It is a process of constant search for more effective ways to solve problems, overcome challenges and eliminate threats. It is a way of constant self-improvement in one's professional activity. This is a process that provides for the acquisition of specific characteristics, qualities, traits, leadership behavior strategies that contribute to overcoming crisis conditions in modern Ukrainian education.

Introduction of the program of management competence development of the leaders of general secondary educational institutions is a sign of the usage of the best European practices in the system of advanced training of Ukrainian education leaders.

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