

EDUCATORS' FEEDBACK ON WEBSITE "OVERCOMING STRESS AND ANXIETY TOGETHER: TEACHERS – SCHOOLCHILDREN – PARENTS"

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Abstract. *The research aim was to collect feedback from educators on the website "Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents" created within the joint Latvian-Ukrainian project "Web-based Support System for Educators to Reduce Children's Anxiety in War-affected Areas" (Registration No GPK-07/2022). Immediately after creating a demo version of the website, researchers organised webinars aimed at presenting its content to educators in Ukraine and collected feedback from webinars' participants. For that very reason the joint Latvian-Ukrainian team of researchers developed a web-based questionnaire using Google Forms. The population of the conducted research comprised 216 educators from different regions of Ukraine including university lecturers, general secondary teachers, researchers and students of pedagogical specialties. The obtained results proved the necessity of developing the web-based support system for educators aimed at reducing anxiety among schoolchildren in war-affected areas in Ukraine.*

Keywords: *anxiety, general secondary schools, psychological and didactic support, schoolchildren and parents, schoolchildren, website for teachers, war-affected areas in Ukraine.*

Introduction

A full-scale military offensive launched by Russia in Ukraine on 24 February 2022 changed the lives of many people not only in Ukraine but also throughout the world. Many Ukrainians became internally displaced and many of them had to seek refuge abroad. According to United Nations (2022b), nowadays there are more than 7.8 million Ukrainian refugees scattered across Europe. Most tragically, hostilities have already had and continue having a detrimental effect on both educational opportunities and mental health of 5.7 million Ukrainian children of different school ages (United Nations Children's Fund, 2022). It means that providing quality education and psychological support to Ukrainian schoolchildren who are inside and outside of Ukraine are among remaining pressing needs to be addressed in the shortest possible time (Malykhin, Aristova, & Bondarchuk, 2022).

The joint Latvian-Ukrainian project "Web-based Support System for Educators to Reduce Children's Anxiety in War-affected Areas" (Registration No GPK-07/2022) was an important initiative preceded by a great deal of theoretical and research work done by a team of scientists from Latvia and Ukraine. The research initiated by Latvian scientists started in the middle of March 2022. Its aim was to define psychological and didactic problems related to maintaining mental and emotional health and providing quality education to children of different school ages as the central agents of education amid martial law and in the post-war period (Malykhin, Aristova, & Rohova, 2022) and to provide theoretically substantiated solutions to the problems defined. Given the complicated situation currently prevailing in Ukraine and the idea that the accumulation of physical and mental problems can lead to negative consequences for schoolchildren, parents and teachers (Bethere et al., 2018), the main efforts of project participants were aimed at developing a website which would provide Ukrainian teachers, schoolchildren and parents with valuable information on stress and anxiety reduction technologies, methods, techniques and activities that could be applied both in the classroom and at home. Thus, a website "Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents" was created through cooperative efforts among Latvian and Ukrainian project participants (Figure 1). The creation of the website lasted for two months (4 October – 30 November 2022).

The website provides its users with different types of support (audio, art etc.), useful information concerning the signs of stress and anxiety, hands-on videos for teachers, schoolchildren and parents aimed at incorporating stress-reduction practices like medication, breathing, drawing and colouring, practical recommendations for teachers targeted at applying various stress and anxiety reduction technologies, methods, techniques and activities for schoolchildren of different school ages etc. Moreover, one of its pages contains information about

practical psychologists who are ready to consult schoolchildren, teachers and parents in the best possible way and provide direct assistance to them. Details of the website can be found under the following link <https://sites.google.com/rta.lv/dolayemo-razom/>.

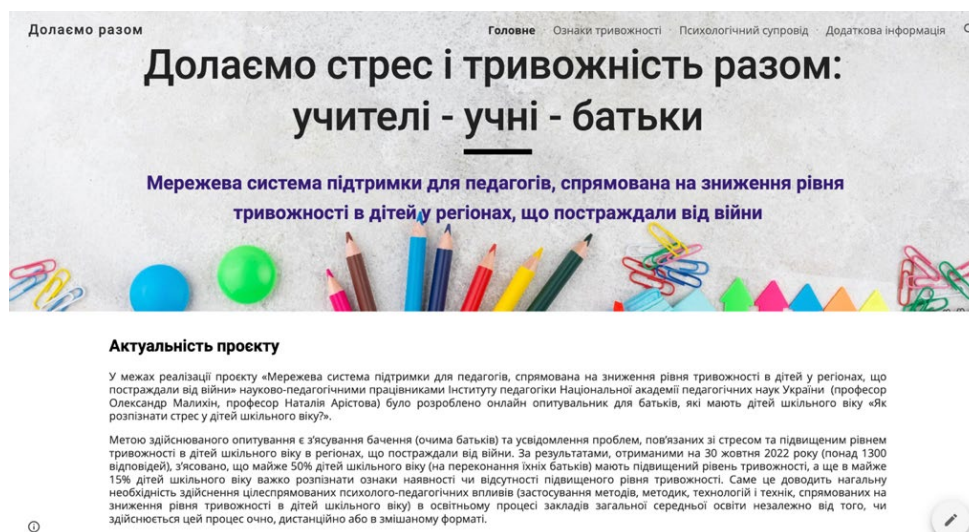


Figure 1 Visual representation of website's initial page (made by authors)

Before releasing the website researchers had to make sure that everything was taken into consideration and ready to use. And that is why it was taken a decision to organise and hold several webinars, face-to-face meetings (where it was possible) and speeches by Ukrainian and Latvian project participants at the Second International Scientific and Practical Conference “The World of Didactics: Didactics in the Contemporary World” (22-23 November 2022). All planned activities were aimed at presenting a website’s demo version to Ukrainian educators (including university and general secondary school teachers, students of pedagogical specialties etc.), on the one hand, and collecting feedback from them with identifying areas for improvement, on the other hand. Table 1 presents summarised information on planned online activities aimed at presenting the demo version of the website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents” to Ukrainian educators.

Table 1 Summarised Information on Planned Online Activities Aimed at Presenting the Demo Version of the Website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents” to Ukrainian Educators (made by authors)

Planned online activities	Date	Link
All-Ukrainian webinar “Overcoming Stress Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents”	10 November 2022	https://undip.org.ua/news/kompensatsii-a-osvitnikh-vtrat-u-zakladakh-zahalnoi-serednoi-osvity-v-umovakh-voiennoho-stanu-ta-u-povoiennyi-chas/

Second International Scientific and Practical Conference "The World of Didactics: Didactics in the Contemporary World"	22 November 2022	https://sites.google.com/view/conferencedidactica2021
Webinar "Overcoming Stress Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents"	22 November 2022	https://kafsotsped.kpnu.edu.ua/sklad-kafedry/
Webinar "Web-based Support System for Educators to Reduce Children's Anxiety in War-affected Areas"	24 November 2022	https://donnuet.edu.ua/kafedra-inozemnoi-filolohii-universytetu-tuhan-baranovskoho-zaproshuie-vidvidaty-vebinar/

Table 2 provides summarised information on planned face-to-face meetings aimed at presenting the demo version of the website "Overcoming Stress and Anxiety together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents" to Ukrainian educators.

Table 2 Summarised Information on Planned Online Activities Aimed at Presenting the Demo Version of the Website "Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents" to Ukrainian Educators (made by authors)

Planned face-to-face activities	Date	Location
Meetings with general secondary school teachers, internally displaced people and local residents	3 November 2022	Lozuvatka (Ukraine)
Meetings with general secondary school teachers, internally displaced people and local residents	8 November 2022	Zelenodolsk (Ukraine)
Meetings with general secondary school teachers	8 November 2022	Kamianets-Podilskyi (Ukraine)
Meetings with general secondary school teachers, internally displaced people and local residents	14 November 2022	Apostolove (Ukraine)
Meetings with general secondary school teachers, internally displaced people and local residents	16 November 2022	Soffiivka and deliberated villages of Kherson region (Ukraine)
Meetings with general secondary school teachers	24 November 2022	Kamianets-Podilskyi (Ukraine)
Meetings with general secondary school teachers	28 November 2022	Kamianets-Podilskyi (Ukraine)

Research Methodology

Instruments

The research aim was to collect feedback from educators on the website "Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents" created within the joint Latvian-Ukrainian project "Web-based Support System for Educators to Reduce Children's Anxiety in War-affected Areas" (Registration

No GPK-07/2022). It is for this purpose the joint Latvian-Ukrainian team of researchers developed a web-based questionnaire using Google Forms. The web-based questionnaire contained two sets of questions. The inclusion of the first set of questions into the web-based questionnaire was targeted at collecting educators' sociodemographic data. The need to collect sociodemographic data is explained by the necessity to get more detailed personal information about research sample. The second set of questions helped researchers collect respondents' independent opinions on the website's demo version.

Research Questions

The following questions were the main point of interest to the team of researchers:

Question 1: *Do you believe that school-age children need psychological and didactic support aimed at overcoming stress and reducing anxiety during the educational process which is delivered in different formats (namely, blended learning format, distance learning format and face-to-face learning format) in times of war in Ukraine?*

Question 2: *Do you observe signs of stress and anxiety among school-age children you teach (headache, lack of concentration, deterioration of mood, irritability, worsening of academic performance, sense of guilt or fear etc.)?*

Question 3: *Do you think that teachers have to develop and summarise information aimed at reducing stress and anxiety among schoolchildren?*

Question 4: *What is your general impression about the website's demo version according to a 5-point Likert scale? (0 – do not like, 5 – impressed).*

Question 5: *Do you use any methods and techniques posted on website during classes?*

Question 6: *Do you think that website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents” is useful for educators who work in times of war in Ukraine?*

Question 7: *Do you like the design and structure of website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents”? Please, give a detailed answer to this question.*

Question 8: *Can you give some comments on improving website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents”?*

Question 9: *Will you recommend your colleagues to use website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents” in their work with schoolchildren?*

Procedure

During planned online activities and face-to-face meetings Ukrainian educators were provided with a link to the web-based questionnaire and asked to

give their feedback on the website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents” developed within the joint Latvian-Ukrainian project “Web-based Support System for Educators to Reduce Children’s Anxiety in War-affected Areas” (Registration No GPK-07/2022). Ukrainian educators were informed that the participation in the web-based survey was voluntary and anonymous. As a result, researchers obtained 216 completed questionnaires which were thoroughly analysed.

Research Sample

The population of the conducted research comprised 216 educators from different regions of Ukraine including university lecturers, general secondary school teachers, researchers and students of pedagogical specialties. All respondents were the participants of planned online activities and face-to-face meetings aimed at popularising the website’s demo version and informing about its content.

Data Analysis

The researchers analysed the data obtained using descriptive statistical analysis.

Results

Sociodemographic Data

Table 3 demonstrates demographic information about 216 respondents who represented the research sample.

Table 3 Demographic information about research sample (made by authors)

Variable	Number (N=216)	Percentage (100%)
Gender		
<i>Female</i>	206	95,4
<i>Male</i>	10	4,6
Age		
<i>≤ 25</i>	8	3,7
<i>26-30</i>	16	7,4
<i>31-35</i>	27	12,5
<i>36-40</i>	34	15,8
<i>41-45</i>	25	11,6
<i>46-50</i>	29	13,4
<i>51-55</i>	32	14,8
<i>56-59</i>	16	7,4
<i>≥60</i>	29	13,4

N=216

Table 4 contains social information about research sample.

Table 4 Social information about research sample (made by authors)

Variable	Number (N=216)	Percentage (100%)
Position		
<i>Teachers without qualifications</i>	29	13,4
<i>Category-1 teachers</i>	44	20,4
<i>Category-2 teachers</i>	29	13,4
<i>Highest category teachers</i>	70	32,4
<i>Resource teachers</i>	23	10,6
<i>Headmasters</i>	9	4,2
<i>University teachers</i>	6	2,8
<i>Students</i>	6	2,8
Work experience		
≤ 3	17	7,9
3-10	27	12,5
11-20	65	30,1
≥ 20	107	49,5

N=216

Feedback Data

Replying to the first question, 202 respondents (93,5%) stated that they were deeply convinced that after a full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, Ukrainian school-age children they taught needed psychological and didactic support aimed at overcoming stress and reducing anxiety during classes. Only 4 respondents (1,9%) expressed the opposite opinion. 10 respondents (4,6%) found it difficult to give a clear answer (Figure 2).

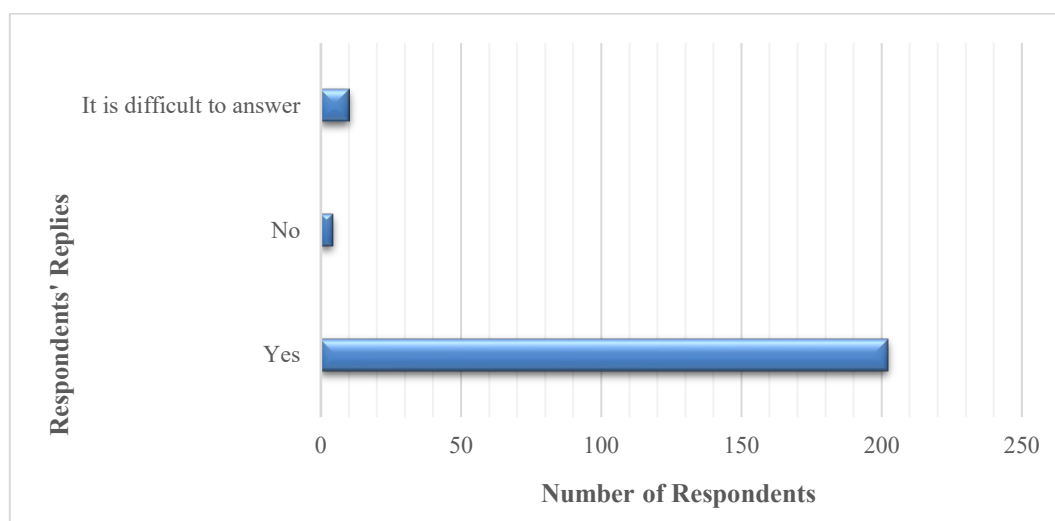


Figure 2 Educators' responses to the question "Do you believe that school-age children need psychological and didactic support aimed at overcoming stress and reducing anxiety during the educational process which is delivered in different formats (namely, blended learning format, distance learning format and face-to-face learning format) in times of war in Ukraine?" (made by authors)

The main aim of the second question was to find out if respondents observed any signs of stress and anxiety among school-age children. The obtained results showed that 165 respondents (76.4%) stated that they could observe signs of stress and anxiety among school-age children they taught. 21 respondents (9.7%) answered negatively and 30 respondents (13.9%) found it difficult to answer this question (Figure 3).

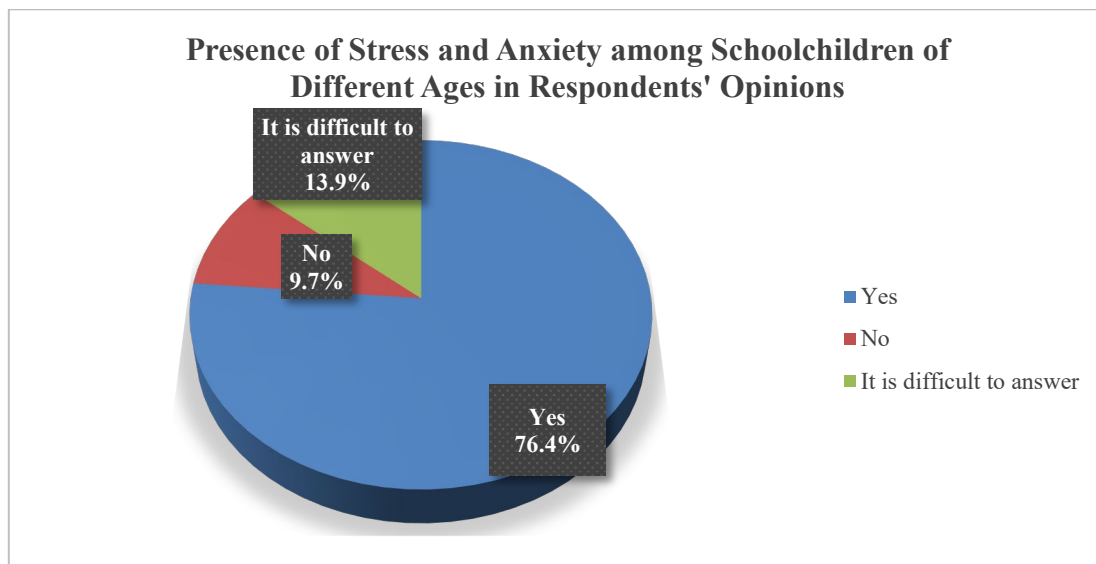


Figure 3 Educators' responses to the question "Do you observe signs of stress and anxiety among school-age children you teach (headache, lack of concentration, deterioration of mood, irritability, worsening of academic performance, sense of guilt or fear etc.)" (made by authors)

The third question which interested researchers was "Do you think that teachers have to develop and summarise information aimed at reducing stress and anxiety among schoolchildren?" The analysis of the responses revealed that 191 respondents (88.4%) thought that teachers had to develop and summarise information aimed at reducing stress and anxiety among schoolchildren. They explained that it was necessary because they worked with children who witnessed tragic events and continued to live experiencing fear. 5 respondents (2.3%) who had completely different points of view stated that they saw no need to develop and summarise information related to reduction of stress and anxiety. 20 respondents (9.3%) found it difficult to answer the question raised.

Asking the fourth question, researchers intended to clarify respondents' general impression on the website's demo version. The obtained results suggested that the website's demo version was well received by respondents (Figure 4).

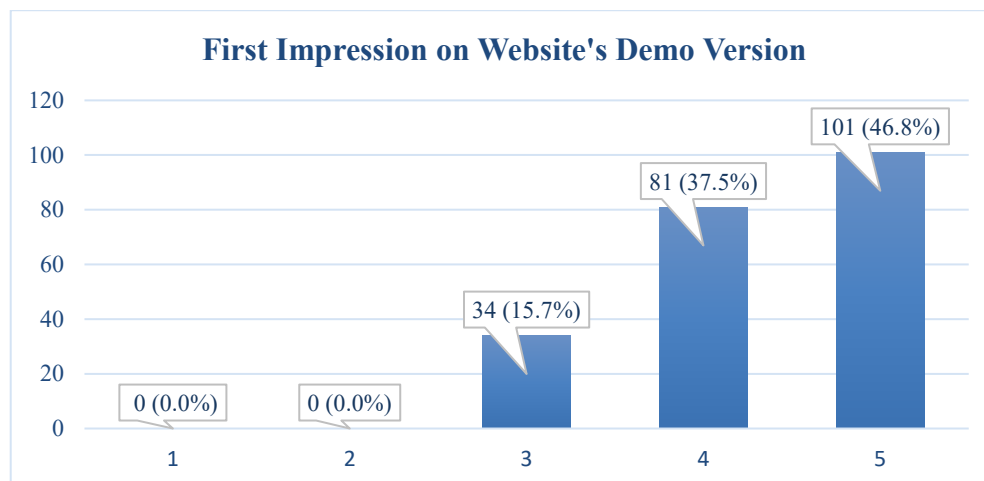


Figure 4 Educators' responses to the question "What is your general impression about the website's demo version according to a 5-point Likert scale? (0 – do not like, 5 – impressed)" (made by authors)

The fifth question was aimed at finding out if respondents used any methods and techniques posted on website during classes. Responding to this question, 201 participants (93.1%) gave a positive answer and only 15 of them (6.9%) answered negatively.

The results obtained clearly showed that approximately all respondents (93.1%) were convinced that the website developed by researchers was useful for educators who worked in times of war in Ukraine and only 15 of them (6.9%) found it difficult to answer this question. Moreover, approximately 179 respondents (82.9%) noted that they liked the design and structure of the website developed. The following are a few of positive respondents' responses:

P 22: *On the whole, I am very much in favor of creating such a website full of useful information and entertaining activities for schoolchildren of different school ages. The activities posted in the section "Art Support" deserve special praise. To tell the truth, I discovered a lot of new and interesting activities which I can use both in the classroom and with my own children at home. It is an excellent idea to collect unbiased and comprehensive information at one place.*

P 39: *I liked both the design and structure. All the activities posted on the website are positive and easy to use in the classroom.*

P 107: *The site contains real techniques and activities which can be used during the educational process.*

P 193: *Useful pieces of advice aimed at reducing stress and anxiety.*

Then, respondents were asked to give some comments on improving website "Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents". The most typical comments given by respondents were as follows:

P 12: *Right now, I cannot recommend anything sound. I liked everything. Thank you for the webinar, it was rather informative. You presented a large*

amount of material and it will take some time to comprehend it. Nevertheless, thank you very much. I really hope for further cooperation. I will definitely recommend this website to the practical psychologist who works in our school. Good luck!

P 54: You all did a great job! Please, do not stop and continue working in this direction! I teach high school English and I like the idea of writing essays. I will definitely use it during my classes.

P 62: Continue working and posting new methods, techniques, activities and more practical advice from teachers.

P 81: Many thanks for such a wonderful job!

P 106: Please, add information about sports-support! I am a PE teacher and I am convinced that physical activities are useful for overcoming stress and reducing anxiety.

P 109: Please, continue improving what you have already done! General impression is very positive.

The last question which interested the researchers greatly was “*Will you recommend your colleagues to use website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents” in their work with schoolchildren?*” A review of the responses obtained suggest that 99.1 per cent of all participants would definitely recommend the website to their colleagues while only 0.9 per cent of all participants responded negatively (Table 5). This shows that respondents have an unquestionably positive attitude towards the website and its content.

Table 5 Respondents opinions on recommending the website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents” to colleagues (made by authors)

Variable	Number (N=216)	Percentage (100%)
Positive recommendation	214	99.1
Negative recommendation	2	0.9

Conclusions

To conclude, the current research provided insight into how Ukrainian educators perceived the demo version of the website “Overcoming Stress and Anxiety Together: Teachers – Schoolchildren – Parents” within the project “Web-based Support System for Educators to Reduce Children’s Anxiety in War-affected Areas” (Registration No GPK-07/2022). The obtained results proved the necessity of developing the web-based support system for educators aimed at reducing anxiety among schoolchildren in war-affected areas in Ukraine and the correctness of chosen strategy aimed at creating the website containing various technologies, methods, techniques and activities for overcoming stress and reducing anxiety among schoolchildren of different school ages. What is more,

the web-based questionnaire used for fruitful analysis of respondents' points of view became a proper framework for establishing a further action plan for the joint team of researchers from Latvia and Ukraine.

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