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TRAINING OF PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR WORKING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: CHALLENGES OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The article describes how higher-education trainers can prepare to be practical psychologists capable of giving evidence-based recommendations on competency and professional standards for Ukraine. The authors have analysed both academic publications and professional reports with a view to identifying trends that have an impact on quality of future professional training of psychologists. Indeed, analysis has shown that didactic elements, theory, and practice in training programs have been unevenly strung such that the absence of a few accentuations on ethics education has been shown to be due to majorly non-effectual supervision and a major absence of digital competencies. The model proposed provided training for psychologists and addressed reflexive needs regarding practice in the professional identity of students. This would, in turn, strengthen interdisciplinary integration so that future professionals can operate in intricate educational spaces. Focused on a systematic introduction of modern digital tools and appreciation of ethics as one feature of the overall quality of psychological participation within the school, this would talk about aligning academic content with practice in the integrated practically-oriented model of training psychologists underpinned by theory, education, and practical-reflexive perspectives. In the empirical part of the research, a mini-training session named “Psychologist in Education: Competence, Ethics, Practice” has been organized, which offered such modules as ethical dilemmas, crisis counselling, and digital communication. Survey results (n=20) showed positive dynamics: 85% of participants reporting an increase in confidence degree, 78% in skills for crisis counselling, 82% in digital skills, and 90% in awareness for ethics. The conclusion regarding practice-oriented approaches has been strengthened: modification of the academic content of the courses should take under consideration balancing of theory with practical classes, increasing supervisory support, and methods involving digital tools and ethical component per modern standards.

Keywords: competence, educational environment, practical psychologist, professional preparation, professional standard, quality of education.

INTRODUCTION

As education shifts towards digitalization and broader online communications, psychologists in training need to be made aware of digital realities, command remote support

technologies and psychodiagnostic tools, and be competent in networking psychological education (EFPA, 2020).

Training practical psychologists for the needs of the Ukrainian education system is one of the key and most challenging problems in modern psychological-pedagogical science, as precisely for this purpose, the specialist should psychologically facilitate the educational process, assist with the harmonious development of the individual personality, and make educational institutions a safe and emotionally comfortable environment.

In this regard, the very essence of applying phenomena of competitiveness to training has started to take on new meaning when working out an environmentally friendly setting of educational culture. In modern socio-cultural conditions, the world of psychology in educational settings has been gaining a new dimension alongside the growing need for specialists able to conduct systematic preventive, consulting, diagnostic, and corrective activities, development not only of programs for the social and emotional competences of children and adults.

The global challenges of military, economic, and digital-environmental set further aggravations of the role of school psychologists in colleges: the controversial role has been mediator between children, families, and the educational environment that requires not just knowledge and skills of theory but rather ethical culture, emotional maturity, adaptability, and creativity.

However, the future psychologist must receive training in digital literacy, teletherapy techniques, and psychodiagnostic tools, and competence in an online networked psychological education (EFPA, 2025).

The appropriateness of education in practical psychologist training correlates directly with whether the courses fulfill the contemporary professional requirements stated in the Professional Standard Necessary in Psychologists (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2022). This is a document that delineates the competence profile of the specialist, main functions of work to be performed, and the requirements for knowledge, skills, and abilities. Accordingly, this advance in the preparation of psychologists should also be judged according to European standards (EFPA, 2020; EFPA, 2025) with respect to training not just on core knowledge but also on a well-developed set of skills in the areas of self-reflection, critical thinking, interpersonal communication, and ethical adherence.

This theoretical basis is put to work into the practical training of future psychologists with respect to competency-based, humanistic-psychological, and reflective-learning approaches. As noted by G. Corey (2019), professional training involves nurturing personal qualities, such as empathy, self-reflection, tolerance, and the capability of developing ethical relationships with clients (Corey, 2019).

In the Ukrainian scientific tradition, research focuses on how effectively SEL projects can be implemented in Ukrainian preschools, using various projects and activities. The study argues that SEL is a primary activity in every educational context, so that children gradually become attuned to these wonderful social-emotional skills as they grow. Examples given by the author are worth a million dollars, for they describe project-based approaches, and the role of the teacher in creating an environment that is safe for the expression of emotional competence and develops that very competence (Baidyk & Romakhova, 2025).

Following this, the work by H. Bondarenko et al. (2025) was aimed at training future teachers to ensure the social and emotional development of primary school children through project work. This article focuses on identifying methodological approaches, programs of study, and pedagogical practices that could facilitate the integration of social-emotional learning within the educational process. The authors outline the competence of future teachers in this respect among the really serious factors substantially influencing students' successful social and emotional development (Bondarenko et al., 2025).

L. Havrilova and A. Rysyukova (2023) describe the international perspective on SEL programs for primary schools. The study undertakes comparative research analysing theory and practice in several countries with relevance to Ukraine. They concluded that a systemic approach to

SEL might work: programs need to be modified for cultural and educational peculiarities, and that early implementation of SEL programs would benefit students' motivation and emotional competence (Havřílová & Rysukova, 2023).

SEL in Ukraine and globally is the matter of main concern by O. Rasskazova et al. (2024). Among the points for deliberation are proposed directions for embedding social-emotional learning in the educational systems pertaining to the development of curricula, training of teachers, and assessment of intervention effectiveness. The authors clarify that SEL serves as a tool to enhance students' social competence and emotional well-being, thus enabling them to perform in academic activities better (Rasskazova et al., 2024).

The focus of T. Vodolozska (2024) was on the impact of lifelong education on social and emotional learning. It demonstrates how learning in social and emotional learning helps to develop a balanced personality of a learner and enhances pedagogical effectiveness. It offers practical recommendations for integrating SEL across diverse educational contexts, emphasizing the pressing need to create a safe, positive learning climate in which emotional competence will flourish (Vodolozska, 2024).

Since its assessment of educational programs concerned with the training of practical psychologists presently available in Ukraine brings about a host of systemic contradictions, among others theoretical: in many instances, the theoretical component overshadows the practical, opportunities for practicing consultative and diagnostic skills are still limited, and there is some evidence for fragmented supervisory assistance received along the way, and there was also a lack of focus on ethical and digital competencies (EFPA, 2020). Therefore, everything indicates that a profound review of the content and methods of professional training is needed.

The above accounts reiterate the complexity and multidimensional nature of the matter on professional development for the specialist in the educational psychological services, as reflected in the generalization of the theoretical provisions, analysis of current professional standards, and contradiction of the already manifested content of specialist training for future practical psychologists. Hence, it calls for empirical studies into the effectiveness of contemporary training approaches and a justification of a model based on integrated professional preparedness due to prohibitive differences between regulation and qualifications on actual competencies for students in educational practice (Anthun, 2020; Bates et al., 2019; Friend & Barron, 2024).

Consequently, it becomes obligatory to state clearly how the methodological principles of the study will, besides systematizing theoretical works, lead to scientifically verified information on the effectiveness of practice-oriented forms of training. After that, considerable methodological aspects of such empirical development methods are detailed, including literature review, empirical modelling of the integrative educational model, and evaluation of operational empirical effectiveness.

The study deals with the problems of identifying qualitatively better remedies for putting training in clinical practice into service, which includes the following tasks: To study the present-day requirements, standards, and barriers with respect to the professionally quality training of applied psychologists in education; To clarify the theoretical foundations of improvement in professional training in personal and professional identity or development, ethical culture, and digital competence; To substantiate the integrative model of practice-oriented training, particularly laying down its elements and mechanisms of implementation along with expected results; Practical evaluation of the model's effectiveness through mini-training, as well as assessment of participants' competency dynamics. Henceforth, this research aims to explore better ways of improving the quality of educational training of practical psychologists with respect to modern professional requirements and modern ethical and digital requirements.

RESEARCH METHODS

Methodological bases of the study include subjective empirical, theoretical, and modelling approaches, systematically applied in to training practical psychologists commissioned to educational institutions, efficacy of which rests upon the integrative professional educational model.

Desktop data collection was done through a thorough clean-up of sources by examining all the scientific sources, as well as the regulatory and international professional standards of psychological activity. The theoretical stage was in a twofold manner via the systematic quantitative and qualitative analysis of literature. Principles for bibliometric relevance for quantitative literature analyses guided the literature review, with wording restrictions of 22 scientific sources (monographs, articles, and international standards) in the training of psychologists against this background. The analysis identified discussions about the frequency of key issues in the field. These include predominant theoretical components in 77% of the sources, but lack supervision in 64% of the sources, the importance of ethical competency for future psychologists in 73% of the sources, and the absence of digital literacy in 59% of the sources.

Such continuous quantitative analyses, complemented with qualitative content analyses which were inferred from the comparison of theoretical-empirical-methodological approaches to the professional training of psychologists, precisely gave insight into the aspect forming its professional identity, ethical culture, and digital competence, and cohering with provisions of the Professional Standard «Psychologist» and EFPA recommendation. The very conceptual bases of the study laid down through qualitative methods do provide such an integrated view of imposed definitions for today's expert in the psychological service of education.

The integrative model of professional training was constructed with the methods of pedagogical and psychological-acmeological modelling. The model constituted the competency paradigm, comprising three interlinked blocks: theoretical, training-modelling, and practical-reflective. The conceptual definition of phases and logic of implementation, as well as expected outcomes of the model, was achieved through the methods of modelling.

This integrative model has been tested at a mini-curricular training “Psychologist at an Educational Institution: Competence, Ethics, Practice”, in which 20 master students. Research methods utilized: questionnaire surveys that defined the level of confidence, crisis and digital competence, and ethical awareness; observation assessing the quality of professional interaction in modelling task processes; content analysis measuring the depth of professional reflection, formation of ethical decisions, and ability to act per professional standards; and comparative analysis into the dynamics of professional competence growth before and after training participation.

Statistical description of data generated from empirical studies through percentage methods shows that it has objectively accounted for the dynamics of professional confidence, crisis competence, digital competency, and ethical awareness of model participants.

This would assure the whole scientific trustworthiness of the results and would confirm the viability and efficiency of the integrative model developed for training practical psychologists towards the needs of educational institutions, as it comprises much synergy quantitatively and qualitatively analysing literature, modelling, and empirical checking.

DISCUSSION

Training aimed at guaranteeing future practitioners' quality within this instilled field of psychology can acquire an air of urgency and be justified only if concrete reforms are introduced in the educational process to effect adequate matching of theoretical and practical components, institutionalization of supervision, development of digital competence, and moral maturity cultivated as an integral aspect of professional quality.

As prescribed by the Professional Standard for Psychologist (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 1623, 2022) and in accordance with the EFPA EuroPsy Framework (EFPA, 2020), the work of a psychologist in educational institutions involves many competencies nicely grouped into competency blocks (Figure 1) thus allowing for the integrity and multidimensionality of the psychologist's functions.

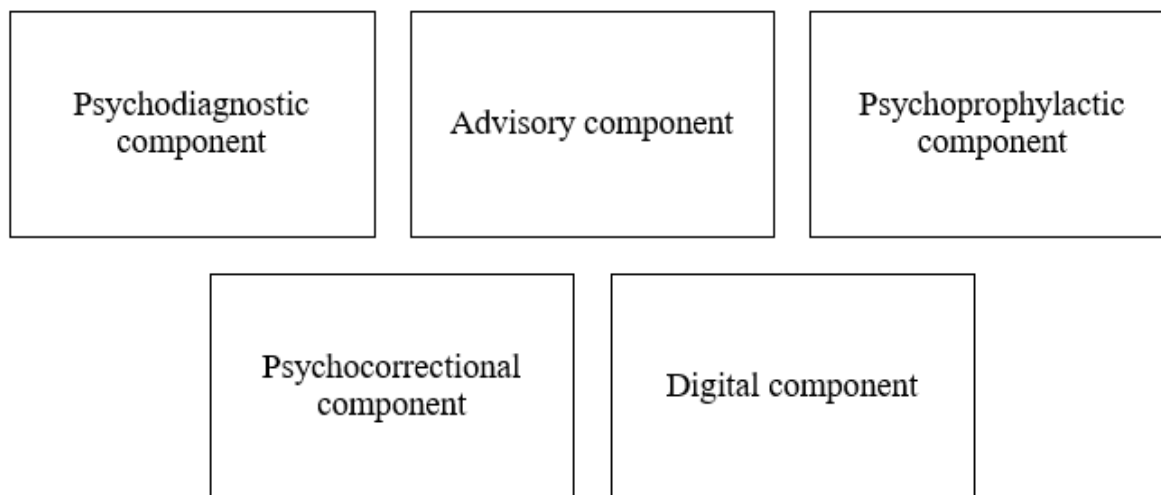


Figure 1. **Competency blocks of a psychologist's professional activity**
Developed by authors

Psychodiagnostic tests offer means to assess such functioning, adaptation, and risk areas for an individual's maladjustment. This field is at the core of professional training in psychology because it serves to identify developmental needs and plan appropriate remediation (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2022). For instance, during the school psychology practice of psychodiagnostic methods, children's social and emotional well-being may be given due regard while their rights are upheld (Hatzichristou, Nastasi, & Jimerson, 2024). Evidence concerning school-based mental health promotion highlights the need for systematic assessment and prevention strategies that will improve student well-being and serve as protective measures against psychosocial difficulties (Weare & Nind, 2011).

Consultative - Individual, group, and family counselling, bearing in mind some characteristics of the clients such as age, socio-cultural and gender, as well as the principles of a client-centered approach (Rogers, 2012).

Psychopreventive – train educational preventive programs geared toward providing psychological culture, emotional intelligence, and defences against stress mediation to promote the well-being of the environment in which students operate and above.

Psychocorrection is the process of conducting individual and group sessions for self-improvement, over-anxiety, deviant behaviour prevention, crisis intervention, and personal development facilitation (Corey, 2019).

Digital means the application of ICT in psychological diagnosis and remote counselling, educational analytics, and design of digital learning environments for enhancing the mental well-being of learners and teachers (Amiri, 2025).

This competency can only be achieved by integrating theory with the practical modules of contemplative and supervised practice that will allow the holistic development of a future professional identity of a psychologist. Such models of learning for integrative education are very highly sought after today-from being included to being digitized and in a spirit of humanistic values; it is today's trend for psychological service professionals.

RESEARCH RESULTS

These holistic approaches are conceived and organically intertwined combinations of a theoretical understanding with practical competency and professional reflection in the preparation of future practical psychologists for effective engagement in professional activity in the educative environment. The proposed model of integrative practice-oriented training is founded upon the principles of cooperatives, systematic and activity approaches aiming to engender ethnic identity and sensitivity, and capacity to function effectively as practical psychologists under modern conditions (Chen et al., 2020; Hallaraker et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024; Maloney et al., 2024; Patterson et al., 2021; Promsiri, 2025).

The model is understood as a structural-logical system comprising three of its interrelated components: theoretical-analytical, training-modelling, and practical-reflective. Guided by such methodological principles for determination of model construction: internationality, interactivity, professionalism, reflexivity, and systematicity of supervisory support, and application of professional standards.

Those will be the structural components of the model: theoretical and analytical component, training and modelling component, and practical and reflective component.

The theoretical and analytical component is one that is targeted towards acquiring fundamental postulates of psychological science together with the regulatory and legal documents-on the Professional Standard «Psychologist» and modern concepts of psychological activity within the education system. Under this block, students: acquire the theoretical foundations of psychodiagnostics, psychological counselling, prevention, and correctional work; become familiar with ethical norms and principles in EFPA, particularly, with professional responsibility and ethical decision-making; and develop critical thinking abilities for analysing educational situations and reflecting their own professional position.

This is form with regard to the theoretical-analytical component. The practical-reflective aspect of that co-constructs some framework, which leads to understanding how and for what purposes a psychologist's activity is done in the context of an educational institution.

The training and modelling component thus fosters essential practical skills significantly through purposely simulated events which closely resemble real work situations in the life of a school psychologist. Role-plays, simulations, case analysis, crisis simulation methodology: working through ethical dilemmas, role conflicts, and issues of confidentiality and professional boundaries: systematic and scheduled supervision sessions, which are the main ones of professional workshops on evolving a reflection development and prevention of emotional burnout, compose the component's content.

Training and modelling will build to prepare practically the consulting, diagnostic, preventive, and crisis energetic functions of a psychologist.

The practical-reflective component covers all these under real-life or, at least, close-to-real conditions of professional activity. It is made up of the following components: field practice and individual tasks of professional character; keeping a reflective diary alongside self-assessment of professional activity; participation in supervision groups in which one's actions are consequentially assessed; and the effectiveness of one's selected strategies is evaluated shaping toward development of professional autonomy.

In fact, a great deal will also be devoted to professional identity, professionalism, ethical maturity, and the capacity for independent judgments about professional decisions.

The model will thus transform in that:

1. From theory to modelling professional situations in practice;
2. From modelling to real life and the supervision input;
3. From practical application on to fact assessment, self-dissatisfaction in assessing, and correction in professional actions.

In this way, one not only establishes continuity in professional development but also harmonizes theoretical knowledge with practical experience as well as solidifies long-lasting, sustainable professional competencies.

It is in these integrative models that it is expected that the practical identity concerning the psychologist comes into being, together with ethical considerations and the ability to mimic a professional decision under circumstances of moral conflict over-and above-theistic enhancement of the efficiency of consultative and psychodiagnostic actions, acquisition of crisis intervention skills, bigger improvement on digital literacy as well as working well online, reflexivity, and ability on self-assessment of professional activities.

The model where under professional formation transpires would thus be the template for criteria under which aspiring psychologists will fit modern standards and demands regarding quality and the educational practice. This is actual modelling of the future practical psychologist in terms of preparation for work in the educative environment, where the orthodox lecture model does not apply. Rather, an integrative practice-oriented model has been developed based on theoretical, training-modelling, and practically-reflective components.

Clarifying, the practice-oriented model really rests largely upon the competency-based approach predefining an educational process focused on the ability to act professionally, ethically, and flexibly under conditions of modern educational environment. Practice, supervision, and conducting interviews are indeed what OECD research at international competence level proved to be the most effective propositions towards developing future psychologists' professional competence.

In an effort to prepare master's-level students in Psychology for registration at an educational institution, the educational-practical event, a mini-training «The Psychologist in the Educational Institution: Competence, Ethics and Practice» was held for the purpose of professional training for activity within the educational space.

Discussed above were three blocks, "Ethical dilemmas in the work of a school psychologist", "Working with a student in crisis" and "Digital aspects of psychological assistance". We shall analyze each one more closely.

The goal of the first in-depth module on Ethical Dilemmas in the Work of a School Psychologist was to foster ethical competence by discussing real-life situations from educational psychologists' practice. The methodology used was that of case studies, class discussions, and group reflections. The situations discussed included potential breaches in confidentiality, conflicting professional roles, and balancing between support given to a student and working together with the teaching staff, amongst others. An emphasis was placed on contemplating one's ethical decisions while developing an action-oriented capacity based on professional norms.

The second module, the working with a Student in Crisis, was aimed primarily at forming an additional consultative and psychocorrectional skill sets. Role-play practices for active listening and empathic reflection were practiced, while cognitive-behavioural support strategies were applied. Much work related to crisis intervention strategies, particularly in relation to anxiety, bullying, and emotional exhaustion, was emphasized. The role-play fostered confidence in one's professional actions and emotional-interactional skills.

Module 3, Digital Aspects of Psychological Assistance, developed digital competences and skills in online communication. The students participated in simulated consultations on Zoom and Google Meet, employing online psychodiagnostic tools and questionnaires. Ethical and technical aspects of online counselling, including personal data protection and maintaining psychological contact in virtual environments, were also discussed.

A positive trend was recorded concerning the formation and at least partial development of future social workers' professional competences assessed through the survey of the participants (n=20). The training was deemed effective in fostering the development of the participants with

personal, communication, and ethical input into their professional activities, thereby supporting the proposition that this innovative training is an alternative mode of professional development.

A total of 85% of the students indicated that their confidence in professional actions has been greatly enhanced, indirectly validating their internal readiness to make decisions under difficult working conditions and further validating an enhanced level of independence in their practical work.

In fact, 78% of the respondents said that their skills in crisis counselling have considerably improved, which have had a large positive impact in helping distressed clients to confront their psycho-emotional difficulties and actually implement the respective methods of psychological support and intervention in the most appropriate way.

Also, 82% of students stated that they improved their digital skills and communication skills for online life and work skills, especially important now in view of the digitalization of social work and the transition to remote forms of interaction with clients. This suggests that their digital literacy has been considerably elevated, and that the emerging specialists have become in alignment with the current technological issues.

The 90% of the students who attested to the awareness of ethical responsibility in professional activity became greatest in number. This again shows how the training has greatly contributed to shaping moral and ethical guidelines of the student's inner sense of founding principles like confidentiality, tolerance, and professional ethics.

There were signs that all variables were above 75%, with the highest effect of this training on the ethical competence pathing way for claiming this training effectiveness for practice-oriented training (Figure 2).

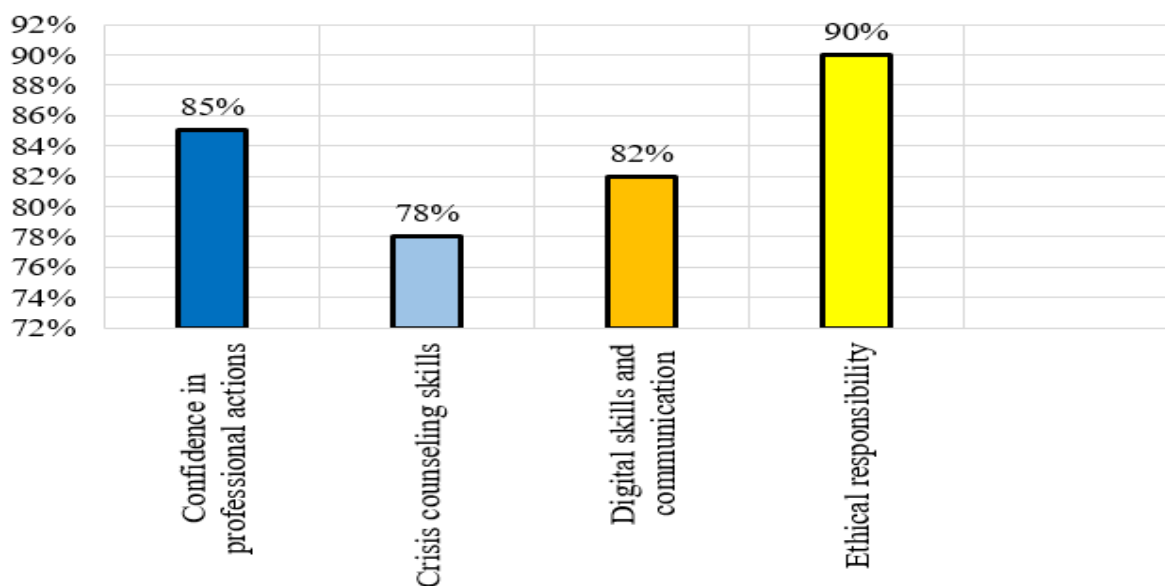


Figure 2. Results of the training

“Psychologist in an educational institution: competence, ethics, practice”

Developed by authors

Summarizing, all training technologies are viewed as legitimate and valid measures in developing some key professional competencies and readiness for practical activity of these social workers in conditions of social uncertainty and crisis while acknowledging their role as facilitators or additional components in transforming futures of social workers' training.

CONCLUSION

The research just about fully systematized the analysis and development of practical psychologists' training at the current pedagogical settings. Hence, the tasks posed and correspondence correlation toward the fully confirmed integrated practice and standard-oriented model of professional education.

In essence, analysis of modern requirements, standards, and challenges actually relevant in quality training for practical psychologists revealed quite a few systemic biases: emphasizing theoretical process of training, somewhat artificially limiting the development of practical modules, poorly developing the supervisory support medium, uneven upgrading of ethical and digital competencies. In particular, Professional standard of "Psychologist" and international recommendations for EFPA set forth, with respect to professionalism, the requirements of a psychologist which thus far remain largely unreflected in our curriculum.

From theoretical aspect, the foundation of professional training, generalized on the basis of an analysis of domestic and foreign literature, considers the need for integrating cognitive, emotional, and activity components in professional development. It is articulated that the very foundation of quality training lays on professional identity development through reflective practices, fixed ethical culture formation as a basis for responsible interaction in complicated educational situations, and ensured digital competence as a prerequisite for operation in digitized educational environments and online communication.

Assuredly, these three components can and must be integrated concerning the professional readiness of the present-day practical psychologists.

The model of integrated practice-oriented training developed and experimented with within this research consists of three interrelated blocks: theory (for mastering basic concepts and professional standards); training and modelling (the development of skills through simulation, role-play, case studies, and group discussion); and practice and reflection (in which students integrate new knowledge and skills into simulated real-life experiences with supervisory support).

Its working logic is to gradually go from theoretical learning toward professional input, making reflective evaluation compulsory, as well as developing ethical and digital competencies. The expected outcomes envisioned by the model would be integrated professional readiness, with involvement in professional reflection, demonstration of ethical accountability, and provision of effective psychological help in the real and ever-present educational environment.

The empirical verification of the model's effectiveness took place in a mini-training on the topic "Psychologist in Educational Institution: Competence, Ethics, Practice", with 20 attendees recording marked change in the development of professional competencies:

- 85% increased professional self-confidence;
- 78% increased crisis competencies;
- 82% digital and digital communication skills acquired;
- 90% raised ethical awareness.

The results affirm that practice-oriented training approaches are highly efficient and emphasize the necessity for supervision, modelling, acting situations, and digital applications.

In all, this study provided evidence that quality training for practical psychologists in educational institutions is achievable under certain conditions: strong alignment between curricula and professional standards, a balanced approach to theoretical and practical components, systematic building of ethical and digital competencies, and obligatory supervision support.

Such an integration model holds great potential as an effective mechanism to develop the professional preparedness of future psychologists and could act as a conceptual platform for modernizing higher psychology education programs in Ukraine.

Future research avenues include developing assessment systems to evaluate psychologists' competency formation during education processes, establishing interuniversity

supervision platforms, and investigating how digital technologies influence psychological interactions within school environments.

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ПІДГОТОВКА ПРАКТИЧНИХ ПСИХОЛОГІВ ДО РОБОТИ В ОСВІТНІХ ЗАКЛАДАХ: ВИКЛИКИ ПРОФЕСІЙНИХ СТАНДАРТІВ

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У статті розглядається підготовка викладачів закладів вищої освіти як практичних психологів, здатних надавати обґрунтовані рекомендації щодо компетентності та професійних стандартів в Україні. Проаналізовано наукові публікації та професійні відгуки, що висвітлюють тенденції, пов'язані з майбутньою якістю професійної підготовки психологів. У результаті аналізу встановлено, що дидактичні, теоретичні та практичні компоненти навчання не збалансовані, з особливою нестачею акцентів на етичну освіту. Виявлено, що відсутність супервізії та недостатнє включення цифрових компетентностей є ключовими факторами цього дисбалансу. Удосконалено модель підготовки психологів із урахуванням потреб рефлексії над практикою для розвитку професійної ідентичності студентів. Консолідація міждисциплінарної інтеграції дозволяє майбутнім фахівцям ефективно діяти в складних освітніх ситуаціях. Акцент зроблено на систематичному впровадженні сучасних цифрових інструментів у освітній процес, а підвищена чутливість до етики визначена як невід'ємна складова якісних психологічних втручань у шкільному середовищі. Це забезпечує узгодження академічного змісту з практикою у рамках інтегрованої, практично-орієнтованої моделі підготовки психологів, що базується на теоретичних, освітніх та практико-рефлексивних перспективах. Для емпіричної частини дослідження проведено міні-тренінг «Психолог в освіті: компетентність, етика, практика», який

включав модулі з етичних дилем, кризового консультування та цифрової взаємодії. У результаті проведеного анкетування ($n=20$) зафіксовано позитивну динаміку: 85% учасників повідомили про підвищення впевненості, 78% – про розвиток навичок кризового консультування, 82% – про покращення цифрових навичок та 90% – про зростання етичної усвідомленості. Удосконалено висновки щодо практично орієнтованих підходів: модифікація академічного змісту курсів повинна здійснюватися на основі балансування теорії з практичними заняттями, посилення супервізійної підтримки та інтеграції цифрових методів і етичних компонентів відповідно до сучасних стандартів.

Ключові слова: компетентність, освітнє середовище, практичний психолог, професійна підготовка, професійний стандарт, якість освіти.