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## Preparation of students for studying in crisis situations

### Preparación de estudiantes para estudiar en situaciones de crisis

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### Abstract

The primary directions of the higher school's educational activity are professional training, education seekers' personal growth and self-affirmation, development of all participants' intellectual potential in the educational process, spiritual enrichment, and moral, aesthetic and physical improvement. The process of socialization of the student's personality continues even during crisis situations.

The purpose of the academic paper is to establish the main tendencies in preparing students for the educational process in crisis situations in the scientific literature and to clarify certain practical aspects of preparing higher education seekers to study in crisis situations. In the course of the research, the analytical-bibliographic method was used to study the scientific literature on the issues of training higher education seekers in crisis situations. Induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis of information, logical-linguistic methods, abstraction, and idealization were applied to study and process data. A questionnaire was conducted by the research authors in online mode to clarify certain aspects of training practically. Based on the research results, the primary theoretical aspects of the process of students' training in crisis situations were studied, as well as the standpoints of education seekers and teachers of higher educational institutions regarding the key aspects of this issue were clarified.

**Keywords:** means of anti-crisis communication, anti-crisis learning strategy, educational competencies in crisis situations, flexibility of learning activities, anti-crisis training programs.

### Resumen

Las direcciones principales de la actividad educativa de la escuela superior son la formación profesional, el crecimiento personal y la autoafirmación de los buscadores de educación, el desarrollo del potencial intelectual de todos los participantes en el proceso educativo, el enriquecimiento espiritual y la mejora moral, estética y física. El proceso de socialización de la personalidad del alumno continúa incluso en situaciones de crisis. Al mismo tiempo, la adaptación, la individualización y la integración efectivas de las medidas anticrisis para garantizar el proceso educativo en las condiciones del entorno educativo de las instituciones culturales y de educación superior adquieren una importancia decisiva. Estudiar las características psicológicas de la edad estudiantil, sus contradicciones, crisis, nivel de desarrollo y características individuales de cada alumno lo hace posible, considerando los cambios que experimenta el equipo estudiantil en general y cada uno de sus participantes en particular, de acuerdo con las especificidades de la situación de crisis, para reconstruir efectivamente el proceso educativo de acuerdo con los requisitos de la institución educativa, incluida la adaptación del contenido y la metodología del proceso educativo mientras se trabaja durante una crisis.

El artículo académico tiene como objetivo establecer las principales tendencias en el estudio del tema de la preparación de los estudiantes para el proceso educativo en situaciones de crisis en la literatura científica y aclarar ciertos aspectos prácticos de la preparación de los aspirantes a la educación superior para estudiar en situaciones de crisis. En el transcurso de la investigación, se utilizó el método analítico-bibliográfico para estudiar la literatura científica sobre los temas de la formación de aspirantes a la educación superior en situaciones de crisis. Se aplicó inducción, deducción, análisis, síntesis de información, métodos sistémico-estructurales, comparativos, lógico-lingüísticos, abstracción, idealización para estudiar y procesar datos. Se realizó un cuestionario por parte de los autores de la investigación en modalidad online para aclarar de manera práctica ciertos aspectos de la formación en condiciones de crisis. Con base en los resultados de la investigación, se estudiaron los principales aspectos teóricos del proceso de formación de los estudiantes en situaciones de crisis, así como se esclareció el punto de vista de los buscadores de educación y de los docentes de las instituciones de educación superior sobre los aspectos clave de este tema.

**Palabras clave:** medios de comunicación anticrisis, estrategia de aprendizaje anticrisis, competencias educativas en situaciones de crisis, flexibilidad de las actividades de aprendizaje, programas de formación anticrisis.

## 1. Introduction

Crises are an integral part of society's development. In case they are not given due attention, they can become a threat to the person, the organization and the state in general. Globalization and informatization as defining tendencies of modern times contribute to the rapid spread and development of crisis situations, the widespread dissemination of negative information. However, at the same time, they provide opportunities for protection, repelling physical and informational aggression, and even development.

To ensure the educational process in higher educational institutions in crisis situations, students should learn the basic requirements of strategic and anti-crisis communication and master the skills of analyzing a crisis situation, forecasting its development. They should substantiate the anti-crisis strategy and develop communication tools for anti-crisis management.

The theoretical part of the present research substantiates the essence, components and features of the preparatory process for training during crises.

The practical part of the research includes assessing certain aspects of ensuring students' quality education in crisis situations, which require particular attention from the perspective of their scientific justification. It also identifies modern educational tendencies, which are most actively and successfully used in education during the period of crisis phenomena. Along with this, it establishes the most important directions of higher education seekers' psychological training in connection with the emergence of crisis situations, as well as competencies that were effectively developed in Ukrainian higher educational institutions during the Russian war in Ukraine, which can be used as a basis for developing anti-crisis training programs in other countries of the world. Based on the research results, conclusions were made regarding the issues raised. New approaches of providing the educational process, most actively and successfully used during the period of crisis phenomena in higher educational institutions' training activities, are distance online learning and gamification of the process of obtaining knowledge. At the same time, the most significant directions of higher education seekers' psychological training, which should be studied at higher educational institutions in connection with the occurrence of crisis situations, are the ability to use modern educational technologies in working with people in crisis situations and deep knowledge and understanding of modern ideas about the principles of providing psychological support in crisis situations and adaptation to specific circumstances. A significant result of the present research is the determination of skills and competencies that have acquired effective development from the perspective of the experience gained by participants in the educational process of Ukrainian higher educational institutions during the Russian war in Ukraine. They can be used as a basis for developing anti-crisis training programs in other countries of the world. Such skills are the ability to create individual ways of development, education, social adaptation and integration of people in crisis situations, and the ability to interdisciplinary interaction under the condition of solving specific tasks during a crisis.

## 2. Literature Review

Pedagogical and educational activities in a higher educational institution aim to form a highly qualified specialist who is able to find his place in the labor market, and take an active part in political, social, cultural and other spheres of society (Costa, Baptista & Dorotea, 2022).

Adaptation-reaction processes in a higher educational institution's pedagogical and educational

activities during crisis situations are conducted by scientific and pedagogical workers implementing the institution's pedagogical, methodical, scientific and organizational activities during a crisis situation in accordance with higher education institutions' main goal. Pedagogical activity of scientific and pedagogical workers of a higher educational institution during a crisis requires a transition from a standard to an adaptive organization of educational activities. At the same time, the entire available stock of abilities and skills of their work in the anti-crisis period is updated, ensuring the fulfillment of a specific task of pedagogical action (Aljanazrah, Yerousis, Hamed & Khlaif, 2022)

In the conditions of a sharp change in the social environment, the transformation of pedagogical activity into a pedagogical and professional one, the education seeker, as a rule, faces significant difficulties in the process of personal and social adaptation of professional training in a period of crisis. The training of the future subject of professional activity in the period of crisis involves the activation of a person's self-awareness, stimulation of the desire for self-esteem and self-development in accordance with the new requirements of organizing the educational process (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The significance of anti-crisis communication in higher education is due to the growing importance of communication processes as a factor in solving problems related to crisis phenomena (Bruggeman et al., 2021).

In modern conditions of computerizing public relations, implementing information and communication technologies, thanks to which news about crisis situations are spread instantly, a media communications specialist must be able to organize external communication with mass media, government bodies, partners and clients and minimize the negative impact on a higher educational institution's work (Ferri, Grifoni & Guzzo, 2020).

In practice, it is increasingly possible to see that using information technologies becomes a catalyst for developing negative consequences, and sometimes a source of crises. After all, the situation can even get out of control due to spreading false information. Consequently, the importance of anti-crisis communication as a component of anti-crisis management in higher education is growing (Bradshaw et al., 2022), (Abad-Segura et al., 2020).

The organization of the educational process during crisis phenomena in society is a new challenge for heads of educational institutions and teachers, and for education seekers. It is important to prepare the educational process in advance or during a crisis from an organizational, material and methodological perspective just to make it safe and pleasant as possible for both students and scientific and pedagogical staff (Vasil'eva, 2022).

Conducted studies of the practical experience of organizing the educational process during Russia's military operations in Ukraine proved that remote work during martial law can be fulfilled both in synchronous and asynchronous mode. However, the best results can be achieved while applying hybrid learning, that is, part of the material is studied in synchronous mode, and most of it is studied in asynchronous mode. Experience has shown that it is necessary to discuss in advance the rules of operation in both modes, as well as the algorithm of actions in the presence of an aggravation of the crisis.

The teacher can also independently make recordings of audiovisual materials and post them on

available platforms for further discussion with education seekers (Vasil'eva, 2022).

Undoubtedly, verifying completed tasks and assessing students' achievements are important parts of the educational process. At the same time, the greatest effectiveness will be achieved in the case when the teacher conducts interviews with students synchronously; however, he can verify the performance of individual and group tasks and conduct control work asynchronously, using platforms (Vasil'eva, 2022).

Having defined the specifics of the provision of educational services in the context of crisis phenomena, it is important to dwell on the main tasks of state authorities in managing the education of territorial communities, fulfilling the requirements for the organization of the educational process in the context of a crisis, namely: to provide education in the most acceptable and safe form, keep records of those who study from among internally displaced persons, pay for the work of teaching staff regardless of their location and notify about the dismissal, promote the employment of employees if there are vacancies (Klimenko, 2022).

Moreover, a specialist should navigate information wars and recognize information operations in current conditions. He should be able to develop and effectively use anti-crisis communication tools. This is precisely why the study of anti-crisis communication aims to prepare students to make balanced decisions and flexible actions in the conditions of rapidly changing situations, to form moral and willful qualities and critical thinking (Barrot, Llenares & Rosario, 2021).

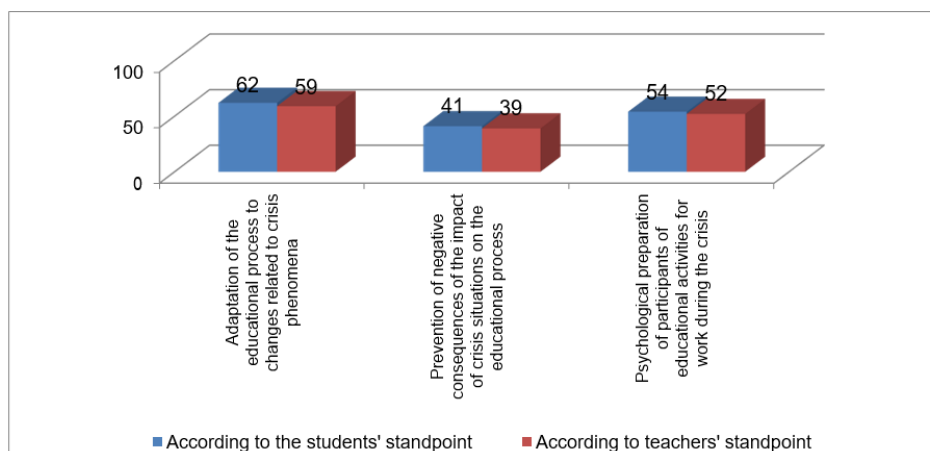
The purpose of the present research is to clarify the standpoint of education seekers and teachers of higher educational institutions regarding certain aspects of training education seekers for effective participation in the educational process during crisis situations.

### **3. Materials and Methods**

A practical study of the features of training students in crisis situations was carried out by surveying 253 practicing teachers of higher educational institutions, as well as 311 students in 14 higher educational institutions of Volyn, Rivne, Zhytomyr and Kyiv regions of Ukraine. The research was conducted using the Survey Monkey service.

### **4. Results**

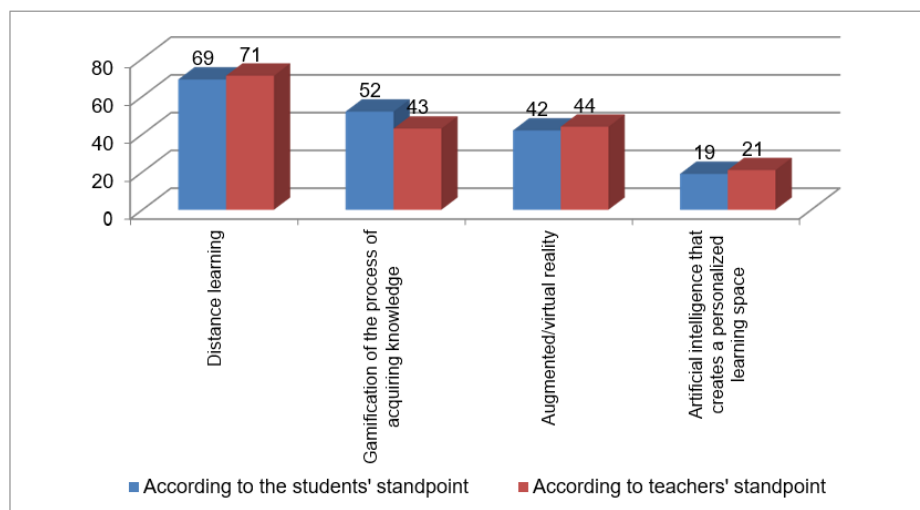
According to the survey participants' standpoint, currently, in conditions of an increased degree of probability of crisis phenomena of various natures in society, the issues related to ensuring quality education of students in crisis situations, requiring the most active study by scientists, are as follows (Figure 1):



**Figure 1.** Aspects of ensuring quality education of students in crisis situations, requiring the most attention from the perspective of their scientific justification, %

Source: compiled by the authors

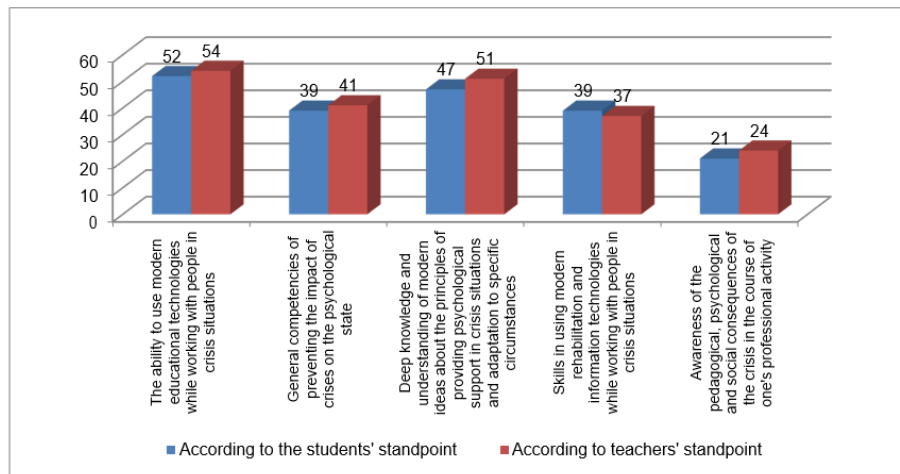
The analysis of the survey's results showed that such aspects are the adaptation of the educational process to the changes related to crisis phenomena and the psychological preparation of the participants of educational activities. During the survey, the respondents determined the following new approaches to ensuring the educational process, which are most actively and successfully used in the period of crisis phenomena in the educational activities of the higher school (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Modern educational trends that are most actively and successfully used in education in the period of crisis phenomena, %

Source: compiled by the authors

According to the standpoint of students and teachers of higher educational institutions, the most important and effective trends in the period of crises are distance online learning and gamification of the process of acquiring knowledge. A significant focus of the research was to reveal the most important areas of higher education seekers' psychological training, which should be studied in higher educational institutions in connection with the emergence of crisis situations (Figure 3).

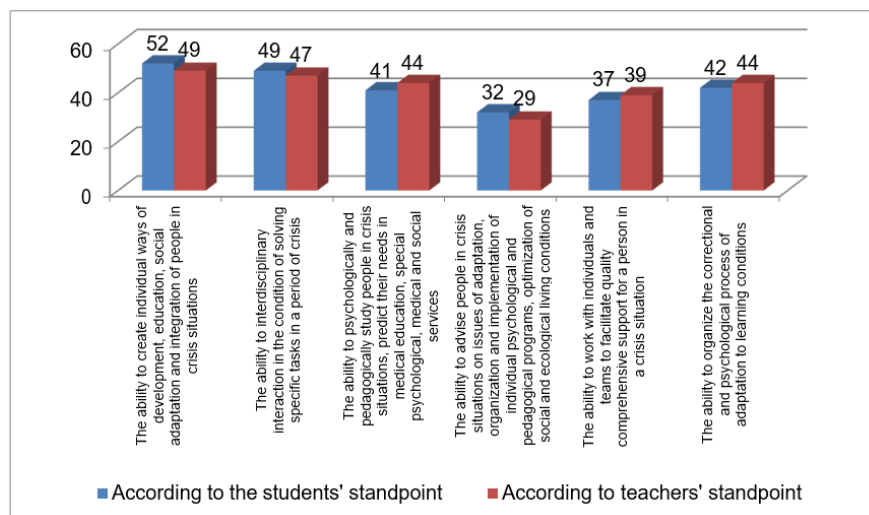


**Figure 3.** The most important directions of higher education seekers' psychological training in connection with the occurrence of crisis situations, %

Source: compiled by the authors

The respondents believe that such directions are the ability to use modern educational technologies in working with people in crisis situations and deep knowledge and understanding of modern ideas about the principles of providing psychological support in crisis situations and adaptation to specific circumstances.

In the course of the research, the respondents were asked to identify the competencies that have acquired effective development from the perspective of the experience gained by education seekers of the Ukrainian higher educational institutions during the Russian war in Ukraine, and can be used as a basis for developing anti-crisis educational programs in other countries of the world (Figure 4):



**Figure 4.** Competencies that were effectively developed at Ukrainian higher educational institutions during Russia's war in Ukraine, which can be used as a basis for the developing anti-crisis training programs in other countries of the world, %

Source: compiled by the authors

It can be observed from Figure 4 that these competencies include the ability to create individual ways of development, education, social adaptation and integration of people in crisis situations, and the ability to interdisciplinary interaction under the condition of solving specific tasks during a crisis.

## 5. Discussion

Considering the features of modern conditions for functioning and developing higher education, when crisis phenomena in society inevitably affect all aspects of the work of higher educational institutions, the necessity to create a “modern strategy” for higher education is of particular relevance. It involves developing anti-crisis methodical principles of specialists’ professional training based on a targeted combination of theoretical, practical, research and experimental aspects of higher educational institutions’ activities (Bruggeman et al., 2021), (Marey & Magd, 2022).

In this regard, higher educational institutions face a number of tasks aimed at effectively preparing all subjects of the educational process to work in crisis situations (Gunasinghe & Nanayakkara, 2021).

The experience of Ukrainian higher educational institutions during crisis situations showed that, thanks to applying special conditions for organizing the educational process, like many areas of social and professional life, it was possible not only to resist, but also to adapt to the new work challenges (Sandanayake, 2019), (Rawashdeh et al., 2021).

Currently, the disruption of the usual scenarios of providing educational activities in the world has finally given higher education the opportunity to reflect, transform and introduce innovations necessary for its adaptation to society’s needs. In particular, the effective organization of the distance learning process has acquired considerable importance in these conditions. The higher education sector proved to be one of the best prepared to move most of its processes to online mode (Alan, Teodora & Seda, 2020), (Singh, Steele & Singh, 2021).

Studying at higher educational institutions is accompanied by the emergence and resolution of contradictions of various natures. At the same time, the crisis often indicates significant problems in personal and professional development, and becomes an incentive for self-development, activating and enriching the psychological resources of students and teachers to overcome difficult life situations. In the conditions of successful overcoming of the crisis, such experience becomes the basis for the formation of professional self-confidence and personality of future specialists. Therefore, recognition and understanding of the phenomenon of students’ professional training crises is a leading prerequisite for psychological support for successfully overcoming these crises (Eaton et al., 2019), (Londar, 2021).

Establishing modern higher education based on a result-oriented model by designing training programs and forming a set of general and professional competencies for future specialists leads to the optimization of their learning process when choosing effective methods and technologies for organizing the educational process. There is every reason to say that in order to be modern and high-quality, university, education should combine a practical orientation with the fundamental preparation of students of all levels to work in adverse conditions (Green & Harrington, 2020).



The primary directions for improving the training of students and teachers in higher educational institutions for professional activities in crisis situations are as follows:

- the introduction of anti-crisis methods of work and the latest approaches to organizing the educational process;
- the implementation of effective models of education seekers' professional and personal training, improvement of existing and development of new teaching methods;
- training of teaching staff of higher educational institutions to acquire competencies in the areas of anti-crisis work in the field of practical psychology, direct practical activity;
- improvement of professional-pedagogical and psychological mastership, teachers' skills and personal qualities;
- development and improvement of effective influence methods and the latest research tools on the basis of educational institutions in order to increase the efficiency of education seekers' work in the educational process in crisis situations (Helmy et al., 2020), (Jin et al., 2019), (Khan et al., 2021).

## 6. Conclusions

Summarizing the analysis of the scientific literature on the research issue and the questionnaire results, it should be noted that the specifics of higher educational institutions' teachers' activities are determined by contact with the inner world of the education seeker during professional interaction. Accordingly, the specifics of the educational process in higher education during the crisis can be determined based on the specifics of professional activity and social requirements for future specialists of each individual profile. At the same time, the ability of the teacher to organize training in crisis conditions, to learn to develop the moral will towards understanding, reflection, critical thinking for communication in crisis situations, modern tools of anti-crisis communication in educational cases, during professional activities, should be taken into account while acquiring skills of self-expression and creativity during anti-crisis communication. Experience has proven that such a communication process requires advance preparation of all training subjects, adaption of methodological materials and the training's material base, as well as the moral and organizational support of education seekers for its effective implementation.

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