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## Modern European trends in the development of the higher education system in the realities of large-scale military aggression (the experience of Ukraine)

### Tendencias europeas modernas en el desarrollo del sistema de educación superior en las realidades de la agresión militar a gran escala (la experiencia de Ucrania)

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#### Abstract

The article describes modern European trends in the development of higher education in the realities of military aggression (using Ukrainian experience). General scientific methods are used in the article. Using the comparative method, the key foundations of educational reforms in some European countries close to Ukraine (Poland and Georgia) were determined. In the article also was used the prognostic method. Additional research methods were retrospective, functional, systemic, etc. In the results, the Polish and Georgian experience of regulating higher education against the background of military aggression, the peculiarities of the use of distance education in wartime conditions, and media education are characterized as a key trend in the development of the higher education system in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In the conclusions, it is stated that Ukraine will need certain structural transformations in higher

#### Resumen

El artículo describe las tendencias europeas modernas en el desarrollo de la educación superior en las realidades de la agresión militar (utilizando la experiencia ucraniana). En el artículo se utilizan métodos científicos generales. Utilizando el método comparativo, se determinaron los fundamentos clave de las reformas educativas en algunos países europeos cercanos a Ucrania (Polonia y Georgia). En el artículo también se utilizó el método de pronóstico. Otros métodos de investigación fueron el retrospectivo, el funcional, el sistémico, etc. En los resultados, la experiencia polaca y georgiana de regulación de la educación superior en el contexto de la agresión militar, las peculiaridades del uso de la educación a distancia en condiciones de guerra y la educación en los medios de comunicación se caracterizan como una tendencia clave en el desarrollo del sistema de educación superior en las condiciones de la guerra ruso-ucraniana. En las conclusiones se afirma que

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education. The Ukrainian experience of the functioning of education against the background of the Russian aggressor demonstrates that distance education is of particular importance today. The fundamental trend of the development of the higher education system in the realities of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation is media education. The developed recommendations will be useful in overcoming the future crisis of higher education in Ukraine.

**Keywords:** Ukraine, higher education, mediaeducation, experience, Russian-Ukrainian confrontation.

### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has been dictating the rules of higher education development for several years. Distance learning gave rise to a number of problems related to the organization of faculty work and student learning but led to a positive change. Modern trends of university education are focused on the formation of an individual educational trajectory, which is also associated with independent learning and the development of practical work skills, which is valued by modern employers. At the same time, working with digital technologies required both students and teachers to master digital competencies, continuous self-improvement, and mastery of new teaching methods. It should be noted that these practices were generally approved in the professional environment, but their effectiveness is still a pressing problem.

At the same time, the open military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine poses new challenges to university education, including responding to the loss of the material base, working in dangerous conditions, dispersal of students, etc.

The article considers possible ways to deal with these and other challenges. Consequently, the paper aims to analyze current European trends in the development of higher education in the realities of large-scale military aggression and the possibility of using these paradigms for Ukraine. In particular, it is proposed to consider media education as a key trend in the development of European higher education, the experience of the use of which can be valuable for Ukraine.

Ucrania necesitará ciertas transformaciones estructurales en la enseñanza superior. La experiencia ucraniana del funcionamiento de la educación en el contexto del agresor ruso demuestra que la educación a distancia tiene hoy una importancia especial. La tendencia fundamental del desarrollo del sistema de educación superior en las realidades del enfrentamiento ruso-ucraniano es la educación a través de los medios de comunicación. Las recomendaciones desarrolladas serán útiles para superar la futura crisis de la educación superior en Ucrania.

**Palabras clave:** Ucrania, educación superior, educación mediática, experiencia, confrontación ruso-ucraniana.

### Theoretical Frame work or Literature Review

The article is based on a thorough review of modern pedagogical literature on current educational problems. In particular, Mas-Verdu et al., (2020) characterized the features of the European higher education system. They compared the effectiveness of learning in local and national universities. Kelly (2021) studied the main competencies in demand in the modern educational field. Demiray (2017) characterized the importance of distance learning in today's globalized education system. At the same time, Kem (2022) analyzed the main opportunities of online education, characterized the key trends of person-centered learning.

Note that for our study the works of those authors who have studied the functioning of higher education in crisis (military) conditions are also important. For example, Rajab (2018) characterized the problem of the effectiveness of distance learning compared to traditional forms. His research is based on the analysis of educational technology at the University of Najran. Note that this university conducted distance learning because of the war between Saudi Arabia and Yemeni insurgent groups. On the other hand, Chankseliani et al., (2020) characterized the situation of higher education in Georgia, paying special attention to the peculiarities of education in the Russian-occupied Georgian territories (it refers to Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

For this article, the results of researchers who have studied the impact of Russian aggression on Ukraine's main spheres of activity are valuable. For example, Herbst, Aslund, & Kramer (2022) characterized the consequences of the Russian-

Ukrainian confrontation in 2014-2015 and described the destruction suffered by the social sector of Ukraine. Ghilès (2022) explored the specifics of the unfolding of the Russo-Ukrainian war and characterized the main changes in international politics. Notably, Abbasi (2022) also summarized that the Russo-Ukrainian war goes beyond the local war and therefore has an impact on the whole world. At the same time, Kuzio (2021) characterized the peculiarities of the spread of Russian aggression in Ukraine, describing the main destruction suffered in key areas of Ukraine.

At the same time, the task of characterizing modern European trends in the development of higher education based on Russian military aggression in Ukraine remains relevant. This is primarily due to the development of the war and the corresponding transformation of the educational system in Ukraine. Despite this, it is not exactly clear how much the Ukrainian authorities will be capable of structural transformation and rapid response to the challenges of the situation during the war. In addition, due to the duration of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the real consequences of the war on the educational sphere remain unknown.

### Methodology

Several general theoretical methods of research were used to write this article: analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction. Based on the analysis we managed to divide the subject of research into smaller parts (coverage of the European experience of educational reorganization (Poland, Georgia), the characteristic of distance learning in the conditions of war, the study of the peculiarities of the implementation of media education). With the help of synthesis, it was possible to combine the previously divided parts and form its own conclusions and perspectives. Thanks to the use of the method of concretization the peculiarities of the implementation of distance European trends in higher education in Ukraine were investigated. In addition, the work used the method of abstraction, which involves the transition from the abstract to the concrete in order to form their own conclusions. This method was used in the discussion while taking into account the main tendencies of higher education development against the background of Russian aggression in Ukraine. With the help of the comparativist method, it was possible to determine the basis of educational reforms in some European countries close to Ukraine (Poland and Georgia). Based on the prognostic

method, an attempt was made to outline an indicative list of functional actions capable of resolving the crisis in higher education in Ukraine. In addition, the work is based on the use of a systematic method of research, based on which higher education is considered as a complex set of different elements. Also in the work, the following additional methods of research are used: retrospective, functional, and structural.

### Results and Discussion

#### Polish and Georgian experience in reorganizing education

Note that in the twentieth century not many European countries have faced hostilities on their territories. A certain tension exists on the territory of the Balkan Peninsula, where the stages of national genesis have not yet been completed, and here the conflict between the former parts of united Yugoslavia is possible. At the same time, the experience of the two countries, which can be implemented in Ukraine, seems useful to us. Poland did not have military conflicts, but now it is a neighboring country to Ukraine, has received many refugees, and provides humanitarian and military support. Neighborly relations have intensified throughout the 21st century, and Poland's integration into the European Union has become a model for Ukraine. Georgia is not exactly a European country. It also has strong diplomatic ties with Ukraine. However, in 2008. Georgia experienced military aggression from Russia, so the development of its higher education system with appropriate accents may become paradigms (or at least general guidelines) for the restoration of Ukrainian university education.

So, a vivid example of European reforms in the field of education is the experience of Poland. This country, one of Ukraine's biggest geographical neighbors, supports it in its war against Russia. Back in the mid-1990s, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development made recommendations for the development of state educational standards, changing the criteria for determining competencies, potential and individual characteristics of Polish higher education institutions. The wide-ranging reform covered not only the university sphere but also the entire structure of training future specialists, the management system, quality control of education, and the formation of knowledge, skills, and competencies. These transformations were positively received in the Polish society

because the former model of education contained certain remnants and was not oriented towards the construction of modern democratic society. The usual system of control and evaluation was aimed at emphasizing deficiencies in skills or knowledge.

These educational paradigms were at odds with ideas about the role and importance of higher education. At the end of the twentieth century, universities in the leading countries were not adapting young applicants to reality but were “on course” to develop creative and creative individuals (Kelly, 2021). Accordingly, using this experience, the best Polish universities use Polish and English for teaching. Thanks to the transition to the ECTS system, Polish students can study mobility in other countries and other universities.

The main principle of the Polish reforms was the democratization of education. Using local experience, there were formulated principles that guaranteed universality, continuity, and succession of education, its unity and differentiation, replacement of narrow-profile training by broad-profile, principles of comprehensive development and education, formation of a modern flexible and quickly adapted specialist (Puriy & Kuznetova, 2020). Let us note that for the modern Ukrainian reality the principle of continuity is extremely important - it is said about the absence of obstacles in the transition from one university to another due to the consistency of industry training and curricula. At a time when some of the Ukrainian universities have been seized or destroyed, the opportunity for a student to continue his or her studies at another institution of higher education is extremely relevant (Rajab, 2018). Let us also pay attention to the principle of continuity, which provides general access to the forms and means of education. Poland has also replaced narrowly focused training with broader training, making it possible in Ukrainian realities to quickly retrain workers - in a war-ravaged economy, demand for certain specialties may decrease, while others grow rapidly. We should also note the large percentage of practical training at Polish universities. This allows future specialists to get acquainted with their subject of study, which will facilitate their integration into the work environment in the future.

In Georgia, higher education is not free of charge, but it is open to all comers. The total cost of education is quite high as for the local level, and in private higher education institutions, it can be even higher. Teaching is conducted in

Georgian, but special emphasis is also placed on learning English (there are branches of several American universities in Georgia) (Chankseliani et al., 2020) State grants allow for the inclusion of the best students. In particular, if a student gets the highest marks on the unified entrance exam, the state subsidy will be 100% of the cost of tuition, with lower results it is possible to compensate 70% or 50%. Note that Georgian students are mobile. They are acquiring up-to-date knowledge with the help of the latest digital technologies. Georgian youth are spreading ideas about the reality of the Russo-Georgian war around the world (Chankseliani et al., 2020). Note that the active use of English in education and the formation of “agents of influence” around the world are quite adequate tasks for Ukraine.

### **Peculiarities of the Use of Distance Education in the Context of Armed Aggression: Ukrainian Experience**

We believe that education is a significant part of a social system plagued by war. The large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 demonstrated that it is dangerous to study on a regular full-time basis (Aladekomo, 2022). In addition, refugee students who have left Ukraine can study on distance learning platforms from their own universities, which is developing primarily an online distance education system (Demiray, 2017).

To support Ukrainian students in a difficult period, the powerful online education platform “Coursera” gave Ukrainian universities free access to more than 3,500 courses (Ayoub et al., 2020). For this reason, many Ukrainian institutions of higher education were able to use it based on the digital base of Coursera for Campus.

Ukrainian authorities, after the full-scale Russian invasion on February 24, 2022, formed an expanded network of state digital platforms for online learning. In particular, based on the initiative of the Office of the President of Ukraine and the capabilities of the international organization UNICEF, several digital resources for students from Ukrainian universities were formed (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2022). It should be noted that at that time was created a free online platform “United Ukrainian University (UUU)”, promotes the acquisition of key educational skills and competencies. United Ukrainian University also has a special “helpline”.

In addition, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine has formed other distance platforms for the development of education. For example, the Learning Without Borders system was formed in common with Ukrainian TV channels and various online platforms. It is noteworthy that almost all Ukrainian universities have switched to distance work since the beginning of the large-scale invasion. Teachers teach classes on such remote platforms as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, etc. (Kem, 2022). Students have been familiar with these platforms since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic when all institutions in Ukraine (following European practices) switched to distance education. Since 2022 Canvas Network online platform forms free courses for Ukrainians. "Prometheus", a Ukrainian system of online learning, organizes events for Ukrainian students, in addition, provides opportunities for universities and individually known professors to publish personal courses and lectures. At the same time, practical classes, seminars, or lectures on the Prometheus site are available online. To optimize the resource, Prometheus also has a mobile app for iOS and Android systems. At the same time, the online resource "Iversity" also provides free training materials for Ukrainian students. In addition, "Iversity" is engaged in a variety of interactive lectures and seminars for students as well as for higher education institutions in general. Note that Iversity's working website provides free educational information on a variety of subjects. Stanford OpenEdx is another remote platform that provides learning materials for Ukrainian students. This resource also provides an opportunity to attend various online meetings and participate in video lectures or seminars organized by Stanford University staff for free. At the same time, the Ukrainian resource Maidan Open University is also an educational site that disseminates knowledge among students on history, philosophy, defense of the Fatherland, and civic education (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2022). This resource has 30 free topics for students from Ukraine. Note that lectures or open seminars are generally taught by well-known professors or scholars. As a result of successful completion of the selected course, Maidan Open University issues an appropriate certificate.

### **Media education as a key trend in the development of higher education in the realities of modern military aggression.**

The experience of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation with the mechanisms of

information warfare confirms that in a world where information reigns, university students must be able to evaluate and verify it rigorously, learn what information can be trusted, know about fake news and ways to protect themselves from dangerous manipulation. For this reason, they need to know about media literacy (Herbst et al, 2022). The information students receive every day through media and popular social media shapes their minds. Accordingly, today's students must acquire skills related to working with media products. Media education integrated into higher education will allow students to think rigorously, learn how to find and verify information, analyze media messages, and create such media products themselves.

Turning to media technology in education means restructuring the entire learning system. It requires new approaches to teaching and perception of information, a restructuring of teaching ethics, and additional attention on the part of teachers. We believe that the process of studying these transformations is relevant, which will allow us to highlight the positive and negative consequences of such transformations in the future, to work with them, and, if possible, to eliminate unnecessary ones. In addition, experiments with the use of media products will make it possible to analyze these factors in detail in practice.

Today, the problem of introducing media educational technologies in the educational space is ambiguously covered in the scientific literature. However, the need to study this topic is due directly to the reform of the educational system in Ukraine in the conditions of Russian aggression. We are talking about updating the content of education, media informatization of Ukrainian society, and increasing the importance of media technologies in the learning process of a modern person.

Note that in Europe, the media educational technologies are actively implemented since the twentieth century, in the Ukrainian studios this topic is somewhat new. However, today there is an active analysis of the introduction of media in the educational process, developing algorithms for solving certain educational problems using media technology and generally predicting the results of the introduction of media in education. The topic of media educational technologies in the educational process is particularly popular among foreign language professionals who, working with foreign sources, can characterize the mediatization of education in Europe and



demonstrate this experience based on Ukrainian systems.

Let us note that media education is the integration of the latest technologies in the educational process based on the use of certain techniques, which will lead to the implementation of media literacy in students. However, the phenomenon of media education is relatively new for pedagogical science. UNESCO has played a leading role in the formation of media education. It is believed that the concept of media education was first used at a general meeting of the UNESCO information sector. However, it is noted that the first curriculum on media-education was formed by M. McLuhan in 1959. However, its main use in the educational process was in the 1960s in Canada, Great Britain, the USA, Germany, and France.

Consequently, media education is a direction in pedagogy aimed at the study of special patterns of mass informatization. We believe that the fundamental tasks of media education are: to form a new generation, ready to exist in modern information and globalization conditions. Students must master the means of communication based on non-verbal means of communication and through technical means.

We believe that media education meets the needs of pedagogy in a crisis (military) environment (Manolea, 2021). At the same time, it also affects the development of personality, expands the range of methods and forms of conducting classes with students in higher education. We believe that the integrated study of print, film, television, video, the Internet helps to correct such significant shortcomings of traditional education as a one-sided, isolated, isolated type of learning. In addition, this system of education assumes a methodology of classes based on the problem, heuristic, game, and other productive forms of learning, developing the individuality of the student, the independence of his thinking. At the same time, it affects the formation of media critical skills, influencing students to understand which sources to trust and which not, which is extremely important in the context of war (Martz, 2022). At the same time, media education that combines lecture and hands-on activities represents a kind of inclusion of students in the process of media culture production, that is, it immerses the audience in its own laboratory of basic media competencies, which is possible both offline and in the process of integration into familiar academic subjects.

Note that when a student understands the influence of media, it helps him or her to actively use the information field of television, radio, video, cinema, press, and the Internet not only for learning but also for their own development. In addition, it helps him better understand the language of media culture. Media education becomes especially important in the context of globalization. Note that the current state of the global and information society leads to the influence of information dangers on all areas of human activity, society, and country. For this reason, the use of media education technologies in higher education is of particular importance.

### Conclusions

So, as the experience of the nearest European countries (Poland and Georgia) has shown, Ukraine will require, first of all, certain structural transformations, in particular, emphasis on foreign language learning at all levels of education, a flexible system of retraining, and continuity of educational processes. Separately, let us emphasize the Georgian experience of involving students in disseminating truthful information about the Russian aggression in 2008.

The Ukrainian experience of the functioning of education against the background of the confrontation with the aggressor demonstrates that distance education is of particular importance at present. The large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated that it is dangerous to conduct education in the usual face-to-face mode. Consequently, Ukrainian universities have switched en masse to an online system. Consequently, refugee students who have left Ukraine can study on distance learning platforms from their own universities. This also develops the potential of educational information and communication technologies in Ukraine. Despite this, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, with the assistance of international organizations, has created many distance learning platforms for the development of education at all levels.

Despite this, the experience of the Russian-Ukrainian war on a variety of mechanisms of information warfare (as well as manipulative-propagandistic) confirms that university students must be able to strictly assess and verify information flows that arrive and circulate in the communication network every day. At the same time, it is also important in a military environment that students should learn how to recognize what information should be trusted,

know about fake messages, and key methods of protection against dangerous information manipulation. For this reason, we believe that media education, which demonstrated its effectiveness in Europe in the late twentieth century, is particularly important. XX century. The paper notes that media education meets the needs of pedagogy in a military environment. Despite this, the use of influential media-education technologies also affects the development of personality in general. Media education also expands the range of methods and forms of conducting classes with students in higher education. Consequently, it affects the formation of media critical competence, which is now in demand in the European educational space. At the same time, the application of media education also affects the fact that students begin to understand the mass flow of information, critically analyze and verify information, which is very important in war conditions.

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