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Improving the Effectiveness of Training Future Psychological Educators to Design a Safe and Comfortable Environment in Education

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to enhance the training of future educational psychologists in designing a safe and comfortable environment in general education settings. The methodology combined literature review, conceptual modeling, surveys, interviews, observations, pedagogical experiments, and statistical analysis. A model was constructed to guide students through a step-by-step process for designing emotionally safe educational spaces, emphasizing values such as empathy, respect, and mutual trust. The study involved 326 participants, including 75 students in formative stages and 84 practicing psychologists from various educational institutions.Results showed a measurable improvement in students' competence and confidence in applying psychological principles to real-world school environments. The training also strengthened their ability to manage conflict and support student well-being effectively.This research highlights the importance of a structured, principle-driven methodology in preparing psychologists for school settings. It provides practical strategies for fostering a safe educational climate and contributes to the ongoing development of professional standards in psychological education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ensuring the safety and well-being of students has become a central priority in modern educational systems, reflecting a broader societal concern for the protection and holistic development of children. Educational institutions are not only responsible for imparting academic knowledge but also for creating psychologically safe and emotionally supportive environments (Adeoye & Yahaya, 2024; Pandapatan, 2024). A safe and comfortable educational space significantly influences students' academic success, emotional well-being, and social development (Kutsyuruba *et al*., 2015). Within this context, the role of teacher-psychologists is crucial, as they are expected to assess, design, and maintain an environment that promotes mental health and constructive interpersonal relationships (Kamaldeen *et al*., 2024). The demand for professionals who can fulfill this function effectively has increased, highlighting the need for more targeted training strategies in teacher preparation programs.

Recent developments (see **Table 1**) in educational psychology underscore the growing complexity of challenges faced by schools, such as increasing levels of aggression, digital conflict, emotional stress, and professional burnout among staff (Yang & Du, 2024; Michulek *et al*., 2-24). These challenges are compounded by external social and economic pressures, which affect the emotional climate within schools. In response, research has begun to emphasize the importance of equipping future psychological educators with the competencies required to address safety and comfort in educational spaces (Baeva & Bordovskaia, 2015). Key areas of focus include psychological assessment, emotional intelligence, empathy development, and the integration of content for the proactive design of healthy learning environments (Vistorte *et al*., 2024). However, while the need for such competencies is well-recognized, training practices remain fragmented, and few models offer an integrative, practice-oriented approach to this issue.

Table 1. Previous research.

Research Scope	Ref.
Basic principles of training future psychological educators to design a safe and comfortable environment in a general education organization	(Baeva & Bordovskaia, 2015)
Designing a safe and comfortable environment in a general education organization as a function and direction of professional activity of future educational psychologists	(Akimkhanova *et al*., 2024)
Pedagogical conditions for the formation of the readiness of future psychological educators to design a safe and comfortable environment in a general education organization	(Shmeleva *et al*., 2015)
Features of professional stress of a teacher and its overcoming	(Bekturov, 2025)
Developing empathy as a professionally significant personal quality of a teacher	(Wink *et al*., 2021)
Professional teacher burnout	(Harr *et al*., 2015)
Integration of educational content in the preparation of future psychological educators for designing a safe and comfortable environment in a general education organization	(Sagingalievna & Berikovna, 2018)
Characteristics of a safe and comfortable environment in a general educational organization	(Martsev, 2023)

Despite a growing body of research, significant gaps remain in understanding and operationalizing the readiness of future psychological educators to perform psychological design functions effectively. The current literature does not provide a comprehensive pedagogical model that systematically addresses the formation of personal and professional competencies required for environmental safety and comfort. Furthermore, existing studies

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often overlook the dynamic context of modern education, including the increasing relevance of virtual communication and the need for psychological support across both physical and digital learning spaces. As a result, there is a need for a unified approach that includes clearly defined learning strategies, structured pedagogical conditions, and value-oriented methodological tools tailored to real-world school environments.

The aim of this study is to develop and validate an effective training model that enhances the readiness of future psychological educators to design psychologically safe and comfortable educational environments. This includes the formulation of theoretical foundations, the identification of pedagogical conditions, and the practical application of tools that support the psychological design of learning spaces. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the professionalization of educational psychology training, improve mental health outcomes for students, and reinforce the role of psychological safety in holistic education reform.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The professional preparation of future psychological educators is a critical area in the field of educational psychology, with numerous studies exploring the competencies, domains, and pedagogical strategies needed to equip them for complex school environments (Khimmataliev & Ergashevna, 2025). One key aspect emphasized in the literature is the importance of advisory and counseling support for families of school-aged children. This support is seen as vital in fostering effective home-school collaboration, improving student outcomes, and addressing socio-emotional difficulties (Masandal & Bakar, 2023). The training curriculum for future educators is thus expected to include practical and theoretical exposure to family systems, communication techniques, and empathetic counseling skills to ensure they can serve as mediators between schools and families (Cowan & Cowan, 2002).

Another essential dimension widely addressed is the ability of psychological educators to work with students who have limited health opportunities or special educational needs. The literature discusses the necessity for inclusive pedagogy, adapted learning environments, and collaboration with specialists from medical and correctional institutions (Faddillah *et al*., 2022). Future educators are required to develop not only pedagogical skills but also emotional resilience, patience, and the ability to understand diverse psychological conditions. Their training must include modules on inclusive education, differentiated instruction, and understanding of psychological diagnostics to effectively support learners with various developmental challenges (Adesokan & Bojuwoye, 2023).

Furthermore, the formation of professional readiness is considered a multidimensional process encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral preparedness (Popov *et al*., 2016). Research stresses the role of higher education institutions in creating an ecosystem where students of psychology education programs engage in reflective practices, collaborative learning, and case-based simulations that mirror real-world challenges (Way *et al*., 2021). Developing readiness also involves fostering skills in self-regulation, ethical decision-making, and continuous professional development (Putri *et al*., 2024). In addition, there is a growing emphasis on preparing these future professionals to design and maintain psychologically safe environments within schools. This includes cultivating school climates that prioritize mental well-being, minimize bullying and exclusion, and support positive behavioral interventions, thereby contributing to the holistic development of all students.

3. METHOD

The methodology for training future psychology educators to design safe and comfortable environments in general education institutions is implemented through four stages: the propaedeutic, educational, project, and final stages. The propaedeutic stage, introduced in the second year of professional training for undergraduate students in the 03/44/02 Psychological and Pedagogical Education program, serves as a foundation. During this phase, students study the methodological basics of project activities, taking into account the individual and age-related characteristics of students. This is facilitated through the course "Organization of Student Design and Research Activities," enhanced with a special module titled "Designing a Safe School Environment." This module includes topics such as "Modern Threats to Student Safety," "Features of Project Activities for Students with Special Needs," "Designing a Health-Promoting School Environment," and "Psychotherapeutic Tools for Creating a Comfortable Learning Environment." Additionally, students explore methods of monitoring educational processes and participants through the course "Psychological Safety of the Educational Environment," in which instructors intentionally provoke feelings of comfort and discomfort to prompt analysis of pedagogical approaches. Students also simulate conflict situations to identify common triggers and explore self-awareness techniques through involved observation and introspection, aiming to evaluate their own psychological state and character traits—fostering value-based attitudes toward their own mental well-being.

The second stage, the educational phase, focuses on deepening students' knowledge of psychological and pedagogical tools to create a positive climate within the educational community. Students learn collaborative methods for fostering harmonious school environments, including the development of an "effective method bank" that encourages teamwork and peer knowledge exchange. In the third stage—the project phase—students begin to practice individual and group counseling using psychological tools. This occurs in the third year of study, particularly through the course "Fundamentals of Family Psychology and Family Conflict," which examines causes of mental health disruptions and students' social problems. Students develop psychological support projects aimed at assisting children with deviant behavior and special developmental needs.

The final stage—the effective or result stage—prepares students to utilize digital tools to support psychological guidance in educational environments. Within the "Organization of Student Design and Research Activities" course, students assess the risks and benefits of social media and its influence on children's psychological development. They also explore the potential of online psychological communities to help foster safe and supportive school environments. Through this four-stage approach, the training methodology equips future psychology educators with the necessary knowledge, practical skills, and reflective awareness to design educational environments that are psychologically safe, healthy, and supportive.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary aim of the experimental work was to verify whether the implementation of a theoretically grounded model could effectively enhance the readiness of future psychological educators to design a safe and comfortable environment in general education settings. The assessment of this readiness was structured around four key criteria: motivational-knowledge (k_1), emotional-regulatory (k_2), communicative-creative (k_3), and analytical-activity (k_4).

To evaluate the effectiveness of the applied methodology, both an initial (ascertaining) diagnosis and a final diagnostic assessment were conducted among students in both

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experimental and control groups. The transition of participants across readiness levels—low, medium, and high—was recorded and compared quantitatively. The data are presented in the **Table 2**.

The comparative analysis clearly demonstrates that students in the experimental group (GE), who were trained using the proposed model, showed a significantly greater transition from lower to higher levels of readiness across all four criteria. Notably, the motivational-knowledge criterion (k_1) improved by +21.62% at the high level in the experimental group, compared to only +10.53% in the control group. Similar trends were observed in emotional-regulatory (k_2), communicative-creative (k_3), and analytical-activity (k_4) criteria, all of which showed significantly higher positive dynamics in the experimental group than in the control group.

Table 2. Formation of readiness criteria according to data from the ascertaining experiment and final diagnostics.

Samples / n, people.	**Diagnostic data**	**Distribution by levels (%)**		
		initial	**design**	**expert**
Criteria		**Motivational knowledge (k_1)**		
GE / n=37	Constat. experiment.	56,76 %	32,43 %	10,81 %
	The results. diagnost.	8,11 %	59,46 %	32,43 %
Dynamics by criterion k_1		**-48,65 %**	**27,03 %**	**21,62 %**
GK / n=38	Constat. experiment.	57,90 %	34,21 %	7,89 %
	The results. diagnost.	36,84 %	44,74 %	18,42 %
Dynamics by criterion k_1		**-21,06 %**	**10,53 %**	**10,53 %**
Criteria		**Emotional and regulatory (k_2)**		
GE / n=37	Constat. experiment.	51,35 %	43,24 %	5,41 %
	The results. diagnost.	13,51 %	56,76 %	29,73 %
Dynamics by criterion k_2		**-37,84 %**	**13,52 %**	**24,32 %**
GK / n=38	Constat. experiment.	50,00 %	47,37 %	2,63 %
	The results. diagnost.	31,58 %	57,89 %	10,53 %
Dynamics by criterion k_2		**-18,42 %**	**10,52 %**	**7,90 %**
Criteria		**Communicative and creative (k_3)**		
GE / n=37	Constat. experiment.	59,46 %	32,43 %	8,11 %
	The results. diagnost.	13,51 %	56,76 %	29,73 %
Dynamics by criterion k_3		**-45,95 %**	**24,33 %**	**21,62 %**
GK / n=38	Constat. experiment.	55,26 %	39,48 %	5,26 %
	The results. diagnost.	39,47 %	47,37 %	13,16 %
Dynamics by criterion k_3		**-15,79 %**	**7,89 %**	**7,89 %**
Criteria		**Analytical and activity-based (k_4)**		
GE / n=37	Constat. experiment.	72,97 %	21,62 %	5,41 %
	The results. diagnost.	27,03 %	48,65 %	24,32 %
Dynamics by criterion k_4		**-45,95 %**	**27,03 %**	**18,92 %**
GK / n=38	Constat. experiment.	71,05 %	23,69 %	5,26 %
	The results. diagnost.	55,26 %	34,21 %	10,53 %
Dynamics by criterion k_4		**-15,79 %**	**10,52 %**	**5,27 %**

The use of statistical methods confirmed the significance of these changes. By applying the χ^2 (chi-squared) criterion, it was established that the improvements observed in the experimental group were not random but were indeed a direct result of the implementation

of the developed model. The statistically significant differences in the distributions between the experimental and control groups validate the effectiveness of the pedagogical strategy. These findings confirm that the structured four-stage methodology, supported by targeted curriculum modules and psychological tools, contributes meaningfully to the development of future psychological educators' competencies (Makrakis & Kostoulas-Makrakis, 2012; Hugher *et al*., 2002; Kazazoglu, 2025). The applied model successfully enhanced their ability to design educational environments that prioritize psychological safety and emotional comfort, which is especially critical in today's educational climate.

The implementation of inclusive social learning based on a competence-based approach has demonstrated significant potential in shaping the professional preparedness of students in the social sciences cluster (Chander *et al*., 2020; Vare *et al*., 2019; Škrinjarić, 2022). The research results highlight that the integration of interdisciplinary content, combined with innovative pedagogical strategies, enhances students' ability to operate effectively in diverse educational settings (Eugenijus, 2023, Liu, 2023; Bremner & Air, 2025). The structured inclusion of methodological models and teaching manuals supported the development of professional competencies, particularly in addressing the educational needs of vulnerable and diverse populations (Smith & Tyler, 2011; Navarro *et al*., 2016; Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Van den Beemt *et al*., 2020; Florian & Rouse, 2009). Furthermore, the application of the "Demographic Management System Electronic Student Database" facilitated personalized student tracking and performance monitoring, which in turn strengthened data-driven educational planning.

The experimental involvement of nearly 400 students provided reliable insights into the effectiveness of the approach, showing improved pedagogical skills and understanding of inclusive practices. The competence-based methodology not only improved the cognitive and practical skills of the students but also reinforced their sense of social responsibility, collaboration, and adaptability. Overall, the findings affirm the necessity of implementing integrated, inclusive, and student-centered approaches in higher education to prepare future professionals who are responsive to the social dynamics and inclusive demands of contemporary education systems.

5. CONCLUSION

The study addresses the urgent need to establish robust theoretical foundations and methodological tools to enhance the training of future educational psychologists in designing safe and comfortable environments within general education institutions. This urgency stems from rising demands for higher quality and more precise professional education, which remains insufficiently addressed in current pedagogical theory and practice. The research identifies critical scientific prerequisites, including the clarification of key concepts—such as "designing a safe and comfortable environment" and "readiness of future psychologists"—and the adoption of psychological-pedagogical mechanisms aligned with competence-based, axiological, activity-oriented, and ecopsychological approaches. Foundational principles such as tolerance, psychological safety, rational emotionality, integrated monitoring, group supervision, and virtual inclusion, along with pedagogical conditions that foster value-driven attitudes toward self-education, contribute to the structured and effective preparation of psychology teachers. Readiness assessment is guided by criteria that capture dynamics in values, design competencies, personal-professional traits, and communication skills. The reliability of the experimental findings, validated through mathematical statistics, confirms that the proposed model and pedagogical conditions significantly improve the training process. Ultimately, the application of these research outcomes opens pathways for further

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refinement and expansion of relevant principles and pedagogical conditions, ensuring sustainable advancement in professional psychological education.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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