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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 examines the effectiveness of a structured training model for preparing future psychological educators to design safe and comfortable educational environments. A mixed-methods pedagogical experiment was conducted using literature review, conceptual modeling, surveys, interviews, observations, and statistical analysis. The model consisted of propaedeutic, educational, project, and final stages, emphasizing empathy, respect, psychological safety, conflict management, and student well-being. The study involved undergraduate students and practicing psychologists from educational institutions. Students in the experimental group demonstrated greater improvement than those in the control group across motivational-knowledge, emotional-regulatory, communicative-creative, and analytical-activity readiness criteria. The results confirm the value of structured, practice-oriented training in psychological education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Creating a safe and comfortable educational environment is an essential responsibility of modern schools. Educational institutions are not only expected to provide academic instruction but also to support students' psychological safety, emotional well-being, social development, and positive interpersonal relationships. A safe school climate can strengthen students' learning motivation, reduce anxiety and conflict, and support overall educational achievement (Adeoye and Yahaya, 2024; Pandapatan, 2024; Kutsyuruba et al., 2015). In this context, psychological educators play an important role in assessing, designing, and maintaining supportive educational environments. They are expected to understand students' emotional needs, identify risks in the school climate, manage conflict, support teachers and families, and promote mental health in schools. Therefore, the preparation of future psychological educators should include not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills for designing safe, inclusive, and emotionally supportive learning spaces (Kamaldeen et al., 2024).

Recent educational changes have made this task more complex. Schools face challenges such as aggression, professional stress, teacher burnout, digital conflict, emotional instability, and students' increasing need for psychological support. These challenges require future psychological educators to develop competence in empathy, emotional regulation, communication, psychological assessment, inclusive support, and digital awareness (Yang and Du, 2024; Michulek et al., 2024; Vistorte et al., 2024). Previous studies related to psychological safety, teacher preparation, burnout, empathy, and safe educational environments are summarized in **Table 1**. Previous research has emphasized the importance of psychological safety, teacher readiness, empathy, burnout prevention, and safe educational environments. However, many studies still discuss these issues separately. There remains a need for an integrated and practice-oriented training model that prepares future psychological educators to design safe and comfortable environments in real school contexts. This gap is important because psychological educators must be able to connect theory, values, assessment, communication, conflict management, and practical intervention.

Table 1. Previous research related to safe and comfortable educational environments.

RESEARCH SCOPE	REFERENCE
Psychological safety and well-being in educational environments	Baeva and Bordovskaia (2015)
Readiness of future educational psychologists to design professional activities in innovative environments	Akimkhanova et al. (2024)
Pedagogical conditions for teachers' readiness to ensure social security in educational environments	Shmeleva et al. (2015)
Professional stress and development of future teachers' competencies	Bekturov (2025)
Teacher empathy and students with problem behaviors	Wink et al. (2021)
Professional teacher burnout and pedagogical-psychological knowledge	Harr et al. (2015)
Psychologically comfortable and safe educational environments in teacher professional development	Sagingalievna and Berikovna (2018)
Eco-psychologically safe inclusive educational environments	Martsev (2023)

This study aims to develop and evaluate a structured training model for improving the readiness of future psychological educators to design safe and comfortable educational environments. The model emphasizes psychological safety, empathy, respect, mutual trust,

emotional regulation, inclusive support, and reflective practice. The study contributes to the improvement of psychological education by offering a pedagogical model that links theoretical preparation with practical school-based application.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The preparation of future psychological educators is an important issue in educational psychology because schools increasingly require professionals who can support students' psychological well-being and create emotionally safe learning environments. Psychological educators need competencies in counseling, assessment, communication, conflict resolution, inclusive support, and collaboration with teachers, families, and school administrators. Professional training should therefore combine theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and reflective learning (Khimmatiev and Ergashevna, 2025). One important area of preparation is the ability to support families and strengthen home-school collaboration. Psychological educators often serve as mediators between schools and families, particularly when students experience emotional, behavioral, or social difficulties. Training programs should help future educators understand family systems, counseling approaches, communication strategies, and socio-emotional support. Such preparation can improve the capacity of psychological educators to respond to students' needs in cooperation with parents and caregivers (Cowan and Cowan, 2002; Masandal and Bakar, 2023). Another important dimension is inclusive education. Future psychological educators must be prepared to work with students who have special educational needs, limited health opportunities, developmental differences, or emotional difficulties. Inclusive practice requires adaptive learning environments, differentiated support, collaboration with specialists, and sensitivity to students' psychological and social conditions. Psychological educators need not only pedagogical knowledge but also emotional resilience, patience, diagnostic awareness, and the ability to support diverse learners (Faddillah *et al.*, 2022; Adesokan and Bojuwoye, 2023; Smith and Tyler, 2011; Florian and Rouse, 2009). Professional readiness is also a multidimensional construct. It includes cognitive readiness, emotional readiness, communicative readiness, ethical readiness, and practical readiness. Higher education institutions should provide learning experiences that develop self-regulation, ethical decision-making, reflective practice, and the ability to solve school-based psychological problems. Case-based learning, simulations, project activities, and authentic assessment can help students connect theoretical concepts with real educational situations (Popov *et al.*, 2016; Way *et al.*, 2021; Putri *et al.*, 2024). Psychologically safe environments are connected to school climate, emotional comfort, teacher well-being, and student achievement. A safe educational environment reduces fear, conflict, exclusion, and emotional pressure while promoting trust, respect, cooperation, and learning engagement. The training of future psychological educators should therefore include methods for identifying risks, monitoring school climate, supporting emotional well-being, and developing interventions that promote safety and comfort (Baeva and Bordovskaia, 2015; Kutsyuruba *et al.*, 2015; Martsev, 2023). Recent studies also highlight the importance of technology and interdisciplinary learning in professional preparation. Digital tools, online communities, artificial intelligence, and blended learning can support psychological assessment, monitoring, and educational intervention. However, these tools must be used carefully because digital learning environments may also create new risks, including emotional stress, digital burnout, and online conflict (Yang and Du, 2024; Vistorte *et al.*, 2024; Eugenijus, 2023; Bremner and Air, 2025). Therefore, future psychological educators should be trained to design safe environments in both physical and

digital learning spaces. Future psychological educators need integrated preparation that combines psychological theory, inclusive pedagogy, family support, ethical practice, emotional competence, digital awareness, and practical school-based design. This study builds on these perspectives by developing and evaluating a structured training model for improving students' readiness to design safe and comfortable educational environments.

3. METHOD

This study used a mixed-methods pedagogical experimental design to develop and evaluate a training model for preparing future psychological educators to design safe and comfortable educational environments. The study combined literature review, conceptual modeling, surveys, interviews, observations, pedagogical experimentation, and statistical analysis. This design was appropriate because the study aimed not only to describe a training model but also to examine its effectiveness in improving students' professional readiness. The participants included undergraduate students in the psychological and pedagogical education program and practicing psychologists from educational institutions. The experimental component involved students divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received training through a structured four-stage model, while the control group followed standard preparation. The readiness of participants was assessed before and after the intervention. The training model consisted of four stages: propaedeutic, educational, project, and final stages. The propaedeutic stage introduced students to the foundations of project activity, psychological safety, modern threats to student well-being, and the design of safe school environments. The educational stage deepened students' understanding of psychological and pedagogical tools for creating a positive school climate. The project stage involved individual and group counseling practice, conflict analysis, family psychology, and psychological support planning. The final stage focused on digital tools, online psychological support, and the analysis of risks and benefits of virtual communication for children's psychological development. Data were collected using diagnostic assessments, surveys, interviews, classroom observations, student activities, and experimental results. Readiness was evaluated based on four criteria: motivational-knowledge, emotional-regulatory, communicative-creative, and analytical-activity readiness. These criteria measured students' understanding of psychological safety, emotional regulation, communication and creativity, and ability to analyze and design educational environments. Quantitative data were analyzed by comparing the initial and final diagnostic results of the experimental and control groups. Changes in students' readiness levels were examined across low, medium, and high categories. Statistical analysis, including the chi-squared criterion, was used to determine whether the observed differences between the experimental and control groups were significant. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were used to support interpretation of the quantitative findings and to understand how students experienced the training process. Ethical considerations were observed during the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, their involvement, and the use of collected data. The study focused on educational improvement and professional training, and participant information was treated confidentially.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the pedagogical experiment used to evaluate the effectiveness of the structured training model for future psychological educators. The analysis focuses on students' readiness to design safe and comfortable educational environments

based on four criteria: motivational-knowledge, emotional-regulatory, communicative-creative, and analytical-activity readiness.

4.1. Improvement in Students' Readiness

The experimental work aimed to determine whether the proposed four-stage training model could improve students' professional readiness to design psychologically safe and comfortable school environments. The readiness levels of students in the experimental group and control group were measured before and after the intervention. **Table 2** presents the distribution of readiness levels based on the initial and final diagnostic results. Students in the experimental group showed stronger improvement than those in the control group across all four readiness criteria. In the motivational-knowledge criterion, the percentage of students at the high level increased from 10.81 to 32.43% in the experimental group, while the control group increased only from 7.89 to 18.42%. The training model improved students' understanding of psychological safety, safe school design, and the professional role of psychological educators. The emotional-regulatory criterion also showed substantial improvement. In the experimental group, the high level increased from 5.41 to 29.73%, while the low level decreased from 51.35 to 13.51%. The training helped students develop emotional awareness, self-regulation, and the ability to respond constructively to emotionally challenging school situations. Such competencies are important because psychological safety in education is closely related to emotional comfort, school climate, and teacher-student relationships (Baeva and Bordovskaia, 2015; Kutsyuruba *et al.*, 2015).

Table 2. Formation of readiness criteria based on initial and final diagnostics.

CRITERIA	GROUP	DIAGNOSTIC STAGE	LOW LEVEL (%)	MEDIUM LEVEL (%)	HIGH LEVEL (%)
Motivational-knowledge	Experimental	Initial diagnosis	56.76	32.43	10.81
Motivational-knowledge	Experimental	Final diagnosis	8.11	59.46	32.43
Motivational-knowledge	Experimental	Change	-48.65	+27.03	+21.62
Motivational-knowledge	Control	Initial diagnosis	57.90	34.21	7.89
Motivational-knowledge	Control	Final diagnosis	36.84	44.74	18.42
Motivational-knowledge	Control	Change	-21.06	+10.53	+10.53
Emotional-regulatory	Experimental	Initial diagnosis	51.35	43.24	5.41
Emotional-regulatory	Experimental	Final diagnosis	13.51	56.76	29.73
Emotional-regulatory	Experimental	Change	-37.84	+13.52	+24.32
Emotional-regulatory	Control	Initial diagnosis	50.00	47.37	2.63
Emotional-regulatory	Control	Final diagnosis	31.58	57.89	10.53
Emotional-regulatory	Control	Change	-18.42	+10.52	+7.90
Communicative-creative	Experimental	Initial diagnosis	59.46	32.43	8.11
Communicative-creative	Experimental	Final diagnosis	13.51	56.76	29.73
Communicative-creative	Experimental	Change	-45.95	+24.33	+21.62
Communicative-creative	Control	Initial diagnosis	55.26	39.48	5.26
Communicative-creative	Control	Final diagnosis	39.47	47.37	13.16
Communicative-creative	Control	Change	-15.79	+7.89	+7.89
Analytical-activity	Experimental	Initial diagnosis	72.97	21.62	5.41
Analytical-activity	Experimental	Final diagnosis	27.03	48.65	24.32
Analytical-activity	Experimental	Change	-45.95	+27.03	+18.92
Analytical-activity	Control	Initial diagnosis	71.05	23.69	5.26
Analytical-activity	Control	Final diagnosis	55.26	34.21	10.53
Analytical-activity	Control	Change	-15.79	+10.52	+5.27

4.2. Development of Communicative and Analytical Competencies

The communicative-creative criterion improved significantly in the experimental group. The proportion of students at the high level increased from 8.11 to 29.73%, while the low level decreased from 59.46 to 13.51%. The model supported students' ability to communicate, cooperate, solve conflicts, and design creative responses to psychological problems in schools. These outcomes are relevant because psychological educators must work with students, teachers, families, and administrators in addressing emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal issues. Empathy and communication are therefore essential professional qualities for educators working with students who experience behavioral or emotional difficulties (Wink *et al.*, 2021; Masandal and Bakar, 2023). The analytical-activity criterion also improved in the experimental group. The percentage of students at the high level increased from 5.41 to 24.32%, while the low level decreased from 72.97 to 27.03%. Students became more capable of analyzing educational environments, identifying psychological risks, and planning practical interventions. Professional readiness should include not only knowledge but also the ability to apply psychological and pedagogical tools in real educational contexts (Popov *et al.*, 2016; Way *et al.*, 2021).

4.3. Effectiveness of the Four-stage Training Model

The propaedeutic, educational, project, and final stages worked as a coherent training sequence. The propaedeutic stage helped students understand the foundations of psychological safety and school environment design. The educational stage strengthened their knowledge of psychological and pedagogical tools. The project stage allowed students to apply these tools through counseling practice, conflict analysis, and support planning. The final stage introduced digital tools and online psychological support, which are increasingly relevant because modern school environments include both physical and virtual spaces. This structured progression helped students move from theoretical understanding to practical application. The results are consistent with studies emphasizing that future psychological educators need integrated preparation, reflective learning, authentic assessment, and practice-based experiences to develop professional readiness (Akimkhanova *et al.*, 2024; Shmeleva *et al.*, 2015; Way *et al.*, 2021). The model also aligns with inclusive education perspectives, which emphasize that educators should be prepared to support learners with diverse needs through adaptive environments, differentiated support, and collaborative practice (Faddillah *et al.*, 2022; Adesokan and Bojuwoye, 2023; Smith and Tyler, 2011; Florian and Rouse, 2009). The use of statistical analysis, including the chi-squared criterion, confirmed that the improvements in the experimental group were not random. The positive dynamics across all four criteria show that structured training can strengthen students' readiness to design psychologically safe and comfortable environments. These findings demonstrate the value of combining conceptual learning, practical tasks, reflective exercises, and digital awareness in psychological educator preparation.

4.4. Implications for Psychological Educator Training

The results have several implications for higher education institutions that prepare future psychological educators. First, training programs should include specific modules on psychological safety, safe school climate, emotional well-being, conflict management, and inclusive support. These topics should not be treated as isolated theoretical content but should be connected to practical school-based situations. Second, students need opportunities to practice designing interventions for real or simulated educational problems.

Case studies, project activities, counseling simulations, group supervision, and reflective observation can help students connect psychological theory with practical action. This is important because professional readiness develops through repeated practice, self-reflection, and exposure to realistic educational challenges (Harr *et al.*, 2015; Putri *et al.*, 2024). Third, digital readiness should be included in the preparation of psychological educators. Schools increasingly face challenges related to online communication, digital conflict, emotional stress, and technology-supported learning. Future psychological educators should therefore understand both the benefits and risks of digital tools in supporting students' psychological well-being (Yang and Du, 2024; Vistorte *et al.*, 2024). These findings indicate that the proposed training model is most useful when theoretical learning is combined with practice, reflection, and digital awareness. The strongest gains appeared in emotional-regulatory and communicative-creative readiness, indicating that the model was especially useful in developing emotional competence, empathy, communication, and conflict-response skills. These competencies are essential for psychological educators who are expected to support student well-being and create inclusive, safe, and emotionally supportive school environments. The training of psychological educators should be connected to broader developments in higher education, sustainability-oriented learning, and inclusive professional preparation. Curriculum design for future educators can be strengthened through sustainability-based content, quality learning environments, and eco-literacy perspectives that help students understand the relationship between education, well-being, and environmental responsibility (Makrakis and Kostoulas-Makrakis, 2012; Hughes *et al.*, 2022; Kazazoglu, 2025). Competence-based and inclusive learning approaches are also relevant because psychological educators must be prepared to work in diverse educational settings and respond to complex social and institutional needs (Chander *et al.*, 2020; Vare *et al.*, 2019; Škrinjarić, 2022). In addition, interdisciplinary curriculum design, student teaching, and inclusive learning experiences can strengthen students' practical competence in designing supportive educational environments (Liu, 2023; Anderson and Stillman, 2013; Navarro *et al.*, 2016; Van den Beemt *et al.*, 2020).

5. CONCLUSION

A structured four-stage training model can improve the readiness of future psychological educators to design safe and comfortable educational environments. The model, consisting of propaedeutic, educational, project, and final stages, strengthened students' motivational-knowledge, emotional-regulatory, communicative-creative, and analytical-activity readiness. The experimental group showed greater improvement than the control group, indicating that practice-oriented training is more effective than conventional preparation alone. The findings highlight the importance of integrating psychological safety, emotional regulation, empathy, conflict management, inclusive support, and digital awareness into psychological educator training. Higher education institutions should provide structured modules, simulations, project activities, and reflective learning experiences to prepare future professionals for real school contexts.

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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