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Education of the Future: From Post-war Reconstruction to EU Membership (Ukrainian Case Study)

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Abstract: The presented article reflects the results of the study of the prospects for the development of Ukrainian education in the postwar period. In particular, the trends due to the situation of full-scale war on the territory of the state and the results of research work on the plan for Ukrainian educational system innovation in accordance with European standards within the broader process of European integration are taken into account. The method of work with focus groups, formed of teachers of different levels of educational institutions on the territory of the country, was applied when conducting this research. In addition, in processing the results of published research, we used the axiomatic method and considered the existing obstacles (the reduction of the number of institutions, funding sources, incoming; the limitation of processes of innovation, digitalization, and development of methodological materials; the new context of professional training of teachers and academic mobility of education applicants) caused by the situation of full-scale war, as a starting point for the further deployment of perspective. The experience of Ukrainian educators in this case is a substrate for the research work, so the selected categories are designed to form a certain structure of the research process. In addition, a comparative approach was involved due to the need to provide predictions about educational trends of the future. In this paper, we present an attempt to reconcile the existing experience of the development of the institution of education in such a context. The result of the development of

the presented topic is a model of educational development in Ukraine, which is based on the above-mentioned basis. The presented theoretical model is prognostic and corresponding recommendations require harmonization with the current norms of educational process management.

Keywords: educational perspectives, educational strategies, innovation, technology, Europe.

Introduction

The educational space of Ukraine is now under dynamic transformation, and development plans need to be periodically revised, taking into account the current circumstances. The question of forecasting the situation in the Ukrainian educational paradigm in the post-war period remains open. The need to develop strategies and determine the directions of further movement for this sphere is essential, given the current constraints (Almpanis & Joseph-Richard, 2022, p. 7). Accordingly, the perspective of the educational process and possible directions for innovation are widely presented. Despite the current context, there has not yet been a significant change at the state level, which consequently necessitates the need to determine the direction for such restructuring in the future.

The issue of post-war reconstruction of Ukrainian education became particularly relevant not only after February 24, 2022 but had been maturing since the beginning of the Russian invasion in 2014. It was driven by the need to change the inefficient post-Soviet legacy in the field of education (Wylegała, 2021) and the overall need for the de-Sovietization of education in a mental dimension (Oliinyk & Kuzio, 2021). Simultaneously, the educational space became a platform for the dissemination and transmission of narratives related to the national identity of Ukrainians and the imperial ambitions of Russians (Luoma-Uhlík, 2021).

The Russian aggression against Ukraine definitively redirected the vectors of the development of Ukrainian education towards European standards. Such realities demand the transformation of education both on a socio-cultural (Bazaluk et al., 2017) and state-building (Sasse & Lackner, 2019) level, as well as in professional educational segments: the creation of innovative educational formats (Voloshinov et al., 2020), models of online learning environments (Oleksiienko et al., 2020), unification of digital potential with the European educational environment (Kulish et al., 2020), socio-economic support for the education sector (Lysytsia et al., 2019), and a high level of proficiency in the English language as the international language of communication in all spheres of European public life (Paziura et al., 2021).

The Ukrainian educational discourse began actively using new conceptual terms, such as the "New Ukrainian School" or "New School" (Nychkalo, 2017), shaping new existential and value meanings of national education.

It's worth understanding that any wars come to an end, raising pertinent questions about the post-war recovery of the potential of all spheres of societal development. Terepyshchyi (2021) proposes using the formula "education for peace," concentrating on the educational potential to shape a new socio-economic paradigm of Ukraine's development. Mishchuk et al. (2019) observe a serious problem of the outflow of participants in the educational process from Ukraine due to the war, posing a threat to both quantitative and qualitative indicators of the level of intellectual potential and human resources on a national scale. It's crucial to realize that the full integration of Ukraine into the European community is possible with the proper strength of human resources, one of which is the level of education.

Therefore, the education sector requires necessary support from the state and international institutions (Ostrovska et al., 2020).

Research Problem

A category of research on possible measures to preserve the functional capacity of the educational system under martial law is currently presented. At the same time, the quality provision of educational services is impossible without the formation of a broader planning field, which will meet the requirements of the future. Consequently, it is advisable to investigate probable scenarios of educational modification in Ukraine during the end of a full-scale war. It is this methodological orientation that guarantees the compliance of actual interventions with the conditions of higher education functioning in the future.

Research Focus

The purpose of this study is to determine the direction of the development of education in the postwar period. It is noteworthy that the basis for this prediction is a meaningful assessment of the current challenges facing the experts of this industry and, accordingly, influence the moment of post-war reconstruction. The basis of the research work is to highlight the prerequisites that will shape the situation of education innovation in the future.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the most significant obstacles that limit the process of gradual development of the educational system and modify the process of pedagogical interaction under conditions of warfare. According to the identified obstacles, we seek to provide an alternative way of development and create a theoretical model for the reconstruction of education in the postwar period. In this case, we aim to take into account not only the results of research work but also to refer to the experience of specialists who continue their professional activities in this context. In this way, we will obtain a comprehensive model for the development of the educational system.

Research Methodology

General Background

A certain direction of research requires the use of the axiomatic method. According to the information about the conditions of the educational process organization, we singled out independent categories describing the general dynamics. The generalized structure became the basis for the survey of the focus group of teachers continuing pedagogical activity. Thus, we avoided the possible loss of certain significant components, as we preformed a structure for discussing with experts the significant challenges of our time. In addition, the comparative method was applied in this work, because the experience of professional activity of teachers from different regions of Ukraine at this stage of the war differs significantly, which is of great importance for the formation of predictions.

Sample / Participants / Group

The application of the focus group method implies certain limitations on the number of respondents involved in the interaction at a certain point in time. So, several groups of teachers from different regions of Ukraine were selected to be involved in the study. The total number of respondents

is 450 people, including representatives of educational institutions of different levels of training in such regions as: Kherson, Poltava, Kyiv, Rivne, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and Lviv regions. Focus groups were conducted in the format of video conferences for the use of Zoom software, teachers, taking into account security measures, were provided with conditions of full confidentiality. A total of 30 conferences were held, each of which involved 15 people. This form was chosen as the most optimal, given the time constraints. Information was collected between March 1 and April 25, 2022. Only 32% of the total number of employees to whom the offer was sent provided a response of consent to participate in the study. Accordingly, we can guarantee the voluntariness and motivation of the respondent.

Instrument and Procedures

At the stage of collecting information the classical form of a focus group survey was applied, during which the discussion of the main categories was conducted, which was pre-determined in accordance with the results of the research activities of specialists. The messages provided by the participants were recorded in the form of audio materials, which were subsequently analyzed. The relevant results were elaborated with the help of content and Internet analysis methods, the results of which are presented in the form of visualizations and tabular materials in the presented work.

Research Results

Based on the results obtained during the processing of research works in this area, we can form a model of obstacles that are significant for the Ukrainian educational process in the context of a full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation. Thus, we have the opportunity to provide context on the peculiarities of the process of restoring education in Ukraine in the post-war period (Table 1).

Table 1

The Limitation of Education in Ukraine in the War and the Prospects of Post-War Recovery

Category of restrictions	Transformation Perspectives
Reducing the number of educational institutions	Development of institutions according to innovative standards and EU requirements
Financing of educational institutions	Exploring new funding channels and signing long-term contracts
Training of pedagogical specialists	Attracting European institutions to support and cooperate with teachers
Number of entrants	The necessity for educational institutions to implement incentives for university entrants
Number of foreign applicants	Opportunity to get a new position in the international educational market
Ensuring didactic methods	Development of the methodological support according to the modern standards

Limiting digitalization	Formation of a new IT-culture and an integrated system of digital support for education
The new context of academic mobility	Intensification of the international cooperation of teaching staff and students
Limiting the process of innovation	Creation of a sound strategy for the gradualist development of the Ukrainian educational system

Source: author development.

Summarizing, the significant difficulties in the implementation of the goals for the educational system are obvious. At the same time, understanding the conditions in which the transformation of the educational process takes place, gives us an opportunity to define the prospects and make a forecast about the potential ways of education development in Ukraine in the future (Hale & Lockard, 2022) more clearly. The most significant factors slowing down the process of development of the educational institution in the state are the reduction in the number of institutions and the reduction of funding of functioning institutions. First of all, it is connected with the prolonged effect of these transformations. The post-war period for Ukrainian education will be primarily a period of reconstruction and the creation of new institutions based on the destroyed ones, as well as the search for sources of financial support, given the significant number of sectors of post-war reconstruction, which are quite valuable for the state budget. In contrast, we can testify that the new institutions will comply with European educational standards since the process of their creation will be based on principles and requirements significantly different from those of the primary ones. Destroyed educational institutions in the new context will be able to develop according to innovative standards.

The demographic component is important in this context (Shevchuk & Shevchuk, 2022). Currently, there is a significant outflow of specialists in the pedagogical segment and applicants for education. From the perspective of the development of education in Ukraine, we can note that demographic changes will have a great impact on the effectiveness of interventions, which will be implemented in the future. Thus, given the age characteristics of the population of the state, meaningful was the forecast of a gradual increase in enrollment in the period up to 2026. Nevertheless, maintaining the possibility of such a prospect depends on political influences aimed at the return of Ukrainians to Ukraine and reducing the outflow of educators in the future. The situation of mass migration due to the beginning of a full-scale war in the country requires targeted actions to stabilize the demographic situation in the future. Special attention should be paid to the issues of educational migration. Yes, an important component of the stable development of the Ukrainian education system is to provide funding from foreign students who joined the Ukrainian HEI. In the future, it is significant to carry out activities to increase the prestige of the institution of higher education at the international level. In the pre-war period, the number of educational migrants in the state tended to gradually increase. Accordingly, attracting the attention of foreign educators to the process of professional training in Ukraine is a guarantee of a stable position of state HEIs in the global educational market. In turn, the economic stability secured in this way gives access to new vectors of academic improvement. Let us also note that with the directed innovation of education a significant risk is a decrease in the number of applicants for higher education in the future, which requires the Ukrainian educational system variability and the search for alternative areas of improvement. Such trends are the cause of the low growth of professional staff, which can provide consistency of Ukrainian production trends to the innovative requirements of the economy of partner states. Therefore, it is the export of educational services that can serve as a

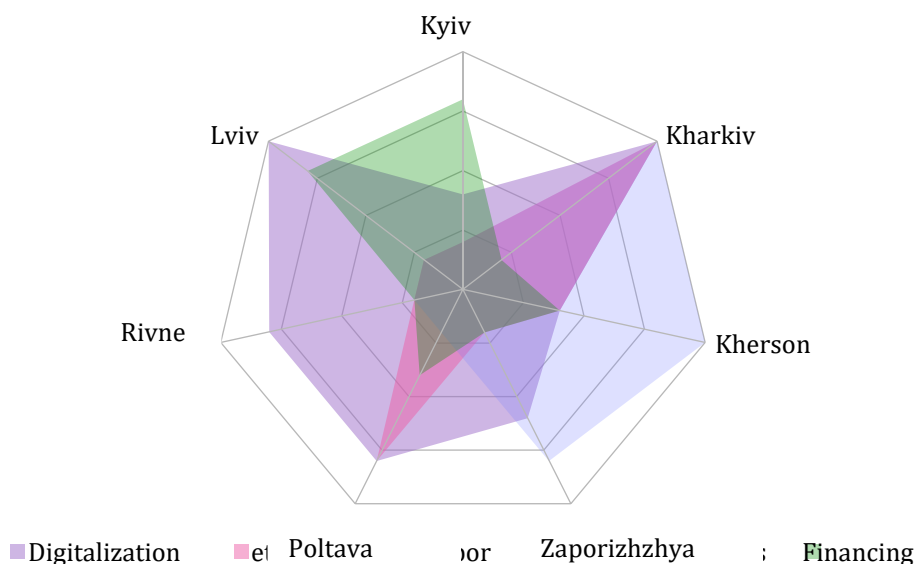
similar basis for the provision of higher education. The tendency to decrease the number of Ukrainian applicants is involved in this aspect. In particular, the financial inaccessibility of higher education is an obstacle in their way. Such restrictions pose a risk to the state economy, as the number of specialized specialists is decreasing. Therefore, the issue of financing educational institutions requires more detailed consideration by the expert community.

Taking into account the need to popularize Ukrainian educational institutions in an international context, we note that the professional training of teachers in the post-war context should be accompanied by the development of international professional communities. The increase in the number of international projects implemented based on Ukrainian educational institutions, caused by military conditions, should further serve as a basis for deepening and strengthening the established ties. It should also be noted that the orientation of the educational system in Ukraine towards European norms is meaningful only if the latter is directly included in the broader context of European educational trends. In this case, we also turn to the problem of the difficulty of training teachers who will have a sufficient level of adaptability and will be able to follow innovative educational standards. Achieving this goal is possible only in a situation of exchange of experience and close cooperation with experts from other states. Only under such conditions, it is possible to consolidate the sustainable position of the Ukrainian educational sector in the international market and restore the financial and personnel flow.

Based on the results of the analysis of the answers provided by pedagogical workers, we can present a detailed model that allows us to evaluate the instrumental aspects of the mentioned categories. In addition, during the processing of the obtained results we were able to establish which of the mentioned limitations are essential for the educational institutions of certain regions (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Assessment of the Limitations of the Educational Process in Different Regions of Ukraine



Source: author development.

Verbalizing the presented diagram, we can note that for the regions affected to a greater extent by Russian aggression, such obstacles to the stable functioning of educational institutions as a decrease in the number of enrollments and difficulties in digital and methodological support are more significant. Note that the difficulties in integrating information technology into the educational process are

experienced by all educators, with the exception of the Kyiv region. We can draw conclusions about the formation of IT infrastructure in this region. At the same time, the reduced level for Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions is associated with the actualization of more pressing problems (in particular, the loss of the ability to fully operate institutions). We can generalize and note that the problem of funding is more acute for educational institutions, which are in the leading positions in the national rating and are associated with the presence of development plans. The problem of methodological support is more pronounced in the eastern regions, which is associated with the long influence of the Russian methodological position on the educational processes and requires time to adapt teachers. Abstracting this component, we can note that the eastern regions are experiencing a crisis of separation and the formation of their own educational method. So, we can make the following assumptions: in the post-war period, it is necessary to develop a sustainable technological foundation for educational institutions and the restoration of destroyed support systems. In addition, it is important to form conditions to support the flow of incoming students for regional institutions (updating the system of regional coefficients, reductive, and career guidance activities). Finally, it is advisable to develop assistant methodological materials aimed at facilitating the transition from the imperial to autonomous educational tradition.

Turning to the experience gained by Ukrainian educators under the quarantine restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic period, it may be noted that globalization trends have significantly diminished. In contrast, convection through digital technologies intensifies. During the focus group also elaborated on the probable accession to the EU and the corresponding restructuring that awaits the educational system on this path. In this direction, the teachers also mainly referred to the issue of technical support and related competencies. We can note that according to the obtained qualitative and quantitative results, in the educational context the most relevant is the issue of providing users with opportunities to use these technologies, i.e., their integration into the educational process. The leading issue in this context is not only the technical support of the relevant institutions, but also the maintenance of a safe environment and the development of staff competencies, which will not only be able to apply such developments in their own professional activities, but also to retransmit this knowledge. Moreover, changes in teaching methodology and changes in the culture of educational institutions are necessary (Hennessy et al., 2022). In working through this aspect in the focus groups, a significant number of nuances were reflected, which we will present below (Table 2).

Table 2

Specifying Aspects of the Digitalization of Education in Ukraine

Aspects of digitalization of teachers	Aspects of digitalization of students
Development of digitalization model and strategy	Providing IT infrastructure and software that is available
Formation of IT infrastructure of the region, institution	Digital deduction and preparation for the use of relevant resources
Training of pedagogical staff	Creation of communication channels for the interaction of participants in the educational process

Ensuring inclusiveness	Support in matters of safety and psycho-hygiene
Development of new forms of didactic content	Digital and psychological adduction of parents

Source: author development.

Detailing the problem field, we are faced with a number of necessary transformations. Based on the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated 10.12.2021. No. 1340 “On Approval of the Model Professional Development Program for Teachers to Develop Digital Competence”, we can talk about the existence of a legal basis for the relevant changes, which simultaneously remain formalized only partially. It is necessary, according to the Order, the introduction measures aimed at the development of digital competencies among teachers, which will provide the necessary basis for further active involvement in the educational process. Nevertheless, given the above table, we can talk about the heterogeneity and multidimensionality of the category of “digital competence”. The teaching staff needs to create a holistic system of digital technology implementation, which will allow continuing professional activities without receiving excessive workloads. Prognostically, we can note that in this case, decentralization as a method of implementing these innovations is not effective, because the number of tasks performed for specialists of a separate institution will increase significantly. As an alternative, we propose the development of a unified reductive program, the passage of which will provide basic training of teachers to enter the new field of activity. In addition, it is necessary to provide forms of didactic content to be used in the future, given the amount of work performed at the individual level.

The above-mentioned components of the digitalization process concerning coeducators of education can be provided as part of the training in the educational institution with the prior professional development of teachers. Note that this embodiment of digitalization is the most ergonomic, as it limits all participants in the educational process from overloading. However, it is obvious that to implement such a scenario it is necessary to create a separate expert group, which will be able to create and integrate such an educational product. In this case, it is important to pay attention to the abilities of the founding bodies overseeing this process. In the period of post-war reconstruction and the conditions of an active process of European integration, such a strategy may be difficult to implement.

Note that digital innovations used in the educational process now include such technologies as mixed or virtual reality, gamification, cloud storage, and information platforms, as well as broader digital learning spaces (DLS, LMS). For the educational system of Ukraine at this stage, the implementation of a digitalization strategy with the implementation of all these technologies is impossible. First of all, it is due to material constraints in the provision of educational institutions. In addition, obtaining a qualification in working with each of these types of digital technology will require considerable effort and time from teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an integrative course or platform that will make this area available to Ukrainian users.

Currently, there is a model of integration of technological support in the educational process, which may be meaningful for the Ukrainian paradigm. According to this model, the teacher performs the role of a catalyst for learning, creating learning experiences. Accordingly, this vector makes it possible to implement the described standard promptly and at the same time preserving the relevant benefits.

The notion of a catalyst in this case reflects the possibility of integrating digital technologies without the need for teachers to become thoroughly familiar with the latter. The educator canalizes the process of mastering a particular technology, and contributes to the exploratory, applied mastery of the new field for applicants to education (Crompton & Sykora, 2021, p. 7).

It is noteworthy that during the World Economic Forum 2019-2021, the issue of creating a new system of criteria defining the features of the educational process was raised. Considering the current conditions of the labor market functioning and general trends in digitalization, we can say that preparing education applicants to be as effective as possible in the information age is of primary importance. In particular, the characteristics of divergence and openness to new experiences are significant. In this case, it is necessary to refer to the system "Man - technology – environment". Integration into this system should take place according to the principles of autonomy and security. It is important to provide intellectual capital (Burov, 2021, p. 2).

Discussion

Working out a long-term strategy for the development of the educational system is necessary for Ukrainian education because, in conditions of constant and rapid changes, it is necessary to observe a certain vector of development. Actually, we were able to establish that the current challenges facing the educational paradigm may reflect the direction of further development for the latter. In particular, we can talk about such trends, which can be traced in research publications, as the need to reduce the number of educational institutions and reduce their funding, the difficulties of quality training of specialists and provide methodological developments, a sharp decline in the number of entrants, including foreign, significant restrictions on the process of innovation and digitalization, as well as academic mobility. To summarize, now education in Ukraine is in the conditions of functionality support and self-determined. In contrast, there are noticeable trends towards the development of those institutions seeking to overcome these obstacles, forming alternatives. It is these alternatives that can form the basis for the innovation of education in Ukraine in the post-war period. Moreover, they largely correspond to the standards of the European educational paradigm and, therefore, contribute to the European integration processes. Thus, the divergent thinking of the management of educational institutions provides Ukrainian education with the possibility of preservation and gradual development. In particular, such alternatives can be noted the search for new ways of financing and strengthening international relations, which are forced by the situation in the country. Nevertheless, these aspects provide teachers with remarkable opportunities in the context of integration processes. In addition, we note that Ukrainian educational institutions are beginning to compete for a stable place in the European educational market, the processes of mastering innovative (including digital) tools for teaching have been strengthened. The question of creating a unified strategy of gradual development, which will standardize these trends remains open. Standardization of education is one of the leading EU requirements for the reform of the educational segment.

In addition to the development of strategies, the process of technological and informational support is also important. In fact, the category of digitalization plays a leading role in this context. Drawing attention to the experience of distance learning in quarantine restrictions, we can draw conclusions about the lack of methodological basis in Ukrainian educational institutions, the individual readiness of teachers, and, in contrast, the need to form a common standard for the latter. Thus, it is possible to provide innovative education corresponding to the challenges of our time. Note that the integration of digital technology increases mobility and adaptability of the educational process, which

is especially important in the post-war reconstruction and encouragement of Ukrainian entrants to return to public HEIs. Moreover, information technology is promising because of the ability to personalize this development, which has the advantage of inclusivity (Rizk & Hillier, 2022, p. 6). In this case, the advantages are significant. The possibility of integrating different forms of work and the absence of certain time constraints forms a space for students' creative exploration and at the same time improves feedback from the educator. Moreover, the asynchronous approach to learning fosters the concept of lifelong learning among educators. In such a context, the educator is a mediator and guides the student more toward conscious exploration.

Note also that the processes of renewal and development will have pronounced geographical heterogeneity. For example, teachers in the eastern regions will need methodological support and a transition to the Ukrainian methodology proper, while for the western regions the issue of creating IT infrastructure will be acute. Attention should be paid to the fact that these changes not only reflect the aspirations of teachers but are also significant for the regional culture, as they represent the current obstacles. Nevertheless, the question of educators' readiness for the corresponding restructuring remains open, which requires further research.

Conclusions and Implications

Thus, the prospects for the development of Ukrainian education in the postwar period were identified. It can be predicted that the leading trend in this direction will be digitalization - the creation of an integral IT infrastructure in the state, providing teachers with technical and methodological support, and the development a culture of use. At the same time, we found that this process is heterogeneous and requires consideration of many components, so we propose an alternative way of implementation - the creation of a single educational product for teachers, which will familiarize them with innovative developments and at the same time will not increase the burden on the latter. Also, relevant to the Ukrainian case, the concept of teacher-catalyst, which directs and stimulates the process of interaction with the IT segment among education applicants, forming a new learning experience. Typical for the Ukrainian educational system will be geographical heterogeneity in the trends of recovery and innovation, but to the necessary extent the development of a standardized education system, given the European integration orientation. Within the projected standardized education, regional variability remains acceptable, as only under this scenario it is possible to preserve the functional educational institutions of the regions. A separate important aspect is the preservation and restoration of not only the central educational institutions, which is a condition for the sustainable development of the state as a whole and in accordance with current EU requirements, in particular. Actually, on the transformation of education in accordance with European standards, it can be noted that educators are mainly based on the categories of digitalization and increased international interaction. The latter already provides a gradual improvement in education in Ukraine, so we can predict meaningful changes in the future due to the adaptability and divergence of teachers.

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