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EDUCATIONAL LEADERS TRAINING: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE OF PRACTICES IN UKRAINIAN AND GLOBAL SCALE

FORMAÇÃO DE LÍDERES EDUCATIVOS: UMA PERSPECTIVA COMPARATIVA DAS PRÁTICAS À ESCALA UCRANIANA E MUNDIAL

FORMACIÓN DE LÍDERES EDUCATIVOS: UNA PERSPECTIVA COMPARATIVA DE LAS PRÁCTICAS A ESCALA UCRANIANA Y MUNDIAL

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ABSTRACT: Drawing on Ukrainian and international experience from 2020 to 2024, the paper explores the unique aspects of professional training for administrative professionals in the field of education. It emphasizes how the Bologna Process and international exchange programs are being used to integrate the Ukrainian educational system into the European educational landscape. Particular attention is paid to how the war has affected the evolution of management training programs in Ukraine. There is discussion of the challenges of integrating psychological training with security measures and modifying courses for crisis situations. The post-war era's potential for creating personnel training based on overseas experience is investigated. It is recommended that foreign methods be used to restore educational facilities and foster professional proficiency. The importance of digitization and new technologies in training contemporary managers is examined in this research. It is shown how beneficial international educational cooperation is for raising the caliber of management courses offered in Ukraine.

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KEYWORDS: Professional Training. Management Personnel. Educational Institutions. Crisis Management. Globalisation of Education.

RESUMO: *Com base em experiências ucranianas e internacionais entre 2020 e 2024, o artigo analisa aspectos específicos da formação profissional de gestores na área educacional. Destaca como o Processo de Bolonha e programas de intercâmbio internacional vêm sendo utilizados para integrar o sistema educacional ucraniano ao espaço europeu. Aborda o impacto da guerra na evolução dos programas de formação gerencial, discutindo os desafios de integrar o treinamento psicológico com medidas de segurança e de adaptar os cursos a situações de crise. Explora o potencial do período pós-guerra para criar capacitações inspiradas em experiências estrangeiras, recomendando o uso de métodos internacionais na reconstrução de instalações educacionais e no fortalecimento de competências profissionais. Por fim, enfatiza a importância da digitalização e das novas tecnologias na formação de gestores contemporâneos, demonstrando como a cooperação educacional internacional eleva a qualidade dos cursos de gestão na Ucrânia.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Formação profissional. Gestão de pessoal. Instituições de ensino. Gestão de crises. Globalização da educação.

RESUMEN: *Basado en la experiencia ucraniana e internacional entre 2020 y 2024, el artículo analiza los aspectos específicos de la formación profesional de los administradores en el ámbito educativo. Se destaca cómo el Proceso de Bolonia y los programas de intercambio internacional se utilizan para integrar el sistema educativo ucraniano en el espacio europeo. Se presta especial atención al impacto de la guerra en la evolución de los programas de formación en gestión, abordando los desafíos de combinar la capacitación psicológica con medidas de seguridad y adaptar los cursos a situaciones de crisis. Se explora el potencial de la etapa posterior a la guerra para desarrollar capacitaciones basadas en experiencias extranjeras, recomendando el uso de métodos internacionales para reconstruir las instalaciones educativas y fortalecer las competencias profesionales. Finalmente, el estudio subraya la importancia de la digitalización y de las nuevas tecnologías en la formación de gestores contemporáneos y destaca cómo la cooperación educativa internacional mejora la calidad de los cursos de gestión en Ucrania.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Formación profesional. Personal directivo. Instituciones educativas. Gestión de crisis. Globalización de la educación.

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INTRODUCTION

The changing social and economic conditions in society have led to progressive transformations in professional education. One of the key features of the current stage in education development is the training of education managers. In light of the expanded functions of educational systems and the shift towards humanization and the professional and personal development of individuals within pedagogical systems, educational institutions increasingly seek not only highly qualified teachers but also experts capable of analyzing the educational process, planning strategies and tactics for pedagogical development, designing individual pathways for students' personal and professional growth, making independent decisions, and carrying out corrective, monitoring, and evaluation activities.

Personal qualities such as readiness for continuous development, creativity, interpersonal skills, mobility, analytical and prognostic abilities, among others, are becoming increasingly important for education managers. Managerial and pedagogical training plays a pivotal role in preparing these professionals, requiring mastery of knowledge in management, economics, psychology, and pedagogy.

In the context of education's innovative development and the growing need to introduce administrative mechanisms into educational practice, the issue of administrative and pedagogical training has become particularly relevant. As a result, there is heightened interest in this topic because managerial and pedagogical activities enable education managers to enhance education quality, organize training and educational processes effectively, and achieve optimal pedagogical outcomes.

Until recently, Ukraine's management training system remained highly centralized. However, the European integration agenda is actively incorporating European standards into the preparation of educational leaders. To further globalize Ukrainian education, there is an emphasis on adopting successful American and European models (Alcántara et al., 2023; Wodon, 2023). Integrating the Ukrainian system into the international educational arena is expected to elevate training standards and ensure compliance with global practices in educational institution management.

Education managers are now increasingly trained to utilize digital tools. A strategic objective of many higher education institutions is to streamline administrative procedures using digital solutions for managing educational processes. In the context of Ukraine's full-scale conflict, technology has become critical. The war has compelled schools to adopt distance learning, accelerating the digitization of education. Platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Moodle are now essential for maintaining the continuity of the educational process.

The goal of this article is to examine how Ukraine's education management system is adapting to the challenges posed by the full-scale war of 2022. The study also explores how

adjusting educational practices to new circumstances supports the development of competencies among educational leaders. Additionally, it compares European, American, and Ukrainian approaches to educational leadership training, with a focus on the prospects for globalizing the education system. This research builds on the author's previous work, "Advancing managerial experience through education: Comparative Ukrainian and global practices," published in 2024 (Moskalenko et al., 2024).

Literature Review

Principals are widely regarded as pivotal to advancing education. However, their influence is often indirect, manifesting in areas such as resource allocation, teacher mentorship, personnel decisions, and school climate, making it difficult to measure their direct impact on students' cognitive and non-cognitive skills. These complexities prompt policymakers and district officials to ask critical questions: "To what extent do principals influence students' cognitive and non-cognitive development?", "What actions can districts take to strengthen the principal pipeline?", and "What policies can enhance principals' effectiveness?" (Sunaengsih et al., 2019).

Rivkin et al. (2024) present findings from three studies on principalship in Chicago Public Schools (CPS), focusing on:

- Principals' contributions to the development of students' cognitive and non-cognitive skills, as well as school climate;
- The district's creation of residency-based training programs for prospective school leaders (Chicago Leadership Collaborative);
- Merit pay bonuses for principals who improve student achievement.

According to Rivkin et al. (2024), principals have a direct impact on student learning and school culture, with effects that extend into students' early adulthood. Given these wide-ranging impacts, it is unsurprising that districts such as Chicago are pursuing various policy approaches to cultivate effective school leadership. The principalship emerges as a role with long-lasting effects on student outcomes. The study further examines the results of two policies: (1) a principal training program designed to prepare future urban school leaders and (2) a merit pay program that rewards effective principals with additional compensation (Rivkin et al., 2024).

The Chicago Leadership Collaborative (CLC) is a principal residency program that CPS launched in November 2011 and continues to run successfully today. The CLC aims to develop a pool of capable school administrators. Candidates start with classroom-based education aligned with the State of Illinois Principal Standards, focusing on challenges faced by leaders in

urban schools, thanks to partnerships with nearby colleges. Subsequently, under the mentorship of a high-performing principal, each candidate completes a year-long residency in a CPS school. During the residency, candidates receive \$80,000 or the equivalent of their CPS salary, whichever is higher. Graduate degrees are awarded to those who successfully complete these programs. Furthermore, after candidates assume principal roles, the training programs continue supporting them for one to two years (Gordon et al., 2022).

According to Sebastien (2017), researchers and educational leaders frequently establish objectives to demonstrate how school leaders influence student progress. In this context, school leadership refers to a broad category that includes district administrators, principals, and teacher leaders. Researchers estimate that approximately 25% of school outcomes are attributable to the combined direct and indirect impact of leadership on student learning. Student achievement is therefore enhanced when educational leaders engage actively with the dynamics of diverse school communities to foster development and change.

Toprak's (2020) systematic review highlights growing interest in educational leadership models over time. The most studied models in education research include transformational leadership, teacher leadership, educational leadership, and distributed leadership. Recent studies increasingly focus on how leaders influence organizational behavior, institutional culture, and student outcomes. The literature consistently describes educational leaders as transformative learners and facilitators (Toprak et al., 2023). Substantial evidence shows that school leaders achieve the greatest success when they implement organizational development and transformational strategies that create environments where teachers and students feel empowered and motivated. This also occurs when leaders demonstrate genuine care and commitment to the holistic development of individuals, whether employees or students (Özkan & Tokel, 2018). Transformative learning requires developing critical reflection, which involves questioning one's assumptions and perceptions to discover new meaning (Asad et al., 2022; Kakungulu, 2024). Additionally, the literature emphasizes that educational leaders foster teamwork to enhance staff productivity. Specifically, leaders encourage collaboration and innovative thinking in the workplace and set positive examples. At the school level, they actively promote and support the creation of a shared vision (Adams, 2023).

At the same time, professional training programs for leadership among teachers and head teachers may create theoretical and applied foundations, as García-Martínez et al. (2018) correctly assert, making such training essential for strengthening educational systems. However, when it comes to training, the conventional "technical orientation" of instruction—reinforced by technocratic education reforms—often separates head teachers and teachers. As a result, their roles become highly distinct, and they may even develop a certain antagonism toward one another in how they perceive their professional growth within the educational system. This separation reduces the impact of cooperative learning on community practices in

education. From this perspective, training is often viewed as an event in which head teachers and instructors are expected to develop independently, rather than as a process in which they can acquire and apply new knowledge collaboratively within a learning community.

It should also be noted that the issue of managerial and pedagogical training has not been sufficiently explored in pedagogical practice. The theoretical and practical solutions to some problems in the field of educational management often do not extend beyond addressing isolated pedagogical tasks. A key factor in advancing this field lies in the integrative, multi-level, and continuous hierarchical nature of managerial and pedagogical training. All areas of managerial and pedagogical activity—especially educational processes—are encompassed within this field, which adds even greater significance to its pedagogical dimension.

Methodology

An assessment of regional and global systems for training management staff in education formed the basis of the research methodology. To achieve this objective, a quantitative study of Ukrainian universities was conducted, including an analysis of their curricula and institutional characteristics. Special attention was given to training managers for leading educational institutions in times of crisis and to reforming the educational system.

To identify key trends and challenges in educational manager training, the study examined 332 higher education institutions, including public, municipal, and private universities, academies, and institutes. The comparative analysis method was employed to explore differences between managerial training practices in Ukraine and other countries.

Given their direct involvement in Ukraine's educational reforms and their significant influence on global education policy, the sample included executive education programs from the United States, the European Union, and Ukraine. To better understand European educational standards, key management training programs in Germany, the United Kingdom, and France were analysed. American approaches to manager training were studied through MBA programs with an educational focus, enabling comparisons among diverse management practice models.

The methodology also involved qualitative analytical methods, including a detailed review of international regulatory documents and Ukrainian education policies. Special consideration was given to the Bologna Process criteria and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), both of which are crucial for aligning Ukrainian educational curricula with European standards. A comparative analysis of legal and regulatory texts revealed the core principles for educational institution directors in several countries (Hokkanen et al., 2019). The final stage of the study involved drawing conclusions, focusing primarily on whether Ukraine's management training system complies with international standards and requirements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the EQF, managers must possess the knowledge and competence to act effectively in complex and unpredictable environments. In the educational context, this is reflected in their ability to manage pedagogical processes and resources while supporting innovative learning approaches. An effective management system facilitates the implementation of innovative teaching methods, the integration of modern technologies, and the enhancement of graduates' competitiveness in the global labor market. The characteristics of international programs for training educational institution managers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Training Programmes for Heads of Educational Institutions in Foreign Countries

Country	Programme description	Institution	Programme duration
USA	Master of Education in Educational Leadership	Harvard University	Two years
USA	Principal Preparation Programme	University of Illinois	Two years
Germany (IEU)	Schulleiterfortbildung	Humboldt University of Berlin	One year
Sweden (EU)	The Swedish National Principal Training Programme	Stockholm University	3 years
United Kingdom (EU)	National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)	University of Manchester	12-18 months
Indonesia	Educational Administration and Management Courses	Asian College of Teachers	4-8 months

Source: compiled by the authors.

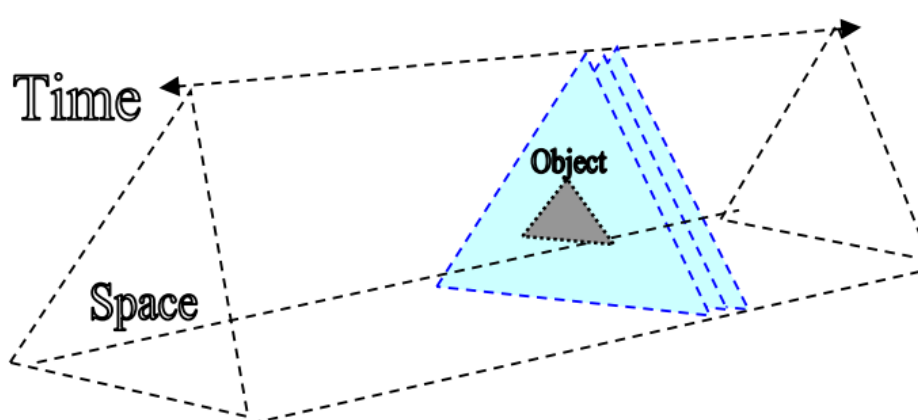
The development of management and leadership abilities, as well as the efficient administration of educational institutions, are the shared objectives of educational leadership programs in the US and the EU. Innovation, technological integration, and the creation of management strategies are heavily emphasized in the Principal Preparation Program at the University of Illinois and the Master of Education in Educational Leadership at Harvard University in the United States. Programs to develop educational leadership are also offered in Germany and the UK, focusing on enhancing administrative management in the education sector.

Numerous studies have highlighted the challenges of integrating theoretical and practical knowledge, emphasizing the difficulty of connecting leadership experience with insights from educational practice (Aldhaen et al., 2023; Forssten Seiser & Söderström, 2021; Grootenboer & Hardy, 2015; Clarke & Dempster, 2020). A study on principals' learning during the Swedish National Principal Training program revealed that continuous learning processes often occur in the workplace outside formal training sessions. The research also showed how interrupted learning can limit—or even hinder—the connection between learning from educational practice and leadership practice, as this is a process that requires greater

awareness of the importance of bridging knowledge between these two areas (Forssten Seiser & Söderström, 2022).

The Swedish approach is based on a structuralist model (see Figure 1). In Figure 1, the elongated transparent prism (known as the Toblerone figure) represents the school as a system. A prominent pattern in this structuring process was that many changes occurred within a short period, with the principal's leadership emerging as the key driving force. Many education managers who completed the training were able to transform schools with high staff turnover and poor reputations into institutions valued by both teachers and students.

Figure 1. The Toblerone figure: Swedish National Principal Training Programme foundation principle



Source: Forssten Seiser and Söderström (2022)

The development of such programmes in Ukraine has problems in terms of leadership training for HEIs, which require more specific training due to the country's vast number of universities and their strategic relevance to the educational system. Only a few higher education programs at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy can prepare leaders to govern huge educational institutions. At the same time, higher education is one of the hardest and responsible aspects of management training. It should be noted in particular that heads of educational institutions now prioritize ensuring the security of their establishments. Managers need to be ready to evacuate rapidly, establish a secure, informative atmosphere, and work well with security authorities in the event of a military threat. The three domains outline the essential elements of equipping staff members with the know-how and abilities to oversee educational establishments during times of conflict.

A comparison of the experience of training managers in Ukrainian and foreign educational institutions is presented in Table 2. This summarizing Table represents a continuation

of the above-mentioned research published in 2024 (Moskalenko et al., 2024). The data in the Table are obtained in the process of unstructured interviews conducted with Ukrainian educational managers who graduated from appropriate programs (interview transcripts were processed manually with the help of the grounded theory toolkit). Data regarding foreign experience were obtained from the secondary sources, including systematic reviews.

Table 2. Comparison of Experience in Training of Educational Institution Managers in Ukraine and Abroad

Criterion	Ukrainian experience	Foreign experience
Training contents	Mostly theoretical	Balanced theoretical and practical part.
Certification after programme completion	Optional certification	Mandatory in most EU countries and the US
Periodicity	Mandatory every 5 years	As needed; it depends on the concrete educational institution situation, or in response to sound new developments in educational management
Integration of the latest digital technologies	Limited use	Active use of EdTech tools and solutions
Opportunities to participate in international programmes	Limited number of existing options	Extensive opportunities for participation in the international exchange programmes within the region and worldwide
Training models	Centralised and predominantly unified management models	Decentralised and customized models
Core advantage	Strong theoretical base of fundamental nature	A lot of practice. Useful practical cases
Training in anti-Crisis management	Exclusively safety-oriented (protection in case of attacks)	Comprehensive
Funding of participation in programmes	State funding	Public and private funding, scholarships, self-funding

Source: developed by the authors.

Since the reconstruction of educational institutions requires the hiring of competent and experienced managers, the post-war era presents new opportunities for the development of Ukraine's management training system. As shown in the table, domestic Ukrainian programmes for training educational managers differ significantly from European and American ones, both in terms of content and organization. This calls for further research in the field, the adoption of best practices worldwide, and broad consultations and cooperation with international agents in the sector of training managers and leaders in education, thus bringing transformational leaders into the Ukrainian education system.

FINAL CONSIDERATION

A crucial element in ensuring the efficient operation of educational institutions amid contemporary challenges is the training of managerial staff in the field of education. Despite political and economic difficulties, Ukraine's educational system is progressively adapting to meet international standards. The study shows that one of the most effective ways to preserve the continuity of the educational process and ensure efficient administration during times of crisis is by incorporating digital technology into the training of educational managers. The launch of new educational initiatives focused on crisis management is an essential first step. The successful development of educational institutions depends on using such a sophisticated set of methodologies. Strengthening the autonomy of educational establishments and fostering the leadership skills of their administrators are also critical.

The results confirm Ukraine's strategy of active cooperation with American and European educational institutions, which contributes to making the management training system more global. Harmonizing educational standards and sharing experiences with international partners have greatly improved training programmes and raised the quality of educational management training. Special attention should also be given to advancing digital infrastructure. By leveraging international experience, Ukraine will be able to train capable managers who can efficiently oversee educational processes and support the sustainable growth of the educational system both nationally and internationally.

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