

SECTION 20.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY

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UPHOLDING EUROPEAN VALUES IN NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL EDUCATION: UKRAINIAN PERSPECTIVES

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Neuropsychology and Clinical Neuropsychology are succinctly defined by the EFPA Standing Committee on Clinical Neuropsychology. Neuropsychology constitutes a specialised branch of psychology that concentrates on the interconnections among cognitive and affective processes, the individual's personality and behaviour, and neurological (brain) functioning.

Luria set early milestones in neuropsychology, by seamlessly merging his psychological theories with practical medical training, establishing a strong foundation for his groundbreaking neuropsychological theories in Ukraine. This era revolutionised the approach to neuropsychological assessment tools and clinical acumen, ultimately transforming the treatment of brain injuries and cognitive rehabilitation on a global scale. Ukraine played a crucial and formative role in cultivating Alexander Luria's scientific contributions to neuropsychology, particularly during his research work at the Ukrainian Psychoneurological Academy in Kharkiv.

In Ukraine this is a new field that is rapidly gaining attention. Clinical Psychologists endeavour to incorporate these principles alongside European standards and methodologies (Gade & Mortensen, 1990; Spikman & van der Naalt, 2010; Baggio & Segura, 2020; Eling, 2016; Collins, 2016; Hokkanen et al., 2016; Grote & Novitski, 2016; Hessen et al., 2018; Hokkanen et al., 2019; Olabarrieta-Landa et al., 2016; Lopes et al., 2019; Dias Neto et al., 2020) to guarantee a contemporary and efficacious strategy for assisting neurodivergent children and patients. Ukrainian

researchers V. Knyazev, O. Chaban, M. Humenuk, V. Verbenko, B. Tkach and O. Kiparenko are adapting Luria's theory for application in their practice [1], [9]. Active work in the field of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses is providing new generations of Clinical Psychologists with the tools they need to understand and implement concepts of neuropsychology. However, many training programs provided by specialists in this field are not accredited by the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), leading to discrepancies in the quality of education and hindering professional recognition in Europe (European Commission, 2015, p.18-24). The European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) addressed these issues by creating a Standing Committee on Clinical Neuropsychology (SCCN) in 2016.

In 2018, a team of researchers E. Hessen, L. Hokkanen, J. Ponsford, M. van Zandvoort, A. Watts, J. Evans, and K. Y. Haaland emphasised that despite differences in training models, the main competency requirements are generally applicable across different countries, suggesting a level of generalizability in the field of clinical neuropsychology. The main competency requirements in Clinical Neuropsychology training:

- In-depth knowledge of general psychology (Clinical Psychology) - a comprehensive understanding of psychology (master's degree in psychology or an equivalent qualification);
- Expert knowledge of brain-behavioural relationships - a deep understanding of how brain functions relate to cognitive and emotional processes;
- Clinical assessment skills - proficiency in neuropsychological assessment, including decision-making and diagnostic skills, is critical for accurate evaluations and interpretations;
- Knowledge of ethical and legal standards - essential for neuropsychologists to ensure compliance and uphold professional standards;
- Adaptation to cultural and economic contexts - cultural competency is increasingly important for providing sensitive assessments and interventions in diverse populations.
- Standardisation of training - creating education and competency standards across countries to ensure that professionals in Clinical Neuropsychology develop the same essential skills, qualifications and recognition of professionals across borders [6].

In 2019, European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) undertook a survey regarding specialisation pathways across various psychological domains in Europe, identifying neuropsychology as a prevalent specialty area. This gap highlights the urgent need for standardised accreditation processes that ensure all practitioners are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively contribute to the field.

SECTION 20.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY

The lack of well-defined governmental criteria and established competency requirements to practise as a specialist in neuropsychology presents significant challenges in Ukraine. The occupation of Clinical Neuropsychologist has yet to achieve formal recognition and registration as an official profession. Without consistent standards, inconsistencies in training and qualifications may arise, potentially impacting the quality of services provided. The researchers, in their 2020 collaboration, discuss the necessity for standardised training benchmarks and competencies, based on the EuroPsy model [7]. The formalisation of regulatory requirements for the profession of neuropsychologist is essential to align with European standards and establish comprehensive frameworks for education and professional qualifications. In 2021, clinical neuropsychology required a licence in 50% of European countries [8]. Embracing European criteria would not only bolster the profession's credibility but also promote international collaboration and enhance recognition across different jurisdictions. The synergistic possibilities arising from the partnership between European and Ukrainian researchers create a remarkable opportunity to enhance neuropsychological therapies in clinical settings.

Developing new methodologies and integrating modern multidisciplinary techniques and theories in Clinical Neuropsychology ensure that Luria's foundational principles continue to evolve and remain relevant in Europe and Ukraine. Furthermore, fostering partnerships between academic institutions and clinical practices will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices, ultimately enhancing the quality of training. The Provisional EuroPsy Specialist Certificate in Clinical Neuropsychology follows the general framework of the EuroPsy Specialists Certificates in Work & Organisational Psychology and Psychotherapy (EFPA, 2023), requiring candidates to first hold the Basic EuroPsy Certificate before they are eligible to pursue the Provisional EuroPsy Specialist Certificate in Clinical Neuropsychology. The EuroPsy Specialist Certificate model may significantly enhance patient safety and care in Ukraine.

In the present day, Ukraine faces a multitude of challenges, yet its historical achievements in the realm of mental health and cognitive science continue to motivate emerging generations of researchers and practitioners devoted to the advancing of these fields. As the nation endeavours to reconstruct and fortify its institutions, there is a revitalised emphasis on the integration and adaptation of contemporary neuropsychological techniques in assessment and intervention alongside traditional methodologies, promoting collaboration between local and international experts to enhance the efficacy of rehabilitation programs. Implementing the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) in Ukrainian Neuropsychology postgraduate courses would standardise

accreditation, ensure the recognition of qualifications across Europe, and provide psychologists with the mobility and credibility needed to collaborate effectively with European colleagues, promoting the overall development of neuropsychology as a discipline. This collaborative approach not only enriches local practices but also positions Ukraine as a pivotal participant in the global dialogue on mental health, fostering cross-cultural exchanges that may pave the way for innovative advancements in treatment methodologies. Ukraine has the potential to successfully align with European standards in neuropsychology while also introducing innovative, adapted multidisciplinary methodologies.

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