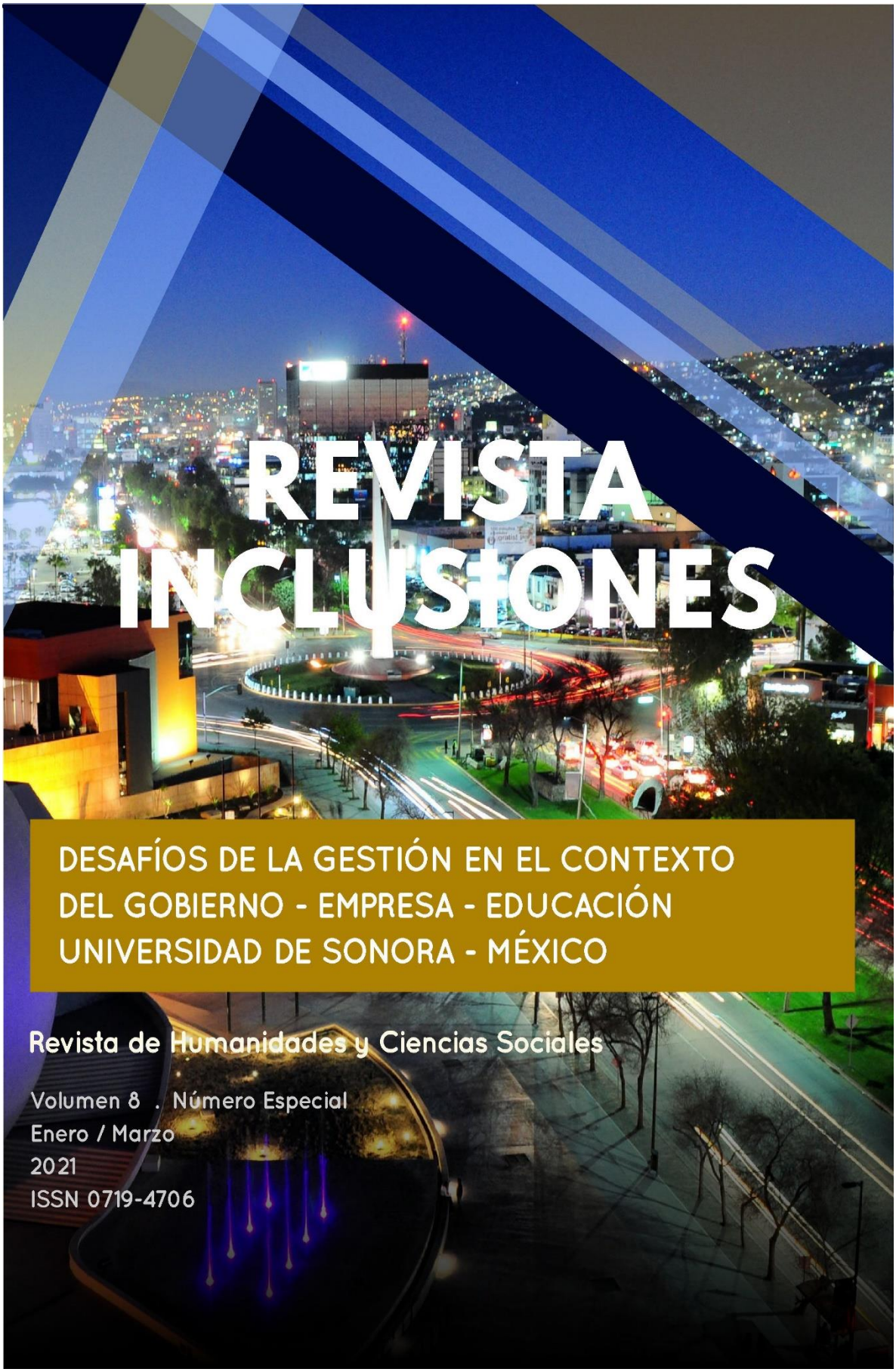

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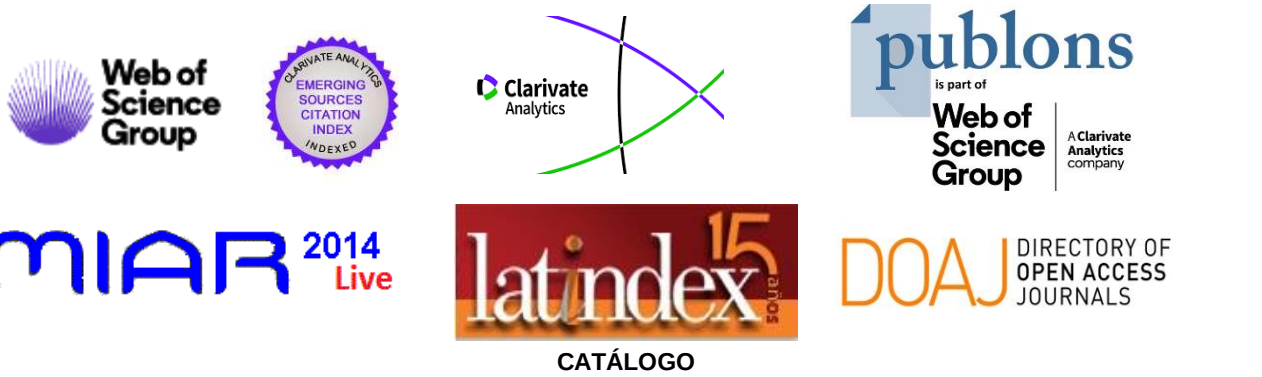

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FEATURES OF MODERN UNIVERSITY STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Ph. D. Lyudmila Matsuk
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ukraine
ORCID iD: 0000-0003-0472-6813
liudmila.matsuk@pnu.edu.ua
Dr. Olena Budnyk
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ukraine
ORCID iD: 0000-0002-5764-6748
olena.budnyk@gmail.com
Ph. D. Halyna Boiko
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine
ORCID iD: 0000-0001-9299-9023
halyna.boiko@lnu.edu.ua
Ph. D. Nadiia Rostykus
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine
ORCID iD: 0000-0001-6036-5333
nadiya.rostykus@lnu.edu.ua
Ph. D. Nataliya Golod
Ivano-Frankivsk National Medical University, Ukraine
ORCID iD: 0000-0003-0996-6920
n.golod@ukr.net
Ph. D. Oksana Nych
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ukraine
ORCID iD: 0000-0003-1983-5967
04oksi@gmail.com
Ph. D. Kateryna Fomin
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ukraine
ORCID iD: 0000-0001-6005-7357
kateryna.fomin@pnu.edu.ua

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Abstract

The article substantiates the nature of conflict in educational institutions through the contradictions arising from differences in attitudes, interests, and aspirations and are perceived and evaluated by participants as incompatible with their own. According to the authors, this is mostly accompanied by attempts to force their own position and leads to psychological tension and confrontation. The types of pedagogical conflicts and the teacher's role in conflict management in the educational institution are revealed. The results of theoretical and empirical research of the strategy of student behavior in conflict situations are presented: competition, cooperation, compromise, avoidance, adaptation. 304 students from Ukrainian universities (control group – CG) and 297 persons (experimental group – EG) were involved in the experiment. It was researched that in conflict situations a third of students is inclined to cooperate (28.4% of CG students and 31.1% of EG), and almost as many (29.4% of CG respondents and 26.4% of EG) – to compromise. Thus, there is a group of educational process participants prone to avoidance or adaptation tactics, as well as the ability to compete and confront in a conflict situation. Emphasis is placed on the need to develop future skills to achieve mutual understanding in conflicts, to transfer the conflict from emotional to intellectual level, as well as the

transformation of motives of confrontation into motives for finding understanding to regulate relationships with others in various spheres of life.

Keywords

Conflict Management – Educational Process – Higher Education Institutions – Future Specialists

Para Citar este Artículo:

Matsuk, Lyudmila; Budnyk, Olena; Boiko, Halyna; Rostykus, Nadiia; Golod, Nataliya; Nych, Oksana y Fomin, Kateryna. Features of modern university student behavior in conflict situations. Revista Inclusiones Vol: 8 num Especial (2021): 95-105.

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Introduction

For the successful young specialists' adaptation to professional activity in any field, it is important to obtain a strong realization and established skills of behavior in conflict situations. Objectively, the pedagogical situation is quite conflictogenic, so in the process of subject-subject interaction, such situations occur quite often. This is due to the fact that participants of pedagogical communication are guided by different goals, motives, needs, expectations, life experiences, as well as show empathy, emotional balance and so on in different ways. Conflict situations in the educational process can be partial and resolved quickly, or can become antagonistic, course the negative attitude to the course, an educator, an educational institution, and sometimes lead to health deterioration of the conflicting parties, both students and teachers.

This largely relates to educational management, business administration of the institution as a whole.Billingham & Sack[1] consider conflict as a breakdown in the mechanism of decision making.

> Concerning conflict management, the effective school function requires its management to be in line with the modern scientific thinking of the Administration of Education. School management can be defined as the continuous and dynamic process of planning, organizing, managing and controlling all productive resources involved in the educational effort so that decisions, actions and knowledge products to be effective[2].

By their nature, pedagogical conflicts in higher education are of different types: activity conflicts, behavior conflicts, conflicts of relationships[3]. Activity conflicts may be caused by necessity to accomplish educational tasks, students' progress, problem situations when educational process participants are not willing to promptly correct their own mistakes. Behavior conflicts mostly arise due to violations of regulations, the regime of the educational institution and outside it. Most often it is a violation of communication norms, aggressive behavior, etc. Conflicts of relationships arise in the field of emotional and personal relations between the administration and teachers (students). They appear on the basis of hostile relations as a consequence of constant previous conflicts of activity or behavior, actions. Such conflicts create a mutually biased perception of each other by conflicting parties, and thus do not allow to achieve goals. Therefore, it is very important to identify modern students' behavior in conflict situations in order to prevent their occurrence, to avoid or adequately respond (solve) problem situations of pedagogical communication at the university.

After all, according to research[4], the relationship between teachers and students significantly affects the results of their academic achievements. At the same time, the search for compromise and social communication skills will help to avoid or prevent possible conflicts in various spheres of life, especially in educational establishments.

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[1] R. Billingham & A. Sack, "Conflict tactics and the level of emotional commitment among unmarried", Human Relation, Vol: 40 (1987): 59-74.

[2] P. Nikolaou, "Effective strategies for human resource management in educational organizations. Conflict management case studies", Journal of Contemporary Education, Theory & Research, Vol: 2 num 2 (2018): 32.

[3] M. M. Rybakova, Conflict and interaction in the pedagogical process (Moscow, 1991).

[4] R. A. Heydenberk y W. R. Heydenberk, "The Conflict Resolution Connection: Increasing School Attachment in Cooperative Classroom Communities", Reclaiming Children and Youth. Vol: 16 num 3 (2007): 18-22.

Methodology of Research

The *subject-target method* was used to analyze and synthesize the content of psychological and pedagogical literature on the researched problem to identify features of students' conflict behavior, types of conflicts, causes of their occurrence in the educational process and specifics of pedagogical conflicts.

Empirical methods – psycho-diagnostic (questionnaire, pedagogical observation, comparison) were used to identify the strategy of students' behavior in conflict situations in higher educational institutions.

Methods of mathematical statistics – for quantitative and qualitative analysis of the research results.

Instruments and Procedures

The article reveals the research results of students' behavior in conflict situations. The study was conducted at Ukrainian universities: Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ivano-Frankivsk National Medical University, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. The experiment involved 304 persons (control group – CG) and 297 persons (experimental group – EG). Total: 601 students of various specialties. The study was conducted in February, 2020.

Results of Research

The theoretical analysis of scientific sources proved that conflict prevention is an important activity, which is the just-in-time detection, elimination or weakening of conflict factors, thus limiting the possibility of their occurrence or destructive solutions in the future. Taking into account the specifics of pedagogical activity in an educational institution, we examined the level of future professionals' readiness to deal with conflict situations in professional activities, diagnosed personal inclinations of university students of different specialties to conflict behavior. Hanson[5] suggests administrators' awareness of various tactics of management whereas Thomas[6] proposes five management styles: avoidance, compromising /sharing, accommodation, collaboration/ integration identified may be effective depending on the situation. In the study the method of "Strategies of human behavior in a conflict situation" (K. Thomas test, adaptation by N. Grishyna) was used. Studying conflict phenomena, Thomas emphasized not only the resolution of conflicts, but also their management. Accordingly, the scientist focused on what forms of behavior in conflict situations are characteristic of people, which of them are more productive or destructive, how to stimulate productive behavior[7].

Processing the result obtained from the research, it was revealed which types of conflict behavior are most characteristic of modern students. As a result, it was found that respondents use almost all behavioral strategies (Table 1, Figure 1).

[5] E. Hanson, Educational administration and organizational behavior (Toronto: Allyn & Bacon, 1991).
[6] K. Thomas, "Conflict and conflict management". In W. K. Hoy & C. G. Miskel (Eds.). Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), 100-102.
[7] K. Thomas, "Conflict and conflict management", in W. K. Hoy & C. G. Miskel (Eds.). Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), 100-102.

Styles of behavior	*CG (N=304)*		*EG (M=297)*	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*
Competition	22	7.3	30	10.2
Cooperation	86	28.4	92	31.1
Compromise	89	29.4	78	26.4
Avoidance	61	20.2	68	22.8
Adaptation	45	14.7	28	9.5

Table 1
Distribution of CG and EG students according to their styles of behavior in conflict situations

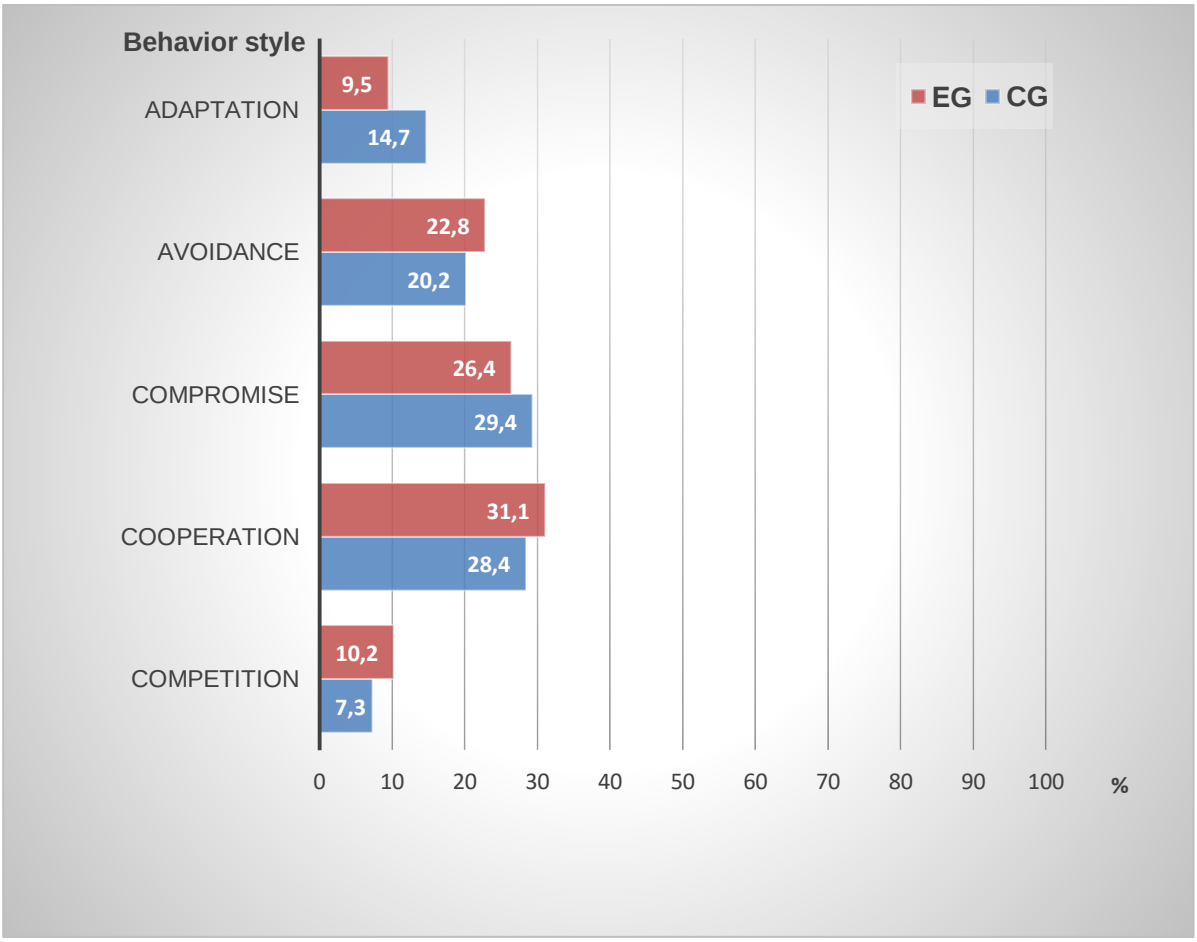

Figure 1
Distribution of CG and EG students according to their styles of behavior in conflict situations

Only 28.4% of CG students and 31.1% of EG show a tendency to the most productive behavior in a conflict situation – cooperation; 29.4% of respondents in CG and 26.4% in EG – to compromise. Thus, approximately half of the respondents (57.8% in CG and 57.5% in EG) in pedagogical interaction considers reasonable mutual concessions, finding alternatives to satisfy interests of both parties.

In addition, each of the communication partners somewhat underestimates his/her claims, giving up interests for at least partial satisfaction. Under such circumstances, as a result of educational communication, each party achieves partial satisfaction of desire and partial fulfillment of counter-claims. In this context, it is important to strive for cooperation in educational interaction, the organization of productive dialogic learning[8].

The style of cooperation is based on the full acceptance of the opposite side as an equal partner in solving the problem of the partner, providing him/her with help and assistance in achieving the desired result so as to simultaneously get a similar result for him/her. Based on this, we believe that students (future teachers or doctors) of this group will not have difficulties in resolving conflict situations in the process of professional activity.

At the same time, a significant proportion of respondents tend to choose unproductive ways of resolving conflict situations. Thus, 20.2% of CG students and 22.8% of EG students are prone to conflict avoidance tactics.

This tactic is characterized by rejection of an immediate solution to the conflict that has arisen, that in conflict situations the respondents of this group will not defend their opinions, but will refuse cooperation with others to solve problems. At the same time, various techniques can be used: from the transition of the conversation to a less delicate topic or frank reluctance to continue it. Obviously, such behavior will not contribute to success in professional interaction.

The adaptation style is typical for 14.7% of CG and 9.5% of EG students. This means that in a conflict situation, they give up their own interests in favor of others. 7.3% of CG respondents and 10.2% of EG are inclined to competition, rivalry in a conflict situation. They seek to satisfy their interests, ignore other opinions. Of course, this can also negatively affect their future professional activities.

As we can see in Figures 2 and 3, EG students are more characterized by a combination of two or more styles of behavior in a conflict situation (adaptation, cooperation and compromise).

[8] O. Budnyk, K. Fomin, N. Novoselska & A. Voitovych, “Preparing Teachers to Organize Dialogic Learning of Students: Communicative Aspect”, Revista Inclusiones, Vol: 7 núm 4 Octubre/Diciembre (2020): 117-129.

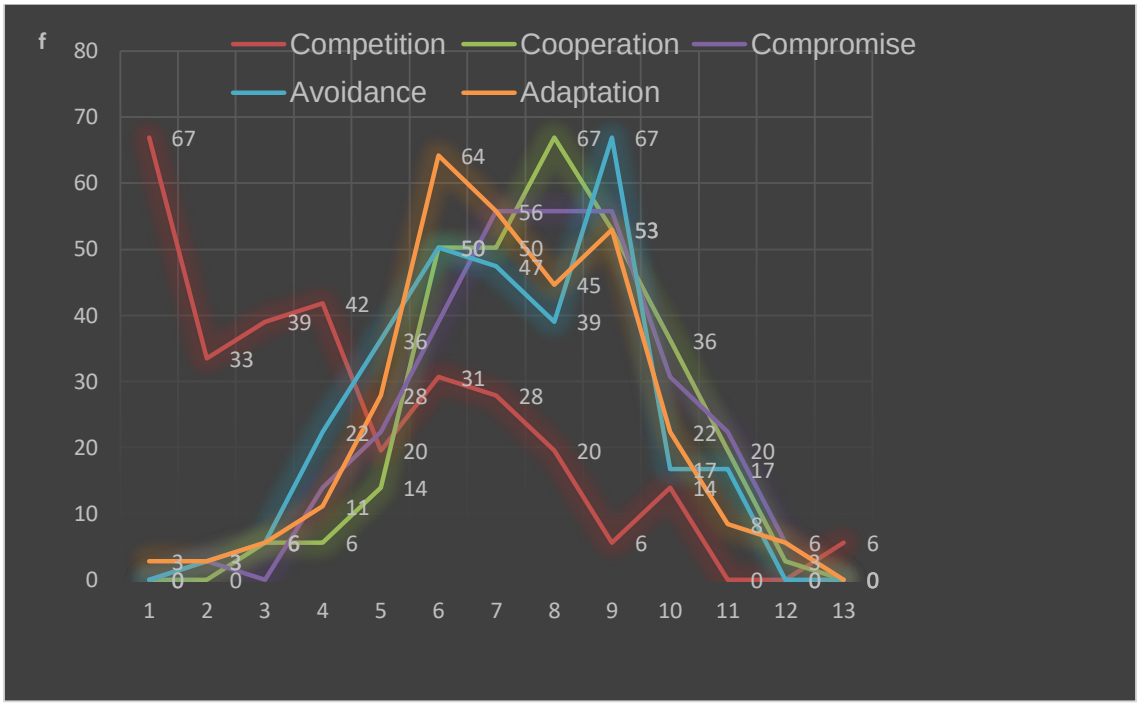

Figure 2
Total indicator of CG behavior strategies in conflict situations (on the graphs the scale of the total score is 13, the axis shifted by 1 point)

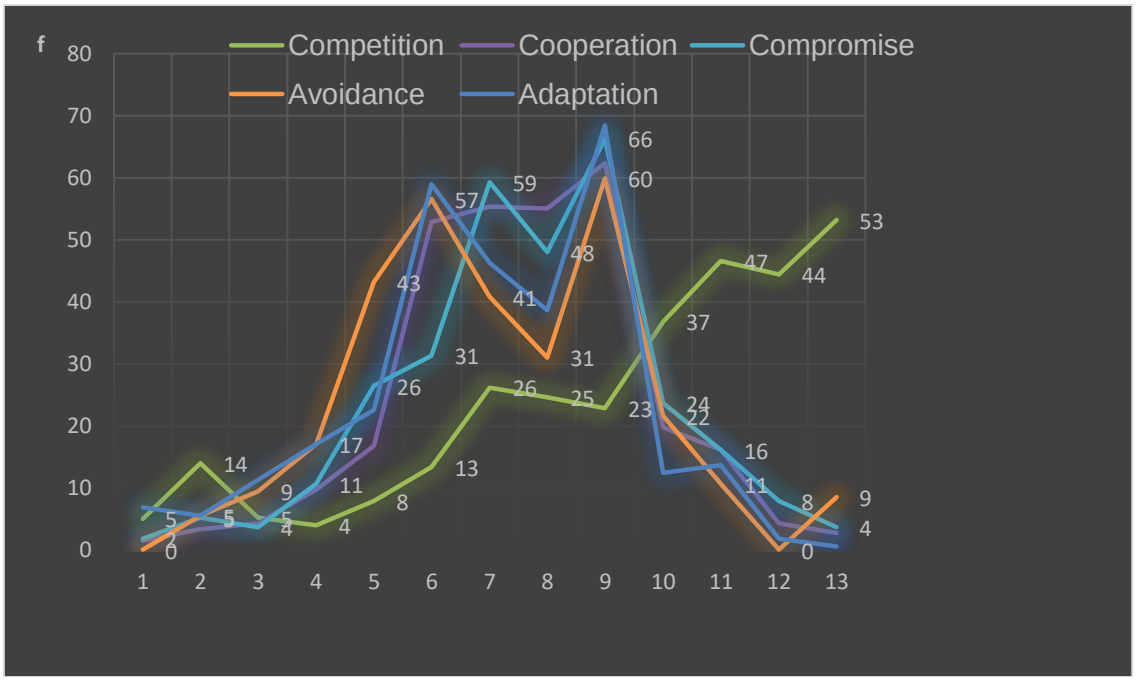

Figure 3
Total indicator of EG behavior strategies in conflict situations

In the research process we also observed the specifics of pedagogical conflicts that sometimes occur in a higher educational institution between educators and students. Their emergence is quite natural, because the student is an independent subject of the educational process and acts as a so-called customer of the type of education.

Therefore, he or she has the right and must assess the quality of educational services. At the same time, there are cases when conflict situations are caused by other reasons.

It was revealed that student-teacher interaction in post-Soviet countries is characterized by the following causes of conflicts: differences in values, communication tactlessness, differences in mutual expectations, the level of teachers' professionalism and students' progress. Forms of communication between teachers and students largely depend on the socio-cultural and individual psychological qualities of the subjects of the educational process, as well as on the established traditions, norms and rules of communication in the educational institution. After all, the "teacher-student" communication is still characterized by an authoritarian style, which is not accepted by democratic youth. At the same time, there are often differences in the mutual expectations of teachers and students regarding the content of education or other issues: value orientations, quality of knowledge, proposed teaching methods, style of behavior, etc. It is no coincidence that Peterson[9] considers negative feedback, or criticism, be the cause of interpersonal conflicts in the educational environment Obviously, in pedagogical activity it is important to be guided by the philosophy of pragmatism, which provides perceiving a person as the highest value, since the uniqueness of each is indisputable; so it is worth proving that the world of a human is incomplete, it has potential opportunities for its improvement, based on own life choices, goal-setting and motivation for self-affirmation[10].

If, for example, a young teacher does not consider it appropriate to find a compromise in his/her behavior and adapt to the conditions of professional teaching, it will inevitably lead to various conflicts. Such misunderstandings can result from school management or other teachers, students, parents, the community, and others. This is proved by the following scientific studies[11]:

> The effects of conflicts in teaching learning process have been presented as follows[12]:
>
> a) Lack of co-operative learning: It was observed that in a conflicting situation, teachers and head teacher lost trust among each other.
>
> b) Development of frustration: It was found that individual teachers had their own drives, motives, goals, or expectation from the schools. They were frustrated because they did not fulfill their interests from the school.
>
> c) Lack of professional motivation: When teachers working in a conflicting situation, they may lose professional motivation. In such situation, teachers had to face problems with the teachers themselves, with the head teacher and with the community as well.

[9] D. R. Peterson, "Conflict", in H. H. Kelley, E. Berschield, J. H. Harvey, T. L. Huston, G. Levinger, E McClintock, L. A. Peplav & D. R. Peterson (Eds.), Close Relationships (New York, NY: Freeman, 1983), 360-396.

[10] H. Vasianovych, O. Budnyk, M. Klepar, T. Beshok, T. Blyznyuk & K. Latyshevska, "Pragmatism in Philosophy of Inclusive Education Studies and Problems of Teacher Training", Revista Inclusiones, Vol: 7 núm 4 Octubre/Diciembre (2020): 59-73.

[11] T. B. Thapa, "Impact of conflict on teaching learning process in schools", Academic Voices: A Multidisciplinary Journal, Vol: 5 num 1 (2015): 73-78; T. Thapa, "Students' conflicts in school", Academic Voices: A Multidisciplinary Journal, Vol: 3 (2013): 76-80.

[12] T. B. Thapa, "Impact of conflict on teaching learning process in schools", Academic Voices: A Multidisciplinary Journal, Vol: 5 num 1 (2015): 73-78.

Pedagogical conflicts take place in various educational institutions. For example, in the sphere of medicine, there is also a professional communication at different levels: a manager, a doctor, a nurse, a patient, relatives, community, and so on. Therefore, future doctors studying at a medical university should obtain tactics for self-regulation of behavior in conflict situations, avoid them if possible and find a compromise.

Often conflicting students' behavior can be accompanied by bullying. However, it is necessary to distinguish between the meaning of "conflict" and "bullying". Thus, a conflict arises when there is a misunderstanding or disagreement between two or more people about a problem. If there is a conflict between students (or a student and a teacher), it does not always mean bullying. After all, bullying is characterized by: a clearly defined goal – to harm others and degrade their dignity; systematic duration of actions; clearly defined roles: an aggressor and a victim; inequality of forces, etc. At the same time, bullying can take many forms: physical, psychological, economic or sexual violence or cyberbullying (if electronic means of harassment are used). In the educational process it is extremely important to manage conflicts, to resolve them effectively to prevent bullying. In any case, the educator of the educational institution should serve as a model of correct behavior in a conflict situation and adequately address them. An experienced specialist always successfully predicts the results of his/her actions and thus preventing possible conflicts.

At the same time, it is important to create a comfortable moral and psychological environment in the educational process[13]:

> A healthy learning environment can only be realised with the existence of healthy relationships. Because of that, taking these conflicts seriously, to lessen and to manage the conflicts correctly, the formulation of programs in which dramatisations and group therapy are used is advised. The development of the ability to manage conflicts can be through the use of case study analysis (the case studies might be imagined or actual)[14].

Thus, it is also about creating a favorable atmosphere for learning and work, the choice of friendly relations between the participants of a pedagogical interaction and the most appropriate ways of resolving conflicts. It is important for a teacher as a leader of the educational process to effectively manage conflict situations and have the ability to create an environment where educational goals and objectives are easily achieved[15].

Conclusions

The reasons of pedagogical conflicts are objective and subjective, and in both cases they have a negative impact on relations between the participants of the educational process, their psychological state, and the results of professional or educational activity.

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[13] Smolinska O., Budnyk O., Voitovych A., Palahniuk M., Smoliuk A. "The Problem of Health Protection in Modern Educational Institutions". Revista Inclusiones. Vol: 7 núm 4 Octubre/Diciembre (2020): 108-116.

14 Özgan, H. "The usage of domination strategies in conflicts between the teachers and students: A case study". Educational Research and Reviews, Vol: 11 num 4 (2016): 146-152. DOI: 10.5897/ERR2015.2542.

[15] O. Budnyk, "Innovative Competence of a Teacher: best European Practices", Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Vol: 6 num 1 (2019): 76-89. DOI: 10.15330/jpnu.6.1.76-89.

According to the results of our study, in a conflict situation university students mostly choose a strategy of cooperation (28.4% of CG respondents and 31.1% of EG) or compromise (29.4% – CG and 26.4% – EG). At the same time, each of the strategies can be correct, because everything depends on a conflict situation. Usually a person uses the same strategy in different life situations, sometimes choosing confrontation as a means of resolving conflicts. At the same time, 20.2% of CG students and 22.8% of EG students chose conflict avoidance tactics. This indicates their unwillingness to resolve the conflict that has arisen in the educational process. In such circumstances, there may be an "involuntary attenuation" of the conflict due to the emergence of a new tense situation, as a result of which previous experiences seem to be pushed to the background. Indifference and lack of desire or social skills to defend one's position in conflict sometimes lead to adaptation tactics.

The effectiveness of a specialist's professional activity depends on his/her ability to manage the conflict and to carry out positive communication activities to avoid misunderstandings and problems. At the same time, the ability to listen and understand the partner, to explain and persuade him/her is important. To prevent and resolve conflicts, it is advisable to follow a certain sequence of psychologically optimal actions, taking into account the specific situation. To do this, an important component of professional training is the formation of psychological readiness for productive conflict resolution. After all, the skills of mutual understanding between the participants of the interaction, the transfer of conflict from emotional to intellectual level, the transformation of motives of confrontation into the motives of finding consent is an effective way of relationships regulations in various spheres of life. Improving the psychological and pedagogical culture of participants of the educational process helps to prevent their aggression in a conflict situation, psychological pressure and conflict-generating communication.

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