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THE EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN SHAPING A CULTURE OF INCLUSIVE INTERACTION AMONG STUDENT YOUTH

ПЕДАГОГІЧНИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ ЕМОЦІЙНОГО ІНТЕЛЕКТУ У ФОРМУВАННІ КУЛЬТУРИ ІНКЛЮЗИВНОЇ ВЗАЄМОДІЇ СТУДЕНТСЬКОЇ МОЛОДІ

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ABSTRACT

Purpose. The aim of the article is to investigate the pedagogical potential of emotional intelligence in fostering a culture of inclusive interaction among student youth.

Methodology. A range of scientific methods was employed in the course of the research. In

Мета. Метою статті є дослідження педагогічного потенціалу емоційного інтелекту у формуванні культури інклюзивної взаємодії студентської молоді.

Методологія. У процесі дослідження було використано комплекс наукових методів. Зокрема, метод аналізу та узагальнення

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particular, the method of analysing and synthesising the scientific literature was used to examine contemporary theoretical approaches to the issue of emotional intelligence and its role in interpersonal interaction. The method of comparative analysis enabled the identification of the main scientific approaches to interpreting the concept of 'emotional intelligence' and establishing its significance in shaping a culture of inclusive interaction among students. To identify the pedagogical conditions for the development of emotional intelligence, the method of systematisation and generalisation of psychological and pedagogical research was used, which made it possible to identify the main components of students' emotional competence and determine effective pedagogical methods for its development. The method of pedagogical modelling was also applied, which made it possible to outline the directions for the development of students' emotional intelligence in the educational process, in particular through the use of interactive teaching methods, reflective practices and creating a favourable socio-psychological climate within the student community.

Results: The results of this study suggest that students with more developed components of emotional intelligence (empathy, emotional self-regulation, emotional awareness) demonstrate a higher level of tolerance towards social diversity and a more positive attitude towards an inclusive educational environment. They find it easier to establish interpersonal relationships and show greater readiness to cooperate with and support fellow students who may have different educational needs or individual characteristics. We have developed and proposed the following formats for work: 'Emotional Diary', 'Emotional Mirror', 'Difficult Conversation', 'University without Barriers', 'Week of Empathy'.

Conclusions: Thus, emotional intelligence acts as an important factor in shaping a culture of inclusive interaction among students, as it promotes the development of empathy, tolerance and social responsibility in the process of interpersonal communication. Its pedagogical potential lies in fostering constructive interaction, and preparing students to collaborate with people who have different individual characteristics. The effective creating a culture of inclusive interaction requires a systematic approach, which involves integrating elements of emotional learning into the content of the educational process,

наукової літератури застосовувався для вивчення сучасних теоретичних підходів до проблеми емоційного інтелекту та його ролі у міжособистісній взаємодії. Метод компаративного аналізу дозволив визначити основні наукові підходи до трактування поняття «емоційний інтелект» і встановити його значення у формуванні культури інклюзивної взаємодії студентської молоді. Для визначення педагогічних умов розвитку емоційного інтелекту було використано метод систематизації та узагальнення психолого-педагогічних досліджень, що дало змогу виокремити основні компоненти емоційної компетентності студентів і визначити ефективні педагогічні методи її розвитку. Також застосовано метод педагогічного моделювання, який дозволив окреслити напрями розвитку емоційного інтелекту студентів у навчальному процесі, зокрема через використання інтерактивних методів навчання, рефлексивних практик та створення сприятливого соціально-психологічного клімату у студентському колективі.

Результати. Результати проведеного дослідження дозволяють констатувати: студенти з більш розвиненими компонентами емоційного інтелекту (емпатія, емоційна саморегуляція, емоційна усвідомленість) демонструють вищий рівень толерантності до соціальної різноманітності та більш позитивне ставлення до інклюзивного освітнього середовища. Вони легше встановлюють міжособистісні контакти, проявляють більшу готовність до співпраці та підтримки однокурсників, які можуть мати різні освітні потреби або індивідуальні особливості. Нами розроблено та запропоновано наступні формати роботи: «Емоційний щоденник», «Емоційне дзеркало», «Складна розмова», «Університет без бар'єрів», «Тиждень емпатії».

Висновки. Таким чином, емоційний інтелект виступає важливим чинником формування культури інклюзивної взаємодії студентської молоді, оскільки сприяє розвитку емпатії, толерантності та соціальної відповідальності у процесі міжособистісної комунікації. Його педагогічний потенціал полягає у створенні сприятливого соціально-психологічного клімату в освітньому середовищі, розвитку конструктивної взаємодії та формуванні готовності студентів до співпраці з людьми, які мають різні індивідуальні особливості. Ефективне формування культури інклюзивної взаємодії потребує системного підходу, що передбачає інтеграцію елементів емоційного

using interactive teaching methods, training activities and reflective practices aimed at developing students' emotional competence. Further research could focus on developing pedagogical approaches to fostering emotional intelligence among students within an inclusive educational environment.

Keywords: communication, culture of interaction, emotional intelligence, empathy, inclusion, inclusive educational environment, pedagogical potential, student youth.

навчання у зміст освітнього процесу, використання інтерактивних методів навчання, тренінгових форм роботи та рефлексивних практик, спрямованих на розвиток емоційної компетентності студентів. Подальші дослідження можуть бути спрямовані на розробку педагогічних технологій розвитку емоційного інтелекту студентської молоді в умовах інклюзивного освітнього середовища.

Ключові слова: комунікація, культура взаємодії, емоційний інтелект, емпатія, інклюзія, інклюзивне освітнє середовище, педагогічний потенціал, студентська молодь.

INTRODUCTION

The modern higher education system is characterised by the active implementation of the principles of inclusivity, humanisation and democratisation of the educational process. One of the key tasks of higher education institutions is to create an educational environment that ensures equal opportunities for learning, development and socialisation for all students, regardless of their individual characteristics, health conditions or social status. In this context, the formation of a culture of inclusive interaction among students takes on particular significance.

A culture of inclusive interaction involves the development of tolerance, mutual respect, empathy and a willingness to cooperate with people who have different life experiences, needs and abilities. One of the key factors contributing to the formation of such a culture is the development of an individual's emotional intelligence.

This issue is particularly relevant in the context of the development of inclusive education, as it is students' emotional competence that largely determines the effectiveness of communication, the level of mutual support, and the success of integrating individuals with special educational needs into the academic environment.

In contemporary scientific discourse, the issue of emotional intelligence is viewed as interdisciplinary and one with significant pedagogical potential in the context of higher education. The theoretical foundations of research into emotional intelligence are based on the ability model by Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2016), in which emotional intelligence is interpreted as a system of cognitive-emotional abilities related to the recognition, understanding and regulation of emotions. This approach has become the methodological basis for most contemporary empirical studies.

A significant number of international publications focus on studying the relationship between emotional intelligence and students' academic performance. In particular, a study by Bilimale et al. (2024) demonstrated a positive correlation between the level of emotional intelligence and students' academic achievement, which is explained by better self-regulation and stress resilience. Similar results were obtained by Saleem, Ullah, and Zafar (2024), who emphasise the role of emotional intelligence as a factor in enhancing academic performance through the development of motivation and interpersonal skills.

The study by Caballero-García and Ruiz (2025) emphasis is placed on the relationship between emotional intelligence and students' subjective well-being, which directly influences the quality of their social interactions. The authors argue that a high level of

emotional intelligence contributes to the formation of a positive socio-psychological climate, which is essential for an inclusive educational environment. Similarly, Halimi et al. (2021) establish that emotional intelligence acts as a predictor of both academic success and social adaptation among students in higher education institutions.

A separate area of research is represented by studies dedicated to the development of emotional competence in education. Celume and Zenasni (2024) emphasise the importance of integrating emotional learning into the pedagogical process as a prerequisite for the development of creativity, empathy and social interaction. In this context, emotional intelligence is viewed not merely as an individual characteristic, but as a resource for formation an inclusive culture.

Of particular relevance to the topic of inclusion are the studies by Grynova and Hubar (2025), in which empathy and tolerance are identified as key determinants of the culture of interaction within the context of inclusive education. The authors stress the need to implement innovative pedagogical practices aimed at developing the emotional sensitivity of future professionals.

Ukrainian researchers expand on these points, highlighting the role of emotional intelligence as a soft skill (Ryshchak et al., 2023; Bilotserkovets et al., 2024), a factor in psychological resilience (Tsiupenko, 2024) and stress management (Usyk, 2024). Studies also highlight the importance of an inclusive culture as a key component of the modern educational environment (Hubar et al., 2024).

Thus, an analysis of previous publications shows that an empirical approach to studying emotional intelligence as a factor in students' academic success and psychological well-being dominates in researchers' studies. At the same time, the issue of its pedagogical potential in shaping a culture of inclusive interaction has not been sufficiently explored, which highlights the relevance of further scientific research in this area.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework of this work is based on the principles of a systematic approach, the humanisation of the educational process, person-centred learning and inclusivity. The use of a systematic approach made it possible to view emotional intelligence as a complex, integrative construct comprising the cognitive, emotional and social components of personality. The person-centred approach allowed us to focus on the individual characteristics of students' development, their emotional needs and opportunities for self-realisation within the educational environment.

A range of methods was employed in the course of the research. In particular, the method of analysing and synthesising the scientific literature was used to examine contemporary theoretical approaches to the issue of emotional intelligence and its role in interpersonal interaction. We also employed the method of comparative analysis, which enabled us to identify the main scientific approaches to interpreting the concept of 'emotional intelligence' and to determine its significance in shaping a culture of inclusive interaction among students.

To identify the pedagogical conditions for the development of emotional intelligence, we applied the method of systematising and summarising the results of psychological and pedagogical research. This enabled us to identify the main components of students' emotional competence, as well as to determine effective pedagogical methods and technologies aimed at its development.

In addition, the study employed a pedagogical modelling method, which made it possible to identify potential directions for developing students' emotional intelligence during the learning process. Based on this method, pedagogical conditions for the formation of a culture of inclusive interaction were outlined, involving the use of interactive teaching methods, the development of reflective practices, and the creation of a supportive socio-psychological climate within the student community.

RESULTS

Emotional intelligence is a complex psychological construct that combines cognitive, emotional and social components of the personality. Its foundation lies in an individual's ability to be aware of their own emotions and those of others, interpret them appropriately and regulate them effectively.

The structure of emotional intelligence typically includes several key components:

- emotional awareness – the ability to recognise one's own emotional states;
- emotional self-regulation – the ability to control and manage one's own emotions;
- empathy – the ability to understand the emotions and experiences of others;
- social skills – the ability to interact effectively with others (Caballero-García & Ruiz, 2025; Lutsa, 2023).

It is these components that play a key role in shaping interpersonal relationships within the student community and contribute to the development of a culture of inclusive interaction.

Inclusive education is based on the principles of equality, accessibility and respect for diversity. It involves creating conditions for the education of all students, regardless of their individual characteristics (Tsiupenko, 2024).

In this context, a culture of inclusive interaction takes on particular significance. It entails:

- a tolerant attitude towards diversity;
- a willingness to cooperate and support one another;
- respect for the dignity of every individual;
- openness to intercultural and social interaction (Mayer et al., 2016; Usyk, 2024).

The formation of such a culture is impossible without the development of students' emotional competence, as it is emotional intelligence that provides the capacity for empathy, understanding and support of others.

It is important to note that higher education institutions possess significant pedagogical potential for developing the emotional intelligence of students, as it is within the academic environment that the personal, social and communicative competencies of future professionals are intensively shaped (Fedorchenko et al., 2024). The educational process in higher education involves not only the transfer of professional knowledge and skills, but also the development of the ability for effective interpersonal interaction, emotional self-regulation, empathy and social responsibility (Celume & Zenasni, 2024). It is for this reason that the development of students' emotional intelligence should be regarded as one of the key areas of contemporary pedagogical practice.

The educational potential for developing emotional intelligence can be realised through the use of a variety of pedagogical approaches, interactive teaching methods and

specially organized educational practices. One important area is the integration of elements of emotional learning into the content of educational programmes. This involves incorporating into the learning process activities that promote awareness of one's own emotions, the development of empathy, the formation of constructive communication skills, and the ability to resolve interpersonal conflicts.

Among the effective means of developing emotional intelligence, we propose conducting special training sessions on the development of emotional competence. During such sessions, students learn to recognise their own emotional states, analyse their causes, and analyse their impact on behaviour. For example, as part of the training, it is advisable to conduct the 'Emotional Diary' exercise, in which students are asked to record their own emotions, the situations that triggered them, and their responses to them over a specific period. The results are then discussed in a group, which promotes reflection and a better understanding of emotional reactions, both their own and those of others. Another example is the 'Emotional Mirror' exercise, during which one student describes a specific life situation that evoked strong emotions, whilst the other participants attempt to identify the narrator's emotional state and suggest ways to offer support. Such exercises help foster empathy and develop emotional perception skills.

Interactive sessions aimed at developing communication skills are also an important tool for fostering emotional intelligence. For example, the teaching process may incorporate group work methods, during which students undertake joint tasks, discuss different perspectives and seek optimal solutions to problematic situations. Such activities contribute to the development of active listening skills, a tolerant attitude towards others' opinions, and the ability to constructively argue one's own position (Bilimale et al., 2024). In particular, organising thematic discussions on issues of inclusive interaction is an effective approach. For example, students may be asked to discuss a situation where a student with special educational needs joins a study group. During the discussion, participants analyse potential difficulties in interaction, identify ways to provide support, and develop skills in empathetic behaviour.

Role-playing and the modelling of social situations offer significant potential for the development of emotional intelligence. In such exercises, students can take on the roles of various participants in communicative interaction, which allows them to better understand the feelings and experiences of others. For example, during the role-play 'A Difficult Conversation', one student plays the role of a person experiencing emotional difficulties, whilst another plays the role of the interlocutor who is to provide support. After the role-play, participants analyse their own emotions and behaviour, which helps to develop skills in emotional self-regulation and constructive communication (Grynova & Hubar, 2025).

Project-based activities, which involve students actively collaborating to solve shared challenges, are also an effective means of developing emotional intelligence. Within such projects, students can develop social initiatives aimed at fostering an inclusive environment or promoting a culture of mutual respect within the university community. For example, students can implement the 'University Without Barriers' project, which aims to raise awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and foster a tolerant attitude towards diversity. During the implementation of such a project, students organise information campaigns, hold themed meetings or training sessions, which contributes to the development of social responsibility and emotional sensitivity.

Another example is the 'Week of Empathy' project, within which students organise interactive events aimed at developing empathy and mutual support. Such events may

include themed discussions, creative workshops, screenings and discussions of social films, as well as volunteering initiatives. Participation in such events allows students to better understand the importance of emotional interaction in social life. For example, this event was held on 27 January 2026 at the V.G. Korolenko Poltava National Pedagogical University on the initiative of the authors of this article (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Organisation of the 'Empathy Week' event



It is also important to emphasise that the teacher plays a special role in the development of students' emotional intelligence, acting not only as a source of academic knowledge but also as an organiser of interpersonal interaction and a facilitator of group processes. The teacher can create conditions for open dialogue, encourage reflection and foster an atmosphere of trust within the learning group (Vrochynska et al., 2023; Khattak et al., 2025). For example, during lessons, the teacher may use the 'reflective circle' method, where at the end of the session students share their own impressions, emotions and thoughts regarding the learning process. This practice promotes the development of emotional openness and the formation of self-reflection skills.

The development of students' emotional intelligence is a key factor in shaping a culture of inclusive interaction, as it directly influences the quality of interpersonal relationships within the student community. In particular, a high level of emotional intelligence helps to increase empathy and mutual understanding, enabling students to gain a deeper awareness of others' emotional states, respond appropriately to them, and build partnerships based on respect and support (Halimi et al., 2021). This, in turn, fosters a tolerant attitude towards people with special educational needs, acceptance of individual differences, and a readiness for constructive interaction in a diverse environment.

Another important outcome of developing emotional intelligence is a reduction in conflict within the student community, as the skills of emotional self-regulation and understanding others' emotions help to prevent and effectively resolve interpersonal

conflicts. At the same time, skills in constructive communication develop, manifesting in the ability to engage in dialogue, articulate one's own position with reasoned arguments, listen to the other person, and achieve mutual understanding.

Students with a high level of emotional intelligence are characterised by greater openness to interaction, the ability to empathise, and a willingness to support others, which creates favourable conditions for the formation of a positive socio-psychological climate within the academic community. Furthermore, the development of emotional intelligence contributes to the formation of social responsibility and civic awareness among students, as it encourages them to adhere to ethical standards, respect the rights of others and actively participate in building an inclusive educational environment (Saleem et al., 2024; Lourenço et al., 2025).

It is important to note that shaping a culture of inclusive interaction within the student community requires a systematic, targeted approach involving the implementation of a range of interrelated educational measures. One of the key areas is the introduction of psychological and pedagogical training sessions focused on developing empathy, emotional self-regulation and the ability to understand others' emotions (Tobias et al., 2025). Such training sessions create a safe space for practising emotional interaction skills, foster a tolerant attitude towards diversity and enhance students' emotional sensitivity.

Interactive teaching methods play an important role, in particular discussions, role-plays, case studies and group projects, which ensure students' active participation in the learning process and encourage them to collaborate. Through such activities, students develop skills in constructive communication, the ability to work in a team, to consider different points of view and to reach joint decisions, which are essential for effective inclusive interaction (Hontarenko & Kovalenko, 2024; Alenezi, 2024).

Equally significant are socio-psychological projects aimed at supporting an inclusive educational environment. Student participation in such initiatives helps to raise awareness of the social significance of inclusion, foster civic engagement and cultivate a responsible attitude towards others. Practical experience of interacting with different social groups enables students to better understand the needs of others and overcome stereotypes (Kolbina et al., 2025).

Volunteering is also an effective means of fostering a culture of inclusive interaction, as it provides direct experience of helping and supporting people with different individual characteristics. Such activities promote the development of social responsibility, altruism and a willingness to cooperate, whilst also instilling enduring humanistic values.

Reflective practices, which involve students becoming aware of their own emotions, experiences and attitudes towards others, hold a special place. The use of reflection journals, group discussions and self-analysis of interaction experiences helps deepen self-awareness, the develop the ability for self-regulation and foster critical reflection on one's own behaviour (Hubar et al., 2024; Ryshchak et al., 2023).

The comprehensive application of these approaches contributes to the formation of values of mutual respect, support and cooperation among students, which form the basis of a culture of inclusive interaction and are an important prerequisite for creating a humanistic educational environment.

An important aspect of the study is the identification of criteria for assessing the development of a culture of inclusive interaction among students. It is advisable to identify both quantitative and qualitative indicators focused on the process of interpersonal

interaction. In particular, the criteria may include: the level of empathetic response in communication, the ability to resolve conflicts constructively, the frequency of mutual assistance and support within the student community, the level of tolerance towards diversity, as well as active participation in joint projects and interactive forms of work.

Additionally, it is advisable to use student self-assessment and pedagogical observation, which allows for tracking changes in behaviour and communication strategies. The proposed system of criteria enables a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of implementing emotional intelligence development programmes in the educational environment.

The results of this study suggest that students with more developed components of emotional intelligence (empathy, emotional self-regulation, emotional awareness) demonstrate a higher level of tolerance towards social diversity and a more positive attitude towards an inclusive educational environment. They find it easier to establish interpersonal relationships and show greater readiness to cooperate with and support fellow students who may have different educational needs or individual characteristics.

We have developed and proposed the following formats for work: ('Emotional Diary', 'Emotional Mirror', 'Difficult Conversation', 'University without Barriers', 'Week of Empathy'). Further research could focus on developing pedagogical approaches to fostering emotional intelligence among students within an inclusive educational environment.

DISCUSSION

The obtained research results are consistent with current scientific approaches to understanding emotional intelligence as a key factor in effective educational interaction. In particular, the link established in the study between the development of emotional intelligence and the formation of a culture of inclusive interaction correlates with the conclusions of Bilimale, Hegde, Pragadesh, Rakesh, Anil, and Gopi (2024) and Saleem, Ullah, and Zafar (2024), who demonstrate the influence of emotional competencies on academic performance and students' social adaptation. This confirms that emotional intelligence functions not only as an individual characteristic but also a socially significant resource.

At the same time, the study's findings expand upon the approaches presented in the works of Caballero-García and Ruiz (2025), where emotional intelligence is considered in the context of subjective well-being. In our study, the focus is shifted to the pedagogical aspect – specifically, to the possibilities of purposefully developing emotional competencies as the foundation of an inclusive culture of interaction.

It is also important to align the obtained results with the views of Celume and Zenasni (2024), who emphasise the need to integrate emotional learning into the educational process. This study demonstrates that the use of interactive teaching methods (workshops, case studies, reflective practices) promotes the development of empathy, tolerance and constructive communication skills, which are key components of inclusive interaction.

At the same time, the results partially substantiate the conclusions of Grynova and Hubar (2025) regarding the role of empathy and tolerance as determinants of an inclusive culture. Unlike previous studies, this work considers these qualities as ones that can be purposefully developed through pedagogical technologies for the development of emotional intelligence.

At the same time, certain limitations should be noted. Most studies are quantitative in nature and focus on measuring the level of emotional intelligence, whilst the

pedagogical mechanisms for its development remain insufficiently explored. In this context, the results of our study have theoretical and practical significance, as they specify the forms and methods of work aimed at fostering inclusive interaction.

At the same time, the implementation of emotional intelligence development programmes in higher education is accompanied by a number of practical difficulties. One of the key obstacles may be resistance from lecturers, who are primarily focused on traditional cognitive learning outcomes and are not always prepared to integrate emotionally oriented approaches into their teaching practice. Furthermore, the limited teaching time within the constraints of rigidly structured educational programmes complicates the systematic implementation of training sessions, reflective practices and interactive forms of work.

An equally important challenge is the difficulty of objectively assessing the level of emotional intelligence and related 'soft skills', as these are difficult to measure using standardised methods and often require the use of complex qualitative and quantitative techniques. Taking these challenges into account is a prerequisite for developing realistic and effective pedagogical strategies for integrating emotional learning into the higher education system.

Thus, the question of the optimal pedagogical conditions for integrating emotional intelligence into the educational process, as well as the need to develop systematic programmes for emotional education in higher education institutions, remains a matter of debate. This opens up prospects for further research aimed at empirically testing the effectiveness of the proposed pedagogical approaches.

CONCLUSIONS

Emotional intelligence is therefore a key factor in fostering a culture of inclusive interaction among students. Its development helps to enhance students' empathy, tolerance and social responsibility.

The pedagogical potential of emotional intelligence lies in its ability to create a favourable socio-psychological climate within the educational environment, foster constructive communication, and prepare students to interact with people who possess diverse individual characteristics.

The effective formation of a culture of inclusive interaction requires a systematic approach, involving the integration of elements of emotional learning into the content of the educational process, the use of interactive teaching methods, and the creation of conditions for the development of students' emotional competence. Further research could focus on the development of pedagogical technologies for fostering emotional intelligence among students within an inclusive educational environment.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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