

**KHACHATUR ABOVIAN ARMENIAN STATE
PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY**

ISSN 1829-1295 (print)

ISSN 2953-7878 (online)

**MAIN ISSUES OF PEDAGOGY AND
PSYCHOLOGY**
Scientific Periodical



SEMANTIC SCHOLAR

vol. 13 No. 1 (2026)

Editor-in-Chief

Hakob TADEVOSYAN – Scientific Secretary of Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University. Ph.D. in Education. Associate Professor, Republic of Armenia

Associate Editors

Kamo VARDANYAN – Director of Scientific Research Center at Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University, Doctor of Sciences in Psychology, Professor, Republic of Armenia

Vahan SARGSYAN – Head of Scientific Program of “Chess” Scientific Research Institute at Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University, Ph.D. in Psychology. Associate Professor, Republic of Armenia

Editorial Team

Mariam ISPIRYAN – Vice-Rector for Science of the Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University. Ph.D. in Education. Associate Professor, Republic of Armenia

Naira HAKOBYAN – Professor at Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University, Doctor of Sciences in Psychology. Professor, Republic of Armenia

Aida TOPUZYAN – Head of the Chair of Pedagogy at Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University, Doctor of Sciences in Pedagogy. Professor, Republic of Armenia

Asia BERBERYAN – Head of the Chair of Psychology at Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, Doctor of Sciences in Psychology. Professor, Republic of Armenia

Irakli IMEDADZE – Director of the D. N. Uznadze Institute of Psychology, Correspondent Member of the National Academy of Sciences in Georgia, Doctor of Sciences (in Psychology), Republic of Georgia

Artin GÖNCÜ – Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology, Professor of Education. The University of Illinois at Chicago, United States of America

Vera LABUNSKAYA – Head of the Department of Social Psychology, Southern Federal University, Russian Federation

David J. COOKE – Professor of the University of Bergen. The ex-president of the European Association of Psychology and Rights, United Kingdom

Dmitriy A. LEONTEV – Head of the International Laboratory of Positive Psychology of the Personality and Motivation of the Higher School of Economics, National Research University. Professor of the Department of Psychology of Identity of the Faculty of Psychology at Moscow State University, Russian Federation

Vladimir D. MENDELEVICH – Director of the Institute of Mental Research, Russian Federation

Vladimir A. MAZILOV – Head of the Department of General and Social Psychology of Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University, Russian Federation

Oleksandr KOCHARIAN – Head of the Department of Psychological Counselling and Psychotherapy of Karazin Kharkiv National University, Ukraine

Koichi TOYOKAWA – Doctor of Philosophy in History and Area Studies. Professor at Meiji University, Japan

Armen TSATURYAN – Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Republic of Armenia

Tigran MIKAYELYAN – Head of the Chair of Romance and Germanic Languages and their teaching methodology. Ph.D. in Philology. Associate Professor, (proofreader), Republic of Armenia

Anahit LALABEGYAN – Head of the Chair of Teaching Foreign Languages at Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University. Ph.D. in Pedagogy. Associate Professor, Republic of Armenia

CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S DATA AND TITLE OF THE ARTICLE	PAGES
SECTION 1. EDUCATION	
Marianna AMIRAGHYAN, Nvard HARUTYUNYAN THE FORMATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' COLLABORATIVE SKILLS THROUGH ONLINE CHESS	6–17
Armenuhi MANUKYAN, Gayane DANIELYAN LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF ABBREVIATIONS IN THE MEDIA DOMAIN	18–28
Lilit MATEVOSYAN INSTITUTIONALIZING SCHOOL INTEGRITY: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION EDUCATION IN ARMENIA	29–39
Irina POGHOSYAN STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ADAPTATION OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	40–52
Tatevik SOGHIKYAN COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AND PEDAGOGY SECTORAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK	53–63
SECTION 2. PSYCHOLOGY	
Marine AYVAZYAN SPECIFICS OF SELF-REGULATION IN LIFE DOMAINS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF POSITIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY	65–77
Svetlana MARUTYAN, Knarik ASMARYAN FAMILY VIOLENCE AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR IN CHILDREN	78–89
Nelli MELKONYAN, Meri ADAMYAN ETHICAL AND PRACTICAL CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL WORKERS' ACTIVITY IN PENITENTIARY INSTITUTIONS	90–103

SECTION 1.

EDUCATION



THE FORMATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' COLLABORATIVE SKILLS THROUGH ONLINE CHESS

Marianna AMIRAGHYAN, PhD, Associate professor, Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University, **Republic of Armenia**

E-mail: amiraghyanmarianna44@aspu.am

Nvard HARUTYUNYAN, Teacher of a secondary school, **Republic of Armenia**

E-mail: nvard.1961@mail.ru

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-5984-7623

DOI:10.24234/miopap.v13i1.131

ABSTRACT

One of the key goals of the 21st-century education is the development of learners' universal competences, which enable them to perform effectively, achieve self-realization, and solve problems collaboratively. Among these competencies are collaborative skills, which are a fundamental prerequisite not only for the social development of primary school students but also for their success in the learning process. According to UNESCO (2015), collaborative skills are included in the group of "4Cs" competences (Critical thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration), which are essential for learners' social self-realization. As an effective means of developing primary school students' collaborative skills, the Li-chess online platform has been chosen for our research. From this perspective, the goal of the article is to promote the development of students' collaborative skills through online chess. The research methodology involves the analysis of professional literature, systematic observation, the use of the Li-chess platform for organizing online chess activities, and the evaluation of students' collaborative skills using a rating scale designed on the basis of Zaitseva's structural components of collaborative competence (cognitive, emotional-motivational, and communicative-activity components). It is also important to note that existing researches on chess have primarily focused on the development of cognitive processes, whereas the purposeful development of primary school students' collaborative skills through online chess remains underexplored. Given the increasing role of digital learning environments, it is necessary to investigate online chess as a context for communication, joint decision-making, and mutual support among students. Accordingly, the present research seeks to fill this gap by examining online chess as a potentially effective tool for fostering collaborative skills. Hence, the scientific novelty of the study lies in examining online chess as a pedagogical tool for the development of primary school students' collaborative skills in a digital learning environment and in applying a component-based observational assessment model. The obtained results suggest a positive tendency regarding the development of students' collaborative skills through chess activities. In particular, online

chess may provide opportunities for joint discussions, proposing solutions to problems, making decisions, and justifying moves within a collaborative learning process.

Keywords: *primary school students, collaborative skills, components of collaboration, online chess, the Li-chess platform.*

INTRODUCTION

Collaboration implies the ability to work in a group, listen to others, respect expressed opinions, and engage in discussions, where the responsibility of each group member and the commitment to achieving a common goal are emphasized. Collaborative skills are essential in any situation that requires working with others toward a shared objective. Well-developed collaborative skills enable individuals to work harmoniously together, implement projects, and create outcomes that would be difficult to achieve individually. In essence, collaboration is crucial for success in every field, as it allows individuals to set common goals, share ideas, and engage in open discussions, creating opportunities to learn from one another and jointly propose effective solutions to emerging problems. Therefore, the development of collaborative skills becomes particularly important starting from primary school, as attending school changes a student's social position, status, and role within a group. In many cases, students' academic success is also influenced by their level of collaborative skills. It is in primary school that learners' essential qualities are formed, such as responsibility in relationships, skills for organizing one's own behavior, and an understanding of the importance of cooperation, communication, and interaction in various forms of activity. These factors provide the foundation for the development of collaborative skills among primary school students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of researchers have discussed the concept of "collaborative competence" identifying several key components within it, such as communication, active listening, and the exchange of ideas (Rosen, et al., 2018).

According to G. N. Klimanova, collaboration ensures interaction with the surrounding environment, as a result of which the interests of group members are satisfied and they develop as individuals (Klimanova, 2010). Essentially, collaboration is a process of joint development carried out through shared activities and the organization of collective discussions around common goals.

Tsukerman notes that during collaboration all participants influence one another and actively contribute to the achievement of both individual and shared goals (Tsukerman & Elizarova, 1993).

Collaborative competence also implies responsibility for group work, time management, and actions directed toward a common goal. It is also emphasized that knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) play a crucial role, as collaboration requires not only technical abilities but also social readiness and appropriate attitudes (Goldsmith, et al., 2023). Trust among team members is also essential in the process of collaboration (Bennett & Gadlin, 2012).

Collaborative competence is most effectively developed within the cooperative learning model (Johnson, 1999), which highlights the following key elements of collaboration:

1. positive interdependence among group members,
2. individual responsibility,
3. interaction,
4. interpersonal and group skills,
5. willingness to cooperate within a group.

The development of the above-mentioned elements in primary school contributes to the formation of students' collaborative culture. Therefore, the development of collaborative competence is closely related to the child's social perception and the development of behavioral self-regulation. During collaboration, a primary school student learns to recognize others' emotions, relate them to their own perceptions, and understand that it is important not only to express their own opinion but also to accept others' viewpoints.

It is emphasized that well-developed collaborative skills contribute to increased motivation, self-confidence, and social engagement, enabling students to learn from one another as co-constructors of solutions to given problems rather than as competitors (Slavin, 2015; Gillies, 2007).

Researches show (Gillies, 2016; Mercer & Howe, 2012) that the development of collaborative skills in primary school:

- improves students' academic achievement,
- promotes the development of critical and creative thinking,
- contributes to the formation of social responsibility,
- creates a positive emotional climate.

It becomes evident that collaboration among primary school students involves interaction between peers of the same age who are united around a shared activity and connected through specific relationships characterized by mutual understanding, harmony, and mutual support aimed at achieving a common goal (Lyatifova & Sinebryukhova, 2021).

In the development of collaborative competence among junior schoolchildren, particular importance is attached to communication, the formation of effective relationships through interaction, empathy, the implementation of constructive dialogue, understanding the positions of group members, and engaging in reflection. This is manifested in the analysis of own actions as well as the interests, desires, and attitudes of peers toward themselves (Subbotina, 2023).

Thus, the development of collaborative competence is viewed not only as a methodological objective of teaching but also as a prerequisite for an individual's social and civic maturity.

The process of forming and developing collaborative competence has its own internal structure, reflecting both its content-related and functional aspects. M. Yu. Zaitseva conceptualizes the structure of collaborative competence as a combination of three interrelated components: cognitive, emotional-

motivational, and communicative-activity. These components not only represent different levels of the collaboration process but also ensure the unity of the child's individual and social development.

The cognitive component involves the ability to engage in effective collaboration in various social situations, as well as the conscious replacement of ineffective behavioral patterns with purposeful and productive actions. The children learn to comprehend and analyze the outcomes of their interactions with peers, to understand the impact of their own actions on the overall effectiveness of group work, and to anticipate the possible results of partner relationships. This component characterizes the child's perception, conscious processes, and thinking operations during collaboration.

The emotional-motivational component reflects the learner's internal motivation to collaborate. It includes both a positive emotional attitude toward joint activity and the perception of own "I" and peer as equal participants in interaction. This component is based on emotionality, mutual respect, trust, and empathy, which foster effective communication and team cohesion. It characterizes the child's internal attitudes, interests, and value orientations toward collaboration.

The communicative-activity component represents the external manifestations of collaboration. It is based on the ability to organize and carry out joint actions aimed at achieving a defined goal. This component includes not only verbal communication but also nonverbal means of expression: facial expressions, gestures, pantomime, and movements, which facilitate mutual understanding and interaction. It reflects the child's practical behavior and communicative skills during collaboration (Zaitseva, 2013).

The structural components of communicative competence can also be observed in the teaching process of "Chess" as a subject, where the use of approaches, methods, and techniques that foster the effective manifestation of these components becomes essential.

Research indicates that chess, in general, contributes to students' cognitive, emotional, and also linguistic development; children who play chess demonstrate more developed verbal skills and communicative abilities, as chess promotes the exchange of ideas and the development of discussions (Nippold, 2009).

At the same time, it is noted that beyond cognitive skills, chess also promotes the development of communication among children, including respectful interaction, turn-taking, fair play, and the expression of empathy (Chess in Education, 2021).

METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION

In order to foster the development of students' communicative competence during the teaching of "Chess" subject, the Li-chess educational platform was utilized. The experiment involved a total of 8 primary school students (Grades 2, 3, and 4), as this represents the entire population of primary-level students in the school: three students in Grade 2, four students in Grade 3, and one student in Grade 4. In order to support the development of the latter student's collaborative skills, direct individual interaction

was organized by the teacher, while in certain cases, learning activities were implemented jointly with students from all three grade levels.

The aim of the experiment was to examine the impact of the Li-chess platform on the development of students' collaborative competence formation process.

The following objectives were derived:

1. to develop assessment indicators based on the structural components of collaborative competence,
2. to implement the Li-chess platform during chess lessons,
3. to record changes in students' collaborative behavior throughout the study,
4. to analyze the obtained pre-test and post-test results, presenting the data in the form of tables and diagrams.

In order to assess the level of development of junior schoolchildren's collaborative competence, the structural model of collaborative competence proposed by M. Yu. Zaitseva was adopted as the theoretical framework for the research (collaborative competence comprises three interrelated components: cognitive, emotional-motivational, and communicative-activity). Based on these components, a set of specific behavioral indicators was developed in order to observe students' participation in collaborative situations and to evaluate the competences they demonstrated (the indicators are presented in the table below). Each indicator was assessed using a three-point rating scale that reflected the degree of manifestation and stability of the observed behavior: 3 points were assigned when the indicator was demonstrated fully, independently, and consistently; 2 points when it was manifested partially or inconsistently; and 1 point when it appeared minimally, rarely, or only with external support. The choice of a three-point scale was determined by the age characteristics of junior schoolchildren and the observational nature of the assessment. In contrast to more differentiated scales, the three-level scale (low-medium-high) allows for clearer interpretation of behavioral indicators, reduces evaluator subjectivity, and facilitates more consistent assessment of collaborative behavior in natural classroom conditions. A total of 12 indicators were evaluated, with a possible score ranging from 12 to 36 points. On the basis of the cumulative score, three levels of collaborative competence were identified: low level (12 points), medium level (13-24 points), and high level (25-36 points).

Since this research had an exploratory character and was conducted with a relatively limited sample, quantitative indices of inter-rater agreement were not calculated. Nevertheless, detailed scoring descriptors were prepared for each level of manifestation, which contributed to greater consistency and transparency in the assessment process.

The research was conducted during the first semester of the 2025–2026 academic year and lasted for 12 weeks including 24 online chess sessions implemented through the Li-Chess platform.

The instructional tasks were designed to promote collaborative interaction and included several types of activities organized through the Li-Chess platform. First, the students solved chess puzzles in pairs using tactical tasks available in the Li-Chess Puzzles section. The tasks required identifying the best

move in a given position. Before submitting an answer, students discussed possible moves, compared alternatives, and agreed on a common solution. Second, the students participated in the joint analysis of chess positions. A position was displayed to the students. They were encouraged to listen to their classmates, ask questions, express agreement or disagreement politely, and reach a decision regarding the most appropriate move. Third, students engaged in the discussion of possible moves before making a decision. During these discussions, they shared opinions, justified their choices, considered alternative ideas, and responded to the suggestions of their peers. Fourth, team-based mini-tournaments were organized through the Li-Chess platform. Students prepared strategies together, discussed key moments during the games, and reflected collectively on successful and unsuccessful decisions. Finally, the students completed reflection tasks in which they explained and justified their moves. They answered short prompts such as: “Why did we choose this move?”, “What did my partner suggest?”, and “Did we change our decision after discussion?” These questions encouraged students to become aware of both their own thinking and the collaborative process.

During the use of the Li-Chess platform, the students gradually became more active in collaborative interaction. They discussed possible moves, shared opinions, attempted to justify their choices, considered alternative ideas, and accepted the viewpoints of others. Their communication became increasingly organized and purposeful. In the initial stage, discussions occasionally led to disagreements; however, in the later stages, mutual respect, patience, and willingness to cooperate became more evident. Students’ statements such as “I think this move is safer”, “If we move the king here, it will protect the rook”, “Your suggestion is better” indicate that they were not only reasoning about the logic of the game but also recognizing the importance of cooperation. Awareness of collaboration was further reflected in expressions such as “We succeeded” and “Our move was good”. Some students also demonstrated analytical reflection, for example, by stating: “If we had not made this move, the rook would have remained unprotected”.

Thus, the Li-Chess platform was used not merely as a tool for chess practice, but as a digital learning environment that created opportunities for students to discuss moves, express and justify opinions, listen to others, negotiate options, and make decisions. Through these activities, the platform promoted the development of communication, mutual understanding, shared responsibility, and collaborative decision-making skills. It should also be noted that prior to the implementation of the Li-chess platform in lessons, students worked individually and separately, while the discussion of chess tasks was often limited to a question-and-answer format. Under these conditions, collaboration among students did not develop, and it was difficult to foster skills of mutual assistance and team-based thinking.

During the whole term systematic observations were conducted after each session, while the assessment of collaborative skills was carried out at the beginning and at the end of the research. The evaluation was performed by chess teacher.

Below, in Table 1, the initial (I) (pre-test) and final (F) (post-test) data, obtained from the indicators, organized according to the structural components of communicative competence are presented:

Table 1.

Structural components of communicative competence and pre-test/post-test data

Structural Components	Indicators	Grade 2						Grade 3								Grade 4	
		1		2		3		1		2		3		4		1	
		I	F	I	F	I	F	I	F	I	F	I	F	I	F	I	F
Cognitive	estimates collaboration and the roles of peers	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	2	1	3	1	2	2	3
	analyzes the situation and acts effectively	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	3	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	2
	listens and understands the ideas expressed by peers	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	3
	participates in discussions by offering opinions	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	2	2	3
Emotional-Motivational	demonstrates a positive attitude toward peers	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	2
	respects peers' opinions	1	2	1	2	3	3	2	3	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	3
	justifies own viewpoint without offending others	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	3
	supports group members	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	2
Communicative-Activity	actively participates in group activities	1	2	1	2	1	3	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2
	expresses own opinion	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	3
	coordinates own actions with others	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	1	2	1	3	1	2	1	2
	demonstrates responsibility while making decisions	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	3

Based on the comparison of the structural components it became obvious that the most noticeable changes occurred in the communicative-activity component. Indicators such as actively participates in group activities, expresses own opinion, and coordinates own actions with others demonstrated improvement in almost all students. The average score of this component among second-grade students increased from 17 to 30 points, among third-grade students from 22 to 38 points, and in the case of the

fourth-grade student from 6 to 10 points. This may be explained by the fact that these skills were practiced repeatedly during each online chess lesson and were directly required for successful completion of the tasks.

The emotional-motivational component also showed positive dynamics, particularly in relation to respect for peers' opinions and justification of own viewpoint without offending others. The relatively strong progress in these indicators may be connected with the interactive and game-based nature of the activities, which created a more engaging and emotionally supportive learning environment. The averaged data demonstrated a positive increase in this component: the average score rose from 20 to 30 points among second-grade students, from 20 to 38 points among third-grade students, and from 8 to 10 points in the case of the fourth-grade student.

Changes in the cognitive component were positive but less consistent. Skills related to analyzing situations and understanding peers' ideas improved in most cases; however, not all students made the same progress. This may indicate that cognitive aspects of collaboration require a longer period of systematic practice than communicative behaviors. Overall, the average score of cognitive component among second-grade students increased from 15 to 27 points, among third-grade students from 20 to 39 points, and in the case of the fourth-grade student from 7 to 11 points.

Taking all the data into account, we can say that in Grade 2, one student demonstrated a low initial level of collaborative competence (12 points), while the other two students were at a medium level (16 and 24 points). After the intervention, the final results indicated that one student reached a medium level (24 points), whereas the other two students achieved a high level (28 and 32 points).

Among the four Grade 3 students, two initially demonstrated a low level of collaborative competence (12 points), while the other two were at a medium level (22 and 20 points). According to the final data, three students reached a high level (32, 26, and 33 points), while one student remained at a medium level (24 points). In Grade 4, the student initially demonstrated a medium level of collaborative competence (21 points), whereas in the final assessment this improved to a high level (31 points).

The average results are presented below (Table 2 and Figure 1):

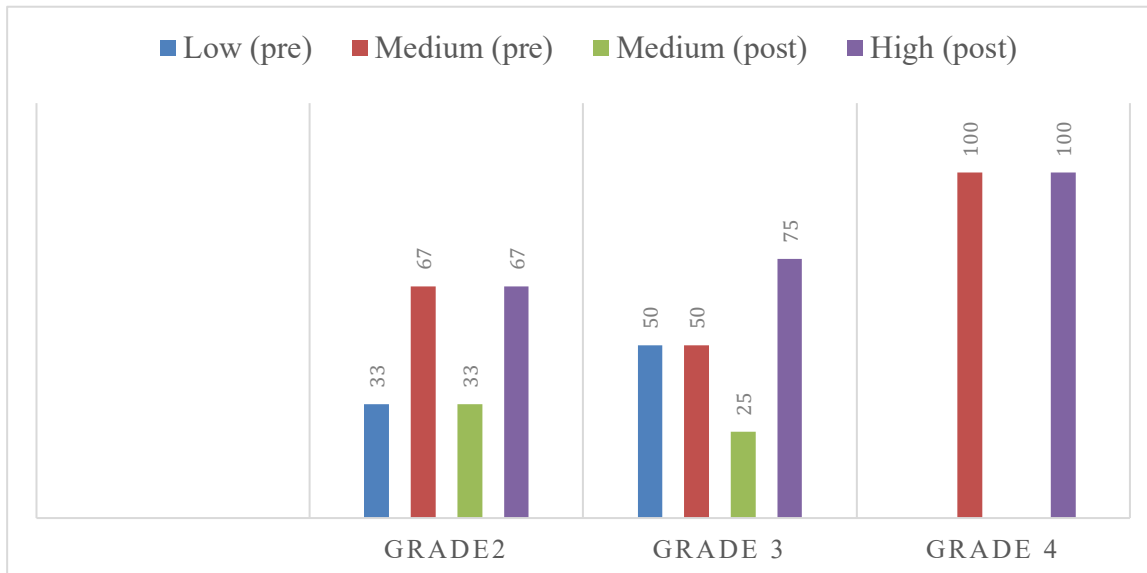
Table 2.

Pre-test and post-test data on the level of development of collaborative competence

Levels	Grade 2				Grade 3				Grade 4			
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		Pre		Post	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low	1	33	-	-	2	50	-	-				
Medium	2	67	1	33	2	50	1	25	1	100		
High	-	-	2	67	-		3	75			1	100

Figure 1.

Initial and Final Level of Development of Collaborative Competence



The results of the research indicate a positive dynamic in the development of primary school students' collaborative competence after the implementation of the Li-Chess platform. At the same time, the findings should be interpreted with caution. The study involved only eight students from one school, which limits the possibility of broad generalization. Consequently, the results should be considered preliminary and may serve as a basis for further research with larger samples, longer interventions, and comparative experimental designs.

The obtained findings are consistent with the ideas of D. W. Johnson and R. T. Johnson's (1999) social interdependence theory, according to which effective collaboration develops when learners work toward a common goal, interact directly, and assume shared responsibility for the outcome. During the research, students completed chess-related tasks that required discussion of moves, agreement on decisions, and coordination of actions with peers. Such forms of interaction created conditions for positive interdependence and mutual involvement, which may explain the observed improvement in collaborative behaviors. The results also correspond to R. E. Slavin's (2015) conception of cooperative learning, which emphasizes that group goals combined with individual participation increase learners' engagement and responsibility. In the online chess activities, each student's contribution was visible during discussions and decision making, which likely encouraged more active participation and accountability within the group. In addition, the findings are in line with R. M. Gillies' (2007) research on cooperative interaction, which highlights the role of constructive dialogue, explanation, and peer support in the development of both academic and social skills. The growth observed in students' participation in discussions, expression of opinions, and coordination of actions with others may be interpreted as evidence of increasingly productive peer interaction. The findings may also be interpreted

in the context of G. N. Klimanova's (2010) technology of collaboration, which emphasizes the purposeful organization of joint activity, distribution of functions, mutual support, and coordinated interaction among learners. The online chess tasks used during the research required students to discuss possible moves, justify their choices, and coordinate decisions with peers, which corresponds to the key principles of collaborative technology.

Thus, the influence of the Li-Chess platform can be interpreted through several psychological and pedagogical mechanisms. First, the platform provides immediate feedback, which supports motivation and self-regulation. Second, the digital environment increases the visibility of actions, allowing students to observe both their own and their peers' decisions, thereby promoting mutual monitoring and shared responsibility. Third, discussing chess positions promotes verbalization of thinking, as students need to explain, justify, and reconsider their ideas in response to peer feedback. Finally, the game-oriented format may reduce anxiety and fear of making mistakes, creating conditions for more confident social participation.

CONCLUSION

By studying the process of developing collaborative skills among elementary school students through online chess, and based on the data obtained from the research, we can state that:

- The formation of collaborative skills is one of the significant priorities of contemporary pedagogical education. Collaboration should be understood as a multidimensional construct that includes not only communicative and organizational aspects, such as interaction and role distribution, but also cognitive, emotional-motivational, and social components, including trust, shared goal orientation, joint decision-making, and responsibility for collective outcomes.
- The findings of the research suggest that "Chess" subject, implemented through the Li-chess platform, may create favorable conditions for the development of elementary school students' collaborative skills. Positive tendencies were observed in students' participation in joint discussions, their ability to express and justify ideas, listen to peers, consider alternative viewpoints, and coordinate actions during shared activities. The use of online chess also appeared to support respectful interaction, mutual support, and elements of self-regulation within group work.
- At the same time, the results of the research should be interpreted as preliminary due to the limited number of participants. The exploratory nature of the research does not allow for broad generalization. However, the identified tendencies indicate the potential pedagogical value of online chess for fostering collaborative interaction. Further research involving larger and more diverse samples, as well as students from different educational contexts, is necessary to obtain a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of the effectiveness of this approach.

REFERENCES

- Bennett M. & Gadlin H.** (2012). Collaboration and team science: From theory to practice. *Journal of Investigative Medicine*, 60(5), 768–775. <https://doi.org/10.231/JIM.0b013e318250871d>
- Chess in Education.** (2021). An Introduction to Chess in Education. <https://chessineducation.org/introduction-to-chess-in-education/> (viewed on 14.10.2025)
- Gillies R. M.** (2007). Cooperative learning: Integrating theory and practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Gillies R. M.** (2016). Cooperative learning: Review of research and practice. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(3), 39–54.
- Goldsmith G. R., Aiken M. L., et al.** (2023). Overcoming the barriers to teaching teamwork to undergraduates in STEM. *Life Sciences Education*, 23(2). <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.23-07-0128>
- Johnson D. W., & Johnson, R. T.** (1999). Learning together and alone: Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning. Allyn & Bacon.
- Klimanova G. N.** (2010). *Technology of collaboration*. Tambov (in Russian).
- Lyatifova Z. E., & Sinebryukhova, V. L.** (2021). Formation of the ability of primary school age children to cooperate with peers. Materialy XIII Mezhdunarodnoy studencheskoy nauchnoy konferentsii “Studencheskiy nauchnyy forum.” <https://scienceforum.ru/2021/article/2018027060> (in Russian).
- Mercer N. & Howe C.** (2012). Explaining the dialogic processes of teaching and learning: The value and potential of sociocultural theory. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 1(1), 12–21.
- Nippold M. A.** (2009). School-age children talk about chess: Does knowledge drive syntactic complexity? *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 52(4), 856–871. [https://doi.org/10.1044/1092-4388\(2009/08-0094\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/1092-4388(2009/08-0094))
- Riaz M. & Din M.** (n.d.). Collaboration as 21st century learning skill at undergraduate level. *SJESR*.
- Rosen M. A., DiazGranados D., Dietz A. S., et al.** (2018). Teamwork in healthcare: Key discoveries enabling safer, high-quality care. *American Psychologist*, 73(4), 433–450. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000298>
- Slavin R. E.** (2015). Cooperative learning in elementary schools. *Education*, 43(1), 5–14.
- Subbotina E. A.** (2023). *Developing collaboration skills in primary school students*. (in Russian).
- Tsukerman G. A., & Elizarova, N. A.** (1993). Teaching educational collaboration. *Voprosy psikhologii*, (2)45. (in Russian).
- Wang H.** (2024). The impact of communication skills on work performance in team collaboration. *Advances in Economics Management and Political Sciences*, 121(1), 99–106.

Zaitseva M. Yu. (2013). *Developing the ability of adolescents to cooperate in sports and health activities*. Izhevsk: Izd-vo "Udmurtskiy universitet." ISBN 978-5-4312-0210-0 (in Russian).

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF ABBREVIATIONS IN THE MEDIA DOMAIN

Armenuhi MANUKYAN, *Acting Head of the Department of Preschool Pedagogy and Methodology, ASPU, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor*

E-mail: manukyanarmenuhi49@aspu.am

Gayane DANIELYAN, *Associate Professor of the Department of English Language No. 2, Yerevan State University, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences*

E-mail: g.danielyan@mail.ru

DOI: 10.24234/miopap.v13i1.132

ABSTRACT

The article discusses issues of transforming previous approaches and perceptions about language and its use in the field of media linguistics, in particular, the linguistic peculiarities of abbreviations. The dominant linguistic units in the media domain have been considered as slang manifestations and studied as a sublayer of language, which characterizes the communication process in the media domain, since the abbreviations used dictate unique and multi-genre models of communication, along with synchronous and asynchronous communication types. Contrary to the opinions that communication in the media domain is inanimate by nature, and the identity of a person cannot be perceived, the article substantiates that by examining the choice of linguistic and non-linguistic means made by individuals, it is possible to form an idea about their socio-cultural affiliation. The belief was expressed that from the point of view of media linguistics, media consumers are expected to activate epistemic and cognitive mechanisms, since the synchronous and asynchronous communication models existing in the media require a strategy of using widely spread abbreviations. It was revealed that the media literacy and media culture of media consumers are of primary importance. It is a set of factors requiring certain knowledge, by which users are guided when using any emoticon or abbreviation. Abbreviations, along with communicative acts, can be decisive in revealing the identity of an individual. We have come to the conclusion that they not only fill the gap in paralinguistic means, but also have sociolinguistic value.

Keywords: *media domain, media linguistics, media literacy, media culture, synchronic, asynchronous, language, discourse, structures, media consumer, paralinguistic features, abbreviations, emoticons.*

INTRODUCTION

The creation and active circulation of various abbreviations in the media field is a well-known fact, which is due to their being components of various types of synchronous and asynchronous communication. In the media domain, abbreviations cannot be considered new in terms of formation, since they are created according to certain established rules (Crystal, 2004).

Abbreviations have been an integral part of written speech and have been used in both printed and handwritten texts (Aghajanyan, 2013). In the media domain their sociolinguistic function becomes predominant.

Based on the studies conducted, we can say that media communication, like face-to-face communication, is distinguished by creating certain rules for various relationships, where the cultural identity of communicators is revealed. Studying the peculiarities of media discussions, Thurlow and Brown distinguish between various criteria, where the priority is given to the brevity of messages. Next, the use of content units and punctuation, the distortion of spelling norms, as well as the widespread presence of abbreviations with the aim of filling the gap in paralinguistic means are considered (Thurlow & Brown, 2003).

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the development of an integrated approach to the investigation of shortenings and abbreviations in contemporary digital media discourse, combining their structural-semantic and communicative analysis with data on students' recognition and interpretation of these linguistic units. This approach makes it possible to distinguish established and widely comprehensible abbreviated forms from newly emerging, non-standard forms requiring context-dependent interpretation, and to identify their role in enhancing the effectiveness of contemporary media communication.

MATERIALS

The empirical material for the present study was collected over a six-month research period and comprised two interconnected components: student-based data and authentic examples of contemporary media communication.

The first component involved 168 undergraduate students enrolled in pedagogical education programmes. The participants were first-, second-, and third-year Bachelor's degree students. Their participation made it possible to examine prospective teachers' recognition, interpretation, and use of abbreviations, shortenings, initialisms, and acronyms, as well as their familiarity with abbreviated forms commonly encountered in contemporary digital communication.

The second component consisted of a corpus of authentic media discourse. During the six-month research period, 300 comments containing or referring to abbreviated linguistic forms were collected and analyzed. The material was drawn from eight online news websites and three widely used digital platforms: YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. These sources were selected because they represent diverse forms of contemporary media communication and provide opportunities to examine abbreviated forms across relatively formal and informal communicative settings and predominantly asynchronous forms of digital interaction.

The corpus included lexical shortenings, initialisms, acronyms, and other emerging abbreviated forms used by media users. Particular attention was given to linguistic units characterized by structural reduction, semantic ambiguity, contextual variability, or limited conventionalization. Examples were

included when their interpretation depended on knowledge of media-specific communicative conventions or on the broader linguistic and situational context.

The collected material was analyzed according to several criteria: (1) structural formation, including the reduction of initial, medial, or final parts of words; (2) morphological characteristics; (3) semantic meaning and potential ambiguity; (4) contextual interpretation; and (5) communicative function, including linguistic economy, expressiveness, euphemization, emotional evaluation, and group identification.

The combination of student-based data and authentic media material made it possible to examine both the linguistic characteristics of abbreviated forms and the extent to which prospective teachers recognize and interpret them. The resulting corpus provided a basis for examining abbreviations and acronyms as dynamic linguistic units shaped by the communicative demands, conventions, and interactional practices of contemporary digital media discourse.

The analysis of the student data also indicated that familiarity with abbreviated forms is an important aspect of effective communication in contemporary media environments. This is particularly relevant because abbreviations, shortenings, initialisms, and acronyms have become increasingly widespread in digital media communication, while a considerable proportion of newly emerging forms may be unfamiliar to users and may require contextual knowledge for accurate interpretation. Accordingly, the study of the linguistic features of emerging abbreviated forms requires attention not only to their structural characteristics but also to the conditions under which their meanings are recognized and interpreted by media users.

One of the characteristic features of contemporary media communication is the need for linguistic economy, particularly in environments where communication is constrained by message length, time, or the rapid exchange of information. Such conditions contribute to the active use of abbreviations and acronyms (Madoyan, 2016). Recent research in this area suggests that abbreviated forms are particularly relevant to digital communication, where successful interpretation may depend on users' familiarity with established media conventions and their ability to infer meaning from the immediate linguistic and situational context. Thus, the increasing use of abbreviated forms reflects not only structural processes of linguistic economy but also the evolving communicative practices of contemporary digital media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative linguistic analysis with quantitative analysis of empirical data. This approach was adopted to investigate the structural, morphological, semantic, and communicative characteristics of abbreviations and acronyms in contemporary media discourse, as well as the extent to which these linguistic units are recognized, interpreted, and used by undergraduate students enrolled in pedagogical education programmes.

The study was designed to examine abbreviated linguistic forms as dynamic elements of contemporary media communication, taking into account both their formal characteristics and their

contextual and communicative functions. Particular attention was paid to the relationship between the structural reduction of linguistic units and their semantic transparency, contextual dependence, and accessibility to media users.

The study involved 168 undergraduate students enrolled in pedagogical education programmes. The participants were first-, second-, and third-year Bachelor's degree students. Their participation provided an opportunity to examine prospective teachers' familiarity with abbreviations, shortenings, initialisms, and acronyms commonly encountered in contemporary media communication.

The student component of the study focused on participants' ability to recognize, understand, interpret, and use abbreviated linguistic forms. The data obtained from the participants were subsequently considered in relation to the abbreviated forms identified in the authentic media corpus.

The empirical data were collected over a six-month period. The research corpus consisted of 300 authentic media comments containing abbreviations, shortenings, initialisms, acronyms, or other abbreviated linguistic forms.

The material was collected from eight online news websites and three widely used digital media platforms: YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. The selection of different media sources enabled the study to examine abbreviated forms across diverse communicative environments, including relatively formal and informal media discourse and predominantly asynchronous forms of digital interaction.

The corpus included both conventionalized abbreviated forms and emerging or non-standard forms whose interpretation depended on contextual and pragmatic knowledge. Particular attention was given to forms characterized by structural reduction, semantic ambiguity, contextual variability, limited conventionalization, or platform-specific usage.

For the purposes of the study, abbreviations and acronyms were examined as related but distinguishable categories of reduced linguistic forms. The classification was based primarily on their structural formation, degree of conventionalization, and pronunciation.

Abbreviations were understood broadly as shortened linguistic forms resulting from the reduction of a word or multi-word expression. Acronyms and initialisms were treated as forms created from the initial letters or parts of a sequence of words, with a distinction made between forms pronounced as a lexical word and those pronounced letter by letter. Conventional examples include *GIF* (*Graphics Interchange Format*), *PIN* (*Personal Identification Number*), and *radar* (*radio detection and ranging*), while forms such as *Prof.* for *professor* illustrate conventional word shortening.

The analysis of the corpus identified three principal structural patterns of shortening:

1. Reduction of the initial part of a word or expression, as in *u* (*you*) and *ur* (*your/you're*), depending on the communicative context;
2. Reduction of the medial part, as in *pls* (*please*);
3. Reduction of the final part, as in *bro* (*brother*).

In addition to these patterns, the analysis considered initialisms, acronyms, and multi-word abbreviated expressions occurring in digital media communication.

ANALYTICAL CRITERIA AND METHODS

The collected material was analyzed according to a set of complementary linguistic and communicative criteria.

1. Structural analysis. Structural analysis was used to identify the mechanisms through which abbreviated forms are created, including the reduction of initial, medial, or final segments of words and the formation of abbreviated expressions from initial letters or parts of multi-word units.
2. Morphological analysis. Morphological analysis examined which linguistic elements were omitted, reduced, or combined in the formation of abbreviated forms. Particular attention was given to the extent to which morphological compression affected the recognizability and interpretation of the original expression.
3. Semantic analysis. Semantic analysis was applied to determine the relationship between abbreviated forms and their corresponding full forms and to identify cases of semantic ambiguity, polysemy, semantic extension, or context-dependent interpretation.
4. Contextual and discourse analysis. Contextual and discourse analysis was used to determine how the meaning and function of abbreviated forms were influenced by the immediate linguistic environment, communicative situation, media platform, and relationship between interlocutors. This approach was particularly relevant to newly emerging and non-standard forms whose meanings could not be established solely from their formal structure.
5. Functional analysis. The communicative functions of abbreviated forms were examined with reference to linguistic economy, acceleration of information exchange, expressiveness, emotional and evaluative meaning, euphemization or mitigation of potentially offensive expressions, and group identification. As previously noted in linguistic research, the function of an abbreviation may vary according to its communicative purpose and context (Aghajanyan, 2013).
6. Comparative analysis. Comparative analysis was used to distinguish conventionalized and widely recognizable abbreviated forms from newly emerging, non-standard, or context-dependent forms. This made it possible to assess differences in semantic transparency and interpretive accessibility.
7. Quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis was applied to determine the frequency and distribution of different types of abbreviated forms within the 300-comment corpus. The quantitative component was also used to assess patterns in students' recognition and interpretation of the identified linguistic units.

ASSESSMENT OF RECOGNITION AND INTERPRETATION

The student component was analyzed in relation to the abbreviated forms identified in the media corpus. Particular attention was paid to participants' ability to recognize the abbreviated form, identify or

infer its full meaning, interpret it within its communicative context, and distinguish conventional forms from newly emerging or non-standard forms.

The combination of authentic media data and student-based data enabled the study to examine abbreviated linguistic forms from both production and reception perspectives. Thus, the methodology considered not only how abbreviations are structurally and functionally formed and used in contemporary media discourse but also how successfully prospective teachers recognize and interpret such forms.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The research was conducted in several successive stages. First, relevant theoretical and methodological literature on abbreviations, shortenings, initialisms, and acronyms was reviewed to establish the conceptual and analytical framework of the study. Second, an empirical corpus was compiled from eight online news websites and the digital platforms YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. Third, 300 comments containing relevant abbreviated linguistic forms were selected and classified according to their structural and linguistic characteristics. Fourth, the identified forms were analyzed using structural, morphological, semantic, contextual, discourse, functional, and comparative methods. Finally, the linguistic findings were considered in relation to the data obtained from the 168 undergraduate students concerning their recognition and interpretation of abbreviated forms.

The application of these complementary methods provided an integrated framework for examining abbreviations and acronyms as dynamic linguistic units shaped by processes of linguistic economy, contextual interpretation, communicative purpose, and the evolving conventions of contemporary digital media discourse.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study indicate that abbreviations constitute an important and increasingly productive resource in contemporary digital media communication. Their widespread use can be associated with the communicative demands of digital environments, particularly the need for linguistic economy, rapid information exchange, and the efficient transmission of meaning. In this respect, media abbreviations function not merely as reduced linguistic forms but also as additional communicative resources that enable users to convey information, attitudes, and interpersonal meanings in a highly condensed form. Conventional examples such as *YAM* (*yet another meeting*) and *LOL* (*laughing out loud*) demonstrate how abbreviated forms can efficiently encode frequently recurring expressions and communicative reactions.

The findings further demonstrate that abbreviation in contemporary media discourse extends beyond the reduction of individual words or initial letters. Multi-word expressions and, in some cases, entire communicative propositions may be represented through abbreviated forms. For example, *TTYL* (*talk to you later*) functions as a condensed form of a complete conversational expression and performs a clearly

interpersonal and pragmatic function. Similarly, *tbh* (*to be honest*) can be regarded as a metacommunicative abbreviation because it signals the speaker's communicative stance toward the proposition that follows or precedes it. The example "*This song deep as hell tbh*" illustrates how an abbreviated form can contribute not only to linguistic economy but also to the expression of the speaker's attitude and degree of sincerity.

These findings support the view that abbreviations in digital media should be examined in relation to their communicative and pragmatic functions rather than solely in terms of their formal structure. Their meaning is frequently determined by the communicative context, the relationship between interlocutors, and the conventions shared by members of a particular digital community. Consequently, the interpretation of an abbreviation may not always be possible through its formal expansion alone.

The polysemy and contextual dependence of abbreviations represent another significant characteristic identified in the study. The same abbreviated form may acquire different meanings in different communicative situations, making contextual indicators essential for accurate interpretation. For example, *TC* may represent *take care* and function as an informal expression of farewell or goodwill. In the following exchange:

"Hey, Eric. Do you have any plans for 2nite?"

"Why are u asking?"

"How about watching a movie 2nite?"

"I'm sorry, but I can't. I'll be with my family for dinner."

"OK. Maybe another time."

"Maybe. TC. CU." the forms *2nite* (*tonight*), *u* (*you*), *TC* (*take care*), and *CU* (*see you*) demonstrate several distinct functions of abbreviated communication. The forms *u* and *2nite* primarily contribute to linguistic economy, whereas *TC* and *CU* perform interpersonal and phatic functions by expressing goodwill and closing the interaction. Thus, the communicative value of these forms cannot be adequately explained by their structural reduction alone.

The analysis also suggests that abbreviated forms may contribute to the development of shared communicative conventions within digital communities. Conventional abbreviations such as *LOL*, *TTYL*, and *tbh* are relatively transparent to experienced users and can therefore facilitate rapid communication. In contrast, newly emerging, non-standard, or highly context-dependent forms may increase the interpretive burden placed on recipients. This distinction is particularly important in relation to prospective teachers, whose familiarity with contemporary digital language may influence their ability to interpret the linguistic practices encountered by students in media and online communication.

Another important finding concerns the relationship between abbreviation and semantic accessibility. Structural compression may increase communicative efficiency while simultaneously reducing the transparency of meaning. This is especially evident in abbreviations formed from multi-word expressions, where several lexical and morphological elements may be omitted. Forms such as *JFFI* (*just fucking Facebook it*) and *NOYC* (*none of your concern*) illustrate the extent to which digital

users may compress an entire expression into a sequence that is difficult to interpret without prior familiarity with the convention. In such cases, contextual knowledge becomes a decisive factor in reconstructing the intended meaning.

The study also identified pragmatic uses of abbreviations in the expression or mitigation of emotionally marked and potentially offensive language. Abbreviating a vulgar expression may conceal part of its explicit lexical form while retaining its evaluative or emotional force. For example, *WTF* (*what the fuck*) can function as an expression of surprise, irritation, or disbelief, depending on the context. Its abbreviated form may therefore serve both a linguistic-economy function and a pragmatic function associated with the mitigation or indirect presentation of taboo language. The interpretation of such forms is nevertheless highly context-dependent, and alternative expansions may occasionally be inferred by users who are unfamiliar with the conventional meaning.

The corpus further demonstrates that abbreviated forms may be used to express negative evaluation and emotional attitudes. Forms such as *pos* (*piece of shit*) illustrate how abbreviation can condense strongly evaluative language while preserving its pragmatic force. Such cases indicate that abbreviations are not semantically neutral devices: they may encode the speaker's emotional stance, interpersonal attitude, and evaluation of a person, event, or object. Their interpretation therefore requires consideration of both linguistic form and discourse context.

The findings concerning forms such as *fag* also illustrate the potential ambiguity of shortened or abbreviated expressions. Depending on the context, the same form may carry different meanings, including offensive or derogatory interpretations, while in other contexts it may represent an entirely different lexical expression. This demonstrates that formal decoding alone is insufficient for determining meaning in contemporary digital discourse. Contextual, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge may be required to distinguish among possible interpretations.

The findings are consistent with the observation that different types of abbreviations perform different communicative functions depending on their contextual purpose (Aghajanyan, 2013). At the same time, the present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that contemporary digital media has created conditions for the rapid emergence, modification, and conventionalization of abbreviated forms. Some forms may become sufficiently established to enter dictionaries and specialized reference resources, whereas others remain platform-specific, community-specific, or highly ephemeral.

The results also highlight the importance of distinguishing between conventionalized and emerging abbreviations. Conventional forms are generally easier to recognize and interpret because their meanings are shared by a broader community of users. Emerging forms, by contrast, may require inferential processing and knowledge of specific communicative practices. This distinction has particular relevance for media literacy and teacher education, as prospective teachers increasingly encounter students whose everyday communication is influenced by digital linguistic practices.

Overall, the discussion confirms that abbreviations and acronyms in contemporary media communication should be viewed as dynamic linguistic phenomena located at the intersection of

structural reduction, semantic change, pragmatic meaning, and digital communicative practice. Their use reflects the principle of linguistic economy, but it also serves broader functions, including interpersonal communication, emotional expression, evaluation, euphemization, group identification, and discourse management. At the same time, the increasing diversity and contextual dependence of abbreviated forms may create challenges for users who lack familiarity with particular digital conventions.

The combination of the linguistic corpus and student-based data therefore provides evidence that successful interpretation of contemporary media abbreviations depends not only on knowledge of their conventional expansions but also on the ability to infer meaning from context. This finding underscores the need to consider digital abbreviated language as an integral component of contemporary media literacy and communicative competence, particularly in the education of future teachers.

RESULTS

The language of synchronous media communication can be difficult to use for media consumers who have not yet mastered the media domain.

During synchronous media communication, new abbreviations appear, displacing rarely used ones. Let us add that by examining the factual material extracted from synchronous discussions, it is possible to reveal the level of media literacy of communicators, the fact of their awareness of Internet neologisms. For example, the abbreviation *wc* /*wrong conversation*// *web camera*/ used in the phrase *hi wc kimmmy* can lead to misunderstanding, as it is ambiguous. Especially when media consumers do not use any punctuation marks, it is unclear whether the statement is interrogative or affirmative. In another example, we see that the abbreviation *WGO* /*what's going on*/ is used without a question mark, but it was discovered that it is also missing in online dictionaries. Therefore, we can state that in the case of Internet abbreviations, the question mark is not mandatory. For example: /*hello, how r u 4:47:am. I'm good hru 4:47:am*/. It is obvious that in simultaneous communication, users used both abbreviations and acronyms. The first user shortened the first and last part of the verb, the pronoun, and what is most characteristic, both users avoided punctuation marks.

In summary, let us state that abbreviations are one of the most effective means of language economy. This linguistic unit is a significant part of media discussions and communication. In some cases abbreviations are also used to emphasize various nuances of oral speech. Let us add that the widespread use of media technologies could not but have an impact on the process of forming new communication formats, stimulating the research interests of linguists, educators and psychologists. We have also found out that Internet communication is in a dynamic development stage and has distinct rules and communication strategies. Judgements that there are no socio-psychological indicators in media communication are wrong. As our study shows, now those who communicate in the media domain attach particular importance to contextual indicators. In other words, those communicating in the media domain, due to their psychological make-up, the nature and purpose of communication, media literacy and media culture awareness, have their unique characteristics of self-expression.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study demonstrates that abbreviations, shortenings, initialisms, acronyms, and other reduced linguistic forms constitute an important and dynamic component of contemporary media communication. Their analysis cannot be limited to their structural characteristics alone, since their meaning, interpretation, and communicative value are closely connected with the specific linguistic, social, and digital contexts in which they occur.

The empirical material collected during the six-month research period made it possible to examine abbreviated forms across different types of contemporary media communication. The analysis of 300 comments collected from eight online news websites and the digital platforms YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook provided a basis for identifying the structural diversity, semantic characteristics, contextual variability, and communicative functions of abbreviated linguistic units. At the same time, the inclusion of 168 undergraduate students receiving pedagogical education made it possible to consider the issue not only from a linguistic perspective but also in relation to the recognition, interpretation, and use of such forms by contemporary media users and prospective teachers.

The findings of the study support the conclusion that abbreviated linguistic units perform several important functions in digital media discourse. In addition to contributing to linguistic economy and the reduction of communicative effort, they may serve expressive, evaluative, emotional, euphemistic, intensifying, and group-identifying purposes. Thus, abbreviation in contemporary media should be regarded not merely as a process of linguistic shortening but also as a communicative strategy shaped by the needs and conventions of particular discourse communities.

The analysis also highlights the importance of contextual dependence in the interpretation of abbreviated forms. While conventional and widely established abbreviations may be easily recognized and decoded, newly emerging, non-standard, or context-specific forms may create difficulties in interpretation. Their understanding often requires familiarity not only with the linguistic structure of the unit but also with the communicative situation, media environment, shared cultural knowledge, and conventions of a particular online community.

The comparison of authentic media material with student-based data further emphasizes the relevance of media and linguistic competence in contemporary education. The ability to recognize and correctly interpret abbreviations and acronyms is increasingly connected with broader skills of media literacy, critical reading, contextual interpretation, and effective participation in digital communication. For prospective teachers in particular, familiarity with contemporary abbreviated forms may contribute to a better understanding of the linguistic practices of young people and the changing nature of communication in digital environments.

Overall, the study confirms that abbreviations and acronyms in contemporary media discourse should be investigated as multidimensional linguistic units characterized by structural variability, semantic flexibility, contextual dependence, and diverse communicative functions. The mixed-methods

approach employed in the research provides an opportunity to combine linguistic analysis with the examination of users' recognition and interpretation of abbreviated forms.

The study also suggests the need for further research based on larger and more diverse corpora, different age and professional groups, and comparative analysis of abbreviations across languages and media platforms. Such research may contribute to a deeper understanding of the ongoing development of abbreviated language and its role in shaping contemporary digital communication.

REFERENCES

- Aghajanyan A. (2013).* Linguistic and stylistic features of abbreviations and abbreviations in English online communications, candidate dissertation, Yerevan, p. 180.
- Crystal D. (2004).* Language and the Internet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, – 304 p.
- Madoyan N. (2016).* On the specifics of online learning and assessment // Language and literature in the modern paradigm of scientific knowledge, № 7, Yerevan, Lusakn, pp. 153-160.
- Thurlow C. & Brown, A. (2003).* Generation Txt? The Sociolinguistics of Young People's Text-messaging // Discourse Analysis Online, Vol., 1, 1 – 27, Department of Communication, University of Washington, Box 353740, Seattle, – pp.1-27.

LIST OF DICTIONARIES

1. **English-Armenian dictionary of computer terms, Yerevan, Ankyunakar, 2004, 368 p.**
2. www.urbandictionary.com

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

1. icq.com/icqchat/en
2. www.enron-mail.com
3. www.facebook.com
4. www.rendezvouschat.com

INSTITUTIONALIZING SCHOOL INTEGRITY: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION EDUCATION IN ARMENIA

Lilit MATEVOSYAN, *PhD Applicant, Department of Pedagogy, Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University, Republic of Armenia*

E-mail: Lilit.matevosyan.i4d@gmail.com

DOI: [10.24234/miopap.v13i1.133](https://doi.org/10.24234/miopap.v13i1.133)

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the institutionalization of anti-corruption education in general education schools in the Republic of Armenia, focusing on the gap between policy commitments and school-level implementation. Armenia's 2023–2026 Anti-Corruption Strategy explicitly includes curriculum development, teacher training, and non-formal school initiatives; monitoring evidence nevertheless indicates uneven implementation of several education-related measures.

The study employs a qualitative conceptual design combining structured document analysis with a purposive comparative review of Armenian policy and monitoring documents and international experience. It identifies three interrelated dimensions of effective anti-corruption education: content, organizational mechanisms, and institutional culture.

The analysis indicates that policy commitments and curricular measures alone are unlikely to generate sustainable behavioral change when they are not aligned with transparent school governance and integrity-supporting institutional norms. Drawing on the Armenian evidence and comparative cases, the paper proposes a three-level institutional model linking what students learn, how schools are governed, and which norms are reinforced in everyday practice.

The study's scientific contribution lies in treating alignment across these three levels as the core unit of institutionalization and in translating the model into measurable indicators that can support future empirical validation and policy implementation.

Keywords: *anti-corruption education, institutionalization, school integrity, organizational culture, transparency, Armenia*

INTRODUCTION

The fight against corruption in contemporary governance systems has increasingly shifted from punitive approaches toward preventive and value-based strategies. Existing research suggests that legal enforcement mechanisms alone are insufficient in the absence of deeper changes in institutional culture and social norms (Persson et al., 2013; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, n.d.) emphasizes the role of education in preventing corruption and promoting ethics and integrity at the primary and secondary levels. Similarly,

the OECD conceptualizes integrity in education not only as a curricular issue, but as a broader matter of governance and institutional practice (OECD, 2018).

In Armenia, anti-corruption education has moved beyond a general policy aspiration. The 2023–2026 Anti-Corruption Strategy identifies anti-corruption education and public awareness as a distinct strategic objective and includes measures to strengthen the Social Studies curriculum, train teachers, and support student anti-corruption clubs (Government of Armenia, 2023). At the same time, these measures are primarily programmatic and curricular; they do not by themselves constitute a school-wide integrity architecture linking learning to governance practice and organizational culture.

Against this background, the present study asks how anti-corruption education can be institutionalized at the level of the school so that curricular content, organizational practice, and everyday norms reinforce one another. Its aim is to develop a context-sensitive conceptual model for Armenian general education schools.

The scientific gap addressed by the study is the limited integration, in a single school-level framework, of three strands that are often treated separately in anti-corruption and education research: integrity-related learning content, organizational governance mechanisms, and institutional culture. The novelty of the proposed model is therefore not a new list of anti-corruption topics, but an institutional alignment proposition: integrity becomes more sustainable when the content level (what is taught), the organizational level (how decisions and procedures operate), and the cultural level (which norms are socially reinforced) function coherently. This three-level architecture also provides an operational bridge from a conceptual model to measurable school-level indicators.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corruption is widely understood as a systemic phenomenon shaped by institutional arrangements, social norms, and patterns of collective behavior (Johnston, 2005; Persson et al., 2013). Consequently, effective anti-corruption strategies must address not only individual behavior, but also the institutional environments in which such behavior occurs.

Educational institutions operate simultaneously as spaces of socialization and as governance structures (OECD, 2018). In contexts where transparency and accountability are weak, schools may inadvertently reproduce practices they are expected to prevent.

Theoretical perspectives on organizational culture emphasize the role of shared values and underlying assumptions in shaping behavior (Schein, 2010), while social norms theory highlights the importance of expectations about others' actions (Bicchieri, 2017).

In the context of school systems, these perspectives suggest that anti-corruption education cannot be reduced to the transmission of knowledge alone, but must also engage with institutional practices and everyday interactions within the school environment.

However, existing literature tends to focus either on legal frameworks or curriculum development, with limited attention to the institutional dimension of education as a systemic process.

These bodies of literature are complementary but analytically incomplete when used in isolation. Curriculum-oriented approaches can strengthen knowledge and ethical reasoning but may leave the institutional environment unchanged; governance-oriented approaches can increase transparency and accountability without ensuring that students understand or internalize integrity values; organizational-culture and social-norm approaches explain how behavior becomes normalized but do not themselves specify curricular or procedural mechanisms. The present study connects these strands by treating school integrity as an alignment problem across content, organization, and culture rather than as a single educational intervention. This positioning is consistent with the broader integrity-in-education perspective advanced by international organizations, which increasingly links educational quality to transparency, accountability, participation, and ethical practice (OECD, 2018; UNODC, n.d.).

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative conceptual research design combining structured document analysis and purposive comparative review. The objective is theory building and contextual model development rather than statistical inference or causal estimation. This design is appropriate for examining how policy commitments, governance arrangements, and institutional norms can be analytically connected and translated into a testable framework.

Estonia, Finland, Singapore, and Georgia were selected purposively using a maximum-variation logic. The cases represent distinct governance traditions and integrity reform pathways: digitally enabled transparency and public administration (Estonia), trust-based professional governance (Finland), coordinated state capacity combined with values education (Singapore), and rapid transparency and public-service reform in a post-Soviet context (Georgia). Georgia also provides regional contextual proximity, while the other cases broaden the institutional range. The cases are not treated as rankings or as models to be transplanted wholesale.

The documentary corpus comprises Armenian normative and policy documents, including the 2023–2026 Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan and the State Standard of General Education as amended in 2026; implementation and monitoring evidence, including the OECD's fifth-round baseline assessment and independent monitoring of the 2023–2024 anti-corruption actions; and international policy reports and scholarly literature relevant to the four comparative cases. Documents were examined for four comparison criteria: (1) integration of integrity-related learning content, (2) transparency and accountability in organizational practice, (3) the role of teachers and professional ethics, and (4) participation, trust, and norm formation.

Analysis proceeded in two stages. First, the documents were coded thematically against the four comparison criteria and for recurring implementation gaps. Second, the resulting themes were synthesized into three higher-order institutional levels—content, organization, and culture—and checked against the Armenian policy context for relevance and feasibility. This procedure supports analytical transferability rather than direct institutional copying: an international practice was considered

potentially transferable only where its underlying function could be matched to an Armenian policy need, implementation mechanism, and identifiable institutional constraint.

RESULTS

CURRENT CHALLENGES IN ARMENIA

Armenia now has a comparatively explicit policy mandate for anti-corruption education. Government Decision No. 1871-L of 26 October 2023 establishes anti-corruption education and public awareness as one of five strategic objectives. Its Action Plan includes improvement of the Social Studies curriculum (Action 3.3), teacher training for Social Studies teachers (Action 3.4), and support for non-formal programmes including student anti-corruption clubs in schools (Action 3.11) (Government of Armenia, 2023). These measures provide a stronger formal basis than a purely declarative commitment.

Implementation evidence, however, shows why institutionalization cannot be inferred from formal adoption alone. Independent monitoring of the 2023–2024 Action Plan found Action 3.3 only partially implemented: the revised Social Studies programme included an anti-corruption component, but the broader concept and methodological manual for anti-corruption education had not yet been approved and baseline knowledge assessment information was absent. Action 3.4 was also assessed as partially implemented: approximately 1,000 Social Studies teachers had been trained, yet the monitoring found no documented baseline assessment or evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of the knowledge-assessment system (Armenian Lawyers' Association, 2025).

The same monitoring report assessed Action 3.11 as partially implemented. Although a draft anti-corruption club programme for Grade 11 students had been developed, the target of establishing anti-corruption clubs in at least 30% of schools had not been met during the monitored period (Armenian Lawyers' Association, 2025). This evidence does not imply failure of anti-corruption education as a whole; rather, it documents a policy-to-implementation gap and, importantly, shows that current monitoring is still weighted toward activities and outputs rather than school-wide changes in governance and culture.

A related opportunity is created by Armenia's competency-based general education framework. The State Standard of General Education, adopted in revised wording in May 2026, defines knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values as the four components of general education programme content (Government of Armenia, 2026). This structure is compatible with integrity education, but curricular compatibility does not automatically ensure transparent decision-making, fair procedures, conflict-of-interest prevention, or a trusted reporting culture inside schools.

Taken together, the national evidence supports a more precise formulation of the policy-practice problem: Armenia has moved toward explicit anti-corruption learning and teacher-development measures, while the organizational and cultural dimensions required for school-wide institutionalization

remain less systematically specified and measured. This is the gap to which the proposed three-level model is directed.

The broader governance context reinforces the need for measurable institutional alignment. The OECD's fifth-round baseline report noted that Armenia's anti-corruption framework incorporated outcome and impact indicators but also highlighted the need for stronger logical links between objectives, measures, and meaningful impact indicators (OECD, 2024). The present model adapts that implementation logic to the school level.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

International practice is used here as a source of functional design principles rather than as evidence that one national system can be directly replicated in Armenia.

Estonia illustrates the governance value of coordinated digital education infrastructure and publicly provided information systems (OECD, 2023). For the present model, the transferable function inferred from this case is traceability: school decisions, criteria, and selected administrative information should be understandable and reviewable by stakeholders, rather than merely digitized.

Finland provides a contrasting trust-based case in which professional autonomy is supported by strong professional capacity and ethical responsibility (Sahlberg, 2011). The transferable lesson is not low external control as such, but the coupling of autonomy with professional norms, reflective practice, and institutional trust.

Singapore combines strong institutional coordination with value-based Character and Citizenship Education (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2021; Quah, 2011). Its relevance lies in the deliberate alignment of educational objectives with broader public-integrity expectations. The centralized features of the Singaporean system, however, cannot be assumed to transfer directly to Armenian school governance.

Georgia demonstrates how transparency-oriented and digital public-service reforms can alter opportunities for corruption in a post-Soviet institutional setting (World Bank, 2012). Its regional relevance is useful, while the case also cautions against equating rapid procedural reform with long-term norm change.

Across the four cases, the common analytical insight is functional complementarity: educational content, governance mechanisms, and institutional culture perform different but mutually reinforcing roles. This pattern provides the comparative basis for the three-level model.

TRANSFERABILITY TO THE ARMENIAN CONTEXT

Transferability is assessed through functional fit, institutional capacity, and implementation risk. Estonia's digital-governance experience can be adapted through clear publication and review of school-level decision criteria, but its effectiveness depends on data quality and administrative capacity. Finland's emphasis on professional trust is relevant to ethics-based teacher development, but requires consistent

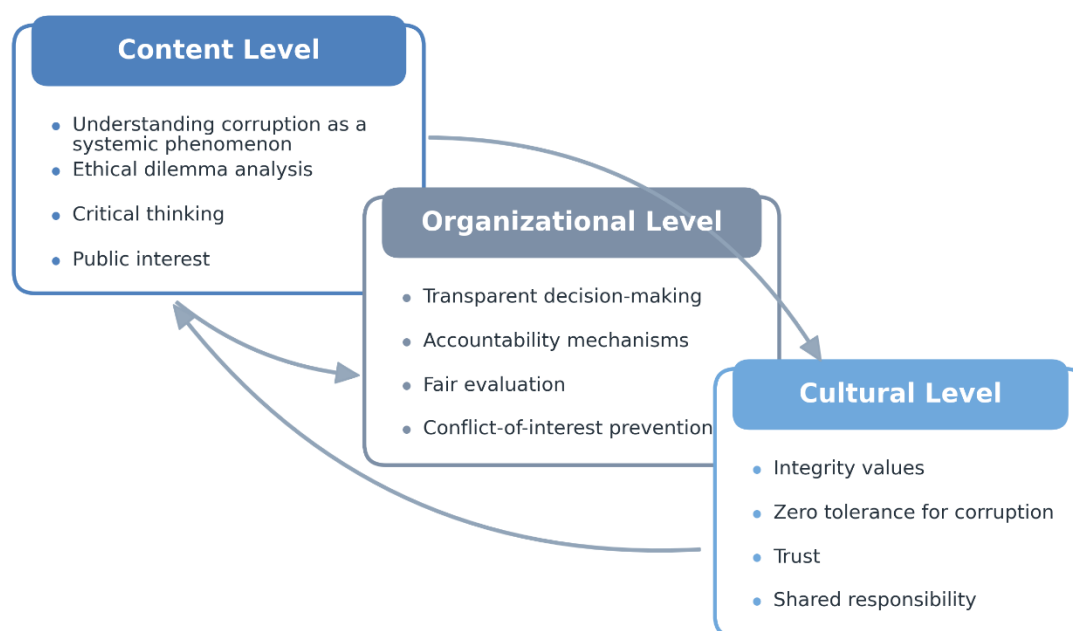
professional support and fair accountability to avoid turning autonomy into uneven practice. Singapore's coordinated values education can inform curriculum-training alignment, while its centralized enforcement arrangements should not be copied without regard to Armenia's legal and governance context. Georgia's experience supports the use of transparent procedures and digital tools, yet also underscores the need to institutionalize norms beyond initial reform measures. For Armenia, therefore, selective adaptation is preferable to model transplantation: each practice should be linked to a specific function within the content, organizational, or cultural level and tested through a phased pilot before system-wide adoption.

PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL MODEL

The proposed model consists of three interrelated levels:

Figure 1

Three-Level Institutional Model of Anti-Corruption Education



1. CONTENT LEVEL

- Understanding corruption as a systemic phenomenon
- Ethical dilemma analysis
- Development of critical thinking
- Promotion of public interest

2. ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

- Transparent decision-making
- Accountability mechanisms
- Fair evaluation systems
- Conflict-of-interest prevention

3. CULTURAL LEVEL

- Internalization of integrity values
- Zero tolerance for unethical behavior
- Development of trust
- Promotion of shared responsibility

INTEGRATION OF LEVELS

The effectiveness of anti-corruption education depends on the interaction between these levels:

- Content → awareness
- Organization → implementation
- Culture → sustainability

Without integration, anti-corruption education remains formalistic and ineffective.

OPERATIONALIZATION AND MEASURABLE INDICATORS

To make the conceptual model empirically testable, each institutional level can be linked to observable indicators. The indicators below are illustrative rather than validated thresholds; their purpose is to define what future pilot studies should measure at baseline and follow-up.

Table 1.

Institutional level	Illustrative indicators	Possible evidence source
Content	Coverage of integrity topics; student performance on ethical-dilemma scenarios; proportion of relevant teachers completing targeted training	Curriculum audit; scenario-based assessment; training records
Organizational	Publication of decision/evaluation criteria; functioning complaint and appeal procedures; conflict-of-interest safeguards; student/parent participation in defined decisions	School documents; administrative records; governance minutes

Institutional level	Illustrative indicators	Possible evidence source
Cultural	Perceived fairness and trust; willingness to report misconduct; perceived consistency between stated values and actual practice; tolerance of favoritism	Anonymous climate survey; focus groups; incident-pattern review

At the model level, alignment should be assessed in addition to separate level scores. A school with strong curricular coverage but low procedural fairness, for example, would display content-organizational misalignment. Future empirical work can therefore construct standardized level scores and examine whether higher cross-level alignment is associated with stronger integrity-related attitudes, trust, and reporting confidence.

DISCUSSION

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation should begin with a limited and evaluable pilot rather than immediate system-wide prescription. A practical sequence is to (1) establish baseline measures for the three levels, (2) align existing curriculum and teacher-development measures with school governance procedures, (3) adopt a small set of school integrity standards and reporting safeguards, (4) involve students and parents in defined governance processes, and (5) repeat the indicators after an implementation period. Key risks include formal compliance without behavioral change, excessive reporting burdens, inconsistent school capacity, and low trust in reporting mechanisms. These risks can be mitigated through simple indicators, phased implementation, capacity-building, confidentiality safeguards, and periodic independent review.

CONCLUSION

Anti-corruption education in Armenia is increasingly supported by explicit policy, curriculum, and teacher-development measures, yet the available implementation evidence shows that formal measures do not automatically amount to school-wide institutionalization. The central challenge is to connect educational content with transparent organizational practice and a culture that consistently reinforces integrity.

By conceptualizing anti-corruption education as a three-level institutional alignment problem rather than a subject-based component, this study offers a distinct framework for policy design and empirical testing. Its contribution lies in linking content, organization, and culture and in specifying observable indicators through which their individual strength and mutual alignment can be assessed.

For Armenia, the framework complements—rather than replaces—current curricular and training reforms. It suggests that the next stage of institutionalization should make school governance and culture visible objects of integrity policy and evaluation alongside learning content.

LIMITATIONS

This study has four main limitations. First, it is conceptual and does not include primary empirical data from schools; the proposed relationships therefore remain hypotheses requiring validation. Second, the documentary corpus is purposive rather than exhaustive and is shaped by the availability and comparability of policy and monitoring materials. Third, the four international cases differ substantially in administrative traditions, resources, and reform histories, which limits direct generalization to Armenia. Fourth, the proposed indicators have not yet been tested for reliability, validity, feasibility, or sensitivity to change. These limitations are addressed by treating cross-country lessons as functionally transferable principles rather than ready-made institutional designs.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should empirically test the model in a diverse sample of Armenian schools using a mixed-methods design. A first phase should establish baseline measures through document audits, anonymous student and teacher surveys, interviews or focus groups, and school-governance records. A pilot intervention can then test whether coordinated changes across content, organizational procedures, and cultural reinforcement produce stronger outcomes than isolated curricular interventions. Longitudinal follow-up should assess whether changes in perceived fairness, trust, willingness to report misconduct, and ethical reasoning are sustained over time. Comparative analysis across urban and rural schools would also help identify capacity constraints and refine the transferability of the framework before broader implementation.

REFERENCES

- Armenian Lawyers' Association.** (2025). Report on the monitoring results of actions scheduled for implementation in 2023–2024 under the 2023–2026 Action Plan for implementing the Republic of Armenia's Anti-Corruption Strategy. <https://armla.am/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/23-26-AC-Monitoring-Report-23-24-Activities-Final.pdf>
- Bicchieri, C.** (2017). *Norms in the wild: How to diagnose, measure, and change social norms*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190622046.001.0001>
- Government of Armenia.** (2023). Decision approving the Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia and the 2023–2026 Action Plan (Decision No. 1871-L, 26 October 2023). <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/184674>
- Government of Armenia.** (2026). Decision supplementing and amending Government Decision No. 439-N of 8 April 2010 (Decision No. 699-N, 21 May 2026). <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/225426>
- Johnston, M.** (2005). *Syndromes of corruption: Wealth, power, and democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

- Ministry of Education, Singapore.** (2021). *Character and citizenship education (CCE): Secondary syllabus*. <https://www.moe.gov.sg/media/files/syllabus/2021-sec-character-and-citizenship-education.pdf>
- OECD.** (2018). *Integrity of education systems: A methodology for sector assessment*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/ef327353-en>
- OECD.** (2023). *Country digital education ecosystems and governance: A companion to Digital Education Outlook 2023*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/906134d4-en>
- OECD.** (2024). *Baseline report of the fifth round of monitoring of anti-corruption reforms in Armenia*. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/03/baseline-report-of-the-fifth-round-of-monitoring-of-anti-corruption-reforms-in-armenia_fe71d6cc/fb158bf9-en.pdf
- Persson, A., Rothstein, B., & Teorell, J.** (2013). Why anticorruption reforms fail: Systemic corruption as a collective action problem. *Governance*, 26(3), 449–471. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2012.01604.x>
- Quah, J. S. T. (Ed.).** (2011). *Curbing corruption in Asian countries: An impossible dream?* Emerald Group Publishing.
- Rose-Ackerman, S., & Palifka, B. J.** (2016). *Corruption and government: Causes, consequences, and reform* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Sahlberg, P.** (2011). *Finnish lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* Teachers College Press.
- Schein, E. H.** (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.** (n.d.). *Primary & secondary education*. GRACE Initiative. <https://grace.unodc.org/grace/en/primary-and-secondary.html>
- World Bank.** (2012). *Fighting corruption in public services: Chronicling Georgia's reforms*. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-9475-5>

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ADAPTATION OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Irina POGHOSYAN, *French university in Armenia*

E-mail: irina.poghosyan@pers.ufar.am

ORCID: 0009-0004-6833-512X

DOI: 10.24234/miopap.v13i1.134

ABSTRACT

This article examines the main directions for adapting the university environment for persons with disabilities based on a comparative analysis of European practices in inclusive higher education and an assessment of their potential application in the Republic of Armenia. The study clarifies the scientific problem of translating general inclusive-education principles into an operational university-level strategy and proposes an integrated framework combining physical and digital accessibility, assistive technologies, adapted educational materials, social and psychological support, staff training, transferability assessment and measurable monitoring indicators. The analysis shows that the creation of an inclusive educational environment requires a systematic approach rather than isolated measures and should include the modernisation of infrastructure, the improvement of information systems, the development of institutional support mechanisms and the assessment of financial and organisational readiness. Based on the examined international experience, a strategic plan for the adaptation of universities is proposed, incorporating short-term, medium-term and long-term measures aimed at improving the accessibility and quality of higher education for persons with disabilities. It may therefore be concluded that the successful implementation of inclusive policies in Armenian universities requires a comprehensive combination of infrastructural, technological, organisational and social transformations aimed at ensuring equal access to educational opportunities and promoting the full participation of persons with disabilities in university life.

Keywords: *inclusive education; persons with disabilities; higher education; accessible educational environment; digital accessibility; assistive technologies; university infrastructure; social support; inclusive policy; Republic of Armenia.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The overarching objective of this strategic plan is to establish conditions that ensure full accessibility and inclusivity within the university environment for students, faculty and staff with disabilities. The University seeks to eliminate existing barriers and implement contemporary solutions that promote equal participation of all categories of users in the educational process, research activities and working life. In pursuit of this objective, the institution will draw upon the best practices and

strategies that have been successfully implemented by leading European universities. These strategies will encompass not only the enhancement of physical and digital accessibility, but also the promotion of cultural and social inclusion at all levels of university life.

The scientific problem addressed in this study is the insufficient translation of general inclusive-education principles into an operational university-level strategy for the Armenian higher education context. Existing studies and policy documents describe legal commitments, European approaches and separate support measures, but they do not sufficiently connect these elements with the institutional, infrastructural and financial conditions of Armenian universities. The novelty of the study therefore lies in the development of an integrated strategic framework that links accessibility audits, digital adaptation, assistive technologies, staff training, student support and monitoring mechanisms into a phased model for university adaptation.

The methodological basis of the study is a comparative documentary analysis of legal acts, international standards, university practices, reports and academic publications related to inclusive higher education. The international examples, primarily European, were selected because they represent different models of accessibility policy: regulatory infrastructure standards, digital accessibility initiatives, institutional disability-support services, pedagogical support and partnership-based inclusion. The comparison was conducted according to the following criteria: relevance to higher education, applicability to different categories of disability, feasibility of phased implementation, institutional responsibility, financial sustainability and potential adaptation to the Armenian context. This approach makes it possible to identify not only successful practices, but also the conditions under which they may be transferred.

2. ANALYSING THE CURRENT STATE

The Law of the Republic of Armenia on Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs, which was adopted in 2014 by the National Assembly, guarantees the right to inclusive education for all citizens, including persons with disabilities (National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, 2014). It enshrines the right of persons with disabilities to receive education at all levels, including higher education, taking into account their individual needs and conditions. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Social Charter form the basis for international policy aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in education. The Law 'On Amendments and Additions' to the Law 'On General Education' (HO-200-N) (National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, 2014) stipulates the introduction of inclusive education in 100% of educational organisations in Armenia by August 1, 2030. This includes the development and implementation of models and programmes oriented to the needs of students with disabilities. A three-stage assessment of students' needs has been introduced, which allows for accurate identification. The overarching objective of this system is to devise bespoke learning plans and provide support to students with special needs at all levels. A key element of this initiative involves the provision of physical accessibility, including the

installation of ramps, the widening of doorways, and the adaptation of learning materials. The reorganisation of the educational environment has necessitated a substantial financial investment. One of the key factors driving this change was the engagement with public opinion and stereotypes, with the aim of overcoming discrimination and establishing equitable conditions for all students, irrespective of their physical, mental or social differences (Melkumyan, 2018). By 2021, there were 1243 inclusive schools in Armenia with 7998 students with special educational needs. However, it was not possible to find similar information and monitoring on the accessibility of inclusive education in the Republic of Armenia. The current statistics indicate that approximately 3% of students enrolled in higher education institutions in Armenia are persons with disabilities (Simonyan, 2017). Nevertheless, despite the positive changes, access to higher education for persons with disabilities is limited mainly by sensory and motor impairments.

The assessment of the current situation in Armenian higher education institutions indicates that accessibility remains uneven and insufficiently monitored. Available publications show progress in the development of inclusive education at the school level, while comparable evidence for universities is limited and fragmented (Melkumyan, 2018; Simonyan, 2017). In practice, higher education institutions may differ substantially in the availability of ramps and lifts, accessible sanitary facilities, tactile navigation, adapted digital resources, assistive technologies and trained support personnel. Institutional capacity is also constrained by the absence of unified monitoring instruments, limited specialised staff, competing infrastructure priorities and the need for regular maintenance of accessibility solutions. Financial constraints are therefore a central factor: many adaptations require not only one-time investment, but also continuous funding for software licences, equipment renewal, staff training and student-support services. For this reason, the proposed plan begins with an evidence-based institutional audit before large-scale implementation.

3. MAIN AREAS OF ADAPTATION

3.1. INFRASTRUCTURAL CHANGES

The provision of ramps and lifts in all buildings of educational institutions is intended to ensure accessibility for students, faculty and staff with disabilities. In accordance with Russian standards (SP 59.13330.2016), ramps must be installed at each building entrance, meeting specific slope and safety requirements. The width of ramps in Russia is set at 0.9 metres, which can, on occasion, prove to be inadequate for wheelchairs with a width of up to 1.2 metres. The data for Russian standards is provided here, as no analogous standard was identified for the Republic of Armenia. Disabled lifts must be a minimum of 1.7m x 1.5m and provide accessibility for people with pushchairs. Furthermore, lifts should be equipped with appropriate buttons, signals and control panels for people with hearing or visual impairments, and have sufficiently spacious wheelchair accessible cabins. In the UK, the BS 8300:2009 + A1:2010 standard places significant emphasis on design flexibility, with ramps permitted to vary in

slope depending on the height of the lift, thereby enhancing adaptability. The width of ramps is stipulated as 1.2 metres, aligning with international standards. Additionally, the standard imposes supplementary requirements on lifts, stipulating that they must meet the maximum requirements for individuals with disabilities. In the German legal framework, specifically the Bauordnung für Berlin 2016, stringent design criteria are stipulated for ramps and lifts. These criteria include a maximum slope of 6 per cent for ramps and the requirement for their length to be proportionate to the lift. Moreover, the law stipulates the provision of at least two lifts for disabled individuals in public buildings, including educational institutions. In contrast, the United States (International Building Code 2018) sets a different standard. Its ramps are designed with a slope of no more than 5%, and rest areas are mandatory every 9 metres to improve facilities for people with disabilities. Lifts must be of standard size for wheelchairs, with a doorway of 1.2 metres. The implementation of such solutions contributes to the creation of an inclusive environment and equal opportunities for all participants in the educational process.

A research article (Regec, Pastierikova, 2016) examines e-accessibility in Czech and Slovak universities for students with visual impairment, focusing on the accessibility of information in electronic format, including the use of technologies and methodologies that facilitate access for such students. The study analysed more than 5,300 digital documents posted on the platforms of 106 universities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 2014 and 2015. The study utilised 15 distinct assistive technologies and tools to assess content accessibility, with the objective of identifying best practices for enhancing the availability of e-resources for visually impaired individuals within higher education institutions. The analysis revealed that none of the universities attained full accessibility levels for their e-content, with only four institutions (three private universities in the Czech Republic and one public institution in Slovakia) demonstrating accessibility levels above 90 per cent. These universities exhibited superior performance, attributable to their more effective integration of assistive technologies and adherence to international standards. The article goes on to state that accessibility is not limited only to the technical characteristics of the sites, but also includes the competences of students in using assistive technologies and the quality of support provided by the universities. In the article under consideration, the authors refer to several significant European projects supported by the European Commission, which are aimed at improving the accessibility of information for visually impaired people. Among these projects is the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), which is actively working on the creation of global accessibility standards for web content, e.g. WCAG 2.0, WCAG 2.2, WCAG 3.0 (World Wide Web Consortium, 2023) Design for All (WAI-DA), which seeks to increase the participation of European organisations in the implementation of web accessibility standards, Europe 2002 and Europe 2005, initiatives that aimed to achieve full accessibility for people with disabilities at EU level, including all web resources of public institutions. Another paper (Yue, 2024) analyses European practices in the education system in Finland and their application to optimise the educational outcomes of students with hearing impairment. In Finland, there is a model of inclusive education, in which children with hearing impairment are educated in regular schools with additional support. This is actively supported at the national level and includes

individualised education plans and various support mechanisms. Furthermore, students with hearing impairment in Finland have access to modern educational technologies, including cochlear implants, which have significantly enhanced their capacity to engage in conventional educational activities. Audiovisual teaching aids, including sound amplification systems, are utilised in conjunction with special pedagogical methods to provide support to students with hearing impairments. The employment of sign language interpreters and other assistive technologies is also a prominent feature.

In the report entitled 'Trends 2024. European higher education institutions in times of transition' (European University Association, 2024), the question of how to create an accessible educational environment for students with disabilities is discussed. The report emphasises the importance of tactile and information elements for people with hearing and visual impairments. Specifically, tactile walkways and floor signs, featuring relief stripes, cones, and materials of specific colours, assist visually impaired individuals in identifying different types of pavement surfaces through touch or residual vision. Additionally, tactile stickers with pertinent information are affixed to railings, aiding in orientation. These indicators can be installed at various levels and are engineered to withstand substantial loads, including exposure to the external environment, a crucial consideration for both indoor and outdoor use. A significant component of this infrastructure is tactile-sound schemes, which incorporate buttons to play audio messages, thereby assisting visually impaired individuals to navigate indoor environments and locate specific destinations. Another notable aspect is the incorporation of Braille into signs affixed to various objects, such as door handles and lavatory facilities, among others.

The report also stipulates that educational organisations should provide at least one accessible toilet cubicle per floor for students with low mobility, with the inclusion of folding support handrails and swivelling or tilting seats to enhance the usability of these facilities for individuals with disabilities. These measures are designed to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for individuals with mobility impairments. Additionally, there should be designated recreational areas that cater to the needs of students with disabilities. These designated areas offer opportunities for rest and recuperation at any time, a factor that is especially salient for students with disabilities who may experience elevated levels of physical exertion in the course of their studies.

3.2. EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

European universities are actively introducing a variety of digital resources, such as audio books, subtitled videos and e-textbooks, with a view to removing barriers to education and rendering educational processes more inclusive (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, n.d.). One example of effective use of ICT for students with disabilities is the e-Learning Development Centre (ELDC) initiative in Estonia. The project, which was initiated in 2000, focuses on creating accessible and flexible forms of learning that support all students, including those with disabilities. The key activities of the ELDC include digitalisation and the recording of learning materials for students with visual impairments. The Primus programme (2008-2013), supported by the European Social Fund, has

developed specialised resources and services to support students with special educational needs, including the creation of adapted digital courses for visually impaired students. For instance, the ECHO 360 system is employed to record lectures and create accessible formats for students with hearing and visual impairments, thereby significantly enhancing the accessibility of materials.

As of 2010, the number of users of the Blackboard and Moodle platforms in Estonia had reached more than 69,000 people. The Blackboard Vista platform, which is utilised in more than 39 Estonian universities, has more than 39,000 users and offers 1,800 courses (Watkins, Tokareva, Turner, (2011). In Spain, the EU4ALL project was implemented to create accessible and adapted courses for students with different types of disabilities (EU4ALL, n.d.). The courses are meticulously designed to accommodate memory impairments, cognitive difficulties and perceptual challenges, with materials presented in audio or video format with subtitles and easy-to-understand texts. A key element of the project is the DotLrn learning platform, which empowers educators to tailor courses to the specific needs of students with disabilities. The EU4ALL project places particular emphasis on the accessibility of learning materials in various formats, including concise lessons, video lessons accompanied by subtitles, and materials rendered in an accessible format for students with dyslexia.

Special software tools such as JAWS and NVDA for visually impaired students and Roger Pen and Ava for hearing impaired students are also employed. In Estonia, for example, projects of digitalisation of teaching materials are closely related to the introduction of such technologies. Also based on this approach, special courses are being created to train teachers to use these technologies in teaching.

Furthermore, university libraries are being equipped with special teaching materials, including Braille books, voiced textbooks (using DAISY Reader), tactile graphics and illustrations. The development of adapted examination materials, including alternative forms of testing for students with motor and cognitive disabilities, using programmes such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking and Ghotit Real Writer, promotes equal opportunities in assessment. The installation of induction loops such as Univox Loop and Ampetronic in classrooms and conference rooms helps students with hearing impairments. Furthermore, the development of mobile applications with accessibility features such as voice assistants (Apple VoiceOver, Google TalkBack) and campus navigation assists students with disabilities in improving their mobility and orientation on campus. The introduction of tactile maps and navigation applications such as BlindSquare and Seeing AI facilitates travel around the university campus for students with visual impairments.

3.3. SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

European universities have established specialised support services for students with disabilities, with the aim of ensuring equal access to the educational process and providing the necessary adaptations. In Italy, since 1999, each university has been obliged to appoint a disability commissioner. In France, universities have Mission Handicap departments that coordinate support for students with disabilities. Students disclose their needs at the time of admission, and a support plan is subsequently developed for

them, including academic accommodations (e.g., extra time in exams) (Université de Strasbourg, n.d.). In many European countries, such as Sweden, the UK and Ireland, institutions are required to provide pedagogical support for students with disabilities and appoint inclusion officers. The EUni4All-Network project, part of the Erasmus+ programme, has established a network of inclusive universities with the aim of developing standards of support for students with disabilities and disseminating best practice (EUni4All-Network, n.d.).

In the context of higher education systems in various countries, the provision of psychological support for students with disabilities has emerged as a significant component of the Studierendenwerk system in Germany, where counselling and assistance in adapting to the learning process are offered. In Spain, the ONCE Foundation operates a career mentoring programme for students with disabilities, aiming to facilitate their transition into professional life. In Ireland, Trinity College provides a supported learning programme for students with intellectual disabilities, encompassing mentoring and psychological support. Various forms of mentoring are also being developed, where experienced professionals help students with disabilities to adapt to the learning process and career. Many universities have mandatory training for teachers on inclusive education, for example, Sweden has introduced a mandatory module for new lecturers on pedagogical support for students with disabilities. In the UK, many universities run workshops on inclusive teaching and the National Education Quality Agency has developed guidance for universities. The European Commission's Disability Rights Strategy places significant emphasis on the training of educators in inclusive education, including the utilisation of assistive technology. In Poland, funding for inclusion has been allocated to support the development of inclusive education, including the training of staff.

In the field of disability studies, student associations have emerged as key actors in promoting inclusivity and accessibility within higher education settings. In Germany, the AStA (Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss) has been instrumental in organising awareness events and inclusive sports competitions, endeavouring to enhance the quality of life for students with disabilities. Similarly, the Disabled Students Campaign in the UK has been a prominent advocate for policy reforms, aiming to ensure that university policies are inclusive and conducive to the academic success of students with disabilities. The ExchangeAbility programme, initiated in 2010 as a component of the Erasmus Student Network, has been a significant initiative in promoting accessibility for students with disabilities in academic mobility. The programme's volunteers assist in removing barriers faced by students with disabilities, thereby promoting their participation in exchange programmes. In Europe, numerous scholarships and grants are available for students with disabilities. For instance, in Poland, scholarships are available to students with disabilities, compensating them for the additional costs associated with their studies. In other countries, such as Germany and France, students with disabilities can receive discounts on tuition fees and specialised grants. The Erasmus+ programme also provides additional funding for students with disabilities participating in international exchange programmes, thereby

facilitating greater mobility. Moreover, grants from organisations such as the ONCE Foundation in Spain and Google Europe support students with disabilities at master's and doctoral levels.

The success of inclusive programmes is contingent on effective partnerships between universities and disability organisations. For instance, the ONCE Foundation in Spain runs mentoring programmes for students with disabilities, while Masaryk University in the Czech Republic collaborates with the Teiresiás Centre to provide guidance on accessibility issues. The European Network of Inclusive Universities, established under the EUni4All project, facilitates knowledge exchange and the dissemination of best practices among universities. International projects such as DECIDE have facilitated the establishment of disability support centres in universities in the Eastern Partnership and Balkan countries, for example. In Austria, universities cooperated with the Österreichischer Behindertenrat to improve accessibility on campuses, which led to the creation of new guidelines for inclusion.

3.4. TRANSFERABILITY OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES TO ARMENIA

International practices should be transferred to Armenian universities selectively, rather than mechanically. The most realistic measures for adaptation are those that can be introduced in stages and adjusted to institutional resources: accessibility audits based on checklists, mobile or modular infrastructure solutions, WCAG-based website improvement, accessible learning materials, disability-support coordinators, teacher training, partnerships with disability organisations and gradual procurement of assistive technologies. These practices are appropriate because they do not require all universities to reach the same level immediately, but they establish common minimum standards and allow institutions to prioritise the most urgent barriers.

The principal risks of transferability are insufficient financing, limited technical expertise, weak interdepartmental coordination, low awareness among staff and the possibility that equipment will be purchased without adequate maintenance or training. These risks may be reduced through pilot projects, external grants, Erasmus+ cooperation, state co-financing, partnerships with non-governmental organisations and the inclusion of accessibility costs in regular university budgets. Institutional readiness should be assessed before implementation by examining management commitment, available technical staff, student-support capacity, digital infrastructure and the willingness of academic departments to adapt teaching and assessment practices.

A SWOT-based interpretation of the proposed strategy shows that the strengths of Armenian universities include the existence of inclusive-education legislation and growing public attention to equal access; the weaknesses include fragmented data, limited funding and uneven infrastructure; the opportunities include international cooperation, donor support, digital transformation and the use of European experience; and the threats include delayed investment, maintenance costs, resistance to organisational change and the risk of formal compliance without real accessibility. This strategic

assessment supports a phased model in which universities first diagnose barriers, then implement priority adaptations, and finally institutionalise monitoring and quality assurance.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

1. Short-term measures (1-2 years):

- 1.1. Audit of infrastructure accessibility. Conduct an audit using the "Accessible Environment" methodology with the involvement of experts from public organizations.
- 1.2. Use checklists to assess physical accessibility (ramps, doorframe width, tactile navigation) and digital resources (website accessibility according to WCAG 2.1 standards).
- 1.3. Immediate changes to infrastructure: Install mobile ramps in buildings without elevators; mark tactile paths with polyurethane coatings; adapt the website for students with visual impairments.
- 1.4. Development of methodological materials for teachers and implementation of guidelines for adapting educational materials.

2. Medium-term measures (3-5 years):

- 2.1. Equipping with adaptive technologies: Purchase equipment such as inductive systems for the hearing impaired, Braille displays; implement software for students with dyslexia to manage computers.
- 2.2. Staff training, workshops, and professional development courses.
- 2.3. Development and implementation of scholarship programs for students.

3. Long-term measures (5+ years):

- 3.1. Create an Inclusion Council with the participation of students, staff, and NGOs.
- 3.2. International cooperation within the Erasmus+ Inclusive Campus programs, partnership with the Global Disability Innovation Hub and other international initiatives to exchange experience in promoting inclusivity.
- 3.3. Development of educational technologies: develop AI tutors for personalized learning, implementation of biometric stress monitoring systems for students with mental impairments.

Monitoring and evaluation indicators:

Infrastructure accessibility indicators: share of audited university buildings; share of entrances, classrooms, libraries, laboratories and sanitary facilities meeting accessibility requirements; number of tactile navigation elements installed; number of priority barriers removed each year.

Digital accessibility indicators: percentage of university websites and learning-management-system pages meeting WCAG requirements; share of electronic learning materials available in accessible formats; number of courses with subtitles, audio materials or alternative text formats.

Assistive technology indicators: number of students using assistive devices or specialised software; availability of induction loops, Braille displays, screen readers and speech-to-text tools; average time required to provide requested adaptations.

Institutional support indicators: number of trained teachers and administrative staff; number of students receiving individual support plans; availability of a disability-support coordinator or unit; student satisfaction with accessibility and support services.

Outcome indicators: retention and graduation rates of students with disabilities; participation in academic mobility, research and extracurricular activities; number of complaints related to accessibility; annual progress against the accessibility audit plan.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study demonstrates that the adaptation of Armenian universities for persons with disabilities should be understood not as a set of isolated infrastructural improvements, but as an integrated institutional transformation. The principal scientific finding is that physical accessibility, digital accessibility, assistive technologies, academic support, psychological support, staff training and monitoring mechanisms must be planned as mutually connected elements of one strategic framework. The original contribution of the study is the proposed phased model for transferring selected European practices to the Armenian higher education context, taking into account legal obligations, institutional capacity, financial limitations and implementation risks. The practical implication is that universities should begin with a systematic accessibility audit, define measurable indicators, introduce priority adaptations, and then embed inclusion into governance, budgeting and quality-assurance procedures. For future research, the framework should be tested through institutional surveys, campus observations and comparative evaluation of Armenian universities, which would make it possible to measure the effectiveness of specific accessibility measures and refine national policy for inclusive higher education.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author used ChatGPT (OpenAI) and Grammarly exclusively for language editing, stylistic improvement, and formatting support. All scientific content, literature selection, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this article are solely the responsibility of the author.

REFERENCES

EUni4All-Network. (n.d.). EUni4All-Network project. <https://www.euni4all-network.com/this-project>

11

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. (n.d.). ICTs in education for people with disabilities: Review of innovative practice. <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/ICTs-in-Education-for-people-with-disabilities.pdf>

- European University Association.** (2024). Trends 2024. <https://www.eua.eu/publications/reports/trends-2024.html>
- Melkumyan, Y. G.** (2018). Inclusive education and creating an accessible educational environment. *Herald of Social Sciences*, (1), 137–152.
- National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia.** (2014). On making additions and amendments to the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On General Education” (Draft law). https://www.parliament.am/draftreading_docs5/2/K-037_DR2.pdf
- Regec, V., & Pastierikova, L.** (2016). Impaired visual perception and selected aspects of e-accessibility at universities and colleges. In *International Conference on Political Science, International Relations and Sociology* (pp. 1–9). <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.05.03.1>
- Simonyan, E. S.** (2017). Inclusive education in Armenian higher education institutions. Contemporary problems and prospects for the development of pedagogy and psychology.
- SP 59.13330.2016.** (2016). Accessibility of buildings and structures for people with limited mobility: Updated edition SNiP 35-01-2001. <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/456054199>
- Université de Strasbourg.** (n.d.). Disability support. <https://en.unistra.fr/campus-life/campus-facilities/disability-support>
- Watkins, A., Tokareva, N., & Turner, M.** (2011). ICTs in education for people with disabilities: Review of innovative practice. UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education & European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/ICTs-in-Education-for-people-with-disabilities.pdf>
- World Wide Web Consortium.** (2023). Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2. <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG22/>
- Yue, J.** (2024). Educational strategies for students with hearing impairment: An international perspective and developmental path analysis. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 45, 229–235. <https://drpress.org/ojs/index.php/EHSS/article/view/28503>

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AND PEDAGOGY SECTORAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Tatevik SOGHIKYAN, *Brusov State University*

E-mail: tateviksoghikyan@gmail.com

DOI: 10.24234/miopap.v13i1.135

ABSTRACT

This article undertakes a comparative analysis of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the Republic of Armenia and Pedagogy Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) from the viewpoint of vertical alignment of descriptors as a precondition for valid assessment and qualification award. The aim of this article is to identify the degree of structural and substantive alignment of master's degree NQF descriptors with the narrower statements for the same level in SQF.

The analysis undertaken herein demonstrates that, even though the SQF mainly reflects the requirements of the NQF, there still remain notable gaps, particularly in the domains of research competencies, data analysis, and independent professional practice. The findings may serve as a basis for improving the Pedagogy SQF upon revision.

Keywords: *European Higher Education Area, National Qualifications Framework, Sectoral Qualifications Framework, pedagogy, higher education, research competencies, master's degree, descriptor, mapping exercise*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of a unified European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Bologna Process, 1999; European Commission, 2017), a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) comes afore as a domestic context provider. The NQF in Armenia is no exception and bridges the international document with lower level and more specific Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks.

The hierarchy among these documents implies that the requirements set for various levels at the European level, meant for uniformity and consistency of education substance and quality, shall be inherited by lower-level domestic frameworks. Such cascading shall not omit important components, to ensure full vertical alignment, since any such omission will compromise the logic of a single and unified education space where education qualifications are mutually recognized, thus undermining the philosophy of the Bologna Declaration. (Cedefop, 2018)

A revised Armenian NQF (Republic of Armenia Government, 2011, Republic of Armenia Government, 2016) with closer alignment to the European framework was adopted in 2016. This exercise was followed by the drafting and adoption of a number of SQFs to narrow the gap between a national level tool and individual academic programs, incorporating specific elements, pertinent to

professional practice in various sectors. (European Training Foundation [ETF], 2025). Therefore, *Pedagogy* SQF (Republic of Armenia Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, 2022) is an instrument to regulate and guide the transition from and translation of generic NQF descriptors to academic program level learning outcomes. (Karakhanyan et al., 2017)

The aim of the article is to conduct a comparative analysis of the Level 7 descriptors in the RA NQF and *Pedagogy* SQF, identifying the extent to which master's degree Pedagogy academic programs meet the general requirements commonly shared in the EHEA/EQF and contribute to the validation of awarded qualifications under the NQF-SFQ umbrella.

METHODS

Comparative content analysis, descriptor mapping and gap analysis have been used as methods to determine the degree of alignment between the NQF and Pedagogy SQF descriptors. (Cedefop, 2018)

This study employed qualitative comparative document analysis. The primary units of analysis were the descriptors in NQF and Pedagogy SQF, conducted at three interrelated levels: 1) study duration and number of ECTS at the MA qualification level; 2) descriptor domains, including knowledge, skills, and competences; 3) individual statements, describing learning outcomes, and key terms, naming professional functions and expected levels of performance. The analysis was guided by the principles of equivalence (similarity in the meaning and intended outcomes of the descriptors albeit the use of a different terminology), consistency (the logical correspondence between the general expectations of the RA NQF and pedagogy-specific requirements of the Pedagogy SQF), professional relevance (applicability of each descriptor to pedagogical roles and functions), and measurability (the extent to which the described competence can be demonstrated and assessed through observable performance).

The comparative approach involved the juxtaposition of each NQF descriptor with its corresponding statement in the SQF. The matrices have allowed the identification of key NQF terms, which were used as assessment headings by a four-level scale of Strong – Weak – Expanded - Partial Alignment, with each of the levels of alignment characterized as follows:

1. **Strong alignment** – the descriptors in both frameworks demonstrate a high degree of semantic and functional correspondence. They address the same competency domain and express comparable expectations regarding scope, complexity, responsibility, autonomy and professional performance. Minor differences in the wording do not alter their essential meaning.
2. **Partial alignment** – the descriptors address the same or a closely related competency domain but correspond only in certain elements. They may differ in scope, specificity, complexity, context of application, or expected degree of responsibility and autonomy. One descriptor may include some, but not all, of the essential components expressed in the corresponding descriptor.
3. **Expanded alignment** – the Pedagogy SQF descriptor incorporates the essential meaning and requirements of the corresponding NQF descriptor, but develops them in greater detail for the pedagogy sector. It may add sector-specific knowledge, skills, professional functions, contexts of

application, performance expectations and ethical responsibilities. Expanded alignment therefore represents correspondence accompanied by professional elaboration rather than inconsistency between the frameworks.

4. **Weak alignment** – the descriptors demonstrate only limited, indirect, or general correspondence. They may refer broadly to a similar domain, but their intended outcomes, level of complexity, scope of application, or expectations concerning responsibility and autonomy differ substantially. The relationship is insufficient to establish clear semantic and functional equivalence.

The **scientific novelty** of this study lies in the systematic comparative examination of the NQF and the Pedagogy SQF at the Master's degree level. Unlike studies that consider national and sectoral frameworks separately, this research analyzes their vertical and horizontal alignment within a unified analytical model. The comparison covers the learning outcomes, knowledge, skills, and competences for graduates of Master's degree programs. The original contributions of this study include a set of criteria for the structural and substantive evaluation of both documents; the areas of convergence, partial correspondence, duplication, and inconsistency between the two. The novel contributions also reveal how the NQF descriptors have been translated into measurable competences and learning outcomes for pedagogical qualifications. The article also proposes an evaluation scale and a matrix of comparison, based on the key terms used in NQF and Pedagogy SQF.

The study has several limitations. First, the analysis was confined to Level 7 of the RA NQF and *Pedagogy* SQF; therefore, its findings do not reflect how these frameworks are implemented in educational programs, assessment practices, teacher certification, or professional development. Second, the classification of descriptor pairs per degree of alignment was based on qualitative interpretation and may consequently involve a degree of researcher subjectivity. Future research shall expand the comparative analysis to cover more levels and a wider scope of teacher activity.

The tables below demonstrate the formal structural as well as substantive alignment between the RA NQF and *Pedagogy* SQF at level 7, with *Pedagogy* SQF consistently positioned within the broader architecture of the national qualifications system.

DISCUSSION:

Table 1.

RA National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) – Pedagogy
Level 7 – Master's Degree	Level 7 – Master's Degree
Master's Educational Program	Master's Educational Program
Minimum duration: 1 year (60–120 ECTS)	Minimum duration: 1 year (60–120 ECTS)

RESULT

The tables below represent an attempt at juxtaposing the RA NQF and Pedagogy SQF descriptors in English to reveal the degree of alignment, coherence, and correspondence between the two frameworks.

More specifically, such a comparative presentation aims to identify conceptual similarities and differences per rubric – Knowledge, Skills – Competencies, reveal the degree of terminological consistency, gaps or omissions in descriptor formulation, and the extent to which the SQF operationalizes the generic expectations of the NQF within the field of pedagogy. This exercise may support further initiatives of validating the internal coherence of the SQF, assessing vertical alignment across qualification levels, benchmarking against national and European standards, improving transparency and comparability of qualifications, and supporting curriculum modernization and quality enhancement.

The effort invested in the English translation of the Armenian-language descriptors creates added value as it enables international comparability and facilitates benchmarking against broader European qualifications discourse, particularly within the context of the European Qualifications Framework and the Bologna Process.

Table 2.

	RA NQF	Pedagogy SQF
Knowledge	Highly specialized knowledge, including knowledge of the latest achievements in the field, applied in learning, research, and professional practice.	Discusses advanced achievements, challenges, and paradigms in pedagogy and related disciplines within national and global contexts, including the legal frameworks of contemporary pedagogical activity.
	Knowledge of theories, advanced principles, and methods in the professional and interdisciplinary fields.	Interprets the pedagogical process considering age-related, psychological and pedagogical, and socialization patterns of learners and adults against contemporary socio-cultural developments, as well as methods and technologies for working with this population.
		Presents the mission and philosophy of education, socio-pedagogical issues, and the role of collaborative and creative educational environments while forecasting educational development trends and possible solutions to emerging problems.
		Presents the characteristics of research activity and reporting research findings in the form of articles or reports.

SKILLS

Table 3.

Application of Knowledge	RA NQF	Pedagogy SQF
	Core professional skills required for conducting research and innovation, integrating knowledge from different fields, and generating new knowledge.	Conducts qualitative and quantitative research to diagnose developmental characteristics, educational needs, achievements, and self-development capacities, while improving applied strategies.
	Ability to solve theoretical and practical problems in new and unfamiliar situations.	Solves theoretical and practical problems in pedagogical activity through the creative application of conceptual and methodological principles.
		Applies quality management tools in pedagogical practice.
		Develops projects and research initiatives in general, higher, special, and vocational education institutions, childcare institutions, social service centers, military units, penitentiary institutions, and healthcare settings.
		Analyzes scientific problems in pedagogy and formulates scientific hypotheses based on research findings.
		Applies innovative pedagogical technologies adapted to challenges within the education system.
		Evaluates new entrepreneurial opportunities in education and develops innovative project packages for their implementation.
		Develops corporate, operational, and sectoral pedagogical strategies and projects.

Table 4.

Communication, ICT, and Data Skills	RA NQF	Pedagogy SQF
	Ability to clearly and systematically communicate conclusions, justifications, and research findings to professional and non-professional audiences.	Uses ICT and media tools in pedagogical and interdisciplinary research to solve complex professional problems and disseminate research results to stakeholders.
	Ability to effectively use ICT in solving complex problems and conducting research.	Evaluates the completeness of information required in specific pedagogical situations and proposes measures for its application.
	Skills required for deep analysis and	Uses principles of pedagogical discourse in

on, IC T, and	RA NQF	Pedagogy SQF
	evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data under conditions of incomplete or limited information for decision-making purposes.	teaching and learning processes.

Table 5.

General Cognitive Skills	RA NQF	Pedagogy SQF
	Skills necessary for researching professional problems, generating innovative ideas and approaches, and proposing creative and innovative solutions aimed at expanding knowledge and practice.	Uses at least one foreign language while working with professional materials and studying international educational experience.
		Formulates professional development needs and acquires new competencies through continuing education and diverse strategies.
		Proposes new approaches for solving non-standard pedagogical problems.
		Applies pedagogical process management methods and technologies to ensure continuous improvement of educational outcomes.
		Formulates learning outcomes while ensuring alignment with objectives, assessment, and feedback.

COMPETENCIES

Table 6.

	RA NQF	Pedagogy SQF
(Autonomy and Responsibility)	Independently performs professional activities requiring strategic approaches for managing and transforming complex and unfamiliar situations.	Applies key competencies of research, practical application of knowledge, independent work, collaboration, teamwork management, and lifelong self-education in professional practice.
	Contributes to the development of professional knowledge.	Organizes professional activity based on national and universal human values.

	RA NQF	Pedagogy SQF
	Assumes responsibility for supervising achievement of strategic team objectives.	
	Evaluates continuing education and professional development needs within the context of technological advancement.	
	Contributes to the development of civil society.	
	Operates by integrating Armenian national values and historical-cultural experience with universal human values.	

Though the benchmarking exercise demonstrates that the *Pedagogy SQF* is broadly aligned with the RA NQF and indirectly with the EQF Level 7 descriptors (European Commission, 2017) and operationalizes many of the generic NQF descriptors into pedagogy-specific competencies, a thorough keyword level mapping effort indicates both over-specification and partial omissions.

The table below is the structured result of the mapping and keyword matching exercise to reveal the degree of alignment between the NQF and SFQ terms.

Table 7.

NQF Key Terms	Corresponding SQF Terms	Alignment Assessment
Highly specialized knowledge	Advanced achievements, paradigms, legal framework	Strong alignment
Interdisciplinary knowledge	Related disciplines, socio-cultural context	Strong alignment
Research	Qualitative and quantitative research, scientific hypotheses	Strong alignment
Innovation	Innovative pedagogical technologies, entrepreneurial opportunities	Strong alignment
Problem-solving	Solving theoretical and practical pedagogical problems	Strong alignment
ICT skills	ICT and media tools	Strong alignment

NQF Key Terms	Corresponding SQF Terms	Alignment Assessment
Data analysis	Evaluation of information completeness	Partial alignment
Quantitative and qualitative data evaluation	Qualitative and quantitative research	Partial alignment
Communication	Pedagogical discourse	Partial alignment
Lifelong learning	Continuing education, self-education	Strong alignment
Creativity	New approaches, innovative solutions	Strong alignment
Strategic management	Corporate and sectoral strategies	Expanded alignment
Teamwork	Collaboration and teamwork management	Strong alignment
Civil society	National and universal values	Partial alignment
Democratic competence	Not explicitly articulated	Weak alignment
Autonomy	Independent work	Strong alignment
Decision-making under uncertainty	<i>*Not clearly operationalized</i>	Weak alignment

The above-presented tables indicate that the SQF effectively contextualizes descriptors within pedagogical practice and strongly operationalizes the following NQF dimensions:

- Research competences,
- Pedagogical innovation,
- Professional problem-solving,
- ICT integration,
- Lifelong learning, and
- Interdisciplinary application of knowledge.

However, along with the strongly aligned areas (10), there are four areas of partial alignment, 2 areas of weak alignment and 1 area of expanded alignment. These areas may require further attention and stronger alignment, should a revision of the *Pedagogy* SQF be undertaken.

The six partially or weakly aligned areas may be grouped under the *Data Literacy*, *Communication Competence* and *Democratic and Civic Competence* subheadings.

As for *Data Literacy*, the NQF explicitly requires deep analysis and evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data under incomplete information conditions. Even though the SQF does reference research

and evaluation of information completeness, it does not sufficiently operationalize the following aspects that are detailed in the NQF:

- advanced analytical competence,
- evidence-based decision-making,
- data interpretation under uncertainty.

Partial alignment in case of *Communication Competence* is due to the mismatch of the NQF's emphasis on both professional and non-professional audiences and the SQF's narrow interpretation of communication, largely confined to pedagogical discourse and instructional communication which means that broader public and interdisciplinary communication dimensions are underdeveloped.

As for *Democratic and Civic Competence*, the NQF explicitly includes contribution to civil society and integration of national and universal values, whereas the SQF makes a general reference to national and universal values, however lacking any explicit descriptors concerning civic agency and democratic participation or inclusive educational governance or human-rights based pedagogy.

As mentioned above, the SQF contains some over-specifications which extend beyond the generic NQF framework, making reference to the following aspects:

- corporate strategy development,
- entrepreneurial project packaging,
- sectoral strategic planning.

While these types of activity may enrich individual professional practice, they may be detrimental to the effective and targeted operationalization of the SQF overloading it, reducing descriptor clarity and complicating curriculum implementation and assessment down the line.

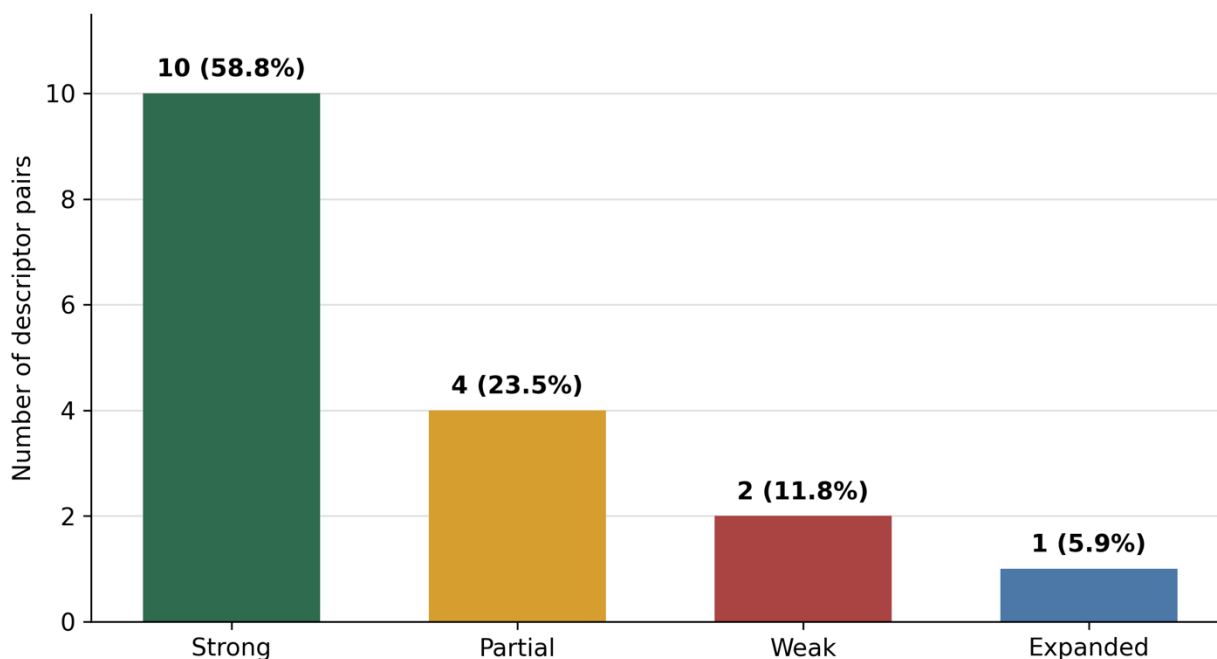
Thus, the quantitative analysis of the 17 competency-descriptor comparisons demonstrates a generally high level of correspondence between the NQF and the SQF. Strong alignment was identified in 10 cases (58.8%), representing the majority of the descriptors examined. Partial alignment was found in 4 cases (23.5%), indicating that the frameworks address similar competency domains but differ in their scope, specificity, or operationalization. Two descriptors (11.8%) exhibited weak alignment: democratic competence was not explicitly articulated in the SQF, while decision making under uncertainty was not clearly operationalized. Expanded alignment occurred in one case (5.9%) where the SQF elaborated strategic management through more specific references to corporate and sectoral strategies.

Overall, 88.2% of the comparisons demonstrated at least partial correspondence when strong, partial, and expanded alignment categories were combined. These findings indicate substantial coherence

between the frameworks, albeit with identifiable gaps concerning civic-democratic competence, decision-making under uncertainty, data analysis, communication, and civil-society-related outcomes.

Figure 1.

Distribution of NQF-SQF Descriptor Alignment



Note. N = 17 competency-descriptor comparisons.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the empirical findings indicate that strong alignment is the predominant relationship between the two frameworks. Nevertheless, the distribution of the alignment categories also demonstrates that correspondence is not uniform across all competency domains.

Based on the foregoing analysis, it may be concluded that from an NQF validation perspective, the *Pedagogy* SQF demonstrates substantial vertical alignment, conceptual consistency with Level 7 expectations, and strong professional contextualization.

However, future revisions of the *Pedagogy* SQF should address the validation gaps remaining in democratic competencies, data literacy, communication breadth, and strategic decision-making under uncertainty. Such a revision should focus on strengthening transversal competencies, harmonizing terminology, improving descriptor measurability, aligning data-analysis competencies with NQF expectations, explicitly integrating democratic and civic competencies.

The mapping exercise above hints at the potential benefits of such a revision which would enhance framework coherence, improve curriculum alignment, strengthen quality assurance and international comparability of pedagogical qualifications as the primary goal of the Bologna process.

REFERENCES

- Bologna Process.** (1999). The Bologna declaration of 19 June 1999: Joint declaration of the European ministers of education. European Higher Education Area.
- Cedefop.** (2018). Analysis and overview of NQF level descriptors in European countries. Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Commission.** (2017). European qualifications framework for lifelong learning. Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Training Foundation.** (2025). National qualifications framework – Armenia. ETF.
- Karakhanyan, S., Militosyan, L., Topchyan, R., Soghikyan, K., Baykov, A., Ayvazyan, M., Khachatryan, R., Gyulazyan, V., & Mazmanyanyan, A.** (2017). A guideline for aligning academic programmes to the Armenian national qualifications framework. ALIGN Project.
- Republic of Armenia Government.** (2011, March 31). N 332-N decree on approving the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Armenia . Yerevan, Armenia.
- Republic of Armenia Government.** (2016, July 7). N 714-N decree on making amendments to the Republic of Armenia Government Decision N 332-N of March 31, 2011 . Yerevan, Armenia.
- Republic of Armenia Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports.** (2022, April 28). Order No. 783-A/2 on approving the descriptors of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for “Pedagogy” . Yerevan, Armenia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

AI tools have been used to format the document and transliterate the Armenian language sources.

SECTION 2.

PSYCHOLOGY



Psychology

SPECIFICS OF SELF-REGULATION IN LIFE DOMAINS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF POSITIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY

Marine AYVAZYAN, *Armenian State Pedagogical University named after Khachatur Abovyan*
Department of Applied Psychology, Lecturer, PhD student

E-mail: marka.ayvazyan@gmail.com

ORCID:ID 0009-0005-4733-6374

DOI: 10.24234/miopap.v13i1.136

ABSTRACT

In modern society, the majority of psychological issues are linked to an imbalance among various life domains. In this context, positive psychotherapy offers a new approach—the "Balance Model"—as an effective means to regulate an individual's internal and external resources. The main objective of the study is to identify the impact of the nature of professional and educational activities (dynamic/uncertain, normative/controlled, and stable/regulated environments) on the distribution of psychological resources and the characteristics of self-regulation in individuals.

To achieve the defined goal, the following tasks were set: 1) to identify the levels of resource distribution across different professional groups according to the four domains of the balance model, 2) to determine the "vulnerable" (deficit) or imbalanced domains for each group, as well as the primary resources that compensate for them, 3) to analyze the interrelationship between the structural characteristics of psychological resources and environmental demands, 4) to test the Wiesbaden Inventory (WIPPF 2.0) in a work and organizational context as an innovative tool for revealing the resource balance of professional groups. The manifestations of resource distribution in various professional and educational environments were studied using testing methods (WIPPF 2.0) and psychological interviews. The results showed that life domains are more balanced among employees of the importing company, which can be explained by the stable, predictable nature of their professional environment and the active use of communicative-adaptive resources. Meanwhile, among working students, a sharp concentration of resources is observed in the domains of work, achievement, and the future, driven by the high dynamics, workload, and objective deficit of time resources in their educational and work environments. In the group of teachers, a concentration of resources is recorded around external, normative-role demands, accompanied by a noticeable depletion of semantic and emotional resources.

Keywords: *balance model, positive psychotherapy, regulation of life domains, psychological resilience, occupational stress, energy distribution.*

INTRODUCTION

The continuous progress of globalization requires individuals to possess a high level of psychological adaptability, which becomes not merely a skill, but a necessity. Only in the presence of effective self-regulation mechanisms can a person withstand the constantly changing world, filled with a continuous flow of information. Each new generation of psychological approaches strives to resolve the psychological problems characteristic of a given period, regardless of whether they have internal or external origins.

In this context, the growing complexity of modern professional environments further emphasizes the need for structural models that can explain how individuals maintain balance under pressure. Rapid changes, high demands, and increasing uncertainty often lead to an uneven distribution of psychological resources, as a result of which certain domains of life are overvalued, while others are neglected. This creates a necessity for integrative frameworks that not only describe these imbalances, but also offer practical ways for their restoration.

One such approach is the Balance Model of positive psychotherapy, developed by Nossrat Peseschkian. Positive psychotherapy utilizes the Balance Model to divide an individual's life into four separate yet interconnected domains. Each domain, possessing its own regulatory mechanisms, provides a unique perception of the entire system. In its application, it is not limited to the scope of being merely a tool for self-knowledge or therapeutic intervention, but serves as a theoretical basis for analyzing how individuals distribute their vital energy among different domains of life under various environmental conditions. It enables the identification of both adaptive patterns and potential imbalances, especially in contexts characterized either by stability or high uncertainty.

The Balance Model is not solely a tool for self-knowledge or internal reharmonization; it is also an approach for understanding and managing short-term to long-term goals and behaviors, as well as for the effective utilization of internal resources to achieve high productivity without harming other domains of life.

Although Nossrat Peseschkian's Balance Model is widely recognized in clinical and counseling psychology, its empirical application as an integrative framework for self-regulation across contrasting organizational environments remains underexplored. Existing empirical literature predominantly examines life-domain allocation within general population samples or static clinical settings, neglecting how domain priorities dynamically shift under specific occupational demands. Consequently, a critical scientific gap persists regarding how the structural constraints, operational intensity, and environmental pressures of different professional contexts moderate domain-specific self-regulatory behaviors and energy distribution.

Addressing this gap is crucial because professional environments act as primary moderators of individual coping and resource allocation. By comparing distinct organizational settings, this study diverges from previous research that treats life balance as a static or context-free trait. Instead, it conceptualizes domain balance as an active, context-dependent self-regulatory process. In line with

contextualized assessment paradigms in organizational psychology (e.g., Bing et al., 2004; Shaffer & Postlethwaite, 2012), this study introduces a contextualized measurement framework tailored specifically to evaluate domain-based self-regulation in workplace environments.

The primary scientific contribution of this work is threefold:

1. **Theoretical Integration:** Expanding Peseschkian's Balance Model from a clinical diagnostic framework into a dynamic model of organizational self-regulation.
2. **Empirical Evidence:** Demonstrating how occupational demands and structural environments directly shape life-domain prioritization and energy allocation.
3. **Methodological Advancement:** Developing and contextualizing the *Life Balance Questionnaire* to measure domain-specific self-regulatory capacity within professional cohorts.

INTRODUCTION

The Balance Model of Positive Psychotherapy was first introduced as a structural framework for understanding how individuals regulate their energy across four main domains of life (Peseschkian, 1977). These four domains - Body / Health, Performance / Achievements, Contacts / Relationships and Future / Meaning / Fantasy, function as regulatory mechanisms for mental and physical health.

Based on further research (Peseschkian, 1988; Remmers, 2020), a constant deficit in one area leads to a compensatory reaction in others, which becomes more prominent in environments with high stress levels.

In Positive Psychotherapy, symptoms are not viewed as pathology, but as a signal that indicates a violation of the balance between the main areas of life; therefore, a healthy mental state is determined by the integrated and balanced co-functioning of those areas.

According to Peseschkian (2000), the total human energy reserve - assuming it is 100%, is distributed among four areas of life; the ideal share of each domain for harmonious development and mental health should be approximately 25%.

N. Peseschkian (1998) distinguishes four main spheres of life activity, which are considered universal and independent units from culture.

1. **Body / Health.** This area includes behavioral patterns related to physical health, sensations related to the body, rest, nutrition, sleep, and somatic self-care. According to Peseschkian, neglect or overvaluation of this area can be expressed both in psychosomatic symptoms and increased vulnerability to stress. The physical area serves as a foundation for psychological resources, consequently, any violation in this area will directly affects others.
2. **Performance / Achievement.** At its core, this area includes professional activities, education, goal-setting, social roles, and achievement-oriented behavior. Peseschkian emphasizes that in modern societies, this area often becomes dominant, which can disrupt the overall balance of life. The dominance of this area is often accompanied by emotional burnout, weakened relationships, and various health problems.

3. **Contacts / Relationships.** This area refers to interpersonal relationships that include family, friendships, social support, and communication. According to Peseschkian's approach, this area performs an important function of emotional regulation, contributing to the reduction of stress and the formation of a sense of psychological security. Disruption of this area leads to social isolation, tension in communication, and a decrease in self-esteem.
4. **Fantasy / Meaning / Future.** The fourth area includes processes related to the meaning of life, values, beliefs, creative imagination, and plans for the future. Peseschkian gives special importance to this area, considering it as a source of psychological resilience and person's ontological stability. The absence of meaning can disrupt the functioning of all other spheres, even in the presence of favorable external conditions (Peseschkian, 1977, 2000).

The theoretical development of these models has deep roots within the broad context of psychological theories, which can be conditionally grouped around three main axes:

1. **Holistic, Existential, and Salutogenetic Foundations.** Alfred Adler (1933) was among the first to emphasize the interconnectedness of various life domains by highlighting the "three life tasks" (work, friendship, and love). According to the Adlerian approach, neglecting any of these domains impairs an individual's social interest and internal equilibrium. Expanding on the existential dimension, Viktor Frankl (1946) demonstrated that the search for meaning and the realization of values serve as a regulatory force, ensuring psychological stability even under crisis conditions. This perspective aligns with Aaron Antonovsky's (1987) salutogenetic model, in which the "sense of coherence" implies an individual's capacity to coordinate demands and resources arising from different life spheres. Peseschkian's model integrates this holistic tradition by viewing the "Meaning/Future" and "Contacts" domains as pillars of existential stability.
2. **Cognitive-Behavioral and Stress-Coping Mechanisms** An individual's resource mobilization and self-regulation are highly mediated by cognitive processes. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as an imbalance between environmental demands and the individual's available resources, indicating that psychological pressure arises when adaptive capacities are exceeded in a specific life domain. This cognitive appraisal is further deepened in Aaron Beck's (1976) framework, according to which dysfunctional schemas and automatic thoughts regarding work, relationships, or the future disrupt overall functional balance. Concurrently, Albert Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory explains how belief in one's capabilities influences effective energy allocation and resilience across various life domains. Peseschkian's Balance Model provides a spatial-contextual framework for these cognitive-behavioral mechanisms, demonstrating precisely in which domain dysfunctional beliefs cause energy "leaks." An individual's resource mobilization and self-regulation are highly mediated by cognitive processes. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as an imbalance between environmental demands and the individual's available resources, indicating that psychological pressure arises when adaptive capacities are exceeded in a specific life domain. This cognitive appraisal is further deepened in

Aaron Beck's (1976) framework, according to which dysfunctional schemas and automatic thoughts regarding work, relationships, or the future disrupt overall functional balance. Concurrently, Albert Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory explains how belief in one's capabilities influences effective energy allocation and resilience across various life domains. Peseschkian's Balance Model provides a spatial-contextual framework for these cognitive-behavioral mechanisms, demonstrating precisely in which domain dysfunctional beliefs cause energy "leaks."

- 3. Resource Conservation and Motivational Dynamics.** From a resource management perspective, Stevan Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory asserts that chronic stress and exhaustion result from a "loss spiral" when an individual fails to replenish vital and social resources. This is complemented by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that well-being requires the satisfaction of basic psychological needs across all life domains. When professional or personal spheres fail to foster autonomy and competence, overall intrinsic motivation diminishes.

Thus, although the theoretical approaches of Adler, Frankl, Antonovsky, Bandura, Lazarus, Beck, Hobfoll, and Deci & Ryan illuminate distinct aspects of self-regulation and resource allocation, they often function in isolation. Nossrat Peseschkian's Balance Model serves as an integrative theoretical and practical framework that synthesizes these holistic, cognitive-behavioral, and motivational principles, providing a measurable and comprehensive picture of individual self-regulation across diverse organizational and professional contexts.

RESEARCH SAMPLE AND METHODS

The empirical basis of the study comprised three distinct groups representing varied professional environments and levels of contextual stability: school teachers (semi-static and regulated environment), manufacturing company employees (stable and regulated environment), and working psychology students (dynamic, dual-role environment). Each group included 130 participants, yielding a total sample size of $N = 390$. Participant ages ranged from 25 to 35 years in the first two cohorts and from 20 to 35 years in the student cohort. Because the primary objective of the study was to examine self-regulation characteristics across different professional and role environments, active engagement in the respective role (a minimum of one year of work or academic experience) served as the primary inclusion criterion, rather than strict age constraints.

The study was conducted in strict compliance with ethical standards: participation was voluntary, and data collection strictly observed the principles of anonymity and confidentiality. Data collection was carried out using two complementary assessment tools based on the theoretical framework of Positive Psychotherapy (PPT):

- 1. Wiesbaden Inventory for Positive Psychotherapy and Family Therapy (WIPPF 2.0):** The Wiesbaden Inventory (Peseschkian & Deidenbach, 1988) was applied as the primary

standardized instrument to assess basic individual psychological capacities and the allocation of resources. It measures the structural distribution of energy across four primary life domains: Body/Health, Achievement/Work, Contact/Relationships, and Future/Meaning/Fantasy. "Based on this research objective, **only the Personal Capacities (Differential Analysis) module** of N. Peseschkian's Wiesbaden Inventory for Positive Psychotherapy (WIPPF) was administered and analyzed to assess primary (emotional-relational) and secondary (socio-normative) capacities. The remaining two blocks of the inventory (clinical-symptomatic and family-relational) were excluded from the analysis, as their variables fall outside the scope of the present study's subject matter and research hypotheses

2. **Life Balance Questionnaire (LBQ):** Developed specifically for this study alongside the WIPPF, the LBQ was designed to measure current self-regulation characteristics in occupational and academic settings. The questionnaire comprises 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree") (Likert, 1932), equally distributed across four domains (5 items per domain).

The combined application of this assessment battery enables the identification of the degree to which individuals rely on their internal resources across various operational and social situations. Furthermore, it highlights the characteristics of self-regulation and adaptive development shaped under the influence of professional environments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparative Analysis of Life Balance Indicators Across Research Groups (N=390). The distribution data for the life balance domains across the studied professional cohorts ("Teachers", "Manufacturing Employees", "Working Students") are presented in **Table 1**.

1.Body / Health: Data obtained in the "Body / Health" domain evidence a pronounced variance across the research cohorts. The highest score in the "Body / Health" domain belongs to teachers (23%). This may indicate a heightened subjective awareness of the need for somatic recovery following high cognitive and emotional loads in the educational environment, although this value remains below the normative balanced threshold (25%). For manufacturing company employees, the index is slightly lower (20%), implying that physical resources are predominantly depleted during real-time work dynamics, leaving less energy for self-care and recovery practices. Conversely, the lowest score was observed among working students (14%), which may be attributed to "role strain" resulting from the simultaneous execution of academic and professional responsibilities.

Table 1. Life balance indicators across professional cohorts (%)

Group Means of Life Balance Indicators Across Research Groups (%)

Life Balance Indicators	Teachers (M, %)	Manufacturing Employees (M, %)	Working Students (M, %)
-------------------------	-----------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------

Life Balance Indicators	Teachers (M, %)	Manufacturing Employees (M, %)	Working Students (M, %)
Body / Health	22% – 24%	18% – 22%	12% – 16%
Performance / Achievement	38% – 42%	28% – 32%	45% – 49%
Contacts / Relationships	24% – 26%	32% – 36%	18% – 22%
Future / Meaning / Fantasy	10% – 14%	14% – 18%	17% – 21%

2. Performance / Achievement: In this domain, the highest score was observed among working students (46%), which may indicate the deployment of hyper-compensatory coping strategies driven by dual-role pressure (studies + work) and a high need for self-affirmation. The score among teachers is also notably high (40%), which can be attributed to constant accountability, high responsibility, and the continuous nature of lesson preparation inherent in the school system. Meanwhile, manufacturing company employees exhibited a more balanced index (30%), suggesting that clear regulation and demarcation of work responsibilities prevent an over-concentration of energy within the "Achievement" domain.

3. Contacts / Relationships: Data obtained in the "Contacts / Relationships" domain reflect the influence of the professional environment on interpersonal communication and the maintenance of social ties. The highest score in this domain was observed among manufacturing company employees (34%), which may indicate the team-oriented nature of work processes and the significant role of social interaction as a primary mechanism for resource recovery and coping with workplace stress. Among teachers, the index stands at a moderate, stable level (25%), which can be attributed to the high intensity of daily professional interactions that, being largely functional in nature, prevent an over-expansion of the emotional sphere. Conversely, the lowest score was recorded among working students (22%), implying that an intensive academic and work schedule restricts the time available for meaningful interpersonal and family relationships.

4. Future / Meaning / Fantasy: Data obtained in the "Future / Meaning / Fantasy" domain evidence differences in reflexive capacities and prospective planning across the research cohorts. The highest score in this domain was recorded among working students (19%), which may be attributed to their psychological specialization, a high level of introspection, and the prioritization of mental energy toward future mapping and the search for meaning during this developmental stage. Among manufacturing company employees, the index stands within a moderate range (16%), suggesting that a stable work environment allows for future planning without requiring constant existential re-evaluations. Conversely, the lowest score was observed among teachers (12%), which may reflect a constraint on psychological resources for creative imagination, future re-planning, and the search for new meanings, resulting from occupational monotony and high workload pressures.

The analysis reveals that each professional group demonstrates unique "critical points" of resource redistribution (energy disproportions). To uncover the psychological mechanisms and personal factors underlying these disproportions at the micro-level, the next phase of the research examined the expression of 19 personal capacities across the observed professional cohorts. The obtained group mean values are presented in **Table 2**.

The research results are presented as group mean values (M) for each scale. A comparison of the **WIPPF 2.0** data demonstrates that the three professional groups differ not only in the levels of individual capacities, but also in their prevailing combinations. Here, the primary emphasis is placed on the self-regulation characteristics specific to each group, their roles, and the probable mechanisms stemming from them. According to the standardized norms of the **WIPPF 2.0**, indicators are evaluated on a 3-12 point scale: 3–5 points indicating low expression/underdevelopment, 6-9 points indicating medium/balanced expression, and 10-12 points indicating high expression/overexpression.

Table 2. Expression of the 19 Personal Capacities Across Professional Environments According to WIPPF 2.0

Group Means (M) for 19 Capacity Scales Across Professional Environments

Capacity Block	No.	WIPPF 2.0 Personal Capacity	Working Students (n ₁ =130, M)	Teachers (n ₂ =130, M)	Importing Company Staff (n ₃ =130, M)
Secondary Capacities	1	Orderliness	5.8	7.5	8.0
	2	Cleanliness	6.1	8.0	7.4
	3	Punctuality	6.8	8.2	6.2
	4	Politeness	6.4	8.3	7.9
	5	Honesty / Openness	6.3	7.2	7.8
	6	Achievement	10.4	9.5	6.8
	7	Seriousness / Reliability	7.1	8.8	7.5
	8	Thrift	5.1	6.4	6.1
	9	Obedience	6.5	8.6	5.5
	10	Justice	6.5	6.9	7.2
	11	Faithfulness	5.6	8.1	7.3
Primary Capacities	12	Patience	4.8	8.1	6.0
	13	Time	3.8	5.6	6.8

Capacity Block	No.	WIPPF 2.0 Personal Capacity	Working Students ($n_1=130$, M)	Teachers ($n_2=130$, M)	Importing Company Staff ($n_3=130$, M)
	14	Contact	4.5	7.0	8.5
	15	Trust	5.4	6.5	7.2
	16	Hope	10.1	4.9	6.5
	17	Tenderness / Sexuality	5.2	6.1	7.0
	18	Love / Acceptance	5.9	7.4	8.3
	19	Faith / Meaning	8.9	4.3	5.5

1. Comparative analysis of highly expressed indicators reveals essential differences in the primary, mobilizing anchors of self-regulation across the groups. In the group of working students ($n_1 = 130$), Achievement ($M = 10.4$), Hope ($M = 10.1$), and Faith/Meaning ($M = 8.9$) predominate, which may indicate that their self-regulation is carried out at the expense of high future-oriented expectations and a focus on accomplishments. In contrast, primary self-regulation in the group of teachers ($n_2 = 130$) carries an over-socialized, normative nature; here, Achievement ($M = 9.5$), Seriousness/Reliability ($M = 8.8$), Obedience ($M = 8.6$), Politeness ($M = 8.3$), and Punctuality ($M = 8.2$) are high, which may suggest that their self-regulation relies entirely on the demands of the professional role and external discipline. Meanwhile, in the group of employees of the importing company ($n_3 = 130$), high indicators—Contact ($M = 8.5$), Love/Acceptance ($M = 8.3$), Discipline ($M = 8.0$), and Politeness ($M = 7.9$)—testify to communicative-adaptive self-regulation; this may mean that in a corporate environment, team interaction and emotional support serve as the primary stress-coping mechanisms.
2. Comparative analysis of low (deficit) indicators shows where the vulnerable areas of each group's self-regulation system are located. Sharp low values of Time ($M = 3.8$), Contact ($M = 4.5$), and Patience ($M = 4.8$) were recorded among working students, which may indicate that their self-regulation suffers from resource imbalance; combining study and work creates an objective deficit of time, depriving them of "time-contact" anchors for emotional recovery. In the group of teachers, on the contrary, the deficit carries an existential-semantic nature; low levels of Faith/Meaning ($M = 4.3$) and Hope ($M = 4.9$) constitute the most vulnerable feature of their self-regulation, which may suggest that long-term pedagogical activity has led to a semantic crisis and a loss of positive expectations for the future. Notably, sharply low (deficit) indicators were not recorded at all in the group of employees of the importing company, while Obedience ($M = 5.5$) and Faith/Meaning ($M = 5.5$) lie in the neutral-medium range, which may testify to high flexibility in their self-regulation system and low dependence on authoritarian instructions.

3. Comparative analysis of medium (range 6–9) indicators highlights the differences in balance and resource distribution among the groups. Among working students, behavioral norms fall within the 6–9 range: Discipline ($M = 5.8$), Orderliness ($M = 6.1$), Punctuality ($M = 6.8$), Politeness ($M = 6.4$), Honesty ($M = 6.3$), Seriousness ($M = 7.1$), Obedience ($M = 6.5$), and Justice ($M = 6.5$), which may mean that they maintain a sufficient level of social behavior, but these medium indicators do not serve as primary stress-compensating resources. In the group of teachers, secondary capacities lie within the 6–9 range: Orderliness ($M = 8.0$), Honesty ($M = 7.2$), Justice ($M = 6.9$), Loyalty ($M = 8.1$), Patience ($M = 8.1$), Contact ($M = 7.0$), Trust ($M = 6.5$), Tenderness ($M = 6.1$), and Love ($M = 7.4$), which may indicate that despite the semantic crisis, they preserve professional ethics and emotional acceptance toward learners. Unlike the first two groups, the absolute majority of indicators among the employees of the importing company fall within the 6–9 range (Discipline 8.0, Orderliness 7.4, Punctuality 6.2, Politeness 7.9, Honesty 7.8, Achievement 6.8, Seriousness 7.5, Frugality 6.1, Justice 7.2, Loyalty 7.3, Patience 6.0, Time 6.8, Trust 7.2, Hope 6.5, Tenderness 7.0), which constitutes the key feature of self-regulation in this group; this may suggest that corporate employees possess the most balanced self-regulation system, do not overstrain in separate domains, and lack deep deficits, thereby ensuring their high psychological adaptability.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that the nature of the professional environment has a significant impact on the distribution of psychological resources across various life domains. The obtained results align with the core tenets of the Positive Psychotherapy Balance Model, according to which an imbalance among life domains serves as a crucial factor in the emergence of psychological tension and dysfunctional states. The hyper-concentration of resources in the "Work / Achievements" domain recorded among working students, alongside the resource deficit in the "Body / Health" and "Contacts / Relationships" domains, indicates an "overstrained-motivational" adaptive strategy forming under conditions of chronic overload. This "flight into work and study" phenomenon and high future-oriented focus serve as cognitive-behavioral compensatory mechanisms to endow current difficulties with meaning; however, in the long-term perspective, they create a high risk of emotional exhaustion (C. Maslach's model).

In contrast, the balanced resource distribution observed among the employees of the importing company indicates that a stable and predictable professional environment fosters the harmonious preservation of physical, social, and semantic resources. Notably, the identity of the total volume of resources across the groups reaffirms a pivotal principle of the Balance Model: the issue lies not in the quantity of resources, but in their structural redistribution.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that dynamic and uncertain work environments tend to concentrate resources within specific domains-often at the expense of others-whereas stable environments allow for

the maintenance of a more harmonious distribution across life domains. These results provide an important foundation for future research and the development of applied programs aimed at promoting psychological well-being in professional environments.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. **Sample Size:** The study was conducted on sample sizes of limited scale ($n_1 = n_2 = n_3 = 130$; total $N = 390$), which may to some extent restrict the generalizability of the obtained results to other professional groups or regions.
2. **Study Design:** The study employs a cross-sectional design, which allows for recording the characteristics of resource distribution and self-regulation at a single point in time, but does not permit the identification of direct causal dynamics over time.
3. **Control of Additional Variables:** Demographic and personal factors—such as work tenure, marital status, or socioeconomic status—were not fully controlled for in the study, though they may also exert a mediated influence on the distribution of an individual's psychological resources.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- **Shift of Energy in Life Balance:** According to N. Peseschkian's approach, the fundamental prerequisite for mental health and life satisfaction is the equal distribution of energy across the four domains of life. The study revealed significant deviations from this balance. A sharp resource imbalance toward the "Work / Achievement" domain was recorded among working students, exceeding the normative level almost twofold, which is accompanied by a pronounced deficit in the "Body / Health" and "Contacts / Relationships" domains.
- **The Role of the Environment in the Distribution of Psychological Resources:** The nature of the professional and educational environment was found to exert a significant impact on an individual's resource distribution. An overstrained, dynamic educational and work environment (working students) leads to the concentration of energy along the "Work–Future" axis. In contrast, a stable and predictable environment (importing company) fosters the balanced preservation of energy in the "Body / Health" and "Contacts / Relationships" domains.
- **The Future Factor as a Psychological Anchor:** Among working students, the high indicator in the "Future / Fantasy" domain serves as an adaptive, compensatory mechanism. The present overload and time deficit are consciously accepted as a necessary professional foundation and educational experience, enabling individuals to maintain psychological stability in anticipation of future success.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent professional burnout and somatic issues based on these empirical findings, the following interventions are recommended:

1. **University and Corporate Support Programs:** Develop workshops on effective time management, as well as sleep and nutritional hygiene, tailored for working students to help restore the "Body / Health" domain.
2. **Activation of Emotional and Interpersonal Resources:** Organize stress management and emotional intelligence (EQ) development trainings to enhance communication quality and foster psychological support within the "Contacts / Relationships" domain.
3. **Transparency of Career and Educational Pathways:** Considering the strong motivational role of the "Future / Fantasy" domain, provide a clear vision for career and professional growth, which will justify the high current investments made by students and promote a sustainable life balance.

REFERENCES

- Adler, A. (1933).* The meaning of life. Verlag Passer.
- Antonovsky, A. (1987).* *Unraveling the mystery of health.* Jossey-Bass.
- Bandura, A. (1997).* *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.* Freeman.
- Beck, A. T. (1976).* *Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders.* International Universities Press.
- Bing, M. N., Whanger, G. S., Davison, H. K., & Van Hook, J. B. (2004).* Incremental validity of the frame-of-reference effect in personality assessment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(1), 150–159. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.1.150>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000).* The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
- Frankl, V. E. (1946).* Man's search for meaning. Verlag für Jugend und Volk.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989).* Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44(3), 513–524. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513>
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984).* *Stress, appraisal, and coping.* Springer.
- Likert, R. (1932).* A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*, 22(140), 1–55.
- Peseschkian, N. (1977).* Positive psychotherapy: Theory and practice of a new method. Fischer.

- Peseschkian, N.** (1988). *Positive psychosomatics: Clinical manual of positive psychotherapy*. Springer-Verlag.
- Peseschkian, N.** (1998). *Positive psychotherapy: Theory and practice*. Springer.
- Peseschkian, N.** (2000). *Positive psychotherapy: Theory and practice of a new method*. Springer-Verlag.
- Peseschkian, N., & Deidenbach, H.** (1988). *Wiesbadener Inventar zur Positiven Psychotherapie und Familientherapie (WIPPF)*. Springer-Verlag.
- Remmers, A.** (2020). Theoretical foundations and core concepts of positive psychotherapy. In E. Messias, H. Peseschkian, & C. Cagande (Eds.), *Positive psychiatry, psychotherapy and psychology: Clinical applications* (pp. 43–58). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-33264-8_4
- Shaffer, J. A., & Postlethwaite, B. E.** (2012). The validity of contextualized personality inventories for predicting job performance: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 20(4), 445–464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsa.12009>

The reference list was compiled with the assistance of AI

FAMILY VIOLENCE AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR IN CHILDREN

Svetlana MARUTYAN, *Department of Preschool Pedagogy and Methodology, Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University*

E-mail: Marutyana47@list.ru

Knarik ASMARYAN, *Department of Preschool Pedagogy and Methodology, Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University*

E-mail: asmaryanqnarik@gmail.com

DOI: 10.24234/miopap.v13i1.137

ABSTRACT

Violence has become widespread in various spheres of human life and is considered one of the most important problems of the modern era. When discussing violence, we are dealing with specific actions directed toward achieving a particular objective - namely, causing harm to another person. The suffering inflicted as a result of such actions may constitute both a motive and an intended outcome.

Approximately 90% of violent crimes are committed primarily in conflict-ridden families, within the context of personal, domestic, and social relationships. Family violence differs from other forms of violence in that it occurs between family members who are connected by kinship or close personal relationships. The group of women studied had been subjected to various forms of domestic violence.

Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that women and children constitute approximately 70% of victims of violence. They suffer severe physical and psychological trauma, which, in turn, contributes to increased mortality among children, older adults, and persons with disabilities. Family violence cannot be regarded solely as an intra-family problem; this phenomenon must also be addressed and discussed at the state level. Discussion at this level contributes to the effective resolution of the problem. Therefore, the roles of public organizations, the mass media, and the state should be coordinated in addressing this issue. Society must not turn a blind eye to this persistent phenomenon, and individuals subjected to violence should be encouraged to speak out and oppose it.

As a consequence of family violence, preschool-aged children may display aggressive behaviour. In order to prevent such behaviour, appropriate pedagogical approaches should be implemented in cooperation with parents.

Keywords: *conflict, aggression, aggressive behaviour, family violence, physical violence, preschool age.*

INTRODUCTION

Violence has become widespread in various spheres of human activity and is regarded as one of the most significant problems of the modern era. The question of what determines human aggressiveness - biological or social factors - continues to be debated in the scientific literature.

On the one hand, aggression is viewed as a genuine innate instinct. It is considered primary, directed toward the preservation of the species, characteristic of all living beings, and capable of manifesting itself suddenly. On the other hand, aggression may be understood as a conscious form of human behaviour aimed at causing physical or psychological harm to another person. From this perspective, aggressive behaviour is not regarded as an innate phenomenon; rather, it develops under the influence of the environment and is considered a consequence of a distorted socialization process.

The instinctive nature of aggression confirms that it is characteristic of all living beings. However, when discussing violence, it is necessary to understand it as a manifestation of aggression in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the term “violence” should be used only in relation to extreme forms of aggression manifested through deliberate and purposeful behavioural actions. Thus, aggression, by its very nature, represents an expression of violence that emerges through the initiatives and actions of the individual (Berkowitz, 2001).

When examining violence within a social context, it is necessary to consider the role of the social and domestic environment, since a significant proportion of violent crimes are committed at the household and community levels. Approximately 90% of violent crimes are committed primarily in conflict-ridden families, on the basis of personal, domestic, and social relationships.

The family, as the oldest social institution, is regarded as the foundation of society. It is within the family that the first stages of an individual’s socialization take place. Like any social organism, the family develops and transforms together with society, responds to social demands, and at the same time expresses its own distinctive attitude toward social norms and customs. It also provides economic, social, and physical protection for its members. Today, in the context of family violence, particular attention must be paid to the cruel and concealed realities of intra-family life (Jaffe, 2000).

The increase and criminalization of violence in society are directly connected with family relationships. Family violence differs from other forms of violence in that violent acts are committed between family members who are connected by blood or close personal relationships; in other words, such acts occur within the family environment. As a result, children develop negative behavioural patterns (Potapova, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to examine aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of preschool-aged children and to apply appropriate methods for overcoming them. Children who grow up in families where violence occurs often display aggressive behaviour. Therefore, we emphasized the importance of the family environment and, in cooperation with parents, attempted to correct children’s aggressive behavioural manifestations.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE STUDY

A group of women who had experienced various forms of family violence was selected for the study. The research focused on the following forms of violence:

1. violence against children;
2. violence against one of the spouses;
3. economic violence;
4. emotional and psychological violence (Shvedova, 2000).

Crimes committed on the basis of family violence generally arise within personal, domestic, and social relationships. According to statistical data, women and children constitute approximately 70% of victims of family violence. They suffer severe physical and psychological injuries, which contributes to an increase in mortality among children, older adults, and persons with disabilities.

A group of the women surveyed 65% believed that the intrusion of family violence into family life destroys the family's existence. Another group agreed that it leads to improper family upbringing 58%. Furthermore, 90% of respondents stated that violence within the family leads to child neglect and encourages children to consume alcohol and drugs, while also contributing to their involvement in criminal environments.

Thus, the criminalization of the family takes place, giving rise to a specific way of life in which violence, alcoholism, and drug addiction become normalized patterns of behaviour. These patterns may subsequently be transmitted from one generation to the next.

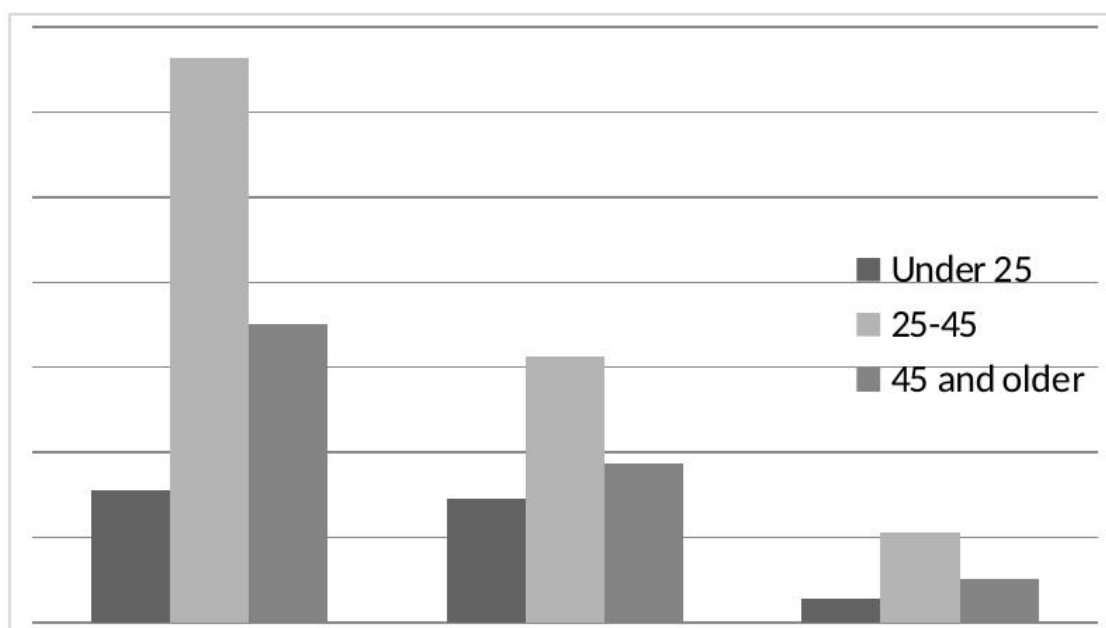
Based on the survey results, psychological violence was reported in 58.5% of cases within Armenian families, while physical violence accounted for 32.2% and sexual violence for 9.3%.

Distribution of Forms of Violence by Age Group

Table 1. Distribution of Forms of Violence by Age Group (%)

Age group	Psychological	Physical	Sexual
Under 25	7.8	7.3	1.4
25–45	33.2	15.6	5.3
45 and older	17.5	9.3	2.6
Total	58.5	32.2	9.3

Figure 1.



The studies described above are not an end in themselves. It is well known that parents influence the development of their children's behaviour, character, views, and convictions primarily through their own example and authority. Our observations revealed that children growing up in families where violence occurs tend to display aggressive behaviour.

A considerable number of theoretical studies have been devoted to aggressive behaviour, including the works of K. Lorenz, A. Bandura, R. Baron, D. Richardson, I. A. Furmanov, R. S. Nemov, V. Zinchenko, I. Zagradova, A. K. Asinsky, N. D. Levintov, R. S. Homans, V. Klein, and E. Fromm.

Studies show that aggressive behaviour formed during the preschool period may remain a stable personal characteristic and persist throughout a person's later life if preventive measures are not taken. According to research, childhood aggression is socially conditioned behaviour. It may emerge when a child's physiological needs, sense of security, need for love and affection, respect, self-expression, and trust in the world remain unmet.

A child's lack of trust in other people and in the world largely depends on the quality of maternal care directed toward the child. Childhood aggression is expressed through behaviour that causes harm, insult, or pain to others. It may arise and intensify as a result of strong negative experiences, frustration, opposition to the child's wishes, or the inability to fulfil those wishes (Kornienko, 2017).

Preschool-aged children are highly sensitive to various factors. Their first fears, first sympathies, first social interactions, family circumstances, and the first aggressive actions directed toward them by other people leave a deep imprint on their developing psyche and character.

The family, family relationships, and the style of family upbringing are important factors in the emergence of aggressive manifestations in a child's behaviour. Families in which members are emotionally alienated from one another, conflicts and acts of violence occur, parents show little interest

in the child's life, neglect the child, behave harshly, or use physical punishment contribute to the development of aggressive behaviour.

The causes of aggressive behavioural manifestations may include biological factors, socio-psychological factors, and individual personality characteristics.

In order to prevent aggressive behaviour among preschool-aged children, we conducted an experimental study based on the following objectives:

1. To examine aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of older preschool-aged children.

2. To test game-based exercises, corrective methods, and clay therapy aimed at overcoming aggressive behaviour in preschool-aged children.

3. To summarize the results.

The study involved 20 children aged five to six. First, we identified the levels of aggressive manifestations in their behaviour by observing them during various activities and joint interactions. We then attempted to determine their family circumstances through conversations and questionnaires administered to their parents.

The study was conducted at Yerevan Municipal Non-Commercial Organization "Nursery-Kindergarten No. 8" from October 2024 to March 2025. Twenty children from the senior group of the kindergarten participated in the study - 12 boys and 8 girls - as well as four parents. The parents were informed in advance about the nature of the work, were introduced to the purpose of the study, and were invited to cooperate with us.

During the study, we used systematic observation and psychological interviews. The choice of these methods was determined by the fact that the study of aggressive behavioural manifestations involves certain difficulties related to the potentially dangerous nature of such behaviour. Naturally, methods that could cause harm to the children or to one another could not be used. Therefore, we selected relatively gentle and safe research methods.

OBJECTIVES OF SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION

1. To obtain information about aggressive manifestations in the children's behaviour for preliminary psychological analysis.

2. To determine the degree to which older preschool-aged children are inclined to display aggressive behaviour.

During the systematic observation, we used an observation sheet consisting of 18 items designed to record aggressive behavioural manifestations (Lavrentieva, Titarenko, 1992).

The results of the systematic observation showed that the number of aggressive manifestations observed in the children's behaviour varied considerably, ranging from 1 to 14.

Based on the number of aggressive behavioural manifestations, the children were conditionally divided into three levels:

1. Low level: Aggressive manifestations were minimal or almost absent; 1–4 manifestations were recorded out of 18.

2. Medium level: Aggressive manifestations were noticeable; 5–9 manifestations were recorded out of 18.

3. High level: Aggressive manifestations occurred frequently; 10–14 manifestations were recorded out of 18.

The results of the systematic observation showed the following:

- 16 children demonstrated a low level of aggressive manifestations;
- 2 children demonstrated a medium level;
- 2 children demonstrated a high level.

The results are presented in the form of a diagram.

Figure 2.

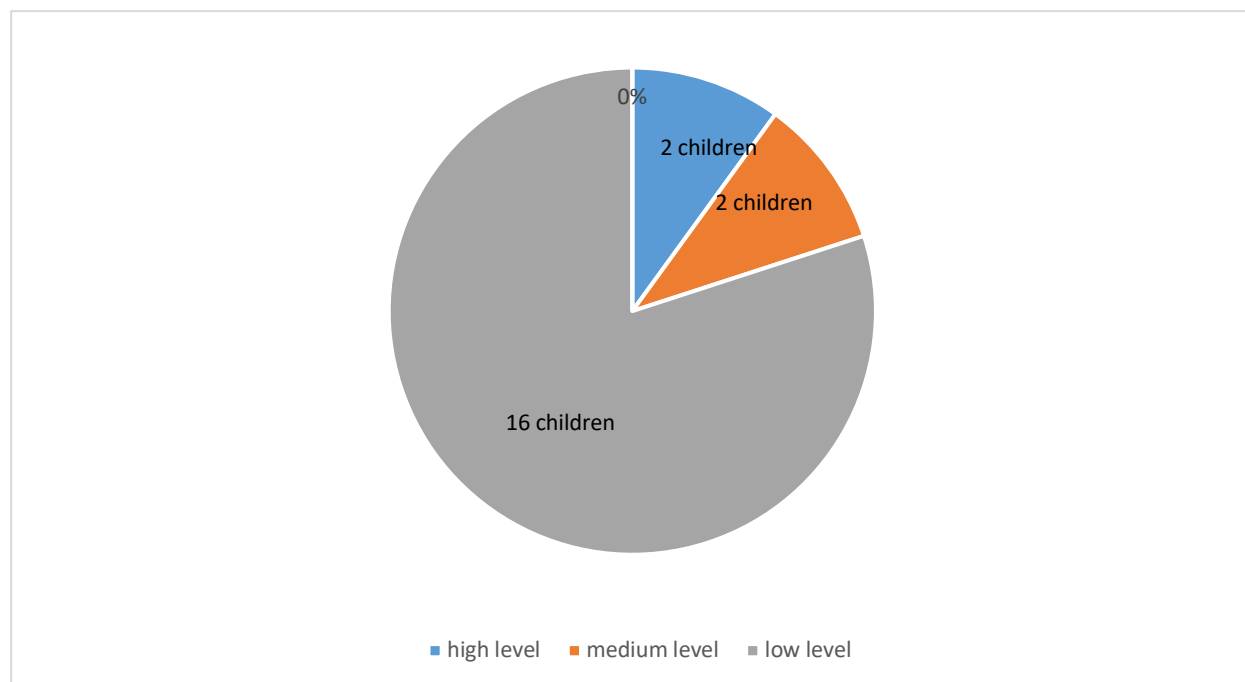


Table 2. Episodes Recording Aggressive Behavioural Manifestations (Main Stage)

N	Child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Results
1	A.D.	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	14
2	M.A.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	14
3	R.K.	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	9
4	M.V.	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	6

Note: "+" indicates the manifestation is present; "-" indicates it is absent.

The table clearly shows that the behaviour of these four children included various manifestations that differed both in nature and frequency, as well as several common manifestations characteristic of all four children. These common manifestations were as follows:

- 1. The child frequently became intensely angry.**
- 2. The child constantly needed the teacher's assistance and supervision.**
- 3. The child often responded to friendly treatment with suspicion or hostility.**
- 4. The child hid or destroyed objects belonging to others.**

The results of the study were regularly discussed with the group teacher and were also presented to the parents.

Analysis of the diagnostic results allows us to conclude that aggressive manifestations were most active and pronounced in the behaviour of four children from the senior preschool group. Subsequent corrective work was therefore conducted with these children.

Corrective Work

At this stage, the aim of our work was to reduce the children's negative emotions and teach them socially acceptable ways of expressing themselves and their emotions. Through the use of games, we set ourselves the following objectives:

- to develop the child's ability to recognize and accept their own emotions, including anger and hostility;
- to teach children to regulate and control their emotional states;
- to contribute to the development of positive emotions;
- to develop the ability to transform destructive aggressive manifestations into constructive forms of behaviour.

Based on the recorded results, we focused our attention on the four older preschool-aged children who had demonstrated medium and high levels of aggressive behavioural manifestations. After analysing the aggressive manifestations present in their behaviour, we selected and developed special games corresponding to their individual needs. These games were subsequently used in the corrective activities organized with the children.

During the corrective work, we attempted to follow the following principles:

- treating the children with attention and patience;
- allowing children to express their aggressive behavioural manifestations while directing them toward objects that do not pose a threat to others;

- demonstrating effective behaviour through personal example, including ensuring that adults do not display aggressive behaviour toward other people in the presence of children;
- creating a positive atmosphere in which children could feel that they were loved, valued, and accepted as they were.

It should be noted that the other children in the group also participated voluntarily in the games we organized. At times, we deliberately involved them, especially in games that required the participation of a larger number of children. The group teacher also participated in the games, including “The School of Friendship and Kindness,” “The Trash Bin,” “The Magic Chair,” “The Wave,” and “Drops.”

The children demonstrated interest and positive emotions while participating in these games. The parents were regularly informed about the progress of the games and the children’s impressions.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the main stage of the intervention and to verify the proposed hypothesis, systematic observation and a questionnaire survey among the parents were conducted during the final stage. The questionnaire was based on the method developed by G. P. Lavrentieva and T. M. Titarenko. These activities were carried out in March 2025.

During the systematic observation, we again used the observation chart consisting of 18 episodes for recording aggressive behavioural manifestations. We observed the behaviour of the four children who had previously demonstrated medium and high levels of aggression throughout the entire period of their stay at the kindergarten.

When recording aggressive behavioural manifestations, we considered both their presence and their frequency.

Table 3. Episodes Recording Aggressive Behavioural Manifestations (Final Stage)

N	Child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Results
1	M.A.	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	9
2	A.D.	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	8
3	R.K.	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	5
4	M.V.	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	2

Note: "+" indicates the manifestation is present; "-" indicates it is absent.

The analysis of the results obtained during the final stage shows that changes occurred in the behaviour of all four children. These changes are presented in the form of a histogram.

Figure 3.

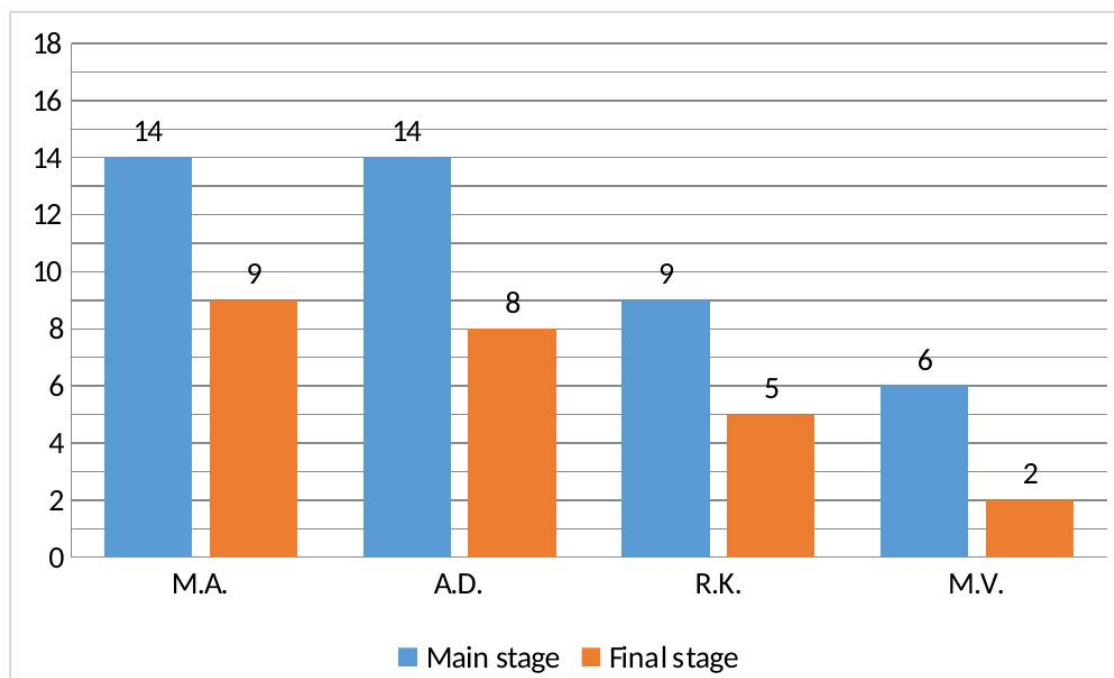


Table 4. Comparison of Levels of Aggressive Manifestations in Children's Behaviour

Child	Result at the main (recording) stage	Result at the final (control) stage
A.D.	High level	Medium level
M.A.	High level	Medium level
M.V.	Medium level	Low level
R.K.	Medium level	Medium level (shift from the upper to the lower boundary)

It is noteworthy that by this stage, the following two common manifestations had almost disappeared from the behaviour of all four children:

- 1. The child frequently became intensely angry.**
- 2. The child hid or destroyed objects belonging to others.**

The effectiveness of the work carried out during the main stage is also confirmed by the results of the questionnaire administered to the parents at this stage. These results almost coincided with the results of the systematic observation.

The results of the questionnaire were as follows:

A.D. – 10 points: medium level;

M.A. – 8 points: medium level;

M.V. – 7 points: medium level;

R.K. – 5 points: low level.

As a result of the study, the children began to demonstrate calmer and more balanced behaviour within their families. They also began to speak more frequently with family members about their feelings, particularly when they were angry. They were able to describe their emotions verbally and explain how they felt in different situations.

This indicates that during the corrective programme, the nature of the aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of the older preschool-aged children changed, and positive changes were observed in their emotional development. The children acquired certain abilities to express their feelings and emotions in socially acceptable ways, as well as the ability to share and talk about their experiences. During joint games, the children became more tolerant toward one another.

Thus, national traditions, patterns of thinking, and established practices often lead people to regard the resolution of violence-related issues as a private matter belonging to each family. Many people believe that every family should resolve its problems independently. However, addressing this issue requires a state-level approach.

Particular importance should be attached to the legal dimension of the family, in which people are connected through a system of legal, marital, and familial obligations. From a sociological perspective, importance is placed on the stable unity and shared life of family members. They are connected through marital, familial, and personal relationships, share common interests, and care for one another.

Considering family violence in a social and legal context requires a continuous search for new solutions. Family violence may be defined as an intentional violent act committed by one person against another member of the family. Such an act violates the person's constitutional rights and freedoms as an individual and citizen, causes physical and psychological pain, and harms their health.

Armenian families possess distinctive characteristics and are traditionally known for their strength and longevity. At the same time, Armenian women, as custodians of the family home, should not forget their rights and responsibilities.

Socio-economic factors also play an important role and may have a destructive influence on family stability. These factors include unemployment, migration, and other difficult social circumstances. Therefore, the state should address these challenges at the legal and organizational levels.

The role of public organizations should also be strengthened. Specialists working in the field of family welfare can provide assistance to families facing such difficulties. Particular attention should be paid to children who have experienced cruel treatment and whose human dignity has been undermined.

In all known cases, such treatment contributes to indifference toward children, the absence of adequate family upbringing, and an increase in social orphanhood. It may also lead to numerous physical and psychological consequences for children and slow down their development.

Children subjected to violence face considerable difficulties in the process of socialization. They may also become transmitters of cruelty themselves. Later, when they establish their own families, they may encounter similar difficulties.

According to statistical data, 80% of children recognize and understand the harmful nature of violence. Cruel treatment contributes to increasing social tension in contemporary society and intensifies the instability of criminalized environments.

Therefore, this complex problem requires a comprehensive solution. Every person must understand that this destructive phenomenon can enter even a family that appears to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, society must not turn a blind eye to this social evil.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of psychological and pedagogical literature, together with the analysis of the results of the experimental work conducted by us, allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1. The problem of family violence should not be regarded solely as an intra-family issue. It must also be addressed and discussed at the state level, which would contribute to the effective resolution of the problem.
2. Having summarized the characteristics of the concept of “aggression” found in the professional literature, as well as the definitions and explanations provided by various approaches and theories, we can define aggression as an oppressive or violent action motivated consciously or unconsciously. Such an action contradicts the norms and rules governing human life and interpersonal relationships in society and is aimed at causing harm to another person, either physically or psychologically, including through negative emotional experiences, fear, tension, or suppression.
3. Among the causes of aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of older preschool-aged children, we identify not only family violence but also the children’s lack of knowledge of socially acceptable ways of self-expression and emotional expression.
4. Games specifically designed for this purpose may serve as a means of teaching children socially acceptable forms of self-expression and emotional expression.
5. Through the use of specially developed games, it is possible to prevent and reduce aggressive manifestations in the behaviour of older preschool-aged children.

REFERENCES

- Akhmetzyanova, A. I., & Artemieva, T. V. (2022). Specific features of behaviour regulation and correction of aggressiveness in preschool children through play activities. Bulletin of Practical Psychology of Education, 19(2), 78–87.*

- Berkowitz, L.** (2001). *Aggression: Causes, consequences, and control*. St. Petersburg. p.12.
- Chernova, O. V., & Vasilenko, V. E.** (2023). Play-based technologies for the prevention and correction of verbal and physical aggression in older preschool children. *Pedagogy and Psychology of Education*, (3), 102–111.
- Jaffe, P.** (2000). Children in families with a history of violence. In *Investigation, accountability to victims, and police case-management rules in cases of violence against women: Russian, American, and international experience*. American Bar Association, Rule of Law Initiative for Central and Eastern European Countries. p. 22.
- Kornienko, A.** (2017). *Childhood aggression*. Rama Publishing. p. 16.
- Lavrentieva G. P. and Titarenko T. M.,** (1992). *Practical Psychology for Teachers*. Kiev, N. 2.
- Lukovtseva, Z.** (2000). Sexual violence: Myths, facts, and the current state of the problem. In *Violence and social change* (Part 1). Moscow.
- Potapova, E.** (2000). Stockholm syndrome: Women and the men who beat them. In *Violence and social change: Theory, practice, and research* (Issues 2–3). Moscow, p. 46.
- Rean, A. A.** (1996). Aggression and personal aggressiveness. *Psychological Journal*, (5), 3–18.
- Semenyuk, L. M., & Gavrilova, E. V.** (2020). Play therapy as a means of correcting aggressive behaviour in older preschool-aged children. *Preschool Education*, (4), 45–52.
- Sharapov, R. D.** (2001). *Physical violence in criminal law*. St. Petersburg.
- Shvedova, N.** (2000). Violence against women in the family. In *Violence and social change*. Moscow, p. 31.

ETHICAL AND PRACTICAL CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL WORKERS' ACTIVITY IN PENITENTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Nelli MELKONYAN, *Lecturer at the chair of Sociology and Social Work at ASPU, Researcher at the "Chess" Scientific Research Institute*

E-mail: nelly.melkonian@yahoo.com, melqonyanneli37@aspu.am

Meri ADAMYAN, *Master's Student at the chair of Sociology and Social Work at ASPU*

E-mail: meri.adamyan29@gmail.com

DOI: [10.24234/miopap.v13i1.138](https://doi.org/10.24234/miopap.v13i1.138)

ABSTRACT

Penitentiary reforms increasingly prioritize convict resocialization, positioning social workers as pivotal agents in this process. However, practicing within closed institutions continuously forces a clash between professional values and punitive logic.

This article discusses the key ethical and practical challenges affecting social work quality and specialists' psychosocial well-being in Armenian penitentiaries. Utilizing a qualitative methodology, the study analyzed domestic and international legislation, internal institutional regulations, and ethical guidelines, supplemented by fieldwork involving direct observations and in-depth interviews. Through observation, the internal environment of penitentiary institutions and the specific dynamics of communication between social workers and convicts were examined. The in-depth interviews brought to light the internal ethical contradictions of social workers and their subjective perceptions of practical difficulties.

The findings indicate that social work in penitentiary institutions still operates within the collision zone between "custodial" and "rehabilitative" functions, which diminishes the effectiveness of psychosocial support. Practical challenges, specifically the limitation of professional autonomy, environmental resistance, and the absence of external supervision, contribute to emotional burnout and hinder the professional self-realization of social workers. The article proposes practical mechanisms aimed at implementing external supervisory frameworks and expanding professional autonomy.

Keywords: *Penitentiary institution, resocialization, professional ethics, ethical dilemma, professional autonomy, role conflict, emotional burnout, external supervision.*

INTRODUCTION

The core of contemporary penal policy in constitutional states is shifting from retributive justice to a rehabilitative model. This transition redefines the philosophy of punishment execution and highlights the pivotal role of social workers within correctional facilities. However, introducing social work into

carceral spaces creates structural and ethical contradictions, forcing specialists to operate within an inherent clash between professional values and punitive logic.

The relevance of this study stems from the perpetual conflict between professional ethics and institutional mandates. While social work is rooted in individual self-determination, absolute confidentiality, and humanism, the penitentiary system prioritizes public safety, security, and strict execution of sentences. This divergence forces social workers into a dual role, balancing therapeutic goals with public service mandates. Consequently, inmates frequently identify the social worker with the prison administration and the punitive apparatus, which inherently undermines the formation of a trust-based relationship.

Although recent strategic reforms in the Republic of Armenia aim to align the penitentiary system with international standards, the institutionalization of social work remains in a complex transitional phase. A significant gap persists between legislative declarations and practical implementation. While sector-specific regulations recognize professional autonomy, internal prison protocols often relegate social workers to auxiliary administrative roles. As a result, specialists are compelled to perform bureaucratic or custodial functions that contradict international social work principles and disrupt client rapport.

Grounded in these systemic tensions, this study identifies the ethical dilemmas and practical obstacles encountered by social workers in Armenian penitentiaries, subsequently proposing operational mechanisms to balance professional ethics with institutional requirements.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The transition of contemporary penitentiary systems from a punitive model to a rehabilitative paradigm has radically reshaped the role of the social worker, transforming them from a mere custodian into an agent of change. International experience indicates that in countries where the resocialization approach prevails, social services possess an expansive and institutionalized role. For instance, penal policy in Germany is anchored in the constitutional principle of resocialization, where the number of social workers exceeds that of other specialists, and they actively coordinate individual treatment plans for convicts as well as family-oriented interventions (Kuzmin, 2017). Similarly, the operation of the system in Scandinavian countries and Switzerland is grounded in the "principle of normality," which aims to bring prison conditions as close as possible to life in the outside community, thereby ensuring that released individuals do not recidivate (Kuznetsov, 2003). Within this framework, a robust systemic link exists between social work and probation services, as observed in the United Kingdom, where specialists are intrinsically involved in risk assessments and inter-agency cooperation (Healey, 1999). Consequently, the overarching global trend emphasizes the reinforcement of the institutional role of social work as a critical tool for recidivism prevention and public safety.

In this context, according to Albert Roberts, a social worker within the criminal justice system acts as a "clinical manager" whose task is to balance therapeutic assistance with supervision (Brownell &

Roberts, 2002). This necessitates the integration of several complementary roles, wherein the specialist simultaneously functions as a mediator maintaining the connection between the convict and the outside world, a counselor supporting psychosocial adaptation, an advocate for human rights, and an officer responsible for pre-release preparation. All these functions converge within case management—the "backbone" of social work—which ensures the holistic nature and continuity of the interventions implemented with the individual (Healey, 1999). Furthermore, this efficacy is heavily contingent upon the collaboration of a multidisciplinary team characterized by a clear delineation of professional boundaries. While the psychologist directs their clinical and therapeutic toolkit toward transforming the individual's inner world and resolving intrapersonal conflicts, the social worker concentrates on reshaping the social environment and mobilizing external resources.

The execution of these multifaceted functions within penitentiary institutions is a legally guaranteed process backed by the state. International baseline frameworks, such as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (The Nelson Mandela Rules, 2015) and the European Prison Rules (2006), mandate that social workers must be included in institutional staff to focus on restoring social ties, while the Bangkok Rules (2010) emphasize gender sensitivity in the psychosocial rehabilitation of female convicts. In the Republic of Armenia (RA), the legal framework of this sphere is anchored in the Penal Code adopted in 2022 and the RA Law "On Social Assistance" (2014). However, a conceptual disconnect emerges here: while international standards view social work as a "right" of the convict aimed at mitigating the harmful effects of isolation, Armenian legislation perceives it more as a "means of punishment execution" and an obligation of the administration. This discrepancy generates a certain legal vacuum regarding the principles of professional ethics and the guarantee of the social worker's legal and professional autonomy.

As a consequence of these legal inconsistencies, social work practice within penitentiary institutions continuously faces resistance when measured against the ethical principles established by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW). First and foremost, the principle of respecting human dignity requires a person-centered approach in an environment where the individual is frequently perceived merely as a "criminal." Concurrently, promoting the beneficiary's right to self-determination is severely restricted within a system based on coercion and strict hierarchy, where participation in rehabilitative programs is often a mandatory prerequisite for early release. This gives rise to the dilemma of the "dual client," wherein the specialist experiences a conflict of loyalty between the state that remunerates them and the convict. Another ethical tension manifests at the intersection of maintaining confidentiality and satisfying public safety mandates. Additionally, specialists face the constant risk of boundary violations, as they can either become susceptible to manipulation by convicts or over-identify with the system, thereby devolving into a "punitive" link. These dilemmas extend to peer relationships as well; when witnessing ethical violations or unlawful treatment of beneficiaries by other staff members, the social worker is forced to

choose between peer solidarity and their primary obligation to protect the beneficiary's rights (IFSW, 2018).

These ethical complexities are further compounded by structural and practical barriers, specifically resource scarcity, a lack of developmental programs, and a severe disproportion between the number of social workers and inmates. The current statistical reality of the penitentiary system in the Republic of Armenia serves as the critical baseline upon which the fundamental issues of social work practice are anchored. Currently, the responsibility for the resocialization of approximately 1,441 remanded individuals and 1,539 sentenced convicts held in the 9 operating penitentiary institutions of the RA is assigned to the departments of social, psychological, and legal work; however, the total number of social workers across all 9 institutions is a mere 10. Specifically, the "Vardashen" and "Abovyan" penitentiary institutions employ only one social worker each (Penitentiary Service Statistics, 2026). From the standpoint of professional efficacy, it is alarming that the average workload of a single social worker frequently exceeds 70 to 100 beneficiaries, whereas an optimal ratio of 1/50 (one specialist per 50 inmates) is accepted in international practice (European Prison Rules, 2006). This actual local reality in Armenian penitentiaries renders in-depth case management physically impossible.

In this situation, social workers are forced to navigate between two opposing poles: professional ethics (freedom, confidentiality) and institutional control (discipline, security). This perpetual role conflict spawn's profound ethical dilemmas and practical obstacles that not only diminish the successful organization of the resocialization process but also inevitably lead to emotional and professional burnout among specialists. Consequently, the synthesis of theoretical, legal, and statistical analyses leads to the conclusion that the incompatibility of punitive and rehabilitative paradigms, the ambiguity of professional mandates, and institutional resistance diminish the potential of the social worker as an agent of positive change, ultimately reducing them to a mere servant of the system.

METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of this study is to identify and analyze the ethical and practical challenges encountered by social workers within the "Abovyan" and "Vardashen" penitentiary institutions in the Republic of Armenia, subsequently proposing operational pathways for their resolution. To achieve this objective, the study addresses several interconnected research tasks:

- examining the legal and operational contradictions between the professional code of ethics and internal penitentiary regulations;
- exploring the practical difficulties stemming from resource constraints and the unique features of the carceral environment;
- assessing the dynamics of interprofessional collaboration alongside the perceptions of the social worker's role held by both the administration and inmates;
- and investigating the impact of the physical and psychological environment on specialist-inmate communication.

To capture the subjective depth of social workers' lived experiences and ethical tribulations within closed institutions, this study employs a qualitative research methodology. Empirical data were gathered utilizing two primary methods:

Table 1.

Research Methods	
in-depth interviews	The in-depth interviews were designed with open-ended, exploratory questions to extract nuanced individual narratives, perceptions, and systemic barriers from social workers and allied professionals, including psychologists, lawyers, and security personnel.
structured observation.	the structured observation focused on the professional workspace and the conditions of interaction with beneficiaries. This method allowed for the direct documentation of behavioral models, communication barriers, and latent ethical tensions emerging from the friction between professional mandates and institutional protocols.

Sampling and Research Sites. Purposive sampling was utilized to select two distinctly different research sites to leverage comparative advantages based on inmate demographics:

- The "*Abovyan*" *penitentiary* is the sole institution in Armenia housing female inmates, thereby allowing an exploration of social work complexities within highly specific layers of vulnerability; ethically, the dilemmas here predominantly manifest as psychological-emotional, such as managing confidentiality amid complex family dynamics.
- The "*Vardashen*" *penitentiary* detains former public officials, military personnel, and foreign nationals—a cohort requiring advanced professional boundaries and specialized skills; consequently, the ethical challenges here are structurally and legally driven, centered on maintaining professional distance with formerly high-ranking individuals.

Sample Composition and Framework. The interview sample comprised 3 social workers and 8 allied specialists (including psychologists, lawyers, security officers, and deputy heads of institutions) from the respective Social, Psychological, and Legal Work Departments. *The inclusion criterion required a minimum of one year of professional experience in the penitentiary sector.* This sample size aligns with the epistemological standards of qualitative inquiry, which prioritizes rich, contextualized depth over statistical generalization across the broader penal system.

Concurrently, the observational sampling was situational and spatial, focusing on carceral zones with the highest probability of ethical and practical friction. A total of 6 comprehensive observation sessions were conducted during direct social worker-inmate interactions, providing an empirical triangulation of the narrative data. The observation mapping targeted social situations across three dimensions:

- locations (social workers' offices, common activity halls, checkpoints, and corridors),
- actors (social workers, allied staff, and inmates),
- and actions (communication styles, group interactions, and interprofessional dynamics).

Data Analysis. To analyze the qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews and structured observation field notes, this study employed reflexive Thematic Analysis, following the six-phase framework established by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019). This iterative analytic process involved:

Data familiarization: Repeated reading of the transcribed verbatim interview audio recordings and observation protocols to immerse in the contextual depth;

Initial code generation: Systematic line-by-line open coding of the transcripts to identify meaningful units, ethical dilemmas, and practical constraints;

Searching for themes: Collapsing and grouping initial codes into broader potential themes aligning with the study's core research tasks (e.g., administrative vs. ethical friction, boundary maintenance, environmental communication barriers);

Reviewing themes: Refining and checking themes against the entire dataset to ensure semantic and latent consistency, as well as empirical alignment with observational findings;

Defining and naming themes: Conceptualizing the core essence and specific nuances of each theme;

Producing the report: Integrating contextual narrative quotes from respondents with observational triangulation to construct a coherent, evidence-based qualitative synthesis.

Audio data were fully transcribed, and cross-methodological triangulation (comparing interview accounts with situational observation field notes) was utilized to enhance the analytical trustworthiness, credibility, and rigor of the qualitative findings.

RESULTS

To identify the ethical and practical challenges of social work in Armenian penitentiaries, empirical data gathered through structured observations and in-depth interviews across the "Abovyan" and "Vardashen" facilities were synthesized around four primary thematic axes:

1. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Empirical findings reveal a sharp contrast in professional self-perception and service delivery based on the specialists' foundational educational background.

- Academic Preparation vs. Clerical Drift: At "Vardashen" penitentiary, social workers with formal social work degrees successfully maintained professional boundaries and therapeutic registers. Conversely, at "Abovyan" penitentiary, where social work functions were performed by staff lacking foundational professional education (having completed only short-term training), interactions with convicts remained transactional, bureaucratic, and strictly administrative.

- Role Perception by Beneficiaries: Observations at "Abovyan" indicated that convicts failed to differentiate the specific role of the social worker from other administrative staff. As an institutional

lawyer at "Abovyan" noted: "They [the convicts] do not differentiate the role boundaries of the social worker."

Thus, foundational professional education acts as the primary determinant of professional identity in carceral settings. Without it, social work practice in Armenian penitentiaries experiences a systemic regression into administrative paperwork and transactional service delivery.

2. PRACTITIONER-BENEFICIARY COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS AND ETHICS

Observational and interview data demonstrated distinct operational atmospheres in practitioner-beneficiary interactions across the two institutions:

- "Vardashen" Penitentiary (Former Officials/Foreigners): Structured observations during group and individual sessions revealed an environment of psychological safety and high trust. Social workers utilized an empathetic, calm register, prioritizing inmate self-expression and structured self-reflection. Security officers displayed non-interfering, respectful behavior during sessions. As inmates at "Vardashen" expressed: "The social worker is one of the few specialists we trust unconditionally." "Individual counseling helps me the most. When I feel I can no longer endure the oppressive conditions of prison, the social worker comes to my aid."

- Managing Confidentiality and Bias: Experienced specialists reported navigating confidentiality limits through upfront transparency and "informed consent" during initial intakes. Regarding non-discrimination, practitioners noted overcoming initial personal biases through experience. As one social worker reflected: "When I was first employed, I had to struggle against my own biases because I found it difficult to provide professional support to individuals who had committed certain types of crimes. Today, I consider myself much more skilled and professional in this regard."

Consequently, psychological safety and beneficiary trust are not contingent on physical conditions alone, but are established through procedural transparency (informed consent) and empathetic communication, effectively neutralizing the inherent coercive pressure of the carceral environment.

3. INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION AND PERCEPTIONS

Data gathered from allied specialists (psychologists, lawyers, security staff, and administration) highlighted divergent interprofessional perceptions:

- The Psychologist's Perspective: At "Abovyan", the psychologist reported a total lack of autonomy in the social worker's practice, describing compliant behavior under administrative direction: "The social worker does not voice an independent opinion; they agree with and submit to the head of the department and the institutional leadership without demonstrating the initiative to make independent decisions." Conversely, at "Vardashen", close multidisciplinary collaboration was observed, where the psychologist actively utilized the social worker's observations to compile inmate psychosocial profiles.

- The Lawyer's Perspective: Across both facilities, legal personnel consistently reduced the social worker's mandate to technical-social administration (e.g., passport processing, pensions, divorce proceedings, employment documents).

- Security and Management Perspectives: Security staff across both sites reported constructive, non-adversarial working relations. The Deputy Head of "Vardashen" acknowledged the social worker as a key actor in resocialization, emphasizing the urgent need to expand staff numbers and lower specialist-to-inmate ratios.

Thus, interprofessional dynamic is asymmetric: while security staff demonstrate high operational acceptance, legal personnel exhibit institutional reductionism, posing a major practical barrier to the recognition of social work as a transformative rehabilitative discipline.

4. STRUCTURAL OVERLOAD AND SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINTS

Statistical and narrative data confirm severe operational bottlenecks:

- Workload Ratios: Currently, only 10 social workers are employed across Armenia's 9 operating penitentiary institutions to serve approximately 2,980 inmates (~1,441 remanded and 1,539 sentenced). At "Vardashen" and "Abovyan", only one social worker is assigned per institution, resulting in caseloads of 70 to 100+ beneficiaries per specialist.

- Administrative Burden: Social workers across both institutions emphasized that heavy bureaucratic paperwork restricts their time for substantive rehabilitative work. As a social worker at "Vardashen" stated: "The institution itself encourages the organization of events, but the heavy workload does not always allow us to fully realize these initiatives."

Thus, extreme practitioner-to-beneficiary disproportions convert social work from a proactive, therapeutic case management model into a reactive, crisis-response mechanism.

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this study offer critical insights into the operational reality of penal social work in Armenia, demonstrating how structural constraints, legal vacuums, and educational gaps intersect to influence professional ethics and practice.

1. CONCEPTUALIZING "BUREAUCRATIC DRIFT" IN TRANSITIONAL CARCERAL CONTEXTS

The empirical divergence observed between "Vardashen" and "Abovyan" validates the theoretical premise that foundational social work education is the primary anchor of professional identity. In settings where formal social work training is absent, penal social work undergoes a clear "Bureaucratic Drift"—a phenomenon where transformative psychosocial interventions erode into purely clerical, administrative support. While international frameworks (such as the UN Nelson Mandela Rules and European Prison

Rules) define social work as a comprehensive rehabilitative process centered on case management (Healey, 1999; Roberts & Brownell, 2002), Armenian practice frequently reduces specialists to social administrators. This reductionism is reinforced by institutional lawyers who fail to perceive the therapeutic potential of social work, viewing specialists merely as facilitators of civil documentation.

2. DE-CONSTRUCTING THE SECURITY VS. CONFIDENTIALITY DICHOTOMY

A prominent theme in Western literature on correctional social work is the chronic, adversarial friction between security mandates (custodial logic) and professional ethics (rehabilitative logic). However, counter to this assumption, empirical findings from Armenian penitentiaries demonstrate a non-adversarial, collaborative dynamic between security personnel and social workers.

Rather than experiencing acute ethical breaches or security interference, social workers successfully resolve the "security vs. confidentiality" dichotomy through the proactive application of informed consent and procedural transparency. By setting clear boundary limits during initial intakes, specialists maintain inmate trust without compromising institutional safety. Furthermore, the findings reveal that supervisory and administrative duties assigned to social workers (e.g., compiling behavioral evaluations) do not inherently disrupt client rapport or cause ethical paralysis, provided the specialist possesses the clinical competence to frame these requirements transparently.

3. INSTITUTIONAL VACUUM, AUTONOMY, AND THE "ABSENCE OF CODIFIED RESTRICTIONS"

The study reveals a dual structural challenge: an alarming quantitative shortage (~1 specialist per 100+ inmates, compared to the international standard of 1:50) and a legal vacuum regarding professional social work autonomy within the RA Penitentiary Code.

However, as highlighted by institutional management, the "absence of codified restrictions" in Armenian law can be re-conceptualized not merely as a limitation, but as an operational window for professional autonomy. In the absence of rigid statutory boundaries, qualified social workers can leverage creative methodology, clinical discretion, and flexible interventions. Nevertheless, relying solely on individual practitioner resilience is unsustainable; without legislative codification of professional privilege, institutionalized external supervision, and systemic staff expansion, social workers remain highly vulnerable to emotional burnout and systemic co-optation by the punitive apparatus.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has two primary limitations. First, the empirical research was restricted to two specific penitentiary institutions in the Republic of Armenia ("Vardashen" and "Abovyan"). Consequently, the findings regarding practitioner-beneficiary dynamics and interprofessional challenges may not be fully generalizable to the entire correctional system of the country or to international contexts with different

legislative and institutional frameworks. Second, given the qualitative nature of the study, which relied on in-depth interviews and structured observations, the emphasis was placed on obtaining rich, contextualized insights rather than statistically representative quantitative data. Future research incorporating larger, mixed-method designs across a broader range of correctional facilities would be beneficial to validate and expand upon these findings.

CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATION

At the international level, the prevailing paradigm emphasizes the strengthening of the institutional role of social work as a vital mechanism for recidivism prevention and public safety. Within the correctional framework, the social worker represents a pivotal link. While other departments within penitentiary institutions are primarily oriented toward maintaining institutional security and internal discipline, the core mission of the social worker is centered on preserving and restoring the social functioning and viability of the convict population.

While international frameworks position the social worker as a vital agent for recidivism prevention, the practical efficacy of social work in the observed Armenian penitentiaries remains constrained by structural limitations. These factors create a distinct gap between the professional mission of social workers and their practical capabilities.

Synthesizing the results of the theoretical analysis and empirical research (comprising in-depth interviews and structured observations) allows for the formulation of the following key conclusions:

Education Anchors Identity: Foundational professional education serves as the bedrock of a social worker's professional identity. The case of the "Vardashen" penitentiary demonstrated that adequate academic preparation enables specialists to maintain therapeutic boundaries. Conversely, the lack of foundational education (as observed in the "Abovyan" penitentiary) leads to a constriction of the professional role, reducing it to purely administrative-technical functions.

Resolving the Security-Confidentiality Dichotomy: The systemic "security vs. confidentiality" tension inherent to closed environments is resolved not by compromising professional principles, but through strategies of transparency and "informed consent." Experienced practitioners succeed in fostering an atmosphere of trust by clarifying the parameters and limitations of confidentiality at the very onset of their engagement with beneficiaries.

Devaluation of the Social Worker's Role: The analysis validated a tendency to devalue the role of the social worker, particularly among legal staff, who often equate the profession with mere administrative paperwork. This indicates that a comprehensive culture of multidisciplinary teamwork—wherein the social worker is recognized as an equal partner and agent in the resocialization process—has yet to be fully institutionalized within the studied facilities.

Supervisory Functions and Professional Ethics: The research revealed that, contrary to the initial hypothesis, the supervisory and control functions assigned to social workers by the penitentiary administration (such as compiling behavior reports and addressing disciplinary matters) do not

fundamentally conflict with professional ethics or the value system of a "helping professional," nor do they disrupt the collaborative atmosphere established with convicts. The core issue is not the function itself, but the resulting workload. This adaptation can be attributed to the internalization of systemic demands by the specialists or the development of professional defense mechanisms in practice.

Disproportionate Practitioner-to-beneficiary ratio: A critical operational challenge identified is the severe quantitative discrepancy between specialists and beneficiaries (often exceeding 1 specialist per 100+ beneficiaries). This objectively compromises the quality of social work, rendering long-term therapeutic interventions unfeasible and restricting the specialist to the reactive role of a "crisis responder."

Practical Recommendations Based directly on the empirical findings and operational challenges identified in the studied penitentiaries, the following evidence-based recommendations are proposed:

1. *Institutionalization of Professional Supervision.* To mitigate practitioner burnout and role erosion resulting from high-stress casework, the Ministry of Justice should establish systematic, external professional supervision mechanisms. Rather than relying solely on administrative oversight, external clinical supervision should be integrated into standard practice to provide social workers with independent professional support, case debriefing, and guidance on complex ethical dilemmas.

2. *Implementation of Targeted Capacity-Building Programs.* Addressing the observed professional role ambiguity and friction with allied specialists requires structured, continuous training:

- **Ethical Dilemma Resolution.** The Penitentiary Service, in collaboration with academic institutions, should implement specialized training modules focused on practical strategies for balancing dual "supportive" and "supervisory" responsibilities in carceral environments.
- **Interprofessional Integration.** To dismantle the documented devaluation of social work by legal staff, mandatory joint orientation workshops should be conducted for multidisciplinary prison teams (security, legal, and social workers) to establish a shared understanding of social work's specific role in resocialization.

3. *Legislative Clarification and Role Differentiation.* To eliminate the legal vulnerabilities that currently force practitioners to rely solely on personal discretion, policy adjustments are required at the statutory level:

- **Functional Demarcation.** Amendments should be introduced to internal regulations and the Law "On Penitentiary Service" to clearly delineate the core duties of social workers, reducing secondary administrative tasks that erode beneficiary trust.
- **Codification of Professional Privilege.** The RA Penitentiary Code should be amended to explicitly define "privileged communication" for prison social workers. Establishing a legally defined, narrow threshold for mandatory disclosure will safeguard therapeutic confidentiality while maintaining necessary institutional security bounds.

4. *Staff Expansion and Workload Optimization.* To bridge the critical gap between professional standards and daily practice—where caseloads frequently exceed 1:100+—the Ministry of Finance and

the Ministry of Justice should allocate resources for a phased expansion of social work positions. Phasing staffing levels toward international benchmarks (such as the 1:50 specialist-to-beneficiary ratio recommended by European Prison Rules) will allow social workers to transition from reactive crisis management to structured individual and group rehabilitative programs.

Scientific Novelty of the Study:

First Empirical Comparative Analysis: This study provides one of the first empirical, multi-method qualitative inquiries (combining in-depth interviews and structured observation) into penal social work in Armenia, contrasting how inmate demographics at "Abovyan" (female inmates) and "Vardashen" (former officials/foreigners) condition ethical dilemmas and boundary maintenance.

Conceptualization of "Bureaucratic Drift" in Post-Soviet Carceral Contexts: The research demonstrates that the absence of formal social work education combined with a legal vacuum triggers "role erosion," shifting penal social work from a transformative, psychosocial intervention into a purely administrative-clerical service.

Re-evaluating the Ethics-Security Nexus: Counter to Western literature highlighting chronic conflict between security staff and social workers, this study identifies a non-adversarial, constructive dynamic in Armenian penitentiaries, where ethical confidentiality is successfully maintained through transparent informed consent frameworks.

Empirical Grounding for Structural Reform: The study empirically identifies the severe structural disparity in specialist-to-inmate ratios (~1:300 in Armenia vs. international 1:30 standards), providing a concrete evidence base for legislative clarity, institutional autonomy, and mandatory professional supervision in penal social work.

The findings and practical recommendations of this study hold significant value for ongoing penitentiary reforms and the institutionalization of social work in Armenia. The identified patterns and dynamics can serve as a fundamental guide for policymakers, legislative bodies, and the professional community, contributing to the enhancement of both the legal and practical foundations of this professional activity.

REFERENCES

- Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW). (2010).* Code of ethics of the social worker.
<http://www.aasw.org/hy/standard/ethic/>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2006).* Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2019).* Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589–597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>

- Brownell, P., & Roberts, A. L.** (2002). A century of social work in criminal justice and correctional settings. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1300/J076v35n02_01
- Council of Europe.** (1987). European prison rules: Recommendation No. R(87)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states. https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/library_rules_prison_arm
- Council of Europe.** (2006). *European prison rules*. Council of Europe Publishing. <https://rm.coe.int/european-prison-rules-978-92-871-5982-3/16806ab9ae>
- Healey, K. M.** (1999). *Case management in prison*. National Institute of Justice. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/173409.pdf>
- International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW).** (2018). *Global social work statement of ethical principles*. <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/>
- Kuzmin, Yu. A.** (2017). Social work in correctional institutions of the penal system.
- Kuznetsov, M.** (2003). Organization of social services in penitentiary institutions of Switzerland. Crime and Punishment.
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW).** (2021). *Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers*. <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/>
- Pavlenok, P. D.** (2018). Technologies of social work in various spheres of life. Infra-M.
- Penitentiary Service of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia.** (2026). Penitentiary service statistics, 2026. URL
- Republic of Armenia.** (2005). Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Penitentiary Service". <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=171957>
- Republic of Armenia.** (2014). Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Social Assistance". <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=161946>
- Republic of Armenia.** (2022). Penitentiary Code of the Republic of Armenia. <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=174036>
- Sukhov, A. N.** (2007). Social work in penitentiary institutions: A textbook. Moscow Psychological and Social Institute.
- United Nations.** (1955). Standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners. https://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/mandela_rules.shtml
- United Nations.** (1988). Body of principles for the protection of all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/body-principles-protection-all-persons-under-any-form-detention>

United Nations. (2015). *The United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners (The Nelson Mandela Rules)*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prisonreform/Nelson_Mandela_Rules-E-ebook.pdf