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THE INFLUENCE OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR ON EDUCATION IN UKRAINE

Vasyl Zaplatynskyi¹

ABSTRACT

The war significantly disrupted the stability of the country and affected all aspects of life. The war in Ukraine led to the emergence of a number of specific dangers that affect various spheres of the functioning of the economy and social life, including education. The educational system of Ukraine has changed significantly as a result of the war. These changes were primarily aimed at ensuring the safety of pupils, students and teachers, improving the quality of education and developing innovative teaching methods. Violations of energy security in Ukraine affect the possibility of conducting classes in face-to-face, mixed and remote formats. There have been changes in the training program for pupils and students. The article analyzes the impact of war hazards on the educational sector, draws conclusions about the stability of the education system in the conditions of war risks.

Key words: war, education of Ukraine, security, dangers, educational institutions, safety

Introduction

The Russian-Ukrainian war began with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent confrontation on the territory of Luhansk and Donetsk regions. Already at this stage, there was a significant impact on the education system of Ukraine. In the occupied territories of Luhansk and Donetsk regions, schools and other educational institutions were closed, and teachers and other education workers who remained in these territories were threatened with persecution for their views. At the same time, the war caused a large number of displaced persons, among whom there were many children and young people who needed training and adaptation to new living conditions.

The evacuation of educational institutions from the occupied territories was very important for ensuring the normal functioning of the education system in Ukraine during the war. It was necessary to ensure the safety of teaching staff and students who were at risk in the occupied territory. For a successful evacuation, it was necessary to coordinate the work of various state bodies and organizations, in particular, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and relevant local education management bodies.

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The war, due to economic difficulties, has made it difficult to finance the education system. The negative impact on education has been caused by interruptions in the supply of electricity, lack of textbooks and other educational materials, lack of access to some important resources and services for education, an increase in the number of displaced persons, and the need for additional support to integrate children and young people from areas of active military operations into a new learning environment. Measures have been developed to admit students and applicants from occupied territories to educational institutions. For this purpose, special admission rules and procedures were developed, which allowed students and applicants from occupied territories to access educational services in areas under Ukrainian control. Programs were created for displaced children and children living in conflict zones to provide them with access to education and support their psychological well-being.

As a result of the war in Ukraine, a number of measures were introduced to increase the safety of students and teachers. In particular, evacuation drills were conducted, and safety systems were installed in schools and other educational institutions.

Due to the war and the threat to national security, education on safety has become particularly important in Ukraine. The Ukrainian education system responded to this need and reformed and supplemented a number of subjects. New safety programs and disciplines were introduced and became an integral part of all educational levels. Safety education has been intensified in schools. Children are taught how to act in emergency situations, how to keep calm, and ensure their safety. New safety courses have been introduced in schools and higher education institutions, such as cybersecurity.

Purpose and methodology

The purpose of the article is to publish an analysis of the impact of the war on specific elements of Ukrainian education and the education system as a whole. A full analysis of the impact of the war would require a detailed study of the following aspects:

- ✓ Evacuation of educational institutions and employment of teaching staff. Possibilities for the education of evacuated students, students, and doctoral students in Ukrainian or foreign educational institutions.
- ✓ Impact of the war on the development of the educational system, in particular on the number of students who continue their education.
- ✓ Level of safety in educational institutions in connection with military threats.
- ✓ Determination of changes in the programs of general education schools and higher education institutions as a result of the war.
- ✓ Education on safety issues, including an analysis of discipline programs.

- ✓ Introduction of distance learning and innovation to reduce the risks of military threats.

The research used retrospective and comparative analysis, induction and deduction, and statistical analysis. Such research methods are quite effective in analyzing complex social phenomena, such as war and its impact on the education system. Comparative analysis allows identifying changes and trends in the development of the education system in different periods, while content analysis allows determining key topics and issues that arise in educational programs and materials for students. Retrospective analysis allows determining the historical context and studying the experience of previous generations, which can be useful for understanding modern challenges and solving problems. Statistical analysis allows obtaining accurate data on the state of the education system and assessing risks associated with war and its impact on education. Each of these methods helps to obtain a comprehensive picture and increase the objectivity of the research.

Main part

To understand the situation that has arisen in the education system of Ukraine in the conditions of war, it is necessary to analyze the main causes and factors that affect the safety of the educational process. One of the main reasons is the change in the socio-political situation in Ukraine, which has arisen as a result of the war with Russia.

As a result of the hostilities, educational institutions are being destroyed. The Ministry of Education and Science has collected numerous facts and arguments that indicate that Russian troops deliberately destroy schools, universities, kindergartens, and children's homes. As of the time of writing this article, 2711 educational institutions have been damaged in Ukraine due to bombing and shelling, and 440 have been completely destroyed (Site Saveschools.in.ua, 2023).

The war has had a negative impact on the financial support and material-technical base of schools and higher education institutions, which has affected the resilience of the education system and its effectiveness in functioning during the war.

In the conditions of the war, the motivation of the teaching staff has also undergone certain changes. Most of them perform their professional duties not only to provide quality education to students, but also to ensure their safety and protection from possible threats. There have been cases where the evacuation of educational institutions was not led by rectors or directors, but by heads of departments or other members of the educational institution's scientific and pedagogical community. Unfortunately, it was not possible to evacuate schools and institutions of preschool and extracurricular education due to objective reasons.

As a result of the war in Donbas, a number of universities and other institutions of higher education located in the territories controlled by the so-called "DNR" and "LNR" pseudo-republics were evacuated. Among them were Shevchenko National University of Luhansk, Tugan-Baranovsky Donetsk National University of Economics and Trade, Donetsk National University, Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University, and other educational institutions. The second wave of evacuations was caused by the full-scale aggression of Russia, which began on February 24, 2022. The evacuation of universities became necessary to preserve the lives and health of students, teachers, and university staff. Most of the evacuated universities were relocated to other cities in Ukraine, where conditions were created for their functioning. In particular, Kherson State University was evacuated to the western Ukrainian city of Ivano-Frankivsk (Kherson State University moved to Prykarpattia, 2022; Kherson State University, 2023). In 2014, due to the war in Donbas, the Taras Shevchenko National University of Luhansk was evacuated to Starobilsk - a district center in Luhansk region, where a separate faculty of this university was already operating before the war. The second evacuation in 2022 forced the management center of the university to relocate to Poltava, where since 2014 the university had been renting premises for the Faculty of Foreign Languages and the Institute of Culture and Arts (*Юлія Гуз*, 2022). The situation with the evacuation of any large educational institution is complicated by the fact that these institutions have a number of branches, separate departments or faculties that may be located in different cities.

Despite the difficult conditions, universities, vocational education institutions, schools, and preschools continue to operate and provide high-quality education.

The beginning of the war in 2014 only affected a part of the education institutions located in Crimea and the self-proclaimed territories later called "Luhansk People's Republic" and "Donetsk People's Republic." In the context of Russia's full-scale aggression, on February 24, 2022, the Ukrainian education system had to declare a two-week break to preserve the lives of all participants in the educational process. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, in a letter dated February 25, 2022, No. 1/3276-22, recommended temporarily suspending the educational process in preschool, general secondary, and vocational (professional-technical) education institutions (About the organization of the educational process, 2022).

Despite the announcement of holidays in many educational institutions, activities did not stop. Some educational institutions became a temporary residence for refugees. Volunteer activities were carried out in educational institutions, including the collection of humanitarian aid, and teachers and students made camouflage nets for the front line, etc.

The resumption of the educational process began in western regions of Ukraine, primarily in the Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv regions. By mid-March 2022,

the educational process had already been restored in schools, vocational education institutions, and pre-school education institutions in these regions.

Several measures were taken to simplify the enrollment of evacuated students. In particular, priority registration for evacuated students in general secondary education institutions was ensured, with only one parent's application required. Special programs and methodological materials were developed for schools that admitted evacuated students to support their learning and adaptation to new conditions. Free textbooks were provided for evacuated schools, and financial support was also provided for evacuated students to ensure they had equal opportunities for learning as other students.

Distance schools and platforms provided support for the restoration of the educational process in Ukraine. There are several online schools in Ukraine, such as EdEra (Educational Era, 2023), DAR, Jamm School, Prometheus, Atmosferna School, Optima, Nova Generatsiya, and others. Some of them provide the opportunity to receive a full education in a distance form, while others offer online courses on specific subjects. The use of resources from distance schools and other institutions helped provide access to education for children who were far away from schools or could not attend school for various reasons. The restoration of education was facilitated by several online learning platforms, such as Coursera, Udemy, Khan Academy, Liko Education Online, OkStudy, GIOS, which provide access to a large number of courses and educational materials on various subjects (Distance schools and learning platforms provide free access for education seekers, 2022).

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine has published a series of letters and directives containing instructions for schools and educational institutions on organizing the educational process in the conditions of war. In particular, on March 29, 2022, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine published letter "1/3725-22 "On the organization of the educational process in primary school in wartime." This letter emphasized the priority of using distance learning system. It was proposed to use electronic textbooks that can be saved on one's own computer to use them in offline mode. This significantly improved the educational process in case of communication system failures and power outages.

The documents of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine contain recommendations regarding the safety of students and teaching staff, ensuring necessary resources for learning (such as textbooks, computers, access to the Internet), organizing distance learning, providing psychological support for students and teachers, and other recommendations that will help ensure normal development of students in the conditions of war. The necessary actions of teachers and students after the "Air alarm" signal, etc. were described in detail.

The educational process in Ukrainian educational institutions under the conditions of a state of war takes place in distance, face-to-face (offline), and combined forms. The choice of the form of conducting the educational process is left to the discretion of the head of the specific educational institution, taking into

account the wishes of parents. It is the head of the educational institution who is responsible for the safety of students and staff. In addition to determining military risks, the head of the educational institution takes into account the availability and capacity of shelters in which students and teachers will stay during an air raid. Not only teaching staff, but also administrative personnel, parents, students, and pupils are involved in ensuring the safety of participants in the educational process. The National Strategy for Ensuring the Safety of People in the Conditions of War provides for the implementation of measures to prevent and respond to possible threats, safety briefings, studying risks and responding to them to preserve their own lives and the lives of people in their immediate environment. During the initial stages of an air raid, the educational process was interrupted. Nowadays, in many educational institutions, teachers continue classes with their students in shelters.

Air raids not only affect in-person classes, but also distance learning. According to established rules, distance learning, webinars, etc. are suspended after an air raid warning and resume after the warning is over. Distance learning can continue during air raids if all participants in the educational process are in shelters. In this context, we understand that each participant independently moves to a shelter and connects to continue the lesson. Unfortunately, not all shelters have internet access, so the opportunity to conduct distance learning during air raids is not always available.

Another factor that negatively affects the educational process is planned and unplanned power outages. Power outages in Ukraine are a forced measure that is a consequence of military strikes on Ukraine's energy sector. Some of the consequences of power outages on the implementation of the educational process include:

- ✓ Complications or impossibility of working with computer equipment. This is a problem for teachers and students who use computers during their studies.
- ✓ Libraries and other resource centers are forced to suspend their activities because they do not have electricity to support their work.
- ✓ The availability of electricity is a necessary condition for conducting online learning and video conferencing, especially for students of general education schools and those who study remotely.
- ✓ Limitations on access to online resources: In many schools and universities, online resources such as electronic libraries, learning platforms, and web conferences are an important component of learning. If electricity is cut off, access to these resources may be limited, which complicates the conduct of lessons and activities.

Additionally, power outages can affect the maintenance of educational facilities, such as air conditioning, heating, and lighting. As a result, the worsening conditions of classes may lead to a decrease in productivity and have a negative impact on the health of participants in the educational process.

To address this problem, educational institutions install small electric power generators. In Ukraine, a system of "resilience points" has been created, which are equipped with their own generators and internet access systems. The availability of electricity and the internet allows participation in remote classes. Most often, students and teachers use resilience points among educators.

The war has significantly changed the social attitude towards Russia and everything Russian. The percentage of Ukrainians who stopped using the Russian language has increased significantly. The education system in Ukraine has long created conditions for the mandatory use of the Ukrainian language. The status of the Russian language in the education system of Ukraine has been changing all the time. During the Soviet Union era, there were few (mostly Eastern) regions of Ukraine where there were no or almost no schools teaching in Ukrainian. Only in the central and especially western regions of Ukraine were there enough schools teaching in Ukrainian. Gradually, the number of schools teaching in Russian decreased. After the full-scale aggression of Russia in 2022, there were no schools teaching in Russian on the territories controlled by Ukraine. It should be noted that the Russian language and literature were taught as separate subjects in schools. The study of Russian as a foreign language also underwent certain reductions, which led to an increase in the number of hours devoted to learning English. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine withdrew a number of language and literature programs, including the programs "Russian language for general education institutions teaching in Russian" for grades 5-9, "Literature (Russian and foreign)" and "Russian language and literature (integrated course) for general education institutions teaching in Russian" for grades 10-11.

In the curriculum of the subject "World Literature", works by certain Russian and Belarusian authors have been removed. Instead, works by European authors have been added to the program. Changes to the content of education have also affected subjects such as "World History", "History of Ukraine", "History: Ukraine and the World", "Basics of Health", "Safety, Health and Well-being", "Defense of Ukraine", literature, geography, and legal studies (Updating the curriculum through the war: what changes have been made, 2022). The changes in the programs were motivated by the need for a more detailed consideration of certain historical moments and accents in geography. Questions related to human rights, International humanitarian law, and the Russo-Ukrainian war were added to the curriculum of legal studies and civic education.

Questions related to ensuring security from the risks of war have been added to the programs of "Basics of Health", "Safety, Health and Well-being", and "Defense of Ukraine".

In 2022, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine updated the curriculum for the subject of "Basics of Health" for students in grades 6-9, adding topics related to the risks of wartime. The program includes topics such as warning signals to the population, actions during air raids and shelling, choosing reliable shelter, dealing with explosive materials, providing pre-medical

assistance and psychological self-help, behavior with armed individuals, and survival in extreme situations. The curriculum for the subject of "Basics of Health" now includes 18 to 33 new topics, depending on the grade level, with 18 topics added for 6th grade, 24 for 7th grade, 33 for 8th grade, and 32 for 9th grade (Fig. 1).

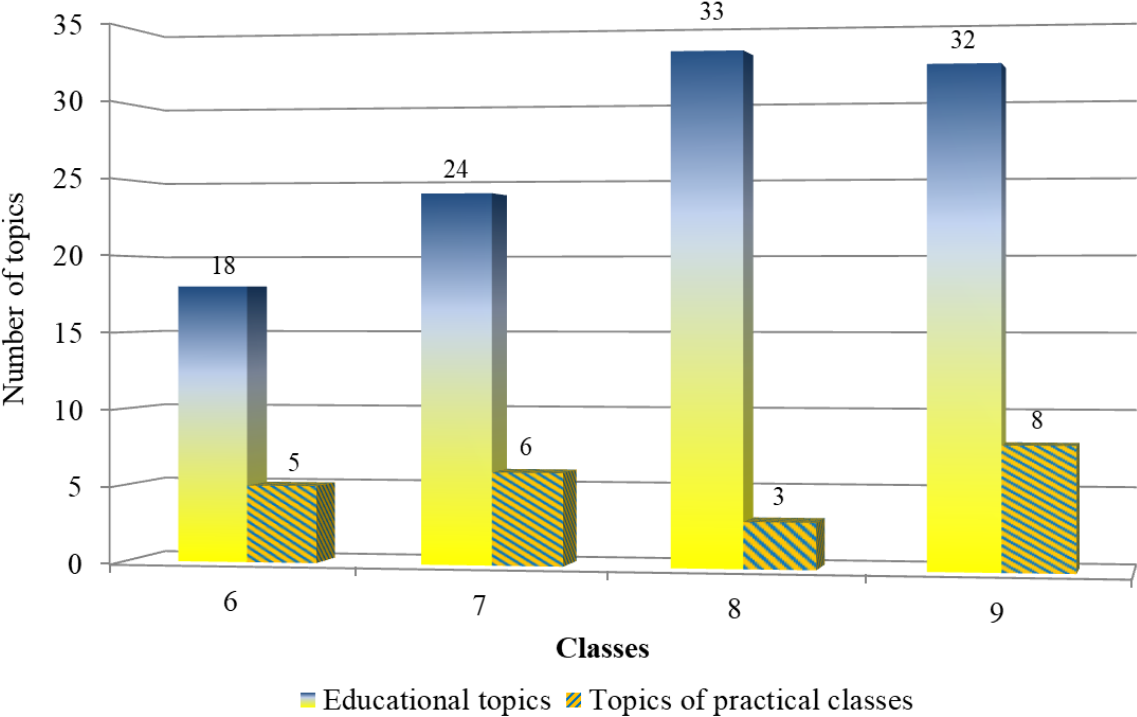


Fig. 1. Graph of the number of added topics and practical tasks by grade in the updated 2022 program of the subject "Fundamentals of Health".

**Source - own elaboration.*

Most of the added topics are dedicated to issues related to protection from wartime dangers. The number of practical lessons is considerably smaller, ranging from 3 to 8. Practical lessons on first aid have been added in each grade, and lessons on psychological assistance have been added in 7th and 9th grades.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine recommends including similar additions to the integrated course "Health, Safety and Well-being". The subject "Defense of Ukraine" for grades 10-11 is supplemented with similar topics. In addition, the subject includes a practical aspect - preparation for conscription to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and familiarization with military equipment. All of this aims to increase the awareness of young citizens about the importance of defending their country and readiness to act in conditions of external threat. Changes in the content of the subject provide for an increase in the role of educating students at the state and national levels, as well as providing practical skills for protecting their own safety and the safety of their people in times of war.

Conclusions

The education system of Ukraine has undergone many changes due to the war. Despite forced evacuation, destruction, and constant threats of missile strikes and bombing, the education system of Ukraine continued to function and carry out reforms that had been initiated earlier. In the face of real military threats, the safety of participants in the educational process became a priority in the education system. In order to ensure safety, educational institutions widely used distance and blended learning formats. Despite the difficulties associated with the partial destruction of the energy system by Russian aggressors, educational institutions managed to overcome them. The use of autonomous power generators and the creation of resilience points, while not fully solving the problem, allowed for the continuation of the educational process. Changes in the socio-political situation and the emergence of a number of military threats forced the revision of the content of several educational programs. Changes in educational programs primarily affected school subjects.

All changes in educational programs can be grouped into several categories:

- ✓ Changes related to the need to ensure personal safety and the safety of the immediate surroundings in conditions of military threats.
- ✓ Strengthening of national-patriotic and military-patriotic education and knowledge of Ukrainian history.
- ✓ Formation of responsible civic position and acquisition of additional competencies in legal aspects.

Analyzing the changes in education in Ukraine over 9 years of war, including a year of full-scale aggression by Russia, it can be stated that Ukrainian education is adapting to the real challenges and needs of society in times of war and is functioning successfully.

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