

## GENERAL ISSUES OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## ЗАГАЛЬНІ ПИТАННЯ ШКІЛЬНОЇ ОСВІТИ ТА НАВЧАННЯ

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## The European approach to fostering determination and self-confidence in primary school students

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### Abstract

The article provides an in-depth analysis of the European experience in fostering determination and self-confidence in primary school students, highlighting these qualities as essential for successful socialization and adaptation in modern society. Educational practices in Finland, Germany, and Poland are examined, focusing on innovative teaching methods that contribute to students' personal growth. In Finland, significant emphasis is placed on creating a supportive learning environment that enhances emotional well-being through individualized approaches and programs such as *KiVa*, which develop confidence and social interaction skills. Germany implements self-reflection programs and project-based learning, such as the *Schülerfirma* ("School Company") initiative, enabling children to gain practical skills in decision-making, responsibility, and teamwork. Poland prioritizes mentoring programs and extracurricular activities that foster mutual support among students, strengthen emotional resilience, and build leadership qualities. The authors emphasize the importance of adapting these European practices to the Ukrainian education system while considering national resources, cultural traditions, and methodological frameworks. The primary challenges identified include insufficient teacher preparation, limited material resources, and an overloaded curriculum. To address these issues, the article proposes implementing specialized teacher training programs, initiating pilot projects in selected schools, and developing tailored programs to build determination and confidence among younger students. Future research directions are outlined, focusing on evaluating the effectiveness of innovative methods within Ukraine's educational framework, assessing their impact on students' personal development, and designing integrated programs inspired by successful European models. Implementing these practices in Ukraine will foster the harmonious development of primary school students, nurturing their emotional stability, leadership skills, and readiness to face contemporary challenges.

**Keywords:** determination, self-confidence, primary school students, European experience, project-based learning, mentoring, supportive environment

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# Європейський досвід формування рішучості та впевненості у молодших школярів

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## Анотація

У статті здійснено ґрунтовний аналіз європейського досвіду формування рішучості та впевненості у дітей молодшого шкільного віку як ключових особистісних якостей, що забезпечують успішну соціалізацію та адаптацію до сучасного суспільства. Розглянуто освітні практики таких країн, як Фінляндія, Німеччина та Польща, які впроваджують інноваційні методи навчання, спрямовані на розвиток особистісного потенціалу учнів. У Фінляндії акцент зроблено на створенні підтримуючого навчального середовища, яке сприяє емоційному благополуччю дитини через індивідуалізацію підходів та інтеграцію програм, як-от *KiVa*, що розвивають навички впевненості та соціальної взаємодії. Німеччина активно впроваджує програми саморефлексії та проектну діяльність, зокрема освітні проекти на кшталт *Schülerfirma* («Шкільна компанія»), які допомагають дітям набутти практичних навичок прийняття рішень та відповідальності. У Польщі значна увага приділяється наставництву та позакласним активностям, що створюють умови для розвитку взаємної підтримки та зміцнення емоційної стійкості учнів. Автори підкреслюють важливість адаптації європейських практик до української системи освіти, враховуючи особливості національних ресурсів, культурних традицій та методичних підходів. Окреслено основні виклики, зокрема недостатню підготовку педагогів, обмеженість матеріально-технічної бази та перевантаженість навчальних програм. Запропоновано шляхи вирішення цих проблем, серед яких – запровадження спеціальних тренінгів для педагогів, організація пілотних проектів у навчальних закладах та створення програм розвитку рішучості та впевненості для молодших школярів. Визначено перспективи подальших досліджень, які включають аналіз ефективності впровадження інноваційних методик у навчально-виховний процес, оцінку впливу на особистісний розвиток учнів та розробку інтегрованих програм на основі європейського досвіду. Впровадження подібних практик в Україні сприятиме гармонійному розвитку молодших школярів, формуванню їхньої емоційної стійкості, лідерських якостей та підготовці до викликів сучасного світу.

**Ключові слова:** рішучість, упевненість, молодші школярі, європейський досвід, проектна діяльність, наставництво, підтримуюче середовище

**Statement of the problem.** Developing personal qualities in primary school students represents a critical objective in modern education, as this stage establishes the foundation for nurturing a harmonious, independent, and responsible personality. During junior school years, the high plasticity of the psyche provides ideal conditions for cultivating core character traits that significantly influence a child's future adaptability and success. Decisiveness and self-confidence hold particular importance in this process, as they empower children to make informed decisions,

overcome challenges, and build effective communication skills. Determination enables children to take responsibility and initiative in both educational and social activities, while self-confidence fosters the psychological resilience necessary to manage fears, setbacks, and external pressures.

Teachers play a pivotal role in fostering these qualities, striving to support the holistic development of each student's personality. Ukrainian pedagogy emphasizes the cultivation of determination and confidence in students but encounters challenges in

applying modern, systematic, and practice-oriented methods. In this context, examining the educational practices of European countries provides valuable insights. European educational systems frequently employ innovative strategies such as individualized learning that addresses each child's unique needs and characteristics, along with project-based activities that enhance independence and teamwork. Additionally, these systems prioritize creating a supportive educational environment that reduces stress, nurtures enthusiasm for learning, and strengthens positive self-esteem. These proven approaches offer a valuable framework for enhancing Ukraine's educational system (Bezborodykh, 2020).

**The Analysis of Sources and Recent Research.** An analysis of recent research and publications on the development of determination and self-confidence in primary school children highlights the significance of this issue in contemporary pedagogical theory. Domestic scholars, including Khilia (2017) and Chorna (2019), underscore the importance of cultivating these traits as integral components of a child's overall development and successful socialization. They argue that determination and self-confidence are crucial for effective learning and for a child's ability to adapt to a dynamic social and educational environment. Researchers such as Sundukova (2019) and Akimova (2008) explore the psychological foundations of these qualities, emphasizing how external factors, particularly pedagogical interventions, foster a child's belief in their own abilities.

Recent publications increasingly focus on integrating innovative methods, such as project-based learning and personalized approaches. European educators, such as Hapchuk (2023) and Tsalkovska, & Siranchuk, (2019), stress the importance of creating a supportive, safe learning environment where children can express themselves, develop critical thinking, and acquire decision-making skills in challenging situations. Researchers in countries like Finland and Germany actively implement innovative practices, including interactive exercises, training sessions, and social projects, which have proven highly effective in cultivating confidence and determination in young students.

**The Purpose of the article** is to examine the European experience in fostering determination and self-confidence in primary school children by analyzing innovative pedagogical approaches, methods, and practices employed in European countries. Additionally, the article seeks to explore the

potential for adapting these methods within the Ukrainian educational system to enhance the effectiveness of developing personal qualities in younger students.

**The Results of the Research.** Building determination and confidence in primary school students is a key focus of modern pedagogy and psychology. These traits are essential for personal development, social adaptation, and success in both educational and social tasks. Determination refers to the ability to make informed decisions during uncertainty or challenges and to act persistently despite obstacles. It requires children to actively use their inner resources to reach goals and plays a critical role in self-realization.

Confidence involves a stable belief in one's abilities, awareness of personal competence, and the ability to act in line with personal values and beliefs. For young children, confidence develops through successfully completing tasks, receiving encouragement from adults and peers, and learning to reflect on their experiences. Psychological and educational factors work together to shape these qualities (Nevala et al., 2011).

On the psychological side, self-perception, emotional resilience, motivation, and self-control play crucial roles. Chorna (2019) highlights the importance of the social environment and stresses how adults can help build children's confidence by creating opportunities for success.

From a teaching perspective, educators can support these qualities by creating a safe and positive learning environment. They can use interactive methods like games, teamwork, and projects to engage students. Recognizing and praising children's achievements boosts their confidence and reinforces their belief in their abilities. Teachers also serve as role models, showing determination and confidence through their actions and encouraging the same in students (Akimova, 1989).

Determination and confidence are vital for children's growth. Determined children can face uncertainty, make decisions independently, and take action even in tough situations. Confident children stay emotionally steady and resist negative influences like low self-esteem or fear of failure. Together, these traits foster initiative, persistence, and a positive attitude toward learning. They also set the stage for leadership, independence, and responsibility, which are essential for success in life (Slushny et al., 2020).

Helping children develop determination and confidence should be a priority in education. By combining effective teaching methods with psychological insights, educators can give children the tools they need to succeed and thrive.

The formation of determination and confidence in children is an important direction of the educational policy of many European countries. Within the framework of national programs and international initiatives, innovative approaches are being developed aimed at the development of these qualities, which contribute to the harmonious formation of the personality and increase the level of social competence of younger schoolchildren. European schools actively use a wide range of methods aimed at developing determination and confidence in children:

*Game methods.* Game activity is an important tool for the formation of personal qualities, as it creates natural conditions for learning. For example, decision-making games are actively used in Denmark, where children are faced with moral dilemmas and learn to justify their choices.

*Project activity.* Carrying out projects allows children to work in a team, assign roles, be responsible for completing tasks, and present the results of their work. In Sweden, such activities are integrated into all educational disciplines and contribute to the development of not only confidence but also leadership qualities.

*Trainings and seminars.* In many European countries, trainings aimed at the development of emotional stability, self-esteem, and communication skills are held. In Great Britain, for example, the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) program includes a series of trainings aimed at developing children's social and emotional competencies.

*Role-playing games and simulations.* These techniques allow children to practice problem-solving, communication, and interaction skills in a safe learning environment. In the Netherlands, role-playing games are often used to prepare children for real-life situations, such as interacting with peers or adults in different social contexts (Chorna, 2019; Appleby, n.d.; Gottschalk & Borhan, n.d.).

Integrating the formation of determination and confidence into the educational process requires a systemic approach that covers several key aspects:

*Complexity.* The development of these qualities should be integrated into all stages of education and upbringing, starting from the organization of lessons to extracurricular activities.

*Individualization.* European educators emphasize the importance of taking into account the individual characteristics of each child, including his temperament, level of self-esteem, and social experience.

*Supportive environment.* Creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect between students and teachers is an important factor that contributes to the formation of confidence in children.

*Reflection and feedback.* Regular analysis of their own achievements and mistakes helps children to realize their strengths, which increases their confidence and stimulates further development (Akimova, & Sapohov, 2011; Bezborodykh, 2020; Hapchuk, 2023).

European countries demonstrate a variety of approaches to the formation of determination and confidence in children of primary school age, using innovative programs and methods adapted to national characteristics. Below are practical examples from Germany, Finland, and Poland.

In Germany, considerable attention is paid to the development of determination and confidence through the involvement of students in self-reflection programs and project tasks. One of the examples is the educational project "Schülerfirma" ("School company"), within the framework of which schoolchildren create and manage their own mini-businesses. Students independently develop business ideas, distribute responsibilities, make decisions regarding the development of the company, and analyze the results of activities. This technique contributes to the formation of determination when making difficult decisions and confidence in one's own abilities through practical success (Hapchuk, 2023).

Self-reflection programs, such as the "Lerntagebuch" ("Learning Diary"), help children analyze their achievements, identify difficulties, and plan next steps. Regularly keeping such a diary allows children to better understand their strengths and weaknesses, form a habit of self-analysis, and increase confidence in their own academic success (Hapchuk, 2023).

Finland is known for its strong focus on creating a supportive learning environment that helps build determination and confidence in children. The main principle of the Finnish education system is to ensure the emotional comfort of students in the classroom. This is achieved through an individualized approach, small class sizes, and the use of interactive learning methods (Khudolii et al., 2013).

The KiVa (“Against Bullying”) program is a vivid example of the integration of elements of emotional intelligence into the educational process. As part of the program, students participate in role-plays and discussions that help them learn to recognize their own and others' emotions and to effectively resolve conflicts. This contributes to the formation of confidence in interpersonal relationships and determination to defend one's rights.

In addition, many Finnish schools use “relaxation zones” where children can have a short break during the school day. Such zones help to reduce stress and stimulate the development of emotional stability, which is the basis for the formation of determination in conditions of uncertainty (Khudolii et al., 2013).

In Poland, the practice of mentoring is actively implemented, which is an important factor in the development of determination and confidence in children. Mentors are both teachers and older students who help younger students in learning and social adaptation. For example, the program “Starszy Brat, Starsza Siostra” (“Older Brother, Older Sister”) involves pair work, where older students act as mentors for younger ones. Such collaboration promotes the development of confidence through positive reinforcement and the creation of a safe environment for discussing difficulties (Saveliev & Sharova, 2020).

Extracurricular activities, in particular sports and creative circles, also play an important role. For example, theater groups are popular in Polish schools, which help children overcome the fear of public speaking, build their self-confidence, and teach them to take the initiative. Sports teams promote the development of determination through achieving a common goal and overcoming difficulties.

The practical experience of European countries, such as Germany, Finland, and Poland, demonstrates a variety of approaches to the formation of determination and confidence in children of primary school age. The integration of self-reflection programs, the creation of a supportive environment, and the implementation of mentoring practices allow not only the development of these important qualities but also contribute to the harmonious personal development of the child. These examples are valuable for adaptation in the educational systems of other countries, in particular in Ukraine (Saveliev & Sharova, 2020).

European countries share many similarities in their strategies for fostering determination and confidence in young school children. A common focus

lies in personalizing the educational process to accommodate each child's unique characteristics and developmental pace. Additionally, these countries widely utilize interactive learning methods, including games, project-based activities, and group work. They also emphasize creating a supportive educational environment that enhances students' emotional well-being and encourages self-reflection (Moskalenko et al., 2019).

However, distinct national characteristics influence the specific approaches used in different countries. Germany emphasizes practicality and independence by incorporating project activities such as school companies, where children gain hands-on experience. Finland prioritizes creating a balanced and nurturing environment that ensures children feel safe and supported. Poland highlights the importance of mentoring and extracurricular activities, which strengthen social bonds and foster emotional stability.

Adopting European methods in Ukraine poses several challenges. Resource limitations remain a significant barrier, as many Ukrainian schools lack the infrastructure and materials necessary for implementing innovative approaches. Overcrowded curricula leave little room for practical tasks, while insufficient teacher training restricts the adoption of modern methods. Cultural factors also play a role, with individualized approaches sometimes clashing with collective education traditions. Additionally, skepticism among educators and parents may hinder acceptance, as they may undervalue foreign practices or resist change (Khudolii et al., 2013).

Despite these challenges, European approaches offer considerable potential for application in Ukraine. Game-based techniques, widely successful in European contexts, could be incorporated through simulations, role-playing, and practical exercises to enhance decision-making skills. Poland's mentoring model might inspire “senior friend” programs or involve volunteers in mentoring roles. Finland's emphasis on supportive environments could inform the creation of school rest areas and initiatives to develop emotional intelligence and communication skills. Enhancing teacher training through specialized programs would further facilitate the integration of innovative practices into the educational system (Bezborodykh, 2020).

To maximize the impact of these methods, pilot projects in selected schools could test their effectiveness and allow for refinements. By adopting these European practices, Ukraine can strengthen the

development of determination and confidence in its children, better preparing them for the demands of modern life and fostering successful socialization.

Adapting European methods for fostering determination and confidence in children to the Ukrainian educational system requires careful consideration of both benefits and limitations. Educators must align these new approaches with existing state standards and curricula. For example, teachers can integrate interactive methods, such as project-based activities and role-playing, into regular lessons through interdisciplinary connections. This strategy not only develops children's personal qualities but also enhances their engagement in the learning process (Tsalkovska, & Siranchuk, 2019).

Improving school infrastructure plays a crucial role in this adaptation. In resource-limited settings, schools can implement innovative practices through cost-effective initiatives like establishing school clubs or organizing extracurricular activities focused on building determination and confidence. Educators must also consider cultural nuances. While European methods emphasize individuality, Ukraine's collective approach offers opportunities to create group support systems within the learning process (Gottschalk & Borhan, n.d.).

Teacher training emerges as a central factor for successfully implementing these methods. Training programs should combine theoretical and practical components. Theoretical sessions can cover concepts such as determination and confidence, their significance in personality development, and detailed analyses of European approaches. Practical sessions should include simulated lessons, modeling of challenging situations, and crafting individualized plans for applying innovative methods (Khilia, 2017).

Developing teachers' emotional intelligence deserves special emphasis. A teacher's ability to convey empathy and support significantly influences children's confidence-building processes. Providing teachers with practical resources, such as instructional materials and guides, will also help them align classroom practices with these new approaches (Slushny et al., 2020).

Creating specialized programs for students represents another critical step. These programs should incorporate several key elements:

- **Game-Based Learning:** Role-playing, simulations, and board games can teach children decision-making, teamwork, and responsibility. For example, problem-solving

games can be woven into lessons or extracurricular activities.

- **Project-Based Activities:** Students can participate in mini-projects, either individually or in groups, focusing on topics like environmental issues, art creation, or school event planning.
- **Supportive Environments:** Favorable conditions for growth are essential. Programs can include training in communication skills to foster trust and understanding between students and teachers (Gottschalk & Borhan, n.d.; Moskalenko et al., 2019).

The development of determination and confidence must follow a gradual process, tailored to children's age-specific needs. For younger students, positive reinforcement and emotional support are particularly vital in helping them apply learned skills in real-life situations. Programs should also include mechanisms for assessing outcomes, enabling timely adjustments to methods and strategies (Bezborodykh, 2020).

Thus, successfully adapting European methods requires a structured approach that includes teacher training, the development of tailored programs, and consideration of the unique aspects of Ukrainian education. By implementing these measures comprehensively, schools can effectively nurture determination and confidence in younger students, preparing them to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

**Conclusions.** European practices for fostering determination and confidence in younger schoolchildren integrate psychological, pedagogical, and social dimensions of the educational process. A defining feature of European education systems is the individualization of learning, which takes into account the interests, abilities, and needs of each student. Equally important is the creation of a supportive learning environment that encourages active interaction between students, teachers, and parents. Programs aimed at developing personal qualities such as determination and confidence employ a variety of methods, including game-based learning, project work, research approaches, and specialized teacher training.

In many European countries, the principle of mentoring plays a significant role, where older students or teachers guide younger students in developing essential social and emotional skills. Mentoring, along with extracurricular activities, helps children build self-confidence by giving them

opportunities to take responsibility and make decisions in real-world contexts. This approach enables students to feel part of a larger community where they are encouraged to learn from mistakes while receiving support for their development (Akimova, 2008).

European schools also place a strong emphasis on developing emotional intelligence through practical tasks that help children adapt to societal changes. These tasks also teach students how to handle stress and make independent decisions. Programs designed to foster these qualities are widely integrated into the educational process, offering flexible approaches that cater to students of different ages and needs.

Implementing European practices for developing determination and confidence in Ukrainian schools is a crucial step toward the holistic development of students. Given the rapid societal changes in modern education, children need to develop the ability to adapt, make informed decisions, and act confidently in diverse situations. European approaches that focus on personal growth through interactive methods such as games, projects, and group collaboration can greatly enhance the educational experience in Ukrainian schools (Gottschalk & Borhan, n.d.).

The harmonious development of students relies heavily on proper support from both teaching staff and parents. In Ukraine, traditional educational methods may overlook the importance of emotional support and individualized learning, which highlights the need for new approaches that emphasize the development of social and emotional skills. These practices can foster greater student openness to learning, improve self-esteem, and enhance the ability to tackle complex challenges. This, in turn, benefits not only personal development but also academic success and overall life outcomes.

Programs that focus on building assertiveness and confidence can help reduce social barriers,

improve peer interactions, and create an environment conducive to the development of emotional intelligence. These programs contribute to the development of sustainable communication, cooperation, and self-regulation skills, which are essential for successful adaptation to adult life (Saveliev & Sharova, 2020).

Future research on fostering assertiveness and confidence in children should adopt a comprehensive approach that integrates both psychological and pedagogical perspectives. One promising area of study is evaluating the effectiveness of various methods and adapting them to the unique needs of Ukrainian schools. It is important to explore how factors such as children's age, social context, and cultural characteristics influence the success of European practices in developing determination and confidence.

Another critical area for research is examining the role of teachers in implementing these practices. Specifically, it is essential to investigate how professional development can influence the development of these personal qualities in students. Efforts should focus on creating conditions that support teachers' professional growth, including training on innovative methods and providing emotional support to help children adapt to modern social challenges.

Additionally, research on integrating new approaches into the Ukrainian curriculum is necessary to identify the most effective methods and forms for implementing them across various educational settings.

Overall, continued research in this field will not only help assess the effectiveness of European methods but also provide practical recommendations for adapting these approaches in Ukraine. This will contribute to the well-rounded development of younger schoolchildren and prepare them for active participation in society.

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