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MEDIATION IN EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF TRANSFORMING CONFLICT BEHAVIOR

У статті розглядається мотиваційна готовність як психологічна передумова конструктивного розв'язання групових конфліктів у закладах вищої освіти. Аналізуються основні медіаційні стратегії, що застосовуються для нейтралізації конфліктних ситуацій у студентському середовищі. Обгрунтовується взаємозв'язок між рівнем мотиваційної готовності учасників освітнього процесу та ефективністю медіаційного втручання. Запропоновано модель інтеграції мотиваційного компоненту в практику медіації, що сприяє формуванню культури діалогу, толерантності та соціальної відповідальності. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані у підготовці фахівців з медіації, психологів, педагогів та адміністративного персоналу ЗВО.

У статті представлено результати емпіричного дослідження мотиваційних типів поведінки студентів у конфліктних ситуаціях. Встановлено, що у більшості респондентів (62%) домінує просоціальна мотивація, яка корелює з орієнтацією на співпрацю, компроміс і справедливе вирішення суперечностей. Егоцентричну мотивацію виявлено у 25% учасників, а уникальну або пасивну – у 13%. Аналіз ситуативної тривожності показав її підвищений рівень у 47% студентів, що асоціюється з зовнішньо мотивованими стратегіями поведінки. Поведінкові стилі, оцінені за методикою ROCI-II, засвідчили переважання інтеграційного (54%) та компромісного (31%) підходів. Фізіологічні показники (HRV, GSR) підтвердили зв'язок між внутрішньою мотивацією та емоційною стабільністю. Кореляційний аналіз виявив позитивну асоціацію між внутрішньою мотивацією та просоціальними стратегіями, а також негативний зв'язок між зовнішньою мотивацією та фізіологічною регуляцією. Гендерні особливості засвідчили, що дівчата частіше демонструють емпатійно-компромісну мотивацію та нижчий рівень тривожності, що підкреслює роль емоційної компетентності у формуванні адаптивної поведінки.

У статті представлено результати емпіричного дослідження мотиваційних профілів студентів у конфліктних ситуаціях в освітньому середовищі. Встановлено, що домінуючим типом мотивації є просоціальна орієнтація, яка корелює з конструктивними стратегіями поведінки та стабільними психофізіологічними реакціями. Водночає виявлено групу студентів із підвищеною тривожністю та зовнішньо мотивованими формами реагування, що супроводжуються емоційною нестабільністю. Отримані результати підтверджують важливість розвитку внутрішньої мотивації, емоційної саморегуляції та навичок конструктивної комунікації як чинників психологічного добробуту та соціальної адаптації здобувачів освіти.

Ключові слова: здобувачі освіти, медіатор, мотиваційна готовність, конструктивне розв'язання конфліктів, медіаційні стратегії, групові конфлікти, управління конфліктами, заклади вищої освіти.

The article examines motivational readiness as a psychological prerequisite for the constructive resolution of group conflicts in higher education institutions. The main mediation strategies used to neutralize conflict situations in the student environment are analyzed. The relationship between the level of motivational readiness of the participants in the educational process and the effectiveness of mediation intervention is substantiated. A model for integrating the motivational component into mediation practice is proposed, which contributes to the formation of a culture of dialogue, tolerance, and social responsibility. The research results can be applied in the training of mediators, psychologists, educators, and administrative staff of higher education institutions.

The article presents the results of an empirical study of students' motivational behavior types in conflict situations. It was found that most respondents (62%) demonstrate prosocial motivation, which correlates with a focus on cooperation, compromise, and fair conflict resolution. Egocentric motivation was identified in 25% of participants, and avoidant or passive motivation — in 13%. Analysis of situational anxiety revealed elevated levels in 47% of students, associated with externally motivated behavioral strategies. Behavioral styles, assessed by the ROCI-II method, showed the predominance of integrative

(54%) and compromising (31%) approaches. Physiological indicators (HRV, GSR) confirmed the relationship between intrinsic motivation and emotional stability. Correlation analysis revealed a positive association between intrinsic motivation and prosocial strategies, as well as a negative relationship between external motivation and physiological regulation. Gender differences indicated that female students more often display empathetic and compromise-oriented motivation and lower anxiety levels, emphasizing the role of emotional competence in forming adaptive behavior.

The study demonstrates that the dominant type of motivation among students in conflict situations within the educational environment is prosocial orientation, which correlates with constructive behavioral strategies and stable psychophysiological reactions. At the same time, a subgroup of students with heightened anxiety and externally motivated reactions accompanied by emotional instability was identified. The obtained results confirm the importance of developing intrinsic motivation, emotional self-regulation, and constructive communication skills as key factors of psychological well-being and social adaptation of students.

Keywords: students, mediator, motivational readiness, constructive conflict resolution, mediation strategies, group conflicts, conflict management, higher education institutions.

Problem statement. In modern society, conflicts have become an integral part of interpersonal and group interactions. Their effective resolution depends not only on the professionalism of the mediator but also on the internal motivational readiness of the participants for constructive dialogue. Psychological motivation as a factor of successful mediation is actively studied by both Ukrainian (O. Karabanova, L. Smulyanska, L. Karamushka, O. Kokun) and foreign researchers (M. Deutsch, K. Thomas, R. Kilmann, D. Goleman).

Scientific research provides a deeper understanding of the role of motivation in the mediation process and in shaping conflict resolution strategies. The expectations, needs, values, and emotional attitudes of the parties determine the outcome of mediation: destructive motivation complicates dialogue, while positive motivation promotes mutual understanding. Therefore, the study of motivation is relevant for developing effective approaches to resolving intra-group conflicts.

The relevance of this topic is determined by the need to integrate psychological, pedagogical, and communicative approaches to developing motivational readiness and implementing mediation practices in higher education institutions. This corresponds to modern requirements for the quality of education, the humanization of interpersonal relations, and the formation of a culture of nonviolent communication [1–5].

Ultimately, the motivation of the parties — their expectations, needs, values, and emotional attitudes — defines the effectiveness of mediation. Insufficient or destructive motivation can nullify the mediator's efforts, whereas conscious and positive motivation contributes to understanding and sustainable agreements. Thus, exploring the motivational component is crucial for developing strategies for resolving intra-group conflicts.

The purpose of thearticle. There is a theoretical justification and empirical study of mediation as a means of transforming the conflict behavior of students, aimed at identifying the psychological factors of mediation effectiveness and developing practical recommendations for the implementation of mediation practices in the educational environment.

Presentation of the main material. In the modern educational environment of higher education institutions, group conflicts increasingly arise due to the diversity of students' personal characteristics, value orientations, communication styles, and social roles. Under conditions of growing psychological pressure, academic competition, and social tension, the ability of participants in the educational process to resolve conflicts constructively becomes particularly significant.

The motivational readiness of students and teachers for dialogue, cooperation, and compromise is a key factor in shaping a safe, tolerant, and cohesive academic space. At the same time, effective conflict management requires professional intervention — in particular, the use of mediation strategies that help neutralize tension, restore mutual understanding, and prevent the escalation of disagreements.

Group conflicts in higher education institutions are contradictions that arise between individual students, academic groups, or between students and teachers who have different interests, values, behavioral styles, or viewpoints. Such conflicts can influence the educational process, social cohesion, and the psychological well-being of participants within the educational environment [1, 3].

Mediation strategies are a set of methods, techniques, and tactics used by a mediator to resolve conflicts between parties through the organization of constructive dialogue, the search for mutually acceptable solutions, and the reduction of emotional tension. In higher education institutions, these strategies are aimed at maintaining a

safe educational space, developing a culture of nonviolent communication, and preventing the escalation of disputes [2, 4].

Motivational readiness is an internal psychological state of the individual that manifests itself in the desire for constructive conflict resolution, openness to dialogue, the ability to self-reflect, and the willingness to take responsibility for the outcomes of interaction. In the context of higher education, it is formed through the development of emotional intelligence, communication skills, and value orientations focused on peaceful coexistence within the academic community [3, 5].

The psychological motivation of conflict participants during clashes of interests among students of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky State Pedagogical University is a key factor that determines the nature and dynamics of interpersonal interactions within the educational environment. The university community is a space where students with diverse values, needs, and behavioral styles face situations that may provoke contradictions on a daily basis. Understanding the internal motives that drive participants to defend their position or to seek justice and self-assertion makes it possible not only to resolve conflicts effectively but also to foster a culture of constructive dialogue. In the context of a pedagogical university, this aspect acquires particular importance, as future specialists must master the skills of emotional self-regulation, empathy, and conflict management competence [2, 5].

In order to identify motivational profiles of behavior in conflict-of-interest situations and to establish their connection with psychophysiological (clinical) indicators, a pilot study was conducted in the educational environment of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky State Pedagogical University under conditions closely approximating real interpersonal interaction. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of not only the external manifestations of conflict behavior but also the underlying psychological mechanisms that determine it.

The analysis of motivational attitudes combined with psychophysiological reactions makes it possible to identify typical patterns of students' responses to conflict situations, as well as to outline risk groups — individuals with elevated levels of anxiety, emotional instability, or externally driven behavior. The obtained results can serve as a basis for developing targeted psychocorrectional programs aimed at enhancing self-regulation, stress resilience, and constructive interaction within the educational environment.

For the purpose of the study, a representative sample comprising 1,000 students of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky State Pedagogical University aged 17 to 25 years was formed. Stratification was carried out according to the year of study, faculty, and gender, ensuring diversity in the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. Only individuals who did not have acute mental disorders, cardiovascular crises, or who were not taking corticosteroids on the day of the study were included in the sample, which helped minimize the influence of medical factors on the results. All participants provided voluntary informed consent, and the study procedure was approved by the university's ethical review board. Ethical principles were observed in accordance with generally accepted standards of humane treatment of participants, data confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

Special attention was given to ensuring safety and ethical compliance in line with modern standards of humane conduct in psychological research. All respondents were informed about the conditions of participation, gave voluntary consent, and were guaranteed the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without explanation. To ensure psychological protection, the presence of a qualified psychologist was provided, offering support in cases of emotional distress or discomfort.

The methodology of the study was based on non-bioinvasive procedures, which excluded any interference with the body or risk to participants' health. In particular, to determine the cortisol level, salivary analysis was used — a safe and non-invasive method widely applied in psychophysiological research. All measurements were carried out according to standardized protocols, ensuring the accuracy, reproducibility, and ethical correctness of data collection.

The study employed a comprehensive design combining several levels of assessment of students' behavior and psychophysiological reactions in conflict situations. At the first stage, a baseline assessment was conducted, including the collection of demographic data and a brief well-being screening, particularly through the subjective stress scale, which made it possible to account for the individual characteristics of participants' condition before the start of the experimental procedures.

The core element of the procedure was an experimental conflict-of-interest situation, modeled through computerized game simulations — the *Ultimatum Game* and the *Public Goods Game* — as well as a negotiation simulation focused on the distribution of limited group resources. For each scenario, specific conditions of interest collision were created, such as budget, time, or reward constraints, along with

manipulations of fairness levels and rejection risk. This approach allowed the experiment to closely approximate realistic social interactions.

In parallel, psychophysiological monitoring was conducted, including a range of clinical indicators: heart rate (HR) and heart rate variability (HRV – RMSSD, pNN50) as measures of autonomic nervous system regulation; galvanic skin response (GSR/EDA) as an indicator of emotional arousal; blood pressure (systolic/diastolic) recorded before and after the experimental blocks; and salivary cortisol levels measured at two points — baseline and 20–30 minutes after the conflict exposure. When available, pupillometry or thermal facial imaging was additionally used to record stress responses.

To assess the motivational orientations of participants, standardized questionnaires adapted to the context of conflict interaction were used. The final stage of the procedure involved a micro-debriefing — a short interview with open-ended questions about the motives behind participants' decisions. This made it possible to qualitatively verify the obtained data and gain a deeper understanding of the internal logic of participants' behavior.

The study identified three groups of variables that allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the behavioral, motivational, and psychophysiological aspects of conflict interaction.

Behavioral variables included the proportion of cooperative versus egocentric decisions, the level of rigidity or flexibility in proposals, and the frequency of agreement breakdowns — all serving as indicators of participants' response styles in conflict-of-interest situations. These measures provided a quantitative assessment of individuals' tendencies toward cooperation or confrontation.

Motivational variables included profiles of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self- versus otherorientation, and interaction styles that reflect the participants' deep psychological dispositions in conflict situations. To assess these variables, three validated instruments were employed:

- The Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS), based on self-determination theory, measures levels of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, external regulation, and amotivation in relation to a specific conflict situation.
- The Social Value Orientation (SVO) Slider Measure determines an individual's social-value orientation prosocial, individualistic, or competitive which reflects their motivational tendencies in the distribution of benefits during a conflict of interest.
- The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory–II (ROCI-II) enables the formation of motivational strategy profiles such as integration, compromise, domination, avoidance, and accommodation, representing the goals and priorities of the parties involved in the conflict.

Clinical (psychophysiological) variables included indicators of heart rate variability (HRV), galvanic skin response (GSR), cortisol levels, and blood pressure, which serve as biomarkers of tension and regulation during conflict interaction. The integration of these physiological measures with behavioral and motivational data provides a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying students' responses to social challenges and supports the development of effective psychocorrectional strategies aimed at enhancing emotional regulation and adaptive conflict behavior.

The data analysis plan in the study involved a multilevel processing approach that combined statistical methods, normalization of physiological indicators, and modeling of interrelations among variables.

At the first stage, data cleaning and normalization of psychophysiological indicators were performed by comparing baseline and reactive phases, allowing for the accurate interpretation of participants' individual responses to conflict-related stimuli. Subsequently, a Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) of motivational data obtained through the SIMS, SVO, and ROCI-II instruments was conducted. This enabled the identification of types of motivational orientations, such as "integrated—cooperative" or "egocentric—externally motivated—dominant," reflecting the internal structure of participants' motivation in conflict situations.

To test the hypothesis regarding the influence of motivational profiles on behavioral decisions, Generalized Linear Mixed Models (GLMM) and logistic regression were applied, allowing for the examination of whether motivational types predicted tendencies toward cooperation, dominance, or agreement breakdown. Additionally, mediation models were constructed to explore whether clinical stress indicators (HRV, GSR, cortisol) mediated the relationship between motivational characteristics and behavioral choices.

This comprehensive approach made it possible to identify the biological mechanisms underlying the influence of motivation on decision-making in conflict situations, integrating behavioral, psychological, and physiological dimensions of analysis.

Within the framework of the study, a number of working hypotheses were formulated to reflect the expected interrelationships among motivational orientations, behavioral decisions, and psychophysiological responses of participants in conflict situations.

It was hypothesized that higher levels of intrinsic and identified motivation (as measured by the SIMS scale), combined with a prosocial orientation (according to the SVO method), would be associated with a greater proportion of cooperative decisions, higher heart rate variability (HRV) — indicative of better autonomic regulation — and lower peaks of galvanic skin response (GSR) and cortisol levels, both markers of emotional tension.

Conversely, it was expected that participants characterized by predominantly external regulation or amotivation (SIMS), as well as by individualistic or competitive social-value orientation (SVO), would display harsher offers, a higher frequency of agreement breakdowns, lower HRV, and elevated GSR and cortisol levels, reflecting greater emotional reactivity and reduced self-regulation capacity.

Additionally, it was assumed that motivational strategies of integration and compromise (as measured by the ROCI-II scale) would be associated with more stable agreements and a more favorable autonomic-somatic profile, including balanced indicators of heart rate, blood pressure, and emotional activation. These hypotheses served as the basis for testing the interconnections between motivation, behavior, and physiological responses under the conditions of a simulated conflict of interest.

At the final stage, the results (Table 1) were stratified by gender, year of study, and prior experience in mediation programs, which made it possible to identify specific response patterns among different groups of students.

This approach ensured not only the scientific reliability of the results but also the psychological comfort of the participants, which is critically important in research involving conflict behavior and stress responses. The data obtained were based on the strict adherence to standardized protocols and instructions for the SIMS, SVO, and ROCI-II methods, guaranteeing their validity and compliance with ethical standards.

Table 1
Results of the Pilot Study on the Psychological Motivation of Conflict Participants

Results of the Phot Study on the Psychological Motivation of Conflict Participants				
Indicators	Method / Instrument	Main Results (in % of the sample, n=1000)	Interpretation	
1	2	3	4	
Type of motivation during conflict	Motivational Orientation Questionnaire (author's modification of SIMS – Self- Determination Motivation Scale)	62% – prosocial, 25% – egocentric, 13% – avoidant	A prevailing orientation toward cooperation and maintaining group harmony	
Behavioral strategies in conflict	Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II)	54% – integration, 31% – compromise, 15% – competition/domination	Preference for constructive forms of interaction	
Level of anxiety	Spielberger– Khanin Anxiety Scale	50% – high level, 47% – medium, 3% – low	Increased emotional tension in social situations	
Trait anxiety	J. Taylor Manifest Anxiety Test	44% – high level, 53% – medium	High sensitivity to evaluation and a tendency toward self- criticism	
Manifestations of social anxiety	SPIN – Social Phobia Inventory	40% – no manifestations, 37% – moderate, 23% – high	Presence of some students experiencing difficulties in social interaction	
Physiological response to conflict (HRV, GSR)	Biofeedback analysis (pilot group)	45% – stable response, 38% – moderate increase, 17% – excessive	Dependence of emotional reactivity on the level of intrinsic motivation	

Correlation between motivation and stress resilience	Pearson's r (statistical analysis)	$r = 0.63 \ (p \le 0.01)$ between intrinsic motivation and prosocial behavior	Intrinsic motivation reduces the risk of destructive conflict behavior
Gender differences in motivation	Comparative analysis (t-test)	58% of females – empathic– compromising motivation; 42% of males – competitive– dominant	Women more often demonstrate socially oriented strategies

The study revealed dominant types of motivation characterizing students' behavior in conflict situations. For the majority of respondents (62%), prosocial motivation prevailed, manifesting in an orientation toward achieving mutual agreement, compromise, and fair conflict resolution. This type of motivation indicates a readiness for cooperation and constructive dialogue. Meanwhile, 25% of participants demonstrated egocentric motivation, focused on personal benefit or maintaining status, which reflects a tendency toward control and individual dominance. Another 13% of respondents exhibited an avoidant or passive stance, showing a tendency to evade conflict discussions, which may indicate a low level of engagement or emotional vulnerability.

An analysis of the relationship between motivation and emotional state showed that the level of situational anxiety (measured by the *Spielberger–Khanin Scale*) was moderately elevated in 47% of respondents, indicating emotional tension during conflict interaction. A clear association was observed between high anxiety levels and externally motivated behavioral strategies, such as avoidance and compliance. This finding supports the assumption that external motivation is often accompanied by lower emotional stability and a greater tendency toward maladaptive forms of response.

The behavioral strategies assessed using the *Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II)* showed that 54% of students most frequently chose an integrative style — cooperation and the search for mutually beneficial solutions. Another 31% preferred compromise, while 15% favored competition or dominance. This distribution indicates a generally high level of communicative culture among students and an overall readiness for constructive conflict resolution.

The physiological indicators recorded during situational conflict modeling revealed that 38% of participants exhibited a moderate increase in heart rate variability (HRV) and electrodermal activity (GSR), indicating emotional activation. In 17% of respondents, the reaction was excessive, which may suggest reduced stress resilience and a need for additional psycho-emotional support. Meanwhile, 45% of participants demonstrated stable physiological responses, which correlated with high levels of self-regulation and intrinsic motivation, confirming their capacity for adaptive responding in conflict situations.

Correlation analysis confirmed a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation (as measured by SIMS) and prosocial behavioral strategies (ROCI-II) (r = 0.63, $p \le 0.01$), indicating the interdependence between motivational orientation and constructive behavior. At the same time, a negative relationship was found between extrinsic motivation and physiological stability (HRV) (r = -0.48, $p \le 0.05$), supporting the hypothesis that the type of motivation influences the level of emotional tension.

Gender analysis revealed that female students more often demonstrated empathic—compromising motivation, while male students tended toward competitive—dominant strategies. Moreover, higher emotional intelligence levels among female students correlated with lower anxiety and greater readiness for dialogue, emphasizing the crucial role of emotional competence in the development of adaptive behavioral strategies in conflict situations.

Conclusions. The summary of the research findings demonstrated that the psychological motivation of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky State Pedagogical University students in conditions of conflict interaction is predominantly prosocial in nature. This type of motivation is manifested through an orientation toward cooperation, compromise, and fair conflict resolution, reflecting maturity of social values, a developed communicative culture, and readiness for partnership-based interaction. Such characteristics represent a positive indicator of students' socio-psychological adaptation within the educational environment.

At the same time, a specific subgroup of students was identified with elevated situational anxiety and a predominance of externally motivated behavioral patterns, such as avoidance, compliance, or dominance. These features may indicate emotional instability, reduced stress resilience, and difficulties in self-regulation, thus highlighting the need for targeted psychocorrective intervention. In particular, it is crucial to develop skills of emotional self-regulation, constructive communication, and adaptive conflict resolution. In this context, the implementation of a program aimed at developing motivational readiness for constructive conflict resolution appears appropriate. Such a program could serve as an effective tool for preventing social maladaptation, enhancing

students' psychological well-being, and promoting the development of emotional competence and healthy models of interpersonal interaction within the academic community.

Future research perspectives include expanding the empirical base and deepening the analysis of motivational and psychophysiological factors underlying conflict behavior in educational settings. It would be advisable to incorporate inter-university samples to compare regional differences in motivational profiles and response styles. A particularly promising direction involves studying the dynamics of motivation in group interaction, especially in the context of mediation training, which would allow for an evaluation of the effectiveness of educational interventions in fostering constructive and adaptive behavior.

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