# Psychological Preparedness of Tutors for Professional Practice in Ukraine

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**Abstract**

This study addresses the psychological preparedness of tutors for professional responsibilities within Ukraine's higher education framework. It examines and clarifies essential terms, including psychological readiness, tutor, professional tutor preparation, tutoring practices, competence, and educational innovation. The paper also outlines the main activities of the Center of Excellence at Bohdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University. The advancement of international educational strategies fosters the creation of a system that supports individuals' creative development and strengthens their moral and spiritual values. In this context, cultural and educational institutions are expected to design learning environments that integrate developmental education theory with practices aimed at encouraging personal growth and providing comprehensive psychological support for autonomous learning. The article's primary aim is to evaluate the current status and significance of tutors' psychological readiness for professional practice in Ukrainian higher education. Through an analysis of participant feedback and a comparison of initial and final results from an experimental training program, the study identifies measurable and meaningful changes in the psychological readiness of teachers preparing for tutoring roles. Enhanced levels of readiness were observed in both experimental and control groups during the intervention phase, largely due to a well-structured certification program titled "Professional Tutors Training." Contributing factors also included involvement in interactive formats such as practical workshops, discussions, roundtables, and conferences focused on excellence in tutoring, along with exercises designed to develop innovative and research competencies.

**Keywords:** Tutor, Professional tutor preparation, Tutoring practices, Psychological readiness, Competence, Educational innovation

## Introduction

The ongoing modernization of Ukrainian society is being driven by new impulses generated within civil society. Within this evolving context, tutor support plays a crucial role in enabling individuals to harness their internal resources, foster autonomy, and engage in self-directed development through self-forecasting and self-perception. These processes are mediated through cultural forms of interaction between the individual and society, particularly in making key decisions related to education, career, and life [1–4]. The cultivation of innovative thinking and the construction of a cultural and educational framework by professional tutors is grounded in the principles of *child-centrism* and *human-dimensionality*, which form the theoretical and methodological foundations for developing value-based education [5].

Research on professional tutor preparation within Ukraine's current educational landscape necessitates a scientific understanding of its core concepts, integration of academic knowledge and practical education, and the implementation of

innovative psychological approaches to elevate training quality. Effective tutor education within higher education institutions enhances both student and teacher competencies. Scholarly analysis emphasizes that tutoring should be conceptualized as a form of psychological, pedagogical, and social support tailored to individual learners. This requires the formation of structured knowledge, practical skills, value-based perspectives, and cognitive readiness. It also involves defining, analyzing, and organizing the mechanisms underlying effective tutor support, understanding the principles that influence its success, tracing the evolution of tutoring practices, and identifying trends in their advancement [6–9].

Further examination of the literature reveals that psychological readiness for professional activity is not merely an individual trait; rather, it serves as a composite indicator of one's actions and professional aptitude [10, 11]. This readiness reflects an integrated personal profile encompassing emotional, volitional, and professional traits, along with ethical values, habits, needs, and key professional competencies.

In response to the directive issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine on June 30, 2016 (Order No. 730), a nationwide experimental initiative was launched under the scientific and pedagogical project *School of Excellence Tutor*. As part of this initiative, the *Center of Excellence Tutor* was established at Bohdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University. The center's primary objectives include conducting both theoretical and applied research on tutors' psychological readiness, delivering professionally oriented educational services for graduates of the School of Excellence Tutor, fostering conditions for tutor preparation and student involvement in research, developing and approving personalized educational programs for tutoring practices, and facilitating the productive engagement of faculty and researchers in academic initiatives. Importantly, the Center of Excellence Tutor contributes to the renewal of scientific and methodological support for pedagogical practices. It also promotes the integration of science and education, alongside the adoption of modern educational technologies, to significantly enhance the quality of tutor training in Ukraine.

The staff of the Centre of Excellence Tutor developed the educational program *Professional Tutors Training* as an additional educational initiative designed to strengthen collaboration between academic faculty and secondary school educators. This program plays a pivotal role in shaping tutors' psychological readiness for engaging in innovative professional activities. It focuses on enhancing tutor preparation through the integration of advanced pedagogical technologies and serves as a platform for experimentally evaluating the effectiveness and quality of the tutor training system under these innovative conditions.

Targeted primarily at individuals pursuing or holding bachelor's or master's degrees, the certification program aims to build key competencies essential for effective tutoring. These competencies include a thorough understanding of foundational tutoring principles; familiarity with international standards, methodologies, and tools for educational process design and implementation; and knowledge of modern strategies for fostering student creativity, independence, and critical thinking.

Participants are also expected to develop the ability to navigate specialized literature in tutoring, present individualized projects that support coordinated efforts across educational structures, and assist students in making informed life and career decisions. Furthermore, the program emphasizes understanding the challenges associated with self-education, self-improvement, and personal development within the framework of individualized learning pathways.

In addition, the curriculum incorporates practical training in the use of information and communication technologies to broaden students' cultural and educational horizons, promote moral development, and leverage modern opportunities such as distance learning. It also fosters competencies in building constructive dialogue, creating a supportive group atmosphere, conducting self-reflective academic and educational assessments, and applying creative approaches to solving pedagogical challenges encountered in educational practice.

**The purpose** of this article is to assess and experimentally validate the current state of tutors' psychological readiness for professional engagement within Ukraine's higher education system. In alignment with this objective, the study sets out to achieve the following key tasks: to define the mechanisms of individualized tutor support within higher education institutions in Ukraine; to analyze the specific functions and structure of the Centre of Excellence Tutor at Bohdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University; and to evaluate the effectiveness of the tutor training program implemented at the university.

## Materials and Methods

The experimental research was carried out at the initial stage of the Centre of Excellence Tutor's operation, involving secondary school teachers from the Melitopol district. To fulfill the research objectives, a comprehensive set of contemporary general scientific methods was employed:

- **Theoretical methods**, including historical and comparative analysis, synthesis, generalization, and comparison, were used to examine academic literature, legislative and normative documents, and the existing practices of professional tutor training in Ukraine's higher education context.
- **Empirical methods** encompassed both direct and indirect observational techniques to assess tutors' psychological readiness for professional practice. These also included expert evaluations, self-assessments, excellence tutoring

rankings, and diagnostic tools such as questionnaires, expert interviews, and surveys to determine the participants' levels of preparedness for tutoring responsibilities.

- **Experimental-theoretical methods** involved the empirical testing of pedagogical conditions that support the professional development of tutors within the higher education system. Additionally, methods of mathematical statistics were applied to analyze the collected data and to explore the quantitative relationships between the studied phenomena and processes.

## Results and Discussion

The questionnaire distributed to teachers from general education institutions revealed that psychological unpreparedness for engaging in innovative pedagogical activities stemmed from a range of professional challenges. As part of the experimental research, participating secondary school teachers conducted a self-assessment to evaluate their readiness for innovation within their professional roles.

A total of 85 respondents took part in the study. They were instructed to complete the following tasks:

1. Assess the extent to which they exhibit key criteria associated with readiness for innovative professional activity using a 10-point scale, where 1–4 points indicated a low level of readiness, 5–7 points indicated a moderate level, and 8–10 points reflected a high level of readiness for innovation.
2. Aggregate their scores and construct a visual profile representing their self-assessment.
3. Analyze their overall profile using three main indicators: motivation**,** creativity, and professional skills**.**

Evaluation of the graphic profiles and the accompanying responses enabled the researchers to categorize and synthesize the collected data. The summarized results are presented in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.**

| № | Evaluation Factor | Levels, % | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low | Moderate | High |
| **Motivation** | | | | |
| 1 | Thirst for knowledge | 5.3 | 59.5 | 35.2 |
| 2 | Drive to excel | 5.6 | 11.4 | 83.0 |
| 3 | Aspiration to guide | 6.4 | 19.0 | 74.6 |
| 4 | Craving for external approval | 7.1 | 43.0 | 49.9 |
| 5 | Passion for personal advancement | 27.2 | 29.3 | 43.5 |
| **Creativity** | | | | |
| 6 | Freedom in decision-making | 58.2 | 27.8 | 14.0 |
| 7 | Creative vision | 44.0 | 32.4 | 23.6 |
| 8 | Inclination to take chances | 43.9 | 34.0 | 22.1 |
| 9 | Alertness to challenges | 58.3 | 23.0 | 18.7 |
| 10 | Evaluative reasoning | 29.1 | 38.3 | 32.6 |
| **Professional Skills** | | | | |
| 11 | Skill in educational research | 24.3 | 44.6 | 31.1 |
| 12 | Flexibility in task adjustment | 63.6 | 24.0 | 12.4 |
| 13 | Teamwork aptitude | 12.5 | 48.3 | 39.2 |
| 14 | Leveraging others' insights | 19.6 | 31.8 | 48.6 |
| 15 | Capacity for self-discipline | 27.2 | 42.1 | 30.7 |

The data presented in **Table 1** indicate that respondents most frequently identified qualities such as a drive for success, leadership aspirations, a desire for external validation, and the capacity to learn from others' experiences. While these characteristics are undoubtedly important, the analysis suggests that they are not entirely sufficient for the effective integration of innovative pedagogical practices. In this context, traits such as independent thinking, imagination, risk tolerance, problem sensitivity, and adaptability in professional activities are particularly crucial for tutors. However, these traits were found to be underdeveloped or weakly expressed among the respondents.

To assess the cognitive component of tutors' psychological readiness, the study utilized a custom-designed questionnaire to evaluate the preparedness of future tutors at both the initial and final stages of the experiment. At the beginning of the study, participants responded to the question: *"Will it be difficult for you to implement tutor activities in an educational institution?"* The responses were as follows: "yes" – 123 participants (56%), "no" – 33 (15%), and "partially" – 64 (29%).

Participants were also asked: *"Is the modern school ready to introduce tutor activity?"* The results were: "yes" – 49 respondents (22%), "no" – 64 (29%), and "partially" – 107 (49%).

This analysis clearly shows that the psychological readiness of teachers for engaging in tutoring activities was generally low at the outset of the study. These findings emphasize the need to revise and enhance the content, methodologies, and formats of tutor preparation. This includes the development of educational exercises, the simulation of pedagogical scenarios, and the integration of the certification program *Professional Tutors Training* to cultivate the essential personal and professional qualities required for tutoring roles.

A comparison of participant responses and readiness levels before and after the experimental phase revealed both quantitative and qualitative improvements in the psychological readiness of future tutors. The outcomes of this research and experimental intervention are detailed in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** The dynamics levels of teachers' psychological readiness for tutor activity at the start and at the end of research and experimental work

| Levels of Formation. | Criteria for the development of tutor activity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Motivational | | | | Cognitive | | | | Activity | | | | Reflexive | | | |
| | At the start of the experiment | | At the end of the experiment | | At the start of the experiment | | At the end of the experiment | | At the start of the experiment | | At the end of the experiment | | At the start of the experiment | | At the end of the experiment | |
| | EG | CG | EG | CG | EG | CG | EG | CG | EG | CG | EG | CG | EG | CG | EG | CG |
| High | 11 | 10,2 | 55,2 | 28,1 | 14 | 12,5 | 48,9 | 15 | 12,2 | 10,7 | 51,1 | 13,8 | 11,3 | 9,1 | 54,2 | 14,8 |
| Moderate | 27,2 | 25,7 | 23,7 | 48,9 | 32,2 | 29,1 | 34 | 36,8 | 26,8 | 24,9 | 42,3 | 46,9 | 28,4 | 26,3 | 34,6 | 70,4 |
| Low | 61,8 | 64,1 | 21,1 | 23 | 53,8 | 58,4 | 17,1 | 48,2 | 61 | 64,4 | 6,6 | 39,3 | 60,3 | 64,6 | 11,2 | 14,8 |

The analysis of empirical data from the experimental study demonstrated significant improvements in the psychological readiness for tutoring among participants in the experimental group (EG), where targeted tutor training was implemented. Specifically, the proportion of participants assessed at a *high* level of excellence tutoring increased from 0% to 52.3%, while the number at a *low* level decreased from 59.2%. In contrast, the control group (CG), which did not receive specialized training, showed a more modest improvement: readiness rose from a *low* level (62.9%) to a *moderate* level (50.7%).

The certification program *Professional Tutors Training* is designed to justify, develop, and implement methods for the psychological support of tutors' professional and innovative development. This initiative contributes to shaping the "excellence tutor" concept as part of broader systemic reforms in higher education, supporting the formation of an integrated educational environment and fostering the internationalization of professional competencies.

The program includes a comprehensive curriculum with courses such as:

- *Historical Sources and Theoretical Foundations of Tutoring*
- *Innovative Pedagogical Technologies*
- *Teaching and Tutoring Technology*
- *Methodology of Tutoring*
- *Tutor Support at Secondary School*
- *Tutoring in Inclusive Education*
- *Professional Tutors Training at a Higher Educational Institution*
- *Features of Tutor Support in Postgraduate Education*

Overall, the program aims to establish a foundational understanding of tutoring as a professional activity, promote the development of a professional standard for tutor qualifications, and ensure academic and professional evaluation of tutor competencies. Its core focus is on the structure, functions, and innovative aspects of tutor practice within higher education settings.

The educational process emphasizes consistent, independent, and active engagement with academic and professional literature, critical analysis, essay writing, and the preparation of scientific reports. Practical components are designed to help future tutors develop both theoretical knowledge and essential skills for self-management and professional growth within the tutoring domain.

In conclusion, the psychological readiness of tutors for professional activity is understood as a multifaceted construct comprising several interrelated components: motivational, orientational, cognitive-operational, emotional-volitional, psychophysiological, and evaluative. The *Professional Tutors Training* program actively supports the development of these components, thereby enhancing the quality and effectiveness of tutoring in Ukraine's higher education system.

It is essential to emphasize that pedagogical orientation, as a manifestation of pedagogical aptitude and disposition, constitutes a critical element within the overall structure of psychological readiness for tutoring activities. In the course of the experimental study, four key criteria were identified—motivational, cognitive, activity-based, and reflective—which correspond to distinct structural components of future tutors' psychological readiness for innovative tutoring.

The motivational criterion encompasses indicators such as a sustained interest in studying professional disciplines through the lens of humanistic teacher self-centration, the ability to address and solve pedagogical problems within tutor practice, and the capacity to link educational content to real-world applications. The cognitive criterion reflects participants' mastery of fundamental tutoring concepts, the ability to logically organize professional training materials, their understanding of the principles underlying innovative pedagogical activity, and readiness to apply interdisciplinary approaches in excellence tutoring.

The activity-based criterion includes the implementation of modern pedagogical technologies and innovative systems in practical settings, effective completion of tutor training through curricular practice, and the development of research and experimental competencies. It also involves the ability to convey learning material through cognitive strategies and structured pedagogical actions. The reflective criterion relates to the development of innovative competencies and the ongoing professional self-realization of the tutor, including self-assessment of engagement in innovation, personal interpretation of work style, and the ability to evaluate the outcomes of one's own professional practice.

## Conclusion

The experimental results demonstrated that the psychological readiness of future tutors—both in the experimental and control groups—was significantly enhanced at the formative stage of the project. This improvement is attributed to the implementation of a well-structured certification program (*Professional Tutors Training*), active engagement in practical trainings, participation in professional discussions, round tables, and thematic conferences focused on excellence tutoring, as well as the completion of training exercises aimed at cultivating innovation-oriented competencies and research skills.

Additionally, key contributing factors included the quality of the tutors' ability to defend and present their individual tutoring models (using both visual and verbal formats), the provision of well-prepared scientific and methodological guidelines for implementing the certification program, and the successful facilitation of training activities in secondary schools regarding the adoption of tutor practices.

Future research should focus on developing comprehensive educational and methodological toolkits, scientific and pedagogical literature tailored for participants of the *School of Excellence Tutoring* project, and evaluating best practices in tutor support. Further directions include designing training materials for teacher-researchers, facilitating professional exchange among project participants, formulating methodological guidelines for educators and psychologists, and establishing robust criteria and mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and long-term impact of the *School of Excellence Tutoring* initiative.

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