

Enhancing Students' Conflictological Competence Through an Acmeological Approach

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Abstract: The development of conflictological competence has become an important objective of contemporary higher education because university students increasingly participate in complex interpersonal, academic, social, and professional interactions. Differences in values, interests, expectations, communication styles, and individual experiences may generate conflict situations that require not only knowledge of conflict resolution but also emotional self-regulation, reflective thinking, constructive communication, and personal responsibility. This article theoretically substantiates the potential of the acmeological approach for enhancing students' conflictological competence. The study employs theoretical analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, and modelling of psychological-pedagogical approaches to conflict management and personal-professional development. The article clarifies the structure of conflictological competence and proposes four interrelated components: cognitive, emotional-regulatory, communicative, and reflective-acmeological. On this basis, an acmeological model for enhancing students' conflictological competence is developed. The model integrates self-awareness, conflict analysis, emotional self-regulation, constructive communication, reflective evaluation, and continuous self-development. Particular attention is given to problem-based learning, case studies, role-playing, dialogue, reflective tasks, and self-assessment as pedagogical mechanisms for transforming conflict experience into a resource for personal and professional growth. The scientific significance of the study lies in integrating conflictological competence with the principles of acmeological development and in proposing a pedagogical mechanism that moves beyond conflict avoidance toward constructive transformation of conflict situations. The proposed model can be used in higher education curricula, professional training, communicative skills courses, and student development programmes.

Keywords: Acmeology, acmeological approach, conflictological competence, conflict management, higher education, students, self-development, reflection, emotional regulation, constructive communication, professional development.

Introduction: Contemporary higher education is undergoing significant transformations associated with digitalization, globalization, increasing social diversity, changing professional requirements, and the growing importance of interpersonal communication. Under these conditions, the effectiveness of professional training cannot be determined exclusively by the amount of disciplinary knowledge acquired by students. Modern specialists are also expected to demonstrate emotional stability, communicative

flexibility, social responsibility, critical thinking, and the ability to constructively respond to complex interpersonal situations.

Conflict is an integral part of social interaction. Within a university environment, conflicts may occur between students, between students and teachers, within academic groups, during collaborative assignments, and in situations involving differences in academic expectations or personal interests. Therefore, the ability to understand, prevent, regulate, and

constructively resolve conflicts represents an important dimension of students' social and professional preparedness.

Conflictological competence should be distinguished from the simple ability to avoid conflict. Conflict avoidance may temporarily reduce tension but does not necessarily address the underlying causes of disagreement. A competent approach to conflict requires an individual to identify the source of disagreement, recognize the interests of the participants, regulate emotional reactions, select an appropriate communication strategy, and participate in the development of a constructive solution.

Recent empirical research demonstrates that specially designed conflict-management education can positively influence students' attitudes and skills in conflict situations. For example, a randomized controlled study involving medical students found significant improvements in conflict-management attitudes following an educational intervention compared with conventional instruction. Another intervention study using self- and observer-assessment reported improvement in students' conflict-management skills following structured training.

These findings indicate that conflictological competence can be intentionally developed through education. However, the pedagogical problem is not limited to teaching particular conflict-resolution techniques. It is also necessary to create conditions in which students can transform conflict experience into a mechanism of self-development and professional maturation. This creates a methodological basis for considering the problem from the perspective of acmeology.

Acmeology focuses on the conditions, mechanisms, and factors associated with the highest levels of personal and professional development. Contemporary pedagogical studies describe the acmeological approach as a framework emphasizing self-development, reflection, self-realization, motivation, and professional growth.

The relevance of combining these two dimensions lies in the fact that conflict situations may become not only obstacles to effective interaction but also opportunities for self-analysis, emotional development, communication improvement, and professional

growth. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to theoretically substantiate an acmeological approach to enhancing students' conflictological competence and to develop a conceptual pedagogical model for its implementation in higher education.

The objectives of the study are:

1. to clarify the pedagogical meaning of conflictological competence;
2. to identify its main structural components;
3. to determine the potential of the acmeological approach in conflictological development;
4. to establish pedagogical conditions for enhancing students' conflictological competence;
5. to develop a conceptual acmeological model of conflictological competence development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Conflictological competence in higher education

Conflictological competence represents an integrated capacity that enables an individual to recognize conflict situations, understand their causes, regulate personal emotional reactions, communicate constructively, and participate in conflict resolution.

Within higher education, this competence has a particularly important role because students are simultaneously developing as individuals and future professionals. Their interactions with peers and teachers provide a natural environment for developing social and communicative abilities.

Research on conflict management in higher education has demonstrated the usefulness of active learning approaches. A case study using the Prisoner's Dilemma in higher education showed that experiential learning and subsequent reflection could help students develop new understandings of conflict, interpersonal interaction, and interdependence.

This suggests that conflictological competence cannot be effectively developed through theoretical instruction alone. Students should be provided with opportunities to experience, analyze, discuss, and reflect upon conflict situations.

The competence therefore includes not only what a student knows about conflict, but also how the student behaves, communicates, regulates emotions, evaluates personal actions, and learns from experience.

2. Acmeological approach as a methodological foundation

The acmeological approach is associated with the study of human development toward higher levels of personal and professional maturity. In educational contexts, its main emphasis is placed on self-awareness, self-development, motivation, reflection, individual potential, and professional self-realization.

Recent research in pedagogical acmeology emphasizes that acmeological principles can contribute to students' professional development by strengthening self-awareness, reflective activity, motivation, creativity, and personal responsibility.

The acmeological approach therefore changes the position of the learner. The student is not merely an object of pedagogical influence but an active subject who is responsible for his or her own developmental trajectory. This principle is particularly relevant to conflictological competence. In a conflict situation, an individual should be able to ask:

- What caused the disagreement?
- What emotions am I experiencing?
- How do my emotions influence my behavior?
- What are the interests of the other person?
- Which communication strategy would be most appropriate?
- What can I learn from this experience?

Such questions transform a conflict situation into a reflective learning experience.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is theoretical and methodological in nature. It does not claim empirical experimental results. The methodological basis consists of the analysis and synthesis of psychological, pedagogical, and acmeological concepts related to conflict management, competence development, personal development, and higher education.

The following theoretical methods were used:

- analysis of scientific literature;
- comparison of theoretical approaches;
- synthesis of pedagogical and psychological concepts;
- generalization of research findings;
- structural analysis;
- modelling;
- interpretation of pedagogical mechanisms.

The methodological logic of the study is based on the integration of three conceptual dimensions: conflictological development + acmeological development + competence-based education.

This integration makes it possible to conceptualize conflictological competence as a dynamic characteristic that develops through knowledge acquisition, practical interaction, emotional regulation, reflection, and self-improvement.

STRUCTURE OF STUDENTS' CONFLICTOLOGICAL COMPETENCE

Based on the theoretical analysis, students' conflictological competence can be represented through four interrelated components.

Table 1. Structural components of students' conflictological competence

Component	Main content	Expected indicators
Cognitive	Knowledge of conflict nature, causes, types, stages and resolution strategies	Ability to identify and analyze the source of conflict
Emotional-regulatory	Emotional awareness, self-control, empathy and psychological stability	Ability to regulate emotional reactions
Communicative	Active listening, dialogue, negotiation and constructive argumentation	Ability to communicate respectfully and find common ground
Reflective-acmeological	Self-analysis, evaluation, self-correction and self-development	Ability to learn from conflict experience and improve behavior

The cognitive component provides the theoretical basis for understanding conflict. Without knowledge of

conflict mechanisms, students may interpret disagreements only through personal emotions and

stereotypes.

The emotional-regulatory component determines the ability to maintain psychological balance during tense situations. Emotional self-regulation is especially important because uncontrolled emotional reactions may intensify rather than resolve a conflict.

The communicative component reflects the student's ability to establish constructive interaction. Active listening, clarification, respectful disagreement, negotiation, and the ability to formulate "I-statements" are important elements of this component.

The reflective-acmeological component represents the developmental dimension of conflictological competence. It allows students to evaluate their own behavior and use conflict experience for further personal and professional growth.

ACMEOLOGICAL MECHANISM FOR ENHANCING CONFLICTOLOGICAL COMPETENCE

The central theoretical contribution of this study is the conceptualization of conflictological competence as a developmental process rather than a fixed personal characteristic.

The proposed mechanism consists of seven interconnected stages:

Stage 1. Self-awareness The student identifies personal behavioral tendencies, emotional reactions, communication habits, and typical responses to disagreement.

Stage 2. Conflict recognition The student identifies the existence of a conflict and distinguishes the actual

problem from emotional or personal interpretations.

Stage 3. Conflict analysis The student determines the causes, participants, interests, needs, positions, and possible consequences of the conflict.

Stage 4. Emotional self-regulation The student controls impulsive reactions, reduces emotional tension, and creates conditions for rational decision-making.

Stage 5. Constructive communication The student uses active listening, respectful dialogue, argumentation, clarification, negotiation, and cooperation.

Stage 6. Reflective evaluation After the situation, the student analyzes the effectiveness of personal behavior and the chosen strategy.

Stage 7. Self-development The experience is transformed into an individual developmental resource and used to improve future professional and interpersonal behavior.

The complete mechanism can be represented as: **SELF-AWARENESS → CONFLICT RECOGNITION → CONFLICT ANALYSIS → EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION → CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION → REFLECTION → SELF-DEVELOPMENT**

This sequence represents the central logic of the proposed acmeological approach.

PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

Based on the identified components and developmental mechanism, an acmeological model for enhancing students' conflictological competence is proposed.

Table 2. Acmeological model of conflictological competence development

Structural block	Content	Pedagogical tools	Expected outcome
Motivational	Need for self-development and constructive interaction	Motivation tasks, discussions	Positive orientation toward self-improvement
Cognitive	Knowledge about conflict	Lectures, problem-based tasks, cases	Understanding conflict mechanisms
Emotional-regulatory	Emotional awareness and self-control	Psychological exercises, simulations	Emotional stability
Communicative	Constructive interaction	Role-play, dialogue, debate	Improved communication
Reflective	Analysis of personal behavior	Reflection diary, self-assessment	Self-awareness
Acmeological	Continuous personal-professional growth	Individual development plan	Sustainable self-development

The model is based on several principles.

Principle of subjectivity: The student acts as an active subject of personal development rather than a passive recipient of pedagogical influence.

Principle of reflection: Every significant conflict experience should become an opportunity for self-analysis and learning.

Principle of constructive interaction: Conflict resolution should be based on respect, dialogue, cooperation, and recognition of the interests of all participants.

Principle of individual development: Students differ in communication styles, emotional regulation, social experience, and developmental needs. Therefore, individual trajectories should be considered.

Principle of continuity: Conflictological competence should not be developed through a single training session. It should be continuously reinforced throughout the educational process.

PEDAGOGICAL TECHNOLOGIES

Several pedagogical technologies can be integrated into the proposed model.

1. Case-study technology

Students analyze realistic conflict situations and identify:

1. the source of conflict;
2. the interests of the participants;
3. emotional factors;
4. possible solutions;
5. advantages and disadvantages of each solution.

The teacher does not immediately provide the correct answer. Instead, students are encouraged to construct and justify their own solutions.

2. Role-playing

Role-playing allows students to experience different positions within the same conflict. For example, one student may represent a teacher, another a student, and a third a mediator. After the role-play, participants change roles and repeat the situation.

This technique develops empathy and helps students understand that the same conflict can be interpreted differently by different participants.

3. Reflective diary

Students record significant communication situations and analyze them using a structured framework: Situation → Emotion → Reaction → Consequence → Alternative behavior → Lesson learned.

Such a structure directly supports the reflective-acmeological component of competence.

4. Problem-based learning

Students are presented with situations where there is no single obvious solution. They must analyze the problem and develop several alternative strategies.

This develops independent decision-making and reduces dependence on ready-made behavioral models.

5. Dialogic and debate-based learning

Debates help students develop the ability to defend their position without rejecting the position of others.

The main pedagogical objective is not to “win” the debate but to learn how to disagree constructively.

DISCUSSION

The proposed approach corresponds to contemporary tendencies in higher education that emphasize the development of students’ personal and professional competencies. Current acmeological research stresses self-development, reflection, professional self-realization, and the creation of educational conditions that help learners reach higher levels of personal and professional development.

At the same time, research on conflict-management education demonstrates that students can improve their conflict-related attitudes and skills through targeted educational interventions. These two research directions are usually considered separately. The present conceptual approach attempts to connect them.

The main theoretical proposition is that conflictological competence becomes more sustainable when conflict-management skills are integrated with the student's broader process of self-development.

For example, teaching a student to negotiate provides a specific behavioral skill. However, an acmeological approach asks a broader question: how does the student use this skill to improve personal and professional interaction? Similarly, emotional

regulation should not be regarded merely as a technique for reducing tension. It should be understood as part of the student's developing ability to consciously regulate personal behavior.

The same applies to reflection. Reflection is not simply a final discussion after a training activity. It should become a continuous mechanism through which students evaluate their experience and adjust their future behavior.

This conceptualization makes conflictological competence dynamic.

It develops according to the following logic: experience → analysis → reflection → correction → improved behavior → new experience. Thus, conflict itself can become a pedagogical resource.

SCIENTIFIC NOVELTY OF THE STUDY

The scientific novelty of the study is reflected in the following propositions. First, conflictological competence is conceptualized as an integrated personal-professional characteristic consisting of cognitive, emotional-regulatory, communicative, and reflective-acmeological components.

Second, the acmeological approach is applied not only to professional development in general but specifically to the development of students' ability to constructively manage interpersonal conflicts.

Third, a seven-stage developmental mechanism is proposed: self-awareness → conflict recognition → conflict analysis → emotional self-regulation → constructive communication → reflection → self-development.

Fourth, the article substantiates the idea that conflict experience can be transformed into a resource for personal and professional development through purposeful reflection. Fifth, a pedagogical model integrating competence-based, conflictological, reflective, and acmeological principles is proposed.

PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The proposed model can be incorporated into:

- higher education curricula;
- pedagogical and psychological disciplines;
- professional communication courses;
- student mentoring programmes;
- psychological and pedagogical training;

- academic group activities;
- teacher-training programmes;
- extracurricular student-development programmes.

The model can also be adapted to different professional fields because conflictological competence is relevant to future teachers, psychologists, managers, social workers, healthcare professionals, and other specialists whose professional activity involves intensive interpersonal interaction.

CONCLUSION

The development of conflictological competence represents an important dimension of modern higher education because professional effectiveness increasingly depends on the ability to interact constructively with people who have different values, interests, expectations, and perspectives.

The analysis demonstrates that conflictological competence cannot be reduced to knowledge of conflict-resolution techniques. It represents an integrated capacity that includes cognitive understanding, emotional self-regulation, constructive communication, reflection, and continuous self-development.

The acmeological approach creates a methodological basis for strengthening these dimensions because it emphasizes personal potential, self-awareness, reflection, professional growth, and self-realization. The proposed conceptual model demonstrates that conflictological competence can be enhanced through a continuous developmental process consisting of self-awareness, conflict recognition, conflict analysis, emotional self-regulation, constructive communication, reflective evaluation, and self-development.

The pedagogical effectiveness of this approach depends on creating an educational environment in which students are not simply taught to avoid conflicts but are encouraged to understand and constructively transform them. Accordingly, case studies, role-playing, problem-based learning, dialogue, debate, reflective diaries, self-assessment, and individual development plans can be systematically integrated into higher education.

The main theoretical conclusion is that conflict can be

transformed from a source of interpersonal tension into a resource for personal and professional development when it is accompanied by reflection, self-regulation, constructive communication, and acmeological orientation.

Future empirical research should test the proposed model through controlled educational interventions and assess changes in students' cognitive, emotional-regulatory, communicative, and reflective-acmeological indicators.

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