



Role of social communications in the development of interpersonal skills of future counselling psychologists

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■ **Abstract.** The purpose of this study was to ascertain how social interaction contributes to the development of key communication skills in psychology students and to identify effective educational methods that help this process. The research methodology employed a systematic approach, allowing for an in-depth exploration of how social communications contribute to the development of interpersonal skills in future counselling psychologists. The study analysed the impact of various teaching approaches, such as case studies, group discussions, mentoring, and the use of digital tools, on the development of professional skills in future professionals. It was found that such communication elements as non-verbal cues, active listening, and emotional interaction are crucial for building effective interaction between a specialist and their clients. The findings showed that practice-oriented methods, such as role-playing and mentoring, greatly improved students' ability to express empathy, manage emotional states, and resolve conflicts, which are fundamental to successful professional practice. The study also found that digital platforms, including simulation programmes and webinars, can considerably improve the effectiveness of the learning process, especially in a remote format. However, the maximum effect was achieved only when such tools were combined with conventional forms of training, such as mentoring and group exercises. The findings of this study emphasised the significance of an integrated approach to the training of future psychologists, where it is necessary to develop both emotional sensitivity and professional interaction skills. The practical significance of this study lies in the identification of effective educational approaches that contribute to the development of key interaction and communication skills in students preparing for professional activities in the field of psychological counselling

■ **Keywords:** emotional intelligence; active listening; empathy; professional interaction; emotional competence; professional growth

■ Introduction

Social communication has become an integral part of professional activity, especially for counselling psychologists. Effective interaction with clients requires a strong level of interpersonal skills, which are developed not only through theoretical training but also through practical social interactions. In the context of the growing complexity of social relations, there is a need to investigate more deeply how social communications affect the development of these skills in future

professionals. The relevance of this study is conditioned by the fact that conventional teaching methods do not always provide a sufficient level of preparation of students for the real challenges of the profession.

T. Anderson *et al.* (2020) found that modelling therapist responses through structured practice increased facilitative interpersonal skills in psychology students. This suggests that the integration of active social communication into the educational process could

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positively influence professional development. Furthermore, K.K. Sacco & K.E. Amende (2021) investigated the use of creative means for expressive self-reflection among future counsellors. Their findings revealed that creative methods encouraged students to deepen their self-knowledge and improved their ability to empathise, a key component of interpersonal skills. Creative expression in a social context contributed to the development of more flexible communication strategies, which was essential when working with various clients. On the other hand, T. Mösler *et al.* (2022) focused on reflective skills, empathy, well-being, and resilience in cognitive behavioural therapy students who took part in mindfulness-based self-reflection practices. The researchers concluded that these practices not only increased empathy but also contributed to the overall psychological well-being of the students. This emphasised the role of inner work and social interaction in the development of professional competence. The study by S.H.W. Chan *et al.* (2021) demonstrated the impact of mindfulness-oriented cognitive therapy on self-efficacy in counselling. The findings showed that mindfulness approaches could increase students' confidence in their professional skills, which was vital for effective social interaction with clients. The increase in efficiency contributed to more open and confident communication, which improved the quality of counselling.

L.S.A. Peixoto *et al.* (2021) analysed the impact of mindfulness interventions on emotional regulation, stress, and well-being in academic education. The researchers found that mindfulness helped to reduce stress and improve emotional regulation, which indirectly influenced the development of interpersonal skills. The ability to manage one's personal emotions was critical for building effective communications with clients. C.E.Jr. Watkins & L.J. Schneider (2020) emphasised the value of research in the field of counselling, addressing the role of social communication in the professional development of counselling psychologists. The researchers stressed the importance of continuous improvement of communication skills through research and practice. This pointed to the fact that continuing education and involvement in the professional community are essential for the development of competence. Another noteworthy study was conducted by E.M. Samfira (2020), who examined the development of assertive communication skills in universities. The researcher showed that the development of assertiveness contributed to more effective social interaction and prepared students for professional challenges. Assertiveness enabled future counselling psychologists to set clear boundaries and communicate their thoughts and feelings effectively. E. Heinonen & H.A. Nissen-Lie (2020) performed a systematic review of professional and personal characteristics of effective psychotherapists. The researchers concluded that personal qualities, such as empathy and the

ability to communicate effectively, are crucial for successful therapeutic practice. This emphasised the need to develop not only technical knowledge but also personal skills through social interactions.

The experience of L. Cronin *et al.* (2020) in studying the development of life skills in physical education through the lens of self-determination theory indicated that autonomy and social support were key factors in the development of interpersonal skills. Although their study focused on physical education, the principles can be applied in the context of psychological education. Providing students with opportunities for independent decision-making and social support contributed to their professional growth. B. Thornhill-Miller *et al.* (2022) discussed the significance of 21st-century skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. The researchers emphasised that the assessment and promotion of these skills are critical to education and future employment, making them relevant to counselling psychology education. The integration of these skills into the curriculum increased the adaptability and effectiveness of future professionals in changing social settings.

Despite the valuable contribution of these studies to the understanding of certain aspects of interpersonal skills development, there is still a gap in the comprehensive study of the role of social communication in this process for future counselling psychologists. Most studies have focused on individual methods or contexts, without considering the systemic impact of social communication in the educational process. The absence of a holistic approach to the integration of social communication left open the question of which methods were most effective and how they could be implemented in educational programmes. In this regard, this study was aimed at an in-depth investigation of the role of social communication in the development of interpersonal skills in psychology students. The key research questions were as follows: how social communications influence the development of interpersonal skills in future counselling psychologists and what methods of their implementation are most effective. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyse effective training methods that promote the development of communication skills in psychology students preparing for professional work with clients.

■ Materials and Methods

The methodology of this study was based on the use of a systematic approach, which enabled a comprehensive examination of the role of social communications in the development of interpersonal skills of future counselling psychologists. Based on the tasks set, the study was conducted through the systematic processing of various materials and sources that reflect the development of the communication sphere in the context of training future psychologists. The use of social

communications in the training of future psychologists has become the subject of a comprehensive analysis, since not only the quality of interpersonal interactions, but also the overall effectiveness of the future specialist's professional activity depends on the level of these communications.

The key concepts and structure of social communications were identified, including both interpersonal interactions and the influence of external factors such as curricula, educational trainings, and the role of media and technology. This helped to outline the context in which social communication becomes practical for the development of interpersonal skills, such as empathy, active listening, and the ability to interact verbally and non-verbally with others. An in-depth analysis of the scientific literature on social communications and their impact on the development of interpersonal skills was conducted (Chigwedere *et al.*, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2022; Perlman *et al.*, 2023). The following criteria for selecting sources were used in the literature analysis: the relevance of publications, the availability of peer review, and relevance to the research topic. A selective search of sources in the Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar databases was conducted using keywords including "social communication", "interpersonal skills development", "psychologist training". This provided a comprehensive overview of modern approaches to the development of interpersonal skills of future psychologists.

The method of analysis helped to identify the key concepts, approaches, and theories on the development of communication skills in psychological training, as well as to determine the most effective teaching methods that contribute to the development of these skills. The synthesis of the information obtained helped to summarise the previous findings and establish significant links between social communication and the professional competence of future psychologists. The induction method was used to draw conclusions based on concrete data collected during the study of various educational programmes and trainings aimed at training psychologists. Specifically, the use of social communication in practical classes and group training was analysed. The method of deduction was used to test the hypothesis that the integration of active social communication into the educational process contributes to the development of interpersonal skills. At the next stage of the study, the collected data were systematised by topic and areas of influence of social communications on the development of key skills of counselling psychologists. The generalisation of the findings helped to identify the key aspects that contribute to the development of empathy, active listening, non-verbal communication, and conflict management skills. Conclusions were drawn regarding the combination of conventional and modern teaching methods, including the use of digital technologies.

■ Results

Social communication is a complex process of information exchange between individuals, groups, or institutions through various channels, such as verbal and non-verbal communication, media, and digital technologies. The primary purpose of social communication is not only to transmit information, but also to ensure mutual understanding, which influences the formation of social relationships, behaviour and interaction. An essential aspect is how social communication affects the development of interpersonal relationships in a professional context, particularly in the field of psychology. For instance, in training programmes for future psychologists, special attention is paid to the use of social communications to develop empathy, active listening, and emotional intelligence. This is accomplished through trainings and workshops that simulate real-life situations of interaction with clients, enabling students to immerse themselves in the communication process and learn different interaction strategies.

Social communications also serve as an intermediary between diverse social groups, creating opportunities for the exchange of experience, knowledge, and ideas, thereby promoting greater collaboration and cooperation in the professional sphere. For instance, the integration of digital technologies, such as online video communication platforms, chatbots, and specialised psychological counselling software, greatly enhances communication opportunities (Shorey *et al.*, 2020). This enables professionals to maintain close contact with clients even over long distances by providing advice through online channels. This approach contributes to the development of communication skills in future psychologists and enables them to actively interact with various categories of clients in the modern digital environment.

One of the key elements of social communication is non-verbal means, such as gestures, facial expressions, intonation, and posture, which play a key role in establishing and maintaining mutual understanding during professional interaction between psychologists and clients. These aspects of communication help future professionals to better understand the emotional state of the interlocutor, which helps them build trusting and open relationships. The study of non-verbal aspects of communication is a vital component of psychologists' training, as these elements substantially affect the effectiveness of professional activity. For example, in their studies, future psychologists learn to recognise clients' facial reactions, which helps them better interpret emotions and adjust their approaches to conversation. Social communication is crucial in educational and professional contexts, where it serves as a means of communicating information and ideas between educators and students, as well as between professionals in their community. Effective social media not only facilitate the transfer of information, but also create favourable conditions for interaction between participants

in the learning process, increasing their engagement and motivation to learn.

In the study of social communication, there are several key theories and concepts that explain how information is exchanged between individuals, groups, and social institutions (Table 1). One of the central theories is the theory of communicative action, which focuses on people's desire for mutual understanding in the

communication process (Fuller *et al.*, 2021). According to this concept, the purpose of communication is to achieve a mutual understanding and coordination of actions, which is crucial in professional activities, particularly in the field of psychology. This is well illustrated during counselling, where psychologists apply their communication skills to reach mutual understanding with clients and help them solve their problems.

Table 1. Key theories and concepts of information exchange

Theory/Concept	Description	Example of application in the profession of counselling psychologists
Theory of communicative action (Jürgen Habermas)	Information exchange is aimed at achieving mutual understanding and coordination.	Used in psychological counselling to establish a dialogue with the client.
Theory of information redundancy	The effectiveness of communication is enhanced by repetition, detail, and clarification.	Psychologists use additional explanations or repeat key points for better understanding by the client.
Theory of social constructivism	People form their perceptions of reality through social interactions and communications.	Psychologists help clients reconsider their perception of life situations through dialogue.
Theory of cognitive dissonance (Leon Festinger)	People tend to avoid discomfort due to conflicting knowledge or beliefs.	Used by psychologists to help clients resolve internal conflicts and change behaviour.
Theory of uncertainty in communications	People seek to reduce uncertainty in new communication situations.	Psychologists help clients overcome uncertainty in communication, e.g., in new social groups.
Theory of exchange (Peter Blau)	Social interaction is based on a mutually beneficial exchange of resources (information, emotions).	Psychologists use it to maintain a balance in the therapeutic relationship.
Theory of structural functionality	Social institutions maintain stability and coordination in society through the exchange of information.	Used in counselling practice to understand the role of family, school, and other institutions in a client's life.
Theory of symbolic interaction (George Herbert Mead)	People interact based on the meanings they attach to symbols, gestures, and words.	Psychologists help clients understand non-verbal signals in interpersonal communication.

Source: compiled by the author based on N. Grover *et al.* (2021), M.R. Perlman *et al.* (2023)

Another significant concept is the theory of information redundancy, which states that the effectiveness of communication depends not only on the transmission of necessary information, but also on redundant elements such as repetition, clarification, or detail. This theory is extremely relevant in the work of counselling psychologists, where clarity and depth of information exchange are critical. Repeating and clarifying information during counselling sessions allows for a better understanding of the client's feelings and ensures that the psychologist correctly interprets their emotions and needs. The theory of social constructivism also plays a major role in understanding social communications. According to this theory, reality is created through social interaction, and people constantly "build" their understanding of the world based on communication processes. For counselling psychologists, this concept becomes relevant as their work is aimed at helping clients to reconsider their perceptions of situations and events that affect their emotional state. Through communicative interaction, the client gets the opportunity to rethink their problems and form a new vision of the situation. The concept of cognitive dissonance is also considered an important theory in social communications. It states that people seek to avoid psychological discomfort that arises from conflicting or contradictory knowledge and beliefs. In the professional work of psychologists, this theory helps to understand how

communication can influence changes in client behaviour or thinking. By using communication techniques, psychologists help clients overcome internal conflicts and achieve harmony in their perception of themselves.

Social communications play a key role in the development and maintenance of social relations, the development of society, and ensuring interaction between its members. Communication is the primary tool for exchanging information, knowledge, and ideas, which contributes not only to individual development but also to social integration. For instance, within public organisations and institutions, there is a constant exchange of opinions and views that influences the development of social norms, values, and collective decisions (Amari, 2021). In the political context, social communication is the basis for dialogue between government institutions and citizens, which ensures the democratic process. A prominent example is election campaigns, where citizens have access to a variety of opinions through the media and social media, enabling them to form their personal opinions and make decisions. Social communications also play a role in the socialisation process, where they help individuals adapt to existing social rules and norms. For example, in schools and educational institutions, communication between students and educators contributes not only to the transfer of knowledge, but also to the development of social competence, the ability to cooperate, resolve conflicts, and

establish connections (Morales-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2020). This is particularly relevant for professions that require a prominent level of interaction with people, such as psychologists, counsellors, and healthcare professionals. Social communication is also integral to economic development, as the effective exchange of information ensures the functioning of markets, increases productivity, and helps businesses better understand the needs of their customers. For example, companies use communication strategies to promote their products and services, interact with partners, and maintain their corporate culture. Successful businesses actively use social media to communicate directly with consumers, which enables them to receive feedback and improve their products or services in line with market needs.

In crisis situations, such as natural disasters or pandemics, the role of social media becomes even more critical. Through media and government channels, citizens receive valuable information about threats, safety measures, and support, which allows them to respond quickly to events and reduce social tensions. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, social media was instrumental in informing the public about quarantine measures, vaccinations, and medical advice, which helped control the spread of the virus. Interpersonal skills are the foundation of the professional activity of counselling psychologists, as they ensure effective interaction between the specialist and the client. One of the key skills is the ability to establish trusting contact with the client, which is crucial for the therapy process (Brown *et al.*, 2021). Without creating an atmosphere of trust and safety, the client may not confide in the therapist completely, which complicates the work on solving their psychological problems. Psychologists who have an elevated level of interpersonal skills can create a comfortable environment where the client feels supported and ready to cooperate. This is reflected, among other things, in the psychologist's ability to listen to the client without interrupting, giving them the opportunity to express their thoughts and emotions.

One of the most striking examples of the effective use of interpersonal skills is the work with clients who are dealing with traumatic events. In such cases, a counselling psychologist must display empathy – a profound understanding of the client's emotional state, which helps to create a supportive environment for working with distressing experiences. Empathy is a crucial tool as it facilitates the emotional connection between the psychologist and the client, helping the latter to feel understood and supported (Perryman *et al.*, 2021). This is particularly important during crisis counselling, where the client may be in a state of severe emotional stress. Another valuable interpersonal skill is the ability to ask open-ended questions that allow the client to reveal their thoughts and feelings more thoroughly. A psychologist must not only formulate such questions, but also be able to hear what is behind them, to notice

non-verbal signals that can reveal more than what the client says. For example, psychologists working with adolescents often use open-ended questions to encourage self-reflection, helping them to better understand their feelings and problems. Furthermore, conflict management skills play a major role, as counselling psychologists often work with clients who are experiencing internal or external conflicts. In such situations, a specialist should help the client understand the causes of the conflict, develop strategies for resolving it, and support the client in the process of changing behavioural patterns. For example, when working with married couples, psychologists often use techniques to help each partner express their needs and find a compromise.

When training future counselling psychologists, special attention is paid to the development of key components of interpersonal skills that ensure effective interaction with clients. One of these components is empathy – the ability of a specialist to feel and understand the emotional state of another person (Cooper *et al.*, 2020). Empathy enables psychologists to immerse themselves in the client's experience, creating a sense of support and security. This is crucial in the counselling process, as the client feels understood and open to dialogue. For example, when working with clients who are experiencing loss or trauma, a psychologist's empathy contributes to the emotional release and healing process. Active listening is another essential component of interpersonal skills. This process involves not only passive perception of information from the client, but also active engagement of the psychologist in the dialogue. Future psychologists learn not only to listen, but also to understand the context of what the client is saying, paying attention to details and emotional tones. For example, during training sessions, students practice using paraphrasing and mirroring techniques to help clients become more aware of their emotions (Waalkes *et al.*, 2024). This helps to establish a trusting connection and contributes to a deeper understanding of the problem. Non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, gestures, posture, and eye contact, is also a significant aspect of training future psychologists. These elements help to reinforce verbal communication or, conversely, to reveal hidden emotions of the client that are not always conveyed in words. For example, in situations where a client cannot openly express their feelings due to fear or shame, non-verbal cues, such as a change in voice tone or avoidance of eye contact, can give the psychologist more information about the client's emotional state.

During their training, students of psychology undergo special training to develop non-verbal sensitivity, which helps them to interpret non-verbal signals during consultations more accurately. Other components of interpersonal skills include the ability to maintain a neutral stance and tolerance for different views and values of clients. Future counselling psychologists learn not to

judge or criticise clients for their choices, creating an atmosphere of non-judgemental support where clients can openly express their thoughts and feelings. This is essential when working with people from diverse cultural or social backgrounds, which requires flexibility and understanding of individual client characteristics. The training of modern counselling psychologists faces a series of challenges that require the adaptation of curricula to rapidly changing social, technological, and professional conditions. One of the greatest challenges is the need to continuously integrate modern technologies into the practice of psychological counselling. Students must not only study the conventional methods of psychological help, but also learn how to work with online consultations, digital platforms, and tools for remote work with clients. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic and the full-scale war in Ukraine have revealed the value of remote work for psychologists, which has led many educational institutions to include training in the use of video conferencing, chats, and specialised platforms for conducting therapy at a distance in their training programmes.

Another challenge is the development of psychologists' intercultural competence. In the modern world, where increasing attention is being paid to multiculturalism and diversity, future psychologists must be prepared to work with clients from diverse cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. This requires not only knowledge about the characteristics of various cultures, but also the ability to adapt their methods of work to accommodate these differences. For example, psychologists working with immigrants or refugees must consider their traumatic experiences and specific cultural barriers that may affect the therapy process. Another challenge is the increasing number of psychological problems faced by clients in modern society. Future professionals must be prepared to handle new forms of stress associated with the fast pace of life, social media, information overload, and general instability in the world (McMahon & Rodillas, 2020). Technological changes, global crises, and the threat of economic turmoil put extra pressure on people's mental health, which increases the need for qualified psychological help. For example, the number of requests for help with anxiety disorders, depression, and social isolation is growing, which has become particularly acute following the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused severe emotional stress among people around the world.

The war in Ukraine, which has caused severe psychological trauma among the population, is yet another factor that creates challenges for psychologists. Psychologists should be prepared to work with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, grief, and loss, as well as with the problems of social adaptation for internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and veterans. People affected by war often face chronic stress, which affects not only their mental but also their

physical condition. Future psychologists should be prepared for such challenges and have the knowledge and skills to work with such clients. For many Ukrainians, the war has become a source of complex psychological trauma, which manifests itself through fear, anxiety about the future, and a sense of loss of stability and security. This requires counselling psychologists not only to have a comprehensive understanding of trauma-related psychological processes, but also to adapt therapeutic methods to the unfamiliar environment, including crisis counselling, group therapy, and long-term support for war victims. In the context of war and other global crises, psychologists play a critical role in helping society recover from the consequences of these catastrophic events. The requirements of modern psychological training also include an emphasis on the development of personal and emotional resources of the specialists themselves. Future counselling psychologists must be capable of managing their emotions and maintaining their mental health at a sufficient level to avoid professional burnout. This requires the inclusion of courses aimed at developing self-regulation skills, meditation, and emotional stability in the curriculum (Perlman *et al.*, 2020). In this context, the role of supervision becomes vital, where students can discuss their emotional state and the challenges, they face in the training process.

Social communication is a powerful tool for developing interpersonal skills, especially in the context of training future counselling psychologists. They provide a platform for interaction that helps future professionals improve their communication skills, emotional flexibility and ability to adapt to different situations. For example, participation in group discussions and practical exercises allows psychology students to train their skills of active listening, asking the right questions and expressing empathy in real-life situations. This is particularly relevant in the context of preparing for professional work, as such skills are the foundation for effective work with clients. One of the key elements of social communication is the ability to establish contacts and maintain dialogue in various social contexts. Psychology curricula actively employ such methods as role-playing and simulation of real counselling sessions, which helps to develop self-confidence and communication skills (Chapman-Hilliard & Parker, 2022). Students can gain experience in interacting with various types of clients, including those who may be resistant or avoid discussing sensitive topics. Through such teaching methods, future psychologists learn how to maintain open and honest communication, which is crucial for establishing trusting relationships with clients.

Social media and digital platforms also play a major role in developing interpersonal skills. For instance, online training and webinars allow students to gain new knowledge and practice their communication skills remotely. The use of video conferencing, chats,

and forums helps future psychologists to master communication skills in a digital environment, which is extremely useful in the modern context where remote consultations have become commonplace. Furthermore, social communication contributes to the development of conflict management and critical thinking skills. In the training of psychologists, a prominent aspect is learning how to resolve conflict situations that may arise during consultations. For example, training in mediation or negotiation techniques helps students learn to identify sources of conflict and find ways to resolve them constructively. This allows psychologists not only to work more effectively with clients, but also to better manage their emotional reactions in complex situations. For future counselling psychologists, the development of interpersonal skills through social

communication forms an integral part of their professional training. There are several practical methods that help to improve these skills by integrating them into real-life communication situations and learning processes (Table 2). One of the most effective methods is role-playing. They allow psychology students to study complex scenarios of interaction with clients in a safe environment. For example, during the games, students can play the roles of both psychologists and clients, re-enacting various types of consultations. This helps them develop skills in active listening, empathy, and adaptation to the emotional needs of the client. Research shows that role-playing games improve students' ability to intuitively recognise emotions and resolve conflict situations that often arise during psychological counselling.

Table 2. Effectiveness of various practical teaching methods

Teaching method	Key skills developed	Benefits	Challenges
Role-playing games	Active listening, emotion management	Practice in a safe environment	Requires additional resources
Trainings with supervision	Consultative skills, feedback	Continuous feedback	Limited number of supervisors
Modelling of consultations	Response to crisis situations	Proximity to real-world conditions	Complexity of organisation
Virtual simulations	Recognition of non-verbal signals, stress management	Possibility of practising scenarios multiple times	Technical requirements, need for special software
Group discussions	Critical thinking and argumentation	Stimulates the exchange of ideas, develops teamwork	Requires a moderator, conflict of opinion may arise
Online consultations (remote work)	Communication skills in a digital environment	Preparation for the real conditions of remote work	Lack of physical presence, technical problems
Practical workshops and masterclasses	Skills of real therapeutic work	Gaining knowledge from experts, possibility of interaction	Limited number of participants

Source: compiled by the author based on C. Chigwedere et al. (2021), C.-S. Li et al. (2022)

Another valuable method is group discussions. They give an opportunity for students to interact with their peers and instructors, discussing different approaches to working with clients. By exchanging ideas, students can improve their communication skills by arguing their positions and learning to accept other opinions. Group discussions also help to develop critical thinking, which is essential for making the right decisions in counselling. For example, when discussing complex cases from clinical practice, students learn how to formulate questions, analyse client behaviour, and give balanced advice. The use of video recordings of consultations is essential for improving non-verbal communication skills. Watching and analysing their personal and other people's sessions allows students to better understand how non-verbal cues affect the communication process. For example, analysing non-verbal behaviours such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice can show students how a client reacts to certain topics or situations. This allows future psychologists to improve their ability to read non-verbal cues and adapt their behaviour accordingly.

Furthermore, supervision is a crucial component of interpersonal skills development. This process involves students working under the supervision of experienced

psychologists who provide feedback on their work. Supervision helps students develop confidence in their communication skills as they receive professional advice on how to improve their interactions with clients. For example, a supervisor can help a student to solve a problem when they encounter difficulties in communicating with a client or point out weaknesses in communication strategies. Reflection allows students to analyse their communication successes and failures. After each consultation or training session, students are encouraged to write down their observations of the interaction with the client, including how the client reacted to their words, gestures, and how they felt during the interaction. This approach allows students to better understand what aspects of their communication need further improvement.

Integration of modern technologies into the teaching process for future counselling psychologists is an essential element of their professional training. Technological advances have substantially changed approaches to learning, enabling students to acquire knowledge and practical skills through a variety of digital tools. The use of such technologies not only improves the quality of the educational process, but also makes it more flexible and adaptive to the needs of the modern

world. One of the key examples is the use of distance learning platforms such as Moodle (n.d.), Canvas (n.d.), or Zoom (n.d.). They enable students to take part in lectures, seminars, and trainings in real time, regardless of their location. This is particularly relevant in the context of distance education, which has become widely used after the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, distance learning platforms promote the development of independent learning skills, as students have access to materials at any time convenient for them and can manage their learning process.

Another significant tool is virtual simulators and online simulations of counselling sessions. This approach allows students to develop confidence in their skills and abilities before they start real practice, as well as receive feedback from teachers and colleagues on their actions. Online trainings and webinars are also becoming principal elements in the training of future psychologists. Thanks to them, students can gain knowledge from experts around the world, take part in masterclasses and seminars without leaving their educational institution. For instance, during webinars on crisis counselling or working with PTSD, students can receive practical advice on how to work with clients who have experienced traumatic events. This enables future professionals to expand their knowledge and improve their practical skills in working with diverse types of clients.

Furthermore, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the training of future psychologists opens new horizons for the integration of modern technologies into the educational process. For example, AI-based systems can analyse student responses, provide feedback, and suggest individualised ways to develop skills. This helps students receive more personalised support in the learning process. The integration of digital platforms for documentation during psychological sessions is equally important. The use of such tools allows future professionals to organise their work more efficiently by storing records of consultations, creating therapy plans, and tracking client progress. Platforms such as SimplePractice (n.d.) or TheraNest (n.d.) are already widely used in professional practice, and their application in the educational process allows students to transition from study to real work more easily. It is also worth mentioning the value of developing social media skills. Social media is an indispensable tool for psychologists to build their professional brand and interact with clients. Future counselling psychologists should learn how to use social platforms to provide information support to clients, promote their services, and even conduct consultations through secure communication channels.

■ Discussion

The findings of this study indicate the important role of social communication in the development of interpersonal skills of future counselling psychologists. The data obtained demonstrate that social communication

contributes to the development of empathy, active listening and conflict management – skills necessary for the effective work of psychologists with clients. The value of these findings is confirmed by the research of other experts who investigated the role of social communication and interpersonal skills in the professional activities of psychologists. For example, J.T. Quaglia *et al.* (2022) pointed out the significance of compassion and empathy in the work of counsellors, emphasising that these skills contribute to the creation of trusting relationships with clients. The findings of both studies suggest that social media is an effective tool for developing these key skills in a professional environment. Another interesting discovery concerns the role of digital technologies in the training of psychologists. The study showed that the use of online platforms and simulations helps students improve their communication skills and prepare for real counselling sessions. These findings correlate with those presented by T. Blakemore & K. Agllias (2020), who examined how social media influences the development of empathy and interpersonal skills in students preparing to become social workers. They found that digital technologies can contribute to the development of social and emotional skills, but their effectiveness depends on how these technologies are used in the educational process. The present study confirmed these findings, pointing to the significance of integrating technology into psychology curricula. This study also confirmed the significance of conflict management in counselling. T. Blakemore & K. Agllias noted that conflict management skills can be effectively developed through group discussions and social media. However, the present study highlighted that the most effective method is mediation training, where students learn to resolve conflict situations in the format of role-playing games. This allowed students to be better prepared to work with clients experiencing internal or external conflicts.

Non-verbal communications, including facial expressions, gestures, and posture, also play an essential role in the development of psychologists' interpersonal skills. They are an important complement to verbal communication, helping professionals to interpret the emotional state of clients more accurately. This is especially noticeable when working with clients who cannot openly express their feelings due to psychological barriers or traumatic experiences. In such situations, non-verbal cues become a key source of information for the psychologist, enabling them to build a deeper understanding of the client's internal state. R. Elliott *et al.* (2023) in their systematic review found that empathic reflections, albeit a valuable tool for conveying an understanding of client experiences, were not always sufficiently effective when used in isolation. The researchers noted that successful communication requires a comprehensive approach that includes not only verbal reflections, but also the integration of

non-verbal cues such as gestures and tone of voice. The researchers also highlighted the significance of flexibility in the approach to empathic mirroring, which requires precise calibration to the client's non-verbal cues. The present study confirmed these findings, showing that teaching psychology students the non-verbal aspects of communication is essential for the development of their professional skills. For instance, the ability to promptly detect a subtle change in a client's facial expressions or posture helped the psychologist to adjust their approach in real time, which increased the effectiveness of the therapeutic interaction. Thus, non-verbal communication is an indispensable component of complex empathy and supports the development of a trusting relationship between psychologist and client.

A significant aspect of this study is the development of intercultural competence of future counselling psychologists. In the modern globalised world, professionals must be equipped to work with clients from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. Y. Liu *et al.* (2022) showed that mutual empathy developed through group activities greatly improves students' ability to communicate interculturally. The findings of the present study confirmed this approach, emphasising the importance of intercultural competence in the profession of psychology, especially when working with immigrants or refugees. Practical training under the guidance of supervisors helped to develop students' confidence and professional competence. Supervision provided an opportunity to receive feedback from experienced professionals, which helped students to adjust their approaches to working with clients in a timely manner and improve their communication and therapeutic skills. R.R. Harris (2022) noted that the emotional intelligence and awareness of psychologists directly influenced the level of stress they experienced during their studies and work. Her study showed that the higher the level of emotional intelligence of psychologists, the lower the level of stress, which helped them to perform their duties more effectively and maintain emotional stability. The present study was consistent with these findings, demonstrating that supervision helped to reduce students' stress levels and contributed to the development of their emotional and professional skills. During supervision, students were given the opportunity to handle demanding situations in a controlled environment, which reduced their anxiety levels and increased their effectiveness in counselling. Practical training with supervision helped students to better understand their emotional reactions to stressful situations and to develop strategies for managing stress.

At the same time, some aspects of this study differ from the findings of previous research. For example, S. Kim *et al.* (2021) found that emotional learning programmes and mindfulness training can considerably

reduce the level of teacher burnout. Their study showed that such programmes helped teachers to better understand their emotional reactions, reducing stress levels and improving overall well-being. However, the present study indicated that for counselling psychologists, these programmes are only effective when combined with other training methods, such as group discussions, role-playing, or practical simulations of counselling sessions. This suggests that training psychologists is a more complex process that requires a multicomponent approach, where not only emotional development but also the development of communication and practical skills must be considered. Role-playing games and group discussions gave students the opportunity to interact with colleagues, analyse various situations with clients and learn how to respond to their emotional signals. This allowed them to combine theoretical knowledge with practical experience, which is crucial in training psychologists who will work with diverse types of clients in complex life situations in the future. Thus, psychologists need to dedicate more time to the development of communication skills and the ability to manage the emotions of their clients.

The findings of the present study showed that emotional learning programmes and mindfulness training can be useful for psychologists only in combination with other interactive training methods. This emphasised the significance of an integrated approach to training future professionals, which included both the development of emotional competence and practical skills in interacting with clients. Overall, the findings of this study confirmed the relevance of an integrated approach to the training of future counselling psychologists, where social communication, practical training, and technology were integrated to develop key skills. This was in line with the findings of other researchers who pointed to the significance of multiple approaches in training. For example, R. Kimball & D. Daniel (2020) emphasised the role of reflective writing in developing students' cognitive complexity, which coincides with the findings of the present study regarding the need for self-reflection and analysis of future psychologists' behaviour.

The study found that social communication has a decisive influence on the development of interpersonal skills in future counselling psychologists. Both verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication play a significant role in this process, which is confirmed by the outcomes of trainings and group interactions. The use of modern technologies and interactive teaching methods, such as role-playing and simulation of consultations, helps to increase students' confidence in professional skills. It was found that a comprehensive approach to training that combines emotional preparation with practical skills is most effective. The study also showed that supervision reduces stress and supports the development of students' emotional competence.

■ Conclusions

The study identified a series of key aspects related to the role of social communications in the development of interpersonal skills of future counselling psychologists. Specifically, it was found that effective training of psychologists requires a multicomponent approach that includes not only the development of emotional competence, but also the development of communication and practical skills. Social communications played a crucial role in this process, as they contributed to creating conditions for effective interaction between psychologist and client, which underlies successful therapeutic practice. The findings of the study confirmed that the use of such methods as role-playing games, group discussions, and supervision are effective tools for developing the communication skills of future psychologists. These methods enabled students not only to acquire the necessary professional skills, but also to better understand their emotional reactions and stress management strategies when working with clients.

The findings of this study indicate a positive effect of social communications on the development of key interpersonal skills in psychology students. Specifically, the study recorded improvements in such skills as active listening, empathy, conflict management, and non-verbal communication. Furthermore, the study revealed the vital role of digital technologies in psychologists' education. The use of online platforms, simulations, and webinars has enabled students to acquire new knowledge and practical skills regardless of their location, which increases the flexibility of the learning process. This is especially true in the context of distance learning, which has become necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in

Ukraine. However, digital tools are only effective when combined with practical training under the supervision of supervisors or teachers. Based on the study conducted, several practical recommendations can be made to improve the training of future psychologists. Educational institutions should pay more attention to the integration of practical teaching methods, such as role-playing and supervision, as they are effective tools for developing professional skills. Digital technologies should be more actively introduced into the educational process, especially in the context of distance learning. The combination of conventional and online learning methods will ensure flexibility and accessibility of educational programmes. However, despite the positive findings, the study has certain limitations. One of them concerns the theoretical framework of the study, which limited the analysis to only certain aspects of social communications and psychology training. Future research should expand the range of research methods, particularly by focusing on the interaction of diverse approaches to training. Further research should also focus on the development of tools for assessing the effectiveness of various teaching methods, especially in the context of digital technologies. Examining how the integration of AI and virtual simulations can contribute to the development of empathy and communication skills in future psychologists could be a major step towards improving the educational process.

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■ Conflict of Interest

None.

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Роль соціальних комунікацій у розвитку міжособистісних навичок у майбутніх психологів-консультантів

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■ **Анотація.** Метою проведення даного дослідження було з'ясувати, як соціальна взаємодія сприяє формуванню ключових навичок спілкування у студентів психологічних спеціальностей та визначити ефективні освітні методики, що допомагають цьому процесу. Методологія дослідження ґрунтувалася на системному підході, що дало змогу глибоко дослідити, як соціальні комунікації сприяють розвитку міжособистісних навичок майбутніх психологів-консультантів. У ході дослідження було проаналізовано вплив різних підходів до навчання, таких як моделювання ситуацій, групові обговорення, наставництво та впровадження цифрових інструментів, на розвиток професійних умінь у майбутніх фахівців. Було встановлено, що такі елементи комунікації, як невербальні сигнали, активне слухання та емоційна взаємодія, є надзвичайно важливими для побудови ефективної взаємодії між спеціалістом і його клієнтами. Результати свідчать про те, що методи, орієнтовані на практику, такі як рольові ігри та наставництво, значно покращували здатність студентів до виявлення емпатії, управління емоційним станом та вирішення конфліктів, що є основоположними для успішної професійної діяльності. Дослідження також показало, що цифрові платформи, включаючи симуляційні програми та вебінари, можуть значно підвищити ефективність навчального процесу, особливо у віддаленому форматі. Однак, максимальний ефект досягався лише за умови поєднання таких інструментів із традиційними формами підготовки, такими як наставництво та групові вправи. Підсумки дослідження наголосили на важливості інтегрованого підходу до підготовки майбутніх психологів, де необхідно розвивати як емоційну чутливість, так і професійні навички взаємодії. Практичне значення даного дослідження полягає у визначенні ефективних освітніх підходів, що сприяють формуванню ключових навичок взаємодії та спілкування у студентів, які готуються до професійної діяльності у сфері психологічного консультування.

■ **Ключові слова:** емоційний інтелект; активне слухання; емпатія; професійна взаємодія; емоційна компетентність; професійне зростання