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ABSTRACT

The relevance of the study is due to practical tasks regarding the purposeful formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning, which has been implemented in Ukraine since the beginning of the pandemic and during martial law. The aim of the study is to determine, justify and verify experimentally of the effectiveness of didactic conditions for the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning. The basis of empirical research was University of Ukoopspilks «Poltava University of Economics and Trade», Poltava Cooperative College, VSP «Professional College of Management, Economics and Law of the Poltava State Agrarian University». The study was conducted in 2019–2022 study years. Research methods: analysis of scientific and methodical literature; pedagogical observation; pedagogical experiment; pedagogical testing; methods of mathematical statistics. The experiment covered 407 students of law school graduation courses, future lawyers, who were studying in educational programs of specialty 081 «Law» in the field of knowledge 08 «Law», as well as 36 teachers of legal disciplines, 7 teachers of the coordination group of the experiment. It was established that in experimental groups the qualitative and quantitative indicators of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning after the experiment were significantly higher than in control groups, which proves the versatile positive influence of the specified didactic conditions.

Keywords: blended learning, didactic conditions, future lawyers, professional activity, readiness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the fundamental position of the state policy of Ukraine in the field of legal education is the preparation of a lawyer in accordance with his fundamental role, namely, affirmation of the rule of law, protection of human rights and freedoms. The (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996) proclaims the principle of the rule of law, and it is also determined that the establishment and provision of human rights and freedoms is the main duty of the state. Under these conditions, the social importance of the legal profession is growing, the features of which are its state character, legal regulation of activity, creative nature of work, procedural independence and personal responsibility. In this regard, legal education should create the most favorable conditions for the formation of a competent, competitive, highly qualified professional lawyer with a high level of professional competence. Studying the scientific output of scientists (Graham, 2006; Verkroost et. al., 2008; Singer et. al., 2010; Norberg et. al., 2011; Bonk et. al., 2012; McGee et. al., 2012; Drysdale et. al., 2013; Lalima et. al., 2017; Sobchenko, 2021; Emetc et. al., 2022) makes it possible to testify that nowadays the educational community, in

particular, law school teachers, directs its attention to blended learning.

The relevance of the study is due to practical tasks regarding the purposeful formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning, which has been implemented in Ukraine since the beginning of the pandemic and during martial law. In order to optimize this process, make it effective and purposeful, it is necessary to have information about the numerous variables, that mediate it, and to deeply know the techniques, means and methods of achieving the desired results. A peculiar situation has arisen in legal education: on the one hand, the need and effectiveness of the process of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning determined by the realities of the time is recognized, and on the other hand, there is no theory that scientifically substantiates the ways of realizing the available possibilities of this process.

Based on the analysis of scientific sources (pedagogical, legal), it was found that the progressive reform and modernization of the legal education system in Ukraine, which is related to the problem of personality formation of future lawyers of the new generation, in the process of professional training taking into account all modern requirements and challenges is required, namely: European integration processes, the need for quick adaptation of future lawyers in the conditions of digitalization of society, democratization and humanization of modern society, the growth of the social role of the individual, the development of his intellectual and creative potential, fundamental changes in the system of legal education in the conditions of distance educational process and information-rich educational environment, the positioning of legal education as a driving force for the development of civil society, the need to build Ukraine as a legal state.

Analysis of modern scientific and pedagogical investigations (Pisuliński, 2005; Androschuk, 2006; Vysotska, 2016; Bochevar, 2017; Vasylyna, 2017; Tsyganiy, 2017) enables the conclusion that the priority factor in the development of Ukraine as a legal and democratic state is the professional training of lawyers with a focus on the demands of the labor market and social needs for qualified, competitive specialists. This actualizes the problem of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning and requires improvement of the process of their professional training, which involves, in particular, the argumentation of didactic conditions that potentially improve the effect of achieving this goal. However, despite the indisputable significance of these studies, important theoretical-methodological and methodical aspects of the problem of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning have not been sufficiently studied.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of the study is to determine, justify and verify experimentally of the effectiveness of didactic conditions for the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning.

An experimental study of the effectiveness of didactic conditions for the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning was carried out during 2019–2022 on the basis of University of Ukoopspilks «Poltava University of Economics and Trade», Poltava Cooperative College, VSP «Professional College of Management, Economics and Law of the Poltava State Agrarian University».

The experiment covered 407 students of law school graduation courses, future lawyers, who were studying in educational programs of specialty 081 «Law» in the field of knowledge 08 «Law» (bachelor's degree, professional junior bachelor's degree), of which 202 are in the control (CG) and 205 in the experimental (EG) groups, as well as 36 teachers of legal disciplines, 7 teachers of the coordination group of the experiment.

Assistance in the organization of the flexible model of blended learning was provided by a coordination group of 7 teachers-specialists in mixed and resource-based learning (University of Ukoopspilks «Poltava University of Economics and Trade», Poltava Cooperative College, VSP «Professional College of Management, Economics and Law of the Poltava State Agrarian University», Poltava State Medical University), who prepared and conducted a series of webinars for teachers of legal disciplines (36 persons) «Models of blended learning: which one to choose, how to implement, how to improve».

The pedagogical experiment was conducted in two stages: ascertaining and formative.

At the *ascertaining stage* of the research (2019–2021), a theoretical analysis of the state of formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning was carried out, the main definitions of the study were clarified and revealed, the structural components of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning were determined. The current state of professional training in institutions of higher education in the conditions of the pandemic, which led to the use of blended learning in the educational process, was analyzed.

The peculiarities of the educational process in institutions of higher education, the opinion of teachers of legal disciplines regarding the problem of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning were studied. A positive attitude of scientific and pedagogical personnel to the flexible model of blended learning was recorded; the didactic conditions for the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning were identified and substantiated (Fig. 1); a diagnostic toolkit was developed (online questionnaire «My attitude to blended learning», comprehensive test «Readiness of future

lawyers for professional activity during blended learning», an interactive online form for solving legal problems, a virtual classroom for students' research activities).

At this stage, the program of a pedagogical experiment was presented during the web conference «Problems of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activities during blended learning» using the Google Meet service.

A set of the following research methods was used in the research process:

1) theoretical – analysis of scientific literature and regulatory documents, synthesis, comparison, generalization and systematization of the obtained data in order to compare the different views of scientists regarding the problem of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning, clarification of the concept of «readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning», determination of the structural components of this readiness, to clarify the specifics of the professional training of future lawyers;

2) empirical – pedagogical observation, questionnaire, testing, conversation, pedagogical survey; pedagogical experiment to test the effectiveness of didactic conditions for the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning;

3) mathematical statistics – for processing experimental data, their quantitative and qualitative analysis. They were used to identify the reliability of the difference between the studied indicators, the correct processing of the results, reflecting them in graphical and tabular forms, conducting experimental testing; descriptive statistics, determination of the statistical significance of differences between groups by correlation analysis by Pearson's method.

The research hypothesis is that the process of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during mixed education will be effective if such didactic conditions are implemented: improvement of the content of the professional training of future lawyers based on the implementation of an online course «Cultural and legal behavior of a modern lawyer»; systematic organization of creation of digital educational resources for the study of legal disciplines; activation of legal education of students on the basis of interactivity; strengthening the positive motivation of students for scientific research activities based on traditional face-to-face education and computer-mediated (distance) interaction; involvement of students to work in consultation centers to provide additional legal services to the population.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A future lawyer is a legal education student – a person who studies at a law school at a certain level of higher education under the educational program of specialty 081 «Law» or 293 «International Law» in order to obtain the corresponding degree and qualification. A law school is either an institution of higher education or its structural subdivision, or an institution of professional pre-higher education, which operates in accordance with the issued license to conduct educational activities at certain levels of higher education.

Within the framework of the study, the «readiness of the future lawyer for professional activity» was defined as multidimensional, systematic and dynamic personal education, which is a set of legal knowledge, skills and abilities, attitude to the law as a value that manifests itself in legitimate activity and is characterized by general respect for the law.

The component composition of the structure of readiness of future lawyers for professional activity was determined: *cognitive, operational-activity and personal-value components*.

The cognitive component of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity reflects the system of professional knowledge (fundamental and specialized), which are essential for the successful implementation of future professional activities in various fields of law.

The operational-activity component reflects the system of legal abilities and skills for carrying out lawful activities, which are a practical implementation of the system of professional legal knowledge in practice.

The personal-value component reflects the legal values of future lawyers, which indicate a person's attitude to the law, personal qualities necessary for successful professional activity (responsibility, perseverance, ability to learn, honesty, justice, ability to work with people and inspire trust, etc.), respect for the law.

Analytical understanding of the scientific and methodological development serves as a basis for the conclusion that blended learning in pedagogy is interpreted as a combination of digital, pedagogical technologies and practice-oriented tasks; mixing different approaches to the organization of the educational process; effective combination of different methods, models and styles of learning; an innovative concept of organizing the educational process that accumulates the advantages of online and offline learning. It was found that the basis of blended learning is the approach of didactic awareness of the combination of traditional learning technologies and virtual learning technologies. The mixed nature of learning involves a combination of forms and methods of learning, the implementation of an individual learning trajectory and conscious motivation for independent work. Seminars, lectures, various types of practice, instruction in the classroom learning process involve both direct contact between the teacher and students, and virtual communication thanks to the modern possibilities of digital technologies and a wide range of Internet services. Scientists (Sobchenko, 2018; Zhamardiy et. al., 2019;

Kononets et. al., 2021; Nestulya et. al., 2021; Shkola et. al., 2022) have also developed a number of methodological recommendations for the organization of various models of blended learning («flipped learning», «rotational model», «flexible model», «personally oriented model», «self-mixing model», «enriched virtual environment model», etc.) in order to create comfortable learning conditions for students.

The process of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activities during blended learning is considered as a targeted system of measures regarding the creation of conditions during online and offline education of students at the law school for their successful adaptation and integration into professional activity with the aim of confirming the understanding of the legal profession as a profession aimed at protecting human rights and freedoms, conviction in the necessity and social utility of laws, the importance of the value of law as a degree of freedom and justice.

Based on the results of psychological and pedagogical research and the practical experience of law schools, the didactic conditions for the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning have been determined (Fig. 1):

- 1) improvement of the content of the professional training of future lawyers based on the implementation of the online course «Cultural and legal behavior of a modern lawyer»;
- 2) systematic organization of creation of digital educational resources for the study of legal disciplines;
- 3) activation of legal education of students on the basis of interactivity;
- 4) strengthening the positive motivation of students for research activities based on traditional face-to-face instruction and computer-mediated (distance) interaction;
- 5) involvement of students to work in consultation centers to provide additional legal services to the population.

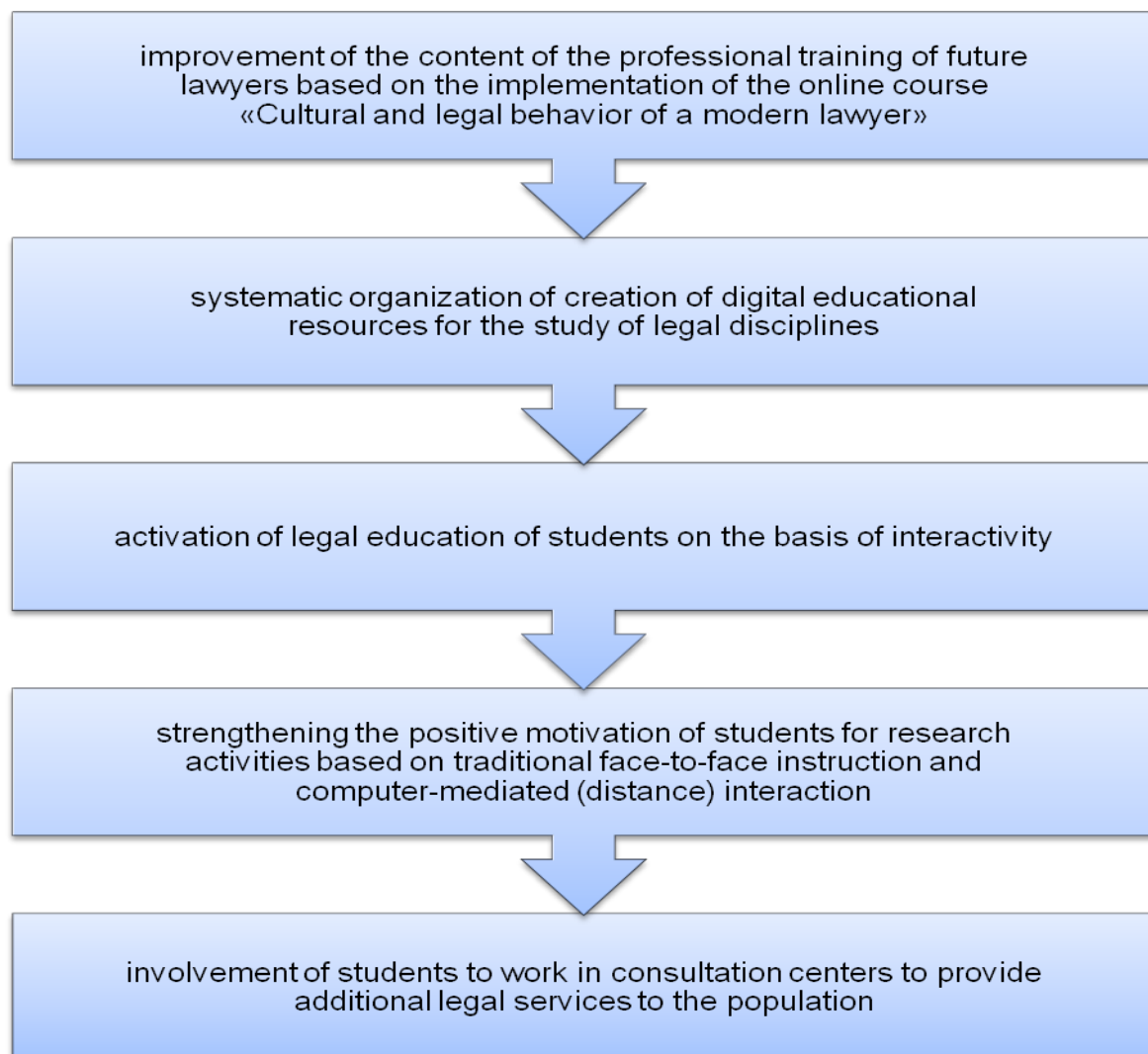


Fig.1:Didactic conditions for the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning

The methodological basis for the implementation of didactic conditions is represented by the main provisions of the concept of the development of higher legal education in Ukraine, concepts of improving legal (legal) education for the professional training of a lawyer in accordance with European standards of higher education and the legal profession, concepts of direct relations of courts with the public, the (Concepts of Distance Education Development in Ukraine, 2000; National Program of Legal Education of the Population, 2001; Project Concept of Digital Transformation of Education and Science of Ukraine for the Period Until 2026, 2021) methodological approaches (competent, activity-based, resource-oriented, systemic, technological, communicative, student-centered, project-based); didactic (scientific, accessible, systematic and consistent, clear, connection between theory and practice, individualization, fundamentalization, humanism) and specific (role perspective, parity, interactivity, intensification and integration) principles of formation of readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning.

The functional and implementation basis reflects learning technologies (modular tutor technology, mind mapping technology, resource-oriented learning, web quest technology, project technologies), forms, methods and means of training that directly contribute to the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning at a higher education institution, as well as forms, methods and means of legal education.

The criterion-diagnostic apparatus of the study is represented by criteria (cognitive, operational-activity, personal-value), indicators and levels (high, medium, low) of readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning (Table 1).

Table 1. Criteria for the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning

Criteria	Parameters
Cognitive	The degree of formation of the system of legal knowledge that a future lawyer must possess in order to carry out professional activities in various fields of law.
Operational-activity	The degree of formation of the system of legal skills and skills for the implementation of legitimate activities, which are the practical implementation of the system of professional legal knowledge in practice.
Personal-value	The degree of formation of legal values of future lawyers, which indicate a person's attitude to law, which is based on his conviction in the value of law, its effectiveness; personal qualities necessary for the successful implementation of the professional activity of a lawyer (responsibility, perseverance, justice, the ability to learn, honesty, the ability to work with people, inspire trust, etc.).

The results of the ascertainment stage made it possible to establish that the students of CG and EG are dominated by low and medium levels of readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning according to all criteria (Table 2).

Table 2: The results of ascertaining the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning

Criteria	Group	Level of readiness		
		Low	Medium	High
Cognitive	CG	88	75	39
		43.56%	37.13%	19.31%
	EG	89	75	41
		43.41%	36.59%	20.00%
Operational-activity	CG	99	82	21
		49.01%	40.59%	10.40%
	EG	103	86	16
		50.24%	41.95%	7.80%
Personal-value	CG	115	80	7
		56.93%	39.60%	3.47%

	EG	116	83	6
		56.59%	40.49%	2.93%
Generalized data	CG	101	79	22
		50.00%	39.11%	10.89%
	EG	103	81	21
		50.24%	39.51%	10.24%

Diagnostics of the general level of readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning at the stage of the ascertainment experiment revealed approximately similar results: a high level of readiness was demonstrated by 10.89% of CG students and 10.24% of EG students; average level was shown by 39.11% of CG students and 39.51% of EG students; 50% of CG students and 50.24% of EG students showed a low level, which indicates insufficient effectiveness of the process of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning.

To check the effectiveness of didactic conditions, the formative stage of the pedagogical experiment was conducted. In CG, the specified didactic conditions were not implemented, and in EG the educational process was based on the implementation of a set of these conditions.

The first didactic condition – improving the content of the professional training of future lawyers based on the implementation of the online course «Cultural and legal behavior of a modern lawyer» – was implemented in two stages:

I stage – updating the content of the disciplines of general and professional training cycles with information about the cultural and legal behavior of a modern lawyer (a webinar «Cultural and legal behavior of a modern lawyer: how it works» was held for EG students, which was an announcement before the introduction of the online course; students were asked to prepare topics for essays and presentations on legal culture and lawyer behavior);

II stage – developed and studied by EG students of the online course «Cultural and legal behavior of a modern lawyer». The structure of the online course, designed for 3 ECTS credits (90 hours), divided into 3 content modules: «Content module 1. Cultural and legal behavior of future lawyers and its place and significance in the legal system of society»; «Content module 2. Cultural and legal behavior of future lawyers in the mechanism of legal regulation»; «Content module 3. Cultural and legal behavior of future lawyers in the mechanism of legal coercion». In addition, the program of the online course «Cultural and legal behavior of a modern lawyer» contains test tasks, legal problems for independent solution, control questions for preparation for the test, topics for the final paper, mind mapping «Visualization of legal knowledge». The methodological support of the online course «Cultural and legal behavior of a modern lawyer» is a developed platform for its remote study (Fig. 2).

During the study of the online course, active learning methods were used (method of cases, projects, kaizen, online network projects, PRESS method, Socrates method, decision tree, brainstorming, take a position, analysis of the legal situation, microphone, discussion, «talk show», debate, brainstorming, negotiation, moderation, freeze frame, work in pairs, role-playing, simulation of simplified court hearing, preliminary investigation and simulation of a court hearing, the «What If» method, the method of collective search for original ideas, excursions, etc.), digital technologies, legal experts were involved, cooperation with legal institutions was organized (round tables, meetings, conversations).

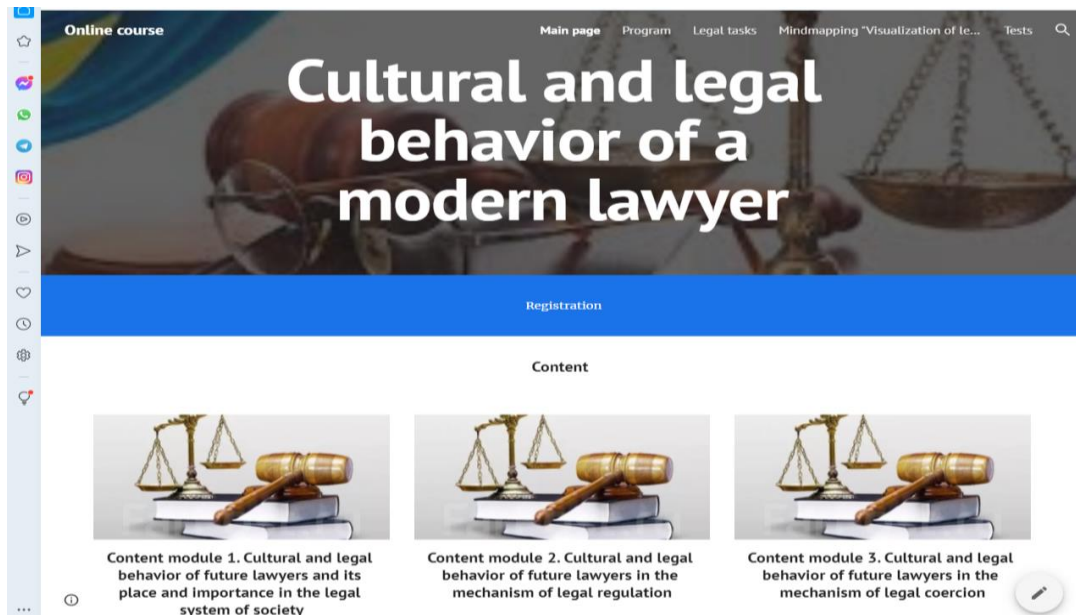


Fig.2: Online course platform «Cultural and legal behavior of a modern lawyer»

The second didactic condition – the system organization of creating digital educational resources for the study of legal disciplines was implemented as a certain technology, which is based on the partnership of teachers, legal experts and students in the process of designing and creating digital educational resources. It was found that «teacher-student-specialist-lawyer» cooperation in the process of working on digital educational resources involves the coordination of the process of obtaining legal knowledge from various sources (personnel, educational and methodological, informational resources), activates motivation for independent acquisition of knowledge, creative search, development of legal culture. It has been proven that the systematic organization of the creation of digital educational resources in legal disciplines involves the following four stages:

I stage «Start»: formation of the author's team of a digital educational resource (motivation is carried out to form students' readiness for the future professional activity of a lawyer, teachers of legal disciplines and students are selected and involved in joint work on a digital educational resource, the head of the author team is selected);

II stage «Case»: preparation of case information materials (text and multimedia materials are being prepared, which are planned to be included in the content of the selected type of digital educational resource – manual, website, blog, social network page, video channel, etc.);

III stage «Realization»: direct creation of a digital educational resource (master classes on the creation of digital educational resources are organized and held, consultations of the head of the author team, teachers of the computer cycle disciplines, legal experts, direct creation of a digital educational resource is carried out);

IV stage «Presentation»: presentation of results (the presentation of the digital educational resource is carried out at the meetings of departments (cycle commissions), methodical councils, conferences, Internet conferences are held with the publication of collections based on the materials of the reports on the created digital educational resources).

Within the implementation of the third didactic condition – activation of legal education of students on the basis of interactivity – methods and methods of work of scientific and pedagogical personnel of higher education institutions in the field of training and education of future lawyers were coordinated, which were aimed at forming their readiness for professional activity, provided advisory and informational support for the process of legal education: weeks of legal education, weeks of departments and cyclic commissions of legal disciplines, development of booklets, brochures for legal propaganda, agitation and legal education of the population. Forms of legal education were used (legal advocacy, agitation, education, individual educational work, self-education, practice); methods (example, persuasion, encouragement, competition, educational activities); means (mass media – radio, television, magazines, Internet publications – creation of «Useful information» corners, student blogs, video channels on YouTube, pages in social networks; students visiting cultural and educational institutions – cinemas, theaters, cultural centers; activation of work with educational literature – preparation of reports, presentations, etc.).

It has been proven that in order to successfully form the readiness of future lawyers for professional activities during blended learning, the activation of legal education of students should be carried out on the basis of interactivity. This involves the use of interactive methods of training and legal education and stimulating the initiative of future lawyers, because the principle of interactivity is designed to implement the construction of an interactive educational process, which is based on parity interaction «scientific and teaching staff – future lawyer student» and is oriented towards lifelong legal education (Kononets et. al., 2020).

The fourth didactic condition – strengthening the positive motivation of students for research activities based on traditional face-to-face instruction and computer-mediated (distance) interaction – provided for the encouragement of future lawyers to activity, active actions in the process of scientific and research activity, which includes traditional types (performance of research tasks, preparation of scientific reports, notices and abstracts on current legal issues, writing and defense of term papers, preparation of scientific reports at conferences, articles to professional collections of legal sciences; preparation of methodological developments on topical issues of the future professional activity of a lawyer – booklets, brochures, presentations for legal education, legal propaganda) and types based on digital technologies (webinars, Internet conferences, virtual consultations, social networks, forums, etc.). It was found that the strengthening of the positive motivation of law students for scientific and research activities following methods will be effective: project method, online network projects; creation of student scientific circles («Young Lawyer School», «Successful Legal Scholars», «Themis», «Modern Lawyer»); organization and holding of «Library Day», «Science Day», «Scientific Picnics» for future lawyers; ways of encouraging and motivating students (economic, creative, resource and status).

The fifth didactic condition – involvement of students to work in consultation centers to provide additional legal services to the population – provided for the active involvement of students in work in «Legal Clinics», «Legal Consultations» at the institution of higher education, which provides common forms of legal assistance, which future lawyers learn to provide to the population (legal information; legal counseling; drafting of legal documents; legal representation; legal education). In this way, the development of high-quality legal clinical education in Ukraine, the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during the mixed form of education at the law school is ensured. It was found that the activities of future lawyers while working in consulting centers are based on such principles: respect for law, justice and human dignity; focus on the protection of human rights and freedoms; humanism; objectivity; legality; confidentiality; free provision of legal assistance; professionalism; «pro bono» principle (Kornosenko et. al., 2020).

At the end of the formative stage, a re-diagnosis of the levels of readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning in CG and EG was performed. A high level of readiness was demonstrated by 12.87% of CG students and 21.95% of EG students; medium level was demonstrated by 44.06% of CG students and 48.29% of EG students; a low level was shown by 43.07% of CG students and 29.76% of EG students, which proves the positive dynamics in EG.

The results of diagnosing the levels of readiness of future lawyers for professional activities during blended learning before and after the experiment are shown in Figure 3.

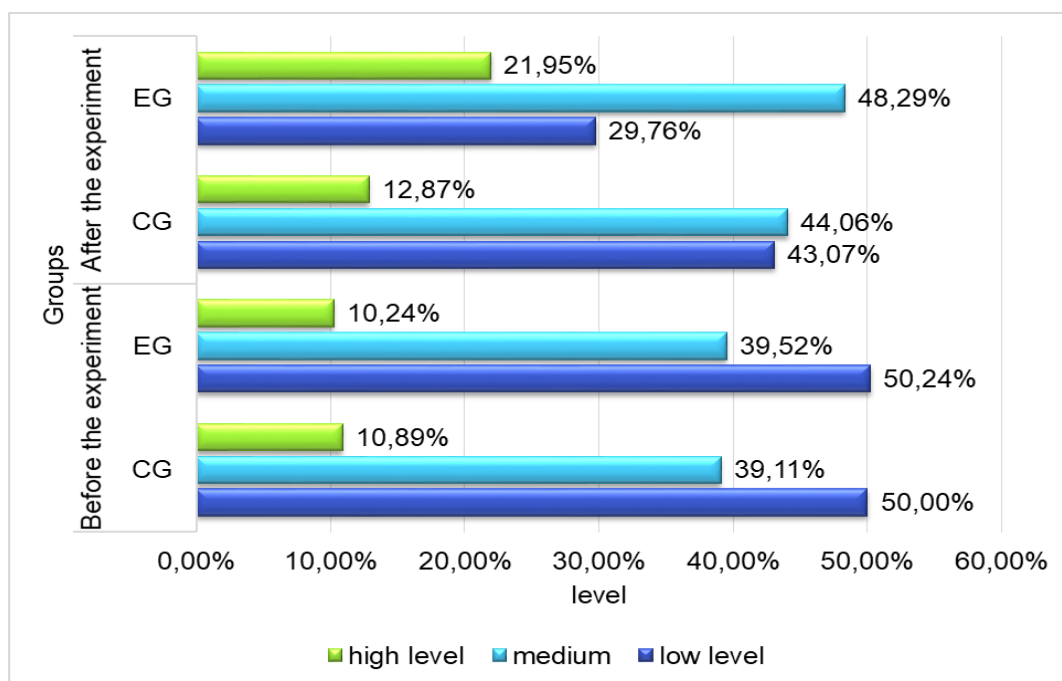


Fig.3: The results of diagnostics of the levels of readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning (before and after the experiment)

A comparative analysis of the dynamics of readiness levels proved that the high level of readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning increased by 1.98% at the CG of students, and in EG – by 11.71%; the medium level in CG increased by 4.95%, and in EG – by 8.78%. The indicators of the low level

changed most significantly: in EG the number of students with a low level of readiness decreased by 20.49%, while in CG – by only 6.93% (Fig. 4).

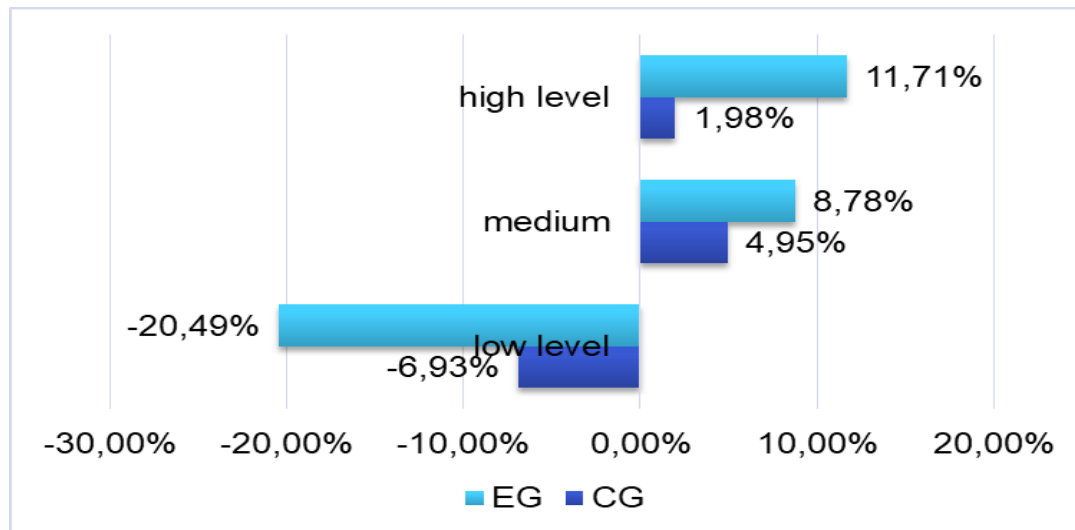


Fig.4: The dynamics of the levels of readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning after the experiment

3. CONCLUSIONS

The generalized final results of the formative experiment convincingly indicate a significant increase in the indicators of the formation of the components of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning among students of experimental groups compared to control groups.

The peculiarities of the educational process in institutions of higher education, the opinion of teachers of legal disciplines regarding the problem of forming the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning were studied. A positive attitude of scientific and pedagogical personnel to the flexible model of blended learning was recorded; the didactic conditions for the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning were identified and substantiated; a diagnostic toolkit was developed (online questionnaire «My attitude to blended learning», comprehensive test «Readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning», an interactive online form for solving legal problems, a virtual classroom for students' research activities).

It was established that in EG the qualitative and quantitative indicators of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning after the experiment were significantly higher than in CG, which proves the versatile positive influence of the specified didactic conditions. For reasoned confirmation that the results of the pedagogical experiment are not random, but ensured precisely by the implementation of the proposed didactic conditions, their statistical verification was carried out (Pearson homogeneity test, χ^2).

Comparing the value of the Pearson test χ^2 before and after the experiment with the critical value, the following conclusions can be drawn: before the experiment: $0.05 < 7.81$, therefore, EG and CG belong to the same general population; hypothesis H_0 is accepted, i.e. there was no significant difference in the characteristics of readiness levels in EG and CG; after the experiment: $10.16 > 7.81$, therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that the significant difference obtained in EG compared to CG was a consequence of the introduction of didactic conditions for the formation of the readiness of future lawyers for professional activity during blended learning.

This allows us to draw a general conclusion about the expediency of introducing the didactic conditions defined by us into the educational process of institutions of higher education that train students in the specialty 081 «Law».

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