

# Developing inclusive competence of future socionomic specialists to meet modern challenges and constraints



Svitlana Kandiuk-Lebid<sup>a</sup>   | Valentyna Mazur<sup>b</sup>  | Oksana Oleksiuk<sup>b</sup>  | Anna Starieva<sup>b</sup>  |  
Oleksandr Chumachenko<sup>b</sup>  | Oksana Shevchenko<sup>b</sup> 

<sup>a</sup>Mykolaiv Professional College of the University «Ukraine», Mykolaiv, Ukraine.

<sup>b</sup>Department of Psychology, Special Education and Human Health, Mykolaiv Institute of Human Development of the University «Ukraine», Mykolaiv, Ukraine.

**Abstract** Developing inclusive competence is becoming crucial for future socionomic professionals in the modern world, with its diversity of cultures and social and economic contexts. This article explores the methods and strategies needed to cultivate such competence in the face of contemporary challenges and constraints. The research employed survey methods, group discussions, observation and quantitative data analysis. The article presents a structural framework for forming inclusive competence in future socionomic professionals amidst contemporary challenges and constraints. Strategies influencing the development of inclusive competence among future professionals in the socionomic sphere are identified, namely: understanding the concept of inclusion; teaching empathy and intercultural communication; using methods and approaches of inclusive education; institutional support; creating barrier-free environments; promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace; support and counselling. The results of using a combination of these strategies include improving the quality of education, enhancing employability, developing social and intercultural skills, creating more inclusive organisational environments, increasing societal awareness and support, developing innovative solutions and strengthening social capital. The challenges of developing inclusive competence, the effectiveness of strategies to influence its development and the expected outcomes of implementing these strategies are examined. The authors conclude that the practical cultivation of inclusive competence contributes to the professional development of future professionals and serves as a key to a fairer and more sustainable society.

**Keywords:** socionomic sphere, psychological and pedagogical training, persons with special needs, limited conditions, psychological assistance, rehabilitation

## 1. Introduction

In today's world, the development of inclusive competence is becoming increasingly relevant for future professionals in the socionomic sphere. The complexity of socionomic processes, the diversity of cultural and social contexts, and growing social inequalities require professionals to interact effectively with different groups of people and involve them in different spheres of activity. Developing inclusive competence is particularly important in light of current challenges and constraints. Circumstances such as global economic crises, demographic changes, technological breakthroughs and socio-cultural transformations require professionals to think flexibly, adapt quickly to new conditions and involve diverse groups of people in their work.

In the context of today's challenges and constraints, the development of integrative competencies in future socionomic professionals becomes crucial. The main challenge is that the socionomic sphere has a high level of social responsibility, and its successful functioning requires effective management of diversity and inclusion of all population groups. Globalisation and migration processes increase diversity of cultures, languages, religions and social groups. It calls for developing strategies and approaches that consider the needs and characteristics of each of these groups. Inequalities in access to education, health care, employment and other resources can lead to social and economic exclusion of specific population groups (Shcherbak et al., 2023). Building inclusive competence requires attention to these inequalities and developing mechanisms and strategies to overcome them.

Technological developments and changes in work organisations require socionomic workers to acquire new skills and competencies, including digital literacy, the ability to work in multicultural environments and diversity management. Global issues such as climate change, economic crises and pandemics can exacerbate social inequalities and the vulnerability of



different population groups. It requires the development of inclusive policies and support measures to ensure the involvement of all social groups in addressing these issues.

Facing these challenges necessitates developing comprehensive and innovative approaches to building inclusive competence in future socio-economic professionals. These approaches include changing educational programmes and methodologies, creating conditions for practical work experience in diverse environments, and actively cooperating with different social and cultural groups (Kostiukevych et al., 2020).

The article aims to study and discuss strategies for effectively developing inclusive competence in future socio-economic specialists, promote the development and improvement of the quality of their training, and provide them with the necessary tools for effectively including all members of society in socio-economic activities.

The article's objectives include:

1. To identify the challenges and constraints faced by future socio-economic specialists in inclusive competence development.
2. To analyse the strategies and skills necessary for the successful development of inclusive competence.
3. To develop strategies and methods that can be used to shape the inclusive competence of future socio-economic specialists.
4. To assess the effectiveness of the proposed strategies to improve inclusive competence and identify critical practices.

Analysis of various authors' perspectives on the formation of inclusive competence among future professionals in the socio-economic sphere amidst contemporary challenges and constraints may encompass diverse approaches and focuses (De Jesús Távara Sabalú et al., 2021), (Sik-Lanyi et al., 2017). The study by González-González et al. (2021) and Novak et al. (2019) focuses on the relationship between inclusive competence and socio-economic factors, including inequality, poverty, unemployment, and access to resources.

The analysis performed, like inclusive competence, can help future professionals effectively address these challenges and constraints (Tadimalla et al., 2023; Paulmani, 2020). Researchers have highlighted the significance of psychological support and emotional and interpersonal skills development in forming inclusive competence (Garay-Rondero et al., 2022). The importance of psychological support and rehabilitation in developing inclusive competence among future professionals in the socio-economic sphere has been considered (Quintero et al., 2024; Almalky & Alwahbi, 2023).

The analysis examines how psychological well-being and adaptation can influence the ability of future professionals to work in an inclusive environment (Sosnickaya & Kryvylova, 2020). The authors focus on the role of education in shaping inclusive competence (Youssef & Youssef, 2019) and consider the most effective methods and education strategies for preparing future professionals to work inclusively (Al-Faraj et al., 2020). Scholars analyse the cultural and sociological aspects of forming inclusive competence, such as cultural diversity, gender norms, and social roles, within an inclusive environment (Miyamoto et al., 2023; Revathy & Kamalakkannan, 2022).

The authors analyse practical experience and research on developing inclusive competence (Venegas et al., 2022). Researchers discuss successful practices, methodologies, and programs that aid future professionals in developing their inclusive skills and knowledge (Dotsenko, 2023; Batsurovska, 2021). Revealing the authors' perspectives provides a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity and diversity of forming inclusive competence in contemporary conditions and constraints (Trpkovska et al., 2016; Soeharto et al., 2024).

## 2. Materials and methods

Various research methods can be used to study the development of inclusive competence of future socio-economic specialists under current challenges and constraints to gain a comprehensive understanding of this process.

*Questionnaires.* Conducting structured surveys with future socio-economic specialists to identify their views, knowledge, and experience in inclusiveness and interaction with various social groups (Supplementary Material).

*Group discussions.* Organising focus groups where students can discuss their views, beliefs and experiences regarding inclusiveness, as well as identify their ideas about obstacles and opportunities in this area.

*Observations.* Observing the interaction of future socio-economic specialists with different groups of people in real-life situations, as well as analysing relevant documents such as curricula, teaching materials and policies of educational institutions.

*Quantitative data analysis.* Conducting statistical analysis of data obtained from surveys or other sources, identifying statistically significant patterns and relationships between variables.

## 3. Results

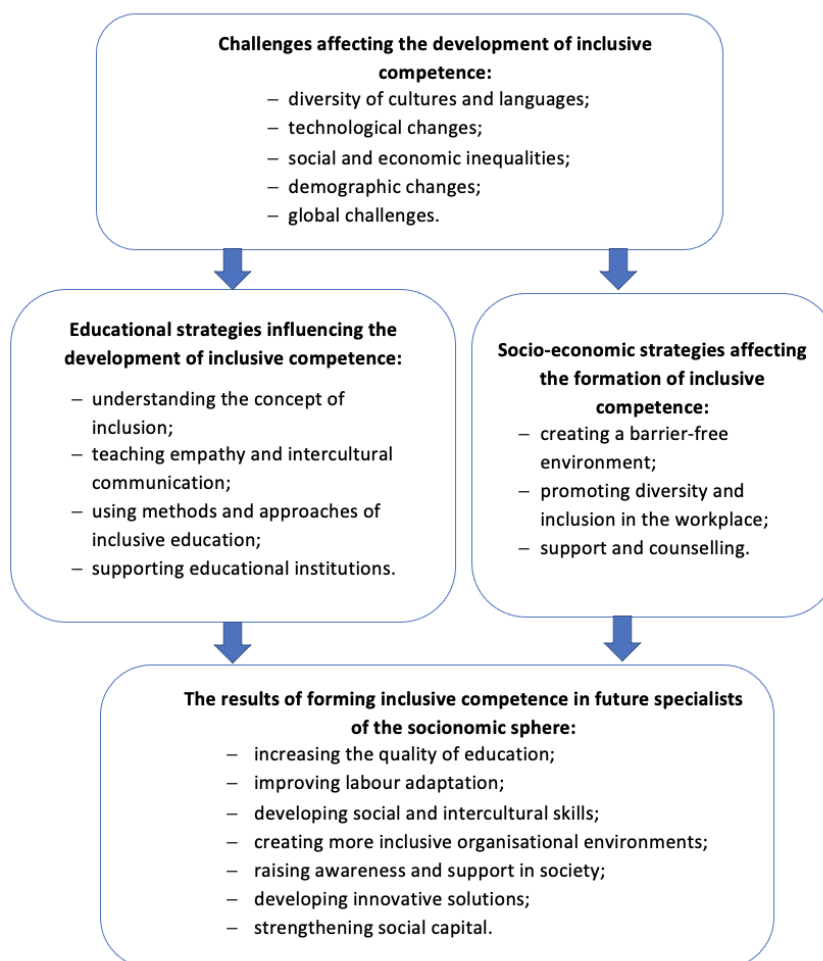
Professionals in the socio-economic sphere may have different professional directions and specialisations, including sociology, economics, political science, management, and socio-economic development. Professionals require a broad range of competencies to succeed in the socio-economic sphere. These include analytical skills, data analysis skills, knowledge of

sociological and economic theories, research skills, the ability to analyse research results, and effective communication and leadership skills.

Inclusive competence refers to an individual's ability and willingness to join all people in various spheres of societal life, such as education, employment, and social interaction, regardless of individual characteristics. Developing inclusive competence involves understanding diversity, empathy, respect, flexibility, adaptation, collaboration, communication, advocacy, rights protection, and creating inclusive environments. It is a process of acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary for successful interaction with diverse groups of people in various spheres of life. In contemporary conditions, the formation of inclusive competence faces several challenges, including cultural and linguistic diversity, social and economic inequalities, technological changes, demographic changes, and global challenges.

Globalisation results in greater cultural and linguistic diversity, necessitating the ability to adapt and interact effectively with individuals from diverse cultures. Disparities in access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and other resources can create barriers to inclusive interaction, requiring special attention and efforts to overcome them. The advancement of technology is altering the way people interact. It necessitates acquiring new skills and abilities to use digital tools and communicate in virtual environments proficiently. Demographic changes in society, such as population ageing, migration, and shifts in family structures, may impact the needs and expectations of diverse groups of people and necessitate appropriate adaptation. Climate change, pandemics, and global conflicts can affect the socio-economic conditions of different groups of people. Inclusive approaches are required to address these issues.

Figure 1 displays a structural diagram of the formation of inclusive competence of future professionals in the socio-economic sphere in the face of modern challenges and constraints. Developing inclusive competence among future professionals in the socio-economic sphere may depend on two types of strategies: educational and socio-economic. Educational strategies involve comprehending the concept of inclusion, teaching empathy and intercultural communication, using methods and approaches of inclusive education, and providing support at the institutional level. Socio-economic strategies comprise creating environments that are accessible to all, promoting workplace diversity and inclusion, and offering support and counselling.



**Figure 1** Structural Diagram of Forming the Inclusive Competence of Future Socioeconomic Specialists to Meet Modern Challenges and Constraints.

*It is essential to recognise the differences between inclusion and integration to understand the essence of inclusion and its significance in the socio-economic sphere. Additionally, it is crucial to understand the benefits of diversity in the workplace. In the socio-economic sphere, professionals understand inclusion as the principle of ensuring equal opportunities for all members of society, regardless of their social status, physical or psychological characteristics, race, gender, or age. Inclusion requires creating conditions that enable individuals to realise their potential and participate in social life. It is also linked to recognising and appreciating diversity, as society comprises people with different cultural, social, and economic characteristics. Respecting this diversity is a crucial aspect of inclusion. Professionals in the socio-economic sphere recognise that achieving inclusion requires developing and implementing inclusive practices and policies within governmental institutions, civil society, and private organisations. It may involve creating social protection programmes, adapting workplaces, developing accessible infrastructure, and implementing other measures.*

Inclusion is a matter of social responsibility for the state, businesses, and civil society organisations. Creating an inclusive society requires joint efforts from various stakeholders to ensure equal opportunities and respect for the rights of every individual. Professionals in the socio-economic sphere understand inclusion as an essential principle for ensuring social justice and economic development, which requires collaboration from all members of society.

*Developing students' empathy skills and understanding of cultural contexts can improve their interactions with clients or colleagues from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This can be achieved by incorporating core concepts of empathy and intercultural communication and explaining their importance and role in the socio-economic sphere. It may involve studying social psychology, theories of intercultural communication, and empathy theories. Simulations of intercultural interactions and role-playing games, including role reversal, can also help students develop empathy and intercultural communication skills.*

Students can analyse real-life cases related to intercultural situations and challenges in the socio-economic sphere to identify features of intercultural interaction and develop problem-solving strategies. Individuals can exchange experiences, express their views, and learn to understand the perspectives of others. To conduct projects and research related to intercultural aspects of the socio-economic sphere, one can study international business practices and analyse the impact of cultural differences on socio-economic processes.

*Inclusive education prepares future professionals to work effectively in modern society. Educators must consider students' diversity, including their abilities, learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and social backgrounds. It may require various teaching methods, adapted materials, and individual support for students with special needs.*

Providing opportunities for all students to actively participate in the learning process, including discussions, group projects, and practical tasks, can help create an atmosphere of understanding and respect among students. Offering diverse educational materials that reflect various cultural and social contexts is also essential. These materials may include literature, case studies, real-life examples, and multimedia resources.

Ensuring accessibility of education may involve using support technologies, adapting learning spaces, and providing additional resources for students with special needs. Supporting the development of cooperation and teamwork skills can be beneficial for working in diverse team environments. Promoting the development of a professional and inclusive culture in students, which includes respect for diversity, openness to new ideas, and a commitment to equality, is vital.

*Creating an environment that is accessible to all students, including those with disabilities or special needs, may require adapting courses, using support technologies, and creating a physical environment that accommodates various needs. Access to technical tools and software that facilitate learning and work for students with different types of disabilities includes using text-to-speech and speech-to-text software, dictaphones, mobile navigation apps, and more.*

Developing and implementing educational methodologies considering diverse learning styles and student needs may involve using multimedia materials, interactive tasks, and group projects. It is necessary to establish mechanisms for feedback from students and consider their opinions and needs when developing courses, programs, and educational institution policies. Similarly, it is vital to provide training programs for teachers and educational staff on inclusion issues, adaptive teaching methods, and working with diverse students. Additionally, various teaching and assessment methods that accommodate different learning styles and abilities can help ensure student success (Stareva, 2022).

*Stimulating diversity and inclusion in the workplace can involve training in leadership skills, conflict management, and fostering a positive organisational culture. Educating future professionals about the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and ways to support and promote such an environment plays a key role in creating a conducive atmosphere.*

Implementing policies actively supporting diversity and inclusion in the workplace, including measures to combat discrimination, promote equal opportunities, create an inclusive culture, and actively engage candidates from diverse socio-cultural and economic backgrounds in job vacancies, as well as remove barriers that may hinder diversity in personnel, is an essential aspect of stimulating inclusion.

Preparing managers and leaders to work with diverse teams will provide skills in conflict management, motivation, and development of work groups. Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of measures to stimulate diversity and inclusion in the workplace, adjusting the strategy as needed, and creating a space where employees can freely express their thoughts and ideas will help create a work environment that values and encourages diversity and inclusion.

Providing students with access to *support and consultations on inclusion* and diversity issues can help them overcome potential obstacles and interact successfully in diverse environments. Mentors can assist students in navigating the professional world by sharing their experiences and career growth advice. Organising events to facilitate learning about the latest trends and methodologies in the socioeconomic sphere can help future professionals develop their skills and exchange experiences with colleagues.

To ensure that students who may experience stress or uncertainty related to their studies and career choices receive psychological support and counselling, it is recommended that they have access to communities of students and graduates in socioeconomic specialities. It will allow them to exchange experiences and ideas and support each other in their professional development.

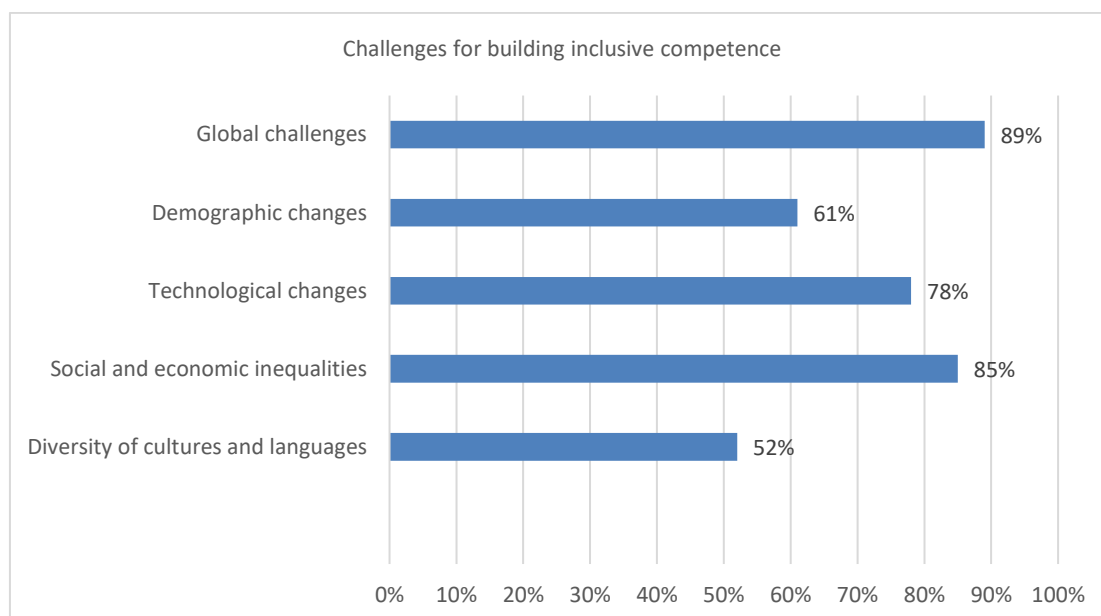
Creating policies and *programs to support inclusivity and diversity in educational institutions*, including course development, student support, and teacher training, can help develop competence in inclusion among future professionals in the socioeconomic sphere. It, in turn, can contribute to more effective and sustainable development and implementation of socioeconomic projects and initiatives.

Incorporating inclusive principles into educational programs, teaching methods, and assessment techniques may involve developing courses that emphasise attention to diversity in society and using teaching methods that accommodate different learning styles and paces. Educators should be prepared to adapt their teaching approach depending on the needs and abilities of different students. Educational institutions can promote interaction and understanding among students from different cultural and social backgrounds by encouraging the creation of diverse student groups, clubs, and events (Kussainov et al., 2023).

The outcome of developing inclusive competence in future specialists in the socioeconomic sphere in the context of modern challenges and constraints can be diverse and include the following aspects: enhancing the quality of education, improving employment adaptation, developing social and intercultural skills, creating more inclusive organisational environments; increasing societal awareness and support; developing innovative solutions; strengthening social capital.

Future professionals will be better equipped to interact with diverse groups of people, contributing to the creation of more inclusive and diverse educational environments. Inclusive competence will assist future specialists in effectively adapting to various work environments and successfully coping with the challenges and limitations they may encounter in their workplaces. Professionals will be better equipped to work with clients and colleagues from diverse cultures and social groups, improving the quality of services and reducing conflicts. Additionally, future professionals will help create organisational environments that embrace diversity and inclusivity, increasing efficiency and making them more attractive workplaces.

A survey was conducted among future socioeconomic specialists to identify the challenges in forming inclusive competence, the most effective strategies, and the expected outcomes. Two hundred fifty-six individuals participated in the survey. Figure 2 presents the percentage analysis of the impact of current challenges on the formation of inclusive competence.



**Figure 2** Influence of Current Challenges on Forming Inclusive Competence of Socioeconomic Specialists.

Global challenges such as war and pandemics have a significant impact on the development of inclusive competence among socioeconomic professionals (89%), as well as social and economic inequalities (85%) and technological changes (78%). The impact of demographic changes (61%) and cultural diversity (52%) were determined to have a lesser extent of influence. The

influence of the proposed strategies on the formation of inclusive competence of socioeconomic specialists was assessed, as presented in Figure 3.

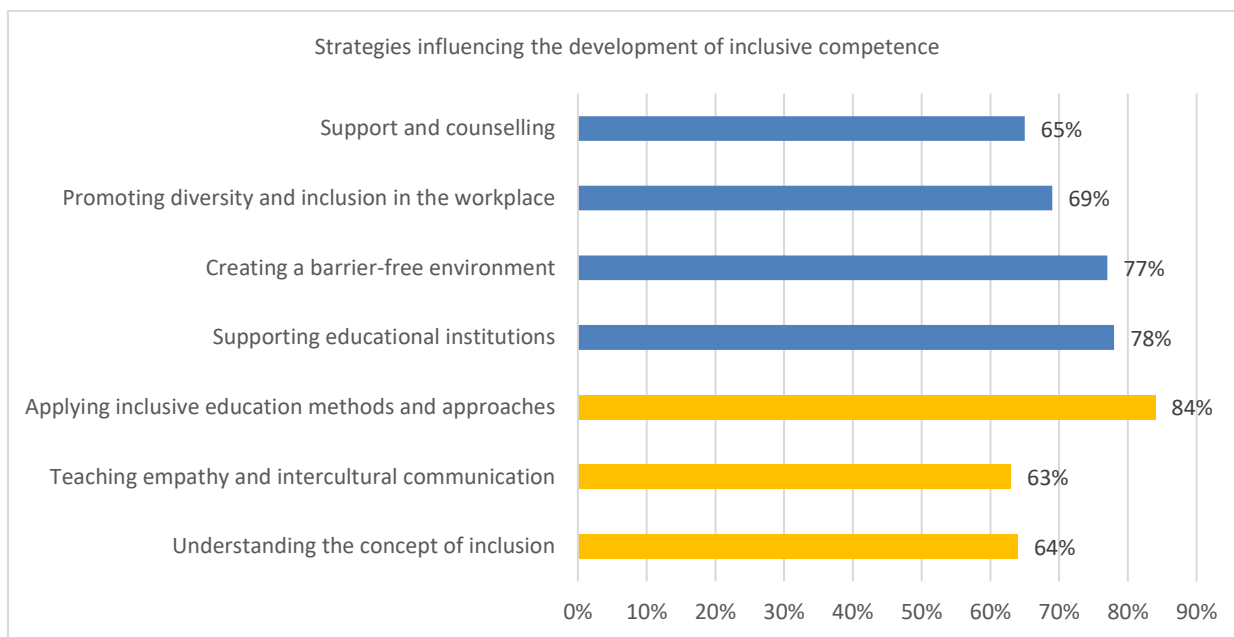


Figure 3 Assessing the Impact of Inclusive Competence Development Strategies.

Among the educational strategies, the most effective are creating a barrier-free environment (77%) and providing support at the institutional level (77%). Promoting diversity and inclusion is also highly rated (69%), as is giving support and counselling (65%). Inclusive approaches and methods have the highest rating at 84%. In comparison, 63% noted the importance of empathy, and 64% highlighted the importance of intercultural communication and understanding the concept of inclusion. Overall, the strategies for developing inclusive competence among socioeconomic specialists have received high scores, indicating their effectiveness.

Figure 4 displays the scale used to assess the effectiveness of the expected results from implementing the proposed strategies.

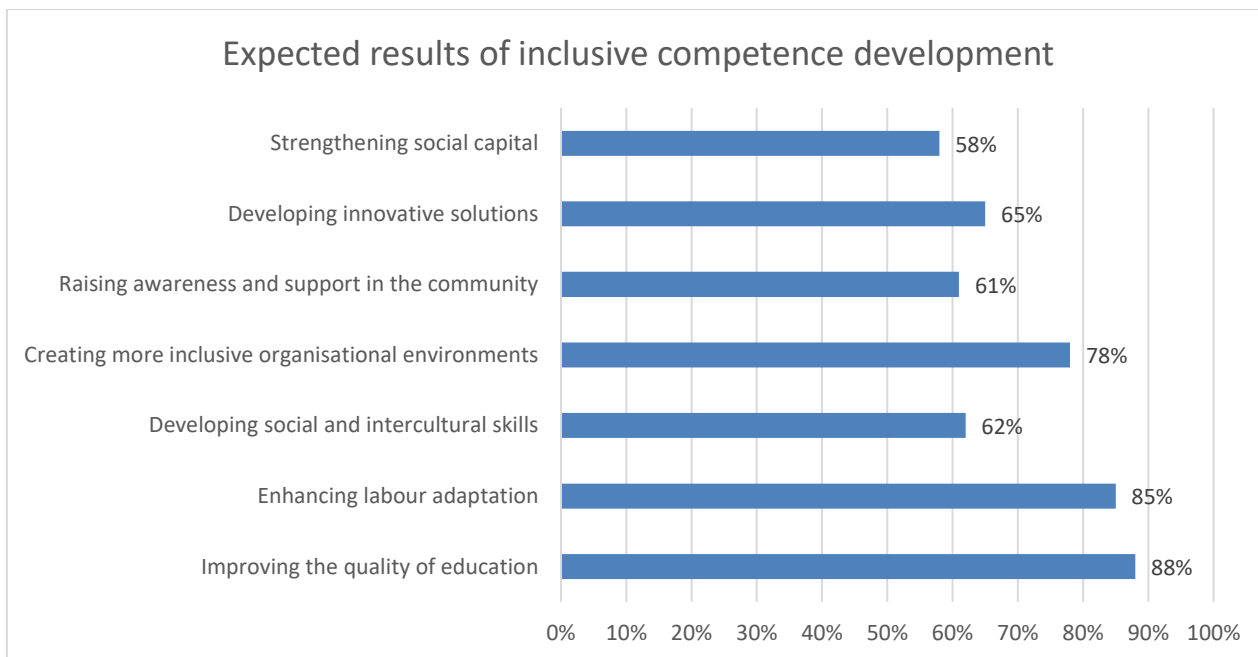


Figure 4 Scale for Assessing the Effectiveness of the Expected Results from the Implementation of the Proposed Strategies.

The most expected outcomes from the implementation of the proposed strategies are an increase in the quality of education (88%), improved labour adaptation (85%) and the creation of more inclusive organisational environments (78%). At





the same time, the development of innovative solutions, strengthening of social capital, and raising awareness and support in society were rated on average by about 60% of respondents. Thus, the results of the formation of inclusive competence of future socio-economic specialists in the context of modern challenges and constraints lead to a more sustainable, inclusive and prosperous society.

#### 4. Discussion

In the context of modern challenges and constraints, the formation of inclusive competence in future specialists in the socio-economic sphere requires special attention to psychological assistance and rehabilitation. This aspect plays a crucial role in ensuring the successful integration of all students into the educational process and preparing them to work in an inclusive environment (Adjei et al., 2024; Ydesen & Elfert, 2023). One of the critical aspects is the development of empathy and understanding of the diverse needs and characteristics of people with different abilities. Psychological assistance can contribute to forming these skills by training interaction with diverse groups of people and developing empathetic perception (Boyle et al., 2023; Hossain, 2023). Another vital aspect is stress management and adaptation to changing conditions and demands (Landberg & Partsch, 2023; Mebert et al., 2020). Students in the socio-economic sphere often face high levels of responsibility and complex situations, and psychological assistance can help them effectively cope with stress and pressure.

Additionally, psychological rehabilitation may be necessary for students facing obstacles in learning or employment due to their characteristics or limitations. It may include counselling, psychological support, and the development of adaptation strategies. Thus, incorporating psychological assistance and rehabilitation into developing inclusive competence in future socio-economic professionals is necessary to ensure their successful adaptation and effective functioning in society.

Developing inclusive competence among future specialists in the socio-economic sphere is crucial in light of modern challenges and constraints. Students need specialised knowledge, skills, and an understanding of inclusivity principles to adapt to diverse social and economic environments. One of the challenges that future professionals face is the diversity of cultures and languages. Researching strategies and teaching methods to help students acquire skills for working in multinational and multicultural environments is crucial. Social and economic inequalities may also create barriers to inclusive interaction (Pienimäki et al., 2021; Shchokin et al., 2023). Educational institutions should aim to help students recognise these issues and develop strategies to overcome them in both professional and public spheres.

Technological changes play a significant societal role (Seddighi et al., 2023). It is essential to analyse how educational programs can integrate digital tools and online learning to create a more inclusive learning environment. It is essential to comprehend how contemporary issues, such as climate change or pandemics, can impact diverse social groups and how future professionals can be equipped to tackle these challenges and implement inclusive approaches to cater to the requirements of all members of society.

#### 5. Conclusion

Given contemporary challenges and constraints, it is crucial to take a comprehensive approach to developing inclusive competence in future professionals in the socio-economic sphere. Inclusive competence is becoming increasingly important in a society where diversity of cultures, social groups, and needs demands the ability to interact with people's diversity effectively. Educational institutions should adjust their educational programs and teaching methods to cater to the needs of diverse student groups and offer them equal opportunities. It is essential to provide students with support and resources to help them overcome potential obstacles in developing inclusive competence, including psychological assistance and counselling. Developing empathy and respect for diversity is crucial to inclusive competence and should be actively cultivated in students. Educational institutions must create inclusive environments that support the inclusion of all students and provide equal opportunities for learning and development. Collaboration with organisations and communities working in the field of inclusion and diversity can strengthen efforts to develop inclusive competence and provide access to experience and resources. Developing inclusive competence in future professionals in the socio-economic sphere requires a systematic approach that includes educational and practical measures and support and collaboration with all stakeholders. It will ensure the successful integration of all societal groups and contribute to creating a fairer and more sustainable society.

#### Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

#### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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