

PEDAGOGICAL SUPERVISION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDY PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

When starting studies, support that can be implemented in individual and group supervision is important for the development of students' personalities and academic competence.

The article aims to reveal the essence of pedagogical supervision and its application in the higher education study process. The research was implemented as a theoretical study, during which the analysis of selected sources – professional and scientific literature, research on supervision, and pedagogical supervision was performed, using induction, deduction, and comparison methods. The following keywords were used to search for data sources: pedagogical supervision, supervisee, supervision, supervisor, education, higher education. A total of 32 data sources were selected.

As a result of the theoretical research, a matrix of explanations of the concepts of *supervision*, *pedagogical supervision*, and *a supervisor* was created and a conceptual explanation of the concept of pedagogical supervision in the context of the higher education study process was developed. The conceptual explanation of the concept of *pedagogical supervision* developed in the research reveals the possibilities of extended application of pedagogical supervision in the higher education study process, including both the components of pedagogical supervision and the essence of supervision as such – to provide support for the growth and improvement of the supervisee.

Keywords: *higher education, pedagogical supervision, study process, supervision, supervisor*

Introduction

In the last decade, the official guidelines and normative documents of the Republic of Latvia on education policy have updated the need for both researches into the reasons for dropping out and improvement of study programs. Data from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (Central Statistical Bureau, 2020) show that the number of people starting their studies has increased significantly in recent years, however, the analysis of the data collected on the Official Statistics Portal (Official Statistics Portal, n. d.) reveals that the number of those who started their studies

and those who obtained qualifications or degrees differs significantly. Thus, in 2015, 29.1 thousand students started their studies, while in 2019, 14.8 thousand (51.05%) graduates obtained a qualification or degree. In turn, in 2016, 28.6 thousand students started their studies, but in 2020, 14.5 thousand graduates, or 50.81% obtained a qualification or degree. The results of the analysis allow concluding that the studies are terminated without obtaining the planned education.

In the “Latvian Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Higher Education Institutions for 2013–2020”, the current challenges are mentioned first

- the need to increase the number of graduates by attracting a wider audience to higher education and the need to reduce the number of early studies leavers,
- the need to improve the quality and relevance of higher education so that study programs meet the needs of individuals, the labor market, and future professions (Council of Higher Education, 2013).

In the study “Improving Student Support to Reduce the Dropout Rate from Studies in Higher Education Institutions in Latvia,” Smitina (Šmitiņa, 2011) mentions several factors influencing the termination of studies: individual characteristics of the student, choice of higher education, psychological and emotional aspects of adaptation to the study environment, etc. Research shows that insufficient institutional support is one of the reasons for students’ decision to drop out (Yorke, 2000). Among the reasons for dropping out of studies, Kirk (2018) also mentions the planning of semester time, when after the internship in the middle of the semester students have difficulties returning to the intensive study process, as well as low academic achievement, at the same time concluding that the reasons why students do not continue their studies are most often intertwined.

The start of studies at the university is associated with the transition period of personality socialization or the so-called *emerging adulthood*, which presents young people with opportunities, choices, and challenges (Arnett, 2007). For those who start their studies, it causes changes in lifestyle, habits, and attitudes. For some students study challenges and difficulties become a point of support for further personal development, but for others, they can become an insurmountable obstacle to successful development and growth. It is expected that students have academic competence when starting their studies at the university, however, research shows that first-year students are generally insufficiently prepared for academic challenges (Mah, 2017; Mah & Ifenthaler, 2018). Although students in the study process need to acquire both professional knowledge and general skills, including academic competence, but in the first year of studies, support is provided in higher education institutions mainly for the acquisition of

knowledge specific to the subjects (Tinto, 2012; Mah & Ifenthaler, 2018). Bluma (Blūma, 2010) points out that in previous levels of education, attention is paid to the development of a student's personality, but the development and improvement of a university student's personality are left to the students themselves.

At the beginning of studies, support is important for the improvement of students' personalities and the development of academic competence, which can be implemented in individual and group supervision, however in bachelor's programs, such individualized support is mostly provided in the final study year in the process of developing a diploma thesis/bachelor's thesis. There is a need for the support of a lecturer as a supervisor in the study process for the acquisition and improvement of students' general skills and academic competence, therefore, the question of a broader understanding and application of the concept of supervision, especially pedagogical supervision, in the context of higher education is open.

The topicality and problem of the research determined **the aim of the research**: to reveal the essence of pedagogical supervision and its application in the higher education study process.

To achieve the aim of the study, the following questions were defined:

1. What is the essence of pedagogical supervision?
2. What is the application of pedagogical supervision in the higher education study process to reduce dropouts?

Supervision and pedagogical supervision

Supervision as a concept in the scientific and cognitive literature is defined and explained differently depending on the context, however, the basic idea remains similar (Mārtinsone et al., 2012). The essence of supervision can be found in the explanation of the word *supervision* in the Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press, 2021) – supervision is the act of watching a person or activity and making certain that everything is done correctly, safely, etc. The definition of supervision in the online dictionary of the American Psychological Association (2020) also provides additional insight – supervision is a critical evaluation and guidance provided by a qualified and experienced person (the supervisor) to another individual (the trainee) during the learning of a task or process.

According to Stankus-Visha (Stankus-Viša, 2017), supervision has historically developed in two directions, marked by two models – American and European. In the American model, the supervisor is a more experienced employee who may not have a supervisor education, assists colleagues, and shares responsibility with the supervisee. The understanding of supervision in this model is mainly related to the supervision of work in one of the

assisting professions. In contrast, in the European model, supervision is understood as a variety of forms of counseling that facilitate both communication and collaboration in different professional settings. In the sense of this model, a supervisor is an independent professional who works permanently for a particular organization or is called upon to do so and who takes responsibility for leading the supervision process. The European model is being developed in Latvia.

Coimbra et al. (2020) indicate that the concept of supervision has evolved concerning the goals of educational intervention. In Portugal, the practice of supervision was initially extended to the initial training of teachers, but later it also acquired other meanings and applications, incl. in the professional development of teachers. Coimbra et al. (2020) define pedagogical supervision as the theory and practice for regulating teaching and learning in an educational context. Within the definition, the object of pedagogical supervision is pedagogy, and it aims to improve pedagogical performance and teacher skills in the supervision process.

Methodology

To achieve the aim of the research and answer the research questions, theoretical research was carried out, within the framework of which the selection of data sources and the analysis of the selected sources were performed from February to May 2021. Databases ERIC, EBSCO, the University of Latvia e-resource repository, and online search engines Google Scholar and Google were used to search for data sources, as well as hand search. The following keywords were used in the search for data sources: supervision, supervisor, supervisee, pedagogical supervision, education, higher education. A total of 32 data sources were selected, which examined and described research and findings on supervision and pedagogical supervision in the education field and reveals the experience of the implementation of pedagogical supervision and supervision in the field of education in Latvia and elsewhere in Europe and other countries. The analysis of selected sources – professional and scientific literature and research on supervision and pedagogical supervision – was performed using induction, deduction, and comparison methods.

Results

The results of the data analysis show (see Table 1) that in the 3 sources analyzed in English (Coimbra et al., 2020; April & Bouchamma, 2017; Dias & Oliveira, 2013), the use of the term *pedagogical supervision* is related to the development of teachers' pedagogical activities and skills, in turn,

in 9 analyzed sources (Nurie, 2018; Janssen et al., 2021; Qureshi & Vazir, 2016; Wolff, 2010; Agné & Mörkenstam, 2018; Määttä, 2012; Kaasila & Lutovac, 2012; Hutchings, 2017; Lee, 2008) the concept of *supervision* in the context of higher education studies is applied to the supervision of diploma theses and dissertations in bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies, and *supervisor* is extended to scientific supervisors at all levels of higher education. On the other hand, the results of the analysis of three sources (descriptions of study courses, which present the implementation and benefits of pedagogical supervision in the educational process) published in Latvian (University of Latvia, 2022a; 2022b; 2022c) show that in Latvia, the term *pedagogical supervision* is used in study titles, course descriptions and content essentially. In the descriptions of the study courses, the term *pedagogical supervision* is explained (1) as a partnership-based method of collegial support, (2) as a collegially supportive interdisciplinary method for encouraging participation and co-responsibility, and (3) as a way of solving problems in pedagogical practice.

Table 1. Conceptual comparison of the concepts of pedagogical supervision, supervision, and supervisor

Sources analyzed in English 14		Analyzed sources published in Latvian 18	
The concept	Conception	The concept	Conception
Pedagogical supervision	Theory and practice for regulating teaching and learning in the context of education; the aim – is to improve pedagogical activity and teacher skills in the supervision process	Pedagogical supervision	Collaborative partnership-based support method; collegially supportive interdisciplinary method for encouraging participation and co-responsibility; the way of solving the problems of pedagogical practice
Supervision	Supervision of diploma theses and dissertations in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies	Supervision	Consultative support in matters of work and professional activity
Supervisor	Scientific supervisor in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies; a supervisor who works with teachers	Supervisor	A specialist in a particular professional field who has additionally obtained the qualification of a supervisor

The results of the analyzed sources published in Latvian (Mārtinsons, 2010a; 2010b; Mārtinsons et al., 2012; Stankus-Viša, 2017; Sudraba, 2017; *Professional standard for supervisors*, 2019; The Latvian Association of Supervisors, n. d.; Mārtinsons & Mihailova, 2017; Apine, 2007; Pumpiņa,

2021; Zakriževska-Belogrudova, 2020; Truskovska, 2013; Āboltiņa, 2012; Mārtinsone & Mihailovs, 2017; 2017b) show that in Latvia when developing the European model of supervision, the term *supervision* is understood as consultative support in matters of work and professional activity, and according to the Occupational Standard, a *supervisor* is a specialist in a particular professional field who has additionally obtained the qualification of a supervisor.

The results of the comparative analysis of the description of *pedagogical supervision* and *supervision* implementation in education in the sources analyzed in English and Latvian show (see Table 2), that in the three sources analyzed in English (Coimbra et al., 2020; April & Bouchamma, 2017; Dias & Oliveira, 2013), which reflect research in Portugal and Canada, pedagogical supervision is seen in the educational context as supporting the development of teachers' pedagogical activities and skills. In turn, in Latvia, pedagogical supervision at the University of Latvia was and is implemented within the study courses in master's programs in the study course "Supervision in a Pedagogical Process" (University of Latvia, 2022c) to promote the skills to apply the acquired pedagogical and psychological knowledge in pedagogical practice and in the study course "Pedagogical counseling and supervision" (University of Latvia, 2022a) to provide Master's students with an opportunity to get to know and understand the essence of pedagogical counseling and supervision for the development of pedagogical competence, management skills, and leadership, as well as in the joint doctoral study program "Educational Sciences" in the study course "Pedagogical supervision in the microsystem of preschool and basic education" (University of Latvia, 2022b) to get acquainted with and test pedagogical supervision as a partnership-based collegial support method. The results of the analysis of 9 sources analyzed in English (Nurie, 2018; Janssen et al., 2021; Qureshi & Vazir, 2016; Wolff, 2010; Agné & Mörkenstam, 2018; Määttä, 2012; Kaasila & Lutovac, 2012; Hutchings, 2017; Lee, 2008), reflecting research and experience in 7 countries – England, Finland, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Australia, Pakistan and Ethiopia – show, that supervision in the context of education is implemented as the supervision of diploma theses and dissertations in bachelor's, masters and doctoral studies. On the other hand, the analysis of 15 sources published in Latvian (Mārtinsone, 2010a; 2010b; Mārtinsone et al., 2012; Stankus-Viša, 2017; Sudraba, 2017; *Professional standard for supervisors*, 2019; The Latvian Association of Supervisors, n. d.; Mārtinsone & Mihailova, 2017; Apine, 2007; Pumpiņa, 2021; Zakriževska-Belogrudova, 2020; Truskovska, 2013; Āboltiņa, 2012; Mārtinsone & Mihailovs, 2017; 2017b) reveals, that in Latvia, by developing the European model of supervision and applying the concept of *supervision* only to consultative support in matters of work

and professional activity, supervision is implemented in such an aspect in several professional fields, incl. in education. Latvia has developed and licensed professional master's programs "Supervision" at Riga Stradiņš University and the Latvian Christian Academy, as well as the professional master's program "Management Psychology and Supervision" at the University of Applied Sciences "RISEBA". Supervision, in turn, is included in the study programs of psychology, pedagogy, social work, art therapy, and music therapy in several universities as a part of a study course or study practice.

Table 2. Comparison of implementation of pedagogical supervision and supervision in the context of education

	Sources analyzed in English	Analyzed sources published in Latvian
Pedagogical supervision	It is implemented as a support for the development of teachers' pedagogical activities and skills	It is implemented within the study courses with the aim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote skills to apply the acquired pedagogical and psychological knowledge in pedagogical practice (master's studies) • to get acquainted with and understand in practice the essence of pedagogical counseling and supervision for the perfection of pedagogical competence, management skills, and leadership (master's studies) • to provide an opportunity to obtain knowledge and appropriate pedagogical supervision in the independent work (doctoral studies)
Supervision	In bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies – supervision of diploma theses and dissertations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is implemented in various professional fields, incl. in education • Professional Master's Program "Supervision", "Management Psychology and Supervision" • Study course or study practice component in study programs psychology, pedagogy, social work, art therapy, and music therapy

In the four analyzed studies on supervision in doctoral studies (Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong, 2021; Qureshi, & Vazir, 2016; Wolff, 2010; Kaasila & Lutovac, 2012) the focus is on the relationship between students and academic staff and on the role of the lecturer as a mentor in acquiring the skills necessary for starting and continuing doctoral studies.

As no explanation of the concept of pedagogical supervision in the context of the higher education study process was found as a result of the source analysis, the matrix of concepts of *supervision*, *pedagogical supervision*, and

a supervisor was developed (see Table 3) to provide a conceptual explanation of the concept of pedagogical supervision in the higher education study process. The matrix included 13 literature items from sources in English and Latvian (Sá-Chaves and Alarcão, 2000 (as cited in Dias & Oliveira, 2013); Mārtinsone, 2010a; Mārtinsone et al., 2012; Määttä, 2012; Dias & Oliveira, 2013; Stankus-Viša, 2017; Sudraba, 2017; Agné & Mörkenstam, 2018; *Professional standard for supervisors*, 2019; American Psychological Association, 2020; Coimbra et al., 2020; Cambridge University Press, 2021; The Latvian Association of Supervisors, n. d.).

Table 3. Findings of various authors and explanations of the concepts of supervision, pedagogical supervision, and a supervisor in various sources

Source	Authors' findings/explanation of concepts
Sá-Chaves and Alarcão (2000, as cited in Dias & Oliveira, 2013)	Pedagogical supervision should be seen as operational support, guidance, and regulation with significant importance the dimension of teaching/learning and the diversity of practice.
Mārtinsone (2010a)	The main function of learning supervision is learning, including analysis, explanation, and reflection.
Mārtinsone et al. (2012)	Supervision is often defined as a learning situation. The learning and development of the supervisee are some of the key elements of supervision.
Määttä (2012)	Supervision in doctoral studies includes four aspects – knowledge, skills, will, and action. Depending on the needs of the supervisee, the supervisor can use different possibilities of these aspects in the supervision process, taking into account his/her supervisor's style and the student's habits. The success of supervision requires the presence of all aspects. An important aspect is the specific structure of the supervisory dialogue. Students appreciate a professional supervisor who examines the issues in a structured manner and whose attitude is sincere and empathetic. Constant communication and mutual questions leading to answers are important in supervisory relationships. A lecturer-supervisor is an authority that acquires its authoritative position according to the same criteria as any lecturer among students. The authoritative position of a supervisor is determined by three criteria: (1) dominant position due to the position held, (2) the position of an expert due to his/her professional development, knowledge, and acquired skills, (3) the demanding but reliable and confidential security and protection provided to the student.
Dias and Oliveira (2013)	In the context of education, supervision is a concept related to the pedagogical practice of a more experienced person and is strongly influenced by the supervisor's position and vision, trying to see what happened before the supervision process, what happens during the supervision, and what will happen

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Source	Authors' findings/explanation of concepts
	after the supervision process. The supervisor participates intelligently, responsibly, empathetically, peacefully, and engagingly in the supervision process to understand it from the inside out, analyzing through his or her vision and based on strategic thinking, to improve the learning and teaching process.
Stankus-Viša (2017)	In the American model, supervision is related to the supervision of work in one of the helping professions; A supervisor is a more experienced employee who may not have the education of a supervisor, who helps colleagues, and who shares responsibilities with the supervisee. In the European model, supervision is a form of counseling that helps to ensure both communication and collaboration in different professional settings; a supervisor is an independent professional who works permanently for a particular organization or is called upon to do so and who takes responsibility for leading the supervision process.
Sudraba (2017)	In group supervision, each participant can enrich the group work with their own experience, abilities, and conceptualization. The main benefits of group supervision are feedback, mutual support, the formation of different points of view, and learning from the experiences of others.
Agné and Mörkenstam (2018)	Collective supervision enhances peer learning as a teaching and learning strategy in which students learn together and from others without the immediate intervention of lecturers.
<i>Occupational Standard of Supervisor</i> (2019)	A supervisor is a specialist in a certain professional field who has additionally obtained the qualification of a supervisor and who provides supervision services – purposefully organized consultative and educational support received in the professional context by an individual, group, or organization intending to improve professional competence and quality of the professional activity.
American Psychological Association (2020)	Supervision is a critical evaluation and guidance provided by a qualified and experienced person (the supervisor) to another individual (the trainee) during the learning of a task or process.
Coimbra et al. (2020)	Pedagogical supervision is the theory and practice for regulating teaching and learning in the context of education. The object of pedagogical supervision is pedagogy, and it aims to improve pedagogical activity and teacher skills in the supervision process.
Cambridge University Press (2021)	Supervision is the act of watching a person or activity and making certain that everything is done correctly, safely, etc.
The Latvian Association of Supervisors (n. d.)	Supervision is a reflection on issues related to work and professional activity.

Discussion

Two questions were defined in this study: “*What is the essence of pedagogical supervision?*” and “*What is the application of pedagogical supervision in the higher education study process to reduce dropout?*”. The results of the data analysis reveal differences in the sources in English and Latvian in the understanding of the concept of pedagogical supervision and its implementation. In research published in the context of education in English, *pedagogical supervision* is linked to the development of teachers’ pedagogical activities and skills, *supervision* means the supervising of diploma theses and dissertations in bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral studies, in turn, the concept of a *supervisor* is extended to scientific supervisors mostly in doctoral studies or supervisors who work with teachers. In Latvia, pedagogical supervision is implemented within the framework of master’s and doctoral study courses to promote the skills to apply the acquired pedagogical and psychological knowledge in pedagogical practice, to get acquainted with and understand in practice the essence of pedagogical counseling and supervision for the improvement of pedagogical competence, management skills, and leadership and to provide an opportunity to get to know and test pedagogical supervision in independent work which is more in line with the American model of supervision.

Summarizing the concepts and explanations of the concepts included in the explanatory matrix of *supervision*, *pedagogical supervision*, and *supervisor*, a conceptual explanation of the concept of pedagogical supervision in the context of the higher education study process was developed.

Pedagogical supervision is the interaction between the lecturer-supervisor and the student-supervisee, in which the student is provided with supervision, support, guidance, and regulation, which includes analysis, explanation, and reflection for the improvement of the student’s knowledge, skills, will effort, and actions in the study process, which takes into account the needs and habits of the student-supervisee and supervisor’s work style. In group and collective supervision, students learn together and from each other’s experiences, providing mutual support, and feedback, and creating different points of view, without the immediate intervention of a lecturer-supervisor. The lecturer-supervisor implements pedagogical supervision within the limits of his/her pedagogical competence as an expert, which does not require the professional qualification of a supervisor.

In the research on supervision in doctoral studies (Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong, 2021; Qureshi, & Vazir, 2016; Wolff, 2010; Kaasila & Lutovac, 2012), the updated topics on the relationship between students and academic staff and the role of the lecturer as a mentor in acquiring

the skills necessary for starting and continuing doctoral studies are also especially important in reducing undergraduate studies.

The solution and answer to the second question of the research “*What is the application of pedagogical supervision in the higher education study process to reduce dropout?*” can be found in the broader understanding and application of the concept of pedagogical supervision in bachelor’s study programs, providing support to young students for the improvement of knowledge, skills, will effort and actions in the study process to continue studies and reduce drop-out rates. Taking into account the results of theoretical research that reveals the understanding, explanation, and application of the concept of supervision and supervisor in Latvia according to the European model of supervision, the need for a broader understanding and application of the concept of pedagogical supervision is especially important in the Latvian context. An expanded understanding and application of the concept (see Figure 1) includes (1) aspect of pedagogical supervision, by which is meant the lecturer-supervisor as an expert, who implements pedagogical supervision within the limits of his or her pedagogical competence – as an expert, he/she already has the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies for the implementation of pedagogical supervision, which does not require the qualification of a supervisor, (2) aspect of supervision, by which is meant supervision as support, guidance, and direction for the comprehensive and not only professional development of young students. It should be noted that pedagogical supervision in Latvia has been and is being implemented in master’s and doctoral study programs with the aim (1) to promote skills to apply the acquired pedagogical and psychological knowledge in pedagogical practice, (2) to get acquainted with and understand in practice the essence of pedagogical counseling and supervision for the improvement of pedagogical competence, management skills, and leadership (in master’s studies) and (3) to provide an opportunity to get to know and approbate pedagogical supervision in independent work to encourage the development of innovative ideas (in doctoral studies). In its turn, supervision in Latvia is offered and implemented as a deepening of the profession and promotion of professional development in study courses, study practices as well as in various professional environments, and the profession of the supervisor is regulated by the Standard of the Profession of Supervisor and is acquired in three master’s study programs implemented in Latvian higher education institutions. So far, five books have been published in Latvian on the issue of supervision (Apine, 2007; Mārtinsons, 2010b; Mārtinsons & Mihailova, 2017; Zakriževska-Belogrudova, 2020; Pumpiņa, 2021) as well as two doctoral theses on the topic of supervision have been developed and defended (Āboltiņa, 2012; Truskovska, 2013) thus strengthening the positions of the implementation of the European model of supervision in Latvia,

however, the question of the need for the support of a lecturer as a supervisor in the study process for the improvement of students' personalities and the development of academic competence is still relevant.

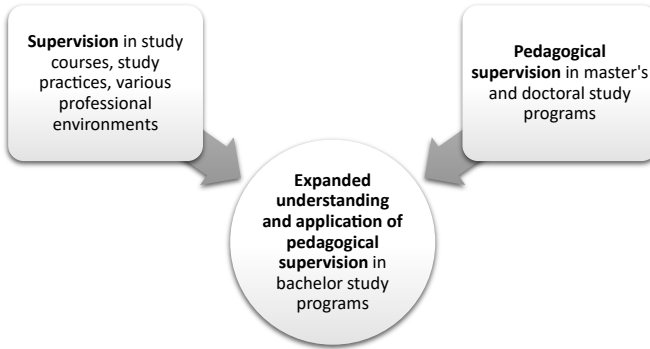


Figure 1. Expanded understanding of supervision and pedagogical supervision in the Latvian context

The limitations of this study are determined by the small number of data sources found on pedagogical supervision. In the course of further theoretical research, an extended search of data sources in various databases should be carried out to gain a broader insight into the application of pedagogical supervision in education. The experience of certain countries, such as Portugal, the United Kingdom, and Iceland, in the implementation of pedagogical supervision in higher education, should be considered as an additional aspect of research. The results of the research would be comparable and applicable to the situation in Latvia.

The results of this theoretical research will be used for further research of the conceptual explanation of the concept of *pedagogical supervision* in the context of the higher education study process and the development of a theoretical concept for the development of students' academic competence in the application of art therapy techniques.

Conclusions

The results of the theoretical research on pedagogical supervision in the higher education study process have revealed the narrow application of pedagogical supervision in the educational environment to promote the improvement of teachers' professional competence and pedagogical activity. At the same time, the results of the research reveal linguistic nuance in the use of the concepts of *supervisor* and *supervision* in English and Latvian. In English, the word *supervisor* in the context of education refers

to both – a supervisor who provides support in the professional activities of teachers and a scientific supervisor of degree or qualification work. In the Latvian language, the word *supervisor* in the context of education is used in the study process, acquiring study courses related to supervision, or participating in supervision, which is intended in the study process for the acquisition of a specific profession. In turn, the word *supervision* in English in the context of education means the scientific supervision of diplomas, qualifications, and doctoral theses, but in the Latvian language, the word *supervision* in the context of education is used in the titles of study programs and study courses, meaning the acquisition of a specific profession or the experience of supervision during the acquisition of a profession.

The conceptual explanation of the concept of *pedagogical supervision* developed in the research reveals the possibilities of its extended application in the higher education study process, including both the components of pedagogical supervision and the essence of supervision as such – to provide support for the growth and improvement of the supervisee. The extended application of pedagogical supervision in the bachelor's study process would enable students to receive support not only for narrow professional growth and improvement but also for personal development and academic competence development, thus reducing the risks of dropping out and promoting the intended education and qualification or degree.

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