

# THE MAIN ASPECTS OF UKRAINIAN YOUTH’S NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

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## ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the issue of developing Ukrainian youth’s national identity in the era of intensive globalization processes. The paper has identified the peculiarity of the youth as a social group whose age is critical for forming personal identity and sensitive for developing their national identity. The three main components of students’ national identity (cognitive, affective and conative) have been described. The authors outline and analyze the main aspects of national identity such as: value orientation (with a set of vital values), moral preferences, tolerance, ideas about factors of life success, academic mobility, etc). It has been highlighted that the formation of students’ national identity at higher schools should be under constant pedagogical influence for its correction and optimization and it can be implemented under such conditions: preparing students for reproducing and representing their culture in professional activities and everyday life; developing their abilities to identify and internalize national values; and putting knowledge, skills and national values into practice.

**Keywords:** National Identity; The Youth; Value Orientation; Tolerance; Life Success.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, new technologies and the “information revolution” are bringing our world closer together and making nations, economies and cultures increasingly interdependent (Javadi, 2008, p. 112). This process of “globalization” is often portrayed as a positive force which unifies quite different societies, integrating them into a “global village”, and enriches them during this process. However, globalization is not only a tendency for uniting the world, but also to escalation (in the

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civilized framework) of the competition of several civilization projects offered by states – world leaders.

The emergence of the European Union led to growing interest in the problem of its impact on the national identity of citizens in its member states. Although European integration differs from globalization, there are some similar aspects, such as: increasing communication beyond the national borders, improving the quality of education to the world level, increasing its competitiveness with the American and Asian educational systems, etc. Yet, in our opinion, all of the above mentioned aspects can lead to the decline of national identity.

For Ukraine, which has chosen the European integration strategy, in the conditions of globalization, the need to develop adequate reactions to opportunities and challenges associated with integration processes is urgent. In particular, the reverse side of internationalization of education in Ukraine is active "educational emigration" to Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, the USA, etc. which reveals inconsistency of the modern higher education to public expectations. At the same time, the number of foreigners studying at Ukrainian higher educational institutions is much less than the number of the Ukrainian youth studying abroad.

Ukraine's integration with the world social space in the era of intensive globalization processes determines the importance of the problem of developing its youth's national identity. It plays a significant role among other types of identities (like ancestral, gender, regional, socio-economic, religious, political, ethnic, national), and it is the combination of ethnic and political identities.

The process of the national identity formation is influenced by a variety of factors, such as: social and economic state of Ukraine; political system; language; religion; national values and ideals; history; culture, etc.), but the strength and direction of their actions directly depends on the environment in which a young person is located (Hora, 2011, p. 98). The educational environment of a higher educational institution plays a vital role in the socialization processes of a young person, who is under its influence throughout the whole period of study, and hence the whole period of intensive formation of identities.

In the context of globalization, the person's connection with the national community is weakening. Yet this connection ensures, on the one hand, the sense of security of the individual, and, on the other hand, it transfers historical memory and cultural traditions. Thus, one of the priorities for

developing Ukrainian society is the formation of national identity of its young people, especially the students.

The need for solving this important task directs modern researchers of psychological and pedagogical sciences to study thoroughly the peculiarities of the development of effective programs for the formation of the youth's national identity.

The purpose of the paper is to identify the key aspects of Ukrainian youth's national identity, emphasize the their influence on consciousness of the Ukrainian youth, determine the effective pedagogical influence on the process of development of Ukrainian youth's national identity and to use it as a material for valuable rethinking and adaptation to Ukrainian higher education practice.

## **2. THE ISSUE OF UKRAINIAN YOUTH'S IDENTITY**

### **2.1. The Concept of Youth's National Identity**

#### ***2.1.1. The Phenomenon of National Identity***

The phenomenon of national identity as a component of social reality has begun to attract linguists' attention quite recently, since the end of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. National identity is the object of study of social psychology, ethnopsychology and ethnosociology. This wide range of scientific branches is explained by the fact that, on the one hand, national identity is the result of social relations, and on the other hand, this concept belongs to the sphere of perception and evaluation of representatives of other ethnic groups connected with the processes that cover human cognition.

To understand the national identity, we consider the clarification of the essence of the identity phenomenon, its interpretation from the standpoint of various social sciences and scientific paradigms, the connection of the state of identification processes with the processes of social transformation, integration of society, institutional and socio-cultural changes.

The papers of the scholars such as V. Bakirov, O. Hudzenko, K. Ivashchenko, A. Javadi, S. Huntington, N. Kozlov, M. Korzewski, S. Makeev, O. Museizov, S. Oksamitna, Y. Pachkovskyi, L. Sokurianska, V. Stepanenko, V. Tarasenko, N. Chernysh, M. Shulga, A. Smith, etc. are devoted to various aspects of the problem of the national identity. In Javadi's opinion, national identity is a special case of collective identity which does not mean an objective connection built by human beings, but a socially shared and binding knowledge in the form of an officially

prevailing conception of itself in a certain nation being imparted through certain institutions (2008, p. 113). Smith considers the elements of national identity as a common historical territory or understanding of homeland, common myths and historical memories, a common mass public culture, a system of rights and duties for all people and a common economy (2004, p. 196). Huntington (1999) has defined the four basic factors in the formation of national identity, such as: belief structure, national heritage, cultural similarity and racial unity.

Yet in spite of this, the general status of the study of the youth's national identity, both as an independent problem, and as a phenomenon, through which one can study and evaluate various aspects of the social life of Ukrainian youth, does not meet the existing needs and it requires further development of the theory of identity and the practical tasks of regulating social processes in the modern Ukrainian society.

### ***2.1.2. The Ukrainian Youth as a Selected Social Group for Investigation***

The Ukrainian youth is an interesting object for observation which is proved by several reasons. First of all, these young people do not have an experience of belonging and loyalty to another territorial-political and cultural-symbolic system and therefore they consider the Ukrainian sovereignty as an objective reality, unlike the generations of their parents and grandparents, for whom its ontological status is slightly different. Under these circumstances, the youth is more conducive to the processes and activities to forming a national identity. The consciousness of the student youth, that has not been affected yet by certain organizational (corporate) cultures, is open to new information trends and to various cultural impacts, and this influence is an interesting perception of the actual processes of socio-cultural and symbolic spaces.

All young people are characterized by the ability to attach to new vital interests and practices. That is why the youth is mobile in getting the identity. The majority of young people in Ukraine are students. The special features of the students as a social group are as follows: a) it is the most numerous and educated social group of the modern society; it is a mobile social group in informative, educational, and creative content; it is a prospective social resource for the development of Ukraine as a civilized European country; it is a differentiated community due to the different social backgrounds of its representatives, their political and ideological preferences, subcultural differences (both general youth subcultures and

unique student subcultures (e.g., the students of a certain profession, specific university, the students living in a hostel, etc.).

### **2.1.3. The Main Components of Youth’s National Identity**

The student age is critical for forming personal identity and sensitive for the development of their national identity. Like nation identity in general, the youth’s national identity includes three main components: cognitive, affective, and conative.

The cognitive component includes the knowledge the youth have about the nation, its territory, customs, traditions, history and if they consider themselves as a part of this nation. The affective component is reflected in the national feelings of the youth, such as national pride or shame, national self-esteem or disrespect. And the conative component is characterized by using the native language and students’ integration into the national culture and public life.

## **2.2. Key Aspects of the Youth’s National Identity**

### **2.2.1. Value Orientations**

While focusing on the formation of national identity, it is necessary to analyze its main aspects. The first aspect that determines the identity of a nation is the value orientations of a modern society. Values are vital elements in all cultures and value awareness can be seen as an essential part of intercultural competence. The meaning of values is also very central for the individual identity and its formation takes place at this period of life. One of the most important general goals in today’s world universally is the search for peace and security, combined with general well-being. Values may be the essential area where to seek answers from cultural and transnational perspective. Values are strongly interconnected with both thinking and emotions and form a basis of action (both good and bad ones). Numerous sociological studies indicate that the value grounds are both integration and disintegration processes that take place in our society (Bakirov, 1998; Korzewski, 2005; Pachkovsky, 2009). In our study, we rely on the definition of value orientation as “systemically related value concepts that really determine the actions of people, and are manifested and layouted in practical behavior, determining the qualitative peculiarity of a human life”, given by Bakirov (1998, p. 81).

In changing and globalizing society capabilities, it is very important to understand, cope with diversified social and cultural reality and construct one’s own identity and value related world view, especially for young

people. Value orientations are quite changeable. Analyzing the dynamics of the Ukrainian students' orientation for terminal values, we conclude, that, first of all, they pay attention to the top three values. Temporary relevant values include wisdom, health, love, happy life, stability and friendly environment in the country and abroad. The instrumental values of students embraced the following top-ranked values: well-being, humor, tolerance to opinions of other people, honesty and consideration. Regarding the invariable values takes the first and second ranked positions (health and family) in investigations, and their intensity increases. In our opinion, this happens, on the one hand, due to the worsening of the health of the contemporary Ukrainian youth (shown by the results of sociological research and official medical statistics (Pachkovsky, 2009, p. 83), and, on the other hand, it is related to more profound awareness of its significance for successful livelihoods. The increase of the importance of a value such as a family is also caused by at least two reasons. The first reason is the awareness of a modern person (including the young one) that they can trust, and, therefore, feel a relative safety only being among the people who are closest to them – the members of their family. The second reason is the significant complications (both subjective and objective ones) that arise for young people who aspire to create a family: the problems of finding a marriage partner and having financial difficulties. This results in the fact that the family, in spite of the highest estimates of its significance, increasingly becomes a so-called "deferred" value (Pachkovsky, 2009, p. 84).

Within the focus group survey, the "delay" with creating a family has got several additional explanations among which are the desire for making a successful professional career (inherent both to men and women) and the desire to "enjoy freedom for as long as possible" (as indicated primarily by young men).

In our opinion, a higher position of humanistic value "good relations with others" in the hierarchy of value orientations chosen by our respondents may be explained by the fact that the student youth is experiencing a certain shortage of such relationships, which requires a more detailed analysis, in particular in the context of the problems of formation favorable moral and psychological climate in higher school environment. The global economic crisis, which has also influenced Ukraine, results in increasing the "materialism" of the students' value discourse.

Consequently, the values we have mentioned (e.g., family, health, material welfare, ecological safety) are the leading ones in the value hierarchy of our target social group of the Ukrainian population, leaving behind such

values as politics, service to society, etc. This testifies that the dominant mass value consciousness becomes the arrangement of private life and family well-being. There is no doubt that the achievement of such welfare should be regarded as the main task of the Ukrainian social policy, and the idea of the well-being of every citizen of Ukraine can and should become an important part of the national idea of identity.

So, as we see, whatever happens in our society, it is always united by the same values: it was true in the XX<sup>th</sup> century, and continues today, at the beginning of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century. However, time does not stand still: the society is changing, and we are changing together with it. The values of private life are replaced by collectivist values. Globalization forces the world to move towards finding the most acceptable tolerant practices for modern civilization, the sociological study of which will optimize social interaction in the direction of their humanization.

### **2.2.2. Tolerance**

The historical growth of the human identity has its own basis of tolerance. Tolerance is the quality of allowing other people to express their own opinion or act as they like, even if you do not agree with this opinion or approve of it. Tolerance becomes a reality through the establishment of stable, unhindered and diverse communications, the purpose of which is to spread understanding between people and the recognition of certain rights. Tolerance becomes a necessary competence of a modern young person, the acquisition of which is primarily possible through education. It is the educational institution that holds a significant place in the formation of a tolerant social space, since it forms beliefs and knowledge about the role of tolerance in public life (Korzewski, 2005, p. 243).

Today, tolerance as a value, norm and principle of activity, becomes a vital element of national identity, which defines the models of interpersonal and intergroup interactions in a multicultural world that is globalizing. According to our research, the Ukrainian students, despite the existing differences within the group, looks like a social community, whose members identify themselves predominantly on cultural grounds and do not experience faults that would make it impossible to consolidate and realize common needs and interests, in particular that tolerance becomes a required condition for the existence in the modern world with its multiculturalism and pluralism of thoughts and actions. In our opinion, students' tolerant attitude promotes the openness of higher education institutions for communication, concentration of efforts on the spiritual

component of education and students' upbringing, propaganda of the elevation of thoughts, desires, and noble motivation of actions. Inclusion of the individual into a tolerant social network (in the context of getting higher education) becomes a key to the formation of their tolerant social behaviour. Tolerant personality is a value for any society, although the cultivation of such a person requires time, effort and will.

By summarizing the previous investigations and experience of psychologists and sociologists studying the manifestations of tolerance on an individual level, we have determined the following characteristics of a tolerant person: readiness to admit the presence of different opinions and perceive the opinions of other people; ability to make a civilized compromise; the efforts of the individual to coordinate their point of view of the problem on the basis of justice, law and human rights at its discretion; unbinding uniform standards; the skills to solve the contradictions openly, constructively and positively; preservation of the sense of harmony; ability to be competitive without restricting their ethical nature; implementation of actions in a positive scenario; non-cultivating the enemy's image; confronting any manifestations of xenophobia; and the lack of society's division into winners and losers.

The communicative technology of tolerance development in a modern university can be considered as a social dialogue between the participants of the university life. A social dialogue is problem-oriented communication; therefore, students should be aware of both university problems and problems in society as a whole and in its particular fields, as well as in the educational policy priorities pursued by the authorities in the direction of developing tolerance.

### **2.2.3. Life Success, Mobility**

We consider the acquired national identity as human success. The factors of life success are the identifiers of value-normative portraiture, as well as they reflect and rank the everyday life practices of contemporary Ukrainian students.

Being successful means to achieve the desired visions and planned goals. Furthermore, success can be a certain social status that describes a prosperous person that could also have gained fame for its favorable outcome. Collins dictionary describes success as follows: "...the achievement of something that you have been trying to do" and "the achievement of a high position in a particular field, for example in business



or politics” (Collins dictionary, n.d.). Conceptually life success is inscribed in the logical connection “life chances – life strategies” and acts as the ideal type of the overall idea of the youth about successful life self-realization. The combination of factors reproduces a kind of “formula of life success”, which directs the students’ everyday practices, reveals the system of values, moral attitudes, target orientations, etc.

According to our research data (based on the students’ survey), the most significant factor of life success is their own intelligence and abilities. By investigating the perception of the role of modern education by the youth in the process of designing life success, Hudzenko points out that “the Soviet people could not imagine being able to work outside their specialty, and even more they considered it as an adaptation to existing conditions” (2010, p. 109). Nowadays, however, education is only a symbol of social prestige, and professions, the youth have, do not often correspond to the specialty they have received, and therefore the second (and sometimes the third) higher education becomes a necessary condition in the labor market (Hudzenko, 2010, p. 109). She explains this by the process of borrowing the models of success from the Western countries and by the lack of a certain ethics of success. We can also add to this list the factor of the deterioration of the quality of modern education in Ukraine as a consequence of its mass character. Sokurianska states that “education is perceived by the students as a means of social mobility, but it is also valued as an opportunity to become a knowledgeable person” (2006, p. 530), that is, the manifestation of the simultaneous perception of education, both as a terminal and as an instrumental value, which reveals the value ambiguity of the consciousness of the Ukrainian students.

Recently, modern students, manifesting their dedication to achieving their goals, have been potentially set to violate moral and legal norms for their realization. This tendency was caused by political instability in the country, the economic crisis, declining living standards of the population (macro level), as well as some changes in moral standards and attitudes of young people at the micro level.

We note that the modernization of modern Western European discourse, which is actualized in the minds of contemporary Ukrainian students, is rather declarative and nominal, which confirms the dynamics of indicators of significant factors of life’s success. The analysis of the factors of constructing civil and other types of social identity allowed us to draw a peculiar socio-cultural portrait of a modern Ukrainian student. At the same time, we paid special attention to such characteristics of the students as

value orientations, moral preferences, ideas about factors of life success, emigration processes, academic mobility, etc.

By studying the value field of contemporary Ukrainian students, we first came to the conclusion about the differentiation of its value consciousness. Our research confirmed the hypothesis about further development of student youth's values and value orientations.

The analysis of the dynamics of the terminal values of Ukrainian students showed an increase in the tensions of civilians, values, which indicates a certain increase in the colour of the value consciousness of future specialists. At the same time, those respondents who fully feel themselves as citizens of Ukraine possess inherent orientation to traditional terminal and instrumental values. However, the clustering of the information we received revealed that the effectiveness of identification practices depends not only on the orientation of the individual on a definite value, but on the level of their realization, the embodiment in the daily life of the individual. Consequently, non-verbal behavior, the declaration of their value preferences, and the real social practices of ordinary people as actualization and realization of these values can provide a higher level of its civic identity. As for the system of Ukrainian students' moral values, it remains within the limits of the traditional value-normative system. The processes of individualization only partly affected the students' moral consciousness, since targeting other people, taking into account their interests, etc., occupy a high place in the system of values of student youth. The tendencies revealed that the base of the students' moral orientations aimed at individual and family values is shifting to more tolerance of the student youth. An important determinant of the youth's moral attitudes is the level of religious self-identity and involvement in religious life, which contributes to a more tolerant attitude towards others, a willingness to cooperate with them, a positive and respectful attitude towards our country and the state, their symbols and culture.

### **2.3. The Influence of Educational Environment on Developing the Youth's National Identity**

#### ***2.3.1. The Concept of Educational Environment of a Higher School***

As we have already mentioned, the process of forming the youth's national identity is influenced by the following factors: social and economic situation in the country, language of communication, religion, national

values and ideals, history, culture, etc. But their power and orientation directly depend on the environment where a young person is located. Most Ukrainian and foreign researchers (Altugan, 2015; Hora, 2011) agreed that the educational environment of a higher educational institution plays the greatest role in the socialization processes of a young person, because the student is under its influence during the period of study, and thus the entire period of intensive formation of identities.

Since the level of national identity formation is an integral part of the students' all-round development, the role of the educational environment in the process of its formation is extremely important. Taking into account the fact that at present the level of the national identity formation of the youth does not always meet the requirements, we conclude that there is an urgent need to develop the educational system which, on the one hand, would train a highly skilled specialist in a particular field, but on the other hand – educate a socially active, nationally-minded person.

We consider the term of “educational environment of a higher educational institution” as “a set of the spiritual and material conditions of its functioning, which ensure the self-development of the person, the realization of the creative potential of their personality”. Educational environment serves as a functional and spatial association of subjects of education having close diverse group relationships between them, and can be considered as a model of social and cultural space, where the formation of personality occurs.

The students as a social group carry the history of the social world in the form of academic knowledge and the prospects of their development as a potential of the realization of this knowledge in practice. The basic role of fundamental knowledge, laid out by academic education, forms the cultural core in which the whole cultural memory of the society is collected, the sociological projection of which is a system of ideals and values of the people. The national component in the content of professional training plays an important role in the process of forming a national identity.

Presented by the content of the educational material, the national component is a powerful factor in the national identification of students, since it is aimed, first of all, at raising the level of the cognitive component of national identity. Its accentuation becomes possible due to self-awareness of the educational environment of national competence by the subjects as a component of professional competence, which facilitates the

formation of the personality’s general and professional culture, and their learning of universal and national values.

### **2.3.2. Nation-forming Function of the Educational Environment**

The fulfillment of the nation-forming function of the educational environment is possible only under the following conditions:

- 1) students’ preparation to reproduce and represent their culture in professional activities and everyday life;
- 2) development of students’ abilities to identify and internalize national values;
- 3) emotional component of assessing socially significant events, symbols and artifacts;
- 4) purposeful use of the knowledge, skills and national values in practice.

The processes of formation of student’s personality characteristics occur under the condition of realizing these opportunities. Because national culture (which is the main component of the process of forming the national identity, the students’ value orientation and the emotional attitude to the environment) is a key to their active participation in the social and political life of society, and the use of knowledge and skills, including the national ones in practice is the way to professionalism.

However, the educational potential of the educational environment is realized only when it has a humanistic character, determined by the personal approach to the organization of educational process, trustful, open, joint activity of students and teachers, joint creativity. Under these conditions, the importance of the teacher as a translator and the main source of national values increases.

The important factor that influences the processes of formation of the social position of students is the orientation of the educational environment and its following characteristics: openness and dynamism, active interaction with various public associations, social organizations, which provides additional opportunities for learning; available conditions for free communication in a group, between teachers and students. This will facilitate the formation of students’ positive national identity.

By modeling the educational environment it is necessary to take into account its impact on its participants in the social environment. This impact is not always positive. However, the formation of national identity

in the educational environment should be under constant pedagogical influence for its correction and optimization.

If the educational environment is directed at the successive influence of the teacher on the emotional-sensory, value-meaningful spheres of the individual (by providing a step-by-step analysis of the effectiveness of the process and correcting joint actions), this will ensure the transformation of cognitive (knowledge) factors into affective ones (emotional), which, in turn, aggregates both groups of factors into a behavioral-activity (conative) strategy of the individual. The result will be a positive national identity of the student.

Since the youth need affiliation and belonging, they require the opportunities to form affirming and healthy relationships with peers, so the teacher's task is to recognize the importance of peer relationships and friendship and provide the opportunity for positive peer interactions (Kellough & Kellough, 2008). This can be achieved by designing cooperative learning activities for students to interact productively with peers. Teachers can also plan activities engaging students in discussions or debates in academic settings as well as those that simulate social situations through role-plays or simulations (Kellough & Kellough, 2008). Moreover, a range of social events can be organized outside the classroom to stimulate the development of national identity. For instance, the teaching staff of the Institute of Humanities at the National Aviation University try to facilitate students' identity formation by attracting them to participate in so-called "live" cultural practices. These are: the collective celebration of national memorable dates (e.g. Independence Day, The Day of a National Flag, The Day of a National Language, Vyshyvanka's Day (which is a traditional Ukrainian embroidered women's blouse or dress or men's shirt) in the form of flash mobs, singing, dancing, etc); excursions to visit memorable places, historical and cultural reserves; literary and artistic presentations; projects; case studies, etc.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

The globalisation processes affects the world's cultures and results in changing the nature of the relationship between the world's youth and their sense of identity. The student age is sensitive and critical for developing their national identity, that's why the issue of developing Ukrainian youth's national identity (consisting of cognitive, affective and conative components) is of great importance today. Among the main aspects of the youth's national identity we have emphasised and analyzed

value orientation, moral preferences, tolerance, life success, academic mobility, etc. The formation of tolerance is facilitated by the experience of national relations. We have noticed that the part of the students supporting multiethnic relations are more socially active, informed and have broader access to means of communication. The results of the study have also showed that there is no fundamental value for a modern student, due to which success has been achieved, in fact, there is no ethics of success, and the latter is valued by itself. With this in mind, it can be argued that the identification searches of Ukrainian students are directed to the invention of an optimal formula for the achievement of life success, to construct the identity of a successful person. It is important that Ukrainian students get this identity at home, which, by guaranteeing their right to education, should contribute to the social, professional and personal self-realization. Under these conditions their civic identity will acquire emotional and value significance and patriotic coloring. The formation of students’ national identity at higher schools should be under pedagogical influence for its correction and optimization and it can be implemented under the definite conditions. If the educational environment is directed to the teacher’s consistent influence on the emotional and value spheres, then this will ensure the transformation of the cognitive factors into affective ones, which, in turn, aggregates both groups of factors into a behavioral and activity (conative) strategy of the individual. The result will be a positive national identity of the young person.

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