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Педагогіка

Ш. Мумінова, С. Асатуров

Педагогічні підходи до роботи з колективною пам'яттю в умовах війни..... 9

С. Пей, А. Кравченко

Інтеграція метакогнітивних стратегій
в іншомовну освіту в технічних коледжах 21

О. Сніговська

Парадипломатія як освітня стратегія протидії інформаційним загрозам
в іншомовній підготовці політологів-міжнародників 32

Н. Тверезовська, І. Демченко, В. Сидорко, Н. Сидорко

Методи формування наскрізних (soft) компетентностей
у здобувачів фахової передвищої освіти..... 53

Психологія

М. Садова

Вікові відмінності мотиваційного потенціалу самореалізації
обдарованої молоді 64

С. Джакоміцці, Л. Кнолл, М. Ертль

Реформа психологічної оцінки для отримання права на володіння вогнепальною зброєю:
питання діагностики та оцінки у законодавстві Австрії про зброю 77

В. Косс

Гендерні, вікові та культурні особливості формування
професійної стійкості психологів сектору безпеки і оборони України 94

Філософія

А. Кравченко, І. Кизименко, Н. Гусєва

Епістемологія традицій: філософські виклики
збереження нематеріальної культурної спадщини..... 110

В. Культенко, А. Супрун

Динаміка цінностей та вразливості сучасної демократії
на тлі процесів глобалізації та локалізації 128

Contents

Pedagogy

S. Muminova, S. Asaturov

Pedagogical approaches to working with collective memory in wartime 9

X. Pei, A. Kravchenko

Integrating metacognitive strategies into foreign language education
in technical colleges..... 21

O. Snigovska

Paradiplomacy as an educational strategy for countering information threats
in foreign language training of political scientists specialising
in international relations..... 32

N. Tverezovska, I. Demchenko, V. Sydorko, N. Sydorko

Methods of forming soft skills in applicants
for professional pre-higher education 53

Psychology

M. Sadova

Age differences in the motivational potential
for self-realisation among gifted young people..... 64

S. Giacomuzzi, L. Knoll, M. Ertl

Reformation of psychological assessment for firearm eligibility:
Issues of diagnostics and evaluation in Austria's gun law..... 77

V. Koss

Gender, age and cultural characteristics of professional resilience
in psychologists working in Ukraine's security and defence sector..... 94

Philosophy

A. Kravchenko, I. Kyzymenko, N. Husieva

Epistemology of traditions: Philosophical challenges
in preserving intangible cultural heritage..... 110

V. Kultenko, A. Suprun

The dynamics of values and vulnerability of modern democracy against the backdrop
of globalisation and localisation processes..... 128



Pedagogical approaches to working with collective memory in wartime

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Abstract. Current study was devoted to a critical rethinking of the role of education in the process of forming collective memory, especially in post-conflict and wartime societies. The relevance of the work was determined by the need to develop effective pedagogical approaches to teaching complex and traumatic historical experiences that had crucial importance for establishing lasting peace and developing civic consciousness. The aim of this study was to analyse the potential of education as a space for ethical reflection on collective historical experience and to develop pedagogical approaches to working with complex historical narratives. The work used comparative analysis methods to study international experience, as well as discourse analysis and thematic analysis of academic sources and memorialisation practices for a deeper understanding of the Ukrainian context. The research was based on an analysis of the actual pedagogical practices of Ukrainian teachers and lecturers in working with historical events. As a result of the research, the phenomenon of “chosen trauma” was analysed as a key component of collective memory that influences the formation of the identity of social groups in the context of a traumatic past. It summarised contemporary approaches to teaching about complex pasts and examined the international experience of Germany, Rwanda, South Africa, and Israel/Palestine in shaping historical memory. A detailed analysis of the Ukrainian context was presented, including the practice of teaching about the Holodomor, Babyn Yar, the Chernobyl disaster, the Volhynian tragedy, and Russia’s current war against Ukraine, with a description of specific pedagogical tools and case studies demonstrating their impact on learners. Particular attention was paid to the concepts of “chosen glory” and “difficult heritage” as key elements in shaping narratives of pride and responsibility. Specific pedagogical recommendations were formulated for working with topics that evoke emotional resistance or silence,

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aimed at developing a culture of peace, critical thinking, and empathy. The results obtained were of practical value for the development of peace pedagogy and civic education, as well as for application in formal and informal educational environments, especially in Ukraine in the context of post-war restoration of the education system. They can serve as a basis for the development of curricula, methodological guides and training courses for educators, contributing to effective work with collective memory

Keywords: chosen trauma; chosen glory; difficult heritage; historical memory; peace education; identity; conflict of memories

Introduction

Collective memory of radical violence, genocide and mass repression increasingly defines the symbolic boundaries of communities and establishes the moral coordinates of political action. An unresolved traumatic past can both strengthen solidarity and produce new lines of conflict, transmitting the image of the enemy and justifying further cycles of violence. The ability of educational institutions to provide a safe space for critical rethinking of these narratives is particularly important in countries undergoing war or post-conflict reconstruction.

Field research by A. Kenworthy & M. U'Ren (2025) showed that the integration of service-learning during military operations increases students' emotional resilience and strengthens the sense of mutual support in the academic community. Research into the role of education in the formation of collective memory, especially in post-conflict and war societies, is an important area of contemporary scientific thought. Several key approaches to pedagogical work with "chosen trauma", "chosen glory", and "difficult heritage" have been developed in contemporary literature. The original concept was introduced by V. Volkan (1997), who is the author of the concept of chosen trauma, which describes an event of great group humiliation or loss that, remaining unprocessed, is passed down from generation to generation and becomes the basis of collective identity. In recent interpretations, these concepts are being actively rethought and developed. Along with this, V. Volkan (1997) also introduced

the concept of chosen glory – the collective memory of heroic achievements or victories that are idealised and symbolise the dignity of the group.

Contemporary researchers are actively rethinking and developing these concepts. Thus, in the context of difficult heritage, S. Macdonald (2022; 2023) analyses the ethical limits of VR/AR projects that immerse visitors in "unwanted" heritage and demonstrates how museums engage different communities in co-curating narratives, emphasising the potential of participatory practices in education. The development of postmemory concepts is reflected in the works of M. Hirsch (2025), who proposed practices of "reparative memory" instead of an exclusively traumatic focus, as well as in her critical reflection on the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust. New applications of the ideas of multidirectional memory and the implicated subject have been expanded by M. Rothberg (2023), who extends the concept of "implication" to the emotional involvement of contemporary witnesses. Educators tested the feasibility of M. Rothberg's (2023) model in different classrooms, showing that "multidirectional memory" helps overcome ethnic barriers, which indicates the relevance of the concept in new cases. The same is proven by the authors of a case study of German school programmes, S. Arnold & S. Bischoff (2023), who operationalise "multidirectional memory" in qualitative interviews.

An analysis of the works of Ukrainian researchers highlights the challenges and peculiarities of working with collective memory in the

context of full-scale war. I. Manners (2024) and O. Lytovchenko & O. Lytovchenko (2025) describe the integration of trauma-informed principles into working with young people during war, adding empirical Ukrainian material on supporting resilience in educators. Ya. Kambalova (2023) analyses the effectiveness of multiperspective tasks for developing critical thinking in students. Practical methods for working with controversial topics in Ukrainian history are also being developed. The introduction of trauma-informed practices in social work is important because the resilience of educators directly depends on their skills in working with collective trauma.

Despite a significant amount of research, existing scientific approaches often fragment phenomena or focus on individual historical events. The analysis reveals a gap in the comprehensive combination of three interrelated categories – “chosen trauma”, “chosen glory” and “difficult heritage” – specifically within the Ukrainian education system, which is under the influence of the ongoing war. Most publications ignore the interaction of narratives of guilt and pride within a single pedagogical framework. Therefore, the aim of this article was to explore how the comprehensive combination of three interrelated categories – “chosen trauma”, “chosen glory” and “difficult heritage” – can be integrated into Ukrainian educational practices, as well as in identifying effective pedagogical tools that support a culture of peace, intergroup empathy and prevent the reproduction of exclusionary narratives.

Materials and Methods

The study implemented a combination of comparative, discursive (discourse), and thematic analyses. This approach enabled the researchers to contrast international models for working with traumatic, heroic, and controversial narratives of collective memory and to examine Ukrainian educational practices in wartime conditions in detail. The justification for selecting these research methods was based on the interdisciplinary nature of the stated problem, which requires

combining theoretical reflection with the analysis of real educational practices.

The following scientific methods were used in the research:

- Theoretical analysis and synthesis were used to gain a deep understanding of key concepts of collective memory, such as “chosen trauma”, “chosen glory”, and “difficult heritage”. This method made it possible to systematise existing scientific approaches to the pedagogy of memory, identify gaps in the study of the Ukrainian context, and formulate the theoretical foundations of the research. Scientific publications, monographs, and reports from relevant institutions for the period from 2012 to 2025 were analysed, with the addition of fundamental works that laid the foundations for these concepts.

- A comparative analysis was used to study international experience in dealing with complex history in the education systems of different countries (Germany, Rwanda, South Africa, Israel/Palestine) and to compare their approaches to Ukrainian educational practice. This method made it possible to identify effective strategies, lessons learned and potential risks associated with teaching about traumatic pasts and difficult heritage. The selection of countries for comparison was based on their unique experience of working through large-scale collective traumas (the Holocaust, genocide, apartheid, the Nakba) and the existence of established pedagogical models.

- Discourse analysis was used to study the narratives of collective memory circulating in Ukraine’s educational space, particularly in school history textbooks, memorial practices and public discussions. The ways of constructing images of “victims”, “heroes”, and “enemies” were analysed, as well as the mechanisms of integration or suppression of the “difficult heritage”.

- Thematic analysis was used to identify and systematise the pedagogical tools and approaches used by Ukrainian teachers and lecturers to work with historical events that provoke emotional resistance or silence. The factual material

for the study was an analysis of the content of existing methodological recommendations, seminar materials, and online resources for educators working with the topics of the Holodomor, Babyn Yar, the Chernobyl disaster, the Volhynian tragedy, and Russia's current war against Ukraine. This made it possible to identify common practices, their advantages, and disadvantages.

The research was conducted in the following stages: defining the theoretical framework of the study and clarifying key concepts; collecting and systematising scientific sources on the pedagogy of memory, with a particular focus on publications from the last 3-5 years and works by Ukrainian authors; analysing international experience in teaching complex history and its relevance to the Ukrainian context; studying pedagogical approaches and practices used in Ukraine to understand the Holodomor, Babyn Yar, the Chernobyl disaster, the Volhynian tragedy, and the impact of the current war; identifying the main challenges and opportunities for the Ukrainian education system in shaping collective memory; developing pedagogical recommendations for effective work with complex historical narratives.

The research was based exclusively on the analysis of secondary data, including academic publications, analytical reports, educational programmes, and methodological guides. The methodologies of other authors were integrated into the methodology by applying their theoretical frameworks to the analysis of Ukrainian cases. Data from information websites were used as supporting materials for illustration or confirmation of certain points, but the main emphasis was placed on academic sources.

Results and Discussion

Research into the potential of education as a space for ethical reflection on collective historical experience has revealed a number of key aspects that shape the pedagogical approach to working with complex historical narratives in Ukrainian society. Further coverage of the results focuses on the practical aspect of teaching and its potential

in Ukraine. For an accurate analysis, it is important to distinguish between key concepts that are central to understanding pedagogical practices: collective memory is a set of shared ideas about the past that are preserved, transmitted and maintained by social groups. Its carriers are family, school, culture, and media; cultural trauma is an event that has caused deep emotional wounds for a significant part of society and has become an element of identity; chosen trauma is a traumatic past that a group consciously preserves as a symbolic core of identity, mainly across generations; difficult heritage – an uncomfortable or controversial part of history that is difficult to accept because it is associated with guilt, shame, violence or the participation of one's own group in the oppression of others (Macdonald, 2023). This concept is broader than "trauma" and includes not only the experience of victimhood but also the experience of complicity.

The concept of chosen trauma was introduced by the seminal scholar V. Volkan (1997), who describes the process in which a certain historical event becomes the symbolic core of group identity. This trauma is not only preserved in memory, but also actively transmitted, actualised in threatening conditions and used to explain events. Chosen trauma can perform both a psychological function of protection (strengthening solidarity, a sense of continuity) and a destructive one (reproducing the image of the enemy). Therefore, working with it requires an ethical and pedagogically sound approach.

In education, selected trauma is often represented by memorialised narratives (victims, heroic resistance). Although this shapes historical consciousness, in the absence of critical reflection, it can reinforce exclusion and reproduce cycles of "historical revenge". For example, in Ukraine, the Holodomor is a central element of the narrative of victimhood. A recent survey by the Rating Group Ukraine (2023) shows that the thesis of genocide is supported by 93% of respondents whose native language is Ukrainian and 55% of those whose first language is Russian. Value

orientations show an even more significant gap: among supporters of European integration, 89% agree, while among its opponents, 48% agree; similarly, among supporters of NATO membership, 91% agree, while among opponents, 51% agree. Data from the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) (2023) confirm that linguistic and ideological factors outweigh pure regional differentiation. G. Kasianov (2021) interprets this asymmetry as a consequence of symbolic competition between the narratives of the Holodomor and the Holocaust. When such topics are silenced or presented in a simplified manner, historical amnesia is formed and the image of the “eternal enemy” is reinforced, becoming a psychological barrier to reconciliation; these barriers are described in detail in the psycho-sociological review by D. Bartal (2024). Alongside chosen trauma, chosen glory serves the function of exaltation and triumph. It is the memory of events that inspire pride and serve as proof of strength. It is transmitted through holidays, monuments, and school texts. In times of war or struggle for independence, chosen glory is emotionally significant, helping communities to cope with loss. However, heroic narratives have two sides: they fuel a sense of belonging, but can also contribute to the militarisation of thinking and the exclusion of alternative views.

In the Ukrainian context, examples of selected glory include the heroisation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army's (UPA) liberation struggle, the romanticised narrative of Maidan, and the cult of heroes of the Anti-Terrorist Operation/Joint Forces Operation and full-scale war. These stories have a deep emotional foundation, but also a heterogeneous perception in society (Piankivska, 2022). They require delicate pedagogical treatment: it is important for teachers not only to “convey the heroic truth”, but also to create space for questions, doubts, and critical reflection. Teachers use the “oral history” method, involve participants in the events, and organise debates to develop the ability to analyse complex processes. Working with selected glory should be based on the formation of value stability, the

ability to empathise and understand the ambiguity of human experience.

The concept of difficult heritage, proposed by S. Macdonald (2023), refers to uncomfortable, controversial or shameful elements of the past (participation in crimes, collaboration, violence). Such heritage is difficult to incorporate into the national narrative, as it calls into question the image of a “virtuous nation”. In many countries (Germany, South Africa), work with it takes place through museums, rethinking programmes, critical pedagogy of memory, for example, visits to concentration camps, the apartheid museum, as well as public museums as spaces for promoting dialogue in divided societies (Weiglhofer *et al.*, 2023).

In the Ukrainian context, the difficult heritage includes the participation of part of the population in the Holocaust, Soviet repression and collaboration with the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the Sovietisation of Western Ukraine, the Volhynian tragedy, and the experience of collaboration during the Second World War. When such topics are silenced or presented in a simplified manner, historical amnesia is formed and the image of the “eternal enemy” is reinforced, which in turn creates psychological barriers to critical reflection on the past and intergroup reconciliation. The existence of such barriers has recently been described in detail in a psycho-sociological review by D. Bartal (2024), which emphasises the need for educational intervention in this particular area. In education, working with a difficult heritage is a vulnerable but necessary direction. It aims to form a mature, responsible historical consciousness that allows to acknowledge mistakes and hear the voice of the “other”. Ukrainian educators are introducing the analysis of controversial monuments, the study of local history from different perspectives, interviews with older people or members of minorities, discussions of artistic and documentary films, and role-playing debates. These practices transform difficult heritage from a source of shame into a platform for ethical growth and the development of critical

thinking. Mature collective memory requires a willingness to acknowledge complexity, which is the key to a true culture of peace.

Working with memory in education requires not only substantive but also methodological reflection. Educators must create space for ethical experience and critical analysis. The key principles of such work in Ukraine include ethical sensitivity, multi-perspectivity (opening up other voices), creating a safe space (for expression and doubt) and the pedagogy of dialogue (questioning, facilitation, collaborative thinking). The issues of teacher confidence and pedagogical strategies for working with emotionally sensitive topics are analysed in detail in a recent case study of the collaboration between Dutch history teachers and a museum; after special training, teachers noted that they were better able to regulate their own and their students' emotional reactions and were more confident in applying multi-perspective tasks (Logtenberg *et al.*, 2024).

Effective methods are used by Ukrainian teachers. These include: analysis of monuments and memorial sites (study of symbols and controversies); work with oral history (interviews with eyewitnesses, family histories); case studies (analysis of specific events); role-playing debates or simulations (discussion of interpretations); multimodal tools (film, literature as a tool for empathy); the problem-posing education method, where knowledge arises from discussion. In these approaches, the teacher becomes a facilitator of encounters with memory, which helps transform memory into a resource for peace. Ukraine is experiencing a period of high emotional tension due to full-scale war, trauma and heroism (Ilichuk, 2023). Collective memory has become a field of identity and mobilisation, creating both new opportunities and risks. Key challenges for Ukrainian education in working with memory: political polarisation (the temptation to broadcast the "only correct version of history"); regional and interethnic differences in the perception of the past (e.g., regarding the UPA, Chernobyl); lack of practical tools and pedagogical support

for teachers who encounter painful topics, especially given their potential involvement in conflict-affected societies; risk of retraumatisation of students with personal experiences of loss (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2024).

According to a national KIIS survey (2023), language remains the most powerful predictor of attitudes towards the Soviet heritage, complicating the development of a unified "pedagogical framework". At the same time, the war has opened up new opportunities to rethink collective memory as a tool for consolidation, restoration and empathy. Young people are ready for complex topics, provided that information is presented honestly and openly, with respect for diversity of opinion. At the initiative level, practices are emerging that demonstrate the potential of critical memory: school museums created by students (testimonies about the war, local history); projects to collect oral histories; volunteer initiatives working with historical memory; local exhibitions and research on the "history of streets" (Shehade & Stylianou-Lambert, 2020). Ukraine is at a unique historical moment when the experience of contemporary trauma can open the door to a deeper understanding of the past in order to look at itself through the eyes of responsibility. Significant differences in pedagogical approaches to teaching about traumatic pasts in different countries have been identified, as summarised in Table 1. In the Ukrainian context, key examples include the Holodomor, the Babyn Yar tragedy, and the Chernobyl disaster. Surveys by Rating Group Ukraine (2023) and KIIS (2023) show linguistic and value-based, rather than geographical, differences in the perception of the Holodomor: in the western regions of Ukraine, identification with this tragedy is significantly lower than in the central and eastern regions. Babi Yar is gradually transforming into a multi-narrative memorial space, while the Chernobyl disaster remains primarily a man-made trauma that is insufficiently integrated into educational practices. This confirms V. Volkan's (1997) thesis about the selectivity of collective memory and its dependence on group identity.

Table 1. Comparison of pedagogical approaches to traumatic memory

Country	Main event	Type of memory	Pedagogical approach	Key features
Ukraine	The Holodomor, Chernobyl, Maidan, war in the East (2014), full-scale war (since 2022)	Chosen trauma, chosen glory, difficult heritage	Mainly memorialisation, emphasis on victims and heroes, formation of a national narrative. Gradual introduction of critical reflection	Language and value differences (Holodomor, UPA). Political polarisation. Lack of systematic pedagogical support regarding the “difficult heritage”. High risk of retraumatisation. Openness of young people to complex topics
Germany	The Holocaust	Difficult heritage, cultural trauma	Critical approach, culture of repentance, reflection on the role of one’s own nation in crimes. Official acknowledgement of guilt	Systematic work with the past through education and memorialisation. Nationwide consensus on the Holocaust and Nazi crimes. Educational visits to concentration camps
Rwanda	The Tutsi genocide	Chosen trauma, cultural trauma, chosen amnesia	Mainly “selective amnesia” aimed at reconciliation and preservation of local coexistence. Facilitated dialogues are gradually being introduced	Conscious avoidance of complex topics in society for the sake of stability. Risk of incomplete processing of trauma
South Africa	Apartheid	Difficult heritage, chosen trauma, cultural trauma	Critical rethinking, reconciliation through institutional mechanisms (truth and reconciliation commission, TRC)	Active processing of complicity and responsibility. Integration of TRC findings into school civics courses
Israel/Palestine	The Nakba, The Holocaust	Chosen trauma, conflict of memories	Specific teaching of trauma, often with an emphasis on personal experience, which can deepen the conflict	The existence of competing, often incompatible narratives of memory (the Holocaust for Israelis, the Nakba for Palestinians). Challenges in implementing a multi-perspective approach

Note: TRC – truth and reconciliation commission

Source: created by the authors based on M. Rothberg (2023), S. Macdonald (2023)

A comparison of international experience shows that a critical pedagogical approach, as in Germany (covering the Holocaust) and South Africa (working through apartheid), contributes to a more effective processing of collective trauma. In Germany, post-war pedagogy of memory was actively aimed at forming a “culture of repentance” and critical reflection on one’s own role in history, which made it possible to achieve a nationwide consensus on the Holocaust and the crimes of Nazism. Recent empirical data confirm this: A. Busu *et al.* (2023) showed that field trips to Holocaust sites, supplemented by reflective journals, significantly increase students’ empathy and ability to connect historical events with contemporary

manifestations of xenophobia, while “passive” memorial visits do not have a lasting effect. A review by P. Toczyski (2023) shows that facilitated discussion after experiential learning is crucial, as it transforms emotional reactions into meaningful awareness of human rights. This approach is diametrically opposed to the initial “selective amnesia” sometimes observed in Rwanda after the genocide, where the community consciously avoids difficult topics in order to preserve local coexistence, even though this may prevent the trauma from being fully processed. New empirical research by J. Buhi-giro *et al.* (2024) has shown that peace & values education is not actually integrated into lesson plans and is not evaluated because teachers lack

methodological support. Despite this, extracurricular clubs promote the development of tolerance.

The experience of transforming a complex past through education requires a deep understanding of the role of memory as a resource for recovery. This is consistent with M. Rothberg's (2023) ideas about multidirectional memory, which allows different narratives of the past to coexist without contradicting each other. In the Ukrainian context, multidirectional memory is critically important, as society simultaneously experiences victimhood (the Holodomor, war), heroism (Maidan, the struggle for independence) and has to work through a "difficult heritage" (the Volhynian tragedy, collaboration).

Unlike Germany, where Holocaust education has become part of a unified national narrative, the Ukrainian educational system still lacks a coherent yet pluralistic framework for teaching complex aspects of history. Ya. Kambalova's (2023) research emphasises the need for a multi-perspective approach in Ukrainian schools, which is in line with the conclusions about the importance of open dialogue. This problem is also highlighted in studies analysing the role of school textbooks in shaping the hierarchy of victims and the need to re-evaluate national narratives. The issue of the "difficult heritage" in Ukraine is particularly acute, as these aspects have long been silenced or ignored. This creates "gaps" in collective memory that can be filled with myths or manipulation. The importance of working through the complicity and responsibility of one's own group, as is done in Germany with regard to Nazism or in South Africa with regard to apartheid (through the truth and reconciliation commission, TRC), should become a key element of Ukrainian memory pedagogy. Research by R. Hattam & J. Matthews (2012) shows that the Reconciliation as Debate module, where students simulate TRC hearings, reduces the level of "social desire for revenge" from 42% to 19% in post-testing, with the effect lasting for six months. The authors emphasise that success depends on the teacher's prior training in working with affect. This approach confirms the need for

multi-perspective teaching, which opens up space for ethical complexity and allows a transition from "cleansing memory" to its mature awareness.

A recent analysis by M. Zembylas & Z. Bekerman (2024) shows that the introduction of a multi-perspective atlas and paired interviews with Israeli and Palestinian witnesses doubles students' readiness for dialogue compared to classes where only the official textbook is taught. N. Alhuzail *et al.* (2024) clarify that a safe space for emotional reactions is critical, otherwise studying the Nakba may deepen the anxiety of Israeli Jewish students. In the study, a similar risk is observed with regard to the topics of the Volhynian tragedy and collaboration, confirming the need for facilitated discussions and multidirectional memory. Although the Chernobyl disaster remained a collective trauma that was beyond critical reflection for a long time, current trends show that young people are ready for more complex topics. This opens up opportunities for the introduction of trauma-informed approaches in pedagogy that take into account the emotional state of students and the risk of retraumatisation.

One of the limitations of the study was the lack of empirical data from specific Ukrainian educational institutions. Further steps may be based on the "quasi-experimental" pre-post design methodology used by A. Frejšan *et al.* (2023) in Germany and R. Hattam & J. Matthews (2012) in South Africa, which allows for the assessment of not only the cognitive but also the emotional effect of pedagogical intervention. Thus, a comparative analysis confirms that the Ukrainian experience is currently closest to the models of Germany and South Africa, while the lessons of Rwanda and Israel/Palestine demonstrate the risks of avoiding difficult topics. Overall, this shows that effective processing of collective memory is possible only through a shift away from monolithic narratives and towards a multidimensional, ethically sensitive and critical approach that takes into account the experiences of victims, heroes and accomplices.

The results of the study highlight the uniqueness of the Ukrainian experience of working

with collective memory, while identifying points of contact and differences in comparison with international pedagogical approaches. A critical analysis of international practice allows for a deeper understanding of the potential and challenges in shaping a mature historical consciousness in Ukraine.

Conclusions

The analysis has demonstrated that the effective formation of historical consciousness requires the simultaneous consideration of three interrelated categories: chosen trauma, chosen glory, and difficult heritage. It is their comprehensive examination that allows to avoid exclusionary or militarised narratives and supports a balanced collective identity. The experience of other countries demonstrates the critical role of multi-perspective, facilitated, and emotionally sensitive forms of learning. Comparisons have shown that models focused solely on the official canon of memory are inferior to approaches where students actively engage with controversial sources and participate in reflective dialogue. In Ukrainian education, narratives of victim, hero and accomplice coexist. Open dialogue about these different types of memory, as well as overcoming linguistic and value gaps in the perception of historical events, is key to social cohesion during and after the war. The proposed pedagogical tools – a trauma-informed approach, multi-perspective tasks, role-playing debates, work with local places of memory, and service-learning – can be directly implemented in school and university programmes, as well as in informal educational projects.

The next step is to conduct a quasi-experimental assessment of the emotional and cognitive impact of various educational formats – from VR immersions and role-playing debates to service-learning courses – in specific schools and higher education institutions in Ukraine. At the same time, it is advisable to compare the reactions of students with different linguistic and value orientations in order to identify the factors for the successful integration of a complex past into the educational process. Additionally, it is important to establish cross-sectoral cooperation between educational institutions, civil society organisations, and memorial museums to ensure resource support and exchange of experience. Such partnerships will contribute to the sustainable implementation of innovative practices for working with collective memory and expand their impact on the formation of a culture of peace in Ukrainian society. A package of special training programmes and methodological materials for teachers, focused on working through the “difficult heritage” using a trauma-informed approach, needs further development. Finally, it is worth deepening the comparative analysis of the experience of other post-conflict countries in order to identify the most effective mechanisms for integrating memory into education.

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Педагогічні підходи до роботи з колективною пам'яттю в умовах війни

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Анотація. Дослідження присвячене критичному переосмисленню ролі освіти у процесі формування колективної пам'яті, особливо в умовах постконфліктного та воєнного суспільства. Актуальність роботи визначається необхідністю розробки ефективних педагогічних підходів до викладання складного та травматичного історичного досвіду, що мали вирішальне значення для утвердження тривалого миру та розвитку громадянської свідомості. Метою цього дослідження був аналіз потенціалу освіти як простору для етичного осмислення колективного історичного досвіду та розробка педагогічних підходів до роботи зі складними історичними наративами. У роботі застосовано методи компаративного аналізу для вивчення міжнародного досвіду, а також дискурс-аналізу та тематичного аналізу академічних джерел і практик меморіалізації для глибокого осмислення українського контексту. Дослідження ґрунтувалось на аналізі реальної педагогічної практики українських вчителів та викладачів у роботі з історичними подіями. У результаті дослідження проаналізовано феномен «обраної травми» як ключової складової колективної пам'яті, що впливає на формування ідентичності соціальних груп у контексті травматичного минулого. Узагальнено сучасні підходи до викладання складного минулого, розглянуто міжнародний досвід Німеччини, Руанди, Південної Африки та Ізраїлю/Палестини у формуванні історичної пам'яті. Представлено детальний аналіз українського контексту, включаючи практику викладання Голодомору, Бабиного Яру, Чорнобильської катастрофи, Волинської трагедії та сучасної війни Росії проти України, з описом конкретних педагогічних інструментів та кейсів, що демонструють вплив на тих, хто навчається. Особливу увагу приділено поняттям «обрана слава» та «важка спадщина» як ключовим елементам у формуванні наративів гордості й відповідальності. Сформульовано конкретні педагогічні рекомендації для роботи з темами, що викликають емоційний спротив або замовчування, спрямовані на розвиток культури миру, критичного мислення та емпатії. Отримані результати мають практичну цінність для розвитку педагогіки миру, громадянської освіти, а також для застосування у формальному та неформальному освітньому середовищі, особливо в Україні в контексті післявоєнного відновлення системи освіти. Вони можуть слугувати основою для розробки навчальних програм, методичних посібників та тренінгів для педагогів, сприяючи ефективній роботі з колективною пам'яттю

Ключові слова: обрана травма; обрана слава; важка спадщина; історична пам'ять; мирна освіта; ідентичність; конфлікт пам'ятей



Integrating metacognitive strategies into foreign language education in technical colleges

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Abstract. The paper investigated metacognitive strategies as an effective tool in the process of learning a foreign language, in particular in technical colleges. The purpose of the study was to determine the mechanism of integration of metacognitive strategies into foreign language learning in technical colleges. A comparison of metacognitive and cognitive strategies for learning a foreign language was made. The main stages of applying such strategies were analysed: planning, monitoring, evaluation, and regulation of educational activities. It was noted that planning included defining educational goals, choosing methods and resources, and allocating time. Monitoring involved monitoring understanding of the material, analysing errors and using self-testing. Evaluation contributed to a critical analysis of personal progress, reflection and correction of teaching methods. Regulation of the educational process ensured optimal organisation of work, supported of motivation and development of independent learning skills. Special attention was paid to the specifics of using metacognitive strategies in technical colleges, where language learning had a professional focus. Practical approaches to integrating these strategies into the educational process were proposed: project activities, technical translations, creating presentations and using interactive tasks. The main advantages and disadvantages of using metacognitive strategies in the process of learning a foreign language by students of non-linguistic specialities have been identified. It has been determined that the use of metacognitive strategies contributes to the development of critical thinking, increasing the efficiency of learning the material and forming autonomous learning skills. The use of such approaches in technical colleges allowed students

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to effectively adapt the acquired language knowledge to the professional environment, increase the level of their preparation for working with technical documentation and international cooperation

Keywords: metacognition; self-discipline; reflection; metalinguistics; foreign language competence

Introduction

Contemporary foreign language education in technical colleges poses complex tasks for students, including the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language in various fields. Spontaneous foreign language communication requires both knowledge of language structures and the ability to apply them in real situations. In this context, metacognitive strategies play an important role, providing students with tools for more effective learning and development of communication skills in a foreign language. The relevance of this study is conditioned by the fact that contemporary global society requires graduates of technical educational institutions to have a higher level of foreign language proficiency than ever before. Effective spontaneous communication, including in a foreign language, not only contributes to the successful academic and professional activities of students, but also enriches their cultural experience and intercultural interaction. Research on metacognitive strategies in the education of technical college students is of great importance. More and more attention in contemporary psychological research is paid to the problem of meta-cognitive processes. Metacognition is considered as one of the conditions for the success of cognitive activity, namely educational activity.

E. Balashov (2019) analysed metacognitive monitoring as one of the key mechanisms of self-control in students' educational activities. The researcher noted that the effective use of metacognitive strategies contributes to improving educational results due to conscious management of personal educational process. However, the researcher did not highlight the difficulties that students encounter during their application.

O. Demydovych (2019) considered the issue of the development of metacognitive competence in students of non-linguistic specialities in the process of learning a foreign language. The researcher emphasised the importance of developing self-reflection and self-regulation skills, which are critical for successful language acquisition. This study lacks the identification of specific tools within the framework of metacognitive strategies that contribute to the growth of self-reflection.

I. Kovalchuk *et al.* (2022) investigated the relationship between students' motivation and the use of metacognitive strategies when learning a foreign language. They proved that students with high intrinsic motivation more often use metacognitive approaches, which has a positive effect on their academic success. However, the study lacks the study of the specifics of the use of metacognitive strategies when learning different languages and the adaptation of strategies according to the language context.

M. Dirkes (1985) explained the importance of metacognition as a mechanism that helps students to consciously control their own thinking and learning processes. N. Lenyuk (2021) experimentally proved the influence of metacognitive strategies on increasing students' ability to understand the content of English texts when reading. They noted that metacognitive strategies are aimed at helping students use their individual strengths, guess the meaning (using word analysis, etc.), and separate known information from new. However, these scientific studies are not exhaustive and need further development.

The purpose of the study was to identify pedagogical conditions and substantiate effective ways of integrating metacognitive

strategies into the process of teaching foreign languages in technical colleges to increase autonomy, learning motivation, and the effectiveness of mastering language material by students of technical specialities.

Materials and Methods

A comprehensive approach was used to investigate metacognitive strategies in foreign language learning, including theoretical and empirical methods. The methods used helped to obtain new scientific results aimed at improving the educational process through the use of metacognitive strategies. The first stage involved a theoretical analysis of scientific literature. Scientific publications devoted to metacognitive strategies and their application in education, teaching a foreign language in technical colleges were analysed. As part of the study, an analysis of scientific literature was conducted, which allowed investigating the theoretical foundations of metacognitive strategies and considering their impact on the learning process. The main criteria for selecting literature were: relevance of publications; affiliation to scientific sources practical orientation (description of effective models of teaching foreign languages using a metacognitive approach); regional coverage – experience in implementing metacognitive strategies in different regions. Literature analysis revealed the theoretical foundations of metacognitive strategies, their typology, and the impact on students' learning motivation and autonomy.

Classification and typology were used to systematise metacognitive strategies according to various criteria (for example, by stages of the educational process: planning, monitoring, evaluation; by types of activity: reading, writing, speaking, listening). Methods of analysis and synthesis were used to study scientific concepts related to metacognition, self-regulation strategies, autonomous learning, and the development of critical thinking in the process of learning a foreign language. These methods allowed identifying the essential characteristics of metacognitive strategies and their impact on students' learning

activities, clarifying the main problems and prospects for the development of the use of metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language.

The following approaches were also used: interpretative-analytical method of conceptual analysis of scientific literature; content analysis of materials to determine the main areas of application of metacognitive strategies; methods of theoretical generalisation to formulate generalised conclusions and substantiate practical recommendations. Content analysis helped to identify key areas of application of metacognitive strategies, typical tasks that contribute to their development, and the frequency of use of relevant elements in educational materials (Savrasov *et. al.*, 2024).

The method of the systems approach provided a comprehensive vision of the process of learning a foreign language as a system in which metacognitive strategies are an integral element of educational interaction between a teacher and a student. The method of conceptual analysis contributed to a deeper understanding of the key concepts of the study (metacognition, educational autonomy, self-reflection), and to the establishment of relationships between them. The use of these methods provided comprehensive information about the role of metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language and to determine the advantages and disadvantages of their implementation in the educational process of technical colleges. To summarise the results obtained, methods of theoretical generalisation were used – on their basis, conclusions and practical recommendations for foreign language teachers in technical colleges were formulated.

Results and Discussion

The study of learning strategies currently focuses on the identification, classification, and analysis of existing strategies. Early studies were conducted by researchers who observed students who were good at a foreign language. Researchers later classified learning strategies into three main types: cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective. This classification is the most popular among

researchers. It divided strategies into two categories: direct strategies (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies) and indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective, and social) (Pakholchuk & Balashov, 2024).

Strategies for mastering a foreign language are conventionally divided into two main levels: cognitive and metacognitive. The cognitive level concerns direct work with educational material, in particular, repetition, clarification of content, structuring information and its comprehension. The metacognitive level covers planning, organisation, monitoring and correction of personal educational activities. Metacognitive strategies are based on combining various cognitive techniques to achieve higher efficiency in learning a foreign language (Anderson, 2002).

Cognitive strategies ensure the execution of mental actions, while metacognitive ones are

responsible for their management, control and optimisation. The “cognitive system” of a person is responsible for the functioning and behaviour of individual learning and cognition. People absorb information from external stimuli, assimilate this information through attention and recognition, and store it in the “short-term memory system”. Some of the information goes through stages such as storage and reorganisation (including the selection and organisation of old and new information, and its review between them) to become the “long-term memory system” in the human brain. During this process, the brain has developed a “system of cognitive strategies” that helps a person to think and solve problems (Kovalchuk *et al.*, 2023). The comparative characteristics of the theories proposed by E. Deci & R. Ryan (2008), S. Larkin (2023), and T. Fitria (2024) are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of cognitive and metacognitive strategies

Attributes	Cognitive strategies	Metacognitive strategies
Directionality	External – objective reality. Aimed at the assimilation and processing of information for the purpose of learning	Internal – subjective world. Reflection of the most cognitive activity
Structure	Sensation, perception, representation, imagination, attention, memory, thinking	Setting goals, determining the means to achieve them, sequence of actions, monitoring results
Strategic goal (strategy)	Teaching skills that ensure the acquisition of educational content (information processing techniques)	Organisation and optimisation of personal cognitive activity; management of the process of learning content
Functions	Cognition of the surrounding world; assimilation, storage and retrieval of information from memory; rational cognition	Recognising the existence of a problem; selecting lower-level processes to solve the problem, choosing a strategy, allocating cognitive resources, monitoring the progress of the solution, and evaluating the correctness of the solution after its completion
Control functions	Control of practical activities	Control of consciousness, one's own cognitive activity
Content	Objects of the surrounding world and their images	Knowledge, abilities, information about cognitions

Source: developed by the authors

Thus, cognitive and metacognitive strategies differ in a number of features: directionality, structure, strategic goal, functions, control functions, and content. This approach has a certain didactic value, since it allows clearly outlining the difference between these two types of strategies, which are often confused in educational

discourse. However, there are several important aspects that require critical reflection. First of all, the division according to the principle of “external-internal”, “objective-subjective” can be misleading. In real educational activity, these strategies are not isolated, but rather interconnected. For example, cognitive activity is often

accompanied by metacognitive assessment, and vice versa – cognitive skills are needed for effective self-control.

S. Larkin (2023) and T. Fitria (2024) described the structure of cognitive strategies as “sensation, perception, imagination, memory, thinking”, which corresponds more to the psychophysiological level than to the strategies themselves. However, they did not consider specific learning actions – for example, grouping, generalisation, translation, which belong to cognitive strategies in the context of learning a foreign language. However, the metacognitive structure is described as more procedural, and this creates a somewhat unequal comparison. Formulations such as “problem awareness” or “mind control” need clarification. They are too general or even philosophical, while in an educational context it is necessary to discuss specific functions: planning, monitoring, self-correction, self-assessment.

Unlike cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies organise and manage learning activities. “Rising” above the hierarchy of cognitive strategies, metacognitions “go beyond” the framework of traditional cognitive processes, since they can be aimed at implementing basic regulatory functions both in relation to own cognition and in relation to the organisation of activity in general. Metacognitive strategies are personal knowledge related to the awareness of personal cognitive processes and the results of mental activity (Savrasov *et al.*, 2024). The concept of “metacognition” first emerged in the field of psychology, and later gained wide application in linguistics and teaching methods. In a psychological context, metacognition is interpreted as “thinking about thinking”. The term was introduced by J. Flavell (2000), who described metacognition as a special type of mental activity aimed at awareness and analysis of own cognitive activity. In other words, metacognitive skills are the ability to make sense of own thoughts, which plays a key role in solving various intellectual tasks (Zakharevich, 2018; Pilishek & Rudoman, 2024). J. Flavell (2000) identified four main components

of metacognition: knowledge about one’s own thinking; metacognitive experience; cognitive goals and tasks; corresponding strategies. The researcher emphasised the fundamental difference between cognitive and metacognitive strategies, primarily in terms of their functional purpose: while the former are aimed at performing specific cognitive actions, the latter are aimed at controlling and regulating these actions.

According to S. Volkov, the main difference between cognitive and metacognitive strategies is not so much in their content as in their functional orientation: cognitive strategies are used to perform cognitive tasks, while metacognitive ones are used to manage and control these tasks. In some cases, metacognitive strategies are also considered as effective or social, facilitating the interaction of students with each other or with native speakers (Volkov, 2024). Due to the close connection between cognitive and metacognitive strategies, considering only one of them without considering the other can reduce the effectiveness of the learning process.

J. Flavell (2000) rightly emphasised the key difference between cognitive and metacognitive strategies: the former concern the direct implementation of learning tasks, while the latter concern the regulation, planning and control of these processes. This division has indeed proven to be extremely productive both in psychology and in pedagogy, especially in the field of foreign language learning. In particular, metacognitive strategies expand students’ capabilities for self-awareness, purposeful learning, and critical reflection.

However, it is worth noting that the boundary between cognitive and metacognitive is sometimes conditional: many strategies can have a dual nature. For example, repetition can be both mechanical (cognitive) and conscious for the purpose of monitoring memorisation (metacognitive). This requires caution when classifying. In addition, although the possibility of classifying metacognitive strategies as social or effective is mentioned, this idea needs clarification. The inclusion of social interaction in the metacognitive

sphere is justified only when the student consciously chooses social tools (for example, dialogue with a native speaker or feedback from classmates) to achieve their own learning goals – that is, precisely as a means of self-regulation.

In the contemporary educational process, metacognitive strategies are not just a useful tool – they are critically important for the development of an autonomous student capable of self-education. This is especially true for technical colleges, where students are often focused on applied skills. Learning a foreign language in such a context requires a strategic approach, where metacognitive skills can compensate for the lack of a linguistic base through self-regulation and adaptation of the educational process to individual needs. Therefore, the development of metacognitive strategies should become a purposeful pedagogical task, integrated into foreign language courses, considering the level of training and professional orientation of students.

Metacognition involves a deep understanding of the mechanisms of thinking and the ability to consciously direct and regulate the course of mental processes using various tools – symbols, signs, instructions. Thus, the student can achieve educational goals both independently and with the support of the teacher. Initially, it is the teacher who is responsible for organising the learning process: formulating goals, planning, control, focusing attention. However, over time, these functions are gradually transferred to the student himself, which reflects the dynamics of metacognitive development. When it comes to the introduction of new methods in the training of students, the integration of metacognitive strategies into the foreign language learning process is the primary focus. Such strategies contribute to the student's awareness of their own role in the learning process, help to better regulate mental activity, and ensure more effective assimilation of new material. They cover a wide range of actions, including emotional ones, that contribute to a deeper understanding and use of new knowledge in various learning situations (Carson, 2021).

Metacognitive strategies, as emphasised by V. Pakholchuk & E. Balashov (2024), are a key component of metacognition, since they enable learners to self-organise, monitor, and reflect on their learning process. In the context of foreign language acquisition, the use of such strategies, according to these researchers, significantly enhances learning effectiveness and leads to improved outcomes. Furthermore, E. Deci & R. Ryan (2008) argued that by applying metacognitive strategies, students become more capable of adapting to diverse instructional approaches, methods, and learning environments – an essential skill in contemporary, dynamic educational settings with varying teaching styles.

Therefore, metacognitive skills are of decisive importance in the process of learning a foreign language. They provide a universal approach to mastering both the native and foreign languages and are based on common principles of the functioning of the language system. Among the factors that influence the choice of learning strategies by students, the focus of independent work on searching for new information, which determines the problematic nature of its content, is highlighted. Students of non-linguistic specialties can solve various types of tasks, namely, tasks related to the selection and accumulation of language resources, interpretation of language resources, compiling a glossary by professional orientation, etc. (Berbaum & Barth, 2001; Melnyk, 2024). Optimal conditions for the development of a student's personal qualities and the real independence and creativity are created by project and problem-search technology. Project and problem-search activities of students should be considered as a model of their future professional activity. According to H. González-Valencia *et al.* (2020), contemporary foreign science distinguishes several effective programmes of metacognitive training designed for both students and professionals already in the workforce. First of all, this is the programme of targeted development of metacognitive strategies of M. Dirkes (1985), a student of J. Flavell (2000), which provides for 6 main stages aimed at the development of skills (Fig. 1).

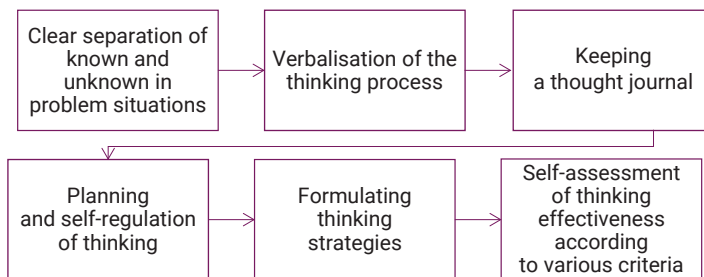


Figure 1. Programme for the targeted development of metacognitive strategies by M. Dirkes
Source: developed by the authors based on M. Dirkes (1985)

Thus, the approach considered by the author does not simply offer mechanical completion of tasks, but involves the student in reflection, analysis, and strategic planning, which are key elements of metacognition. Instead of focusing only on the result, the approach pays attention to the entire process: from awareness of the problem to evaluation of own actions. This contributes to the development of autonomous and critical thinking. Such a position is well consistent with the paradigm of competency-based learning, where the goal is not the transfer of knowledge, but the development of the ability to act and learn independently.

However, the approach focuses mainly on the intellectual aspect of metacognition, leaving aside the emotional-volitional and motivational component. Namely, motivation and affective involvement often determine the success of self-regulation. It assumes a high level of reflection, which is not within the power of all students, especially those who do not have self-observation skills. This requires pedagogical support, which is not visible in the scheme. Based on a review of the scientific literature, three metacognitive strategies were identified (Table 2).

Table 2. Main metacognitive strategies in foreign language learning

Name	Essence	Examples
Planning	Defining learning goals and developing strategies to achieve them.	Creation of a language lesson schedule. Identification of key topics to be covered. Choice of learning methods (e.g., reading books, watching movies in the original language, communicating with native speakers).
Monitoring	Control over own learning process, track progress and adjust methods.	Keeping a learning diary (recording new words, difficulties, achievements). Analysis of errors in speech or writing. Use of self-testing applications (Duolingo, Anki, Quizlet).
Evaluation	Analysis of learning results and strategy adjustment.	Assessment of own level of knowledge through tests or language certificates (IELTS, TOEFL, DELF). Feedback from teachers or native speakers. Self-assessment: identifying strengths and weaknesses in language knowledge.
Regulation of educational activities	Development of a training programme.	Concentration: Using attention-boosting techniques, such as the Pomodoro technique (25 minutes of study – 5 minutes of rest). Motivation: Creating practical projects (writing technical reports, translating instructions, making presentations in English). Changing the type of activity: Combining writing, reading, speaking and listening for deeper assimilation of the material.

Source: developed by the authors based on H. González-Valencia et al. (2020), T. Fitria (2024)

The approach based on the division of metacognitive strategies into planning, monitoring, evaluation, and regulation is a reliable and theoretically sound basis (Izhko, 2021). It is convenient for systematising knowledge and has practical value, but needs to be supplemented with modern tools, considering individual characteristics and deeper detailing to be as effective as possible in the contemporary educational process. The metacognitive approach to learning a foreign language should be supplemented with advanced digital tools, such as learning applications, online progress trackers, and interactive resources that facilitate flexible planning and control of the educational process. It is also important to use

time management methods, individualised curricula, and platforms for collaborative learning to increase motivation and adapt strategies to the needs of each student.

As noted by V. Plyushch *et al.* (2018), in technical colleges, learning a foreign language is often focused on the professional sphere; therefore, the use of metacognitive strategies enables students to effectively learn the material and adapt it to their future profession. These strategies allow learners to study in a more effective, conscious, and purposeful manner. In the process of research, the advantages of metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language were highlighted (Fig. 2).

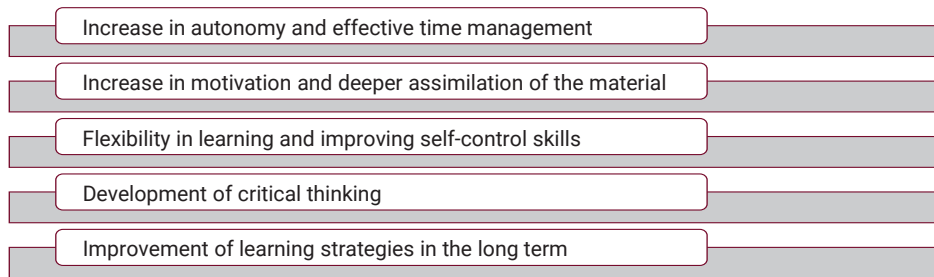


Figure 2. Advantages of metacognitive strategies in foreign language learning

Source: developed by the authors

Thus, using metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language, students learn to independently manage their learning, identify strengths and weaknesses, which leads to increased independence in the language being learned. Students also make a learning plan and manage it more effectively, dividing topics and tasks. Due to the fact that students can see their progress, their motivation to learn a language increases. There is an opportunity to adapt teaching methods to a foreign language. Students evaluate their own achievements and determine the necessary strategies.

However, despite the advantages, the use of metacognitive strategies in learning a foreign language also has disadvantages, namely: the use of these strategies requires self-discipline, which can be a problem for students with a low level of

motivation; high cognitive load can cause fatigue and reduce learning productivity; can be difficult for beginners; it is difficult to measure effectiveness; can cause stress; the possibility of excessive analysis; lack of immediate results.

Despite the shortcomings, the use of metacognitive strategies in foreign language learning is quite widespread, including in technical colleges. Students use metacognitive strategies to improve understanding and translation of professional texts. These strategies are often used in project activities. For example, preparing technical presentations in a foreign language with subsequent self-analysis. The use of simulations, professional dialogues and video lessons to form practical skills is widespread. Due to metacognitive strategies, students of

technical colleges can study more effectively, consciously, and purposefully.

Conclusions

Metacognitive strategies play a key role in the process of learning a foreign language, especially in technical colleges, where language training has a professional focus. The use of such strategies as planning, monitoring, evaluation, and regulation of educational activities contributes to increasing the effectiveness of learning, developing student autonomy and forming critical thinking. Studying the problem of language training of specialists, we came to the conclusion that the purpose of the educational process is to increase the effectiveness of educational activities in a foreign language of future specialists based on the development of cognitive activity strategies. The desire to find ways to increase the effectiveness of foreign language training identified a problem, the essence of which is to search for theoretical foundations, identify conditions and methodological approaches aimed at the development of cognitive strategies of students.

The use of metacognitive approaches in technical education allows students not only to

master general language skills, but also to work effectively with professional terminology, technical documentation, and specialised texts. The integration of these strategies into the educational process through project activities, technical translations, presentations, and interactive tasks helps students to better adapt the knowledge gained to future professional activities. Therefore, the introduction of metacognitive strategies into foreign language teaching in technical colleges is necessary for the fostering of competent specialists capable of independent learning, critical analysis of information, and effective application of language skills in a professional environment. Future research can deepen understanding of which specific metacognitive strategies contribute to the development of foreign language competence of technical college students.

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Conflict of Interest

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Інтеграція метакогнітивних стратегій в іншомовну освіту в технічних коледжах

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Анотація. У статті досліджено метакогнітивні стратегії як ефективний інструмент у процесі вивчення іноземної мови, зокрема в умовах технічних коледжів. Метою дослідження стало визначення механізму інтеграції метакогнітивних стратегій у вивчення іноземної мови у технічних коледжах. Здійснено порівняння метакогнітивних та когнітивних стратегій вивчення іноземної мови. Проведено аналіз основних етапів застосування таких стратегій: планування, моніторинг, оцінювання та регуляція навчальної діяльності. Зазначено, що планування включає визначення навчальних цілей, вибір методів і ресурсів, а також розподіл часу. Моніторинг передбачає контроль розуміння матеріалу, аналіз помилок і застосування самотестування. Оцінювання сприяло критичному аналізу власного прогресу, рефлексії та корекції методики навчання. Регуляція навчального процесу забезпечує оптимальну організацію роботи, підтримку мотивації та розвиток навичок самостійного навчання. Окрему увагу приділено специфіці використання метакогнітивних стратегій у технічних коледжах, де вивчення мови має професійне спрямування. Запропоновано практичні підходи до інтеграції цих стратегій у навчальний процес: проєктна діяльність, технічні переклади, створення презентацій та використання інтерактивних завдань. Визначено основні переваги та недоліки використання метакогнітивних стратегій у процесі вивчення іноземної мови студентами немовних спеціальностей. Визначено, що застосування метакогнітивних стратегій сприяє розвитку критичного мислення, підвищенню ефективності засвоєння матеріалу та формуванню навичок автономного навчання. Використання таких підходів у технічних коледжах дозволяє студентам ефективно адаптувати отримані мовні знання до професійного середовища, підвищує рівень їхньої підготовки до роботи з технічною документацією та міжнародного співробітництва.

Ключові слова: метакогніція; самодисципліна; рефлексія; метапізнання; іншомовна компетентність



Paradiplomacy as an educational strategy for countering information threats in foreign language training of political scientists specialising in international relations

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Abstract. The relevance of the topic was conditioned by the strengthening of information warfare and the growing role of subnational actors in the international space, which required rethinking educational strategies in the field of international relations. The purpose of the study was to theoretically substantiate the educational approach focused on the use of paradiplomatic practices as a didactic resource for the development of professional resilience of higher education applicants to disinformation and propaganda. The study used a set of methods, in particular, structural and functional analysis, interdisciplinary modelling and content analysis of the information environment. The results of the study showed that paradiplomacy as a form of external activity of regional and municipal entities can effectively complement classical diplomacy in the face of hybrid threats due to its flexibility, efficiency, and ability to network influence. It was established that such activities have a significant potential in spreading truthful information, strengthening cultural ties, and forming a positive image of the state. The conceptualisation of paradiplomacy as a didactic tool integrated into foreign-language professional training of international specialists was carried out. Practical steps for integrating paradiplomatic content into the educational process based on the development of critical thinking, analytical skills, digital and media literacy were proposed. The expediency of including thematic blocks related to paradiplomatic activities in the curriculum of international relations and political science, in particular, in the context of learning foreign languages as a means of intercultural interaction and communication security, was substantiated. The practical significance of the study was to create the basis for the development of innovative educational strategies that can provide high-quality training for a new generation of international political scientists, adapted to the challenges of the global information space and able to implement public diplomacy strategies at the local level.

Keywords: professional education; cultural approach; foreign language in diplomacy; intercultural communication; interdisciplinary approach; media literacy

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Introduction

Nowadays, when information warfare takes on complex and sophisticated forms, and the spread of disinformation and propaganda becomes a systemic threat at the global level, there is a growing need for new tools to counter these challenges. One of these promising, but still insufficiently studied and implemented mechanisms is paradiplomacy – the foreign policy activity of regions, municipalities, and other subnational actors. In the context of training future international political scientists, this area opens up wide opportunities for developing innovative thinking of graduates and an interdisciplinary approach to solving current geopolitical problems.

O. Pryshlyak (2019) and E. Huijgh (2010), exploring the blurring of the boundaries between domestic and foreign diplomacy, emphasised rapid communication with various target groups through the involvement of subnational actors, including cultural institutions and municipalities. Therefore, unlike conventional diplomacy, which operates mainly within the framework of centralised state policy, paradiplomatic practices are characterised by mobility, adaptability and the ability to quickly communicate with foreign partners at the local level. They involve building networks of trust between twin cities, academic communities, professional associations, cultural and educational institutions, and public organisations. Such interaction can become an effective means of spreading truthful information, affirming democratic values, and creating a positive image of Ukraine in the face of external information pressure.

According to I. Mietule *et al.* (2024), the relevance of the study consists in the need to develop a new educational strategy that would consider the paradiplomatic dimension as a tool for professional training of future specialists in international relations and political science in the context of growing fragmentation of the global order, increasing hybrid threats and information vulnerability of societies. The contemporary international context requires going beyond

conventional diplomatic paradigms and involves integrating the practices of subnational external activity into educational models focused on the development of critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, and the ability to act in a multi-level public diplomacy.

As noted by S. Happaerts (2012) and B. Reinsberg & S. Dellepiane (2022), subnational governments play a crucial role in transnational networks, which is directly related to paradiplomacy as a form of network external activity. The researchers emphasised that the subjects of paradiplomacy have not only a symbolic presence, but also take an active part in real mechanisms of coordination, interaction, and countering challenges in complex international networks. This concept creates the basis for considering paradiplomacy not only as a subject of analytical study, but also as a didactic basis for implementing a competence-based approach in the professional training of specialists who should be able to effectively counteract destructive information influences and adapt to the challenges of a globalised environment. Integration of the cultural approach into the teaching of paradiplomatic practices deepens the understanding of symbolic, identification and narrative dimensions of external activity of subnational actors, which contributes to the development of the ability of higher education applicants to culturally sensitive analysis, reflexive understanding of intercultural interaction, and constructive communication in the conditions of polynarrative and polycode space of international relations.

According to M. Keating (2000), subnational authorities must use certain mechanisms, so-called “channels of participation”, to conduct their policies in the international arena. In particular, to open permanent representative offices of regions, and representatives of local authorities should carry out business trips abroad and participate in conferences/round tables/forums/congresses, hold international trade and industrial and investment exhibitions, etc. According

to the researcher, there are many opportunities for regional actors to carry out paradiplomatic activities, such as concluding international agreements, participating in interregional associations, and actively cooperating with non-state actors.

For applicants, this implies the need not only to master classical diplomatic tools, but also to master the methods of communication management, analysis of information flows, cross-cultural communication, digital literacy, and crisis response in the media sphere. Graduates of higher education institutions (HEIs) should understand the logic of the functioning of local networks in a global context, be able to attract resources from various sectors – from education to business – to joint resistance to disinformation. According to the study by A. Zelenkauskaitė (2022), an example of the Lithuanian initiative “elves” illustrates the effectiveness of multisectoral interaction, where public volunteer networks, in partnership with government agencies, media, educational and technological institutions, carry out systematic counteraction to information threats. This experience shows that successful counteraction to disinformation at the subnational level is possible with a combination of digital skills of specialists, cross-sectoral coordination, and the ability to act within global communication networks.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the first attempt to conceptualise paradiplomacy as a didactic resource in the professional foreign language training of future specialists; to interpret the paradiplomatic approach as an educational strategy for building the professional resilience of higher education students against information manipulation and propaganda; and to propose and test the feasibility of integrating media literacy knowledge into the professional foreign language training of international political scientists in the face of growing information and communication threats.

The purpose of the study was to theoretically substantiate and develop an educational strategy in the system of professional training of future international political scientists, based on the

concept of paradiplomacy as a tool for countering advanced information threats. The objectives of the study included: analysing of the essence of the phenomenon of paradiplomacy in the context of the transformation of the geopolitical space; examining of the potential of paradiplomatic activity as a component of professional training of international political scientists; developing of steps for integrating paradiplomatic content into foreign language training aimed at fostering critical thinking, analytical skills, and media literacy among applicants for higher education.

Literature Review

In the context of the study, special attention is drawn to research works devoted to the phenomenon of paradiplomacy as a relatively new, but increasingly significant area in the field of international relations and political science. The growing activity of subnational actors (regions, cities, autonomous regions) in the foreign policy arena has become a response to complex challenges, including global crises, political turbulence, hybrid threats, climate change, mass population displacements, and other transnational problems.

The development of the scientific discourse of paradiplomacy within the framework of political science took place in the early 1980s. Special attention should be paid to the contribution of American scholars, in particular, I. Duchacek (1990), A. Wendt (1992), who established the theoretical and methodological foundations for the study of paradiplomacy. According to their studies, this phenomenon received a conceptual definition and was integrated into the broader context of political science as one of the promising areas of research. These researchers not only adapted the corresponding conceptual and categorical apparatus to the specifics of subnational foreign policy, but also outlined strategic vectors for further studies in this area. Initially, the term “microdiplomacy” was used to refer to the phenomenon under study, but later it was replaced by “paradiplomacy”. The author of the term “paradiplomacy” is considered to be

I. Duchacek (1984). According to his definition, it most accurately reflects the essence of processes taking place in parallel and in addition to the official diplomatic activities of central authorities.

The scientific legacy of N. Cornago (1999) is of considerable interest. He is considered one of the leading researchers in the field of paradiplomacy, whose scientific activity has significantly influenced the understanding of this phenomenon. In the other study, the researcher highlighted the role of subnational actors in the transformation of international security (Cornago, 2010). His colleague, Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of the Basque Country, I. Aguirre (1999), focused his research on rethinking paradiplomacy, which is still in the process of theoretical development.

One of the fundamental studies that explored in detail the differences between conventional diplomacy and paradiplomacy was the paper by E. Pajtinka (2017). The researcher provided a comparative analysis of Taiwan's official diplomatic relations with countries that have recognised its sovereignty, and unofficial (paradiplomatic) forms of cooperation with states that have not provided such recognition. The researcher paid special attention to the institutional foundations, legal regulation, and protocol aspects of interaction, which helped to understand the specifics of the functioning of paradiplomacy in conditions of limited international legal status of subnational or unrecognised actors.

In general, in contemporary scientific discourse, the main focus is on the development of conceptual and theoretical foundations of paradiplomacy and a comprehensive analysis of key problems associated with this phenomenon. Among them, a special place is occupied by the processes of globalisation, the specifics of the functioning of federal states, development issues, the specifics of the implementation of foreign policy, and the development of interests of subnational actors in the international environment. There is a thematic stratification of research that reflects the multidimensional

nature of this phenomenon and its interdisciplinary nature. In particular, attention to public and cultural diplomacy in a paradiplomatic context is noticeable. E. Huijgh (2010) explored the external communication of subnational actors through the prism of public diplomacy on the example of Quebec. The focus of the cultural dimension of paradiplomatic activity also includes M. Zamorano & A. Morató (2015), who analysed the relationship between cultural policy and the international presence of cities and regions. The study of ecological and climatic paradiplomacy is a separate area. J. Setzer (2015) analysed the role of subnational governments in global climate governance, demonstrating their ability to participate in international agreements independently of central governments. Complementary approaches can be traced in the paper by S. Happaerts (2012), who focused on paradiplomacy in the field of sustainability, and in a joint study by S. Happaerts *et al.* (2011), who consider the environmental activity of European regions as a component of multi-level governance.

Institutional, communication, and analytical aspects of paradiplomacy are also being studied. Thus, S. Issundari (2018) focused on the structure and mechanisms of interaction between local governments and external partners. The further development of this area is reflected in the bibliometric study by S. Issundari & Y. Yani (2024), who traced the dynamics of academic interest in the subject of paradiplomacy. A significant contribution to the development of methodological tools was made by L. Waltman *et al.* (2010), proposing effective approaches to scientometric analysis of publication activity in this area. A. Kuznetsov (2014) delineates the geopolitical and governance dimensions of paradiplomacy, synthesising its theoretical foundations and examining the practical engagement of subnational governments in international affairs. Simultaneously, R. Tavares (2016) explored paradiplomacy as a manifestation of the global role of cities and regions in the system of international relations. An analysis of the foreign policy of subnational

units in federal states, particularly Canada, was presented in the study by C. Kukucha (2004), which allows understanding the interaction between the levels of government in the field of international activities.

The analysis of the literature has proved that most researchers distinguish three forms of manifestation of paradiplomatic activity of subnational actors, which are differentiated by the nature and level of their interaction with partners. Firstly, this refers to cross-border cooperation, which provides for both formalised and informal ties between adjacent regions of neighbouring states. Secondly, interregional cooperation, which involves communication between regions that do not share a common border but belong to different countries. Finally, the third type covers transnational cooperation, which involves establishing contacts between subnational units and geographically remote regions of other states, or direct interaction with national governments of other countries (Holovko, 2017).

It can be stated that paradiplomacy as an object of scientific understanding has already gained recognition in contemporary political science, as evidenced by the presence of thorough theoretical and methodological developments by Ukrainian researchers, in particular, T. Hrachevska (2014), A. Amirov (2021), and D. Sukhatska (2022). Based on a systematic approach and interdisciplinary analysis of the scientific legacy of P. Petrov *et al.* (2024) significantly contributed to the development of Ukrainian discourse on the phenomenon of paradiplomacy. Despite the presence of a wide range of political, legal, and international studies, in the contemporary Ukrainian scientific discourse there is almost no analysis of paradiplomacy from the standpoint of educational practices, in particular, in the context of professional training of specialists in the field of international relations and political science. There is not a single attempt of pedagogical understanding of paradiplomacy as a didactic resource that can be integrated into the content of educational programmes for the development of

interdisciplinary skills necessary for effective functioning in conditions of hybrid threats, in particular, in the information dimension. This situation indicates a scientific gap that needs to be filled by developing new educational strategies based on the potential of paradiplomatic activity as one of the factors in the development of professional mobility, critical thinking, and information resilience of future international political scientists.

A literature review has shown that paradiplomacy is understood as a certain form of external activity of subnational actors, such as regional and local authorities, who carry out international relations outside of traditional diplomacy at the state level. It consists of establishing and developing direct ties with international actors, participating in projects, cultural, economic, and information exchanges. Paradiplomacy is characterised by a decentralised nature, flexibility, and adaptability, which allows subnational actors to effectively respond to international challenges, in particular, in the field of countering propaganda and combating disinformation. In contemporary globalised world, paradiplomacy is becoming particularly important as a tool for promoting regional interests and improving information security in the international arena.

Materials and Methods

The conducted research was based on the comprehensive application of complementary methods, which together provide a holistic, multi-level understanding of the phenomenon of paradiplomacy as an educational strategy relevant to the challenges of professional foreign language training for political scientists and international relations specialists. The methodological foundations of the research were built considering the need to integrate theoretical developments with applied aspects of modelling educational practices that would meet the conditions of the information age with a high level of uncertainty, the dynamism of global processes, and the spread of hybrid threats. Special emphasis was placed on the components of the educational process aimed at developing

the skills of higher education applicants to act effectively in challenging transnational contexts, not limited to the role of a space for international interaction, but performing the functions of an intellectual and cultural platform for implementing educational initiatives aimed at strengthening intercultural dialogue.

The defining methodological role in the study was played by structural and functional analysis, which allowed to consider paradiplomacy not only as a political practice, but as a complex social structure with great educational potential. Based on this conceptual framework, it was found that the interaction of subnational actors with the international environment acquires the characteristics of an informal educational process, in which graduates develop strategic communication and critical thinking skills. The study of empirical materials allowed identifying the structural components of forms of interaction using real-world examples, in particular, in educational initiatives of municipalities, in projects of interregional cooperation, and in exchange programmes supported at the local level. Structural and functional analysis allowed to reconstruct the logic of functioning of paradiplomatic practices, trace their dynamics and adaptive properties, and identify latent (hidden) educational functions.

The integration of the interdisciplinary modelling method combined conceptual approaches of political science, educational theory, linguoculturology, media education, and sociology. The use of this method provided conditions for constructing an educational strategy based on paradiplomatic content and reflecting contemporary requirements for professional training of specialists in the field of international relations and political science. In the course of modelling, the content of the educational process at different levels was considered, and typical scenarios for implementing research tasks through working out cases of external activity of subnational entities. The modelling also contributed to specifying methodological solutions for designing interdisciplinary training modules, enabling future

specialists to develop the ability to critically interpret information flows, make autonomous decisions, and communicate effectively under conditions of political diversity and digital vulnerability.

Content analysis of educational materials, information and communication resources, and media texts used in the professional training of future international political scientists has a separate analytical weight in the study. The analysis helped to assess the level of representation of topics related to paradiplomacy, disinformation, digital security, and intercultural dialogue. Special attention was paid to the linguistic and cultural aspects of information presentation, the structure of educational content, and the degree of its compliance with contemporary realities. The results of the content analysis showed the fragmentary and unsystematic use of paradiplomatic elements in the educational process, which confirmed the need for their integration at the conceptual and methodological levels. Thus, the use of structural and functional analysis, interdisciplinary modelling, and content analysis provided methodological depth and empirical validity of this study. The developed methodology allowed highlighting paradiplomacy as a didactic phenomenon and substantiating ways to integrate it into the contemporary educational space, considering global transformations and challenges of the digital age.

Results and Discussion

Paradiplomacy in the paradigm of nonlinear learning: Educational potential for professional foreign language training of political scientists and international relations specialists

In the conditions of increasing political turbulence, transformation of global governance models and strengthening the role of subnational actors in international processes, paradiplomacy is considered as an important mechanism for forming a new configuration of interstate relations. In this context, it is particularly important to apply the paradigm of non-linear learning, focused on the development of individual educational trajectories and adaptability to the challenges of the

information age. This approach opens up new opportunities for rethinking the professional training of international political scientists, which implies their ability to analytically interpret socio-political phenomena, participate in international discourse, and develop innovative solutions in many areas.

As noted by H. Padalka (2022), one of the leading directions of modernisation of higher art education is “transfessional renewal of the content of professional training for students of art faculties”. The researcher defined the concept of “transfession” as “labour activity, which is a consequence of a combination of competencies formed in various specialised forms of artistic and pedagogical activity”, focusing on the readiness of a specialist to work in conditions of intersectoral interaction. The researcher paid special attention to the breadth of coverage inherent in art education, which “creates favourable conditions for implementing transfessional approaches that are multidimensional, interdisciplinary, and foster future specialists’ readiness to synthesise knowledge from various fields”. These observations, despite their attachment to the field of art education, are also conceptually relevant for the training of specialists in international relations and political science, in particular, in the context of the introduction of paradiplomacy as an educational strategy. After all, paradiplomacy as a branch of knowledge and practice functions at the intersection of political science, cultural diplomacy, public administration, regionalism and intercultural communication, which objectively requires a transfessionary approach in the development of professional competencies of future specialists. Consequently, the applicability of the transfessionary model goes beyond exclusively artistic specialities and acquires cross-sectoral significance in the light of the latest educational paradigms. Moreover, the nonlinearity of transfessional approaches specified by H. Padalka (2022), “which are inherently nonlinear”, organically meets the needs of contemporary education in a mixed, hybrid format that is actively developing in the context of post-pandemic

challenges and war. In the case of international studies, this allows modelling training based on flexible trajectories, where students not only learn the fundamental theoretical framework, but also acquire competencies in the analysis and implementation of subnational foreign policy initiatives, using the paradiplomacy tools.

Thus, the provisions expressed by H. Padalka (2022) on art education acquire transprofessional validity, expanding opportunities for conceptual rethinking of professional training in other areas where interdisciplinarity, networking and nonlinear dynamics are key requirements for a graduate’s professional identity. Therefore, in the context of pedagogical sciences, the consideration of paradiplomacy as a tool for developing the competencies of future specialists in international relations and political science requires updating the educational process through the prism of nonlinearity, integrativity, and situational learning. The conditions of a complex information environment provide for the rejection of traditionally linear, frontal teaching in favour of interactive methods that allow modelling real situations of paradiplomatic interaction, in particular, working with authentic foreign-language sources, analysing propaganda discourse, developing counter-narratives, critical interpretation of culturally determined communication strategies, etc. In this sense, paradiplomacy plays the role of not only a subject of study, but also an educational tool that allows creating an environment close to the real functioning of international actors. Involvement of higher education applicants in project activities, role-playing games, debates in foreign languages aimed at creating communicative models of interaction between subnational structures contributes to the development of their intercultural competence, the development of language flexibility, argumentation, and analytical thinking skills.

Another critical aspect is the ability of paradiplomacy to provide localisation of graduates’ knowledge in response to international challenges. Professional training of international

political scientists should consider that contemporary information threats are mostly global in nature, but they spread and are perceived in specific local contexts. That is why the study of foreign languages in connection with paradiplomatic activities should be accompanied by a systematic analysis of local information ecosystems, features of the national identity of partner territorial communities, regional media practices, etc. In this context, foreign language training in HEIs takes on an applied character, where instead of abstract mastering of language constructions, the future specialist receives communication experience that is close to the realities of international public diplomacy. For example, the practice of translation, cross-language editing, conducting interregional dialogue, creating content for an international audience (including social networks) can be integrated into training courses as tools for developing resistance to disinformation through strengthening the subjectivity of subnational participants.

An important conceptual addition is the consideration of paradiplomacy as a cross-sectoral practice that integrates governmental, educational, cultural, economic, and civic resources. In the system of foreign language training of specialists, this opens up new opportunities for the implementation of international educational programmes, academic mobility, internships in local government structures abroad, participation in cross-border educational and humanitarian initiatives. Applicants involved in such formats acquire not only linguistic, but also professional competence – the ability to use a foreign language as an instrument of intercultural diplomacy at the regional level.

Data from structural and functional analysis have shown that paradiplomacy can act as an important social mechanism with significant educational potential. The analysis of the structure and functions of paradiplomatic practices revealed their defining role in the development of key competencies of subnational actors in the international environment. In particular,

paradiplomatic activities contribute to strengthening communication security by ensuring effective interaction with partners in different cultural contexts. Simultaneously, it encourages the development of cross-cultural competence of specialists, which is a necessary condition for overcoming cultural barriers and building trust at the international level. In addition, in the process of implementing paradiplomatic functions, analytical thinking is activated, which provides a deeper understanding of external challenges and effective strategic decision-making. Thus, the structural and functional approach helped to comprehensively assess paradiplomacy as a tool of educational influence, which contributes to the development of a new type of specialist in the field of international relations – mobile, critical-minded, open to cooperation, and able to act in the conditions of post-truth, global instability, and multi-level diplomacy.

Further development of the paradiplomatic approach in the context of countering disinformation requires considering the concept of social capital as a key resource for building trust in international social networks. Within the framework of social capital theory, strong interpersonal connections (bonding social capital) and broad intergroup contacts (bridging social capital) contribute to effective knowledge exchange, rapid dissemination of information, and resistance to external influences. Subnational actors, active in interregional partnerships, build reliable information channels that can support critical thinking, intercultural dialogue, and the exchange of verified information. The contemporary educational paradigm in the field of international relations is increasingly focused on the cognitive-behavioural model of learning, which considers the patterns of information perception, the influence of emotions and cognitive biases on decision-making. In the case of professional training of international political scientists, this model allows forming more stable knowledge and skills aimed at analytical interpretation of information content, recognition of

manipulations, and creation of convincing information products in a foreign language.

Involvement of elements of behavioural economics in training programmes (for example, analysing the effects of anchoring, framing, and the illusion of truth effect) allows future specialists to predict the reaction of an international audience to certain messages. This is especially true for paradiplomatic activities, where each message distributed through a digital network must be adapted to the cultural and psychological context of the target audience. Thus, the synthesis of the theory of social networks, cognitive sciences, and behavioural economics creates a methodological basis for the development of a new type of professional foreign language training for specialists in international relations and political science. Education in this field not only provides knowledge, but also forms the ability to think strategically, act responsibly and effectively in conditions of information instability. Therefore, the paradiplomatic dimension can become a unique educational platform, combining global vision with local experience, critical thinking with language practice, and institutional thinking with creative social action.

The role of universities as centres of institutional capacity and transnational partnership

The deployment of paradiplomatic strategies in the fight against disinformation is impossible without a deep understanding of the systemic factors that determine their effectiveness. In the educational context, in particular, within the framework of the activities of universities as subnational actors, these factors become particularly important, since it is the educational environment that is the centre of knowledge production, generation of innovative communication solutions, and professional foreign language training of future international political scientists. Thus, for the effective implementation of paradiplomatic functions in the information confrontation, it is considered necessary to create a sustainable institutional infrastructure. In the HEI, this involves the deployment of specialised

units for international digital communication, fact-checking, strategic narratives; the development of inter-faculty centres for media literacy and information security; the development of strategic programmes for academic diplomacy and scientific and informational influence within the framework of international cooperation. Such units should not function in isolation, but in the context of long-term strategic planning, with a clear vision of the role of HEIs as an agent of “soft power” in the global space, responding to the challenges of disinformation through education, science, and public activism.

In the context of increased attention to information integrity, the University’s paradiplomatic activities should be based on the principles of academic transparency. This concerns openness in publishing sources of funding for information projects, transparent presentation of goals, and expected results of counter-propaganda initiatives, compliance with academic integrity standards, in particular, in matters of fact-checking, citation, communication with international partners. For international applicants, such activities are the practice of developing ethical foreign-language communication that combines academic ethics with social responsibility. Effective use of paradiplomacy as a tool for countering disinformation is impossible without developing a reliable empirical base that allows describing, explaining, comparing, and scaling successful practices. This area is particularly relevant in the educational context, as it provides future international political scientists with practical cases, applied analysis skills, and methods of reflexive understanding of the tactics of various subjects in the international arena.

Conducting cross-cultural and interregional comparisons of the effectiveness of various paradiplomatic strategies helped to identify patterns in the choice of tools for responding to information threats depending on the political regime, the degree of digital freedom, the level of decentralisation; to identify culturally determined strategies for interaction with audiences (for example, the role of traditional values, local

authorities, communication channels), with the possibility of integrating these data into training courses on intercultural communication, global governance or international information policy. In this process, teachers perform a facilitation function, stimulating problem-oriented thinking of applicants, forming research teams and accompanying the writing of comparative analytical reports or case studies.

Of particular importance is an in-depth study of examples of the use of paradiplomacy in the context of disinformation campaigns. In particular, initiatives of cities that have organised multilingual counterinformation campaigns in response to external interference; partnership projects between universities and city administrations to promote transparency and media literacy; networks of regions that have joined forces to promote democratic narratives at the international level, etc. The analysis of such cases should be integrated into the educational process through student presentations, role-playing games, and strategic sessions, creating a database of cases in the public domain for use in independent work, writing interdisciplinary qualification papers, using real data.

In the analysis of theoretical approaches to media literacy in the Ukrainian education system, attention was paid to the research by I. de Andrade Gama & W. Moźgin (2021), who examined in detail the application of protectionist, ethical, socio-cultural theories, and the theory of critical thinking against the background of the war in Ukraine. In particular, protectionist theory considers the media as a potential threat to society, since contemporary media have changed traditional cultural guidelines, distancing perception from classical sources of information. In the training of future specialists, this theory is used to develop critical thinking skills and verify information, which is especially important in the context of information wars and hybrid conflicts, where paradiplomacy becomes a tool for subnational actors to combat disinformation. However, this theory also causes some discussions, because contemporary media have not only a destructive,

but also a positive impact, contributing to the implementation of democratic ideas, the mobilisation of society, and the spread of cultural diplomacy. Ethical theory focuses on controlling information flows to prevent harmful propaganda, which is an important component of training programmes for international political scientists who will work with subnational and regional actors. However, excessive control of information can lead to a restriction of pluralism of opinions, which contradicts the principles of open diplomacy and free exchange of ideas.

Critical thinking theory aims to develop applicants' ability to analyse and evaluate information. It is the basic competence for effective paradiplomatic activities, because subnational actors should be able to resist information manipulation and take an active part in creating a positive image of their regions. However, the current challenges of the digital age, such as algorithmic filters, fake news, misinformation, etc., require a much broader approach than conventional source criticism, which requires the integration of digital literacy and media skills. Ultimately, the socio-cultural concept recognises the media as a necessary tool for a globalised world, which is especially important for paradiplomats working in the digital information space. This concept risks insufficiently critical assessment of the threats of manipulation and propaganda that are becoming more active in Media 2.0, which is why education in the field of international relations should not only popularise the use of media, but also form a critical attitude among applicants to their potential negative impact.

In addition, despite the theoretical thoroughness, the implementation of such educational approaches in the professional training of specialists in international relations and political science in the HEIs of Ukraine is uneven due to organisational and technical difficulties. This creates a gap between the potential of media literacy as an educational strategy and its actual application in the fight against propaganda, which is critically important in contemporary geopolitical

conditions. Therefore, at this stage, an important task is to develop valid methods that would allow assessing the impact of paradiplomatic initiatives on the perception of information by target audiences (through surveys, analysis of reactions in social networks, tracking media consumption); changes in behaviour (for example, in the distribution of fact-checked content, changing communication patterns); strengthening intercultural dialogue, academic mobility, and participation in international initiatives. In the educational process, these tools become not only the object of research, but also the result of student projects under the mentorship of instructors. Thus, this facilitates the practical development of research skills, critical analysis, academic writing in a foreign language and project management. In all these areas of work, teachers play a key role as facilitators, mentors, and mediators between academic science and the real challenges of the global world. They form the research motivation of applicants through involvement in the analysis of real cases; create an environment of dialogue where participants express their vision, while simultaneously receiving an analytical framework for its structuring; help to develop linguistic and terminological competencies in the context of disinformation, information security, digital diplomacy; promote international collaboration of specialists through participation in joint scientific projects, conferences, and symposia.

Practical recommendations for teachers in the context of facilitation of paradiplomatic topics in foreign language training courses for specialists in international relations and political science are based on the introduction of modules that reveal the concept of paradiplomacy, its role in contemporary international communication and features of use in the fight against information threats. To do this, it is advisable to use interactive teaching methods: discussions, debates, role-playing games, where applicants work out communication strategies at the subnational level. It is proposed to consider real or simulated examples of disinformation campaigns, identify

political narratives, indicate sources of information, identify methods of manipulation and suggest countermeasures using paradiplomatic tools. Tasks involving the development of counter-narratives are interesting and useful. They consist of creating effective communication messages adapted to different cultural and linguistic groups, using storytelling and data visualisation techniques. Debates on information security are effective. Ultimately, the development of teams for conducting debates from the positions of various subnational actors involved in countering disinformation contributes to the development of skills in argumentation, analysis and synthesis of information. This includes role-playing games simulating diplomatic or paradiplomatic negotiations, where participants play the roles of regional leaders, journalists, and activists, using communication strategies and countering fake news. It is considered appropriate to integrate tasks related to the analysis of cultural codes, the specifics of information perception in different social groups, and the practice of working with multilingual sources. This will contribute to the development of language competence and readiness of graduates to act effectively in the international information space.

Cultural approach in the professional training of international political scientists

The content analysis of educational materials, information and communication resources, and media platforms used in the study allowed assessing the content of educational tools in the field of training specialists in international relations and political science. The analytical study revealed a number of significant shortcomings, in particular, the fragmentation of the presented topics, insufficient attention to cross-cultural aspects, and weak integration of disinformation and digital security issues. Special emphasis was placed on the study of linguistic and cultural contexts, which demonstrated the lack of an integrated approach to the development of intercultural competence of applicants. It was also found that the lack of consistency in the presentation of paradiplomatic content causes a gap

between the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of graduates necessary to work effectively in the face of hybrid threats and information challenges. Therefore, content analysis can be considered one of the tools for diagnosing existing educational deficits and substantiating strategic areas for overcoming them by strengthening the cultural component in the training of future specialists. It was found that paradiplomacy, despite its relative “invisibility” in traditional systems of state foreign policy, is increasingly established as one of the most promising mechanisms for countering global information threats. Its key advantage lies in its decentralised nature, which allows quickly, contextually, and specifically responding to information challenges, forming alternative narratives, and building trust through network communications, partnerships, and interaction with local and transnational communities.

It was recorded that “paradiplomacy” uses tools that do not have significant differences from the tools of classical diplomacy. The main approaches and mechanisms of paradiplomacy actors’ activities aimed at mobilising regional resources fully justify themselves and contribute to the implementation of initiatives designed to ensure the interests of regions and their citizens in the field of foreign relations (Holovko, 2017). However, paradiplomacy differs from conventional diplomacy primarily in the level and subject of international interaction. If diplomacy is exclusively

the sphere of activity of central state bodies aimed at the official conduct of international relations between states, then paradiplomacy is carried out by subnational entities (regions, cities, autonomies) and has a more flexible, operational character. In relation to subjects of activity, diplomacy is the prerogative of central governments and their official missions, while paradiplomacy belongs to subnational actors (regional and local authorities). Diplomacy is aimed at shaping state foreign policy, concluding international agreements, and ensuring national security and interests on a global scale. Paradiplomacy is focused on promoting local interests, cultural exchanges, economic cooperation, and information initiatives, often within specific regional or inter-municipal contexts. Diplomacy operates in accordance with regulated international norms and protocols, while paradiplomacy is more informal, decentralised in nature, allowing it to quickly adapt to local conditions and respond to challenges. In terms of tools and methods, diplomacy is dominated by official negotiations, treaties, and international conferences. However, cross-cultural dialogue, partnerships, cooperation projects, communication platforms, and digital technologies are widely used in paradiplomacy. Thus, paradiplomacy complements conventional diplomacy, expanding the capabilities of the state in the international arena due to the active role of subnational entities and flexible, localised approaches (Table 1).

Table 1. *Main differences between paradiplomacy and diplomacy*

Criteria	Diplomacy	Paradiplomacy
Business entities	Central government agencies, official embassies and consulates	Subnational entities (regions, cities, autonomous regions)
Purpose	Conduct official foreign policy, conclude international treaties	Promotion of regional interests, inter-municipal cooperation, cultural exchanges
Formality level	High, regulated by international standards	Lower, more flexible and informal
Hierarchy	Centralised, fixed structure	Decentralised, adaptive structure
Tools and methods	Official negotiations, diplomatic notes, international conferences and congresses	Cooperation projects, partnerships, cultural events, digital platforms
Scope of influence	Global, at the state level	Local or regional, maybe with international coverage
Response rate	Slow due to bureaucratic procedures	Faster due to flexibility and proximity to local processes

Source: *compiled by the author*

In the modern world, where the information field has become an arena of continuous struggle, paradiplomacy is an important component of the “soft power” of the state. It is at the level of sub-national actors that new formats of influence appear, with the help of which it is possible to quickly disseminate verified information; strengthen counter-narratives in response to disinformation attacks; form the image of the state through cultural diplomacy, interregional exchanges, international projects; act in conditions where official diplomacy faces restrictions or loses legitimacy among certain international audiences. Therefore, the integration of paradiplomatic tools into the national information policy should provide for the creation of regulatory and institutional bases for legalising and supporting the external activities of subnational actors; the development of strategies for interaction between state and local levels to coordinate information messages; support for educational, cultural, and scientific projects aimed at an external audience; the development of professional teams capable of working in an environment of information confrontation, a multilingual environment, and cultural diversity.

The effectiveness of paradiplomatic efforts is directly related to how well specialists in international relations and political science are prepared to interact with representatives of other cultures and linguistic communities. In this context, the cultural approach is crucial, because it combines foreign language training aimed at the development of academic, professional and media-related competencies in a foreign language; cultural awareness, which includes knowledge of history and country studies, in particular traditions, communicative norms, narratives and symbols of target audiences; empathic thinking, enabling the building of dialogue, avoiding cross-cultural conflicts and adapting communication to specific circumstances.

In education, the cultural approach is becoming increasingly popular, in particular due to its ability to integrate diverse cultural perspectives, forming cultural sensitivity and analytical skills

in applicants. However, like any other approach, it generates some debate and controversies. Some researchers point to the possibility of cultural relativism, where certain practices considered harmful or hostile are justified on the basis of cultural traits. M. Matthews (2023) emphasised that cultural studies programmes raise a number of serious issues, in particular, social justice, indigenous education, discussions about the goals and methods of teaching, and value orientations in education. However, the researcher pointed to the fact that the cultural approach often ignores the philosophical and historical foundations of education and science. Lack of awareness of these aspects leads to confusion and misguided directions in education, especially in complex contexts, such as shaping the worldview of future professionals. This criticism is particularly important in the context of professional training of international political scientists, since against the background of the aggravation of international conflicts and the growing role of paradiplomacy and regional subnational actors, there is an urgent need to avoid substantiating aggressive or confrontational positions under the guise of cultural or ideological steadfastness. The lack of awareness of cultural relativism in curricula can contribute to the formation of one-sided ideas among graduates that not only justify violence, but also ignore the multifaceted nature of international processes.

Therefore, in order to ensure high-quality training of international political scientists, it is necessary to integrate an awareness of the problem of cultural relativism into the cultural approach, which will contribute to the development of balanced, critically meaningful opinions of specialists. This approach will help to counter radicalisation and unfounded aggressive narratives that increasingly affect the current global political environment. Within the educational process, this means the introduction of interdisciplinary courses on intercultural communication, digital diplomacy, strategic communications; the use of authentic materials (analytics, mass media, cases, public speeches) for foreign language

practice; modelling situations of paradiplomatic interaction (business games, debates, simulation of international events); developing skills in creating counter-narratives, preparing speeches and public speeches in a foreign language considering cultural sensitivity.

**Expansion of the paradiplomatic tools
in the context of combating disinformation:
New mechanisms and educational directions**

The method of interdisciplinary modelling used in the study demonstrated a successful combination of approaches of political science, educational theory, linguoculturology, media education and sociology in the development of a comprehensive educational strategy involving paradiplomatic content. Due to this integrated approach, effective practical recommendations for professional training of international political scientists have been developed, which provide for the development of skills in critical interpretation of information flows. The study confirmed that such an educational strategy helps to increase the ability of specialists to effectively and promptly interact in the context of hybrid threats. However, interdisciplinary modelling has enabled the creation of educational tools that form not only the theoretical basis, but also the competencies necessary for analysing and countering information challenges in foreign policy. Thus, the use of this method has allowed updating training programmes that meet contemporary security challenges and to train highly qualified specialists with a deep understanding of paradiplomatic processes.

In the context of the escalation of hybrid threats, which are increasingly aimed at undermining democratic institutions through information attacks, paradiplomacy emerges as a potentially effective domain for initiatives that complement and expand the traditional state mechanisms of information security. One of the key areas for expanding this capacity is the introduction of innovative counter-propaganda measures and the dissemination of verified information, especially considering linguistic, cultural,

and socio-psychological factors. In this regard, attention should be paid to the creation of multilingual and multicultural information platforms as a key aspect of the transnational educational environment. Subnational entities (cities, regions, communities) have unique resources rooted in the local context, allowing them to develop and maintain platforms for cross-cultural communication. These platforms can function as multilingual information centres aimed at dispelling misinformation in an adapted form, considering cultural codes, communication styles, and emotional triggers of the target audience. An important educational component here is the training of future international political scientists to master not only a foreign language as such, but also the language of professional communication in the context of socio-cultural and political circumstances. Such foreign language training should integrate multimodal competencies, in particular critical news analysis, creating compelling messages, blogging and communication through social media, etc.

It is also advisable to analyse the effectiveness of fact-checking projects and media literacy programmes as components of information security in education. Fact-checking, according to V. Shevchenko (2018), dates back to 2007, when the PolitiFact resource launched by editors and journalists of the Tampa Bay Times in Florida, and the PunditFact project, initiated in collaboration with the same newspaper. PolitiFact analysed original statements made by government officials, candidates for elected positions, party leaders, and political activists at all levels – from local officials to the US president. Statements by experts, commentators, bloggers, political observers, talk show presenters and guests, and other participants in the information space are also considered. Among the well-known and effective international fact-checking projects that can be used to detect false information, fakes, pseudo-scientific materials and fraud cases in various spheres of public life, the author highlights Pinocchio (USA, The Washington Post), FactCheck.org, Truth-o-Meter, PolitiFact (USA), BBC Reality

Check (UK), SMHoaxSlayer (India), Gohoo (Japan), Les Décodeurs (Le Monde, France), Pagella Politica and Bufale.net (Italy), Ellinikahoaxes.gr and Factchecker.gr (Greece), Ferret Fact Service (Scotland), Chequedo.com (Argentina), and Ukrainian initiatives StopFake and Factcheck.com.ua.

In the modern university environment, fact-checking is increasingly considered a tool for ensuring academic integrity, developing analytical thinking, and countering the spread of disinformation. Fact-checking plays an important role in shaping the ability to critically evaluate political narratives, verify information sources, and recognise manipulative techniques, which is especially relevant in the context of hybrid warfare, information pressure, and the growing role of regional actors in global processes. Along with the positive results of implementing fact-checking in the academic environment, a number of controversial issues arise. University fact-checking platforms can be involved in political processes, in particular, through cooperation with state or non-state structures, which poses a threat to their independence and objectivity. As a result, fact-checking risks turning from a neutral educational tool into a mechanism for legitimising dominant ideological positions or discrediting alternative views. In addition, algorithmisation of fact-checking processes and the lack of transparent criteria for evaluating information make it difficult to access a balanced discourse in the educational space. In such circumstances, applicants may face limited opportunities for free expression of critical judgements or analysis of conflict situations, which is important for their professional training.

Despite the potential benefits of fact-checking as an educational practice, its implementation in the university environment requires a particularly attentive attitude to issues of transparency, pluralism, and preservation of academic autonomy. In particular, through the introduction of practice-oriented modules, namely simulation of fact-checking, analysis of information manipulation in the media in foreign languages,

creation of educational videos, podcasts and digital campaigns. This approach not only actualises the interdisciplinary content of training, but also contributes to the development of a new generation of specialists who can effectively act in the information paradigm of contemporary paradiplomacy. The application of these mechanisms, expanding the functional field of paradiplomacy, creates new educational horizons for future international political scientists who must act in conditions of supranational information pressure, dynamic digital environment, and intercultural interaction. Systematic support for fact-checking initiatives at the regional level helps to increase the transparency of the information space and build confidence in democratic procedures. Graduates as subnational actors can become founders of independent media analytics centres, partner networks with international fact-checking organisations, or even initiate interactive educational campaigns. For international political scientists, this opens up a wide range of opportunities for professional implementation: from participation in international projects to the development of educational content for different target audiences, adapted in foreign languages.

It is also worth exploring the potential of working with influencers and opinion leaders in regional contexts to strengthen the communication strategy of educational initiatives. In the contemporary information environment, where trust in centralised institutions is often low, local authorities (journalists, public figures, artists, university professors, etc.) can play the role of a "transmission belt" between professional analytics and a wide audience. Their voice, enhanced by subnational institutional support, can effectively influence the perception of information within local and transnational networks. Training of international political scientists should include the ability to identify such leaders, build professional connections with them, involve them in cross-cultural projects, and to act independently act as influencers in the field of international communication.

It is also advisable to consider the possibilities of using visual aids and storytelling as effective mechanisms for broadcasting educational messages in an intercultural environment. In the global information space, where the advantage often belongs not to facts, but to narratives that can evoke an emotional response from society, the ability not only to produce reliable content, but also to effectively verbalise it becomes extremely important. Data visualisation and storytelling as impact tools allow adapting complex information to the needs of different audiences, reducing the cognitive load and increasing the emotional involvement of participants. It is these tools that acquire strategic importance within the framework of paradiplomatic initiatives aimed at combating disinformation.

Subnational actors (municipalities, regional administrations, educational institutions) can implement visual campaigns explaining complex socio-political processes through graphs, infographics, interactive maps, or visual stories. Combining these elements with storytelling (storytelling that appeals to a person's emotions, experience, or local context) forms a powerful narrative that can compete with disinformation messages. It is also important to create materials adapted to foreign languages based on the cultural codes of the target audience. In this regard, international political scientists must not only be polyglots, but also communicative "designers" capable of conveying complex meanings in a format that is understandable to the international community. The educational process, accordingly, should be reoriented to the development of cross-media storytelling skills by foreign-language means – writing socially significant stories, creating video essays, presentations, multilingual posters, and podcasts based on verified information. Therefore, the integration of courses in digital rhetoric, critical media analysis, and visual literacy is an urgent pedagogical response to these challenges.

In the fight against disinformation, the partnership of subnational entities with technology companies, startups, and research centres is

becoming important. This collaboration may include the joint development of tools for automatic detection of fake content, botnets, and visual labelling of questionable information in the public space. Such initiatives not only increase the effectiveness of countering disinformation, but also create new channels for international positioning of regions as responsible and technologically advanced actors. Professional foreign language training in this context should include the technical component of the global information space: training in specialised terminology on information security, studying interdisciplinary cases of interaction between states, technology companies and public initiatives, developing professional communication skills with digital developers, designers, media professionals. Applicants should be able to participate in a multilingual technical dialogue, write project summaries in foreign languages, and prepare cross-cutting presentations for receiving international grants or participating in conferences.

Thus, the combination of visualisation, storytelling and technological partnership expands the horizons of paradiplomatic counter-propaganda strategies, opening up new dimensions for professional education. As indicated by R. Tavares (2016), international political scientists of the new generation should be not only international analysts, but also effective communicators who work in synergy with the digital space, think visually and are able to broadcast meanings in formats that can win in the conditions of information confrontation. Consequently, digital paradiplomacy is a leading component of professional training of international specialists. After all, the modern world is characterised by the dynamic development of information and communication technologies, which open up new opportunities for the dissemination of information and the development of influence in the international arena. Therefore, the integration of digital tools and platforms into the educational process is not only appropriate, but also a necessary condition for the development of effective paradiplomatic skills among future international political scientists.

Digital platforms and social networks serve as the main channels for the exchange of information and the dissemination of counter-narratives in paradiplomatic activities. Training should include hands-on mastery of social media marketing tools, digital storytelling, data analytics, and working with audiences in a virtual environment. Future specialists should be able not only to create high-quality content, but also to monitor the information field, identifying misinformation and quickly responding to it using appropriate digital resources. Thus, digital technologies provide an opportunity to model and work out paradiplomatic scenarios in virtual trainings, which improves the quality of practical training of applicants. Using interactive platforms allows creating simulations of negotiations, crisis communications, and work with foreign-language media. Digital tools support the facilitation of the educational process, facilitating collaboration between applicants, teachers, and experts from different countries. Online courses, webinars, and collaboration platforms help to create an international professional environment, which is especially important for paradiplomatic activities based on network connections and cross-cultural dialogue. Therefore, consideration of these aspects in the system of professional training of specialists in international relations and political science not only improves the quality of training, but also contributes to the development of a new generation of professionals who can effectively counteract information threats, using digital transformation technologies as a tool for flexible and adaptive paradiplomacy.

The proposed approaches to integrating paradiplomacy and counter-propaganda into foreign-language training of graduates fit seamlessly into the framework of international and national educational standards. In particular, they meet the requirements of the Bologna Process for the development of applicants' competencies focused on interdisciplinarity and the development of critical thinking. The inclusion of topics on digital literacy and combating disinformation contributes to the implementation of the criteria defined in the European and Ukrainian standards for training international political scientists. From this standpoint, these research strategies correspond to the tasks of developing professional competence of graduates, which implies mastering the skills of information analysis, communication in a multicultural environment, and the ability to apply innovative digital tools in professional activities. In addition, the emphasis on facilitation of teaching activities and integration of innovative teaching methods correlates with the requirements for the quality of the educational process, consolidated in the legislation of Ukraine. For a visual summary of approaches to the introduction of paradiplomacy in the educational process of professional training of specialists in international relations and political science, Table 2 is presented below, illustrating the components of the educational strategy, focusing on the use of active forms of training, digital technologies, case analysis, and intersectoral interaction as means of forming information resilience of higher education applicants.

Table 2. *Integration of the educational strategy of paradiplomacy into the professional training of specialists in international relations and political science*

Strategy element	Description	Application examples
Theoretical training	Study of paradiplomacy, information security, and counter-propaganda	Lectures and seminars on international relations, political science and sociology
Communication skills development	Practice of foreign language professional communication with an emphasis on paradiplomatic topics	Discussions, debates, and role-playing games

Table 2. Continued

Strategy element	Description	Application examples
Facilitation of critical thinking	Analysis of cases of disinformation and counter-narratives, development of media literacy	Working on real-world cases, fact-checking tasks
Use of digital tools	Application of data visualisation, storytelling, and digital platforms in the educational process	Creation of presentations, videos, and information campaigns
Interdisciplinarity	Integration of knowledge in linguoculturology, cognitive sciences, and pedagogy	Projects, research papers, interdisciplinary seminars, and webinars

Source: compiled by the author

It can be concluded that the integration of the educational strategy of paradiplomacy into the professional training of specialists in international relations and political science implies a combination of theoretical awareness with the development of practical skills and an interdisciplinary perspective. This approach not only contributes to a deeper understanding of paradiplomatic processes in a global context, but also forms critical thinking, the ability to communicate in a foreign language at a professional level, and digital information processing skills in applicants. Of particular importance is the focus on active learning through engagement with real-world cases, the use of ICT and the incorporation of elements of intersectoral interaction, which meets the requirements of contemporary international education and increases the level of professional readiness of graduates to work in the context of information and communication challenges.

Conclusions

As a result of the research, it was found that paradiplomacy, which for a long time remained on the periphery of educational discourse, has a significant potential as an innovative resource in the development of professional readiness of future international political scientists to work in the face of growing information threats. Given the increasingly fragmented international space, in which state borders intersect not only physically, but also informationally, the role of local actors as carriers of new models of cooperation is growing. In this context, paradiplomacy takes on the

character of not only alternative diplomacy, but also a new form of global presence that operates through horizontal networks, cultural ties, educational platforms, and value coalitions. In this sense, it meets the needs of a post-industrial society focused on flexibility, networking, and cooperativeness. Generalisation of the research results indicates that it is necessary to institutionalise the paradiplomatic component in the framework of training programmes on international relations, public communications, and regional studies.

The innovative idea of the study is to combine paradiplomacy and education as industries that can mutually reinforce each other. Paradiplomacy, based on communication practices, trust and partnership, gives the educational process an external dynamic and practical dimension. But education, perceiving paradiplomacy as an educational strategy, contributes not only to the assimilation of knowledge by applicants, but also to the development of behavioural models that activate “soft power” in the international environment. Another of the conceptual conclusions of the study is the interpretation of foreign language training not only as a functional component of professional education, but also as an environment for the development of graduates’ ability to peaceful international influence. The foreign-language competence of future specialists, combined with a paradiplomatic consciousness, creates the basis for nonviolent counteraction to disinformation, building a dialogue with foreign partners, strengthening the position of the region or community in the information and political space.

In conclusion, in the context of information competition, paradiplomacy should be integrated into the educational process as a tool for not only professional but also value-based training of students. Creation of an appropriate educational ecosystem that combines local initiatives with global challenges is a strategic challenge for both the scientific community and public policy in the field of higher education and security. It should also be emphasised that further research in this area should contribute not only to the theoretical understanding of paradiplomacy as an instrument of public diplomacy at the subnational level, but also to the development of a new culture-oriented paradigm of professional

training of specialists, which meets the challenges of the post-truth era, mediated conflict, and value polarisation. In this sense, paradiplomacy should be considered not just as an educational content, but as a cultural practice of future graduates, capable of activating their civic position, responsible information, and intercultural understanding in a globalised world.

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Парадипломатія як освітня стратегія протидії інформаційним загрозам в іншомовній підготовці політологів-міжнародників

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Анотація. Актуальність теми зумовлена посиленням інформаційної війни та зростанням ролі субнаціональних акторів у міжнародному просторі, що вимагає переосмислення освітніх стратегій у сфері міжнародних відносин. Мета роботи полягала в теоретичному обґрунтуванні освітнього підходу, орієнтованого на використання парадипломатичних практик як дидактичного ресурсу для формування фахової стійкості здобувачів вищої освіти до дезінформації та пропаганди. У дослідженні застосовано комплекс методів, зокрема структурно-функціональний аналіз, міждисциплінарне моделювання і контент-аналіз інформаційного середовища. Результати дослідження показали, що парадипломатія як форма зовнішньої діяльності регіональних і муніципальних суб'єктів може ефективно доповнювати класичну дипломатію в умовах гібридних загроз завдяки своїй гнучкості, оперативності й здатності до мережевого впливу. Встановлено, що така діяльність має значний потенціал у поширенні правдивої інформації, зміцненні культурних зв'язків, формуванні позитивного іміджу держави. Здійснено концептуалізацію парадипломатії як дидактичного інструменту, інтегрованого в іншомовну професійну підготовку фахівців-міжнародників. Запропоновано практичні кроки інтеграції парадипломатичного контенту в освітній процес, що базується на розвитку критичного мислення, аналітичних навичок, цифрової та медіаграмотності. Обґрунтовано доцільність включення тематичних блоків, пов'язаних із парадипломатичною діяльністю, до навчальних програм із міжнародних відносин і політології, зокрема в контексті вивчення іноземних мов як засобу міжкультурної взаємодії та комунікаційної безпеки. Практична значущість дослідження полягала у створенні підґрунтя для розроблення інноваційних освітніх стратегій, здатних забезпечити якісну підготовку нової генерації політологів-міжнародників, адаптованих до викликів глобального інформаційного простору та здатних реалізувати стратегії публічної дипломатії на локальному рівні.

Ключові слова: професійна освіта; культурологічний підхід; іноземна мова в дипломатії; міжкультурна комунікація; міждисциплінарний підхід; медіаграмотність



Methods of forming soft skills in applicants for professional pre-higher education

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Abstract. The growing demands on land management specialists in the context of land reform and martial law in Ukraine have highlighted the need to develop soft skills for the effective performance of interdisciplinary tasks. The aim of the study was to develop methods for integrating critical thinking, communication, cooperation and adaptability into land management disciplines in order to increase the competitiveness of graduates. Methods of analysis of educational and professional programmes, a five-point scale survey, pilot implementation and statistical analysis were used. The analysis of 15 programmes revealed limited integration of soft skills (15-20% of teaching time), resulting in their low level: critical thinking – 2.9 points, communication – 3.0, cooperation – 2.7, adaptability – 2.5. The proposed three-level model of methods included analysis of land conflict cases to develop critical

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thinking, role-playing activities for communication with stakeholders, and project-based learning with geoinformation simulations for cooperation and adaptability. A pilot implementation with 60 students in 2025 showed an increase in skills: critical thinking – up to 3.6 points (24%), communication – up to 3.8 (27%), cooperation – up to 3.5 (30%), adaptability – up to 3.3 (32%), confirmed statistically (t-criterion 4.2-5.8, $p < 0.05$; correlation 0.68, $p < 0.01$). It was found that the application of a system of methods in the educational process allows for the integration of skills in 30-40% of teaching time, adapting to the interdisciplinary requirements of land management. The results correlated with international studies that emphasised the importance of active learning. The practical value lies in the creation of recommendations for improving educational programmes that contribute to a 30-40% increase in graduate employability and the implementation of land reform

Keywords: land management; project-based learning; GIS simulations; land reform; critical thinking; adaptability

Introduction

The relevance of the study was determined by the fragmented and unsystematic integration of soft skills into educational and professional programmes in land management disciplines, which contradicts the requirements of international educational and professional standards. In a global context, particularly within the framework of the Bologna Process and the competence frameworks of the European Higher Education Area (ESCO, DigComp, EntreComp), soft skills such as critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration, adaptability and digital literacy were recognised as an integral part of professional training. It is this gap between national educational practices and international standards that significantly reduces the competitiveness of Ukrainian graduates not only in the domestic labour market, but also in the European and global labour markets. Modern land management specialists work in a complex, dynamic environment shaped by land reform, martial law, digital transformation and the growth of interdisciplinary challenges, requiring them to be able to analyse ambiguous situations, interact constructively with various stakeholders (farmers, civil society organisations, local authorities, international experts) and make informed decisions in conditions of uncertainty. Technical knowledge alone is not enough for this; a comprehensive competency base combining specialised

and soft skills is required. However, higher education programmes in land management specialisations remain predominantly technically oriented, with minimal attention paid to the development of soft skills. This imbalance not only limits the professional mobility of graduates, but also hinders the integration of Ukrainian education into the European and global educational space.

The issue of soft skills development in vocational education has attracted the attention of many researchers. For example, N. Pan *et al.* (2025), analysing the role of adaptability in resource management in the context of economic and climate challenges, point to an increase in students' adaptability in the process of integrating soft skills through modular learning. F. Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2023) demonstrated in their study in Colombia that vocational training with a focus on teamwork increases employability by 15-20%, especially in industries where interaction with various stakeholders is critical. An analysis of student and employer perceptions by C. Succi & M. Canovi (2019) highlighted the importance of creativity and problem-based learning in Industry 4.0 for land management. M. Hussein (2024) points to a 40% increase in employability in Saudi Arabia through group projects in postgraduate education. Identifying gaps in adaptability (2.8 points) in China's higher vocational education,

Z. Liu (2024) proposes interdisciplinary modules. B. Larson *et al.* (2025) note the lack of adaptation of soft skills in earth sciences, particularly geoinformatics, in a systematic review. Research by D. Orih *et al.* (2024) shows the effectiveness of project-based learning at 30% in higher education, but points to the need for sectoral adaptations. N. Bakhmat *et al.* (2023) propose an active learning model for teaching professions in Ukraine, which can be adapted to land management. I. Ovdiienko *et al.* (2025) focus on the psychological determinants of soft skills, but do not consider technical disciplines.

The diversity of the analysed approaches to the formation of soft skills emphasises the need for their systematisation and adaptation to the specific requirements of land management disciplines, where interdisciplinarity and the challenges of land reform require new methods. Thus, there is a scientifically and practically justified need to develop systematised, standardised methods for integrating soft skills into the educational process, i.e. methods that would correspond to both national realities and international competence frameworks, ensuring the formation of a flexible, adaptive and globally competitive professional personality. The role of international cooperation in the development of vocational education in Ukraine, as emphasised by O. Borodiyenko *et al.* (2023), is critical for the adaptation of educational programmes to global standards. Land reform in Ukraine, defined by Law of Ukraine No. 552-IX (2020), creates a context for the development of methods that meet the current requirements of land management specialists.

The aim was to develop and implement a three-level model of methods for forming soft skills (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, adaptability) in students of higher vocational education while studying land management disciplines. The objectives were to analyse educational and professional programmes in land management specialities to assess the current level of soft skills integration; conduct a survey of students and teachers to determine the

baseline level of skills; developing and implementing a three-level model of methods (case analysis, role-playing activities, project-based learning with geoinformation simulations). The scientific novelty lay in the creation of an industry-adapted model for the formation of soft skills with empirical confirmation of its effectiveness, which fills a gap in the reform of professional education in the context of land management in Ukraine.

Materials and Methods

In accordance with the aim, the study was conducted in several stages aimed at developing methods for forming soft skills in applicants for higher professional education in the process of studying land management disciplines. All stages of the study were conducted in compliance with international ethical standards and Ukrainian legislation. The study was based on the principles set out in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), the Declaration of Helsinki (1964) and Law of Ukraine No. 2297-VI (2010). All research procedures complied with the requirements of Law of Ukraine No. 2297-VI (2010). The recruitment of research participants was based on the principle of informed consent: all students and teachers were provided with detailed written information about the purpose of the research, methods, potential risks and benefits, with the option to withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences for their assessment or status.

Ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of participants was a critical aspect. Personal data (surnames, contact information) were not collected or disseminated. All data were coded with numerical or alphabetic codes that made it impossible to identify individuals. The results were presented exclusively in aggregate form. The study did not pose any risks to the physical, psychological, or social well-being of the participants. All methods were non-invasive and based on standard educational practices. Participation in the study was open to all applicants regardless of gender, ethnic origin or socio-economic status.

The control group was given access to the developed methods after the study was completed, ensuring equality. The results of the study were published with a clear definition of methodological limitations and without conflicts of interest.

The first stage involved identifying the key concepts of the study (soft skills: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, adaptability) and the criteria for selecting information. The main criteria for selecting sources were: focus on the integration of soft skills into vocational education, in particular in land management disciplines; quality and authority of research confirmed by citations in the Scopus and Web of Science scientometric databases. The main sources of the targeted sample were the Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar databases. The search was conducted using the keywords: “soft skills in vocational education”, “land management education”, “project-based learning in VET”, limited to English and Ukrainian publications. In addition, the method of tracking citations in selected works was used to expand the sample, which allowed the inclusion of fundamental works with high citation indices. The source base included scientific articles, monographs, conference materials, avoiding abstracts, abstracts, and unverified Internet publications.

At the second stage, a qualitative analysis of 15 educational and professional programmes in the field of 193 “Geodesy and Land Management” from vocational colleges in Ukraine (Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv, Odesa, Dnipro) was conducted to assess the share of soft skills in the curricula. Content analysis was used to determine the amount of teaching time (in ECTS credits) devoted to soft skills, and comparative analysis was used to compare with international standards (Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 32006H0962, 2006; European Training Foundation, 2017). In parallel, a quantitative survey of 120 students (2nd-4th year, 60% men, 40% women, average age 19) and 45 teachers (average experience 12 years) was conducted using a five-point Likert scale to assess the level of critical thinking, communication, cooperation and

adaptability. The sample was formed using stratified sampling to represent regional colleges. The experimental base was the “Boyarka Professional College of the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine”.

In the third stage, a pilot implementation of a three-level model of methods for forming soft skills was carried out on 60 students while studying the discipline “Land Management Design” (2025). The model included three levels: basic level – analysis of land conflict cases in the decentralisation of amalgamated territorial communities (30 applicants, discipline “Land Management”, 8 hours); intermediate level – role-playing activities to simulate negotiations with stakeholders (farmers, local council representatives, cadastral engineers) in the course “Automated Land and Cadastral Informatics” (30 students, 12 hours); advanced level – project-based learning with geoinformation simulations (QGIS, ArcGIS Pro) in the discipline “Land Cadastre” (45 applicants, 20 hours, including planning, data analysis and presentation of results). Pre-post testing measured competency dynamics on a five-point Likert scale. The control group received traditional training without the use of the developed methods.

At the fourth stage, statistical analysis of the results was performed using SPSS 26.0. The following statistical methods were used: Student’s t-test to compare results before and after implementation; Pearson’s correlation to assess the relationship between motivation and competence level; one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the experimental and control groups. The significance criterion was set at $p < 0.05$ with a 95% confidence interval. The data were rounded to 0.1 in accordance with the rules of statistical processing.

At the fifth stage, the results were systematised, a comparative analysis with international studies was carried out, and conclusions were formulated. The main methods of this stage were synthesis, systematisation, and generalisation. The methodology ensured the reliability and reproducibility of the results (Vitranjuk *et al.*, 2022;

Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 22, 2024).

The study was based on a solid methodological foundation that ensured internal and external validity (Vlemincx *et al.*, 2021). The use of multiple methods (qualitative programme analysis, quantitative survey, pilot implementation, statistical analysis) allowed for data triangulation. The control group provided an opportunity to compare experimental and traditional approaches. The stratified sample represented regional colleges in Ukraine, which increased the generalisability of the results. Compliance with ethical standards enshrined in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), the Declaration of Helsinki (1964) and Law of Ukraine No. 2297-VI (2010) ensured the protection of participants and the reliability of the study's conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Land management is considered an interdisciplinary field that integrates geodesy, topography, ecology, land law, land resource management, and land cadastre, aimed at ensuring sustainable development and resolving land conflicts in the context of land reform in Ukraine (Law of Ukraine No. 552-IX, 2020; Kovalchuk *et al.*, 2022; Bakhmat *et al.*, 2023). Soft skills, in particular critical thinking, communication, collaboration and adaptability, are key for professionals in this field, as they enable them to interact effectively with stakeholders, adapt to dynamic conditions and implement reforms. The lack of a unified approach to integrating these skills into land management disciplines highlights the need to develop new methodological solutions that take into account the interdisciplinary nature of the speciality.

A qualitative analysis of 15 educational and professional programmes in the field of 193/G18 "Geodesy and Land Management" from Ukrainian professional colleges showed that 70-80% of study time (ECTS credits) is dedicated to technical skills such as cartography, geographic information system analysis, and cadastral

regulation, whereas soft skills are limited to 15-20% of study time and are addressed only through general subjects such as "Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship" or "Informatics". A quantitative survey of 120 students (2nd-4th year, 60% male, 40% female, average age 19) and 45 teachers (average experience 12 years) on a five-point Likert scale revealed a low baseline level of skills: critical thinking – 2.9 points (standard deviation 0.3), communication – 3.0 (0.4), cooperation – 2.7 (0.3), adaptability – 2.5 (0.4). Pearson's correlation analysis showed a relationship between the level of skills and motivation to learn ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), which is consistent with the findings of M. Marenych & V. Onipko (2022) and I. Ovdienko *et al.* (2025) on the psychological determinants of soft skill formation. In order to assess the effectiveness of the formation of soft skills, a three-level model of methods adapted to the interdisciplinary nature of the specialty was developed and implemented for students of higher professional education in the process of studying land management disciplines.

The basic level (case analysis for the development of critical thinking) involved the development of critical thinking through the analysis of land conflict cases in the context of the decentralisation of amalgamated territorial communities. Within the discipline of "Land Management", 30 students participated in modelling disputes over land boundaries using geographic information systems (ArcGIS Pro). The cases were based on real-life scenarios, such as conflicts between farmers and local authorities due to discrepancies in cadastral data after the amalgamation of communities. Participants analysed documents, created cartographic models and proposed solutions, which required the evaluation of alternative options and arguments. The pre-test showed an average critical thinking score of 2.9 points (standard deviation 0.3), while the post-test after four sessions (8 hours) showed an increase to 3.6 points, which is 24% ($t = 4.2$, $p < 0.01$, 95% confidence interval). This result was consistent with the findings of A. Petrasová (2018) and

N. Karimova (2020), who note that case analysis in higher education increases critical thinking by 20-25% thanks to its interactive approach. The method proved to be effective due to its practical orientation, which allowed applicants to apply their skills and abilities to assess complex situations.

The intermediate level focused on developing communication skills through role-play activities within the course "Automated Land-Cadastral Informatics". In a group of 30 students, simulations of negotiations between stakeholders (farmers, representatives of local councils, cadastral engineers) were conducted regarding the clarification of cadastral data in geographic information systems. Participants were assigned roles, recreating scenarios such as agreeing land parcel boundaries or resolving disputes over land categories. Each role-play session (6 classes, 12 hours) included preparing arguments, presenting data from geographic information systems, and moderating discussions. The initial level of communication was 3.0 points (standard deviation 0.4), and after implementation it increased to 3.8 points (a rise of 27%, $t = 4.8$, $p < 0.01$, 95% confidence interval). The correlation between communication skills and learning motivation was $r = 0.65$ ($p < 0.01$), confirming the psychological basis of the method's effectiveness, as noted by I. Ovdiienko *et al.* (2025). The results are consistent with the findings of C. Succi & M. Canovi (2019), who emphasise that role-play in vocational education improves communication by 25-30% through the imitation of real professional scenarios. The method proved effective due to its practical context, which fostered the development

of both verbal and non-verbal skills necessary for stakeholder interaction.

The advanced level involved the development of cooperation and adaptability through project-based learning in the discipline of "Land Cadastre". A group of 45 applicants worked on complex land zoning projects using geoinformation simulations (QGIS, ArcGIS Pro), taking into account environmental factors such as soil protection and restrictions for protected areas. Each team (5-6 people) developed a project over 10 pairs (20 hours, including planning, data analysis, map creation, and presentation of results.

The initial level of cooperation was 2.7 points (standard deviation 0.3), and adaptability was 2.5 points (0.4). After implementation, cooperation increased to 3.5 points (30%, $F = 5.8$; $p < 0.05$; Anova), and adaptability to 3.3 points (32%; $t = 5.2$; $p < 0.01$). Analysis of variance (Anova) confirmed significant differences between the groups that used project-based learning compared to the control group that used traditional methods ($F = 5.8$; $p < 0.05$). The results correlate with the study by F. Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2023), which showed a 15-20% increase in cooperation in professional training thanks to team projects. Project-based learning in resource management, according to H. Pan *et al.* (2025), increases adaptability by 20-30%, which is consistent with the data obtained. The method proved to be effective thanks to the integration of geoinformation technologies, which allowed applicants to adapt to changing conditions and work in teams to solve real land management problems. The dynamics of competence development are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Level of development of soft skills before and after the implementation of methods ($n = 60$)

Skills	Before the experiment	After the experiment	Growth (%)	t-value	P-value
Critical thinking	2.9 (± 0.3)	3.6 (± 0.2)	24	4.2	<0.01
Communication	3.0 (± 0.4)	3.8 (± 0.3)	27	4.8	<0.01
Cooperation	2.7 (± 0.3)	3.5 (± 0.2)	30	5.1	<0.05
Adaptability	2.5 (± 0.4)	3.3 (± 0.3)	32	5.2	<0.01

Source: calculations based on pilot implementation

The results presented in Table 1 show statistically significant growth for each skill after the implementation of the three-level model of methods. These skills show consistent growth, with the highest increase in

adaptability (32%) and cooperation (30%). Table 2 demonstrates the effectiveness of the proposed three-level model compared to traditional approaches, showing an increase in soft skills in each method.

Table 2. Comparison of traditional and proposed methods for developing soft skills

Method	Traditional approach	Proposed method	Effectiveness (growth in soft skills, %)
Case studies	Lectures	Interactive analysis	25
Role-playing activities	Seminars	Negotiation simulations	27
Project-based learning	Individual assignments	Team GIS projects	35

Source: calculations based on pilot implementation

The pilot implementation of the three-level model of methods confirmed its ability to ensure effective integration of cross-curricular competencies in 30-40% of teaching time, which exceeds the typical 15-20% in traditional programmes (Hussein, 2024; Zahn *et al.*, 2024). Analysis of variance (Anova) confirmed statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups ($F = 5.8$; $p < 0.05$). The correlation between motivation and competency level ($r = 0.68$; $p < 0.01$) indicates the psychological basis for the model's effectiveness, which is consistent with I. Ovdienko *et al.* (2025) on the motivational mechanisms of soft skills development. The predicted 30-40% increase in employment is based on similar results in studies by F. Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2023).

The results obtained correlate with current research. C. Succi & M. Canovi (2019) showed that 85% of employers require communication and cooperation, which supports the relevance of the proposed methods. In addition, adaptive learning in the context of professional development, as shown by the example of Eastern Europe, improves learning outcomes in technical disciplines (Vasiutynska *et al.*, 2025). B. Larson *et al.* (2025) identified a lack of adaptation of soft skills in earth sciences, while this model fills the gap through specialised geoinformation simulations. N. Bakhmat *et al.* (2023) proposed active learning for pedagogy, but this study adapts approaches to technical disciplines. Z. Liu (2024) emphasised

the importance of adaptability in HVET after Covid-19, which corresponds to this model's focus on developing adaptability (32% growth).

The lack of a unified approach to integrating soft skills of future professionals when studying land management disciplines, as noted by N. Bakhmat *et al.* (2023), creates a gap that this model addresses by adapting to interdisciplinary requirements (ecology, law, economics). Unlike pedagogically oriented approaches, the model focuses on technical disciplines, in particular geoinformation systems, which distinguishes it from the conclusions of B. Larson *et al.* (2025) about the lack of adaptation of soft skills to earth sciences. The proposed methods, such as geoinformation simulations, are in line with Industry 4.0 trends, where digital technologies, according to Z. Liu (2024), increase the need for adaptability. Compared to the study by A. Harder & S. Schumann (2025), which emphasises the effectiveness of project-based learning by 30%, this model offers specific industry solutions that contribute to the implementation of land reform.

A critical aspect was the need to overcome the limitations of traditional programmes, which are dominated by lecture and seminar formats, reducing the development of soft skills (Liu *et al.*, 2014; Mohammed & Ozdamli, 2024). The proposed model opens a discussion on scaling to other technical specialties and integrating digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, for

land data analysis, which can increase learning effectiveness (Pan *et al.*, 2025). The problem of low motivation among applicants, as noted by I. Ovdiienko *et al.* (2025), requires further research to improve psychological mechanisms. The model also promotes the social responsibility of land management specialists, which is important in the context of sustainable development.

The practical implication is the need to review educational standards for higher vocational education to ensure a balance between technical and soft skills, which contributes to improving the employability of graduates and the implementation of land reform in the context of the challenges identified by N. Vitranjuk *et al.* (2022) methodological recommendations and Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 22 (2024). A comparison with other studies shows that the proposed model is innovative because it adapts active learning methods to the specific requirements of land management. This opens up the prospect of a more in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of methods in different regions of Ukraine and ways of combining them with digital technologies.

Conclusions

The study showed that the level of integration of soft skills into higher education programmes in land management disciplines is fragmented, which negatively affects the competitiveness of future graduates in the labour market. A qualitative analysis of 15 educational and professional programmes in the field of 193 "Geodesy and Land Management" showed that only 15-20% of teaching time is devoted to the development of critical thinking, communication skills, cooperation and adaptability, while the majority of time is devoted to technical training. This imbalance is consistent with low scores for basic skills: critical thinking – 2.9 points, communication – 3.0, cooperation – 2.7, adaptability – 2.5 on a five-point scale. A three-level model for developing soft skills, which includes analysis of land conflict cases, role-playing activities to simulate negotiations, and project-based

learning with geoinformation simulations, has been developed and implemented. It has proven effective in increasing the level of critical thinking (24%), communication (27%), cooperation (30%) and adaptability (32%) with statistically significant results (t-criterion 4.2-5.2, $p < 0.05$; Anova $F = 5.8$; $p < 0.05$). The introduction of interactive and practice-oriented methods has made it possible to integrate soft skills into 30-40% of teaching time, which is in line with current international trends in vocational education, as confirmed by the study.

The study creates an industry-adapted model for the formation of soft skills, covering three levels: basic, intermediate and advanced, each of which is aimed at developing specific skills. The experimental model was applied in the teaching of technical disciplines, filling the gap in the adaptation of soft skills in earth sciences. Unlike pedagogically oriented approaches, the model specialises in land management disciplines, taking into account land reform in Ukraine and the digital transformation of education. Factors that reduce the generalisability of the conclusions are: limited geographical representation (5 regional colleges in Ukraine); a relatively short pilot implementation period (2025, 6 months); focus on individual disciplines; the possibility of external factors (martial law) influencing participant motivation. Overall, the study demonstrates that the systematic integration of interactive teaching methods into technical disciplines is effective for developing soft skills and improving the quality of vocational education. The implementation of a three-level model at the national level can contribute to increasing the competitiveness of Ukrainian graduates in the European labour market.

Prospects for further research include: long-term assessment of the model's impact on graduates' career development (3-5 years); scaling the model to other technical specialities (construction, ecology, agronomy); integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning to automate land data analysis in educational projects; research into psychological factors (motivation,

stress resistance, emotional intelligence) that influence the formation of soft skills; analysis of regional characteristics of the model's implementation in different regions of Ukraine to adapt it to local labour market needs.

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Методи формування наскрізних (soft) компетентностей у здобувачів фахової передвищої освіти

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Анотація. Зростання вимог фахівців землевпорядкування в умовах земельної реформи та воєнного стану в Україні актуалізувало потребу в розвитку наскрізних компетентностей для ефективного виконання міждисциплінарних завдань. Метою дослідження було створення методів інтеграції критичного мислення, комунікації, співпраці та адаптивності в землевпорядні дисципліни для підвищення конкурентоспроможності випускників. Застосовано методи аналізу освітньо-професійних програм, опитування за п'ятибальною шкалою, пілотного впровадження та статистичного аналізу. У результаті аналізу 15 програм виявлено обмежену інтеграцію наскрізних компетентностей (15-20 % навчального часу), що спричиняє їх низький рівень: критичне мислення – 2,9 бали, комунікація – 3,0, співпраця – 2,7, адаптивність – 2,5. Запропонована трирівнева модель методів охопила аналіз кейсів земельних конфліктів для розвитку критичного мислення, ролеві ігри для комунікації зі стейкхолдерами та проєктне навчання з геоінформаційними симуляціями для співпраці й адаптивності. Пілотне впровадження на 60 студентах у 2025 році показало зростання компетентностей: критичне мислення – до 3,6 балів (24 %), комунікація – до 3,8 (27 %), співпраця – до 3,5 (30 %), адаптивність – до 3,3 (32 %), підтвержене статично (t-критерій 4,2-5,8, $p < 0,05$; кореляція 0,68, $p < 0,01$). З'ясовано, що застосування системи методів в освітньому процесі дозволяють інтегрувати компетентності у 30-40 % навчального часу, адаптуючись до міждисциплінарних вимог землевпорядкування. Результати корелювали із міжнародними дослідженнями, які підкреслили значення активного навчання. Практична цінність полягає у створенні рекомендацій для вдосконалення освітніх програм, що сприяють підвищенню працевлаштованості випускників на 30-40 % та реалізації земельної реформи

Ключові слова: землевпорядкування; проєктне навчання; GIS-симуляції; земельна реформа; критичне мислення; адаптивність



Age differences in the motivational potential for self-realisation among gifted young people

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Abstract. The study analysed age differences in the motivational potential for self-realisation among gifted young people. The sample consisted of respondents with a high level of giftedness who need targeted psychological support and stimulation of learning motivation, motivation to overcome difficulties and set goals. Motivational potential was considered as a resource for the development and realisation of abilities in various spheres of life. The aim of the study was to empirically identify and analyse age differences in the motivational potential for self-realisation among gifted young people. To achieve this goal, five psychodiagnostic methods were used: “Resources” by N. Vodopyanova, “Coping strategies” by D. Amirkhan, “Motivation for success and fear of failure” by A. Rean, the author’s questionnaire “Learning motivation”, and “SAT” by E. Shostrom. The results of the empirical study were presented in a table showing age differences according to the criteria of F. Fisher and T. Student, mean values and standard deviations, as well as an interpretation of the obtained indicators. It has been established that older school-age boys and girls had a higher level of motivational potential for self-realisation than adolescents. The older group was more characterised by such motivational tendencies as ideas about human nature, self-respect, behavioural flexibility, value orientations, time orientation, orientation towards professional realisation, academic success, motivation to avoid failure, creativity, cognitive needs and synergy. In adolescence, other motivational orientations dominate: motivation for prestige, social significance, external negative motivation, need for support, sensitivity, avoidance of problems, social support, lack of clear motivation, self-criticism, and motivation to achieve success. The practical significance of the results obtained lies in identifying age-related psychological barriers and obstacles that affect the self-realisation of gifted individuals, as well as in the possibility of using the data to develop programmes for counselling, therapy and training

Keywords: age range; differentiation; mean value; standard deviation; criteria of F. Fisher and T. Student

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Introduction

Gifted young people are considered an important resource for the development of the state and society, requiring the creation of conditions for the realisation of personal potential. The potential for self-realisation of gifted young people is a complex dynamic formation that determines the resource capabilities of the individual and manifests itself in various types of activity. For students, the dominant type is educational and professional activity. In this study, the concept of "potential for self-realisation" is considered as an intermediate category between the concepts of "self-realisation" and "self-actualisation". This was due to the fact that young men and women of student age do not yet have sufficient professional experience and competence for full self-realisation. The concept of "self-actualisation" in this context characterises internal resources and intense motivation, while self-realisation reflects external activity and extensive motivation in specific types of activity. One of the key components of self-actualisation potential is motivation. With low levels of motivation, gifted young people do not realise their personal potential, which could ensure high results in various fields of activity. Low academic motivation and insufficient stimulation of creative development lead to the emergence of psychological barriers that complicate the process of self-actualisation. This study is devoted to analysing age differences in the motivational potential for self-actualisation among gifted young people and identifying motivational trends characteristic of different age groups. The relevance of the study was determined by the need to study the motivational aspect of the potential for self-realisation of gifted young people, taking into account age and gender differences, as well as the influence of psychological barriers that can block the successful realisation of potential. The scientific novelty lies in the differentiation of these factors in the context of the motivational characteristics of gifted young people.

Well-known contemporary Ukrainian scientists have studied the self-realisation of gifted

students in modern living conditions. Y. Eremenko (2019) developed a typology of self-realisation risks and identified the structural components of student giftedness that influence the self-realisation of young people. In their study, K. Androsovyh *et al.* (2021) presents the main results of research on the adaptation processes of gifted students at different age stages, develops a theoretical model of the organisation of socio-psychological adaptation in the educational environment, and develops socio-psychological training to overcome maladjustment in educational institutions with gifted students. According to the research of M. Sadova (2021), the factors that contribute to and hinder the realisation of the potential of gifted individuals have been substantiated and experimentally identified. An analysis of the factors that motivate and hinder the realisation of gifted young people in a psychological and pedagogical context has been carried out.

The component of motivation that is the focus of J. Laszczyk's (2023) research is goal setting. The author established a relationship between setting goals, the complexity of their implementation, and overcoming psychological barriers. In particular, using the interview method, the researcher substantiated the respondents' answers with the help of qualitative analysis. In the work of R. Cholankeril *et al.* (2023) on intellectual giftedness, factors that hinder its realisation at different ages are identified, among which desocialisation and perfectionism are the leading ones. In the case of academic giftedness, the factor of maladjustment is less common.

S. Olton-Weber *et al.* (2020) emphasise the role of academic success and increased motivation of gifted young people, taking into account age aspects. Practical experience shows that it is difficult to find an effective approach to gifted young people in adolescence and youth. When identified, it becomes an important external stimulus, or extensive motivation, which is consistent with the conclusions of H. Briddick & W. Briddick (2024). A typological approach to studying the potential for

self-realisation has made it possible to identify personality types of this phenomenon. In particular, M. Sadova's (2024) dissertation research identified theoretical and empirical typologies of the potential for self-realisation among students. Cluster analysis made it possible to identify four types: active, passive self-development, existential and social. Representatives of each type are capable of achieving their goals, but differ in the pace of realising their personal potential.

The aim of the study was to theoretically substantiate and empirically investigate age differences in the motivational potential for self-realisation among gifted adolescents and young adults.

Literature Review

The problem of the realisation potential of gifted young people has its roots in the humanistic approach to psychology. D. Winsor & C. Mueller (2020) consider self-actualisation to be a natural source of activity that motivates the development of one's own potential. The development of self-actualisation is facilitated by a safe and supportive environment and a positive perception of oneself as a person who can realise their own potential and who has the motivational power to achieve self-actualisation.

A. Novak *et al.* (2020) explore self-actualisation from the perspective of both an internal socio-ethical source of activity and an external one, through creativity, love, and an active life position. In particular, K. Barbier *et al.* (2019) examined self-actualisation from the perspective of individualisation and personal self-development. When a person realises their own potential, they undergo a process of individualisation, integrating conscious and unconscious aspects of their personality. H. Stoeger & M. Zeidner (2019) identified a connection between psychological and physical processes, linking self-actualisation with the harmonious development of the mind and body and the release of internal blocks and obstacles. The process of synergy is also revealed in this study. W. Fan & C. Williams (2018) consider self-actualisation of

the personality through the harmonious development of intellect, emotions and spirituality.

At the present stage, the problem is substantiated by analysing studies of the motivational aspects of the self-realisation potential of gifted young people over the last five years. H. Tiwen (2023) explores the problem of giftedness through the subjective prerequisites of psychological well-being in adolescents. The author confirms models of the influence of subjective factors on the psychological well-being of modern gifted adolescents. Yu. Stryzhak & M. Grynova (2022) experimentally studied the academic intrinsic motivation of intellectually gifted children of different age categories using the longitudinal method. M. Ecker-Lyster *et al.* (2021) investigate the sociocultural barriers that prevent gifted children from realising their potential. The authors shift the focus from diagnosing high abilities to creating conditions for the development of giftedness in real-life situations.

A study by E. Burns & A. Martin (2021) identified motivational problems in the education of gifted children: understanding the role of students' beliefs about attribution and control, self-esteem protection, and growth orientation. The authors explore vectors of giftedness and talent development in pedagogical and psychological contexts in children of different age groups in the Asia-Pacific region. The study shows that the motivational sphere has peak points of development: at a younger age, play and emotional motivation prevail, in adolescence – social and achievement motivation, and in youth – professional and self-actualisation motivation. S. Laujin (2021) emphasises the peculiarities of the transition from childhood giftedness to adolescent self-actualisation: support and expansion of educational opportunities are important.

Research over the last decade has focused on identifying the factors and components of motivation that shape the personal potential of gifted young people. For example, B. Abu-Hamour & H. Al-Hmouz (2013) described the components of extra- and intrapunitive motivation that contribute to the development of the potential of

gifted adolescents. S. Laujin (2021) analysed the positive and negative attribution of success and failure among gifted students. D. Siegle & D. McCoach (2018) investigated the factors contributing to the failure of gifted children from low-income families. E. Fiedler (1999), adjunct professor of school psychology at Pennsylvania State University, developed a battery of psychodiagnostic techniques for identifying intellectual giftedness in different age groups. P. Clivenbeard (2012), President of the National Association for Gifted Children and Director of the Minskoff Institute for Talent Development, as well as a Houston University lecturer, researched gifted pupils with disabilities and analysed the influence of inclusive education on the development of their potential.

R. Ryan *et al.* (2021) explore motivation as the most powerful current support in the development and realisation of oneself as a personality. Research in this area, self-determination theory, summarises evidence about basic needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness) in learning and outlines effective directions for implementation in educational policy and practice. Appropriate interventions can change attitudes, but rarely assessments without broader conditions (climate, support, level of teaching). For gifted students, the link between motivation and self-actualisation is stronger: skilful orientation better predicts self-regulation strategies in learning for them. Giftedness from the perspective of talent development models, identification, and well-being is considered by the talent development paradigm of R. Subotnik *et al.* (2020). Thus, at the empirical level, age differences in the motivational potential for self-actualisation among gifted young people have not been studied, which makes this study a significant contribution.

Materials and Methods

The initial stages of research focused on the theoretical substantiation of the problem concerning the self-realisation potential of gifted youth. To this end, theoretical methods were used: analysis of literary sources, systematisation and

classification. At the second stage of the research, psychodiagnostic methods were selected and developed: "Determination of personal resources" by N. Vodopyanova; "Indicator of coping strategies" by D. Amirkhan; "Motivation for success and fear of failure" by A. Rean; the test "Determination of self-actualisation of the personality" by E. Shostrom; author's questionnaires: "Identification of motivational tendencies towards learning activities of pupils/students" and "Setting goals".

Examples of questions from the author's questionnaire on goal setting: "What goals do you set for yourself for a month, a year, 5 years, and for your whole life?"; "What psychological barriers prevent you from setting and achieving your goals?" The subjects were given a recommendation guide for goal setting, which took into account the motivational blocks "want", "can", "must", and "decision making". Examples of tasks from the author's questionnaire for identifying motivational tendencies towards learning activities were presented to the subjects according to the following motivational blocks: motive of satisfaction, motive of professional fulfilment, social motive, identification of external positive motives, identification of external negative motives, identification of the social significance of the pupil (student), identification of prestige motivation, etc. The subjects gave each block a score of 0 to 4 points.

At the third stage, the questionnaires were compiled into Google forms and launched online in 2023 (initial control) for gifted young people. Prior to this, the subjects were contacted and asked to take part in the survey on a voluntary basis. During the initial control, the principle of confidentiality of each subject was taken into account, and the results were subsequently processed in the SPSS programme. The results of the initial control of the research were tested in the English-language monograph by M. Sadova (2024).

At the fourth stage, factor analysis of the data was used to identify the psychological components of the self-realisation potential of gifted young people: the goal component, the potential-motivational component, the

educational-motivational component, psychological barriers, and the personal-realisation component. At the fifth stage, the typology of self-realisation potential was determined using cluster analysis: motivated-realisation and unmotivated-realisation types. The sixth stage consisted of identifying the differentiation of the self-realisation potential of gifted young people according to age, gender and professional criteria using statistical tests for independent samples (F. Fischer, T. Student). At the final, seventh stage, a personal growth training programme was developed, aimed at overcoming psychological barriers in gifted young people.

Justification of the sample of respondents. The object of the study was gifted young people, whom the author has been researching for over 6 years in Ukraine, including 2.5 years on a grant in Slovakia (Bratislava) (Sadova, 2021). This category includes students and high school pupils characterised by a high level of intellectual giftedness, creative abilities and academic success. The subjects included: high school students from the Small Academy of Sciences of Ukraine; students from national universities in Kyiv and Odesa (National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy", Ukrainian Humanitarian Institute, Kyiv National Economic University named after V. Hetman, Odessa National University named after I. Mechnikov); students of the Pan-European University in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Gifted young men and women were identified based on academic achievements (high grades),

creative achievements (choreography, visual arts, vocalisation), and intellectually gifted students were selected based on the results of the Wechsler tests (adult version). Age range of the participants: 15-22 years. Gender: 382 boys, 387 girls. By specialisation: creative professions (designers, choreographers, actors, vocalists, artists) – 390 people; romance-germanic philology (French, German, Italian) – 379 people. Total number of participants: 769 people. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics (2018).

Results and Discussion

The application of mathematical statistics methods (Fischer's test and Student's test for independent samples) made it possible to identify significant age differences in the motivational potential for self-realisation among gifted young people. The analysis showed that the distribution of indicators on individual scales has statistically confirmed differences between age groups, which indicates the dynamics of motivational factors in the process of growing up.

Table 1 presents the results of the analysis of the equality of variances and mean values, reflecting the main trends in changes in the structure of motivational potential. In general, with age, the focus on internal motives for self-realisation increases, while some of the external determinants lose their decisive significance. Thus, the analysis confirms that the motivational potential for self-realisation varies with age and is shaped by both internal and external factors.

Table 1. Age differences in the motivational potential for self-realisation among gifted young people according to the criteria of F. Fischer and T. Student

Scale	Age	N	Average	Standard deviation	F	Significance according to F	T	Significance (2 nd degree) according to t
1. Motivation for professional fulfilment	Adolescents	172	.6628	.59453	76.017	.000 ***	-4.194	.000
	Young adults	597	.8342	.43075			-3.523	.001
2. Academic success	Adolescents	172	7.8384	2.16101	48.621	.000 ***	3.742	.000
	Young adults	597	7.0107	2.65737			4.190	.000
3. No motivation identified	Adolescents	172	13.0233	2.71869	.475	.491	2.927	.004
	Young adults	597	12.3417	2.68300			2.905	.004

Table 1. Continued

Scale	Age	N	Average	Standard deviation	F	Significance according to F	T	Significance (2nd degree) according to t
4. Self-criticism	Adolescents	172	10.4535	3.42217	5.129	.024 **	3.612	.000
	Young adults	597	9.4573	3.11636			3.430	.001
5. Motivation for success	Adolescents	172	13.0233	2.71869	.475	.491	2.927	.004
	Young adults	597	12.3417	2.68300			2.905	.004
6. Motivation for failure	Adolescents	172	12.3417	2.68300	.475	.491	2.927	.004
	Young adults	597	13.0233	2.71869			2.905	.004
7. Avoidance of problems	Adolescents	172	19.1106	7.01971	4.735	.030 **	-3.698	.001
	Young adults	597	17.1279	5.93591			-3.373	.000
8. Social support	Adolescents	172	23.0407	6.56711	19.993	.000 ***	.898	.369
	Young adults	597	22.3668	9.18113			1.076	.282
9. Creativity	Adolescents	172	25.3430	5.85136	.028	.866	-2.489	.013
	Young adults	597	26.2764	7.51636			-2.469	.014
10. Cognitive needs	Adolescents	172	6.8198	2.34136	7.706	.006 ***	3.825	.000
	Young adults	597	7.3183	2.30608			3.476	.001
11. Synergy	Adolescents	172	3.839	.99398	7.102	.008 ***	2.010	.045
	Young adults	597	4.0174	1.03347			2.054	.041
12. Perceptions of human nature	Adolescents	172	4.8811	1.39784	.783	.376	2.126	.034
	Young adults	597	5.1395	1.42790			2.101	.037
13. Self-respect	Adolescents	172	8.8576	2.70768	10.690	.001 ***	.212	.832
	Young adults	597	8.9128	3.08517			.228	.820
14. Sensitivity	Adolescents	172	6.8459	1.82354	.047	.828	-2.401	.017
	Young adults	597	6.4535	1.90717			-2.461	.014
15. Behavioural flexibility	Adolescents	172	12.5427	3.45988	.652	.420	3.272	.001
	Young adults	597	13.5000	3.35789			3.218	.001
16. Support	Adolescents	172	49.4360	8.63025	.002	.966	2.058	.040
	Young adults	597	47.8811	8.76047			2.075	.039
17. Value orientations	Adolescents	172	11.2010	3.05932	3.392	.066	2.062	.040
	Young adults	597	11.7907	3.37129			2.176	.030
18. Time orientation	Adolescents	172	7.2111	2.88484	11.414	.001 ***	1.761	.079
	Young adults	597	7.6047	2.48938			1.624	.106
19. Professional disciplines	Adolescents	172	.6683	.46370	43.437	.000 ***	3.514	.000
	Young adults	597	.8256	.53145			3.788	.000
20. Prestige motivation	Adolescents	172	1.6030	1.24689	7.543	.006 ***	-.182	.856
	Young adults	597	1.5814	1.41119			-.194	.846
21. Social significance of the pupil/student	Adolescents	172	1.0233	.87829	6.070	.014 **	.607	.544
	Young adults	597	.9715	1.01376			.657	.512
22. External negative motivation	Adolescents	172	.6744	.81566	14.822	.000 ***	2.071	.049
	Young adults	597	.5444	.69764			1.900	.059

Source: compiled by the author

Analysis of statistical data showed that out of 38 scales studied, 22 revealed significant age differences between adolescents (15-16 years old) and young adults (17-22 years old).

According to F. Fischer's criterion, 13 scales worked, of which 10 were at a 1% significance level ($p \leq 0.01$) (External negative motivation (.000); Prestige motivation (.006), Professional

disciplines (.000), Time orientation (.000), Self-esteem (.001), Synergy (.008), Cognitive needs (.006), Social support (.000), Success (.000), Professional fulfilment (.000), at the five percent level ($p \leq 0.05$) – 3 (Social significance of the student (.014), Avoidance of problems (.030), Self-acceptance (.024)); at the ten percent level ($p \leq 0.1$), the scales did not work.

According to another criterion, T. Student, 17 scales worked, of which at a one percent level of significance ($p \leq 0.01$) – 10 (Professional disciplines (.000) in adolescents and young men; Behavioural flexibility at 0.001 for adolescents and young adults, Cognitive needs (.000) in adolescents and young adults; Avoidance of problems (.000) – the same indicator across the age range; Motivation for failure (.004), the same indicator in adolescence and young adulthood; Motivation for success (.004) – the same; Self-acceptance (.000), the same; No motivation found (0.004) – the same indicator; Academic success (0.000) in both adolescents and young adults; Motivation for professional fulfilment (0.000) – the same); at the five percent level ($p \leq 0.05$) – 6 scales (Value orientations (.040) in adolescents and (.030) in young adults, respectively; Support – .040 for both age groups; Sensitivity (.017) in adolescents and (.014) in young adults; Perceptions of human nature (0.034) and (0.037) respectively, Synergy (0.045) and (0.041) respectively, Creativity (0.013) and (0.014) respectively for the specified categories); at the ten percent level ($p \leq 0.1$) – 1 scale (External negative motivation (.050) for adolescents and (.059) for young adults, respectively).

If to analyse the average values and standard deviation indicators for each of the scales in a more generalised way, the following should be noted: the scale of Professional realisation motivation, according to the results of the study, indicates that young people are motivated more stably and closer to the common level, their motivational structure is more formed and balanced. Thus, in the process of growing up (from adolescence to young adulthood), motivation for professional fulfilment becomes more stable and developed.

The results of the study on the Academic success scale describe confidence in academic achievement and increase with age. Young adults are better at navigating educational requirements and are able to realise their creative, intellectual and personal potential. On the No motivation scale, adolescents are more resistant to help, which may be a manifestation of their search for autonomy and personal freedom. Young adults are more flexible and may recognise the need for support.

The Self-criticism scale increases in adolescence, indicating crisis situations that complicate the adequate perception of one's own personality and, as a result, the further development of reflexivity, the ability to evaluate one's own actions, mistakes and responsibility in adolescence. The results on the Motivation for success scale are explained as follows: senior students lose motivation over time because they are involved in many areas of activity: intimate and personal, educational and professional, and social. Gifted young people face objective factors of reality that prevent them from fully realising their potential (war, unemployment, low wages, etc.), unlike adolescents, who, with their high ambitions, see a bright and happy future. The Failure motivation scale shows results that confirm the previous Motivation for success scale. In other words, young adults are more focused on failure due to encountering various problems and realising their potential in reality without the help of their parents.

The Avoidance of problems scale shows an unwillingness to overcome difficulties and obstacles in various areas of life. Adolescents more often demonstrate an attitude of avoiding difficulties, which may be a reaction to psychological discomfort, psychological immaturity, or adolescent crisis. Young adults are more inclined to overcome challenges, which indicates the formation of an active life position, adulthood, and independence in life. The Social support scale indicates the approval of others and the manifestation of empathetic tendencies towards loved ones and acquaintances. With regard to gifted young people, this need is more deficient in adolescence than

in youth. Therefore, peers and friends in this age group are particularly important for adolescents. The Creativity scale is the main one in the category of creatively gifted young men and women; it is the ability to solve various tasks in different ways and find a way out of difficult life situations. Thus, creativity, as a property of self-realisation potential, increases with age – thanks to the expansion of experience, awareness of one's own uniqueness and self-expression.

The Cognitive needs scale reveals the desire and aspiration to learn something new in various areas of activity and to realise one's own potential, to plan one's life. Interpretation: young people have a pronounced desire for knowledge and planning for the future, which indicates the formation of strategic thinking, professional self-determination, and adult identity. The Synergy scale is an important component of self-actualisation potential, which indicates the combination of different types of activities into a single balanced whole. Therefore, gifted young men and women can interact more successfully with others and with themselves, achieving more effective results in a collegial setting, as opposed to individual factors, which do not manifest themselves with such full force. Adolescents are prone to negative factors that affect their personality structure and lead to imbalance: lack of focus, irritability, uncontrolled aggression.

The scale of Perception of human nature describes the experience and objectivity of reality in which gifted young people find themselves. This scale is more pronounced in senior students than in high school students. The more mature gifted young people become on a personal, physical, and physiological level, the more objectively they can perceive the world, the meaning of life, human nature, the psyche in general, the laws of being, etc. The Self-esteem scale indicates a positive attitude towards oneself and others, the ability to set personal boundaries, and the ability to respect oneself. In young adulthood, unlike adolescence, the stage of growing up manifests itself at a high psychological level, because the

need for self-respect and the ability to respect oneself is at one of the highest levels on the path to professional and personal self-realisation. Adolescents are very vulnerable and, due to their lack of maturity, may not be able to adequately assess their abilities and actions, as evidenced by statistical data. The Sensitivity scale proved to be more significant in adolescents than in young adults. Adolescents are more vulnerable, sensitive, impulsive to criticism, and self-critical. All of these factors indicate an adolescent crisis and emotional and psychological immaturity, which generates a high level of anxiety. As for the category of creatively gifted individuals, this scale manifests itself quite well in young adults, indicating creative depth, empathy, and the ability to see what is invisible to others.

The Behavioural flexibility scale is based on social intelligence, the ability to find a way out of different situations, and the ability to adapt to new changes and decisions. Developing these skills requires experience and maturity, as indicated by research results for the adult category. The Support in permanent manifestation scale indicates the ability to help others, and in modern interpretations of self-actualisation tests, it is more focused on the need for social support. Therefore, it is adolescents who need this support from their loved ones and relatives the most: support in friendship, support in understanding their nature and rebellious character. And, of course, young people can provide more support to others as they reach a higher age range and self-development. The Value orientations scale describes the phenomena and needs that a person strives for and their orientation towards them. According to the results of the scale studied, students make more conscious choices about their profession and life partner, unlike adolescents, for whom parents usually decide where they should enrol. Adolescents are oriented towards friends, while young adults are oriented towards their profession. Taking into account the potential for self-realisation in the professional sphere, students are more professionally motivated than pupils.

The Time orientation scale describes the successful combination of the past, present and future in gifted young people. Young adults are better able to orient themselves in time and allocate time for their future, understanding that past actions can have consequences in the future and that negative or positive experiences are an integral part of the future. In adolescence, such skills are not yet fully developed. The Professional disciplines scale indicates the orientation towards a profession, the professional field in which gifted students are studying. The data from this scale show the reality of the situation, as students study both compulsory subjects and specialised professional disciplines of their own choice. In general education schools, professional disciplines are not always included for senior pupils – this is common in European countries, where pupils receive vocational and technical education at school.

The Prestige motivation scale is expressed in various areas of life according to the desires and preferences of gifted young people who seek recognition, respect, and higher status in a team or group. This desire for self-expression is more pronounced in adolescent children than in young men and women. And if the desire to be better at something does not work, then the adolescents try to follow the path of negative freedom and express themselves in conformity: smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and using profanity, as most adolescents do. In this regard, the author's research echoes T. Cash & T. Lin (2021) on negative personal freedom. Only a few adolescents are capable of self-expression and being unique and original in their creativity: competing for prizes in sports or creative activities, achieving high results in the development and realisation of their hobbies, which may later lead to their choice of profession. Therefore, the concept of creative potential by J. González-Cabrera *et al.* (2022) highlights the creative component and the path to its self-development as the main aspect.

The scale of Social significance of a pupil/student became clearly apparent in adolescence. For the category of both gifted adolescents and

young adults, it is important not to lose their sense of "self", but to reveal their personal potential in various spheres of life. This requires positive reinforcement and support, which is often lacking for gifted young people. Therefore, it is extremely important for psychologists, lecturers and teachers to notice even minor achievements of pupils and students so that they do not lose motivation in their activities. The External negative motivation scale is more pronounced in adolescents than in young adults, according to the research. Thus, external negative motivation can function as a motive through fear; results will be achieved, but the level of inner-personal conflict will increase, manifesting as depression, resentment, anxiety, and so on. Gifted youth, driven by this type of motivation to avoid unpleasant consequences, will engage in the corresponding activity but will derive no satisfaction from it. The more psychologically and age-mature the individual, the less susceptible they are to external negative motivation.

It has been found that indicators of motivational potential for self-realisation are formed gradually: in adolescence, they are more heterogeneous and unstable, while in young adults, a more stable and structured motivational system is observed. It has also been found that indicators of motivational potential for self-realisation develop gradually: in adolescence, they are more heterogeneous and unstable, while in young adults, a more stable and structured motivational system is observed. In particular, young adults show higher levels of professional fulfilment and academic achievement, which indicates the formation of clear guidelines in academic and professional activities. Adolescents, on the other hand, demonstrate more pronounced self-criticism, external negative motivation and a desire for prestige, which may reflect the processes of seeking autonomy and establishing personal identity. Adolescents also show a tendency towards social significance, i.e. the desire to be noticed and appreciated in a group. Other scales characterising time orientation, cognitive needs and behavioural flexibility show that young

adults are better able to plan and allocate their time and more effectively carry out educational and professional tasks, while adolescents have not yet fully mastered these skills. Standard deviation indicators show greater heterogeneity in motivational manifestations in adolescents compared to young adults.

The results obtained are consistent with current research. Thus, M. McGregor *et al.* (2025) found that high school students with high self-determination demonstrate significantly higher engagement in educational activities, which correlates with the research data on young adults. The study shows a slight increase in social orientation with age, which may reflect the specifics of the cultural environment. Research by M. Jurišević *et al.* (2024) showed that the motivational potential of gifted young people can change under the influence of external circumstances. The study data show more stable dynamics: a gradual transition from unstable and fragmented motivational orientations in adolescents to a more developed system in young adults.

In general, age differences in the motivational potential for self-realisation indicate a gradual shift from fragmented, unstable orientations in adolescents to more structured, internally determined motivations in young adults. The identified trends emphasise the importance of supporting and encouraging gifted young people at every stage of their development, and also provide a basis for formulating conclusions about the patterns of development of the motivational sphere of gifted individuals.

Conclusions

The motivational sphere is one of the key determinants of personal development and professional growth of gifted young people. As they grow up, the direction, intensity and stability of their motivation changes, which is particularly evident during the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. Gifted young men and women demonstrate a higher level of motivational potential for self-realisation compared to adolescents. They

have more pronounced motivational tendencies that contribute to the disclosure of their own potential and productive self-realisation, in particular: Motivation for professional fulfilment, Academic success, Motivation to succeed, Creativity, Cognitive needs, Synergy, Understanding of human nature, Self-respect, Behavioural flexibility, Value orientations, Time orientation, and Professional disciplines. In adolescence, gifted high school students are more vulnerable and prone to using defence mechanisms. They are not always able to adequately express themselves in order to realise their personal potential in various areas of activity. Accordingly, other motivational tendencies are more pronounced in adolescents: avoidance of problems, social support, lack of apparent motivation, self-criticism, motivation for success, motivation for prestige, social significance, external negative motivation, support, and sensitivity.

The identified age-related characteristics of motivational potential emphasise the need for a differentiated approach to supporting adolescents and young people in the development of their professional and creative abilities. Taking these characteristics into account allows for the creation of effective development programmes that promote not only academic achievement but also the formation of a stable and positive self-perception. Prospects for further research lie in studying the psychological barriers and mechanisms that limit the ability of gifted young people, especially adolescents, to realise their creative potential in activities that correspond to their own preferences rather than external expectations. It is planned to develop and test individual and group counselling programmes, as well as original projective technologies and socio-psychological training courses for personal development aimed at overcoming these barriers and supporting the full self-realisation of gifted young people.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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Вікові відмінності мотиваційного потенціалу самореалізації обдарованої молоді

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Анотація. У дослідженні проаналізовано вікові відмінності мотиваційного потенціалу самореалізації обдарованої молоді. Вибірку склали респонденти з високим рівнем обдарованості, які потребували цілеспрямованої психологічної підтримки та стимулювання навчальної мотивації, мотивації до подолання труднощів і постановки цілей. Мотиваційний потенціал розглядався як ресурс розвитку та реалізації здібностей у різних сферах життєдіяльності. Метою дослідження було емпіричне виявлення та аналіз вікових відмінностей мотиваційного потенціалу самореалізації обдарованої молоді. Для досягнення мети було застосовано п'ять психодіагностичних методик: «Ресурси» Н. Водоп'янова, «Копінг-стратегії» Д. Амірхан, «Мотивація успіху та страху перед невдачами» А. Реан, авторську анкету «Навчальна мотивація», а також «САТ» Е. Шостром. Результати емпіричного дослідження подано у вигляді таблиці із зазначенням вікових відмінностей за критеріями Ф. Фішера та Т. Стьюдента, середніх значень і стандартних відхилень, а також з інтерпретацією отриманих показників. Встановлено, що у юнаків і дівчат старшого шкільного віку рівень мотиваційного потенціалу самореалізації є вищим, ніж у підлітків. Для старшої групи більш характерні такі мотиваційні тенденції, як уявлення про природу людини, самоповага, гнучкість поведінки, ціннісні орієнтації, часова орієнтація, орієнтація на професійну реалізацію, успішність у навчанні, мотивація на уникнення невдач, креативність, пізнавальні потреби та синергія. У підлітковому віці домінують інші мотиваційні орієнтації: мотивація престижу, соціальна значущість, зовнішня негативна мотивація, потреба у підтримці, сензитивність, уникнення проблем, соціальна підтримка, відсутність чіткої мотивації, самокритичність і мотивація досягнення успіху. Практичне значення отриманих результатів полягає у визначенні вікових психологічних бар'єрів та перешкод, що впливають на самореалізацію обдарованих, а також у можливості використання даних для розробки програм консультативно-терапевтичної та тренінгової роботи

Ключові слова: віковий діапазон; диференціація; середнє значення; стандартне відхилення; критерій Ф. Фішера та Т. Стьюдента



Reformation of psychological assessment for firearm eligibility: Issues of diagnostics and evaluation in Austria's gun law

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Abstract. The psychological assessment of firearm applicants is crucial for public safety, yet the scientific validity of the methods mandated by law in Austria and other European nations remains inadequate. The study emphasised the need to redefine approaches to the psychological assessment of individuals applying for firearm ownership toward greater scientific validity and interdisciplinary coherence. The study aimed to critically evaluate the diagnostic and evaluation foundations of the assessment framework enacted by the Austrian Weapons Act, highlighting scientific and legal deficiencies. The evaluation was conducted through a critical analysis of the legal regulations, a formal-logical deconstruction of the mandated test combinations, and a systematic review of the psychometric properties and forensic suitability of each prescribed evaluation instrument. The problematic legal framework, which mandated outdated and scientifically unsubstantiated test series, was analysed. The logical inconsistencies and false equivalences created by the legally permissible combinations of different psychological tests were described. The study stated that the individual instruments are unsuitable for forensic assessment due to outdated norms, a lack of predictive validity for firearm-related risk behaviour, and susceptibility to response distortion. The study further detailed how the reliance on static, actuarial assessment methods contradict modern, evidence-based standards in

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forensic psychology. The results of this research can be used by legislators, legal experts, and clinical psychologists to reform the existing assessment procedures, thereby enhancing the scientific accuracy and legal defensibility of firearms licensing processes

Keywords: firearms licensing; forensic evaluation; psychometric deficiencies; forensic psychology; diagnostic validity

Introduction

Clinical psychology is no longer a subordinate auxiliary discipline but a substantive contributor to domains requiring high-stakes decision-making, especially where individual risk profiles intersect with legal and public safety concerns. One such critical area is the psychological assessment mandated by the Austrian Weapons Act (Waffengesetz, WaffG) (RIS, n.d.-b) for any individual applying for a weapon ownership license. This evaluation aims to establish an applicant's "reliability" (Verlässlichkeit), ensuring low probability of reckless firearm handling, particularly under psychological stress.

However, the scientific and legal foundation of this process is fraught with profound deficiencies that undermine the intended purpose (RIS, n.d.-b). The significance of robust licensing procedures is underscored by public health research. Such studies as K. Kennedy *et al.* (2025) and S. Oliphant *et al.* (2025), from the United States, for instance, consistently demonstrate a significant association between the benefits of firearm purchaser licensing laws and reductions in firearm-related deaths, including those among young people and in the context of intimate partner violence. While the legal frameworks differ, these findings highlight the high stakes involved in worldwide firearms legislation. Therefore, the psychological assessments at the core of such laws should be scientifically valid, reliable, and legally defensible – a standard the Austrian system, as this article demonstrated, fails to meet. The diagnostic framework imposed by law is rooted in outdated practices and relies on assessment tools that are inconsistent, psychometrically weak, and ill-suited for the complex task of prognostic evaluation.

The core of the problem lies in the legal requirement for psychologists to use a fixed, or "taxative", list of tests, a practice that directly contradicts the principle of scientific progress and professional autonomy. In a comprehensive critique, A. Kampusch (2022) argued that the term "reliability" in the 1996 firearms act is insufficiently defined, rendering it scientifically impossible to operationalise and verify. Following the study results, this ambiguity creates systematic distortions in the significance of any test used. The author further identified major flaws in the mandated procedures, including the use of outdated validation instruments, redundancies between test subscales, and the fact that only three of the fifteen listed tests include validity scales to detect response distortion. Compounding this issue, a study by M. Ertl *et al.* (2021) empirically demonstrated that most test subjects were able to identify and manipulate these few validity scales, therefore inefficient at cheating prevention.

The Austrian assessment model is further compromised by its adherence to a static, actuarial paradigm, a methodology that has been largely superseded in modern forensic psychology. International best practice has shifted decisively toward dynamic, context-sensitive risk assessment, often referred to as structured professional judgment (SPJ). For instance, seminal work by D. Brookstein *et al.* (2020) on the HCR-20^{v3} have established the superior predictive validity of models that integrate historical, clinical, and future-oriented dynamic risk factors. In their comprehensive international handbook, K. Douglas & R. Otto (2021) confirmed that contemporary risk assessment

acknowledges the limitations of static instruments, emphasising that individual behaviour cannot be captured solely through cross-sectional test results. This perspective is reinforced by T. Albright & N. Scurich (2024), highlighting in the study on psychopathy and legal decision-making the necessity of using multi-faceted assessment tools that can account for complex personality dynamics, a feature absent in the rigid Austrian framework. This undermines large-scale meta-analyses that have shown that structured instruments significantly outperform static or unstructured evaluation in predictive accuracy. Furthermore, the European psychiatric association has explicitly underpinned the value of an evidence-based, dynamic and context-sensitive approach as the professional standard (Völm *et al.*, 2018).

This legislative and scientific inertia is not unique to Austria but reflects a broader European challenge. Modern studies show that similar issues persist across the continent. In Germany, for example, the legal guidelines for psychological examinations remain vague, leading to significant inconsistencies in evaluation practices between different jurisdictions (Hoppe *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, in Italy, the lack of a nationally binding assessment protocol results in significant disparities (“heterogeneous solutions”) in the quality and methodology of assessments between regions, determining the scientific need for greater uniformity (Blandino *et al.*, 2024). In Poland, critical analyses of the legal framework highlight significant discrepancy between legal definitions and forensic science, confirming a lack of standardised quality control for the required psychological examinations. These international examples underscore the urgent need for a paradigm shift towards an evidence-based, scientifically robust approach. The continued use of outdated, static models not only fails to meet modern professional standards but also creates a significant legal paradox, holding experts liable for reports based on scientifically indefensible methods.

The study aimed to critically analyse the diagnostic and test-theoretical foundations of the

psychological assessments for firearm reliability legally prescribed in Austria. By deconstructing the mandated test batteries and their underlying assumptions, significant scientific and legal inconsistencies were revealed. The analysis first examined the problematic legal framework, then demonstrated the logical fallacies of the prescribed test combinations through a formal analysis and concluded with a detailed critique of the suitability of each individual test instrument, based on the official test manuals and provider documentation (Testzentrale, n.d.; Schuhfried, n.d.; Pearson, n.d.). Lastly, the far-reaching implications of using outdated, static assessment models were discussed, and a paradigm shift toward a modern, evidence-based approach was proposed.

Issues of the firearms law implementation and the test procedures prescribed therein

Section 3 paragraph 2 of the first firearms act implementation (1. WaffV) regulates which test procedures are to be used during the assessment for determining reliability (RIS, n.d.-a). To ensure meaningful assessments at a scientifically recognised level, so-called “established test procedures” were already selected in 1997 and listed (taxativ) in the 1. WaffV in coordination with various “experts”. With the further amendment of the 1. WaffV in 2012, the Federal Minister of the Interior expanded the existing selection with various test combinations that were considered qualitatively and “scientifically equivalent”. Following the requirement of 8 paragraph 7 WaffG, the procedures were listed “taxatively” (i.e., fully, exhaustively) (cf. 3 paragraph 2a 1. WaffV). However, since that time, no further development of diagnostics or verification was amended to cover modern scientific research and expertise. Studies on the issue in the context of Austria are insufficient.

In this context, it is worth noting from a scientific-professional perspective that the term “taxative” mentioned in the legal text cannot be valid, as knowledge is never complete and a

normative determination may perpetuate an “error or only preliminary finding”, which contradicts practical developments. Accordingly, diagnostic recommendations can never be “taxative”, especially when they are outdated and partly obsolete from a professional standpoint. In this context, the ongoing turn away from actuarial, static, and statistical diagnostic instruments, where the field has progressed to the fifth developmental stage of prognostic and idiographic assessments, should be referenced.

D. Gerhold & C. Obermaier (2013) stated that, similar to the previously familiar approach, experts were still “free” to use the base scales of the Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory 2 (MMPI-2 base scales) in combination with the stress coping questionnaire (Stressverarbeitungsfragebogen, S-V-F) or the reliability-oriented personality test – version 3 (Verlässlichkeitsbezogener Persönlichkeitstest, VPT-3), alongside risk propensity factors questionnaire (Fragebogen für Risikobereitschaftsfaktoren, F-R-F). These two test series largely correspond to those already familiar and well-established. The legal text was updated to list the then-prevailing versions of the procedures. D. Gerhold & C. Obermaier (2013) list about 20 combinations of assessment instruments that would theoretically be possible under the law.

According to the amendment of the 1st weapons act implementation ordinance (1. Waffengesetz-Durchführungsverordnung, 1. WaffV) in 2012, several new combinations of test instruments were introduced as alternatives to the previously used combination of the MMPI-2 base scales with the stress processing questionnaire (Stressverarbeitungsfragebogen, S-V-F) (RIS, n.d.-a). These new regulations stipulated that the Eppendorf schizophrenia scale (Eppendorfer Schizophrenie-Inventar, ESI) must be employed. This was to be combined with the short questionnaire for aggression factors (Kurzfragebogen zur Erfassung von Aggressivitätsfaktoren, K-FAF) and the locus of control questionnaire (Fragebogen zu Kontrollüberzeugungen, IPC). Additionally, one

of several stress assessment tools was required, providing the choice between the S-V-F, the coping inventory for stressful situations (CISS), or the differential stress inventory HR (Differentielles Stressinventar HR, DSIHR).

To complete the assessment, examiners were to choose one of four distinct pathways. The first option was to add the personality style and disorder inventory (Persönlichkeits-Stil- und Störungs-Inventar, PSSI). A second alternative was to use the inventory of clinical personality accentuations (Inventar Klinischer Persönlichkeitsakzentuierungen, IKP) instead of the PSSI. The third pathway involved adding the NEO five-factor inventory (NEO-Fünf-Faktoren-Inventar, NEO-FFI) along with a depression screening tool, which could be either the general depression scale (Allgemeine Depressionsskala, ADS) or the beck depression inventory revision (BDI-II). The fourth and final option was to use the big five plus one personality inventory (Big Five Plus One Persönlichkeitsinventar, B5PO), also supplemented by either the ADS or the BDI-II. At the time, the Federal Minister of the Interior, according to D. Gerhold & C. Obermaier (2013), wanted to state using the term “or” that the test procedures named could be combined as an alternative. Thus, experts “would have” the possibility to choose from the above-mentioned combinations and prescribe them. This would also significantly hinder the occurrence of a “learning effect” in candidates when undergoing repeated weapons-psychological evaluations.

A. Kampusch (2022) shows in a study that the direct influence of the 1st weapons act implementing ordinance (1. WaffV) on the selection options of clinical-psychological test procedures applied in phase 1 evaluations in Austria creates systematic errors. The study criticised the fact that the term “reliability” in the 1996 firearms act (WaffG) is insufficiently defined and thus cannot be scientifically operationalised and verified. This circumstance causes systematic distortions in the test results. Simulation of desirable traits as well as dissimulation of undesirable traits also occur

among applicants. The combination of the test instruments leads to redundancies between the various subscales, the test instruments are partially outdated and/or have deficiencies in the normative samples. Moreover, A. Kampusch (2022) criticised that only three of the 15 listed test procedures have validity scales to identify tendencies toward response distortion.

Additionally, the study by M. Ertl *et al.* (2021) demonstrated that most test subjects were able to manipulate the validity scales, therefore they are insufficiently suitable for identification of response distortion. The listed procedures are already internally inconsistent, from both an expert and professional-scientific point of view, and contradictory in their specific constructs, original goals, areas of application, and psychometric properties – so that the presumed “prognostic and content equivalence”, especially among all these possible combinations, is not present. Moreover, the combinatory permutation itself is flawed, difficult to comprehend, and has never been tested regarding its predictive validity for lawful behaviour.

The problematic pseudo-validity of the construct “reliability” in the firearms act implementation

The Austrian legislation assumes that the test instruments explicitly listed in the implementation ordinance can be combined interchangeably and are all equally suitable for assessing the construct of “reliability” as required in paragraph 8 of the firearms act (WaffG). For analytical clarity, the construct “reliability” (regardless of what it may represent in psychological reality) will hereafter be abbreviated as V. According to the legal text, the construct of Reliability (V) may be inferred through various specific combinations of diagnostic instruments. At least formally, this results in a series of supposed equivalences, where V is assessed by the following combinations:

Combination 1:

➤ Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory-2 (MMPI-2)

➤ Stress coping questionnaire (SVF)

Combination 2:

➤ Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory-2 (MMPI-2)

➤ Risk propensity questionnaire (FRF)

➤ Reliability-oriented personality test (VPT-3)

Combination 3:

➤ Eppendorf schizophrenia inventory (ESI)

➤ Short questionnaire for aggression factors (K-FAF)

➤ Locus of control questionnaire (IPC)

➤ Stress coping questionnaire (SVF)

➤ Personality style and disorder inventory (PSSI)

Combination 4:

➤ Eppendorf schizophrenia inventory (ESI)

➤ Short questionnaire for aggression factors (K-FAF)

➤ Locus of control questionnaire (IPC)

➤ Coping inventory for stressful situations (CISS)

➤ Personality style and disorder inventory (PSSI)

Combination 5:

➤ Eppendorf schizophrenia inventory (ESI)

➤ Short questionnaire for aggression factors (K-FAF)

➤ Locus of control questionnaire (IPC)

➤ Differential stress inventory HR (DSIHR)

➤ Personality style and disorder inventory (PSSI)

Combination 6:

➤ Eppendorf schizophrenia inventory (ESI)

➤ Short questionnaire for aggression factors (K-FAF)

➤ Locus of control questionnaire (IPC)

➤ Stress coping questionnaire (SVF)

➤ Inventory of clinical personality accentuations (IKP)

Combination 7:

➤ Eppendorf schizophrenia inventory (ESI)

➤ Short questionnaire for aggression factors (K-FAF)

➤ Locus of control questionnaire (IPC)

➤ Coping inventory for stressful situations (CISS)

➤ Inventory of clinical personality accentuations (IKP)

Combination 8:

➤ Eppendorf schizophrenia inventory (ESI)

- Short questionnaire for aggression factors (K-FAF)
 - Locus of control questionnaire (IPC)
 - Differential stress inventory HR (DSIHR)
 - Inventory of clinical personality accentuations (IKP)
- ...etc.

It is possible to deduce a set of logically inconsistent identities from these combinations through basic algebraic transformation. For example: the MMPI-2 is treated as equivalent to the combined use of the ESI, the K-FAF, the IPC, and the PSSI. Furthermore, the stress coping questionnaire (SVF) is interchangeable with the combination of the risk propensity questionnaire (FRF) and the reliability-oriented personality test (VPT-3). The SVF is also treated as equivalent to both the CISS and the DSIHR. Similarly, the PSSI is considered diagnostically interchangeable with the inventory of IKP.

From these legally implied equivalences, it is possible to incorrectly deduce several scientifically indefensible conclusions: this implies that three psychometrically distinct instruments – the SVF, the DSIHR, and CISS – are functionally identical. The regulation also assumes that the comprehensive Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory-2 (MMPI-2) is equivalent to the sum of four other tests (ESI, K-FAF, IPC, and PSSI), and that the inventory of IKP and the PSSI are interchangeable. Furthermore, it is suggested that the SVF can be directly substituted by combining the FRF with the reliability-oriented personality test (VPT-3). Consequently, this combination of the FRF and VPT-3 is also considered equivalent to both the DSIHR and the CISS.

These formulaic derivations arithmetically suggest that different diagnostic instruments are functionally equivalent in their capacity to assess V, which contradicts not only basic psychometric principles but also the theoretical and clinical foundations of the instruments involved. Moreover, such equivalences were never intended by the original test developers and defy construct validity and contextual fit. For instance, it is methodolog-

ically and diagnostically indefensible to assume that the MMPI-2 is functionally equivalent to the sum of ESI, K-FAF, IPC, and PSSI. These instruments differ fundamentally in their diagnostic focus, empirical foundation, and psychometric properties.

The inconsistencies become even more pronounced considering the full range of theoretically permissible combinations – of which over 20 exist under the regulation. Each new equation yields further contradictions that render the diagnostic logic arbitrary and incoherent. From a formal-logic standpoint, these identities are invalid: from a false premise, no valid conclusion can follow. These theoretical concerns have been empirically substantiated. A. Kampusch (2022) evaluated 100 tests collected from firearms psychological assessments between 2015 and 2021, which included combinations such as SVF-120, ESI, K-FAF, IKP, and IPC. The findings were unequivocal: all such combinations exhibited significant tendencies toward response distortion and systematic redundancy. All tested inventories demonstrated high intercorrelations among subscales, implying substantial overlap in content and construct representation. This redundancy causes statistical inflation and undermines the validity and reliability of any conclusions regarding V (Doyle & Dolan, 2002). Especially concerning is that many of the instruments are outdated or were never intended for forensic or prognostic application.

Furthermore, the observation by A. Kampusch (2022) that only 3 out of the 15 mandated instruments include validity or manipulation-check scales (e.g., lie scales) further weakens the framework. These concerns are compounded by the findings of M. Ertl *et al.* (2021), demonstrating that most test-takers were able to recognise and strategically circumvent such scales, further reducing their utility in detection of simulation or dissimulation. In sum, the regulatory assumption that heterogeneous instruments can be freely combined while still maintaining content and prognostic equivalence is deeply flawed. The result is a system in which logically contradictory test combinations are mandated yet treated as

diagnostically and legally interchangeable. No professional or empirical justification for this approach can be found in the international literature. The regulatory framework thereby constitutes a diagnostic and legislative paradox that undermines the scientific credibility of firearms psychological assessments in Austria.

Critical review of the proposed test instruments from a diagnostic and test-theoretical perspective

For the sake of clarity and academic rigor, the test instruments listed in the Austrian firearms act implementation (1. WaffV, paragraph 3) are presented and systematically examined for their diagnostic validity, test-theoretical robustness, and forensic applicability (RIS, n.d.-a). The scientific suitability of the instruments for assessment of legal construct of “reliability” (Verlässlichkeit), as stipulated by the Austrian firearms law, was emphasised (Table 1, Fig. 1). The ADS represents a German-language screening tool adapted from the centre for epidemiological studies depression

scale (CES-D) (Giacomuzzi & Ertl, 2024). While its utility in public health screening is acknowledged, its methodological limitations, such as limited normative samples and insufficient psychometric standardisation, render it unsuitable for forensic purposes. The absence of predictive validation concerning firearm risk further questions its applicability. The BDI-II is widely utilised in clinical settings to assess the severity of depressive symptoms. However, critiques noted outdated normative data and problematic German translations (Margraf & Schneider, 2018). No empirical studies support its predictive value for firearm-related risk behaviours, nor is it constructed to assess stress tolerance or impulse control – key components in determining legal reliability (Heilbrun et al., 2014). The B5PO operationalises broad personality traits but lacks fine-grained clinical sensitivity. Although based on the five-factor model, its abbreviated item structure limits its discriminant capacity (John et al., 2008). Its utility for high-stakes legal evaluations is therefore limited, as it was never normed for forensic populations.

Table 1. Available test instruments by scales and item count

Test name	Scales	Items	Provider
MMPI-2 – Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory®-2, basic scales	13	370	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)
ESI – Eppendorfer schizophrenia inventory	4	40	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)
K-FAF – short questionnaire on aggressiveness factors	5	49	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)
IPC – questionnaire on locus of control	3	24	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)
S-V-F – stress coping questionnaire	19	114	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)
CISS – coping inventory for stressful situations	3	48	Pearsonclinical (UK)
DSIHR – differential stress inventory	13	121	Schuhfried GmbH
PSSI – personality style and disorder inventory	14	140	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)
IKP – inventory of clinical personality accentuations	11	110	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)
NEO-FFI – NEO five-factor inventory	5	60	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)
B5PO – big five plus one personality inventory	6	66	Schuhfried GmbH
ADS – general depression scale	1	20	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)
BDI-II – beck depression inventory revision	1	21	Testzentrale (Hogrefe) / Schuhfried GmbH
VPT.3 – reliability-oriented personality test	6	70	Schuhfried GmbH
FRF – risk propensity questionnaire	3	49	Schuhfried GmbH
FPI-R – Freiburg personality inventory	12	138	Testzentrale (Hogrefe)

Source: compiled based on the official test catalogues and manuals of the listed providers, including Testzentrale (n.d.), Schuhfried (n.d.), Pearson (n.d.)

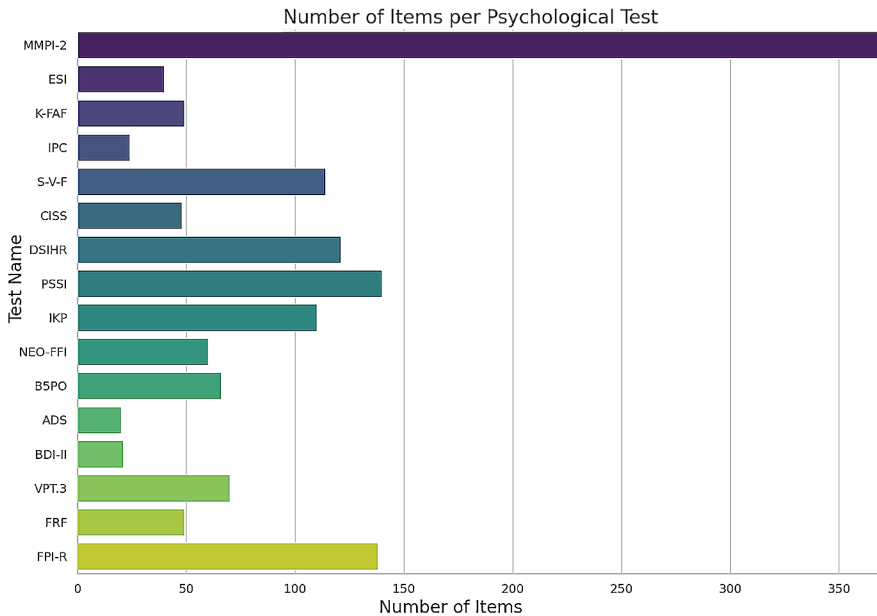


Figure 1. Number of items per psychological test

Note: MMPI-2: Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory-2; ESI: Eppendorf schizophrenia inventory; K-FAF: short questionnaire on aggressiveness factors; IPC: questionnaire on locus of control; S-V-F: stress coping questionnaire; CISS: coping inventory for stressful situations; DSIHR: differential stress inventory; PSSI: personality style and disorder inventory; IKP: inventory of clinical personality accentuations; NEO-FFI: NEO five-factor inventory; B5PO: big five plus one personality inventory; ADS: general depression scale; BDI-II: beck depression inventory revision; VPT.3: reliability-oriented personality test; FRF: risk propensity questionnaire; FPI-R: Freiburg personality inventory
Source: compiled by the authors based on data in Table 1

The CISS measures habitual coping styles across three dimensions: task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidance-oriented coping. Although it demonstrates solid psychometric qualities in general populations, its relevance to forensic risk assessments remains tenuous (Ender & Parker, 1990; Andrade, 2009). Coping behaviour in experimental conditions may not translate to real-world firearm safety scenarios. O. Kohut (2020) noted that the Differential Stress Inventory (DSI) evaluates stress responses but lacks transparency regarding its theoretical underpinnings and discriminant validity. Empirical support remains limited, and the distinction between DSI and DSI-HR is not sufficiently clarified (Schuhfried, n.d.). The construct's tangential connection to firearm misuse or recklessness undermines its inclusion in reliability diagnostics. The ESI has

demonstrated utility in screening for schizophrenia-spectrum disorders. Nevertheless, the presence of a mental disorder such as schizophrenia is neither necessary nor sufficient for establishing ineligibility in legal contexts. Notably, many individuals with psychotic disorders demonstrate stable behaviour under treatment (APA, 2022).

In a study by M. Ertl *et al.* (2021), 60% of subjects successfully manipulated the Freiburg personality inventory – revised (FPI-R) social desirability scales. Earlier studies had already identified its vulnerabilities to response bias. Without effective validity scales, the instrument is not capable of reliably detecting dissimulation or simulation of real-world behaviour. The FPI-R should therefore not be used in isolation for legal assessments of firearms eligibility. The FRF measures physical, social, and financial risk-taking. However, its

limited external validity in predicting real-life risk behaviour, especially in forensic settings, renders its use highly questionable. No studies link FRF scores with impulsive aggression or firearm misuse. The IKP offers structured assessment of personality disorders and accentuations. Although methodologically rich, its forensic applicability is limited by the absence of operational thresholds for determining reliability. Furthermore, empirical links between specific personality disorder profiles and firearm misuse are scarce (Paris, 2003).

The IPC differentiates between internal and external control beliefs. However, substantial concerns regarding its factorial structure, outdated normative data, and interpretability remain. Its role in predicting behaviour under duress is speculative at best. Forensic practice demands updated tools with validated control indices (Roesch & Cook, 2017; Ortega-Escobar *et al.*, 2017). The K-FAF aims to detect trait aggression. While normed, it still lacks comprehensive validation studies regarding falsification and forensic utility. No studies confirm that aggression scores are predictive of unsafe firearm use (Hutten *et al.*, 2024). Despite extensive clinical use, the MMPI-2 is limited in forensic validation in its German version. Several subscales lack adequate reliability and predictive validity. The MMPI-2-RF, a more modern revision, offers improved psychometric properties but is not yet standard in Austrian forensic psychology (Ben-Porath, 2023). This gap between the mandated procedures and current scientific standards is further highlighted by research based on the even more modern MMPI-3 for firearm injury prevention studies (Bandel *et al.*, 2025). No version has been validated for predicting legal reliability.

The NEO-FFI captures key personality dimensions. Although its theoretical foundation is substantial, the German version lacks necessary psychometric metrics for forensic use (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Furthermore, it offers insufficient insight into impulsivity, aggression, or disinhibition – core traits in firearm-related risk. The PSSI, rooted in PSI-theory, offers a phenomenological

model of personality disorders. Its small sample sizes and low validity coefficients limit its forensic relevance. As no studies correlate PSSI dimensions with legal constructs of reliability, its inclusion in firearm assessments is questionable. The SVF differentiates coping strategies but demonstrates limited validity in predicting behaviour under stress. Studies indicate strong situational modification of coping patterns (Trempa *et al.*, 2002). The predictive power of the SVF-120 is too weak for use in legal risk prognoses. Reliability-based personality test – version 3 (VPT.3). The VPT.3 is insufficiently documented, with no independent validation studies (Schuhfried, n.d.). It lacks transparency in scoring, theoretical grounding, and test fairness. As of 2024, the test is not indexed in international psychological databases nor referenced in any peer-reviewed forensic journals.

The diagnostic heterogeneity of the test battery specified in the 1. WaffV, along with its lack of conceptual alignment with the legal construct of “reliability”, renders its forensic use methodologically unsound (RIS, n.d.-a). Many instruments are outdated, poorly normed, or lack any predictive value for firearm misuse or risk behaviour. More fundamentally, no empirical study exists to justify the arbitrary combination of such diverse tests into a coherent diagnostic battery. From a scientific perspective, the substitution or permutation of these instruments, some with 370 items, others with less than 50, cannot yield consistent or valid results. The continued reliance on these outdated methods contradicts best practices in forensic psychology and raises serious concerns regarding the legal and ethical robustness of the firearms licensing process in Austria.

On the problematic use of purely statistical and static assessment instruments

The goal of a reliability prognosis is to predict the psychological stability of individuals regarding potential future behaviour – essentially in assessment of the probability of hidden adverse events.

Even the most performant prognostic models lose validity in two years. Furthermore, internationally recognised diagnostic systems such as the ICD-10/ICD-11 or DSM-5-TR were never designed to generate prognostic predictions regarding “reliability” and cannot validly represent this construct (APA, 2022; WHO, n.d.).

In addition to the already mentioned problematic permutations, it is necessary to critically assess the psychometric quality of the instruments used. Of all the instruments listed in the Austrian ordinance, only three include validity scales (e.g., lie scales or openness indices) intended to detect socially desirable responding – MMPI-2, FPI-R, and ESI. However, these scales are controversial due to limited reliability in detecting cheating (Ben-Porath, 2023).

For instruments that lack such validity indices, the probability of response bias increases significantly, especially as many of them are easily interpretable by test-savvy individuals. Further analysis of the issue demonstrates the several tests are below an ROC (receiver operating characteristic) curve threshold of 0.7 – indicating insufficient discriminative accuracy. The ROC curve plots true positive rate (sensitivity) against false positive rate (1 – specificity), and an AUC (area under the curve) below 0.7 suggests limited predictive utility (Swets, 1988; Ellerbrock, 2010; Youngstrom, 2014). Modern studies highlighted these limitations: F. van Leeuwen *et al.* (2025) underpinned that AUC values of prognostic model change significantly across external validation studies. This implies that large uncertainty when applying an instrument to a new context. Furthermore, R. Denz *et al.* (2023) highlighted that AUC is often misused as an all-purpose performance metric in risk assessments.

A. Kampusch (2022) highlighted that the test procedures mandated by the 1. WaffV are not only partially redundant at the subscale level but also outdated, no longer commercially available in some cases, and based on obsolete or insufficiently documented normative samples. These limitations fundamentally undermine the fairness and validity of any comparative

conclusions drawn from such data. Modern forensic risk assessment uses AUC values derived from ROC analyses to establish the predictive validity of instruments. State-of-the-art tools such as the HCR-20^{v3} or the FoVOx rely on a combination of historical, clinical, and future-oriented dynamic risk factors – reflecting a shift toward structured professional judgment and evidence-based idiographic evaluation (Douglas *et al.*, 2014).

Statistical or static diagnostic instruments, such as those often cited in the Austrian context, are therefore further defined as obsolete. Contemporary risk prediction acknowledges that individual trajectories cannot be captured solely through historical data or cross-sectional test results. Instead, dynamic interactional models – considering context, psychosocial variability, and clinical judgment – have proven more accurate (Ogloff, 2003; Koh & Kim, 2023). Moreover, some case constellations simply defy conventional diagnostic categorisation. For these, specialised instruments such as FOTRES or FoVOx are recommended, though their application requires structured training and calibration (Fazel *et al.*, 2012; Goncalves *et al.*, 2017). Unfortunately, such sophisticated, dynamic approaches remain absent from Austrian firearms reliability assessments, which still rely on standardised self-report tests with fixed answer categories. None of the instruments in use possess scientifically verified predictive validity for the complex construct of behavioural reliability under stress, social provocation, or legal scrutiny.

In summary, the continued reliance on outdated, largely static, and insufficiently validated instruments – absent a theoretical foundation linking them to the legal construct of “reliability” – undermines the credibility of the assessment framework. To ensure legal robustness and scientific rigor, a paradigm shift toward idiographic, evidence-based, and dynamically grounded diagnostics is urgently needed. This necessity mirrors a broader, international demand for greater scientific accountability in all forensic disciplines, including a call for more transparency, open data,

and rigorous validation of methods, often summarised under the principle of “open science” (Albright & Scurich, 2024). Adopting these principles is fundamental to establishing the scientific and legal integrity of future reliability assessments.

Legal issues and conclusion of observations

The foregoing analysis demonstrated that the assessment procedures mandated under the Austrian firearms act (WaffG) for evaluation of “reliability” is not scientific or robust (RIS, n.d.-b). The entire framework is based on a foundation of outdated science, logical fallacies, and legislative inertia, creating a significant legal and professional paradox for the experts tasked with its implementation. The central issue is the legal obligation for experts to use a fixed, “taxative” list of diagnostic instruments that are, as demonstrated, scientifically indefensible. The construct of “reliability” that these tests are meant to assess remains insufficiently defined within the law, rendering it impossible to operationalise and validate in a scientifically rigorous way. This fundamental ambiguity means that any subsequent assessment, regardless of the instruments used, rests on a legally precarious foundation. A judgment of “unreliability” derived from such an undefined premise is highly vulnerable to legal challenge, as it lacks objective, verifiable criteria. Experts are therefore required to produce legally binding judgments on a construct that has no clear scientific basis, using tools that are ill-suited for the task. This stands in evident contrast to modern forensic practice, which demands that legal constructs have clear, empirical referents to be assessed validly (Ortega-Escobar *et al.*, 2017).

This creates a direct and irreconcilable conflict with their professional and ethical obligations. According to paragraph 22. 1 of the psychologists’ act, experts are guaranteed “freedom in professional practice”, which includes autonomy over the choice of diagnostic instruments. Furthermore, they are legally bound by professional standards to align their practice with the current state of psychological science. However, the state

of the science has moved decisively away from the static, actuarial instruments listed in the ordinance. International best practice is centred on dynamic, evidence-based models of SPJ, such as the HCR-20^{v3}, which integrate historical, clinical, and dynamic future-oriented risk factors and have far superior predictive validity (Douglas *et al.*, 2014; Pirelli *et al.*, 2015). The exclusive reliance on outdated, item-based self-report instruments no longer reflects scientific standards and fundamentally contradicts the principles of evidence-based practice in forensic psychology.

The legal framework forces a system where psychometrically distinct instruments are treated as functionally interchangeable, leading to logically contradictory and arbitrary assessment batteries. Yet experts remain personally liable for their reports. They are caught in an untenable position: adhere to a flawed law and violate their professional duties, or adhere to professional standards and violate the letter of the weapons act. This flawed process not only exposes experts to significant liability, including potential civil lawsuits from applicants or sanctions from professional bodies, but it also raises serious questions about due process for applicants. Their fundamental eligibility for a firearms license is decided by scientifically indefensible methods, which is therefore impossible to appeal a negative decision on objective, evidence-based grounds (Heilbrun *et al.*, 2014). The contradiction in the law is further highlighted by the fact that in phase 2 assessments, experts are granted full discretion in their choice of tools, an inconsistency that undermines the entire regulatory logic. This legislative and scientific inertia is not an isolated Austrian anomaly but reflects a broader European challenge.

The Austrian case in an international context

The problems delineated throughout this article, ranging from outdated diagnostic instruments and a reliance on static-actuarial methods to the logically inconsistent combination of tests, are

not exclusive to Austria. While the Austrian case is particularly notable for its rigid, legally mandated list of flawed test combinations, the underlying issues of legislative inertia and a failure to align legal requirements with modern scientific standards are echoed across the continent. A comparative analysis of practices in other European nations reveals a widespread and troubling inconsistency in how psychological fitness for firearm ownership is assessed, highlighting the urgent need for a paradigm shift toward an evidence-based, scientifically robust approach.

Several countries, such as Germany and Italy, provide a substantial contrast to Austria's rigid framework. In Germany, a psychological examination may be required under paragraph 6 of the *Waffengesetz* (WaffG), but the legal guidelines remain vague, leaving the selection of instruments to the examiner's discretion. While this lack of a binding federal standard creates significant inconsistencies in evaluation practices, it avoids the specific legal and ethical paradox found in Austria. German experts are not legally compelled to use a fixed list of scientifically indefensible tools; the Austrian expert, however, is bound by a "taxative" list that mandates outdated procedures and creates a direct conflict with their professional duty to use state-of-the-art methods.

A similar situation is present in Italy, where assessments are handled regionally without a nationally binding protocol, leading to significant disparities in quality and methodology. Although some Italian experts use instruments, such as the MMPI-2, they are not forced to treat it as diagnostically equivalent to a collection of other, completely different tests – a core logical fallacy of the Austrian system. An Italian expert could, in theory, apply a modern, evidence-based approach like SPJ, whereas the Austrian expert is legally barred from doing so in the critical phase 1 assessment. The problem in these countries is a lack of standardisation, leading to inconsistent quality; Austria's problem is the standardisation of scientifically flawed practices. Other nations, such as the UK and Nordic countries, have even less formal-

ised systems. In England and Wales, psychological assessment is not a routine requirement and is typically only initiated if "good reason" suggests a potential issue, with the evaluation of "fitness" often left to general practitioners and police forces.

Similarly, in Sweden and Norway, psychological assessment is rarely formalised and tends to be reactive rather than proactive. A study by S. Henriksen & B. Kruke (2020) confirmed that these assessments vary widely and lack structured prognostic models. While this approach forgoes the potential benefit of systematic screening, it also avoids the systemic harm of mandating a scientifically invalid process for every applicant. The issue in these jurisdictions can be seen as a potential under-utilisation of psychological expertise, which starkly contrasts with Austria's legally enforced misapplication of it.

The challenges of Poland highlight shared methodological deficiencies. In Poland, psychological assessments are mandated, but analyses show insufficient quality control regarding the validity, predictive utility, or critically – the manipulation resistance of the tests being used. This directly mirrors the Austrian dilemma, where only three of the fifteen mandated instruments even include validity scales to detect response distortion, and those have been empirically shown to be largely ineffective. The reliance on tests that cannot reliably detect faking is a profound forensic shortcoming shared by both systems.

These international cases reveal a clear and global inconsistency in the psychological assessment of firearm applicants. The widespread reliance on static self-report tools, outdated diagnostic logic, and the absence of standardised, empirically validated methods reflects a profound forensic shortcoming across Europe. This comparative analysis strengthens the conclusion that the Austrian model is not just flawed but represents a rigid and paradoxical failure of regulation. The urgent need for a paradigm shift towards scientifically sound, evidence-based standards is not just an Austrian issue, but an international imperative for ensuring public safety.

Conclusions

The analysis of the psychological assessment of firearm reliability in Austria, presented in the study, causes several critical conclusions. First, the legal framework established by the 1st weapons act implementation ordinance is scientifically untenable. The “taxative” or exhaustive list of procedures effectively freezes the assessment process in time, ignoring decades of scientific progress. It compels experts to use test procedures that are outdated, questionable from a test-theoretical standpoint, and unsuitable for the prognostic assessment of the construct “reliability – a term the law fails to adequately define, rendering any scientific operationalisation impossible from the outset. Second, the assumption that the various prescribed test combinations are diagnostically equivalent and interchangeable is a logical fallacy. As has been shown, this leads to formally and logically inconsistent equations of psychometrically distinct instruments, such as treating the comprehensive MMPI-2 as equal to a combination of four entirely different tests. This arbitrary interchangeability undermines the validity of the entire assessment process from a basic scientific perspective. Third, the individual test instruments lack suitability for the forensic context. Many suffer from outdated norms, low predictive validity for risk-relevant behaviour, and high susceptibility to socially desirable responding. This vulnerability is compounded by the fact that few possess effective validity scales, and even those have been empirically shown to be easily circumvented by informed test-takers, rendering them largely ineffective in high-stakes evaluations.

Fourth, anchoring the assessment exclusively in a static-actuarial paradigm contradicts scientific standards in forensic risk prognosis. Contemporary, evidence-based approaches call for a shift towards dynamic methods such as SPJ, which integrate historical, clinical, and future-oriented risk factors – methods absent in the Austrian system.

In summary, the system places experts in an irreconcilable legal and ethical dilemma, caught between the flawed mandates of the weapons act and their professional duty under the psychologists act to adhere to the state of the science. This fundamentally challenges the scientific credibility of firearm-related assessments in Austria. A fundamental reform, guided by scientific findings, is urgently needed to ensure the rule of law, professional integrity, and public safety. Prospects for future research should therefore focus on the validation of dynamic, evidence-based risk assessment tools within the Austrian legal context and on developing a scientifically operationalised model of “reliability” to inform future legislation.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Реформа психологічної оцінки для отримання права на володіння вогнепальною зброєю: питання діагностики та оцінки у законодавстві Австрії про зброю

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Анотація. Психологічна оцінка осіб, які подали заяву на отримання дозволу на володіння вогнепальною зброєю, має вирішальне значення для громадської безпеки. Дослідження підкреслило необхідність переосмислення підходів до психологічної оцінки осіб, які претендували на право володіння зброєю, у напрямі більшої наукової валідності та міждисциплінарної узгодженості. Водночас наукова обґрунтованість методів, передбачених законодавством Австрії та інших європейських країн, залишається вкрай сумнівною. Метою цієї статті було здійснити критичну оцінку діагностичних і тестово-теоретичних засад системи оцінювання, встановленої законом Австрії про зброю та виявлення її наукових і юридичних недоліків. Оцінювання здійснювалося шляхом критичного аналізу нормативно-правових положень, формально-логічної деконструкції обов'язкових комбінацій тестів та систематичного огляду психометричних характеристик і судово-психологічної придатності кожного із передбачених інструментів. У статті проаналізовано проблемну правову базу, яка вимагає використання застарілих і науково необґрунтованих тестових батарей. Описано логічні неузгодженості та хибні еквіваленти, що виникають унаслідок законодавчо допустимих комбінацій різних психологічних тестів. Зазначено, що окремі інструменти здебільшого непридатні для судово-психологічної оцінки через застарілі норми, відсутність прогностичної валідності щодо ризику поведінки, пов'язаної зі зброєю, та вразливість до спотворення відповідей. Детально показано, що виключна залежність від статичних, актуарних методів оцінювання суперечить сучасним, доказовим стандартам судової психології. Результати цього дослідження можуть бути використані законодавцями, юристами та клінічними психологами для реформування чинних процедур оцінювання, що сприятиме підвищенню наукової обґрунтованості та юридичної захищеності процесу видачі дозволів на володіння зброєю.

Ключові слова: дозвіл на володіння зброєю; судово-психологічна оцінка; психометричні недоліки; судова психологія; діагностична валідність



Gender, age and cultural characteristics of professional resilience in psychologists working in Ukraine's security and defence sector

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Abstract. This article provided a comprehensive analysis of the gender, age and cultural factors that determined professional resilience in psychologists working in Ukraine's security and defence sector (SDS). Professional resilience was considered an integral psychological characteristic that combined the ability to adapt to extreme conditions, effectively perform official duties and maintain personal well-being. The aim of this scientific article was to develop an integrative conceptual model of professional resilience of SDS psychologists in Ukraine, which takes into account the interaction of three key determinants – gender, age and cultural characteristics – and was aimed at improving the effectiveness of psychological support in the context of contemporary challenges to national security. The methodological basis of the study was formed by approaches from military and organisational psychology, the theory of psychological resilience, as well as empirical data from international sources adapted to the Ukrainian context. Particular attention was paid to practical recommendations for the implementation of resilience development programmes that take into account the gender, age and cultural characteristics of the target group. The study found that gender differences influence the choice of stress coping strategies, the level of emotional regulation, and the propensity to use social support. Age characteristics determined the balance between accumulated experience and flexibility in learning new approaches, which was crucial in the dynamic environment of the SDS. Cultural factors, in particular regional traditions, ethnopsychological attitudes, and organisational norms, determined the perception of psychological assistance and the level of acceptance of innovative working methods. The results obtained have significant practical potential: they can be used to optimise the training of military and law enforcement psychologists, improve the system of moral and psychological support, and develop interventions aimed at reducing the risk of professional burnout

Keywords: social support; professional burnout; age factors; cultural context; coping strategies; emotional regulation

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Introduction

In the context of full-scale war, Ukraine's security and defence sector, particularly psychologists working in this sector, perform an extremely responsible mission. They ensure the moral and psychological stability of personnel and support their psycho-emotional well-being in conditions of active combat stress, constant danger and high professional demands. Gender factors include differences in stress experiences, emotional regulation methods, and the influence of social roles and organisational structures. The age aspect concerns changes in resources, experience, and burnout risks at different stages of a career, from a young specialist to an experienced veteran. The cultural component covers regional characteristics, organisational subcultures, and interdepartmental interaction practices.

The Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC) is often used in international literature to measure psychological resilience. A study by D. Liu *et al.* (2015) found that this scale is invariant across genders and age cohorts, allowing it to be applied across a wide demographic spectrum. This makes it possible to use the CD-RISC as a reliable tool in the Ukrainian context, while maintaining validity requirements. The United States and Norway have jointly developed a resilience training programme for Ukrainian military personnel, emphasising the need to adapt psychological and psychiatric support to the realities of war. This initiative is described in the AUSA (2023) publication and demonstrates the current practical demand for structured support from psychologists. Thus, the urgency of the research lies in combining theoretical analysis with practical examples of adapted interventions that strengthen the methodological justification.

According to S. Brooks *et al.* (2015), the gender aspect of the problem lies in the lack of standardised approaches to taking gender-related differences into account in the formation of resilience. Practice shows that female psychologists are more likely to experience a double burden – professional and family – which can reduce

their level of resourcefulness. At the same time, men in the SDS face another challenge – the culturally conditioned norm of “emotional restraint”, which complicates the application of preventive self-regulation strategies.

The age aspect manifests itself in differences between young professionals and experienced psychologists. The former may have lower tolerance to chronic stress due to a lack of previous experience working in combat conditions, while experienced professionals are at higher risk of professional burnout and secondary traumatization. However, there are no large-scale empirical studies in the Ukrainian scientific field that systematically compare these age groups in the context of SDS. The cultural dimension of the problem covers the influence of regional and organisational traditions on the formation of coping strategies. For example, psychologists working in frontline areas often develop a more pragmatic and short-term approach to emotional regulation, while in regions far from combat operations, long-term strategies for maintaining well-being prevail. At the same time, there are virtually no systematic studies analysing cultural factors within the SDS.

The problem is exacerbated by the lack of adapted methods for measuring professional resilience for the Ukrainian SDS. Although the Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC) and other instruments have international validity, their adaptation for Ukrainian military and law enforcement psychologists has not been completed. The lack of local norms and comparative indicators makes it impossible to develop individualised resilience enhancement programmes. Therefore, the essence of the scientific problem lies in the fact that, in the context of ongoing hostilities and significant psychological stress, SDS of Ukraine need a scientifically based model of professional resilience for psychologists that takes into account gender, age and cultural characteristics and is supported by valid diagnostic tools and adapted intervention programmes.

The study of professional resilience in the field of security and defence has become particularly relevant in recent years due to the extreme challenges faced by both military personnel and the psychologists who work with them. Contemporary scientific works emphasise the integration of gender, age and cultural factors into the system of training and support for specialists. R. Sirko & V. Slobodianyuk (2024) have demonstrated that the development of “self-preserving behaviour” in representatives of the security and defence sector through training and psychoeducational programmes is an important factor in reducing professional trauma and strengthening resilience. O. Nyzovets-Kropta (2024), in summarising research conducted during the war, notes that the key factors in maintaining the professional resilience of Ukrainian psychologists are social support, self-regulation skills, and the presence of meanings and values that give their work a sense of significance. O. Kokun *et al.* (2022) emphasise that psychological resilience is the ability to function effectively under combat stress. The authors highlight the role of individual resources, social support and special training programmes as basic mechanisms for developing professional resilience. International studies focus on gender differences. For example, L. Denneson *et al.* (2021) in a national longitudinal study of US veterans after suicide attempts found that women have lower levels of self-compassion and autonomy, as well as higher risks of recurrent crisis states. This necessitates gender-specific support programmes.

An analysis of resilience training programmes for police officers conducted by A. Moreno *et al.* (2024) showed that the most effective programmes are integrated programmes that combine mindfulness, biofeedback and organisational practices. The authors emphasise that effectiveness largely depends on the cultural and organisational adaptation of programmes. J. Andersen *et al.* (2023) developed a “biological approach” to resilience development based on heart rate variability training. Studies have shown that this technique not only reduces the

manifestations of post-traumatic stress, but also reveals gender differences in response to intervention. Thus, modern research confirms that gender, age, and cultural factors are decisive in the formation of professional resilience among psychologists in the security and defence sector.

The aim of the article was to develop a comprehensive integrative model of professional resilience among psychologists in the security and defence sector of Ukraine, in particular through the prism of three interrelated determinants: gender, age and cultural context.

Materials and Methods

The study of professional resilience among psychologists in Ukraine’s SDS, accounting for gender, age, and cultural specifics, requires the application of a combined (mixed-methods) approach. This allows for the combination of quantitative methods to obtain valid statistical data and qualitative methods for an in-depth understanding of specialists’ subjective experiences. The research sample involved psychologists working in various SDS subdivisions, including the armed forces of Ukraine, the national guard, the state border guard service, and the national police. The representativeness of the sample was ensured through stratification by sex, age categories (under 30 years, 31–45 years, and over 45 years), and region of service (frontline regions and rear regions).

Quantitative methods involve the use of standardised psychometric instruments to measure resilience. The main instrument proposed is the Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC-25), which has proven reliability and validity in military contingents (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007). To assess related variables, it is planned for use the Maslach burnout inventory (MBI) to determine the level of professional burnout and the perceived stress scale (PSS) to measure the subjective level of stress. Qualitative methods include semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Qualitative methods included semi-structured interviews and focus groups. These allowed for the identification of unique

coping strategies that might be determined by gender, age, or cultural factors. To increase data reliability, the method of triangulation was used, which involves comparing the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses.

The data collection procedure included a comprehensive approach, which began with informing participants in advance about the purpose of the study, its procedures and ethical aspects, ensuring their informed consent. This was followed by a survey using standardised questionnaires, which allowed structured data to be collected. To gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences, interviews and focus groups were organised, which were recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Qualitative analysis of the data obtained from semi-structured interviews and focus groups revealed key stress management strategies used by SDS psychologists. Fifty psychologists participated in the study, distributed by gender and age in proportion to the sample size. Interviews were conducted online via Zoom during May-June 2025. The focus groups included 6-8 participants each, lasted an average of 90 minutes, and were organised offline in rear regions. The interview structure included 15 open-ended questions aimed at identifying personal experiences, coping strategies, and factors influencing resilience. The focus groups were oriented towards discussing collective support practices and challenges faced by psychologists. The final stage involved data analysis, including statistical methods such as correlation, regression and variance analysis, as well as thematic analysis of qualitative data. This approach ensured a comprehensive study and interpretation of the results.

Ethical standards comply with the Declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association "Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects" (1964) and the Code of Ethics for Psychologists (1990). Confidentiality and the participant's right to refuse participation without negative consequences are respected (APA, 2017). The chosen methodological approach provides a

comprehensive disclosure of the phenomenon of resilience in SDS psychologists, allowing to identify not only the level of resilience, but also the mechanisms of its formation and maintenance in specific service conditions.

Results and Discussion

A detailed analysis of the results of quantitative and qualitative research methods allows for a comprehensive assessment of the phenomenon of professional resilience among psychologists in the SDS of Ukraine. Studying the professional resilience of psychologists in the SDS of Ukraine requires the integration of knowledge from related fields: military psychology, occupational psychology, intercultural psychology, and gender studies. International and Ukrainian experience shows that resilience is considered a multidimensional construct that includes individual psychological resources, social support, and organisational conditions.

According to the results of a survey conducted using standardised tools, data was collected from 320 psychologists working in various SDS departments. The sample included 45% men and 55% women, with the following age distribution: under 30 years old – 30%, 31-45 years old – 50%, over 45 years old – 20%. The regional distribution of participants included frontline areas (60%) and rear regions (40%). The main results obtained using the Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC-25) showed an average resilience level of 72.5 points (out of a possible 100). Statistically significant correlations were found between resilience levels and participant age: psychologists aged 31-45 demonstrated higher scores compared to other age groups. According to the Maslach burnout inventory (MBI), 40% of participants showed signs of professional burnout, which correlated with lower resilience scores. The perceived stress scale (PSS) showed that psychologists from frontline areas had higher stress levels compared to those working in rear areas.

Qualitative data analysis using thematic coding revealed key aspects that influence the professional resilience of SDS psychologists. One

of the most important factors is the role of social support provided by colleagues, family, and friends. This support promotes emotional resilience and helps psychologists better cope with professional challenges. It was also found that psychologists actively use personal strategies to reduce stress, such as meditation, physical activity, and hobbies. These practices help reduce stress levels and maintain psychological well-being. In addition to personal strategies, an important factor is the influence of organisational culture on professional resilience. The availability of supervision and training programmes contributes to the development of professional skills and supports psychologists in their work. These organisational measures are key to building resilience and preventing professional burnout. The results of the analysis highlight the importance of both personal and organisational factors in supporting the professional resilience of SDS psychologists.

The results of the study confirm the importance of a combined approach to studying resilience in SDS psychologists. Quantitative data revealed general trends, such as the influence of age and region of service on the level of resilience, while qualitative methods revealed subjective experiences and unique coping strategies. The correlations identified between resilience, professional burnout, and stress underscore the need to develop targeted interventions aimed at supporting psychologists, especially in frontline regions. Qualitative analysis also highlighted the importance of organisational measures, such as supervision and training, in enhancing resilience. The professional resilience of psychologists in the SDS of Ukraine is the result of a combination of individual, social, and organisational factors. Based on an analysis of international and Ukrainian studies, three key factors can be identified that determine its formation: gender, age, and cultural characteristics.

Gender influences both the perception of stressful situations and the choice of coping strategies. For example, a study by G. Wagnild & H. Young (1993) showed that female professionals in high-stress situations are more likely

to use emotionally-oriented strategies, including seeking social support, while men tend to take a problem-oriented approach. In the context of the SDS of Ukraine, this may mean the need for gender-sensitive training programmes that take into account differences in stress coping styles and the specifics of psychological assistance to military personnel of different genders.

The age aspect of resilience formation manifests itself in varying levels of stress resistance and flexibility of adaptation strategies at different stages of a career. Young psychologists (under 30) often have high levels of motivation but lower levels of experience, which increases the risk of emotional exhaustion. Experienced professionals (over 45 years old) have established coping models, but sometimes show less willingness to implement new working methods (Britt *et al.*, 2016). This requires the development of differentiated professional development programmes for different age groups.

The cultural context in the SDS of Ukraine includes not only regional differences (frontline or rear areas), but also the organisational culture of different departments. For example, psychologists of the national guard often work in mixed conditions (peacekeeping operations, public order protection, combat operations), which requires high flexibility, while psychologists of the state border guard service focus on stable operational work with rotational risks. These differences shape different resilience profiles and must be taken into account when developing methodological recommendations.

Combining gender, age and cultural factors allows for the formation of an integrative model of resilience, which involves adapting diagnostic tools (e.g., CD-RISC) to Ukrainian realities, developing flexible training programmes that take into account the needs of different groups, and integrating culturally relevant coping strategies into daily practice. In conclusion, the development of resilience among psychologists in Ukraine's security and defence sector is a multidimensional process that requires targeted support at the individual, organisational and state policy levels.

Gender characteristics of professional resilience among psychologists in Ukraine's security and defence sector. Significant attention is paid to the gender aspects of resilience in the global literature. For example, a study by L. Campbell-Sills & M. Stein (2007) showed that women in samples of military and law enforcement personnel demonstrate a higher level of emotional sensitivity, but at the same time more often use socially oriented coping strategies, which correlates positively with CD-RISC indicators. This indicates the potential protective effect of gender-specific strategies in stressful conditions, although in the Ukrainian context such relationships have not yet been systematically studied. Stress coping studies consistently record systemic differences between women and men: women more often resort to emotionally-oriented strategies (seeking emotional support, verbalising experiences, rumination), while men resort to direct problem-oriented coping or avoidance and denial (Tamres *et al.*, 2002). In terms of professional resilience, this means that the basic sets of behavioural strategies during intense work stress differ, and therefore training and supervision approaches for SDS psychologists must be gender-sensitive, taking into account which strategies each group spontaneously activates and which ones need targeted development.

Large sample studies show that women on average report higher levels of chronic and daily stress and more often use emotionally and uniquely oriented coping styles, while men more often use rational and non-emotional coping (Matud, 2004). Combined with meta-analysis data, this provides two practical guidelines for SDS: female psychologists need to systematically strengthen their arsenal of problem-oriented and stimulating techniques (structured action plans, tactical self-regulation protocols), while men need to purposefully develop emotional expressiveness, skills for seeking support, and work with social standards of emotional control that can mask distress and increase the risk of delayed help-seeking (Tamres *et al.*, 2002).

Military and law enforcement organisations have powerful cultural narratives of resilience

and invulnerability. For men, these often reinforce avoidance of emotional support; for women, they are combined with a double burden (service/family) and additional communicative work (emotional support for teams, working with loss). For psychologists as a supporting profession, this means different profiles of secondary traumatisation and compassion fatigue. Accordingly, it is advisable to regulate the "right to vulnerability" and seeking help without stigma in internal SDS regulations, to guarantee gender-balanced access to supervision/intervention, and to design rotation and leave schedules that take family responsibilities into account.

It is advisable to differentiate the content of training modules. For female psychologists, the emphasis should be on protocols for operational problem solving, tactical planning, and training in operational actions in the field (structured briefing, stabilisation algorithms, clear markers for returning to the task) in order to balance the tendency towards emotional coping (Matud, 2004). For male psychologists, the focus should be on expanding emotional literacy (supported verbalisation of experiences, requesting and accepting support, working with rumination/self-criticism), and creating a supportive environment for practising empathic contact skills. Separately, modules for overcoming rumination, reframing, and mindfulness techniques should be implemented with a focus on short protocols that are actually applicable in change/on the job.

Assessment of the resilience of SDS psychologists (e.g., through CD-RISC in combination with coping questionnaires) should be conducted with mandatory stratification by gender and control of the type of stressor. Meta-analysis data show that gender differences can be modulated by the nature of the stressor and its subjective assessment, according to L. Tamres *et al.* (2002). This means that the interpretation of individual scores should be based on gender-specific norms and the context of the tasks (combat events, mass casualties, work with the civilian population, etc.). Gender differences in coping strategies are stable and reproducible. They do not classify either gender as pathological, but only indicate the need to strengthen certain

resources in specific areas. Successful institutional solutions are a combination of general resilience protocols with flexible blocks that can be tailored to the specific needs of female and male psychologists. This approach reduces the risk of burnout, improves the quality of assistance to personnel, and makes the support system more reliable.

Age factors and stages of professional development. The age factor in the formation of professional resilience in SDS psychologists determines the balance between accumulated experience and the flexibility of adaptation strategies. According to the life-span perspective theory, psychological resilience changes throughout life, reflecting the influence of both biological and socio-cultural determinants (Baltes *et al.*, 2006). Young professionals tend to have high levels of energy and motivation, but may be more vulnerable to professional stress due to a lack of established coping strategies. The age dimension of resilience is studied mainly in relation to service experience. Studies show that among psychologists and medical professionals in military structures, younger specialists are more likely to face the risk of professional burnout, while older colleagues demonstrate greater stability but may be less flexible in implementing new methods. This conclusion is particularly relevant for the Ukrainian SDS, where the staffing structure of psychologists includes both newly appointed graduates and specialists with many years of experience gained in peacetime.

At the beginning of their professional careers, SDS psychologists face an intense process of adaptation to the organisational culture and the peculiarities of combat and crisis conditions. Studies show that young specialists are more likely to experience high levels of anxiety, self-doubt and dependence on external sources of support. At this stage, mentoring, supervision, and training programmes aimed at developing self-regulation and quick decision-making skills in stressful situations are particularly important (Teslenko & Kashperskyi, 2022). Middle-aged professionals usually have an established professional

style, developed stress resistance, and effective models of interaction with colleagues and clients. At the same time, this group is at increased risk of professional burnout due to the cumulative effect of working in conditions of chronic stress and increased responsibility. The optimal strategy for this stage is task rotation, periodic updating of competencies, and the implementation of preventive programmes with elements of mindfulness and cognitive-behavioural techniques. Experienced psychologists have a deep understanding of the specifics of SDS, a large practical base, and high authority among colleagues. However, cognitive flexibility and the speed of adaptation to new methods and technologies may decline with age. This requires a special approach – creating conditions for transferring experience to younger specialists, involving them in strategic planning, and maintaining motivation through participation in scientific and methodological projects.

An analysis of age factors shows that an effective support system for psychologists should include differentiated interventions: mentoring programmes for young professionals, burnout prevention for the middle age group, and the involvement of experienced specialists as mentors and trainers. This approach allows maintaining a high level of resilience at all stages of professional development, minimising the risks of staff losses.

Cultural and intercultural aspects. Culture is one of the key macro-level factors influencing the formation of professional resilience in SDS psychologists. According to M. Ungar (2006), intercultural studies, cultural values, norms, and communication patterns determine both the perception of stress and the choice of strategies for overcoming it. In countries with a collectivist culture, greater importance is attached to social support and teamwork, while in individualistic countries, the emphasis is on personal autonomy and individual strategies. With regard to cultural aspects, international studies show that the context of war or emergency situations has a significant impact on the resilience profile. For example, studies among military medics in the United States and Israel have shown that

cultural norms and values determine not only the level of resilience, but also the acceptability of certain forms of psychological assistance. However, there are virtually no studies in open sources that analyse similar processes in Ukraine, taking into account regional differences (frontline zone vs rear regions).

In Ukraine, which is currently at war, the regional context is particularly important. Psychologists working in frontline areas often develop more pragmatic, crisis-oriented strategies, while in rear regions, long-term approaches to mental health support prevail. Research in the field of disaster psychology conducted by F. Norris *et al.* (2008) shows that proximity to the conflict zone affects coping style: in high-risk areas, tactics for rapid stabilisation of the client's condition are more often used than in-depth therapeutic work.

Each SDS agency has its own subculture, which creates unique conditions for the development of psychologists' resilience. For example, the armed forces of Ukraine are dominated by a culture of clear command and adherence to hierarchy, which influences the speed of decision-making and the expected level of emotional restraint. The national guard has a more multifunctional nature of service, which requires psychologists to be flexible and able to quickly switch between different types of tasks. The state border service emphasises stability and proceduralism, which contributes to the formation of structured coping models.

Studies among military psychologists in the United States and Israel show that cross-cultural differences in manifestations of resilience are related to the historical experience of nations, dominant values, and institutional traditions. For Ukraine, the experience of countries that have been under military threat for a long time is useful, particularly in terms of supporting the moral and psychological state of personnel and institutionalising supervisory practices. Understanding the cultural and intercultural aspects of resilience development opens up the possibility of adapting training programmes to the specifics of regions and organisational cultures, to introduce interdepartmental exchanges of experience to reduce the "closedness" of

subcultures and disseminate best practices, as well as to develop culturally relevant interventions that take into account both local and global experience.

Organisational determinants of resilience in the SDS. The organisational environment determines the resources, conditions and constraints in which the professional resilience of SDS psychologists is formed. Research by B. Smith *et al.* (2008) shows that command structure, access to supervision, clear protocols, and management support significantly influence the ability of professionals to adapt to stress. In Ukraine, where the SDS operates in the context of a protracted military conflict, these factors are particularly important. Effective leadership is one of the key factors in organisational support for resilience. Leaders who demonstrate empathy, transparency in decision-making and the ability to delegate authority increase the motivation and psychological resilience of their subordinates (Avolio *et al.*, 2009). At the same time, an authoritarian style that ignores the needs of psychologists can increase the risk of burnout, reducing the ability to perform effectively in crisis situations.

Systemic support for psychologists in the SDS should include regular supervision and intervention, psychological debriefings after intense operations, professional development programmes such as courses, training and further education, and guaranteed access to recovery resources, including leave, rotation and medical services. International experience confirms that regular participation in supervision sessions reduces emotional exhaustion and increases job satisfaction (Smith *et al.*, 2008). Uneven distribution of workload among psychologists leads to increased chronic stress and reduced quality of work. The optimal solution is to introduce flexible schedules that take into account the intensity of operations, regional risks, and the personal circumstances of specialists. This is in line with contemporary approaches to occupational health psychology, which emphasise the balance between work demands and resources. An organisational culture focused on mutual support, openness and

recognition of each employee's contribution creates a favourable environment for the development of resilience. At the SDS of Ukraine, this means the need to build a climate of trust between management and psychologists, which reduces barriers to seeking help, increases team cohesion and adaptability in crisis situations.

Professional risks and vulnerabilities of SDS psychologists. Psychologists of the SDS of Ukraine work daily with people who have experienced extreme events – combat operations, injuries, loss of loved ones. Constant immersion in the traumatic experiences of clients leads to secondary traumatisation and compassion fatigue syndrome (Figley, 2002). These conditions reduce work efficiency, increase the risk of errors, and can lead to professional demotivation.

Authors C. Maslach & M. Leiter (2016) found that burnout syndrome is one of the most common risks for SDS psychologists. Its key symptoms – emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced sense of personal accomplishment – are often exacerbated in wartime due to the lack of clear boundaries between work and personal life. Psychologists who work in a state of constant readiness and perform tasks in high-risk areas are particularly vulnerable. A shortage of qualified personnel, excessive workloads, and a lack of regular supervision and psychological debriefings increase the risk of professional burnout. Studies show that even a short-term reduction in access

to recovery resources (holidays, medical care) leads to a sharp decline in resilience.

In the SDS environment, there are cultural attitudes that can prevent psychologists from seeking help for themselves. There is often a stigma attached to acknowledging one's own vulnerability, which complicates timely intervention and prevention of more severe psycho-emotional conditions. To reduce the professional vulnerabilities of SDS psychologists, it is advisable to implement systematic burnout prevention programmes, including mindfulness, cognitive-behavioural techniques and support groups, regulate supervision as a mandatory component of professional practice, develop crisis self-help protocols for specialists working in high-risk areas, and implement policies to reduce the stigma associated with psychologists seeking psychological help themselves.

Coping strategies, self-regulation skills and their moderators. Coping strategies (models for overcoming stress) are a central mechanism for maintaining the professional resilience of SDS psychologists. In military and crisis psychology, coping is defined as conscious and unconscious efforts to regulate emotions, behaviour, and cognitive processes in response to stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). For a better understanding of the main types of coping used in the professional environment of SDS, a schematic representation is provided in Figure 1 below.

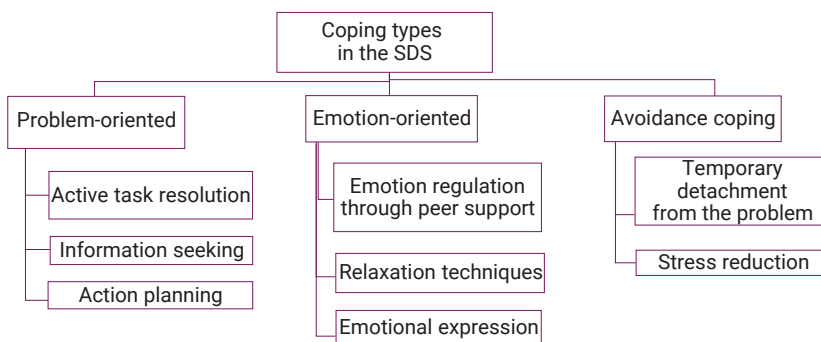


Figure 1. Coping strategies used in situations of occupational combat stress

Source: developed by the author based on C. Carver & J. Connor-Smith (2010)

Data show that the most resilient psychologists combine problem-oriented and emotion-oriented strategies, reducing their dependence on unique behavioural patterns. For a

better understanding of the key skills that enhance the resilience of SDS psychologists, Table 1 below provides the main techniques and their characteristics.

Table 1. Key techniques and characteristics of skills for improving psychological resilience

Skill	Description
Mindfulness	Reducing anxiety levels and increasing concentration
Breathing techniques	Rapid restoration of physiological equilibrium in stressful conditions
Cognitive restructuring	Changing destructive beliefs into adaptive ones
Behavioural modelling	Training constructive behavioural patterns in simulated crisis scenarios

Source: developed by the author

The effectiveness of coping strategies among SDS psychologists depends on a number of moderators, among which gender, age, cultural context, and organisational resources play an important role. Gender influences the choice of strategies and willingness to seek support, while age is associated with differences in cognitive flexibility and experience in overcoming crisis situations. Cultural context determines the acceptability of certain forms of emotional expression and interaction, and organisational resources, such as access to supervision, training programmes and recreation, also significantly influence the effectiveness of stress management strategies. To increase the stress resilience of SDS psychologists, it is recommended to: introduce training on combining problem-oriented and emotion-oriented coping, develop a set of self-regulation skills with an emphasis on short techniques used in the field, and provide access to individual and group supervision to discuss the effectiveness of coping strategies. Assessment and indicators of professional resilience. Systematic assessment of the professional resilience of SDS psychologists is critical to ensuring the effectiveness of moral and psychological support for personnel. Valid and reliable assessment methods allow for the timely identification of risks of professional burnout, secondary traumatisation, and reduced task performance (Windle *et al.*, 2011).

In international practice, the most common tools for measuring resilience are the

Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC-25), which assesses the ability to adapt to stress and recover from crisis events; the brief resilience scale (BRS), which measures the speed of “recovery” after stressful influences; and the resilience scale for adults (RSA), which takes into account social resources, personal competencies, and the structure of life (Friborg *et al.*, 2003). Adapting these tools to the Ukrainian context of the SDS is necessary because cultural and organisational characteristics can influence test results.

In addition to psychometric methods, it is important to use behavioural indicators: the ability to perform duties consistently during intense operations, maintaining a high level of team interaction, the ability to restore emotional balance after crisis events, and active use of support resources (supervision, support groups, training). The optimal assessment strategy is a multimodal approach that combines: psychometric data (CD-RISC, BRS, RSA), assessment by colleagues and management (360-degree feedback), self-reports on the use of coping strategies, objective data (number of successfully completed operations, frequency of requests for support). To ensure effective monitoring of resilience in SDS psychologists, it is recommended to: conduct regular testing (at least twice a year), analyse the dynamics of indicators in connection with personnel changes and tasks, use indicators to individualise professional development programmes, and integrate assessment results into personnel policy planning.

Training, preparation and support of personnel. The professional resilience of SDS psychologists is formed not only on the basis of personal qualities, but also through targeted training and support. Systematic training allows for the development of adaptation, emotional regulation and crisis management skills, which are particularly important in combat situations (Cornum *et al.*, 2011). Basic training for SDS psychologists should include: theoretical courses in military and crisis psychology, training in psychological first aid, training in methods of working with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and secondary traumatisation, familiarisation with ethical standards and international norms of work in armed conflict.

Research by G. Everly *et al.* (2012) shows that the introduction of psychological first aid modules at the initial training stage significantly increases specialists' confidence in their own abilities and reduces recovery time after critical incidents. Continuous professional training is a prerequisite for maintaining a high level of resilience. Such programmes include: courses on the latest psychotherapy methods (EMDR, cognitive-behavioural therapy, narrative exposure therapy), training in team interaction and interagency coordination, simulation training to practise actions in crisis scenarios, and participation in international experience exchange programmes.

To effectively consolidate the knowledge and skills acquired, it is important to have supervision, which involves regular professional analysis of complex cases under the guidance of experienced specialists; intervision, which consists of sharing experiences in a group of peers; online platforms for self-education and access to relevant materials; as well as mentoring programmes for young psychologists. Practical recommendations include integrating culturally and gender-relevant modules into training programmes, ensuring that psychologists participate in crisis response training at least once a year, and developing a system for monitoring training effectiveness, including assessing resilience levels before and after training.

Ethical standards and legal framework. The professional activities of SDS psychologists take place in an environment that combines high psychological risks and legal restrictions. Ethical standards and legal norms ensure a balance between the need to provide effective assistance and respect for human rights, confidentiality and safety (APA, 2017). The international community and professional associations have identified several basic principles that SDS psychologists should follow. Confidentiality requires the protection of information obtained during work, except in cases where disclosure is required by law. Competence requires the provision of services within the scope of one's qualifications and with continuous professional development. No harm means prioritising the prevention of any form of harm to clients or colleagues. Informed consent involves clearly explaining the purpose, methods and possible risks before starting work with a client (IFRC, n.d.).

In Ukraine, the activities of SDS psychologists are regulated by a number of regulatory and legal acts. Law of Ukraine No. 4223-IX... (2025) establishes the legal, organisational, economic and social foundations of the mental health care system in Ukraine, aimed at ensuring accessibility, quality of services, respect for the rights of people with mental disorders and prevention of negative impacts on mental health. Law of Ukraine No. 2694-XII... (1992) – establishes the employer's obligations regarding safe working conditions, including psychological protection of personnel. Additionally, activities are regulated by departmental Order of the Ministry... (2016), which defines the specifics of organising psychological support in the service environment. This regulatory framework creates a legal framework for the professional activities of SDS psychologists, guaranteeing both the quality of services provided and the protection of the rights of all participants in the process.

During combat operations or in emergency situations, psychologists may find themselves in situations where strict adherence to standards is difficult. For example, the need to act without full informed consent in cases of emergency care,

restrictions on confidentiality when the life or safety of others is at risk, performing tasks within a command structure where the psychologist may be required to report to management. It is recommended that clear protocols be developed for the work of military psychologists, taking into account international ethical standards and national legal norms. Regular training in professional ethics and law should be provided, including simulation scenarios for practical reinforcement of knowledge. It is also important to establish independent ethics committees within SDS agencies to review complex cases and ensure compliance with ethical standards in professional practice.

Recommendations for policy and management in the SDS. The development and implementation of effective psychological support policies in the SDS should be based on scientifically proven data on factors of professional resilience and their interaction. Successful management models in the military and law enforcement agencies of foreign countries demonstrate that a combination of institutional support programmes and individual interventions provides the most lasting effect (Britt *et al.*, 2001).

It is recommended to integrate the concept of resilience into strategic documents, in particular into the concepts of moral and psychological support, doctrines and guidelines of agencies, in order to ensure a systematic approach to the development of resilience among psychologists. It is important to create specialised psychological support units in each SDS agency, which will be responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring resilience development programmes. A system of mandatory supervision should also be introduced at least once a month, taking into account the individual needs and professional workload of psychologists (Hoge *et al.*, 2004). In terms of personnel and training policy, it is important to develop mentoring programmes for young professionals with the involvement of experienced psychologists, as well as to ensure regular professional development with the inclusion of modules on crisis intervention, burnout prevention and

culturally and gender-sensitive approaches. Interagency training sessions should be organised in collaboration with international partners to share experiences and implement best practices.

At the organisational level, access to recovery resources such as leave, psychological counselling and medical care should be provided as part of service standards. It is also important to introduce a system of early risk detection through regular testing for burnout, secondary traumatisation and resilience levels, using multimodal assessment methods that combine psychometric, behavioural and organisational indicators. In the area of management, it is recommended to support leadership that promotes open communication, trust and recognition of professionals' achievements. Flexible workload planning should be implemented, taking into account the intensity of operations and the personal circumstances of psychologists. It is also important to create transparent feedback channels so that psychologists can report difficulties at work or the need for additional resources without fear. The proposed measures will contribute to: reducing the level of professional burnout, increasing readiness to work in crisis conditions, strengthening the human resources capacity of the SDS, and integrating psychological support into management decisions.

Conclusions

The analysis shows that the professional resilience of psychologists in Ukraine's security and defence sector is a multifactorial phenomenon shaped by gender, age and cultural factors, as well as organisational conditions and the level of institutional support. The study confirmed that gender differences influence the choice of coping strategies, the level of emotional regulation and the ways of seeking support. Age factors determine the balance between experience, cognitive flexibility and adaptability to new working methods. The cultural context, both regional and organisational, modulates the acceptability of support strategies and forms of team interaction. Organisational determinants (leadership,

supervision, personnel policy) directly influence the preservation and development of resilience. Based on the results, a set of recommendations has been formulated, including: integrating resilience into SDS strategic documents, developing differentiated support programmes that take gender and age into account, introducing inter-agency exchanges and international cooperation, and creating a system for regular monitoring of resilience through psychometric and behavioural indicators. The expected effect of implementing these recommendations is a reduction in the level of professional burnout, an increase in readiness to work in crisis conditions, and the preservation of the human resources potential of SDS psychologists.

The professional resilience of SDS psychologists is not only an individual resource but also a strategic asset for state security. Its development requires coordinated action at the level of state policy, departmental structures and professional communities. The implementation of scientifically based approaches to supporting resilience will contribute to strengthening the psychological readiness of the SDS to perform tasks in the most difficult conditions and to increasing the effectiveness of moral and psychological support. Several promising areas can be identified for deepening the scientific understanding of resilience among psychologists in the security and defence services of Ukraine. It is worth focusing on longitudinal studies that will allow for the analysis of changes in the level of resilience during different stages of professional activity. This will help identify key periods when psychologists are most

vulnerable and develop targeted support measures. An important step is the adaptation and validation of international assessment tools, such as CD-RISC, BRS and RSA, for the Ukrainian context. This will ensure more accurate diagnosis and allow for the specifics of local conditions to be taken into account. International comparative studies can be a source of valuable insights, as they will identify both universal and culturally specific factors that influence resilience. This can be useful for developing more effective support strategies.

Experimental testing of various interventions, such as training and supervision programmes, followed by analysis of their effectiveness in the short and long term, is another important aspect. This will help identify the most effective methods. The role of digital technologies in supporting resilience is also worth noting. For example, the development and implementation of mobile applications for psychological self-support can significantly improve the accessibility of assistance for specialists. In the long term, it is advisable to focus on the integration of longitudinal, intercultural and innovative approaches, which will allow for the formation of a comprehensive strategy for the development of resilience in SDS psychologists.

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Conflict of Interest

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Гендерні, вікові та культурні особливості формування професійної стійкості психологів сектору безпеки і оборони України

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Аспірант

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Анотація. Статтю було присвячено комплексному аналізу гендерних, вікових та культурних чинників, що визначають формування професійної стійкості психологів сектору безпеки і оборони (СБО) України. Професійна стійкість розглядається як інтегральна психологічна характеристика, що поєднує здатність адаптуватися до екстремальних умов, ефективно виконувати службові обов'язки та підтримувати особистісне благополуччя. Метою цієї наукової статті була розробка інтегративної концептуальної моделі професійної стійкості психологів СБО України, що враховує взаємодію трьох ключових детермінантів – гендерних, вікових та культурних особливостей і спрямована на підвищення ефективності психологічного забезпечення в умовах сучасних викликів національної безпеки. Методологічну основу дослідження становили підходи військової та організаційної психології, теорія психологічної стійкості, а також емпіричні дані з міжнародних джерел, адаптовані до українського контексту. Особливу увагу було приділено практичним рекомендаціям щодо впровадження програм розвитку стійкості, які враховують гендерно-вікові та культурні особливості цільової групи. У роботі визначено, що гендерні відмінності впливають на вибір стратегій подолання стресу, рівень емоційної регуляції та схильність до використання соціальної підтримки. Вікові особливості обумовлюють баланс між накопиченим досвідом та гнучкістю у засвоєнні нових підходів, що має вирішальне значення у динамічному середовищі СБО. Культурні чинники, зокрема регіональні традиції, етнопсихологічні установки та організаційні норми, визначили сприйняття психологічної допомоги та рівень прийнятності інноваційних методів роботи. Отримані результати мають значний прикладний потенціал: вони можуть бути використані для оптимізації підготовки військових і правоохоронних психологів, удосконалення системи морально-психологічного забезпечення, а також розробки інтервенцій, спрямованих на зменшення ризику професійного вигорання.

Ключові слова: соціальна підтримка; професійне вигорання; вікові чинники; культурний контекст; coping-стратегії; емоційна регуляція



Epistemology of traditions: Philosophical challenges in preserving intangible cultural heritage

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to establish a typology of intangible traditions as forms of epistemological knowledge, using the Ukrainian cultural environment as a case study; in addition, a comparative analysis was conducted with corresponding practices in Spain, Italy, and Romania in order to identify structural differences and points of intersection. The methodological framework was based on a comparative analysis of the forms of representation of intangible cultural heritage within national contexts, taking into account legal frameworks, institutional legitimisation, and methods of knowledge transmission. The analysis was conducted on the basis of official documents, elements from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) lists, and national legislative sources. As a result, it was revealed that tradition functions as an instrument for the preservation and transmission not only of cultural content, but also of structured knowledge. Four key forms of knowledge transmission were identified: oral-vocal, corporeal-ritual, culinary-domestic, and artisanal-visual. Each demonstrated a specific model of epistemic presence: from emotional memory (in songs and verbal genres) to the practical embodiment of knowledge in material forms (culinary practices, crafts). All four countries possess formalised systems for safeguarding intangible cultural

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heritage; however, differences were identified in the depth of integration of traditions into national institutions: Spain and Italy exhibited stable normative models, Romania showed targeted support for craftsmanship, while Ukraine was found to be at the stage of institutional transition under conditions of wartime instability. The systematisation of the obtained results made it possible to define tradition as a form of social knowledge performing normative, practical, and identificatory functions. It was demonstrated that intangible heritage requires not only ethnographic or legal approaches but also epistemological reflection as a bearer of knowledge represented in non-verbal, bodily, imagistic, or ritualised forms. The practical significance of the study lies in the development of an approach to analysing intangible heritage as a component of the system of knowledge transmission under conditions of social transformation

Keywords: epistemology; culture; cultural heritage; tradition; emotional memory; integration; instability

Introduction

The preservation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has emerged in the Ukrainian intellectual sphere as an issue that transcends the protective or anthropological dimension. Under conditions of external threat and internal institutional transformation, tradition has begun to perform not only the function of cultural identification but has also become a source of knowledge transmission amid the fragmentation of semantic structures. The relevance of this research is determined by the need for a philosophical comprehension of tradition as a form of epistemological presence in contemporary society, where knowledge is not confined to academic or written formats but is transmitted through ritual, voice, craft, ceremony, and embodied practice. In the Ukrainian context – where tradition is closely linked to historical memory and the transmission of national experience – the problem of understanding intangible heritage is aggravated by the absence of stable protection mechanisms. Unlike Spain, Italy, and Romania, where the epistemological role of tradition is partially institutionalised, Ukraine faces the need to reconceptualise it as a form of knowledge that exists beyond the boundaries of a formalised cultural field.

Several attempts to systematise ICH in Ukraine have already been undertaken. In particular, O. Beidyk *et al.* (2024) presented a comprehensive structure of ICH as a multilayered

system, in which the documentation of traditional practice was accompanied by a hierarchy of significance: from local ritual knowledge to representative resources of national scope. Their study outlined prospects for the development of institutional policy in the sphere of intangible heritage, emphasising not only its cultural but also its practical value. Another conceptual approach was proposed by I. Hryhorchak (2020), who focused on the relationship between globalisation processes and local authenticity. The core of her analysis was the transformation of traditions under new social conditions, in particular the mechanisms for adapting Ukrainian forms of intangible knowledge to the international legal framework. The author concluded that without consideration of the local semantics of tradition, any interventions in its protection risk remaining superficial. In the work of O. Beznosiuk (2024), the legal indeterminacy of the concept of ICH within the national cultural field was singled out. The author established that the absence of stable definitions and the blurred boundaries between tangible and intangible heritage create obstacles to the effective protection of elements of traditional culture. The main outcome of his research was the delineation of priorities for normative systematisation.

Philosophical reflection on intangible heritage within the context of worldview transformation was provided by I. Plachinta *et al.* (2024).

They revealed how religious tradition functions as a mechanism for preserving value structures within modern society. Their results demonstrated that tradition can not only reproduce semantic constants but also ensure the ontological stability of cultural identity in situations of its devaluation. L. Polishchuk & M. Hrach (2023) focused on the issue of preserving cultural identity in wartime conditions. Their research addressed the risks of the destruction of ICH through the physical annihilation of the cultural environment. The authors concluded that in conditions of armed conflict, tradition performs a stabilising function, supporting the symbolic integrity of collective consciousness.

The issue of institutional strategies for safeguarding ICH during wartime was comprehensively analysed by Y. Rachkov (2024). His study outlined a range of challenges, paying particular attention to the shortage of qualified personnel, insufficient state funding, and the inefficiency of promotional programmes. As a result, the author concluded that the existing protection system does not correspond to current threats. The legal dimension of the problem was explored by M. Akimov *et al.* (2024), who identified gaps in the criminal-law protection of ICH. They demonstrated that Ukraine's legislation fails to ensure adequate liability for the destruction of intangible heritage forms, particularly in cases of deliberate eradication during wartime. Their conclusions underscored the urgent need for the codification of such offences.

In M. Okhrimenko's (2022) research, emphasis was placed on the practical implementation of protection policies under wartime conditions. The author analysed how local-level cultural institutions responded to the threats of destruction of the traditional environment. It was found that many decisions were improvised in nature, and the normative framework remained insufficiently adapted to a state of emergency. A. Moroko (2024) focused on the archaeological dimension of heritage, which directly intersects with intangible tradition in the form of cultural interpretation. His study showed that the loss of material carriers of heritage leads to the devaluation

of the knowledge associated with them, and this interconnection must be considered in legal regulations on heritage protection. In the work of B. Navrátilová (2024), the role of ICH elements in shaping national identity was explored. The author established that through established cultural practices – songs, rituals, crafts – a narrative of community is formed that unites the experiences of individual regions into a coherent imagination of Ukraine. The findings of this study confirmed that ICH performs not only a symbolic but also an integrative function in nation-building processes.

Despite the extensive empirical base, existing studies have predominantly focused on the legal, political, or sociocultural dimensions of heritage protection. The epistemological perspective – namely, the question of how tradition functions as a form of knowledge (embodied, ritual, artisanal, or symbolic) – has remained largely unaddressed. Moreover, a lack of comparative analysis has been identified, which would make it possible to assess the specificity of the Ukrainian experience within a broader European context. Given these limitations, the present study was aimed at the theoretical reconstruction of tradition as a form of epistemological knowledge and at identifying the philosophical challenges accompanying its safeguarding under contemporary sociocultural conditions.

The purpose of the research was to provide a philosophical interpretation of intangible cultural heritage as a mode of knowledge transmission. The objectives of the study included: identifying the forms in which tradition is realised within the Ukrainian cultural environment as a mode of epistemological presence; conducting a comparative analysis of the ways in which ICH is represented as knowledge in Ukraine and other European countries; and systematising the findings in order to formulate a typology of traditions as models of knowledge transmission and representation.

Materials and Methods

The study focused on identifying patterns of representing tradition as a form of epistemological

presence, with a subsequent comparison between the Ukrainian context and the safeguarding practices of intangible cultural heritage in Spain, Italy, and Romania. The selection of these four countries was driven by the availability of representative examples of traditions that have been officially recognised as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage elements and are legislatively regulated at the national level. An important criterion for including countries in the analysis was also the availability of reliable sources – legal acts and detailed descriptions of traditional practices – which enabled a comprehensive comparative study.

Ukraine was considered the primary object of research due to the need to conceptualise intangible tradition not merely as a cultural phenomenon, but as knowledge functioning outside academic institutions. The sources for the analysis were official documents: Law of Ukraine No. 1805-III “On the Protection of Cultural Heritage” (2000), Ordinance of the Cabinet of the Ministers of Ukraine No. 84-p “On Approval of An Action Plan to Support the Cultural Sector, Protect Cultural Heritage, Develop Creative Industries and Tourism” (2021) and the updated Ukrainian Center for Cultural Studies (n.d.), which allowed for the reconstruction of the regulatory and institutional landscape. The empirical analysis was based on three UNESCO elements: Cossack songs of Dnipropetrovsk Region (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015), Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2022) and Kosiv painted ceramics (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.f), which reflect different types of epistemological knowledge – oral, culinary-domestic, and artisanal-visual.

In the context of Spain, a key criterion for inclusion in the analysis was the multi-level regulatory framework for safeguarding ICH, encompassing both the general law, Law No. 126 “On the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage” (2015), and specialised regulations,

particularly Royal Decree No. 385/2017 “On Transhumance as a Representative Manifestation of Intangible Cultural Heritage” (2017), which demonstrated the integration of practices into the state-legal domain. The study focused on castellers – human towers (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.d), flamenco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.c) and the Mediterranean diet (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.e), three distinct models of tradition that enable the tracing of corporeal-ritualistic, vocal-emotional, and culinary-ethical knowledge transmission.

Italy was included in the study as an example of a country with a high level of heritage formalisation, enshrined in the Code of the Cultural and Landscape Heritage (2004) and Legislative Decree No. 162 “On Implementation of Directives 2004/49/EC and 2004/51/EC On the Safety and Development of the Community’s Railways” (2007), which defined the legal status of intangible objects. For analysis, the following were selected: the Opera dei Pupi (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.f.), as an example of theatricalised corporeal-symbolic practice, and the art of Neapolitan “pizzaiuolo” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.a), as an example of a culinary tradition with an institutionalised training system. Both examples illustrate different modes of knowledge transmission – through bodily manipulation or through gastronomic routines with embedded moral norms.

The inclusion of Romania was based on its systematic state policy for supporting artisanal heritage, documented in Law of the Romanian Parliament No. 26 “On the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage” (2008) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). The research material included traditional wall-carpet craftsmanship (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.h), which functions as a visualised system for transmitting socio-gender norms, as well as the

vocal form of the “doina” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.b), which accumulates emotional knowledge in the format of individual performance.

The material was analysed using the method of qualitative comparative analysis, based on a systematic comparison of forms of cultural transmission, types of knowledge, and legal mechanisms enshrined in national systems. The selection of sources was carried out based on their correspondence to the research typological model: oral, corporeal, culinary, and artisanal forms. The approach combined interpretative analysis of the content of texts and normative acts with typological systematisation, which allowed for the outlining of epistemological models of tradition implementation in a comparative context.

Results

The Ukrainian experience: Tradition as a form of epistemological presence. The formation and preservation of knowledge within intangible cultural heritage in the Ukrainian context occurred in diverse forms, among which oral tradition constitutes one of the most stable. Epistemological presence implies the ability of tradition not only to preserve the substantive components of culture but also to structure knowledge that functions in the form of practices, experience, symbols, and repeated actions within a specific social environment. Unlike written or institutionalised modes of representation, such knowledge is not textually fixed but circulates within the community through rhythm, intonation, narrative structure, and ritualised action. It is not abstract but is always rooted in a specific cultural situation, space, and community.

Cossack songs of Dnipropetrovsk Region (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015) constitute an example of the functioning of collective historical memory, where the past is not archived but re-enacted in the performance. These songs encapsulate knowledge about social structures, notions of heroism, and established behavioural models transmitted

from generation to generation without reliance on a written tradition. Their structure contains not only substantive markers of a specific era but also auditory parameters that serve as means of recognition and repetition within the collective environment. The song text, even in the absence of a fixed version, contains stable verbal formulae which, combined with the melodic structure, create a recognisable image constantly renewed in performance. Rhythm, intonation, textual variability, and the presence of a ritual context indicate that these songs are not merely carriers of content but also a complex system of epistemological transmission, where knowledge emerges as practical participation in its realisation.

Another form of oral tradition is represented in the gastronomic sphere. The tradition of borscht cooking, recognised as an element of intangible cultural heritage, embodies everyday knowledge about the structure of communal life, food culture, local ecological conditions, and ritual cyclicality (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2022). The selection of ingredients, the sequence of actions, the semantics of colour, the structure of consumption – all these components constitute knowledge transmitted in domestic practice without losing cognitive value. During the preparation of the dish, not only a set of culinary actions is reproduced but also a cultural semiotics, where culinary technique becomes a carrier of collective experience. The repetitiveness of actions ensures a stable ritual structure, and the participation of multiple generations in this process guarantees the intergenerational transmission of not only skills but also meanings related to identity, home, and community. In contemporary conditions, this tradition has also gained significance as an instrument of cultural resilience: its safeguarding in wartime demonstrates that intangible practices can perform the function of representing national resistance through action and repetition. This is confirmed not only by the inclusion of borscht on the UNESCO list but also by the increased public, media, and scholarly attention to its role in

the current cultural context. Oral and ritualised culture in the Ukrainian context demonstrates an ability to preserve and transmit structured knowledge that has cultural, social, and normative functions. Its functioning attests that knowledge within tradition is not purely declarative but effective and situationally activated. Its actualisation occurs not at the moment of reflection but at the moment of practice – in performance, in ritual, in rite. This knowledge is rooted in shared experience, which not only reproduces the past but also shapes the present.

The transition to the artisanal domain allows for the consideration of another type of intangible knowledge transmission – through material-visual codes embedded in productive practice. Unlike oral culture, which is based on auditory and linguistic structure, artisanal forms of knowledge are realised in the visual and material plane. Kosiv painted ceramics (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.g) illustrates an example of this type of continuity. Its structure includes not only craft techniques but also an elaborate system of symbolism in which each decorative element performs a semantic function. The placement of images, types of motifs, compositional schemes – all this codifies collective knowledge embodied in images that are easily identified within the local culture (Fig. 1).

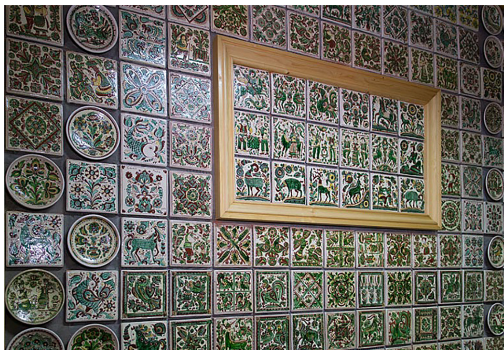


Figure 1. Works by the masters of the Kosiv Regional Branch of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine
Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (n.d.g)

The technique of ornament application, the choice of colours, and the thematic compositions form a system transmitted not through instructions but through participation in practice. Transmission occurs in the form of observation, copying, and ritualised repetition – that is, through an embodied form of learning in which knowledge is sedimented in the body and gesture, rather than in text. The capacity of the ceramic craft to convey knowledge without the mediation of writing points to its epistemological autonomy. The craft environment is structured according to the principle of interaction between the visual and the practical. This means that each element of a work contains not only material parameters but also a cultural interpretation. Ceramic objects used in ritual or everyday contexts – specifically, wedding plates, christening bowls, or religious decorative elements – attest to the connection between a material object and its traditional function. In each case, the artefact is not merely an object but a carrier of normative, aesthetic, and ethical knowledge, embodied in form.

Against the background of oral culture and craft, normative regulation emerges as a mechanism that allows for the institutionalisation of these forms of knowledge. The transition to the normative plane makes it possible to assess how the state responds to intangible practices and whether it is capable of integrating them into a system of legal protection. The legislative framework for the protection of cultural heritage in Ukraine formally includes ICH within the sphere of state responsibility; however, the current legislation remains predominantly focused on objects of material culture. Law of Ukraine No. 1805-III “On the Protection of Cultural Heritage” (2000) lacks sufficiently clear mechanisms for describing, recording, and preserving intangible forms of knowledge. Categories pertaining to oral tradition, craft, or everyday rituals remain vaguely defined, which precludes their effective legal protection. The absence of an adapted lexicon and flexible identification tools limits the practical coverage of this sphere. The Government of

Ukraine adopted Ordinance of the Cabinet of the Ministers of Ukraine No. 84-p (2021), aimed at supporting creative industries and cultural heritage; however, the practical implementation of these provisions faces challenges related to funding, staffing, and a lack of methodological tools capable of encompassing precisely the intangible forms of culture. The issues of classification, assessment, and monitoring of intangible cultural manifestations remain unregulated. The efforts of professional communities and individual enthusiasts have led to the formation of the National Inventory of ICH Elements (Ukrainian Center for Cultural Studies, n.d.), which provides formal recognition to elements of traditional culture and constitutes an important stage in structuring the sphere of intangible heritage. Nevertheless, even in cases of inclusion in the inventory, forms of knowledge remain vulnerable under martial law, when the cultural environment is subject to destruction and communities face displacement or the loss of bearers. This situation reveals the limitations of the normative model, which lacks flexible mechanisms for adaptation to crisis situations. In response to these challenges, there is a growing need for an epistemological rethinking of heritage, where tradition is viewed as a form of knowledge capable of functioning beyond stable structures, in situations of social and cultural risk.

The totality of the described forms – oral, artisanal, and normative – provides grounds for considering the Ukrainian experience as a complex system in which tradition functions not only as a means of preserving culture but also as a method of organising, transmitting, and recording knowledge that exists outside of academic or formalised systems. The conditions of war have only intensified the need to reinterpret this heritage as a resource of an epistemological nature, capable of existing in a fluid, mutable, and risky environment.

Comparative perspective: The epistemology of tradition in Spain, Italy, and Romania. Various European contexts demonstrate a variability of approaches to safeguarding intangible cultural

heritage as a means of accumulating and transmitting knowledge. In the cases studied – Spain, Italy, and Romania – tradition emerges not as an archaic form of cultural expression but as a structured instrument operating through ritual, corporeality, craft, and verbal practice. All three models rely on localised knowledge that takes the form of action, while simultaneously being integrated into legal systems that facilitate their state recognition and protection. A comparative analysis allows for tracing how the epistemological function of heritage is realised within different legal, social, and cultural traditions.

In the case of Spain, tradition appears predominantly in forms activated through the body, movement, collective action, and rhythmic coordination. One of the key elements is flamenco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.c) – a complex cultural practice that unites vocal, dance, and guitar music into a unified system of expression. In flamenco, knowledge is not fixed in texts or musical scores; it is realised in the intonation of the voice, the rhythmic structure of movements, and the dynamics of group interaction. Such knowledge is not transmitted through written media – it requires inclusion in the environment, repeated practice, and corporeal emulation, which testifies to its processual, context-dependent character. A similar type of collective bodily action is traced in the practice of building human towers (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.d) – castells (Fig. 2). The participants in this activity perform precise spatial coordination, where physical experience and intuition are of key importance. Here, knowledge is the result not only of individual training but also of integration into a shared structure. This knowledge is synchronous, collective, and corporeal, and its reproduction is possible only in the presence of the entire group, which functions as a single organism. The expansion of the concept of tradition as knowledge in the Spanish context is exemplified by the Mediterranean diet (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.e), inscribed on the UNESCO list as a model for

safeguarding the cultural practices of daily life. In this case, it concerns the integration of gastronomic, ecological, and ethical knowledge into a stable system of daily actions – the selection of products, seasonality, eating rituals, and family hierarchy during food consumption. The diet as a form of knowledge is not reducible to a culinary recipe – it constitutes a system of beliefs about a proper way of life, consonant with the natural rhythm.



Figure 2. The Colla Joves castellers team rises skyward in the Catalan town of Valls

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (n.d.d)

Normative regulation of intangible heritage in Spain is carried out through Law No. 126 (2015), which grants such practices the status of protected objects of cultural policy. This document defines mechanisms for the inclusion of ICH elements in the national register, as well as rules for their safeguarding and promotion. Additionally, through royal decrees, such as Royal Decree No. 385/2017 (2017), specific traditional forms, for instance, “trashumancia” (seasonal migration of livestock), have received the status of representative manifestations of culture. This model testifies to the institutionalisation of local knowledge without the loss of its dynamism. The transition to the Italian context demonstrates a shift in emphasis from collective bodily interaction to an artisanal and technical form of knowledge, in which personal

mastery of technique serves as the basis for the reproduction of tradition.

In Italy, knowledge within intangible heritage takes the form of artisanal competence, in which practical experience, technology, and local semantics form a unified structure. The “Opera dei Pupi” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.f) functions as an instrument for reproducing narrative structures in which value orientations, conflicts, and behavioural models are embedded. Within this tradition, knowledge is realised in scripted schemes, movement algorithms, character typologies, and the interrelationships between gesture and speech. The stage performance reproduces generalised perceptions of the world’s moral structure, and the very knowledge, embodied in the repertoire, is transmitted through repeated participation in performances, outside of formalised learning. Another example – the art of Neapolitan “pizzaiuolo” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.a), testifies to the technical stability of knowledge embedded in artisanal actions. The preparation process, from the selection of flour to adherence to the temperature regime, encodes knowledge that is not articulated verbally but is fixed in a rigid sequence of actions. Each stage contains a norm, deviation from which leads to a loss of the product’s authenticity. Such knowledge is not standardised in the form of an instruction but is embedded in the physical practice of the tradition bearer.

The legal framework for this model is implemented through the Code of the Cultural and Landscape Heritage (2004), a legislative act that includes intangible elements in the general system of cultural heritage protection. It establishes the status, recognition criteria, mechanisms for inclusion in inventories, and means of state support. Additionally, Legislative Decree No. 162 (2007) regulates the activities of the Central Institute for Demoethnoanthropology, which ensures the documentation, research, and archiving of ICH elements. The Italian model demonstrates a high degree of interaction between local practice and

state policy, where craft is recognised as a bearer of cultural knowledge capable of legal formalisation and educational inclusion.

In contrast to Spain and Italy, in the Romanian context, tradition functions in forms associated with verbal emotional expression and visual symbolism, with an emphasis on cyclicity and repeatability. In Romanian intangible culture, practices dominate in which knowledge is transmitted through a combination of an intuitive emotional structure and a local-symbolic code. The “Doina” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.b) – an improvised vocal genre – embodies knowledge about emotional states, moral situations, and shared experiences. Its structure is based not on fixed texts but on verbal creativity in real time. This knowledge is not individual in a narrow sense: it is formalised by a cultural norm that allows for improvisation within a stable intonational, rhythmic, and thematic structure. This constitutes its cognitive specificity – knowledge exists in the moment but is grounded in a deep collective archive. Traditional wall-carpet craftsmanship (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.h) reflects a visually-structured form of knowledge, in which composition, ornament, and colouring are not decorative components but carry semantic load (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Example of a craft Romanian carpet
Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (n.d.h), A. Mitrica (2022)

The patterns encode representations of social status, ritual events, and mythological narratives.

The technical execution of the carpet requires precise knowledge of the structural sequence, materials, tools, and the temporal rhythm of work, which is transmitted through demonstration and collective production. Law of the Romanian Parliament No. 26 (2008), which regulates the safeguarding of intangible heritage in Romania, establishes principles for state support, documentation, community participation, and the creation of archives. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) coordinates the inclusion of elements in the national inventory, organises expert assessments, and implements support programmes for tradition bearers. The Romanian model demonstrates an orientation towards supporting local communities, preserving the living environment of traditional practices, and the active role of the state in documenting and promoting cultural practices.

In summary, the three national models demonstrate distinct pathways for the formation of the epistemological status of tradition. In Spain, corporeal-social practices with high emotional intensity dominate; in Italy, the artisan structure with formally codified technique prevails; and in Romania, verbal and visual forms function through emotional-symbolic repetition. In each case, knowledge is not secondary to action but exists through action, encapsulating unique modes of cultural memory.

Typology of traditions as epistemological models. The study of national strategies for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage revealed that traditional practices function not merely as cultural phenomena but as specific forms of epistemological organisation of knowledge. Unlike academic or technocratic models, these forms are not grounded in textuality or standardised fixation but are realised through repeated action, material objects, or collective experience. Typologising these modes of transmission allows for outlining the structural differences between various types of knowledge embedded in

traditional practices and tracing how this knowledge is formed, transmitted, and consolidated within local cultures. A table systematising the

main types of knowledge transmission within intangible heritage and defining their epistemological functions is provided below (Table 1).

Table 1. Typology of forms of intangible cultural heritage transmission as epistemological models in national contexts

Mode of knowledge transmission	Countries	Epistemological significance
Oral-vocal	Ukraine, Romania	Representation of affective memory and emotional experience through rhythm, intonation, and verbalisation; transmission of historical and archetypal representations within a communal environment
Somatic-ritualistic	Spain, Italy	Embodiment of knowledge through somatic action, ritualised coordination, and spatial interaction; internalisation of norms through dynamics rather than textuality
Culinary-domestic	Ukraine, Spain, Italy	Codification of practical knowledge concerning quotidian norms, ethical conceptions, and ecological parameters; knowledge is transmitted through repeated domestic practice
Artisanal-visual	Ukraine, Romania	Visualisation of technical and symbolic knowledge through material form; informal learning through observation, participation, and embodiment of cultural identity

Source: compiled by the authors based on H. Chmil et al. (2021), M. Stefano (2021), S. Munoz-Vinas (2023), M. Milenković (2024)

The mechanisms of legal regulation for intangible cultural heritage define the conditions for its preservation, transmission, and social recognition. Examining normative approaches in different countries reveals the level of institutional support for traditional forms of knowledge and the degree of their integration into state cultural

policy. National models of legitimation vary depending on the historical-legal context, administrative structure, and cultural policy, resulting in differing levels of effectiveness in safeguarding intangible heritage. The provided table summarises the key parameters of legal provision in the four countries (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparative characteristics of legal mechanisms for the legitimation of intangible cultural heritage in Ukraine, Spain, Italy, and Romania

Country	Regulatory framework	Institutional mechanism	Level of integration of traditional knowledge	Specificities of the legal approach
Spain	Legislative regulation via a specific law	Combined system of national and regional governance	High	Flexible integration of local traditions with state policy
Italy	Code of Cultural Heritage and related acts	Involvement of sectoral ethnoscientific institutions	High	Institutionalisation through interdisciplinary integration
Romania	Law on the Safeguarding of ICH	National Commission for Heritage Safeguarding	Medium	Systemic support for crafts and certification of practitioners
Ukraine	General law on cultural heritage	Ministry of Culture, National Register	Low / unstable	Lack of specific instruments, impact of martial law

Source: compiled by the authors based on Law of Ukraine No. 1805-III “On the Protection of Cultural Heritage” (2000), Code of the Cultural and Landscape Heritage (2004), Law of the Romanian Parliament No. 26 “On the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage” (2008), Law No. 126 “On the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage” (2015)

Within the research, four types of knowledge transmission within intangible tradition were identified: oral-vocal, corporeal-ritual, culinary-domestic, and craft-visual. Each functions as an autonomous form of structuring social experience, requiring no fixation in text or academic discourse. Concurrently, national strategies for legitimising traditional knowledge demonstrate significant variations, indicating the heterogeneity of the institutional field. In all cases examined, tradition emerges as a relevant form of knowledge capable of ensuring cognitive stability within contexts of cultural dynamics. This interpretation necessitates considering intangible cultural heritage not only from legal or ethnographic perspectives but also as a subject of epistemological analysis aimed at uncovering the forms and mechanisms of knowledge existence in the intangible dimension.

Discussion

Tradition as a form of intangible cultural heritage is increasingly considered within interdisciplinary scientific discourse as a means of preserving, transmitting, and legitimising knowledge. Researchers focus on the interrelationships between cultural memory, normative institutions, and the epistemological models embodied in intangible practices. In this context, substantive analysis of individual heritage elements is important, as is comparing the mechanisms through which tradition acquires the status of knowledge in different socio-cultural environments.

The study established that intangible cultural heritage traditions functioned as forms of non-linear epistemology, where knowledge was embodied in verbal-sonic, corporeal, gastronomic, and craft-visual practices. This interpretation refined the discourse analysis of C. Melis & D. Chambers (2021), who viewed heritage through the Foucauldian prism of power-knowledge as a constructed normative category. The results of this study confirmed that the institutional articulation of heritage indeed determined the forms of its representation; however, it was simultaneously

discovered that in local traditions, knowledge circulated beyond discursive constraints, through the body, gesture, intonation, and material action. This allowed for proposing a more complex model where tradition was not only inscribed within normative space but also resisted it through inefable modalities of knowledge.

Within the understanding of heritage as a form of epistemic multiplicity, the study's results correlated with the approach of F. Mazzocchi (2022) and L. Petrenko & Y. Brach (2024), who emphasised the impossibility of reducing cultural heritage to a unified type of knowledge. The research confirmed that the diversity of transmission forms – from song genres to culinary and craft activities – necessitated the existence of different epistemological regimes, which were not reducible to cognitive or conceptual representation. This supported the thesis of epistemic diversity and specified it – through a typology of practices that generated meaning through embodiment, repetition, and affective memory. The theme of affective motivation for safeguarding traditions, explored by C. Bortolotto (2024), proved relevant to this study's results concerning corporeal-ritual forms. It was evidenced that models such as castells or flamenco transmitted not only technical skill but also structures of collective emotional memory, activated through collective performance. In this context, the conclusion regarding the role of intimacy as a factor of institutional inclusion was refined: the study demonstrated that the institutionalisation of tradition was not always accompanied by a reduction of affective content – on the contrary, in the cases of Spain and Italy, emotional experience was embedded within the very structure of normative support.

Comparing educational and transmission models with the work of W.-J. Yan & K.-R. Li (2023), who analysed heritage in educational settings, helped to actualise the practical function of traditions within the model of informal learning. It was confirmed that knowledge was transmitted not through formalised programmes but through participation, observation, and reproduction – as

in the case of culinary or craft techniques. This expanded upon the understanding of the educational potential of heritage proposed by the aforementioned authors, highlighting the need to incorporate practices of embodied knowledge into formal pedagogical environments.

The digital dimension of heritage representation, analysed by H. Tamrazyan & G. Hovhannisyan (2025), was partially correlated with the results of this study concerning the problem of categorisation. It was established that traditions based on non-verbal forms of knowledge were difficult to subject to digital cataloguing. This aligned with the assertion regarding the complexity of typologising epigraphic heritage due to its multi-layered cultural significance. The research confirmed that in cases of crafts or ritual practices, the process of formalisation was complicated by the situational, variable, and contextual nature of the knowledge, which eluded stable codification. The results related to the political and administrative aspects of legitimation were relevant to the conclusions of T. Kumar (2024), who researched the limitations of heritage documentation in India. This study identified an analogous situation in the Ukrainian context: formal normative documents existed, yet they were unable to encompass all types of epistemological activity associated with tradition. As in the work of the aforementioned author, the results evidenced that without the active involvement of tradition bearers, the legal system remained fragmented, and knowledge vulnerable to loss. The study allowed for specifying this thesis by demonstrating how forms of succession functioned through actions rather than institutional articulation.

In the sphere of innovative heritage protection, the conclusions of N. Zoannos *et al.* (2023) regarding the potential use of blockchain technologies for recording heritage acquired an additional dimension. This research found that a significant portion of traditions was based on contextual variability and local situationality, which did not align with the logic of an immutable record. This allowed for a refinement: while blockchain might

be relevant for some heritage types, it fails to account for the dynamics of affective and embodied knowledge inherent, for instance, in corporeal or culinary practices. Thus, the results called into question the universality of digital solutions for safeguarding all types of intangible heritage. The undertaken analysis of the forms of epistemological representation of intangible cultural heritage demonstrated a disparity between the normative safeguarding paradigm embedded in international institutions and the actual practices of knowledge transmission. This discrepancy correlated with the critical observations of S. Ortiz & C. de Madariaga (2021), who pointed out that the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) was limited to declarative mechanisms and failed to consider the internal dynamics of heritage within local communities. The results of this study allowed for specifying these conclusions: it was revealed that in Italy, Spain, and Romania, traditions maintained their function as an autonomous knowledge system, reproducing itself despite official procedures – through the daily corporeal and material participation of its bearers. Thus, it was demonstrated that formal inscription on UNESCO lists guaranteed neither active practice nor the genuine transmission of knowledge.

The documented role of language as a vector of intergenerational epistemology resonated with the theses of N. Braber & V. Howard (2023), who considered language an autonomous form of intangible heritage that functioned not merely as a means of communication, but as a bearer of a cultural code. It was confirmed that within local traditions, verbal units did not perform an informative function in isolation but served as markers of ritual, ceremonial, or artisanal content. For instance, terms used in gastronomic discourse (as in the case of Ukrainian borscht) were not neutral lexemes but denoted specific stages of action, rite, or intention. This allowed for an expansion of the conclusions of the aforementioned study, emphasising not only the linguistic dimension of heritage preservation but also the

cognitive function of language as a structure of preserved collective memory.

The problem of the legal regime and intellectual property in the sphere of intangible cultural heritage, analysed by B. Ubertazzi (2022), was tangential to the conflict identified in this study between institutional safeguarding and the living practice of tradition. It was established that practices recorded in registries were not subject to unified legal protection, as the knowledge circulating in artisanal-visual or corporeal-ritual forms could not be formalised into a patent or copyright. This was observed, in particular, in the Ukrainian and Romanian contexts. The study clarified that the legal mechanism must account not only for the product of tradition but also for the processuality of its transmission, which is not a copy but an empirical reproduction of affective and corporeal experience.

The identified transformation of intangible heritage into an object of symbolic capital correlated with the findings of B. Santamarina (2023), who considered UNESCO's activities as the production of "heritage brands". The analysis revealed that practices included in the Representative List acquired commercial significance in tourism and cultural industries, which affected the nature of their functioning. For example, in the case of flamenco or castells, authentic forms were transformed into a spectacular format oriented towards an external audience. This allowed for the development of the idea of "heritage capitalisation" in the context of its distancing from the bearer-community, while simultaneously emphasising that symbolic value does not always contribute to the preservation of the epistemological function of tradition. The study enabled a rethinking of the approaches of R. Smeets (2023), who emphasised the reorientation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) towards sustainable development. The results revealed that in local contexts, traditions indeed acted as instruments for the sustainable reproduction of knowledge; however, they were not always amenable to

adaptation into development programmes in the form expected institutionally. In cases where tradition was embodied in situational, non-systemic experience (as in gastronomic or seasonal rites), it was not integrated into the logic of sustainable economic or educational planning. This allowed for a supplementation of the stated concept by pointing to the need for a more flexible interpretation of heritage within development policies.

Finally, the conclusions of S. Qechai (2023), focused on the symbolic power of UNESCO in constructing global heritage, were juxtaposed with the identified limitations in representing local forms of epistemology. The study confirmed that global standards did not encompass all forms of knowledge – particularly those lacking fixed objectified expression. For instance, bodily techniques in food preparation or pottery-making could not be uniformly recorded without a loss of context. Consequently, a critical rethinking of the unifying heritage strategy was proposed, which confirmed the observations regarding its political and discursive nature in the global sphere.

The obtained analytical results allowed for the outlining of key directions in contemporary scholarly reflection on intangible cultural heritage as a form of knowledge. A comparison with existing studies demonstrated that questions regarding the epistemological nature of tradition, the mechanisms of its institutional legitimation, as well as the forms of its preservation and transmission, are considered in both normative-legal and socio-cultural dimensions. The identified correspondence between the typology proposed within this study and ideas concerning the diversity of cognitive regimes, the institutionalisation of knowledge, and the risks of heritage universalisation allows for an expansion of the interpretative boundaries of tradition, not merely as an object of safeguarding, but as an active epistemological resource.

Conclusions

In the course of the research, it was documented that within the Ukrainian cultural environment,

tradition functioned as a form of epistemological presence, independent of written or institutionalised channels of knowledge. It was established that oral-vocal, artisanal, culinary-domestic, and ritual-corporeal practices ensured not only the preservation of cultural content but also formed stable models of cognitive interaction. In particular, it was evidenced that Ukrainian Cossack songs, gastronomic, and artisanal traditions served as effective mechanisms for transmitting historical memory, moral-ethical conceptions, and technical-symbolic knowledge, which were passed down through generations via the practice of participation, ritualised repetitiveness, and corporeal interaction. It was revealed that these forms were capable of transmitting cognitive structures even in the absence of formal education or written media. The conducted comparison with the experience of Spain, Italy, and Romania made it possible to outline common and distinct models of representing intangible cultural heritage as knowledge. It was determined that in all the studied countries, tradition functioned as a means of fixing not only cultural identity but also socio-normative structures, representing shared experience in forms such as music, ritual, craft, and gastronomy. At the same time, differences in the degree of formalisation of these forms were recorded: while Spain and Italy demonstrated a high level of normative institutionalisation of ICH elements, Ukraine was at a stage of transitional system stabilisation, and Romania was distinguished by its emphasis on artisanal support through state policy.

The systematisation of the identified data allowed for the formulation of a typology of traditions as epistemological models, within which four forms of knowledge transmission were distinguished: oral-vocal, ritual-corporeal, culinary-domestic, and artisanal-visual. Each of them was characterised by specific mechanisms for preserving and transmitting cognitive content that existed outside textual codes. It was ascertained that these forms possessed an internal structure that ensured not only repetitiveness but also adaptability to a changing environment, as evidenced particularly in the conditions of cultural transformation caused by war. A limitation of the study was its focus primarily on representative practices already recognised or inventoried at the national or international level, which limits the coverage of local or marginalised forms of intangible heritage that remain outside legal and academic focus. Promising directions for further research include studying the dynamics of intangible heritage transformation under conditions of migration processes, armed conflict, and digitalisation, as well as analysing the interaction between local epistemologies and global mechanisms of cultural legitimation.

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Епістемологія традицій: філософські виклики збереження нематеріальної культурної спадщини

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Анотація. Метою дослідження було встановити типологію нематеріальних традицій як форм епістемологічного знання на прикладі українського культурного середовища; додатково проведено порівняння з відповідними практиками в Іспанії, Італії та Румунії для виявлення структурних відмінностей і точок перетину. Методологічну основу становив порівняльний аналіз форм репрезентації нематеріальної культурної спадщини у національних контекстах з урахуванням правових рамок, інституційної легітимації та способів передачі знання. Аналіз проводився на основі офіційних документів, елементів списку Організації Об'єднаних Націй з питань освіти, науки і культури (ЮНЕСКО) та національних законодавчих джерел. У результаті було виявлено, що традиція функціонує як інструмент збереження та передачі не лише культурного змісту, але й структурованого знання. Зафіксовано чотири ключові форми трансляції знання: усно-вокальна, тілесно-обрядова, кулінарно-побутова та ремісничо-візуальна. Кожна з них демонструвала специфічну модель епістемічної присутності: від емоційної пам'яті (у піснях та вербальних жанрах) до практичного втілення знання у матеріальних формах (кулінарія, ремесла). Усі чотири країни мали формалізовані системи збереження нематеріальної культурної спадщини, проте виявлені розбіжності в глибині інтеграції традицій у національні інститути: Іспанія та Італія демонстрували стабільну нормативну модель, Румунія – цілеспрямовану підтримку ремесел, а Україна перебувала на етапі інституційного переходу в умовах воєнної нестабільності. Систематизація отриманих результатів дозволила визначити традицію як форму соціального знання, що виконує нормативну, практичну й ідентифікаційну функцію. Було показано, що нематеріальна спадщина вимагає не лише етнографічного або правового підходу, але й епістемологічного осмислення як носія знання, репрезентованого у невербальних, тілесних, образних або ритуалізованих формах. Практична значимість дослідження полягала у розробці підходу до аналізу нематеріальної спадщини як складника системи трансляції знання в умовах соціальних трансформацій

Ключові слова: епістемологія; культура; культурна спадщина; традиція; емоційна пам'ять; інтеграція; нестабільність



The dynamics of values and vulnerability of modern democracy against the backdrop of globalisation and localisation processes

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Abstract. The relevance of this work was determined by the acute problem of value-based attitudes towards the world in modern conditions, articulated in the concepts of post-truth, the destruction of grand narratives of the past, and widespread fatigue and disappointment. This has led to the devaluation of traditional values and an axiological crisis. The aim of the work was to reveal the vulnerable aspects of democracy and their impact on the dynamics of values, globalisation and localisation processes of the present day. To achieve this aim, a set of methods was used, in particular, comparative, analytical, empirical, and causal. The research was conducted in the context of a sociocultural approach, based on the principles of systematicity and development. The research found that the instability of the world, permanent crises, and global challenges that characterise the modern era have led to significant sociocultural and political changes, which have become a serious test and threat to the democratic world. Leaders of political processes have increasingly appealed to the emotional and irrational sphere, defining it as the value base for political action. This has resulted in the global spread of manipulative practices, populist slogans, aggressive demagoguery, fear politics, and growing authoritarian tendencies in the socio-political sphere. Democracy, being limited in its ability to counter such practices, had at its disposal mainly means of dialogue, agreements, and deals that required prior consent, responsibility of the parties, and the willingness of all actors to comply with the terms of the agreements. This demonstrated the vulnerability of democracy, within which fertile ground was created for radicals and political criminals who viewed the stability of democratic values as weaknesses of democracy and used

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them to seize power, achieve immoral goals, and localise the population in closed communities through intimidation, violence, and political speculation. To counter this, the local unification of communities based on markers of patriotic nationalism seemed to be the most acceptable strategy, taking into account humanity's need for security and, at the same time, looking to the future. The results achieved can be used in educational and social work as separate topics in courses on ethics, philosophy, political science, etc

Keywords: authoritarianism; radicalism; populism; political manipulation; identity; nationalism; patriotism

Introduction

The research is relevant given the systemic crisis of democracy, which manifests itself in the decline of democratic open societies compared to authoritarian regimes, in the political instability of electoral democracy, in the devaluation of liberal values, and in the crisis of identity. The spread of information technology, the virtual environment and social networks, which, in the context of global environmental threats and challenges, pandemics and military conflicts, are becoming the primary medium for communication, has opened up broad prospects for their use for the purposes of emotional and psychological manipulation, suggestion, propaganda of populism, radicalism, plutocracy, social isolation, etc. The modern information society is characterised by excessive amounts of information that people are unable to perceive, but this information overload causes fragmentation of society. The process of forming social, informational, cultural, and ideological bubbles, echo chambers, and filter bubbles continues, with the intellectual isolation of social groups occurring according to the criteria of selectivity of perceived information. In the process, the concept of traditional values is being revised, and the universal nature of liberal democratic values, in particular legal equality, human dignity, popular sovereignty, etc., is being questioned. This deepens the social crisis and undermines the authority of democracy in the world.

Researchers T. Pryadko & A. Ruban (2025) have identified the following signs of the crisis of modern democracy: the ineffectiveness of the system of checks and balances, the spread of

authoritarian control over the media, civil society, and the judiciary, accompanied by a decline in political accountability; information wars and external influences. These factors undermine trust in democracy and create a high level of public dissatisfaction with politics and low levels of trust in governments and political actors. The crisis of democracy is exacerbated by a lack of political literacy, the crisis of classical ideologies, ineffective representation, and the growing influence of actors who are not accountable to the electorate. Ultimately, the threat of populism and authoritarianism is growing.

In conditions of destabilisation, two opposing trends are clearly evident: the growing processes of community localisation are overlapping with active globalisation movements. Researcher N. Natalina (2023) has described this state as the non-linearity, multidimensionality and asynchrony of democracy, considering it a trend towards the formation of a new world order characterised by conflicts between democratic and authoritarian regimes, political fragmentation of the world and the formation of a multipolar world model. In this regard, the problem of identity crisis and the ambivalence of its solution at the local and global levels becomes relevant. The formation of global identity is based on universal human values and behavioural markers, including democracy, inclusiveness and diversity, cultural openness, broad mental horizons and the mobility of ideas, knowledge and individuals, personal autonomy, environmentalism, right-wing politics, responsibility, solidarity, etc. The rise of isolationist

sentiments and trends, the desire for unity at the local level, is described by a number of researchers using markers of nationalism: nativist nationalism – in S. Marginson (2024), critical, exclusive nationalism – in F. Bieber (2022), and patriotic nationalism – in J. Sánchez-Prieto (2023). The localisation of communities also occurs on the basis of a number of factors, such as culture, media, financial values, and information technology, which are markers that influence the processes of grouping and self-identification. This dualism of identification processes is quite controversial in nature – contradictory processes caused by the latest challenges facing the world occur simultaneously. These challenges include pandemics, military threats, worldview conflicts and crises, resulting in growing existential anxiety, declining interpersonal trust, isolationism, manipulative and speculative political practices, geopolitical crises, economic turmoil, and so on. This is a paradox of the superposition of traditionalism and innovation, resulting in a systemic crisis. One of its manifestations is the crisis of modern democracy.

Against the backdrop of global threats, subcultures are developing rapidly, and various local cultural practices and movements are becoming more individualised, leading to heightened intercultural confrontation and intensified processes of localisation, de-Westernisation, desecularisation and deculturation. The degree of US dominance in the world is decreasing, with the country abandoning its position as a world leader in favour of internal development. Instead, China and groups of “non-Euro-American” states such as India, Iran, Indonesia, South Korea and Brazil are on the rise. In particular, researcher S. Marginson (2024) noted a trend towards a decline in the dominance of the United States and “Euro-American” countries at the global level, which he explained by the extraordinary situation associated with climate and environmental challenges and the powerlessness of states to counter them. The result is political destabilisation and a growing sense of danger, which affects the dynamics of values and the formation

of new value needs, among which nativism and securitisation stand out.

Thus, this concerns the formation of the foundations for a new world order and a multipolar world, a revision of traditional values, and the emergence of new value demands based on changes in people’s self-identification. The aim of this work was to study the dialectics of changes in value orientations and self-identification trends against the backdrop of the crisis of democracy and the ambivalent processes of globalisation and localisation in the modern world.

Literature Review

A crisis, particularly one that is prolonged or lacks a foreseeable resolution, leads to a number of negative consequences. Philosophical analysis of the consequences, conducted at various times by researchers R. Koselleck (2004), A. Etzioni (2019), and P. Rosanvallon (2021), has made it possible to identify the most significant ones. In particular, these include: a reduction in the scope of experience and a distancing of expectations; an increase in aggressive demagoguery among isolated people; political vulnerability, destabilisation, growing dangers, fragmentation of life, difficult choices, and restrictions on the mobility of active population groups. Against the backdrop of such negative consequences, P. Rosanvallon (2021) proposes the concept of “life trials” as a new sociological category that reflects the crisis state of the world. The researcher emphasised the value of deep personal experience and the importance of the emotional reactions it generates. This refers to the growing crisis of rationality in the modern world, manifested in the increasing distance and gap between individuals and society, the escape into a world of irrational, psychological experiences, often virtual constructs, artificial solutions, and simulacra. At the same time, researchers distinguish between both negative and positive consequences of such an escape: emotional reactions can either exacerbate the closedness and fragmentation of society, increase fear, sometimes panic, and a feeling of vulnerability

to threats, or contribute to social cohesion and the accumulation of strength, primarily strength of spirit, in conditions of extreme threat, ensuring social security through the use of the community's internal potential.

One of the forms of uniting society against external threats is the national idea, which is implemented in various ways. In particular, researcher F. Bieber (2022) highlights the phenomenon of exclusive critical nationalism, which involves the pursuit of national unity in the face of dangers, crises, and global challenges of the modern world, such as covid-19 or the threat of nuclear apocalypse. This type of nationalism is characterised by a tendency towards isolation in the face of deadly threats. An integral factor in the formation of closed communities of this kind is emotions that often call for the exclusion of others. Community security is achieved through strict physical restrictions, which are actively and successfully used by right-wing politicians. F. Bieber (2022) noted that the factors of crisis unification of communities were the desire to achieve stability in the spread of the pandemic, protection from authoritarian regimes, and oppression of citizens' rights and freedoms. This localisation was based on fear and aims to strengthen borders as protective mechanisms against pandemics, globalisation, and risk groups. The result of such unification is the strengthening of exclusive nationalism – a closed type of nationalism, where membership in the group is ensured solely by the national/ethnic affiliation of the individual. Historically, communities united on the basis of fear are classified as mythological societies. Thus, the influence of mythological narratives on the formation of values, behavioural patterns, and communication strategies in such communities is to be expected. The obvious negative consequences of this kind of exclusive nationalism are the regulation of social life by emotional and irrational methods of influence, leading to the restriction of citizens' democratic rights and freedoms as a result of the introduction of policies of fear and prejudice, and regulatory security mechanisms

through increased control and surveillance. These conditions are fertile ground for the growth of political manipulation, right-wing radical movements, separatism and isolationism.

Another kind of emotional social escape is fatigue, disillusionment, and the rejection of rational political leadership. Thinkers from O. Spengler (2007) to contemporary philosophers like R. Keyes (2004) and S. Žižek (2022) have repeatedly stressed the destruction of the grand narratives of the past and the general exhaustion of European civilisation. C. Ryan (2021) described this condition as a "great refusal", a "great disillusionment" characteristic of European culture. R. Keyes (2004) announced the arrival of the post-truth era, defining it as a phenomenon of interpersonal communication and an alternative ethics – a grey ethical zone where emotions and personal convictions prevail, accompanied by a deliberate distancing from objective truth. History is mostly a story of colonisation, the seizure of new territories, and the forceful establishment of orders in colonised lands. The 21st century has become a time for rethinking history and past colonial practices, acknowledging the responsibility of Euro-North American civilisation for the actions of its predecessors. Ideas advocating for the rejection of Eurocentrism in favour of the autonomous development of local cultures and territories to preserve the authenticity of local cultures have actively begun to be voiced. Against this backdrop, P. Bruckner (2010) pointed to the rising sense of guilt and the need for repentance experienced by modern Europeans for the crimes committed by their predecessors – genocides, the Holocaust, world wars, and violent methods of exercising power and subjugation. The author labelled this need for repentance as a "tyranny". From a psychological perspective, such repentance resembles the efforts of children to distance themselves from the crimes of their parents by rejecting previous aggressive political experience, as a result of which any active display of force is perceived as evil, a threat of violence. This is a fragmentation of historical memory, resulting in political

weakness. Europeans are refusing methods of coercive pressure from the arsenal of previous generations, striving to preserve the calm well-being achieved after the Second World War. However, against the backdrop of new threats and aggressive belligerent regimes, this refusal/forgetting appears as the powerlessness of democracy.

Autocrats, radicals, and political manipulators seek to exploit this situation of powerlessness, using the unresolved contradictions of the past to destabilise the present. In the collective monograph by O. Horban *et al.* (2019), the researchers note that a fragmented, selective, rather than holistic image of memory provokes the destruction of legality and justice, causes territorial disputes, discrimination based on various criteria, and mass human rights violations. Ultimately, the fragmentation of memory turns into its ideologisation, during which certain fragments of historical reality are absolutised to fit the general logic of the proposed metanarrative, while facts that contradict this logic are silenced. The consequence of these actions is always manipulation and the distortion of history. This position is also held by Y. Dukh (2025), a specialist in Ukrainian strategic communications, who noted that painful historical traumas must be handled with extreme caution; they must be memorialised to ensure the tragedies do not recur. Thus, the politics of repentance involves solving three interconnected tasks: the honouring (sacralisation) of victims' memory, achieving historical reconciliation, and subsequently, the politicisation of historical memory. The process of politicisation of historical memory directly influences the formation of national identity and the stability of the value system, and therefore must be an integral part of the state-national security strategy. This is emphasised in the monograph by V. Yablonskyi *et al.* (2019). The researchers indicated the necessity of changes in historical consciousness and the construction of a national historical narrative, forming a memory policy that corresponds to national (anti-colonial) interests, promotes the formation of a stable national identity, legitimises

state sovereignty, and provides a holistic vision of the past for the purpose of societal consolidation. These issues are clearly strategic for ensuring the sovereignty and integrity of any state. Otherwise, historical traumas become a tool for blackmail, emotional pressure on opponents, and political manipulation, a source of claims and speculation. Ultimately, this escalates into historical revisionism, a historical debt that never expires. Such a path leads to the increase of political tension and inter-state contradictions, which are successfully used by dictatorships to weaken global democracy and strengthen themselves.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted on the principles of a systemic approach and development, employing socio-cultural and activity-based methodologies. A combination of research methods was used, including the comparative method – to determine the characteristics of globalisation and localisation processes, to explore the phenomenon of modern nationalism, and to compare and contrast these phenomena in the contemporary context in order to identify the causes and features of different types of nationalism. To examine the characteristic traits of various forms of nationalism, the patterns of their emergence and development, to compare their strengths and weaknesses, and to identify related social issues, the content analysis method was also applied.

The empirical method, which is most relevant for the study of current events and real-world political facts, was employed particularly in analysing media publications, processing internet content (especially on the YouTube platform), and summarising materials from scholarly articles published in professional academic journals. The empirical foundation for this method consisted of selected media publications and podcasts by Ukrainian philosophers, political scientists, cultural theorists, and political journalists. The chronological sample of materials covered the 2020s, while the thematic sample included events significant to the subject of the

study – such as the crisis of democracy, military threats, the rise of radical movements, the spread of populism, and their impact on worldview and socio-cultural transformations. The basic hypothesis of the study was that the systemic political crisis of contemporary democracy has an ambivalent impact on processes of self-identification and, consequently, on the transformation of values. This duality gives rise to a dichotomy in social consolidation processes, manifesting as globalisation and localisation.

In processing empirical material, the causal analysis method was applied to identify correlations between the dynamics of values and political processes; to study the regularities of globalisation and localisation in the context of global political and socio-cultural trends; and to explore the anthropological challenges and identity processes these trends provoke. Causal relationships were identified between the crisis of democracy, the decline in overall educational standards, and the growth of radical and populist political movements. These, in turn, drive value transformations toward increased differentiation, identity divergence, and, consequently, the closure of societies and the localisation of communities as a security response in a rapidly changing world.

The discourse analysis method was used for a critical examination of the discourse of nationalism, to generalise the characteristics of modern forms of nationalism, and to interpret their influence on social change, value transformation, and the direction of social consolidation processes. The observed diversity in contemporary nationalism proved productive for developing the hypothesis of the priority of patriotic nationalism – which, as demonstrated by the Ukrainian experience, most effectively counters present-day threats and challenges. Overall, the applied methods enabled the identification of the weak and vulnerable aspects of modern democratic systems of governance, the rapid dynamics of political and socio-cultural processes and events, their analysis, and the elucidation of transformation mechanisms. They also facilitated the formulation of

relevant generalisations and forecasts regarding the future resilience of democratic regimes under conditions of mounting challenges and threats.

Results and Discussion

Scientists around the world are drawing attention to the peculiarities of the current socio-political situation, seeing in it threats to the future of the democratic world, when democracy proves incapable of protecting its own values, above all freedom of choice, in the face of a brutal criminal force seeking to forcibly restore the old norms and orders. Ukrainian historian Y. Hrytsak (2025) defines this state of affairs as an institutional crisis of democratic institutions, which in the current conditions are unable to perform their functions. There is a growing threat of abandoning the future in favour of regression, of escaping into the past. Researchers V. Ganuthula & K. Balaraman (2025), referring to the experience of the United States, India, Germany, China and Russia, pointed to dangerous political changes and the legitimisation of regressive processes in the modern world. The researchers believe that the key reason for such political changes was the interaction of money, identity and information. The authors identified this as a universal trend of contemporary politics whereby financial resources are used to deepen identity divisions, to amplify social differences through digital platforms, and to delegitimise democratic regimes while simultaneously enhancing the appeal of non-democratic narratives. Thus, it can be argued that democracy, by refusing to use force, loses out to totalitarian regimes. A symbolic example is the protest of Yale University professors T. Snyder, M. Shore and J. Stanley who relocated to universities in Toronto, Canada, as an act of dissent against the current political climate in the United States. This protest, in the form of refusal/escape characteristic of democracy, is an attempt to fight for one's values and beliefs by non-violent means of influence (Lopez & Wang, 2025).

Ukrainian researchers V. Lomaka (2024) and V. Yermolenko & T. Ogarkova (2025) point to the

vulnerabilities of modern democracy, calling the position of European democrats “the powerlessness of the strong” and emphasising that there are growing trends of fascism and radicalisation in the world. Right-wing ideological movements and emotional and value-based speculation are becoming increasingly popular, against which the critical rationality of democracy is proving helpless. Researchers call Western societies “risk reduction machines” and “insurance companies” that seek first and foremost to preserve the security of their own existence. In contrast, putinism, where the value of human life is minimal, operates as a “machine for increasing risks for others”. Democracy, based on the principles of humanism, legal equality, freedom of speech and respect for human dignity, proves incapable of resisting the trends that destroy it, thus demonstrating its own weakness and extremely vulnerable position. By refusing, even in threatening conditions, to use force in favour of open dialogue, democracy loses its ability to stop violence and evil. It is used as an open platform for attack by those who are extremely distant from democratic values but understand the vulnerability and weaknesses of democracy in order to achieve their own shameful goals. In this context, the position of researchers H. Carey & S. Mitchell (2020) is illustrative. They call for the mitigation of the prerogatives of power through the introduction of equality and consultation with local actors, insisting that without such mitigations, it is impossible to achieve stable peace. This opinion is indisputable in peacetime. The formation of international organisations such as the UN after the Second World War was precisely aimed at ensuring world order and strengthening peace between states within internationally recognised borders on the basis of the principles of equality and self-determination. These principles are enshrined in the UN Charter. However, since February 24, 2022, the international security order has been violently shattered, and its restoration now demands the unified strength of the democratic world – the application of democratic force against criminal

aggressors. Traditional democratic instruments – dialogue, compromise, and consensus – have proven ineffective against dictatorial aggression, posing an existential threat to humanity's future. Thus, peacemaking based on the mitigation of the prerogatives of power ignores the rights of future generations and increases the sense of uncertainty and insecurity.

The passage addresses a global political, governance, socio-cultural, and value crisis. J. Sánchez-Prieto (2023) points out that the world was engaged in a struggle over fundamental transformations of the system-forming order, linked to changes in the evaluation of the world and the formation of new value systems. This struggle was highly emotionally charged and often carries negative, oppositional connotations. Against the backdrop of the erosion of the idea of the future and growing public distrust of leaders and institutions, local identity grounded in shared ethno-cultural and national values gains increasing importance. A social demand for security emerges as a core value which, in the context of active global change, provokes localisation and the closing-off of communities. One of the most successful variants of such localisation, according to the author, is nation-building. The process of nation-building typically revolves around the values of language as the quintessence of culture and a shared historical narrative as the source of tradition. Nation-building myths become the emotional and value-based foundation around which processes of consolidation unfold. J. Sánchez-Prieto (2023) emphasises the importance of myth-making as a powerful engine of culture and communication, while noting its selective nature, linked to the constraints and loopholes of rationality, where rational elements combine with emotions, images, and symbols. The outcomes of this combination are often excessive and associated with heightened levels of social threat. Analysing contemporary processes of myth-making, the author identifies three types of myths: metaphysical, naturalistic, and cultural. Each displays a distinct value-emotional

colouring. Metaphysical myths possess a sacred character and appeal to the holy idea of a national spirit or messianism. Naturalistic myths rest on magical ideas of the sanctity of native soil, the spirit of ancestors, and the call of blood. Cultural myths are the closest to rational nation-building and appeal to the cultural transformation of a community into a nation under the pressure of harsh trials and the struggle for survival. An updated national narrative is formed in the emotional-value struggle, based on patriotic feeling, which becomes the antidote to national populism. In J. Sánchez-Prieto's (2023) conviction, patriotic nationalism formed on the basis of the cultural myth is the only capable force to ensure effective intercultural dialogues supported by moral values – the so-called moral dialogues, “dialogues that allow us to objectify and discern the variety of moral cultures at stake”. The very cultural, nation-building myth has been fully manifested in Ukraine. After all, Ukraine is at war, a “dramatic struggle for existence”, resisting Russian imperialism. Developing the idea of the regressive processes of the contemporary era, the author classifies Russian imperialism among them, viewing it as a consequence of social Darwinism. At the same time, the author considers war to be an effective cultural agent, whose noble outcome has been the transformation of the Ukrainian people into a nation. Thus, the researcher records a successful example of forced localisation of a community that has prospects for a successful future.

Indeed, wartime Ukraine has faced the threat of the obliteration of its statehood and of the Ukrainian nation itself, and therefore had no choice but to unite, militarise and fight. In circumstances where room for manoeuvre is minimised, what V. Havel (1985) called the “power of the powerless” is forged – a power which, the author argues, is feared by dictatorships everywhere. In the present conditions, the formation and consolidation of the Ukrainian nation around the values of patriotism and the necessity of defending the sovereignty and independence of the state is taking place. However, for the young Ukrainian state,

the task of resisting a large and powerful autocracy over a prolonged period is extremely difficult. Assistance and the combined efforts of the entire democratic world are required. At the same time, Europeans still find it very hard to resolve to take decisive action against the invaders and perpetrators of violence, and to employ the full military and armed potential at their disposal.

The arguments used to justify Europe's indecision range from “not provoking the aggressor” to warnings to Ukraine about excessive enthusiasm for the national idea. In view of this, it is worth differentiating between the concepts of nazism and nationalism. After all, it was precisely the accusation of nazism that became the pretext for Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Europeans are also quite cautious about the national question, believing that the historical era of nations is over and that the modern civilised world is a world of the internet, migration and multiculturalism, united around other value markers such as globalism, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism. In the context of globalisation, nations are losing their historical subjectivity, and the world is moving towards a post-national state. The identification of individuals by ethnic or national markers is opposed by the idea of universal humanitarian values: human rights, democracy, sustainable development, technological progress, freedom of speech, etc. The ideas of a cosmopolitan shift in global citizenship and post-national identity are becoming increasingly relevant (Habermas, 2005). Globalisation, the internet, international corporations, cosmopolitan risks, environmental challenges and multiculturalism are weakening national identity and prompting a transition to a reflective, conscious identity and a search for new forms of governance and cooperation at the international level.

For Ukraine, the issue of national identity is particularly relevant due to its more than three centuries of stateless existence. In the 17th and 18th centuries, when the idea of the nation and the nation state emerged in Europe, Ukrainians were going through difficult times of loss of

statehood and political subjectivity. Statelessness always results in the oppression of ethnic communities (loss of rights, humiliation, enslavement, deprivation of language, culture, and historical memory). For a long time, Ukraine, divided into parts, was in colonial dependence (Stezhko *et al.*, 2021; Kultenko *et al.*, 2022). Only with the attainment of independence in 1991 did Ukrainians gain the opportunity to build their own sovereign state in accordance with their national character, history, traditions, culture, values and vision of the future. Therefore, the national theme, not having been experienced synchronously with Europe, is being comprehended and realised in the current difficult conditions, and at a fairly rapid pace – after all, Europeans had about five hundred years to transition from national to post-national identity. For Ukrainians, this is a relatively new experience of living in their own state in accordance with national and cultural traditions, ensuring the priority of national interests, values and prospects. This experience is shaped by the sensitive emotional and value-based foundation of tragic historical memory, the collective trauma of several generations of Ukrainians who were massively repressed, evicted from their native land, persecuted, devalued and objectified. The implementation of a colonial policy of inferiority forced Ukrainians to be ashamed of their own origins, ethnicity, language and culture. Therefore, for Ukrainians, national self-determination and self-awareness are linked to liberation from feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, insufficiency, defectiveness and unworthiness. The unifying basis for the formation of the Ukrainian nation is love and attachment to the native land – patriotism that has overcome narrow regional boundaries, xenophobia, and discrimination and has grown to the level of an active feeling, a conscious need to defend one's homeland.

It is important that the Ukrainian nation is formed on the principles of inclusiveness, not exclusivity, as is characteristic of radical chauvinistic national movements. The principle of inclusiveness implies openness, the unification of representatives of different ethnic groups living

together in one territory into a single nation – a political community that professes common patriotic feelings and strives to build a sovereign, politically, socially, culturally and economically successful nation state. Distinguishing between the concepts of ethnic and national identities, it is emphasised that the former (ethnic identity) is socio-cultural in nature, while national identity is political and legal in essence. The most telling example in this context is Ukraine's government representation: Ukrainians, Jews, Crimean Tatars, ethnic Russians and representatives of other ethnic groups represent the will of the Ukrainian people and identify themselves as Ukrainians at the level of political consciousness. Against the backdrop of growing fascist and chauvinistic sentiments in Europe and the United States, such Ukrainian inclusive nationalism appears much more promising and democratic. Ukrainian political journalist V. Portnikov (2025) systematically draws attention to this, emphasising that the issue of identity in the Russian-Ukrainian war is the most important for Ukraine's future.

National unity in Ukraine is forming in response to an external military threat, significantly accelerating the identification of the population. The war has become a trigger and catalyst for nation-building processes. F. Barnard (2003) called such processes the "spirit of the nation", when, in addition to the classic regulatory characteristics of statehood – territory, population, public authority, sovereignty, legal system, state symbols, international recognition – specific worldview components appear that determine national identity. In the modern tradition, the concept of the spirit of the nation is relevant to the concept of national identity, which is based on the values of language, historical tradition and culture. The spirit of the Ukrainian nation is manifested in the fact that Ukrainian culture overcomes inferiority and the boundaries of the local ethnic community, the language goes beyond the boundaries of purely family communication and becomes a means of social communication and marking one's own and others; history written in Ukrainian rather than imperial

textbooks becomes relevant to historical memory; there is a social demand for research into family trees and ancestry; Ukrainian culture, art, book publishing, theatre, cinema and other spheres are actively developing, and Ukrainian cultural figures are attracting interest and gaining recognition in their own country and around the world.

The contextual series of mental value oppositions between Ukraine and Western Europe can be summarised as the contrast between hard and soft power: Europeans have lost their hard power assets (positive assessments of military strength, military resistance, resilience in the face of the enemy), focusing only on soft power (the value of cultural diplomacy, words, agreements). The axiological opposition takes on a broader order: action versus words, responsibility versus irresponsibility, determination versus fear, confidence versus disbelief. Thanks to the construction of a renewed system of values, the power of the powerless acquires the potential to overcome dictatorship and military aggression and to protect freedom and justice. Meanwhile, Western societies are focused on reducing risks, avoiding harsh pressure, and striving to avoid greater harm: not provoking dictators, drawing red lines for dictatorships, etc. The West's focus on soft power is explained by the high value placed on human life in Western democracies, which is ensured by the organisation of preventive measures to reduce risks to the health and lives of citizens, the establishment of compensation payments for loss of life, etc. (Kartashova *et al.*, 2019). A threatening consequence of such aspirations is the rejection of force by democracy in favour of peace deals. At the same time, democracies lose force as their own asset. This is how the powerlessness of democracy in the face of the audacity and cruelty of dictatorships is formed. At the same time, democracy remains the only acceptable alternative to authoritarianism, tyranny and despotism, so democracy must be able to defend itself. The strength of democracy lies in its ability to use both the emotional and value potential of irrationalism and the methods of critical rational thinking, which

ensure an objective assessment and understanding of the situation, a value-based attitude to truth, a sober assessment of strengths and weaknesses and, ultimately, the use of force as a means of deterrence and countering aggression. Together, this paves the way for the unity of the democratic world based on responsibility, dignity, mutual respect and the pursuit of common security.

Liberal European culture has been shaped since the Renaissance by the dominance of the individualistic principle. For many centuries, it has determined the motives behind any individual or collective actions. The value of human life in a democratic world has been absolutised to the maximum extent, adversely affecting civic duties, in particular, the duty to defend one's homeland with arms and the willingness to sacrifice individual well-being for the common good. In a global world, the issues of territory and state borders have lost the urgency they had in classical geopolitical culture. A single global world has opened up opportunities for people to realise their potential without being rigidly confined to a specific territory. It is possible to realise individual talents and abilities in the single open space of the oikoumene. In postmodern discourse, the ideas of patriotism, national dignity and freedom-lovingness have been relativised, sometimes gaining an ironic interpretation or speculative context. The grand narratives of the past seemed to be firmly buried under postmodern irony. However, reality has exacerbated the problem of the dynamics of values, pointing out that the ideals of truth, goodness and justice, as formulated since Plato's time, need to be defended in the modern world. The values of freedom, democracy and the entire architecture of a free and open world require effort to secure. Freedom is not inherited, but is fought for at the cost of heroic efforts and great sacrifices, and democracy is a procedure that requires constant attention to ensure its observance. When the procedure is violated, democratic institutions are destroyed, and the world finds itself under pressure from the speculative simulacra of postmodern reality, in which

identity is blurred. Instead, in times of challenge, humanity needs an identity formed around markers of freedom, responsibility, security and stability, which are practically proven axiological and ethical constants. The results of empirical research by T. Mohamed (2025) are indicative in this context, allowing author to argue that in the field of education, the best educational achievements are demonstrated by students whose identity is defined in the range between cultural openness and nationalism. Meanwhile, rejection of national identity (non-nationalism) is associated with a decline in academic self-efficacy. Thus, localisation in closed communities around selective values of the past is also directly linked to a decline in education levels, which in turn negatively affects citizens' electoral skills and also contributes to the rise to power of political populists.

Conclusions

Against the backdrop of the crisis of democratic institutions, there was a dynamic change in social and individual values. As a result, the political and socio-cultural situation in the world is changing quite actively and significantly, which is especially noticeable in the context of the transition of power in leading countries in Europe and the United States. The change of power is taking place mainly through democratic means, but it is becoming increasingly difficult for democracies to resist populist, totalitarian/authoritarian regimes without having sufficient leverage to prevent this without losing democracy. After all, the main value principle of democratic politics is, first and foremost, the consent of civil society to mutual respect for the rights, honour and dignity of each individual, compliance with rules, non-violation of agreements and contracts, and consideration of everyone's position. The democratic principles of tolerance and acceptance of others' differences, which have spread in recent decades, have led to the formation of a high level of moral sterility/servility, contrary to the personal selfish positions of individuals and their consumerist attitudes. As a result, there is a growing social tension in the world, which leads to the

localisation of communities as a way of escaping tension. Grouping into closed communities, united by a sense of fear of an unknown future, is based on selective memory, a tendency towards populist slogans, unification around the values of the past, primarily force and coercion to achieve security, fascism, radicalisation of views and actions, when authoritarian leaders exercise power through threats, manipulative suggestions and a policy of fear. Traditional moral values are being relativised in favour of emotional and sensual speculation, the absolutisation of the principles of selfishness and consumer culture as the worldview of present day. This is used in fascist ideologies to unite and localise communities against the backdrop of increasing government powers. The basis for such unification is populist rhetoric that devalues the traditions of law and morality, intensifies feelings of anxiety, and appeals to invisible threats capable of destroying the comfort of ordinary people.

Uniting around a national idea is one type of localisation. There are different forms of nationalism, from nativist nationalism based on mystical experiences to critical, exclusive nationalism, which is equivalent to the process of fascistisation of society. The experience of Ukrainians' struggle for freedom and sovereignty of their own state under the slogans and values of patriotic nationalism looks like the most successful national strategy for the future, capable of protecting the world from the decline of democracy and the triumph of dictatorships. Patriotic nationalism synthesises critical rationalism and irrationality, combining the emotional values of love for the homeland with real hard power, which allows it to resist tyranny in favour of democracy. After all, despite all the shortcomings of democracy, humanity has no better alternative, so democracy must be able to defend itself, including with the use of weapons. The localisation of communities based on the values of freedom, respect, responsibility, dialogue, reinforced by the real ability to defend their values, territory and rights, has the potential to become the basis for a new world union and a new order. The results of the study may also form the basis for

further development of the theme of the transitivity of contemporary axiological and ethical problems.

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Динаміка цінностей та вразливості сучасної демократії на тлі процесів глобалізації та локалізації

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Анотація. Актуальність роботи визначилась загостренням проблеми ціннісного ставлення до світу в сучасних умовах, що артикулюється в поняттях постправди, руйнування гранднартивів минулого, великої втоми й розчарування. Це спричинило девальвацію традиційних цінностей та аксіологічну кризу. Мета роботи полягала в розкритті вразливих сторін демократії та їхнього впливу на динаміку цінностей, глобалізаційні та локалізаційні процеси сучасності. Для досягнення поставленої мети була застосована сукупність методів, зокрема, компаративістський, аналітичний, емпіричний, каузальний. Дослідження здійснене в контексті соціокультурного підходу, на принципах системності та розвитку. В процесі дослідження було встановлено, що нестабільність світу, перманентні кризи, глобальні виклики, якими характеризується сучасність, призводили до відчутних соціокультурних та політичних змін, що стало серйозним випробуванням, загрозою для демократичного світу. Лідери політичних процесів все частіше апелювали до емоційно-іраціональної сфери, саме її визначаючи як ціннісну базу для здійснення політичних дій. Наслідком цього стало поширення в глобальних масштабах в суспільно-політичній сфері маніпулятивних практик, популістських гасел, агресивної демагогії, політики страху, наростання авторитарних тенденцій. Демократія, будучи обмеженою у протидії таким практикам, мала в своєму арсеналі переважно засоби діалогу, домовленостей, угод, які передбачали попередню згоду, відповідальність сторін та готовність всіх акторів дотримуватись умов договорів. Це демонструвало вразливість демократії, всередині якої створювався плідний ґрунт для радикалів та політичних злочинців, що розглядали стабільність демократичних цінностей як слабкості демократії та використовували їх з метою захоплення влади, досягнення аморальних цілей, локалізації населення в закритих спільнотах шляхом залякування, насильства, політичних спекуляцій. В протидію цьому локальне об'єднання спільнот за маркерами патріотичного націоналізму видавалось найбільш прийнятною стратегією, що врахувала потреби людства у безпеці та, водночас, була спрямована у майбутнє. Досягнені результати можуть бути використані в освітній, соціально-виховній роботі як окремі теми в курсах з етики, філософії, політології тощо

Ключові слова: авторитаризм; радикалізм; популізм; політичні маніпуляції; ідентичність; націоналізм; патріотизм

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