

Psychological support of students with national identity transformations

Abstract

Introduction. The research of the development of national identity of student's youth is important for a deeper understanding of the factors of psychological security preservation, stability of nations and psychological health of their representatives. The recent intensification of globalisation, integration and migration processes in the European space makes especially relevant the problem of development of positive national identity among its youth citizens and the correction of transformations in this process. Therefore, the development of effective psychological support of student's youth with transformed national identity is necessary.

Aim. The article aims at conducting theoretical and empirical research of transformed types of national identity among students of higher educational institutions displaying national hypoidentity (national nihilism), national indifference or national hyperidentity (national egoism, national isolationism, national fanaticism); as well as at developing and organising their psychological support.

Material and methods. The study involved full-time first – fourth year students of higher education institutions from different regions of Ukraine who ensured the representativeness of sample. The age range of 17-21 to which the respondents belong is sensitive regarding the development of national identity. To reveal the type of students' national identity, psychodiagnostic methods ("Types of ethnic identity" by G. Soldatova, S. Ryzhova) and methods of assessing the positivity and uncertainty of ethnic identity were applied (by A. Tatarko, N. Lebedeva), and methods of mathematical statistics were applied to assess the obtained data.

Results. Empirical research of 309 students of higher educational institutions demonstrated that 53 students had the transformed types of national identity that required correction in the process of organised psychological support. After all, the transformations of national identity primarily threaten the psychological health of the personality.

Discussion. Psychological support of students with national identity transformations (national hypoidentity, national indifference and national hyperidentity) should be directed towards the development of their positive national identity. To do this, such support should be organised separately for students with national hypoidentity and national indifference promoting the development of their positive attitude towards the representatives of their nation, and for students with national hyperidentity promoting the development of their tolerant attitude towards the representatives of other nations.

Conclusion. Most students of higher educational institutions develop positive national identity (norm). A small number of students have deviations from the norm displaying the transformation of their national identity. The main purpose of psychological support of students with national identity transformations is the development of positive national identity.

Keywords: national identity, norm, transformation, students.

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INTRODUCTION

The research of the development of national identity of personality in sensitive periods for this process is important for a deeper understanding of the factors of psychological security preservation, stability of nations and psychological health of their representatives. The recent intensification of globalisation, integration and migration processes in the European space makes especially relevant the problem of development of positive national identity among its citizens and the correction of transformations in this process. Therefore, the development of effective psychological support of personality with transformed national identity is necessary.

The sensitive period for the development of national identity of personality is the young age because in this period the group identification processes are intensified. The absence of a positive national identity in a personality of this age is based on the choice of undesirable and dangerous social roles, what is manifested by a negative attitude towards his/her own origin and belonging to a certain nation, its values, goals etc. [1,2].

AIM

The aim of the article is to present the theoretical and empirical research of students of higher educational institutions with national identity transformations.

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Theoretical background

We believe that national identity is a cognitive and emotional awareness of personality of his/her belonging to a certain nation with such differentiating features as name, territory, language, history, culture, economy, equal legal rights and obligations for the citizens of the state. On the one hand, the national identity reflects the knowledge of personality about a certain nation, its language, culture, history, territory, as well as his/her belonging to a certain nation. On the other hand, the national identity reflects the emotional attitude of personality towards his/her own national belonging. Normally, the cognitive and emotional content of national identity is positive. Deviations from the norm indicate the transformation of national identity [3,4].

According to Soldatova [5], most people are characterised by positive national identity (norm). The main manifestation of a positive national identity is a tolerant attitude of the personality towards the representatives of his/her nation and other nations. The presence of a positive national identity among many representatives of the nation is a necessary condition for its independence, integrity, stability as well as peaceful interaction with other nations. Deviations from the norm, that is, the transformation of the national identity of the personality, mainly relate to his/her group identity. The main manifestations of the transformation of national identity of personality are: the irrelevance of nationality; the uncertainty of national identity; the tendency to give preference to other nations or groups; the tendency to discriminate other nations or national minorities. A transformed national identity is manifested in such types as: the national hypoidentity (national nihilism), national indifference, national hyperidentity (national egoism, national isolationism and national fanaticism). These transformed types of national identity among the representatives of the nation pose a threat not only to the psychological security and stability of the nation but also to the mental health of its representatives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The empirical study involved 309 full-time first-fourth year students of Ukrainian higher education institutions (cities: Kyiv, Rivne, Berdyansk, Kamenets-Podilskyi). Age group: 17-21, nationality: Ukrainian.

The type of students' national identity (norm or transformation) was revealed with the help of "Types of ethnic identity" method (by G. Soldatova, S. Ryzhova) [5], which we modified to achieve the aim of the research [6]. The key to the methodology was used to reveal the types of national identity – positive or transformed national hypoidentity (national nihilism), national hyperidentity (national egoism, national isolationism and national fanaticism), national indifference.

Application of the method of assessing the positivity and uncertainty of ethnic identity (by A. Tatarko, N. Lebedeva) [7], which we modified to achieve the aim of the research [6], also allowed us to reveal the positivity of students' national identity or its absence.

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows the aggregate quantitative data on students' positive national identity and transformed types of national identity obtained with the help of the applied methods.

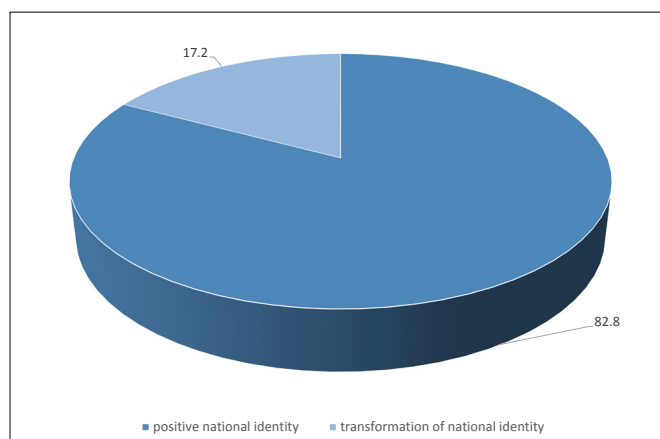


FIGURE 1. Quantitative data (%) on students' national identity types (n=309).

A positive type of national identity (82.8%) was empirically revealed in most students. Students with this type of national identity give preference to the lifestyle of their nation. They have great respect towards the representatives of their nation and demonstrate tolerance towards the representatives of other nations. They also respect the language and culture of own nation and different ones. However, they attach the greatest importance to the language and culture of their nation. Students with a positive type of national identity are proud of their national identity.

Thus, the majority of Ukrainian students of higher educational institutions are distinguished by a positive type of national identity.

In the rest of the students whose number is considerably less (17.2 % in total), the transformed types of national identity – national hypoidentity (national nihilism), national indifference, national hyperidentity (national egoism, national isolationism, national fanaticism) were empirically revealed. The quantitative data obtained with the help of "types of ethnic identity" method (by G. Soldatova, S. Ryzhova) concerning each transformed type of students' national identity is presented in Figure 2.

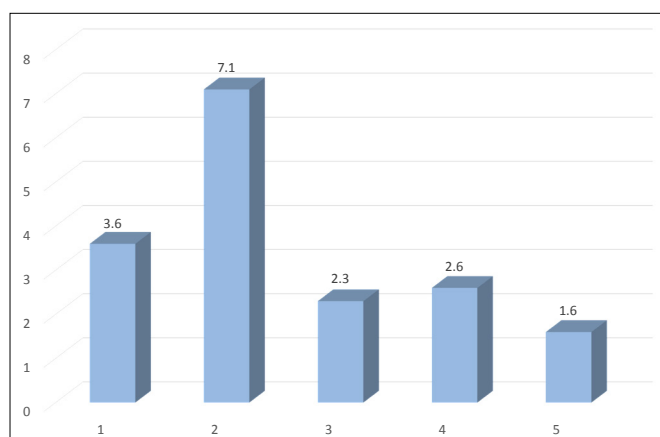


FIGURE 2. Quantitative data (%) on students' transformed types of national identity (n = 309).

Note: The numbers refer to these concepts: 1 – national nihilism, 2 – national indifference, 3 – national egoism, 4 – national isolationism, 5 – national fanaticism.

The largest number of students (7.1%) demonstrated national indifference. These students are characterised by the irrelevant and uncertain nature of their national identity. They are indifferent to their own national identity because, in their opinion, nationality does not predetermine the impact on the interaction between people. "In everyday communication, nationality does not matter", they say. According to these students, their nation is neither better nor worse than other nations. Therefore, they do not give their preference to the culture of a certain nation.

A much smaller number of students (3.6%) demonstrated national nihilism (national hypoidentity). These students are described by a reluctance to maintain the values of their nation; a sense of inferiority for their own nationality; a feeling of shame and occasional manifestations of negativity towards the representatives of their nation and difficulties in communicating with them; the alienation from their nation. They consider themselves to be the kind of people who "often feel the superiority of people of other nationalities". They also deny their own national identity and, therefore, look for other more stable social groups but not nations.

National hyperidentity includes such transformed types of national identity as national egoism, national isolationism and national fanaticism. In general, the manifestations of national hyperidentity are: the desire of a representative of a certain nation to dominate the representatives of other nations; national intolerance which can range from irritation at the presence of representatives of other nations to insistence on limiting their rights; a negative image of other nations and a hostile attitude towards their representatives.

In particular, the national egoism was revealed in 2.3% of students. These students get angry and stressed if they have to interact closely with the representatives of other nations and when they hear a foreign language. In their opinion, the interaction with representatives of other nations often leads to many problems. Such students are convinced that their nation has the full right to solve different problems at the expense of other nations. They consider themselves as people who "quite often feel the superiority of their nation over others". In verbal interactions with other nations, they most often use the words "my nation".

National isolationism was revealed in 2.6% of students. In their opinion, their nation occupies the highest position among all other nations because the representatives of their nation are more gifted and developed compared to other nations. They believe that it is necessary to do everything possible to preserve the purity of national culture. In their opinion, friendship and especially marriages with the representatives of other nations are unacceptable because "international marriages destroy the nation".

National fanaticism was revealed in the smallest number of students – 1.6%. Students with this type of transformed national identity justify all actions, even the most brutal, as protecting the interests of their nation, despite the fact that these interests are understood by them too subjectively. They believe that the representatives of "foreign" nations should be prohibited to enjoy the resources of their nation as well as the rights and privileges of its representatives. They believe that "people of other nationalities should be restricted in their right to reside in the territory of their nation". These students think that the rights of the nation should always be above human rights.

In their opinion, it is absolutely necessary to preserve the purity of nation. They do not take international problems seriously.

Therefore, the results of empirical research of the types of students' national identity allowed making the following conclusions. The majority of students of Ukrainian higher education institutions in the normal conditions of their education and upbringing demonstrate a positive national identity – the norm (82.8%). The deviation from the norm – the transformation of national identity according to different types was revealed in a small number of students (17.2%). We note a certain similarity of manifestations among these students of such types of transformed national identity as national hypoidentity (national nihilism) and national indifference. Such manifestations are found in their negative or indifferent attitude towards their nation and their national belonging. Similar manifestations are typical for the transformed types of national identity which demonstrate national hyperidentity. These manifestations are found in the intolerant attitude towards the representatives of other nations. At the same time, the presence of transformed types of national identity among students made it necessary to develop and organise their psychological support.

In general, psychological support of students with national identity transformations should be directed to the psychological correction of these transformations, what will contribute to the development of their positive national identity. Despite the empirically revealed results, such support should be organised separately for students with national hypoidentity and national indifference, promoting among them a positive attitude towards the representatives of their nation. Students with national hyperidentity should be promoted to develop a tolerant attitude towards the representatives of other nations.

In the psychological support of 25 students of higher education institutions of the cities of Kyiv and Rivne who demonstrated transformations of national identity (14 students with national hypoidentity and national indifference and 11 students with national hyperidentity), a number of psycho-correctional techniques were used.

In order to promote the development of positive attitude towards the representatives of their nation among students with national hypoidentity and national indifference, the following psycho-correctional techniques were used: training exercises "History of my Name", "Message of Support", "What Makes us Similar", role-playing games "Story of the National Dish" [9], "Story of the National Clothes (holidays, music, traditions)", etc. These psycho-correctional techniques were focused only on Ukrainian culture and identity. The systematic usage of psycho-correctional techniques by a psychologist allowed students to develop a positive attitude towards the representatives of their nation which was confirmed by the emergence of a positive national identity among them.

In order to promote the development of positive attitude towards the representatives of other nations among students with national hyperidentity, the following psycho-correctional techniques were used: training exercises "Guess who is Being Described", "Good Words", role-playing games "Meeting at the Airport", "Dialogue of Cultures" [9]. The systematic use of psycho-correctional techniques and cultural assimilation techniques by a psychologist [1, 8, 10] allowed to develop a tolerant attitude towards the representatives of other nations, what was confirmed by the emergence of positive national identity among them.

The effectiveness of the applied psycho-correctional techniques in psychological support of students with national identity transformations was confirmed statistically by Pearson's χ^2 -criterion ($\chi^2 = 7.84$, $p \leq 0.01$).

CONCLUSION

Most students of higher educational institutions develop positive national identity (norm) in the normal conditions of their education and upbringing. However, a small number of students have deviations from the norm displaying the transformation of their national identity, namely, the national hypoidentity (national nihilism), national indifference, national hyperidentity (national egoism, national isolationism, national fanaticism). The emergence and development of students' transformed types of national identity require the organisation of the appropriate psychological support.

The main purpose of psychological support of students with national identity transformations is the development of positive national identity. Students with national hypoidentity and national indifference should develop a positive attitude towards the representatives of their nation. Students with national hyperidentity should develop a tolerant attitude towards representatives of other nations.

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