

Building Cultural Identity of University Students in a Globalizing World

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Abstract. The paper examines the development of students' cultural identity in the context of the educational transformation at the tertiary level. It aims at analyzing the impact of global sociocultural processes on university educational practices and their role in changing student social value structures. Cultural identity has been recognized as an open and dynamic system that develops through educational interaction and intercultural communication. The globalization of higher education presents a dual reality; it enriches students' cross-cultural literacy but simultaneously erodes the stability of local cultural codes through a process of systematic standardization. Meanwhile, the concluding part proposes pedagogically supportive strategies for preserving cultural identity and improving intercultural reflection in educational environment.

Keywords: cultural identity, university students, globalization, value orientations, educational environment, intercultural communication.

Introduction

Globalization is bringing economic, political, and cultural systems to the attention of the world, deepening intercultural exchange, and bringing about a unification of social norms and values. In this context, the development and maintenance of cultural identity becomes increasingly necessary for young individuals in the process of social and professional growth. College students are especially exposed to globalization.

Higher education is one of the stages of personal development when worldview, value systems, and identity (that is, who am I) are being formed by individuals. The University is a place that combines many and diverse peoples (academia, family, culture), so the university environment plays a crucial role in constructing students' sense of belonging and self-identification.

A cultural identity not only binds people through the shared values, but also separates them in personality [1]. Its formation as a phe-

nomenon of globalization is a major problem in the areas of pedagogy and sociology. The theoretical framework for this study is derived from Erikson's theory of identity development [2], and the studies of M. Castells, Z. Bauman [3], and S. Hall [4] who examined how identity transforms in the information society. Identifying identity formation in pedagogy is intimately connected to this phenomenon of socialization. The environment of the learning space i.e. the academic environment, and university in particular, is widely accepted as a personal development environment [5]. Against a backdrop of globalization, there's a tension between the pursuit of maintaining the national identity to preserve it and internationalization. For students, those differences are also a source of tension – about values, communication, language, language styles and digital influence. This leads to a "hybrid identity" with national and global dimensions, thereby one which necessitates the pedagogical support of the building of intercultural competence. Identity

is developed through academic, extracurricular, and intercultural encounters. Globalization, at the same time, raises the visibility but also dangers to national identity. As M. Castells [6] explains, contemporary existence is marked by the interaction between multiple identities constructed from globalized frameworks.

Hence, higher education should facilitate a balance between national and global identities. In order to analyze the impact of globalization on students' cultural identity formation, this study aims to explore these four factors.

Research methods

We ground the study in the various cultural, systemic, and student-centered approaches since identity is understood to be an evolving pedagogical process shaped by local and global sociocultural forces together. One core principle, represented in much of the research literature in this area is the notion of cultural-historical development that identifies identity as a product of historical experience and tradition which serves as a framework to understand the dynamic tension between national legacy and global modernization. The study employs a multi-dimensional collection of methods: theoretical and historical: Investigation of philosophical, educational and social literature to map contemporary concepts of identity; comparative: Comparing national as well as international models of higher education identity development; Hermeneutic: Aims to interpret cultural texts and the particular value systems of contemporary youth; empirical/sociological: Based on questionnaires to collect information about the students' current value orientations and attitudes toward tradition; pedagogical analysis: Examine the university as an inherently formative space for identity.

By using an interdisciplinary approach, this study has succeeded in obtaining an integrative view of what processes a student's cultural identity is influenced by in the world of globalization. This integrated model allows the mechanisms of forming identities to be seen not in isolation, but rather as an integrated pedagogical process with local and international influences. Scientific novelty: Instead of being considered as a sociological phenomenon, the present finding of the present study establishes student cultural identity not simply as a phenomenon of sociological significance, but also as a deliberately informed pedagogical outcome. It reinforces a university environment as the ideal springboard to fuse global awareness with firm civic and national self-consciousness.

Scientific results

Research on cultural identity is scholarly interpretation from certain traditions that have a different theoretical approach to interpretation

of cultural identity and society development. A historical-formational perspective of culture is that of the development of culture and society in society: cultural identities change with time, while the historical-formational perspective treats culture as a dynamic system in continuous flux and changing and identity as identity molded as a result of changing and adapting to societal change. On the other hand, cultural communities' individualization, and relative autonomy are emphasized and are emphasised with a focus on the exceptional and some degree of self-reliance in a civilizational culture. Too much emphasis on cultural isolation, on the other hand, limits the understanding of contemporary intercultural interaction. As S. Huntington points out, globalization heightens the dangers of cultural contradictions ("clash of civilizations") [7]. The modern work combines the two, considering culture to be both stable and flexible. Cultural identity has its roots in historical experience but will evolve under the influence of social, economic, and informational factors. Intercultural communication is further enhanced as a result of globalization and has its own potentiality for individualisation. Also, globalization enhances two similar processes in parallel: cultural fusion and identity persistence. The convergence of local and global contexts constructs multiple identities – national, civic and global. The problem of national self-determination assumes more importance in a multicultural world. At the same time, university education helps in this process that comprises academic, professional, and personal growth. The university is a space of cross-cultural exchange, where cultural values and their integration develop a multifaceted picture of self that offers both national assimilation and the capability to adapt globally. Research indicates that professional identity is constructed through educational practice in general, but also through internships and practice-oriented learning experiences, as well as through social interaction with the professional world [8]. The nature of identity formation in Kazakhstan is closely tied to educational reforms, progress in state development, and globalization. Simultaneously the social stability demands, though language, history and culture are essential for stability and intercultural competence is increasingly important nowadays due to the emergence of intercultural competence. Research is in no doubt also affirming the rise of a hybrid identity of national and global identity [9].

To investigate these dynamics, a survey of 326 students at E.A. Buketov Karaganda National Research University and Abylkas Saginov Karaganda Technical University was conducted. In order to refine the empirical basis of

the study, the questionnaire included several blocks of questions aimed at identifying the level of students' cultural identity formation, their value orientations, and their attitudes toward national culture and globalization processes. Empirical data were collected through an online survey conducted via the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire was distributed through digital educational and communication environments, which made it possible to reach a wide audience of students. The sample was random and included respondents from different years of study and fields of specialization. This approach ensured diversity of opinions and increased the reliability of the results obtained. Data processing was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The interpretation of the results was based on the comparison of empirical data with the theoretical framework of the study, which ensured a comprehensive understanding of the features of students' cultural identity formation in the context of globalization.

The data indicated a good foundation of a sense of belonging: Sense of Belonging: More than 50% indicated they may have a strong or very strong identification with national culture, and 50% a moderate one. Of note, there was

no weak identification.

Cultural Pride: An overwhelming 88.5% felt pride in their national culture, said the survey's respondents, who said that upholding traditions was whether "very" or "somewhat" important. According to the survey data, the student population has strong ties to their national heritage. Fifty percent said their sense of cultural belonging was average, on the other hand, other half felt a very strong (26.9%) or a somewhat strong (23.1%) connection.

Importantly, most respondents reported no or few instances of weak cultural identification. And the findings are indicative of a strong respect for national identity: a generous 88.5% said they felt proud of their culture. This is correlated with a global respect for heritage, with 69.2% of respondents indicating the importance of tradition preservation as "very important" and 30.8% expressing the importance of it as "somewhat important". Individually, these figures suggest the generational significance of the younger generation's cultural roots. The results show that the key components of cultural identity are native language (84.6%), national history and traditions (57.7%), and family traditions (50%), while religion (23.1%) and place of residence (11.5%) play a less sig-

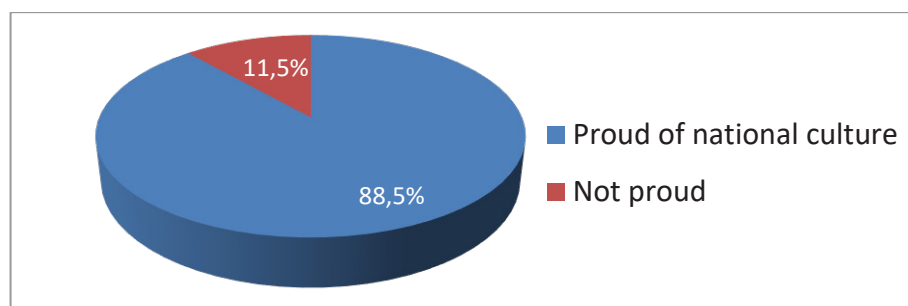


Figure 1 – Cultural pride of students

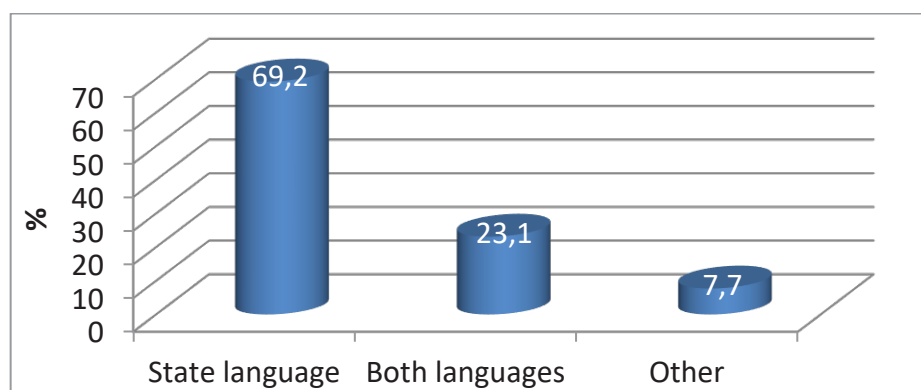


Figure 2 – Language use in everyday communication

nificant role.

These results support the basic message that language is the base element of cultural identity – consistent with theories that claim that it constitutes the most important vehicle of cultural identity. The data highlights this domination of language in the physical and the digital realm, on the same lines as the others: Daily Use of Communication: About 69.2% of students predominantly use the official language while 23.1% maintain a balanced bilingual approach. Digital Coverage: The native language is even stronger online, with 88.5% of participants using it consistently for social media and internet browsing.

For active participation, student participation in cultural events is moderate but constant. Very few (4%) rarely engage, while the vast majority participate either regularly (38.5%) or occasionally (57.7%) in national holiday celebrations. Most institutions exert a high level of control over the culture of the student body and the culture is moving toward global integration while the engagement remains moderate. When it comes to university participation, 23.1% of students attend organized cultural events regularly; 50% participate occasionally and 23.1% only infrequently. Despite this difference in activity level, the university environment is one key factor in cultural development: 42.3% of students agree it has an impact; another 50 per cent agree with "rather yes". Regarding students' global perspectives, students possess substantial intercultural curiosity, with 46.2% calling foreign cultures "very interesting" and 19.2% "somewhat interesting", and 33.3% being neutral. But tolerance reflects this openness, with 26.9% of respondents declaring themselves very tolerant, 46.2% rather tolerant, and 23.1% average in their tolerance. 57.7% of students also main-

tain friendships with individuals from other countries or cultures, further evidence of this social connectivity. 80.8% of students agree that today young people are becoming globalised with the impact of globalization. Most (61.5%) agree that it can be possible to make a hybrid identity – in which one holds a national identity while participating in the world. Notably, although 73.1% of respondents dream of international mobility where they live or work abroad, their cultural roots at home appear strong – 69.2% appreciate national films as well as music, and 26.9% are fans of both domestic and international media. On the other hand, the university can be regarded as an essential institution for socialization to develop and influence how a university student views their cultural identity. A total of 92.3% of the participants recognize this institutional presence but, 42.3% directly agree on this fact while 50% say their influence is 'somewhat so'. In turn, a combination of factors leads to this formation: academic subjects were the main influencers at 38.5%, followed by peer interactions at 26.9%, and participation in student organizations at 23.1%.

Digital habits as a platform play an essential role in this process as the majority of students are active on and share on social media. 53.8 percent in fact use the apps one to three hours a day, while 30.8 percent spend three to five hours.

As a result, almost 89% of participants think that these online spaces inform their global and cultural consciousness to a degree, yet global interactions online are rather scarce; interestingly, 40.7% of participants report that they never interact with someone from another nation online.

Conclusions

Our qualitative feedback on student's defi-

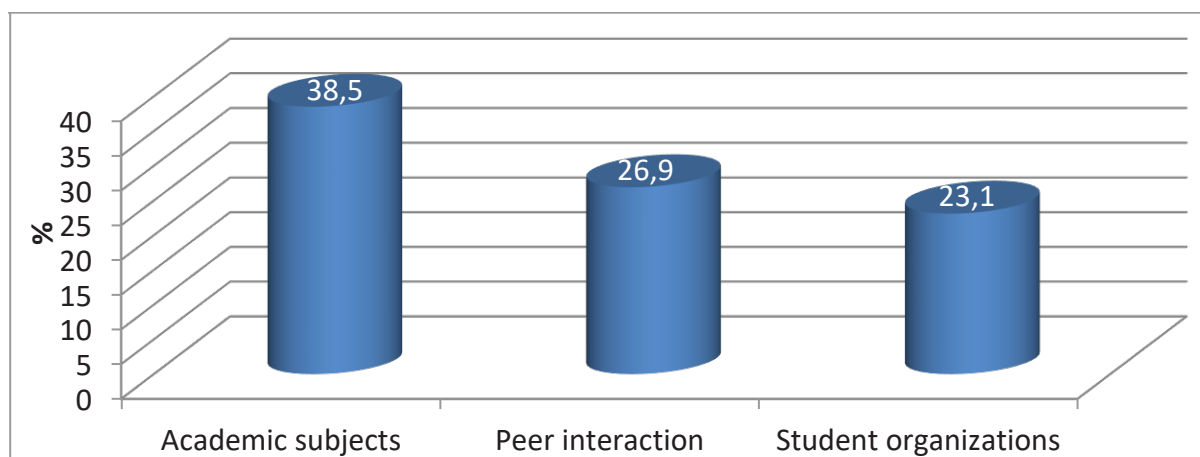


Figure 3 – Role of the university in identity formation

nitions of cultural identity reflects student perceptions of national identity, language, history, traditions, and core values. The results indicate that recent student identity is a 'hybrid' construct consisting of, on the one hand, a 'rigorous' understanding of the broader national culture and native traditions, on the other hand, a high degree of intercultural openness as well as high degree of desire for global mobility. The characteristics of students' cultural identity described can also be seen in the light of globalization, showing a necessity to take them into consideration in practice among higher education institutions. The study results have practical implications: It is conceivable to apply its results in the development of educational programs and extracurricular activities for students, to formulate, in policies (e.g. university policies), an atmosphere which fosters cultural identity and intercultural competence

and enables harmonious integration of national values with global ideas. This implies that the identity of the present is, in the sense of time, an ongoing dynamic at the meeting of heritage and newness, instead of the result of cultural detachment. To facilitate such development, higher education has to use a general pedagogical strategy: through the integration of language, communication, and value to strengthen a sense of national identity while encouraging appreciation for diversity. Identity is considered a central psychological factor that significantly influences students' academic motivation and their overall academic performance [10]. The university does indeed have an important responsibility, though, in providing people who can achieve the kind of success that may only come from being part of a certain culture but operate in a globalized sociocultural milieu.

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Жаһандану жағдайындағы жоғары оқу орны студенттерінің мәдени сәйкестігін қалыптастыру

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Аңдатпа. Зерттеуде қазіргі жоғары білім беру жүйесінің трансформациясы жағдайында студенттердің мәдени сәйкестігін қалыптастыру ерекшеліктері қарастырылады. Жаһандық әлеуметтік-мәдени үдерістердің жоғары оқу орнының білім беру тәжірибесіне әсері және олардың студент жастардың тұрақты құндылықтарға деген бағдарларының өзгеруіндегі рөлі талданады. Мәдени сәйкестік білім беру үдерісіндегі өзара әрекеттесу мен мәдениетаралық коммуникация барысында дамитын ашық әрі динамикалық жүйе ретінде түсіндіріледі. Жаһандану студенттердің мәдени тәжірибесін кеңейтуге ықпал ететіні, алайда сонымен қатар стандарттандыру үрдістерін күшейтіп, ұлттық мәдени кодтың тұрақтылығын төмендететіні негізделеді. Қорытындыда жоғары оқу орнының білім беру ортасында мәдени бірегейлікті сақтау және мәдениетаралық рефлексияны дамытуға бағытталған педагогикалық қолдау жолдары ұсынылады.

Кілт сөздер: мәдени бірегейлік, жоғары оқу орны студенттері, жаһандану, құндылық бағдарлары, білім беру ортасы, мәдениетаралық коммуникация.

Формирование культурной идентичности студентов вуза в условиях глобализирующегося мира

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Аннотация. В исследовании рассматриваются особенности формирования культурной идентичности студентов в условиях трансформации современного высшего образования. Анализируется влияние глобальных социокультурных процессов на образовательные практики вуза и их роль в изменении ориентиров студенческой молодежи по отношению к непреходящим ценностям. Культурная идентичность интерпретируется как открытая и динамичная система, развивающаяся в процессе образовательного взаимодействия и межкультурной коммуникации. Обосновано, что глобализация способствует расширению культурного опыта студентов, однако одновременно усиливает тенденции стандартизации и снижает устойчивость национального культурного кода. В заключение предлагаются направления педагогической поддержки, направленные на сохранение культурной самобытности и развитие межкультурной рефлексии в образовательной среде вуза.

Ключевые слова: культурная идентичность, студенты, глобализация, ценностные ориентации, образовательная среда, межкультурная коммуникация.

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