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The influence of sociocultural activities on building social competencies


La influencia de las actividades socioculturales en el desarrollo de las competencias sociales

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to track the dynamics of the development of citizens' social competencies in the context of specially organized socio-cultural activities. The method of V.V. Sinyavskiy and B.A. Fedoryshyn was used to determine the development of communicative and organizational abilities, as well as the method of N. Hall to study emotional intelligence (EI). It was found that, in general, medium indicators of social competencies are characteristic of the studied citizens. The developed programme of socio-cultural influence showed effectiveness in the dynamics of communicative abilities. However, the changes turned out to be more significant in the students' sample. The indicators of organizational abilities as a result of



the formative experiment remained unchanged. EI significantly changed in the group of working citizens after completing the programme, while the indicators remained stable among students. The results indicate the partial effectiveness of the programme of socio-cultural activities in the development of social competencies of the citizens of Ukraine. The obtained data make it possible to optimize the strategy of educational influence in the student environment with a focus on the cultural integration of the individual. The data can also be used to develop communication trainings for specialists of certain organizations. Research prospects are to clarify gender differences in the influence of socio-cultural activities on the development of citizens' social competencies.

Keywords: communication skills, emotional intelligence (EI), organizational skills, social competencies, socio-cultural activity.

Resumen

El objetivo del artículo es seguir la dinámica del desarrollo de las competencias sociales de los ciudadanos en el contexto de actividades socioculturales especialmente organizadas. Se utilizó el método de V.V. Sinyavskiy y B.A. Fedoryshyn para determinar el desarrollo de las capacidades comunicativas y organizativas, así como el método de N. Hall para estudiar la inteligencia emocional (IE). Se comprobó que, en general, los indicadores medios de competencias sociales son característicos de los ciudadanos estudiados. El programa desarrollado de influencia sociocultural mostró eficacia en la dinámica de las habilidades comunicativas. Sin embargo, los cambios resultaron ser más significativos en la muestra de estudiantes. Los indicadores de las habilidades organizativas como resultado del experimento formativo permanecieron inalterados. La IE cambió significativamente en el grupo de ciudadanos trabajadores tras completar el programa, mientras que los indicadores permanecieron estables entre los estudiantes. Los resultados indican la eficacia parcial del programa de actividades socioculturales en el desarrollo de las competencias sociales de los ciudadanos de Ucrania. Los datos obtenidos permiten optimizar la estrategia de influencia educativa en el entorno estudiantil centrándose en la integración cultural del individuo. Los datos también pueden utilizarse para desarrollar cursos de formación en comunicación para especialistas de determinadas organizaciones. Las perspectivas de investigación consisten en aclarar las diferencias de género en la influencia de las actividades socioculturales en el desarrollo de las competencias sociales de los ciudadanos.

Palabras clave: actividad sociocultural, competencias sociales, habilidades comunicativas, habilidades organizativas, inteligencia emocional (IE).

Introduction

Preservation of the cultural heritage of humanity and the state plays an important role in overcoming poverty, ensuring gender equality and solving environmental problems (Giliberto & Labadi, 2021; Wiktor-Mach, 2019). Active sociocultural activity ensures the formation of identity and competitiveness of the local communities (Lopes & Hiray, 2024). The importance of socio-cultural activities for the implementation of sustainable development processes is argued (Mair & Smith, 2021). An important direction of research is the study of the cultural influences in the tourism sector and economic trends (Wallstam et al., 2018). In particular, the role of cultural festivals as centres of concentration of tangible and intangible resources, which give a powerful impetus to urban development (Perry et al., 2019), as well as economic and social development in general (Luonila et al., 2020), is growing. In this context, the relevance of the academic analysis and creation of a theoretical model of socio-cultural activities as part of state policy is increasing (Nordvall & Brown, 2018). A club as a form of organization of socio-cultural activities has been proven an effective tool for the cognitive, social, and professional development of citizens (Nunev, 2019). In general, the tendency of studying the general aspects of involvement in the cultural space can be traced, while the analysis of specific empirical data regarding the specified processes remains insufficient.

In this context, the role of programmes of socio-cultural activities for the formation of social competencies



is worth noting. Communication skills are mandatory for the successful integration of an individual into the cultural and professional environment (Dauber & Spencer-Oatey, 2023). It is worth noting that the theoretical definition of social competencies is associated with a number of methodological problems in the search for a single definition (Beenen et al., 2023). Therefore, the theoretical and practical relevance of the study of the phenomenon of social competencies in the context of specific social conditions is obvious. It is promising to search for ways to develop social skills of an individual, in particular, through well-founded and purposeful programs of socio-cultural activities. It is important to have a differentiated approach, which provides for specific social categories of the population — students, workers in certain fields, etc.

The aim of the article is to determine the dynamics of the development of citizens' social competencies in the context of specially organized socio-cultural activities.

Objectives of the study:

- 1) Determine the main features and indicators of the influence of the socio-cultural sphere on the functioning of society;
- 2) Analyse the indicators of the development of communication skills, organizational skills, and EI of citizens;
- 3) Empirically determine the indicators of the development of social competencies of student youth and working adults in the context of organized socio-cultural activities.

Literature Review

One of the first researchers of social competence, Rose-Krasnor (1997), describes this phenomenon as the ability for effective social interaction, optimal adaptation to communicative situations, and the construction of trusting relationships. This mental system provides for appropriate cognitive, emotional, and behavioural structures. It is emphasized that there are quite a lot of definitions of social competence and they may even contradict each other (Junge et al., 2020). Social competence implies a certain social flexibility, which involves differentiated behaviour in different communicative contexts and pronounced cultural differences (Pinquart, 2022). Accordingly, social competencies require orientation to three main aspects — the communicative goal, the content of communication, and the psychological characteristics of the participants in the interaction (Touloumakos, 2022). Rabetska (2022) believes that the main social competencies are the ability to understand interaction partners, effective communication tools (verbal and non-verbal), the ability to optimally resolve interpersonal conflicts, empathy, emotional self-regulation. The factor model underlying the appropriate diagnostic tool predicts the following types of social competencies: leadership ability, group integration, interpersonal communication and affiliation skills, social activity (Padhy & Hariharan, 2023). A significant social competence of humanitarian workers is the ability to work in a team (Febrianita & Hardjati, 2019). The results of empirical studies indicate the importance of empathy in the structure of social competencies of secondary school graduates (Hirn et al., 2018).

Sociocultural influence depends on the coherence of two value systems – social and individual (Horban et al., 2022). The researchers claim that modern mass culture determines the emergence of a number of crisis phenomena in the citizens' minds associated with the development of the so-called "consumer society" (Zhylin et al., 2023). Such trends determine the need to develop clear conceptual foundations of the state's socio-cultural activities. The definition of the phenomenon involves a number of terminological interpretations. However, in general, sociocultural activity can be interpreted as a purposeful, specially organized by social institutions process of active involvement of a person in the cultural values of society and the active inclusion of the individual in it, which involves the development of the individual (Leshchuk & Soroka, 2020). It is believed that participation in sociocultural activities of an individual is related to the level of his/her subjective well-being (Murtin & Zanobetti, 2024).

The effectiveness of cultural processes primarily depends on the systemic activity of the state and specific social groups (Ginzarly et al., 2019). Socio-cultural activity is closely related to the concept of "cultural heritage". This concept reflects a cultural process that ensures the constant transfer of social memory, establishing connections between the cultural past and the present, which is associated with social,



political, and economic factors (Heras et al., 2019). Self-organization of a specific social community is essential for the described phenomenon (Pastor Pérez & Colomer, 2023). An approach that provides for active involvement of young people in the translation of cultural heritage is promising in theoretical and practical contexts (Zhang et al., 2023). The optimal organization of socio-cultural activities contributes to the formation of the valuable aspect of humanitarian security of the state (Giovanis, 2021).

Therefore, the study of the socio-cultural sphere and its influence on social processes is an actual vector of modern research. The study of social competencies and the development of the communicative sphere opens up prospects for the clarification of theoretical constructions and the development of effective socialization optimization programmes. However, the impact of purposeful socio-cultural activities on the development of communication skills of an individual is poorly studied, which causes certain gaps.

Methodology

The general structure of the study corresponds to the provisions of the natural science paradigm. Different stages of the research reflect the relationship and logical sequence of actions of the researchers. The general scheme of the research was analysed in detail before carrying out it in order to obtain valid academic results.

1. The organizational stage is an algorithm of actions that substantiates the general research design and ensures the fulfilment of the research objectives in the context of clarifying the impact of socio-cultural activities on the development of citizens' social competencies. The formative strategy was defined as the main one in our study. A system of classes in the field of socio-cultural activities aimed at the development of social competencies was developed. Intensive consultations with experts — psychologists, teachers, specialists in the cultural sphere — were also involved. Research samples were formed on the basis of scientific, psychological, and ethical criteria. The most effective ways of experimental influence and collection of the data on the dynamics of social effectiveness of the individual were established. The main parameters reflecting key social competencies were chosen: communicative skills as the ability to communicate effectively; organizational skills as the ability to effectively organize and coordinate social interaction; EI as the ability to identify and understand emotions in social processes. The research hypothesis is advanced: a specially organized purposeful methodologically justified programme of socio-cultural activities is an effective tool for building social competencies of citizens of Ukraine. The stage comprised the period of September-October 2023.
2. Experimental stage — collection of research data and formative experiment. The stage was carried out according to the classic scheme: primary diagnostics of social competence development indicators, formative influence, repeated diagnostics of social competence development indicators. This stage was conducted online because of the security situation in Ukraine and in order to ensure mobility and representativeness of the study. The proposed approach made it possible to realize a fairly wide geography of the studied sample. If necessary, citizens could refuse to participate in the experimental programme. All actions of the empirical stage met the basic ethical criteria. The stage comprised the period of November 2023 — April 2024.
3. The stage of quantitative and qualitative data processing. Primary diagnostic individual data “before” and “after” the implementation of the experimental programme were calculated. Measurement scales, their types, compliance of the obtained data with the law of normal distribution were determined. The procedure for calculating the statistical significance of the differences in the obtained results was carried out. The stage comprised the period of May — June 2024.
4. The data interpretation stage involved the explanation of statistical patterns in the context of the aim of the study. The main task of the stage was to draw a conclusion about the effectiveness of the programme of socio-cultural activities for building social competencies of citizens of Ukraine. The generalization was carried out with the orientation of the difference in indicators in the context of different categories — those who are getting an education and working citizens of the state.



Instruments

The aim of the research was achieved by selecting test methods in terms of their convenience and mobility. The method of V. V. Sinyavskiy and B. A. Fedoryshin was used to determine the indicators of communicative and organizational abilities. Hall's method was applied in order to study EI as one of the key social competencies. The selected methods are recommended for psychological research of the communicative structure of the personality (Kokun et al., 2012). The selected tests meet psychometric requirements, which is confirmed by expert opinion and their methodical and academic argumentation in other studies. The methods are quite compact in scope, which enables avoiding over-fatigue of research participants in the process of working out the test content.

Sample

Two samples were formed according to the natural science paradigm — experimental group (EG) and control group (CG). Students and working citizens from various educational institutions and organizations of Ukraine took part in the study. The student samples included graduates from higher education institutions (HEIs) from Kyiv, Sumy, Ivano-Frankivsk, Cherkasy, and Odesa. The study involved 109 students of the CG and 111 students of the EG (a total of 220 people). Gender distribution of the studied students: 96 boys (43.64%) and 124 girls (56.36%). Two samples consisting of teachers, doctors, lawyers, and service workers were also formed. Quantitative distribution of this group: 69 people in the CG and 70 in the EG (total number – 139 people). Accordingly, the gender distribution was: 102 women (73.38%) and 37 men (26.62%). The samples were formed on the basis of personal contacts of researchers with educational institutions and organizations, as well as the use of social networks to establish communication. Only adults participated in the study based on prior informed consent.

Data analysis

The data were collected online using test instruments via Google forms. Qualified specialists in the field of psychology who have experience in practical and research activities were also involved. The tests were methodologically and professionally justified.

The description of the programme of experimental influence deserves special attention. This system was based on a number of socio-cultural measures. The main principles on which the programme was based were cultural relevance, humanism, individual approach, unity of activity with specific cultural traditions (Leshchuk, 2019). The number of meetings was not fixed and ranged from 18 to 20 — an average of two meetings per week. The meetings were held online. The duration of one lesson is 50 minutes. Each experimental community was divided into subgroups of 15–20 participants each. The main thematic blocks of the programme: cultural heritage of Ukraine and its connection with world trends, cultural heritage of the region and its connection with state and world trends. Each of these blocks included approximate topics: literature, painting, cinematography, music, prominent statesmen. We emphasize that the list of topics is not fixed, but dynamically changed depending on the mood in the group and the interests of the subjects. At each session, the researcher offered information on a certain aspect of cultural heritage, followed by creative reflection of the material (for example, preparation of essays, creation of mini-scenarios, thematic sketches, etc.) and discussion. The meeting necessarily ended with summing up. The implementation of the experimental programme was carried out by the authors of the study and their assistants. Formative experiment is conducted in the EG, while the programme was not implemented in the CG.

The data analysis is aimed at determining statistical indicators of the dynamics of the social competencies of the subjects during the experimental programme. The identified trends are presented graphically. Basic statistical methods: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Student's t-test. In this way, the statistical significance of the differences in the identified empirical indicators was established. Data processing was carried out in the SPSS software package.



Results and Discussion

The results of the conducted formative experiment in terms of the dynamics of social competencies are graphically presented in the diagrams. The abbreviations CG and EG represent the control and experimental groups, respectively. The letter “S” is indicated in the samples of students, and the letter “W” in the samples of working citizens. Figures 1 and 2 indicate the results of primary and secondary diagnostics (before and after the completion of the sociocultural programme). The dynamics of communicative skills in the studied samples is recorded in Figure 1.

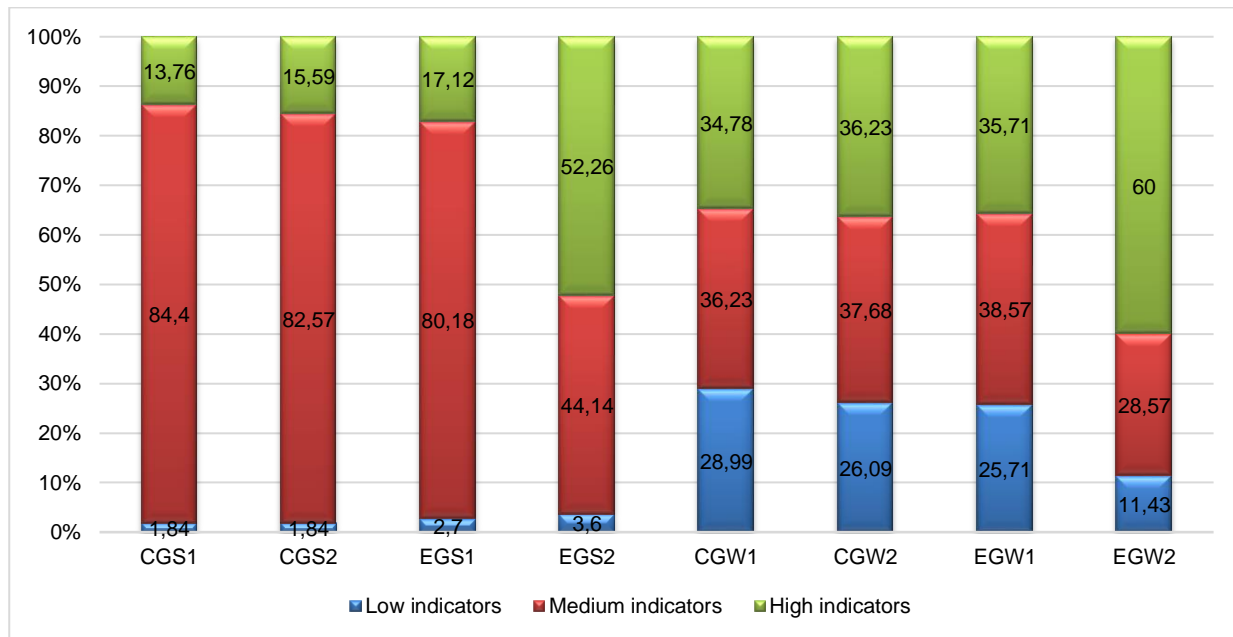


Figure 1. Dynamics of indicators of communicative skills during the implementation of the programme of socio-cultural activities.

In the students' sample, the primary diagnostics showed a significant predominance of individuals with medium values of the parameter — more than 80%. Low communication skills were diagnosed in only a few students at the beginning of the study. The percentage values of a high level of this social competence range within 13-17%. The obtained data potentially indicate some instability of the ability to communicate among student youth. After completing the sociocultural programme, no significant changes were found in the CG of students. At the same time, a significant increase in the percentage of subjects with high indicators (by 35.14%) in the EG attracts attention. The overall medium level is decreasing. In the sample of working citizens, the primary diagnostics recorded that the levels of the parameter of the subjects were distributed almost in equal thirds. The investigated social competence of workers has higher high and low indicators compared to the group of students. After the completion of the experimental programme, the percentage of persons with high indicators of communicative skills increased by 24.29%. The medium indicators of competence decreased by 10%, and the low ones — by 14.28%. Therefore, it is possible to conclude about the effectiveness of the developed socio-cultural programme for the development of the ability to effective communication. The dynamics of organizational abilities in the studied samples is shown in Figure 2.

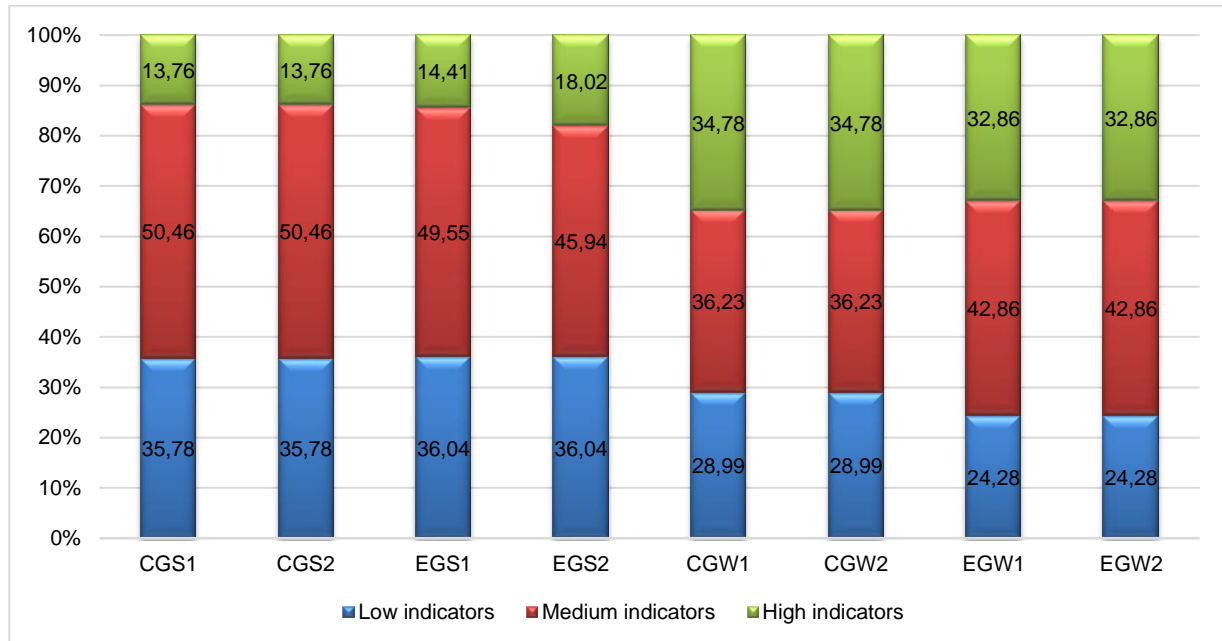


Figure 2. The dynamics of indicators of organizational abilities during the implementation of the programme of socio-cultural activities.

In the group of students, the dominance of medium indicators of social competence was revealed again. However, organizational abilities are less developed than communicative ones. This is evidenced by more than 30% of the respondents diagnosed with low indicators of the parameter. A small number of studied students have a high level. After the implementation of the programme of socio-cultural activities, the indicators in both samples did not actually change. In the sample of working citizens, the distribution of diagnostic levels in equal thirds was observed again. We can assume that communicative and organizational tendencies are more interconnected in adulthood, compared to the sample of student youth. Re-diagnosis did not reveal significant changes. Therefore, the programme of socio-cultural activities is not effective for organizational competence. The dynamics of EI in the studied samples is shown in Figure 3.

The tendency of dominance of medium indicators continues for this parameter. In the sample of students, the medium level was found in approximately 60% of the subjects. The percentage of the high level is slightly higher than the indicators of the low level. In the group of students, the developed socio-cultural programme did not demonstrate effectiveness for the development of EI. It should be noted that the indicators of this social competence have similar trends in the groups of students and workers. However, a minimum number of people with a low level of EI was found in the sample of workers. No changes were found in the CG. In the EG of working citizens, a significant increase in the percentage of high indicators was recorded — by 51.43%. So, the developed programme of socio-cultural activities demonstrated partial effectiveness in the EI development.

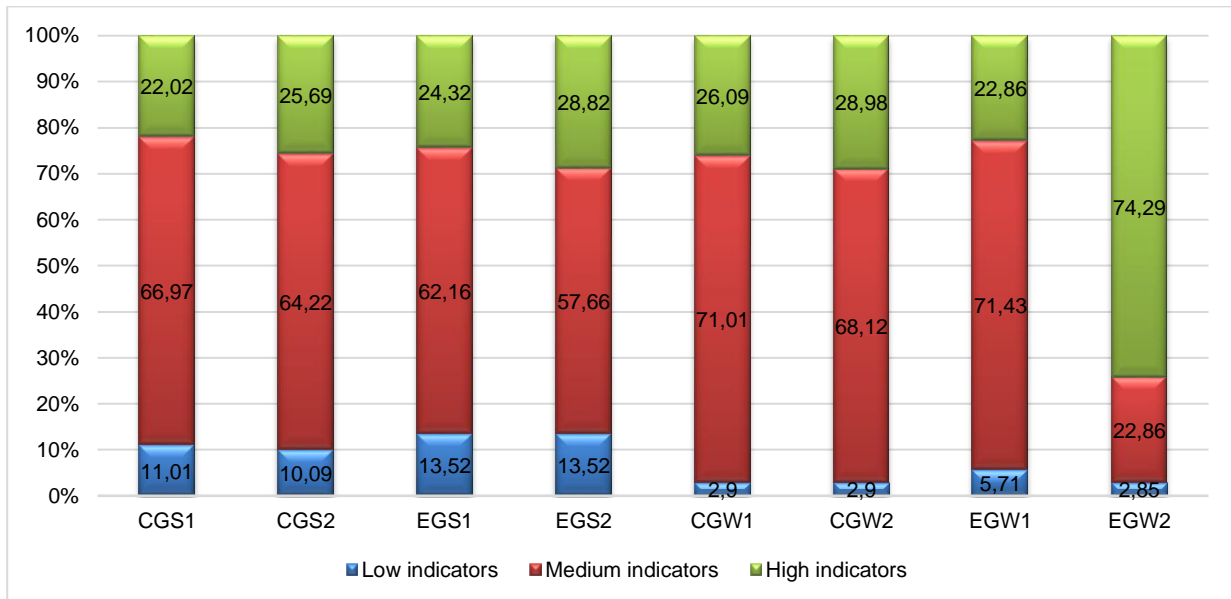


Figure 3. Dynamics of indicators of EI during the implementation of the programme of socio-cultural activities.

The use of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed the correspondence of the series of statistical data to the law of normal distribution. The results of the descriptive analysis were confirmed by using Student's t-test to reveal the significance of the differences between the obtained statistical data "before" and "after" the formative experiment (Table 1). It was found that all obtained coefficients for the two control groups do not reflect a significant difference between the indicators of social competencies. In the EG of students, significant changes in the parameter of communicative skills were recorded ($t=4.337, p=0.01$). In the experimental sample of working citizens, significant differences were determined in the dynamics of communicative skills ($t=2.357, p=0.05$) and EI ($t=3.269, p=0.01$). In general, the results of the conducted statistical analysis confirm the previous conclusions.

Table 1. The Student's t-test of differences in indicators of social competencies in the context of a formative experiment

Social competencies	Student's t-test			
	Sample of students		Sample of working youth	
	CG	EG	CG	EG
Communication skills	1.722	4.337**	1.449	2.357*
Organizational abilities	1.301	1.098	1.567	1.386
EI	1.222	1.301	1.663	3.269**

Observing the behaviour of research participants during the formative experiment makes it possible to make several generalizations. In general, working citizens were more oriented towards cooperation and an active position in the programme compared to students. In particular, it was indicative that the students performed "homework" reading certain books or watching movies for further discussion less responsibly. At the same time, there was a clear tendency to more active participation in thematic discussions and creative activities during the implementation of the programme. The main topic of the discussions was based on a specific object of socio-cultural heritage that was considered at the meeting. So, the result of communication was influenced by awareness and training on a specific topic. Several main types of participants in the socio-cultural programme can be tentatively identified.



The first type is “supporters of arguments”, who implement a discussion based on a thorough study of the subject. They focus more on facts rather than emotions. They do not switch to manipulative aspects in communication. They remain calm during the discussion being friendly in interaction. They can prove an opinion regardless of personal socio-cultural preferences. About 70% of the participants of this orientation were found in the group of working citizens and about 40% in the sample of students.

The second type is “supporters of emotions”, who engage in communication based on the actualization of the emotional component. Prone to provoking conflicts. They use elements of manipulation and passive aggression. They can switch to an active manifestation of aggression. About 20% of such participants were found in the group of working citizens and about 30% in the students’ sample.

The third type is “indifferent”, who take the most passive position in the communicative space of the programme. Minimal activity in discussions is characteristic. Communication is unargued. They can leave the communication that has already started. About 10% of such participants were found in the group of working citizens and about 30% — among students.

It should be noted that the division by types took place on the basis of observation, so it does not claim to be accurate. However, the identified differences can be the basis for planning and developing an individual approach in development programmes. In general, we evaluate the programme of socio-cultural activities as one that was quite positively perceived by the research participants.

The generalized research hypothesis is the statement that a specially organized, purposeful, methodologically sound programme of socio-cultural activities is an effective tool for building social competencies of citizens of Ukraine. In general, the results indicate its partial confirmation. The predominance of medium indicators of social competencies is explained by the potential instability of the communicative sphere of the individual. Differences in primary diagnostics between students and working citizens are related to different social conditions of activity and age-related aspects of personality development. In addition, the impact of the tense general situation in the country because of the war should be taken into account. The effectiveness of the programme of socio-cultural activities for building communication skills can be explained by the active use of the discussion method in the context of cultural topics. At the same time, organizational abilities did not show developmental shifts, as the content and implementation method of the programme itself were not sensitive to this structure. The lack of effectiveness of the programme for EI development of higher school students is related to their greater passivity, compared to the group of working people. Progress in EI during the programme may be associated with greater social engagement in the experimental community. At the same time, the increased passive aggression and closed position of students hindered the activation of EI.

In the context of the goal and objectives of the study, we support the opinion about the importance of socio-cultural activities for the development of society (Mair & Smith, 2021). Studying the influence of cultural development on the optimization of the economic sphere also seems promising (Luonila et al., 2020). In this context, it is important to organize a systemic state policy to address this issue (Ginzarly et al., 2019). The club form of organizing sociocultural influence is quite effective, especially in educational systems (Nunev, 2019). It is important to focus sociocultural activities on personality development (Leshchuk & Soroka, 2020). This approach makes it possible to optimize the citizens’ psychological well-being (Murtin & Zanobetti, 2024). The optimal organization of socio-cultural activities contributes to the formation of the valuable aspect of humanitarian security of the state (Giovanis, 2021).

We explain the high values of social competencies of working citizens by their relevance for the integration of the individual into the professional environment (Dauber & Spencer-Oatey, 2023). The results of observing the subjects during the experiment confirm the opinion about the importance of social flexibility for effective social interaction (Pinquart, 2022). Empathy is also an important component of the communicative sphere (Hirn et al., 2018).



Limitations

The obtained results should be evaluated through the prism of several factors. First, the diagnostics and collection of empirical material were conducted online, therefore it is advisable to determine the specifics of the actions performed in direct interaction. Differences in the quantitative and gender composition of samples of students and working citizens should also be taken into account. The results could also be affected by stress reactions, instability of the emotional sphere due to the military situation in Ukraine.

Recommendations

The obtained data give ground give grounds to provide the following recommendations for optimizing socio-cultural activities and building the social competencies of students:

- 1) Introduce discussion forms of work into students' educational activities;
- 2) Develop and implement courses on the study of regional and state cultural heritage into educational programmes;
- 3) Teach students the algorithms of argumentation of their own opinion;
- 4) Stimulate interest in cultural heritage in the context of main educational subjects;
- 5) Provide the possibility of individual work on the subject in the context of the activation of socio-cultural activities in the plans.

Conclusions

The influence of socio-cultural activities on the development of social competencies was not the subject of the research. The practical significance of the study of this problem is the possibility of effective influence on the transformation of the cultural environment and the development of the individual. It was found that, in general, medium indicators of the development of social competences are characteristic of the studied citizens. It was found that in the group of working citizens, indicators of high, medium and low levels of communicative and organizational abilities were evenly distributed. At the same time, the medium values for these parameters significantly prevail in the students' sample. The trends in the manifestation of EI are similar in both groups. The developed programme of socio-cultural influence showed effectiveness in the dynamics of communicative abilities. However, in the students' sample, the changes turned out to be more significant. Indicators of organizational abilities as a result of the implementation of the formative experiment remained unchanged. EI significantly changed in the group of working citizens after completing the programme, while the indicators remained stable among students. The results indicate the partial effectiveness of the programme of socio-cultural activities in the development of social competencies of citizens of Ukraine. The obtained data make it possible to optimize the strategy of educational influence in the student environment with a focus on the cultural integration of the individual. The data can also be used to develop communication trainings for specialists of certain organizations. Further research may focus on clarifying gender differences in the influence of socio-cultural activities on the development of citizens' social competencies.

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