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**CULTURAL AWARENESS OF ACADEMIC AND TEACHING STAFF  
IN THE LIFELONG LEARNING CONTEXT**

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**Abstract.** *The importance of forming cultural awareness of academic and teaching staff is with the help of a competency-based approach, as a means of a person's self-expression and enrichment of the possibility of scientific knowledge is emphasized in the article. Definitions of the concept of cultural awareness and its components are considered by the authors. The content of tasks for the development of cultural awareness of high school academic and teachers is disclosed. The personal traits that mostly influence the adaptation and socialization of academicians to new cultural environments are shown. Among them are: openness, communicativeness, flexibility and tolerance for uncertainty. The authors note as the necessary conditions for the formation of cultural awareness in the context of lifelong learning the development of its basic components, such as linguistic, intercultural, sociocultural and personal. The competency-based approach was used to achieve this goal. It is stated that the effectiveness of the development of cultural awareness and self-expression of teachers increases in the context of integration of culture, religion and national interests of the Ukrainians.*

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**Introduction.**

The most important task of modern education is to create a space for preserving and passing on to the next generations the experience of their native country as well as the world experience, and at the same time to define and preserve the values of each historical period and to create the conditions for the formation of a certain cultural type of a person. All these purposes correspond to the tendencies of personal development, freedom for self-determination, openness and respect for other cultures. The urgency of this task grows in times of the individual and country crisis, because any nation has a chance to get out of the crisis owing to the idea of statehood and national interests, and also its culture and religion. On the other hand, the development of science also requires a connection with the spiritual experience of civilization and culture [1], which activates the self-development of a person, reveals his cognitive abilities. So, the university is the unique environment in which science and culture intersects interfere.

In the context of the "lifelong learning" concept it becomes obvious the need to transform knowledge for the further development of the individual in the situation of constant changes, including adaptation and socialization to new conditions, adoption of new social roles, establishing productive relationships with representatives of other cultures, creating an individual educational trajectory for a person's self-realization.

The research is aimed at the theoretical level of the study of cultural awareness, at the empirical study of its components and at the tasks of developing cultural awareness in higher education, as a means of enriching the possibility of scientific knowledge.

The Leuven Conference of Ministers responsible for higher education, "The Bologna Process 2020 - The European Higher Education Area in the new decade" (28-29 April 2009), emphasized lifelong learning as a priority area for the development of European higher education [2]. This is the answer to the challenge of modern time - the fullest disclosure of the talents and abilities of the adult population. Comparison of the European reference framework of key competences for lifelong learning in 2006 and 2018 concludes that the essence of competences has been transformed [3] and also indicates a very slow implementation of the lifelong learning direction in Ukraine. Therefore, the state policy in this country in the field of higher education highlights, first of all, the development of the following areas: 1) quality of education; 2) integration into the European higher education and research area; 3) lifelong learning. The latter direction is realized by [4]: recognition of non-formal and / or informal education; development of postgraduate academic (pedagogical) education; the new architecture of the postgraduate education system.

An important prerequisite for the implementation of the abovementioned directions is the change of the encyclopedic approach and the use of a competency-based approach [5], which contributes to the formation of personal characteristics of a human being for living in the modern world, gives the opportunity to use knowledge and skills in various professional and life spheres and defines the most important competences of modernity in the common European educational area – so called "key competencies".

Competence is a specially organized, dynamic combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes which develop throughout life with the help of formal, non-formal, informal education and enables to socialize, realize, and express a person in society in a creatively and effectively. Competence involves obtaining an assessment or actual result, which is achieved through a combination of knowledge and skills with the person's way of thinking, his attitude, values, ideas and experience [6]. The updated European reference framework for key competences for lifelong learning (2018) emphasizes the innovative idea of the cross-cutting of key competences in a coherent educational space which combines formal, non-formal and informal education [5].

The data science analysis provided by Google Trends, allows us to track the main trends of scientific development and the level of interest of the scientific community in the field of cultural awareness. The dynamics of search queries show a range of issues related to the concept of cultural awareness, and the countries where the topic (or closely related subject) is mostly being studied: intercultural competence: Australia (100 thousand); Germany (82 thousand); Uzbekistan (60 thousand); defining standards of cultural competence: National Association of Social Workers, USA; developing competencies in the field of intercultural counseling through a systematic approach: USA; creation and implementation of cultural projects: Ukraine; cultural project management: Russia.

Topics of publications examining cultural awareness are related to the concepts of "national" and "cultural identity" of a person [7], which is determined by the commonness of the cultural horizon, through which the possibility of cultural and historical knowledge appears, and a special way of perceiving the existence of a human being and the world is created - a real "hermeneutic universe" in which a person is not closed, and to which he or she is opened [8]. The main focuses on cultural identity include higher education (University), as well as understanding of the university mission at the "temporal crossroads" (learning as

knowledge transfer from the past and research in order to gain knowledge from the future) and "spatial crossroads" (nationalization at the stage of the nation-states formation and internationalization in today's global context) [9, p. 16]. This is a condition for creating a personality of a certain cultural type which is capable to act in all directions and shape "education".

Lifelong learning helps build an individual trajectory of learning that requires self-direction, self-determination, as well as awareness of one's own qualities and capabilities [10].

Scientists are developing scales for measuring the propensity to learn over the lifetime, which is related to the level of gnoseological beliefs [11], self-esteem of self-learning [12]; ability to learn throughout life as a separate element of professionalism [13].

The definitions of cultural awareness related to various fields of economics, thinking, foreign language, inclusion are of particular interest to our study. Thus, the development of cultural awareness occurs on the verge of philosophy, philology, cultural studies, history, psychology, and therefore requires an interdisciplinary approach [14]. This has led to the interest in studying the state of cultural awareness of academic and teaching staff of different fields of specialization, because the cultural and humanistic dimension of scientific knowledge expands the cognitive abilities of the individual and promotes his spiritual development. So the purpose of the study is to highlight the accents of cultural awareness in the context of lifelong learning at the example of high school academic and teaching staff.

According to the purpose the following tasks were formulated: 1. To identify the components of cultural awareness. 2. To analyze and characterize the factors which contribute to the development of cultural awareness. 3. To describe the tasks for the self-development of high school academic and teaching staff and development of their cultural awareness.

To achieve this purpose the following research methods were used: studying the scientific and theoretical basis of cultural awareness, theoretical analysis and comparison of the state of the defined problem development; methods of theoretical generalization of the issue of cultural awareness formation, empirical study of the present state of cultural awareness of high school academic and teaching staff.

#### **Main research material.**

Cultural awareness refers to the next knowledge, skills and attitudes:

- knowledge of local, national, European and world cultures, including languages, heritage, traditions, cultural products;
- understanding the various ways in which ideas, between the creator, the participant and the audience can be conveyed in written, printed and digital texts, theatrical performances, films, dances, games, art, design, music, rituals and architecture, as well as in hybrid forms;
- skills that imply the ability to express and interpret figurative and abstract ideas with the imagination, to experience emotions in various fields of art and forms of culture;
- cultural awareness implies an openness to and respect for the diversity of cultural expression, for ethical standards and responsibility for intellectual and cultural property;
- positive attitude includes interest to the world, openness, willingness to participate in cultural experience;
- cultural awareness includes contemporary digital forms of cultural expression, intercultural awareness and a global perspective [15].

The realization of key competences in Ukraine is also provided for by the New Ukrainian School concept, in particular awareness and self-expression in the cultural sphere is defined as the ability to understand works of art, to form their own artistic tastes, to independently express ideas, experiences and feelings through art [16]. This competence requires an understanding of one's national identity as a basis for an open attitude and respect for the diversity of the cultural expression of others.

Adoption of the New Ukrainian School concept leads to changes in the content of determining the mandatory competences of a bachelor's degree: to preserve and enhance the moral, cultural, scientific values and achievements of society on the basis of understanding of the history and regularity of development of the subject area [17].

Content of cultural awareness helps ensure:

- knowledge of philosophical, cultural, socio-cultural, moral and ethical content;
- availability of skills for the implementation of cultural projects, initiatives, community, volunteering, educational cultural activities to provide lifelong learning;
- formation of values, attitudes, mindset: general cultural, national, civic, moral, ethical and scientific.

The content of cultural awareness provides an opportunity to determine its components:

- 1) linguistic component (knowledge of native, national and foreign languages);
- 2) intercultural component (general information about geographical location, natural conditions, basic categories of different cultures, system of values, ethnic and cultural settings, features of verbal and non-verbal communication);
- 3) sociocultural component (mentality, state system, historical peculiarities and cultural traditions of the countries, willingness to participate in modern cultural events);
- 4) personal component (barriers, motivation or unwillingness to master a foreign language, respect for the values of different cultures, ability to reflect).

The relevance of these components, in our opinion, is determined by the situation of integration into the European space, understanding and acceptance of European values.

During the conducted research 50 representatives of academic and teaching staff of 10 Kyiv higher educational institutions have been interviewed. The group of respondents aged 30 to 70 consisted of the representatives of the humanitarian direction – 27 persons (including foreign language philologists – 10, socio-political direction – 5, law – 4, economic – 8), and technical direction – 23.

The research results on the linguistic component show a high level (67%) and medium level (33%) of mastery of the language culture. Most academic and teaching staff (73%) speaks foreign languages (12% of them are not philologists); those, who do not know any foreign language – 27% – represent different directions.

Respondents are more likely to experience positive emotions when learning a foreign language: satisfaction - 50%, and interest - 67%, astonishment - 3%, 9% respondents feel negative emotions, 3% - irritation. As a motivation for learning foreign languages by academic and teaching staff the next factors were mentioned: competitiveness (70%), participation in international projects (27%), work with foreign scientific literature (27%). Motivations related to personal preferences include: traveling, learning the new facts about the world, reading fiction, watching movies, having a wish to interact with foreigners, striving for self-improvement, and developing cognitive abilities.

Thus, 50% of academic and teaching staff, not foreign language teachers, knows foreign languages, and it is the sphere where the language teachers show the self-improvement and development of cognitive abilities as a significant motivation. At the same time, the common motivation for language learning is competitiveness, participation in international projects, and the need to work with scientific literature, which speaks about the tendency of modern high school teachers to enter the international level, and the pursuit of academic mobility. In the context of cultural awareness, the level of development of the linguistic component is related to professional scientific activity, but is not manifested in pedagogical activity, is not used or little used in the teaching of disciplines.

The study of the intercultural component of cultural awareness of academic and teaching staff revealed the existence of cultural focuses aimed at gaining new experience on different cultures, the desire to communicate on the international level, the desire for self-improvement and the expansion of the range of interest. According to the respondents, the important qualities that contribute to the development of the intercultural component are self-esteem, communicative abilities, tolerance towards other cultures, as well as the presence of cognitive interest and professional ambitions (see table 1).

**Table 1. Summary table of intercultural awareness based on the results of academic and teachers staff survey**

	<b>Questions that determine the component of cultural awareness</b>	<b>Survey results</b>
<b>Intercultural component</b>	What do you think helps you gain your own cross-cultural experience?	<b>Cultural mindsets:</b> - gaining the new experience, - desire to communicate, - desire for self-improvement, - expansion of the range of interest
	What do you think hinders high school teachers from understanding other cultures?	
	What influenced your interest in other cultures?	
	By what means and personality traits, does your cultural expression happen?	<b>Personal qualities:</b> - self-esteem, - communicative abilities, - tolerance towards other cultures, - empathy, - cognitive interest, - professional ambitions
	What personal traits contribute to intercultural understanding and communication?	
	Rate on a scale of "0" to "3" how much the material at the lessons includes the achievements of European and world cultures.	<b>Application of intercultural component in the educational process:</b> - use of materials of intercultural artistic or inclusive practices and projects, - ability to understand, comprehend, and explain the diversity of cultural achievements
Rate on a scale of "0" to "3" your own ability to understand and explain in various ways the transfer of ideas between creator, participant and audience in written, printed and digital texts, theatrical performances, films, dances, games, art, design, music, rituals and architecture, as well as in hybrid forms.		

However, according to the survey, we can conclude that there is a low level of use of cultural awareness and self-improvement of the teachers when teaching subjects. Also, the rapid increase of the of teachers' interest in other cultures during the COVID-19 quarantine (online participation in international projects, cultural events), which are not directly related to professional activities, may be explained by the availability and the compensatory function of cultural awareness in the context of uncertainty.

The socio-cultural component is represented by the factors that contribute to or hinder the development of cultural awareness of higher education teachers. Thus, according to the survey, the presence of motivation for self-improvement, a focus on lifelong learning and knowledge of foreign languages, and a focus of teachers to the preservation of Ukrainian sacred values of a family, in which cultural and national identity are manifested, are the factors that help to gain cultural experience. Availability of free time, the ability to travel as well as the ability to communicate with representatives of different cultures were indicated as the necessary conditions.

On the contrary, lack of free time, overloading, and insufficient funds are the common factors that lead to lack of interest and limitation of interests exclusively within the scope of professional specialization. This is evidenced by the low involvement of teachers in cultural projects and activities (6% - cultural project managers, 8% - project implementers, 2% were cultural events observers).

An important task was to investigate the meaning of the respondents' participation in cultural projects and activities. According to their answers there were roughly marked out three groups of teachers. The first group includes respondents who did not answer this question at all. In addition, they did not participate in cultural projects, showed a low level of interest in cultural life, not directly related to the specialist's specialty, attended cultural events at a frequency of 1-3 times a year. It is quite clear that they answered the question of using the artistic practices and artistic information in the educational process negatively. Teachers are aware of their unwillingness to engage national, European and world cultures in their teaching activities.

The second group of respondents sees the meaning of participation in cultural projects and activities in "learning about the new", "self-development", "self-improvement", "unlocking one's own potential", "growth". However, the teaching process they show a low level of activity regarding the use of experience of artistic practices, involvement of cultural figures and use of modern information and communication technologies.

Respondents of the third group see the meaning not only in self-improvement, but also as a teacher's mission - transfer of cultural experience, values, creation of a spiritual center. This is connected with the fact that higher educational institutions stimulate activity, provide opportunities for participation in cultural events of national European and world level. It is interesting that these teachers (aged 46 years) expressed the meaning of participation in cultural projects, such as "involving young people into the cultural heritage of humanity", "understanding the social importance of the profession of a teacher", "spreading and preserving the spiritual values and cultural traditions of the nation", "self-realization and self-expression through culture".

A significant role in the development of cultural awareness is played by the personal component, which is reflected in the subjective assessments of the proposed areas: 1) the

importance of supporting and creating conditions in the higher education institution that promotes teacher's self-development and self-expression; 2) personal traits that influence adaptation and socialization in new cultural environments; 3) the value of national traditions.

The results of the evaluation of support and participation of the university in the process of organizing the conditions for the cultural awareness development on a 10-point scale are as follows: the lowest rating "1-3 points" was found by two people; the highest score "9-10 points" – was given by nine people; the largest group consists of thirty nine people who rated the organization activities at their institutions at "7-8 points". Thus, working conditions in higher education institutions can be considered as satisfactory. This data reveals a contradiction between subjective satisfaction of the support and participation of the universities in creating the conditions for the development of cultural awareness and the real participation in cultural projects and activities.

The personality traits that influence academicians' adaptation and socialization to new cultural environments most of all are: openness, communicativeness, flexibility, and tolerance for uncertainty.

In our opinion, the diversity of national traditions of one's own country also influences on the development of valuable attitude and cultural awareness of a person and enables to express oneself. According to the results of the survey, the respondents noted the most valuable tendencies for them are: 1) traditional holidays with the accent on the family values; 2) traditions that emphasize national identity, including Ukrainian cuisine, embroideries on clothes, the most popular customs; 3) sacred rites. Thus, the results obtained indicate that the personalities of the respondents are directed towards preserving the Ukrainian sacred values of the family in which national identity may be manifested.

The development of the cultural awareness components is influenced by the level of personal component formation. The latter permeates all spheres of professional and personal life, while at the same time changing itself under the influence of culture, due to the desire for self-improvement and the ability to self-determination. The peculiarity of the development of the personal component of scientific and pedagogical staff is the synergy of scientific activity and cultural awareness, in which we can see personal resources and potentials for self-expression and self-realization, because a person is able to make the informed choice. In this sense science can be considered as a part of the cultural phenomenon.

As the important conditions for developing the personality traits of high school teachers and which influence upon the developing the cognitive interest, motivate to gain knowledge of the world and respect other cultures, while maintaining the teachers' own identity, we see the next:

- commitment to preserve the sacred values of the family and family in which national identity is manifested;
- an eco-social and psychologically safe space for opportunities and free access to communication and exchange of experience with other cultures and practices;
- support and participation of the higher education institution in creating conditions for the development of cultural awareness, self-realization, as a process of self-expression, accompanied by creativity;
- presence of such personal qualities as: openness, communicativeness, flexibility, tolerance, readiness for uncertainty.

At the same time, respondents consider as the most important condition - having their own personal qualities, which indicate the orientation of a person to self-realization. However, the maturity of the willingness to act independently for the knowledge of the Other, the other world, and the culture is not manifested enough. This can testify to the narrowness of the view and the lack of a holistic perception of the world and nature of a human being. Studying the current state of the components of cultural awareness of academic and teaching staff of higher educational institutions allows us to formulate the tasks for their possible development:

- 1) to promote the development of cultural and national identity, preserve and popularize the values of Ukrainian culture, language, traditions;
- 2) to form an understanding and respect for the achievements and values of other cultures;
- 3) to form responsibility for the preservation of cultural heritage and national culture;
- 4) to promote the development of an active life position through the extending and application of artistic practices, achievements of national culture as well as achievements of other cultures;
- 5) to promote the development of a cohesive and inclusive society by improving intercultural understanding, applying innovative and inclusive practices, supporting national and European initiatives.

### **Conclusions.**

Thus, by cultural awareness we mean the ability to understand and respect to the ways how ideas and meanings in different cultures are creatively expressed and transmitted through different fields of art and forms of culture. Cultural awareness in the context of lifelong learning is determined by the level of development of linguistic, intercultural, socio-cultural and personal components. Cultural awareness and self-expression are the key competences, the development of which is enhanced by the academician's personality traits - openness, communication, flexibility and tolerance for uncertainty.

There were identified the factors that contribute to the development of cultural awareness of academic and teaching staff of higher educational institutions: 1) cognitive factors (knowledge of languages, development of mother tongue culture); 2) value factors (preservation of national identity, respect for the achievements of other cultures, development of personal qualities that promote motivation, interest to other cultures as well as the national one); 3) behavioral factors (creating the conditions for cooperation and communication with representatives of other cultures, obtaining free time for cultural experiences). It was also defined the task for developing the cultural awareness of high school teaching staff contributing to the self-determination of the individual. We see the challenge for further research in exploring the conditions for developing cultural awareness as opportunities for self-expression in inclusive education.

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