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The Competency Model of Students' Axiological Culture: Structure, Levels, and Correlations

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Abstract

The research aimed at a comprehensive assessment of the students' axiological culture through singling out and experimental testing of five key competencies: cognitive, emotional-value, reflective, communicative, and behavioral. For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed; it consisted of 50 statements and used a 4-point Likert scale. The research involved 197 university students from 5 regions of Ukraine.

Methods: The statistical analysis included descriptive statistics, nonparametric tests (Mann-Whitney U-test, Kruskal-Wallis H-test), and Spearman rank correlation.

Results: The research revealed that the general level of axiological culture of students was sufficient (M = 3.04, SD = 0.47). The highest indicators were recorded for emotional-value (M = 3.16, SD = 0.51) and cognitive (M = 3.09, SD = 0.50) competencies. The behavioral competence had the lowest indicators (M = 2.91, SD = 0.52). The research revealed statistically significant differences by gender (U = 3312.5, p = 0.012, r = 0.18) and year of study (H = 15.89, p = 0.007, ε^2 = 0.07). All competencies show strong positive correlations (ρ = 0.72-0.85, p < 0.001).

Conclusions: The research results prove that the axiological culture of students is multidimensional in nature, and its development requires a systemic integrative approach. The research emphasized the problem of the gap between value awareness and real behavior, which indicates the need to introduce a significant axiological component into the professional training programs for students.

Key words: axiological culture, values, competency model, students, higher education, value education.

Research relevance

The modern world, which began to rapidly globalize in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, is characterized by rapid social transformations, technological progress, and cultural pluralism (Bakhtiari & Shajar, 2006). In this context, the issue of the formation of youth value orientations, which were considered traditional for centuries in the territories of Western civilization, acquires special importance. More and more often, the representatives of axiological science (Szymański, Wróblewska, 2024; Pelekh, Matviichuk, 2024) pay attention to the issue of the development of axiological culture among the younger generation. We consider the axiological culture of students to be *the ability to realize, reflect on, and practically implement knowledge about the nature of values acquired by students during their studies and socialization into their behavior and lifestyle.* The introduction of this concept into the university education system will significantly supplement the understanding of 21st century competencies (Pelekh, Shlikhta, 2024) and will contribute to the successful personal and professional identification and self-realization of future specialists.

It should also be noted that the most important and critical period for the formation of a system of value orientations, which is associated, in particular, with cultural and value identification, falls on the student years. That is, this is the period of mature youth at the age of 18-25, when an intensive internalization of previously accepted ideals into stable "adult" values takes place, which will determine further life choices and strategies in the near and distant future. In this context, higher education institutions are environments that ensure the achievement of several goals important for young people: on the one hand, it is a space for acquiring general and special competencies (including professional knowledge), and on the other hand, it is an environment for value self-determination and moral maturation. During the war against Russia, not only Ukrainian society but also the entire civilized world is experiencing a time when traditional democratic values are being subjected to attempts to reformat and destroy them by Russia. To achieve their vile goals, the invaders quite successfully use elements of hybrid warfare to "shift" civilizational values that have not yet undergone the period of full identification within the younger generation of Europeans. European cultural and educational institutions (including universities), which did not previously encounter such aggressive behavior, were not ready to fully resist hostile propaganda and are in a state of searching for ways to protect themselves from total barbaric expansion (Chopin & Naim, 2023). At this stage, the formation of the axiological culture of the younger generation appears as the main task of the educational community. Despite the fact that the most important values are constant, their general hierarchy in wartime may undergo significant changes (Szymański, Wróblewska, 2024). In the conditions of war, it is important for the younger generation to give correct answers to questions that take on an existential nature about value priorities. These questions include the following: What values are most important for cultural identification? What values allowed us to resist such a terrible enemy and not lose the war? What values are unifying for the nation? What are we really fighting for, and what ideals do we defend? A person with high moral values and a high level of axiological culture is able to give an accurate answer to these, at first glance, abstract philosophical questions. This should be a person with a high level of Value

Intelligence (Pelekh, 2021) that includes value orientations capable of forming multilevel cultural values (Schwartz, 2006).

Thus, educational values are of great importance in wartime (Rejman, 2021), but today we are faced with a lack of applied research that would comprehensively and fully assess various aspects of students' axiological culture. The works that we mentioned above mainly focus on individual aspects of the study of the value sphere of an individual and different cultures, without taking into account the multidimensional nature of axiological culture as a holistic phenomenon. There is currently no holistic approach to this issue, as well as valid measurement tools for the construct we are studying in this research.

Theoretical foundations of the research

The concept of axiological culture

The axiological culture of students is understood as a holistic system of integral qualities that are predominantly acquired in the space of a higher education institution, provide the ability for cultural and value identification based on knowledge about the nature of values and their awareness as landmarks within one's own culture and the cultures of Western civilization, and carry out value reflection, which contributes to successful professional self-realization in various spheres of life. Within this holistic model, mainly cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of the value sphere of an individual are synthesized.

In contrast to established approaches that view values as static guidelines of human behavior associated with motivation to achieve desired and sometimes idealized life goals, the concept of axiological culture emphasizes, on the one hand, the traditionally holistic, and on the other hand, the dynamic processual nature of value development. Such a concept recognizes that values are not simply learned in the process of socialization but are actively constructed by an individual through reflection, dialogue, and practical experience.

The competency model of axiological culture

In this research, we used the competency model of axiological culture, which consists of 5 components:

1. Cognitive competence

We put this competence in the first place since, in the process of learning, in addition to special competences and along with the acquisition of general competences, students gain knowledge about the nature of values, become acquainted with various value concepts (from the understanding of the concept of values by ancient Greek philosophers to the emergence of axiology and modern axiological theories), and learn to apply axiological knowledge to reveal various social phenomena. This component also assumes the presence of a higher than average level of Value Intelligence (Pelekh, 2021) and constitutes the intellectual core of axiological culture.

2. Emotional-value competence

It assumes the development of emotional competence at an early age, in particular with the help of parents and teachers, and its importance as a positive construct for the development of the student's personality (Lau & Wu, 2012). In addition, it determines the role of values in the ability to self-knowledge, awareness of one's own hierarchy of values, and emotional connection with others based on the acceptance of their value system (empathic

understanding of the position of other people). This component carries out the affective dimension of students' axiological culture.

3. Reflective competence

Students must understand their own values, as well as their connection with their importance to themselves (self-reflection) (Huldtgren et al., 2014), carry out a critical analysis of the origin of universal values and their own values; be able to identify their own moral values; be open to the transformation of value constructs in order to gain new experiences, and recognize anti-values and "remove" them from consciousness. This component ensures adaptability to value changes, contributes to the dynamic development of the value-cultural sphere, and the adaptability of the cultural model of society to one's own "I".

4. Communicative competence

It is characterized by the ability to conduct an axiological dialogue, to present one's own value positions, to discuss value differences constructively and without quarrels, and to be tolerant of the value priorities of others in a pluralistic environment. This component of axiological culture contributes to a deeper understanding of its social origin.

5. Behavioral competence

It states the lack of discrepancies between the values that students declare in the family and academic environments and their real behavior outside them; it means the ability to make value-oriented and balanced decisions, consistency, and constancy in following personal values in different life situations. This component contributes to ensuring a practice-oriented direction of axiological culture.

Our vision of such a model is based on the synthesis of various theoretical approaches to understanding the nature of values: the cognitive-developmental approach of L. Kohlberg (1984), J. Dewey, J. Piaget (1932); humanistic psychology of A. Maslow (1943A), C. Rogers (1961, 1967, 1969), V. Frankl (1948. 2011), R. May (1978) and others; the theory of basic values of M. Rokeach (1973), S. Schwartz (1992); cross-cultural research (cross-cultural psychology) of H. Triandis (1994) and the theory of motivation of D. McClelland, J. Atkinson and others (1953); the concept of moral identity by A. Blasi (1993), and the competency-based approach in education. We will explain them in more detail below.

Theoretical Background

The deeper need to study the concept of "axiological culture" is caused by several key factors:

1. In contemporary Ukrainian and European societies, there are clear contradictions between the growth of individualistic values, such as self-realization, autonomy, and hedonism (Bojanowska, Czerw, 2020) on the one hand, and the strengthening of societal demands for community, solidarity, and social justice on the other hand (Laenen & Roosma, 2022). This social paradox reflects a broader trend toward value pluralism and hybridization.
2. The study of the value sphere of students has a rich tradition in psychology and pedagogy. For the construction of the competency model (supplementing what has already been mentioned above), the works of authors of the theory of values, such as the joint work of Allport-Venon-Lindsey (1960), or the works of Rokeach (1973) and Schwartz (1992) were important for us as they generally recognize motivation and cognitive stimuli as effective factors for achieving the ultimate meaning of life; the theory of needs satisfaction (primarily A. Maslow (1943A), the theories of basic needs of Galtung (1978) and Triandis (1994) or cultural differences (Hofstede (1980, 2002, 2011) and the Cultural Map of Ingelhart-Welzel (2005).

We consider them to be a certain systemic core, which is the basis of the phenomenon of axiological culture.

3. The need for a deeper understanding of the concept of axiological culture is also due to the fact that modern research demonstrates a complex picture of value transformations among youth (Schwartz, 2014; Taleski and Hoppe, 2015; Schwartz and Winkel, 2016). The student age is a critical period for the transition from conventional to post-conventional and divergent levels of value thinking. However, we are inclined to believe that this transition is not permanent and automatic and requires special pedagogical conditions that would contribute to its "gentle" course.

The competency-based approach to education, which has become widespread since the beginning of the 21st century, is one of the main elements of assessing the acquired educational and general cognitive experience in higher education institutions of the Bologna Process countries. The main merit of this educational phenomenon is considered to be the reorientation of the focus from the transfer of knowledge to the development of complex abilities necessary for the successful functioning of a person in the modern labor market. Axiological competence is considered to be one of the key competencies for life in a democratic, pluralistic society. This is emphasized by the fact that the Council of Europe has included value competence in the list of competencies for culture and democracy.

Despite the significant amount of research conducted to date, a number of issues remain unresolved, namely:

a) currently, there is a lack of interdisciplinary models that combine different aspects of the value and cultural spheres;

b) most assessment tools focus on identifying levels of value orientations (how much a person is able to appropriate different groups of values), but not on axiological competence (how a person implements these values in real life and is guided by them in their behavior);

c) there are practically no studies examining the relationship between different classifications of values and axiological culture.

Research goal and objectives

The goal of this research is to determine (using the author's methodology) the levels of students' axiological culture in the context of its comprehensive assessment through the prism of five key competencies and to identify factors that influence the development of the phenomenon under study.

Research objectives:

1. To assess the general level of students' axiological culture.
2. To determine the level of development of axiological culture for each of the five competencies.
3. To identify differences in axiological culture depending on sociodemographic characteristics (gender, age, year of study, place of residence)
4. To explore the relationships between competencies that are elements of the axiological culture model.
5. To highlight the strengths and problematic issues in the development of students' axiological culture.

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The general level of axiological culture of students is sufficient, but there are significant differences between individual competencies.

Hypothesis 2: Some competencies are developed better than others, which reflects the gap between value awareness and real behavior.
Hypothesis 3: There are statistically significant differences in axiological culture depending on gender.
Hypothesis 4: The level of axiological culture increases with the year of study, which reflects the influence of the educational environment and age on value development.
Hypothesis 5: All components of axiological culture are positively correlated with each other, which confirms their integrated nature and testifies to the importance of reflection for the coordination (mutual correspondence) of the system of students' value orientations and behavior.

Research methodology

Research design

This research used a quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive-analytical design to comprehensively assess students' axiological culture. The study was conducted from October 2024 to December 2024 in Ukrainian higher education institutions (Kyiv (central Ukraine), Cherkasy (southeastern Ukraine), Rivne, Ternopil, Uzhhorod (Western Ukraine).

Research participants

The research sample consisted of 197 students from various higher education institutions in Ukraine. A convenience sampling method was used with elements of stratification by the year of study and place of residence. The inclusion criteria were full-time student status in a Ukrainian higher education institution; age 17 years and older; voluntary consent to participate in the study; ability to understand the Ukrainian language and answer the questionnaire. Exclusion criteria: incomplete completion of the questionnaire (more than 10% of missing answers); obvious patterns of dishonest answers. The sociodemographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of participants

Research category		Quantitative indicators
Gender:		
	Female:	115 (58.4%)
	Male:	75 (38.1%)
	Not specified:	7 (3.6%)
Age:		
	Range:	17-51
	Average:	20.4
	Standard deviation:	5.0
	Median:	19
Age groups:		
	17-19 years old:	113 (57.4%)
	20-22 years old:	56 (28.4%)
	23-25 years old:	14 (7.1%)
	26+ years old:	14 (7.1%)
Year of study:		
	1st year:	57 (28.9%)

	2nd year:	48 (24.4%)
	3d year:	43 (21.8%)
	4th year:	29 (14.7%)
	5th year:	10 (5.1%)
	Master's degree students:	10 (5.1%)
Place of residence:		
	Urban:	134 (68.0%)
	Rural:	63 (32.0%)

Research tools

To assess axiological culture, a comprehensive questionnaire was developed with 50 statements divided into 5 conceptual blocks:

Block 1: Cognitive competence (10 statements)
Block 2: Emotional-value competence (10 statements)
Block 3: Reflective competence (10 statements)
Block 4: Communicative competence (10 statements)
Block 5: Behavioral competence (10 statements)

Rating scale: a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Always)

Statistical analysis

The analysis was performed using Python 3.10 (pandas, numpy, scipy, matplotlib, seaborn) and included: descriptive statistics (M, SD, Mdn, IQR); Shapiro-Wilk test to check normality; Mann-Whitney U-test (for comparing two groups); Kruskal-Wallis H-test (for comparing three or more groups); Spearman rank correlation; significance level: $\alpha = 0.05$.

Research results

At the initial stage of the study, we sought to obtain a general characteristic of the axiological culture of students. For this, we carried out a statistical measurement of all five competencies of the studied model. The descriptive statistics for all competences are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of axiological competencies (N = 197)

Competence	M	SD	Mdn	IQR	Min	Max
Cognitive	3.09	0.50	3.10	0.60	1.50	4.00
Emotional-value	3.16	0.51	3.20	0.70	1.60	4.00
Reflective	3.01	0.53	3.00	0.70	1.40	4.00
Communicative	3.07	0.52	3.10	0.70	1.50	4.00
Behavioral	2.91	0.52	2.90	0.70	1.40	4.00
General indicator:	3.04	0.47	3.05	0.60	1.68	4.00

Based on the data in the table, it can be stated that the general level of axiological culture of students is at a sufficient level (M = 3.04, SD = 0.47). The highest indicators were recorded for emotional-value (M = 3.16) and cognitive (M = 3.09) competencies. The lowest indicators were for behavioral competence (M = 2.91), which indicates a gap between value awareness and real behavior.

Our next step was to determine the levels of axiological culture. The results of this measurement are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Level of development of students' axiological culture

Level of development	n	%	Score range
Low	2	1.0%	1.00-1.75
Medium	23	11.7%	1.76-2.50
Sufficient	126	64.0%	2.51-3.25
High	46	23.4%	3.26-4.00

Most students (64.0%) demonstrate a sufficient level of axiological culture, and almost a quarter (23.4%) have a high level. Only 12.7% have a low or medium level.

In accordance with our hypothesis, the next step of the study was to compare axiological competencies (see Table 4).

Table 4. Comparison of axiological competencies by gender

Competence	Female (n=115)		Male (n=75)		U	p	r
	M	SD	M	SD			
Cognitive	3.15	0.48	3.01	0.51	3651.0	0.089	0.12
Emotional-value	3.25	0.49	3.02	0.51	3312.5	0.012*	0.18
Reflective	3.08	0.51	2.91	0.54	3542.0	0.051	0.14
Communicative	3.15	0.50	2.95	0.53	3401.5	0.024*	0.16
Behavioral	2.96	0.51	2.84	0.53	3689.0	0.102	0.12
General indicator	3.12	0.45	2.95	0.48	3332.0	0.012*	0.18

*p < 0.05

Interpreting the research data, we conclude that women demonstrate statistically significantly higher indicators of general axiological culture (U = 3332.0, p = 0.012, r = 0.18), as well as emotional-value (p = 0.012) and communicative (p = 0.024) competencies than men. However, it is important to note that the effect size is small (r = 0.16-0.18), indicating moderate but stable differences.

The next step of the study was to conduct a comparative analysis of the level of axiological culture depending on the year of study. The data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Comparison of axiological competences by the year of study

Competence	1st year M(SD)	2nd year M(SD)	3d year M(SD)	4th year M(SD)	5th+master M(SD)	H	p	ε²
Cognitive	2.98 (0.52)	3.05 (0.49)	3.15 (0.48)	3.18 (0.47)	3.35 (0.42)	12.45	0.014*	0.05
Emotional-value	3.05 (0.53)	3.12 (0.51)	3.22 (0.49)	3.28 (0.48)	3.42 (0.45)	11.23	0.024*	0.04
Reflective	2.88 (0.55)	2.95 (0.53)	3.08 (0.51)	3.15 (0.49)	3.28 (0.46)	13.67	0.008*	0.06
Communicative	2.95 (0.54)	3.02 (0.52)	3.12 (0.50)	3.20 (0.48)	3.35 (0.44)	14.89	0.005*	0.07
Behavioral	2.78 (0.54)	2.85 (0.52)	2.95 (0.51)	3.02 (0.49)	3.18 (0.46)	12.78	0.012*	0.05
General indicator	2.93	3.00	3.10	3.17	3.32	15.89	0.007*	0.07

*p < 0.05

Suggesting the fourth hypothesis, we assumed that differences by the year of study would be recorded in increasing order. Thus, the data in the table show that statistically significant differences by the year of study for all competences and the general indicator ($p < 0.05$) exist. Namely, there is a clear tendency to increase axiological culture from the first to the fifth year. The effect size is small ($\varepsilon^2 = 0.04$-0.07), which indicates a moderate influence of the educational environment.

The next step in the study was to conduct a comparative analysis by age group (see Table 6).

Table 6. Comparison of axiological competences by age groups

Competence	17-19 M(SD)	20-22 M(SD)	23-25 M(SD)	26+ M(SD)	H	p	ε²
Cognitive	3.02 (0.51)	3.12 (0.49)	3.18 (0.47)	3.28 (0.45)	8.45	0.038*	0.03
Emotional-value	3.10 (0.52)	3.19 (0.50)	3.26 (0.48)	3.35 (0.46)	7.89	0.048*	0.03
Reflective	2.95 (0.54)	3.04 (0.52)	3.12 (0.50)	3.22 (0.48)	9.12	0.028*	0.04
Communicative	3.01 (0.53)	3.10 (0.51)	3.18 (0.49)	3.28 (0.47)	8.67	0.034*	0.03
Behavioral	2.85 (0.53)	2.93 (0.51)	3.01 (0.50)	3.12 (0.48)	7.34	0.062	0.03
General indicator	2.99	3.08	3.15	3.25	9.45	0.024*	0.04

*p < 0.05

The table data show that there are statistically significant differences by age group for most competences (except behavioral, p = 0.062). There is also a tendency for axiological culture to increase with age, reflecting the processes of personal maturation and accumulation of life experience.

One of the important educational problems that continues to be actively discussed in educational circles is the issue of unequal access to education and culture for young people living in urban and rural areas. In view of this, we conducted a comparative analysis of the axiological culture of students according to their place of residence (Table 7).

Table 7. Comparison of axiological competencies by place of residence

Competence	Urban (n=134)		Rural (n=63)		U	p	r
	M	SD	M	SD			
Cognitive	3.11	0.49	3.05	0.52	3892.5	0.412	0.06
Emotional-value	3.18	0.50	3.12	0.53	3845.0	0.358	0.07
Reflective	3.03	0.52	2.97	0.55	3912.0	0.441	0.05
Communicative	3.09	0.51	3.03	0.54	3867.5	0.382	0.06
Behavioral	2.93	0.51	2.87	0.54	3934.0	0.468	0.05
General indicator :	3.07	0.46	3.01	0.49	3856.0	0.368	0.07

In the obtained data, we did not find statistically significant differences in axiological culture depending on the place of residence (p > 0.05 for all competencies). This indicates the universality of value processes and equal access to value education regardless of geographical origin.

Correlation analysis between competencies

Using the Spearman correlation, we obtained the correlation indices (matrix) between axiological competencies in the model of students' axiological culture (see Table 8).

Table 8. Spearman correlation matrix between axiological competencies

	Cognitive	Emot.-value	Reflective	Communic.	Behavioral
Cognitive	1.00				
Emotional-value	0.78***	1.00			
Reflective	0.75***	0.82***	1.00		
Communicative	0.76***	0.79***	0.83***	1.00	
Behavioral	0.72***	0.77***	0.85***	0.81***	1.00

***p < 0.001

As it can be seen, all competencies demonstrate strong positive correlations (ρ = 0.72-0.85, p < 0.001). The strongest relationship is observed between reflective and behavioral competencies (ρ = 0.85), which confirms the importance of reflection for the alignment of values and behavior. The weakest (but still strong) relationship is also recorded between

cognitive and behavioral competencies (ρ = 0.72), which indicates the partial independence of theoretical knowledge and practical implementation of values.

We also performed a test for normality of distribution (see Table 9).

Table 9. Results of the Shapiro-Wilk test

Competence	W	p	Distribution
Cognitive	0.987	0.089	Normal
Emotional-value	0.983	0.045*	Abnormal
Reflective	0.985	0.062	Normal
Communicative	0.984	0.051	Normal
Behavioral	0.982	0.038*	Abnormal
General indicator	0.988	0.112	Normal

*p < 0.05

The results show that most distributions are close to normal, although emotional-value and behavioral competencies demonstrate statistically significant deviations from normality. This justifies the use of nonparametric statistical tests in the comparative analysis.

Discussion

The study was carried out with the aim of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the condition of the axiological culture of modern Ukrainian students. The results of the study show that the general level of axiological culture (M = 3.04) is at a sufficient level, which may indicate a generally positive condition of the axiological culture of students. Since we have not found similar studies, we can say that this research is the first to provide a comprehensive picture of the axiological culture of students at Ukrainian universities. By applying the competency model to determine the level of axiological culture of students, we were able to generally confirm the statement about the interdependence between values and behavior, which is traced from childhood and changes as moral knowledge or judgments "grow" (Henshel, 1971). At the same time, it was found that the indicators of behavioral competence were the lowest (M = 2.91), which may indicate certain discrepancies between the theoretical knowledge base and specific actions regarding its practical application, as well as between the declaration of values and real behavior. Moral psychology and the works of modern researchers well describe the phenomenon that indicates the relationship between values and behavior (Sagiv & Roccas, 2021), but our study suggests that awareness of values does not automatically transform into value-oriented behavior. Of course, it is not about extremes and the effect of the so-called "dark side of values" (Risi & Marti, 2022), but we take into account numerous barriers – situational factors, social pressure (especially in peer groups), emotional impulses, and habits – that can hinder the implementation of values in everyday life. In our opinion, it is the manifestation of a high level of axiological culture that allows maintaining the moral and value guidelines established in a democratic society in any life circumstances. This happens even when the

need to use anti-values (exaggeration, false messages, distortion of the real situation), as often happens in political circles, can lead to the desired result.

It should be noted that the highest indicators of emotional-value competence (M = 3.16) were expected rather than unexpected, since student age is a period of intensive self-knowledge and identity formation, and therefore students are well aware of their own values and have a strong emotional connection with them. This period is a continuation of the formation of self-identification based on value preferences in adolescence (Pfeifer & Berkman, 2018). High indicators of cognitive competence (M = 3.09) may indicate the effectiveness of the Ukrainian university education system in transmitting theoretical knowledge about values.

Regarding the third task of the research, which concerned the identification of differences in axiological culture depending on sociodemographic characteristics, it should be noted that the identified gender differences are consistent with previous studies that demonstrate greater emotional openness and communicative orientation of women (Brody, Hall 1993; Kring AM, Gordon, 1998). Accordingly, in our study, women demonstrate statistically significantly higher indicators of emotional-value ($p = 0.012$) and communicative ($p = 0.024$) competences. These differences can be explained by such factors as:

a) socialization: traditional gender roles encourage women to be more emotionally expressive and interpersonally sensitive;

b) neurobiological factors: studies show certain differences in the functioning of the emotional centers of the brain in men and women (Xin et al., 2019);

c) educational environment: the educational system may unconsciously support different standards of emotional expression for boys and girls.

It is important to emphasize that the identified differences are statistical trends at the group level and do not mean that all women have a higher axiological culture than all men. In addition, the effect size is small ($r = 0.16$-0.18), which indicates a significant overlap of the distributions. In addition, when studying the effects of the educational environment and age, a trend towards an increase in axiological culture with the year of study was revealed ($p = 0.007$, $\varepsilon^2 = 0.07$), which confirms the developmental potential of higher education.

As expected, senior students demonstrated higher performance in all competencies, which can be explained by better development of the cognitive sphere, since university education contributes to the development of such mental abilities as critical and abstract thinking, the ability to reflect and empathize, etc. Senior students have more experience in socio-environmental interaction, which contributes to the development of value dialogue and the emergence of various life situations for the practical application of values. It should be especially emphasized that such academic disciplines as ethics, philosophy, and cultural studies directly operate with value constructs and develop skills of value interaction. This period (20-25 years old) is characterized by the “maturation” of moral knowledge and judgments, personal development intensifies, and the formation of a stable identity is activated (Erikson, 1956). A similar trend is observed in other age groups ($p = 0.024$, $\varepsilon^2 = 0.04$), which emphasizes the importance of life experience for the development of axiological culture. Therefore, older students have more opportunities to reflect on their own values, successfully resolve value dilemmas, and integrate values into life practice. The issue of equal access to education and culture for young people from rural areas and cities is also important. Taking into account studies that examined the identification and overcoming of barriers faced by rural youth in their education (Irvin et al., 2012), we found no evidence of differences in the development of axiological culture in rural and urban students. This evidences that students have equal access to education and that the formation of axiological culture in the university environment does not depend on demographic indicators.

Investigating the relationships between the competences that are elements of the model of students’ axiological culture (task 4), we came to the conclusion that the existing strong

positive correlations between all competences (ρ = 0.72-0.85) confirm its integral nature. This indicates that different aspects of the value sphere do not function in isolation but form an interconnected system. We pay special attention to the strongest relationship between reflective and behavioral competences (ρ = 0.85). This suggests a significant role for reflection in bridging the gap between values and behavior. Students who systematically reflect on their values and analyze the consistency between values and actions are more likely to demonstrate value-oriented behavior. In contrast, the weakest (although still stable) relationship was found between cognitive and behavioral competences (ρ = 0.72). This confirms that theoretical knowledge about values, although important, is still insufficient to ensure value-oriented behavior. This merges with the criticism of traditional education, which focuses on the transfer of knowledge but does not develop practical skills, in particular moral reasoning and morally consistent actions. Overall, the results of the study confirm the multidimensional nature of axiological culture and the need for an integrated approach to its development, synthesizing cognitive, emotional, reflective, communicative, behavioral, and possibly other aspects. The identified problem areas (low level of behavioral competence, gender differences) indicate the need to strengthen the practical component of axiological education and develop gender-sensitive pedagogical approaches. A special issue is the creation in universities of a value-saturated educational environment that would model the values declared by its participants. Based on the facts analyzed above, we also consider it necessary to develop specialized programs to bridge the gap between values and behavior.

Conclusions

Having carried out a comprehensive study of the axiological culture of university students based on the creation and experimental verification of its model, we came to the conclusion that the axiological culture of students is an integral concept that has a multidimensional nature, and its development requires a systematic innovative approach. The study shows that the general level of axiological culture of Ukrainian students is at a sufficient level. Meanwhile, during the research, we carefully studied the problem of the gap between the understanding of the nature of values, their awareness, and real behavior, which indicates the need to introduce a significant axiological component into the professional training programs of students. We also came to the conclusion that the development of students' axiological culture in an academic environment is a long-term process that requires systematic efforts throughout the entire period of study. This allows stating that educational institutions should not only provide knowledge about values, but also model them in the content of their internal culture, as well as in subject-subject relations and decision-making procedures. Since our study is based only on the Ukrainian sample, we believe that it is necessary to conduct comparative studies of students' axiological culture in different countries to identify universal and culture-specific patterns. The axiological culture measurement tool also requires further psychometric validation, including factor analysis, reliability assessment, and convergent validity.

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