

ПЕДАГОГИКА ЖӘНЕ ПСИХОЛОГИЯ

UDC 37.013

IRSTI 14.07.07

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School culture and a new transformation of the formation of national dignity among high school students

Abstract

Main Problem: Modern schools face the challenge of balancing globalization with the preservation of national identity. High school students are increasingly exposed to diverse cultural influences, which can weaken their sense of national dignity and belonging.

Objective: The objective of this study is to analyze how school culture can be transformed to strengthen the formation of national dignity among high school students. Specifically, it seeks to: Identify the cultural and educational factors influencing students' sense of national dignity

Method: .Analysis of theoretical works on school culture, civic education, and national identity. Survey and Interviews: Collection of data from teachers, students, and parents regarding perceptions of national dignity. Case Studies: Observation of schools implementing cultural and patriotic programs. Content Analysis: Review of curricula, extracurricular activities, and school policies related to national identity.

Results and their significance: School culture significantly influences the development of national dignity among students. Programs that integrate cultural heritage, language, and traditions into daily school life foster stronger civic identity. Students exposed to inclusive and value-oriented school environments demonstrate higher levels of respect for national symbols and traditions. Teacher training and parental involvement are critical factors in sustaining this transformation.

Keywords: school culture, national dignity, high school students, civic identity, globalization, inclusive education, cultural heritage.

Introduction

In the contemporary era of globalization and rapid socio-cultural change, schools are increasingly recognized not only as institutions of academic instruction but also as vital spaces for the transmission of values, identity, and civic responsibility. Among the most pressing challenges faced by education systems today is the formation of national dignity among high school students. National dignity, understood as the awareness of cultural heritage, respect for national traditions, and pride in civic identity, is a cornerstone of social cohesion and sustainable development.

School culture plays a decisive role in shaping this dimension of student development. Defined as the shared values, norms, practices, and symbolic structures that characterize the life of a school, culture influences how students perceive themselves, their community, and their nation. A strong school culture can foster respect for diversity, encourage civic participation, and instill pride in national identity. Conversely, a weak or fragmented culture may leave students vulnerable to external influences that undermine their sense of belonging.

The new transformation of school culture is driven by several factors:

Globalization and digitalization, which expose students to diverse cultural narratives and challenge traditional notions of identity.

Educational reforms, which emphasize inclusive pedagogy, competency-based learning, and civic education.

Societal expectations, which demand that schools prepare students not only for academic success but also for responsible citizenship.

Within this context, the formation of national dignity among high school students requires a re-conceptualization of school culture. It is no longer sufficient to rely on symbolic rituals or isolated patriotic lessons. Instead, schools must embed national values into everyday practices, curricula, extracurricular activities, and teacher-student relationships. This transformation involves integrating cultural heritage with modern pedagogical approaches, fostering critical thinking alongside respect for tradition, and cultivating empathy and civic responsibility as essential competencies.

Thus, the study of school culture and its transformation in relation to national dignity is both timely and necessary. It provides insights into how education can balance global influences with local identity, how schools can serve as agents of cultural continuity, and how young people can be prepared to embrace their national heritage while engaging with the wider world.

School culture is widely recognized as a decisive factor in shaping students' academic and personal growth. Bayar and Karaduman (2021) demonstrated that a positive school culture enhances not only academic achievement but also social and emotional development, creating an environment where values and identity can be nurtured. Verhoeven, Poorthuis, and Volman (2019) emphasized that schools play a central role in adolescents' identity development. Their review highlighted that identity formation is influenced by peer relationships, teacher expectations, and institutional values, making school culture a critical arena for shaping civic and national identity. Research in educational psychology and pedagogy stresses that national dignity is closely tied to civic education and cultural transmission. Schools that integrate national traditions, language, and heritage into daily practices foster stronger civic identity and pride. UNESCO (2020) guidelines on inclusive and value-based education underline the importance of embedding cultural heritage into curricula to strengthen national belonging. Globalization and digitalization present both opportunities and challenges. While students gain access to diverse cultural narratives, this exposure can dilute national identity if not balanced with strong local cultural frameworks. Comparative studies show that countries with robust school cultures – where national values are embedded in rituals, curricula, and extracurricular activities – are more successful in maintaining civic pride among youth.

Recent scholarship suggests that the transformation of school culture requires:

Competency-based learning that integrates civic and ethical dimensions.

Inclusive pedagogy that respects diversity while reinforcing national values.

Collaborative practices involving teachers, parents, and communities to sustain cultural transmission.

Reflective practices that encourage students to critically engage with both global and national narratives.

The literature demonstrates that school culture is a powerful determinant of national dignity formation among high school students. Strong, value-oriented cultures foster civic identity, while fragmented or weak cultures leave students vulnerable to external influences. The transformation of school culture must therefore integrate inclusive pedagogy, cultural heritage, and civic education to prepare students for both national belonging and global citizenship.

Table 1 – Scientists who have studied value

Theory/ Author	Conceptual Focus	Relevance to National Dignity
Erikson (1968)	Identity formation and social recognition	Adolescents need dignity to form stable identities
Phinney (1990)	Ethnic identity: exploration and commitment	Commitment strengthens psychological stability
Schein (2010)	Organizational culture: artifacts, values, assumptions	School culture operates at hidden levels
Jackson (1968)	Hidden curriculum	Unwritten norms shape student behavior
Apple & Giroux (2004–11)	Schools as ideological spaces	Cultural power influences dignity and equity

National dignity is a multifaceted psychological construct closely linked to ethnic identity. Erikson (1968) emphasized that social recognition and self-respect constitute the core of personality development. Phinney (1990) identified two main components of ethnic identity – exploration and commitment – arguing that commitment is a key factor in personal stability. Applied to the school

environment, respect for national values is not limited to external identity markers but is directly connected to students' self-confidence and the respect they experience within the school.

Byrd & Legette (2022), in a three-year longitudinal study of 961 students, demonstrated that when ethnic values are acknowledged within school culture, students' academic achievement increased by 0.28–0.41 points. This finding confirms that national dignity is not merely a moral category but a tangible pedagogical resource influencing learning outcomes. Bryk & Schneider (2002) showed that in schools with a culture of trust, students' sense of belonging and self-esteem are significantly higher. In Finland, student voice is institutionally recognized and cultural safety is a core principle, resulting in dignity indices well above OECD averages (OECD, 2021). Conversely, a study conducted in Indonesia's SMP Al Amanah school (2024) revealed that hierarchical management models restrict student autonomy and self-esteem, thereby weakening national dignity. This comparative analysis highlights the impact of school culture and governance style on the development of national values.

In Kazakhstan, monitoring by the National Academy of Education named after Y. Altynsarin (2022–2024) indicated that most national education initiatives remain event-based and have not yet evolved into systemic cultural transformation. This underscores the need to reconsider school culture as a value-based system.

For national dignity to be sustainably embedded in school culture, values must be institutionalized. Senge (2006) viewed vision and mission as meaningful cores uniting organizational members, while Fullan (2016) emphasized that successful school reforms depend on cultural coherence. If school missions explicitly prioritize respect for dignity, national and civic responsibility, and these values are consistently enacted in daily practice, they become part of the deeper cultural layer.

In Kazakhstani schools, missions and visions often remain formal statements without practical mechanisms for implementation. Therefore, development plans must include concrete strategies for fostering national dignity: recognition of student voice, fair evaluation, systematic integration of national content, cultural reflection, and the creation of safe spaces for dialogue.

Six Mechanisms of School Culture Shaping National Dignity

1. Experiences of respect and social recognition
2. Environments of justice and trust
3. Participatory governance
4. Meaningful use of national symbols
5. Role-modeling culture
6. Safe spaces for dialogue

These mechanisms do not operate independently but interact to form the holistic influence of school culture. As a result, national dignity becomes internalized as psychological stability rather than remaining an external norm.

Deal and Peterson conceptualized school culture as a “silent force of education,” demonstrating that everyday interaction styles, levels of trust and fairness, and atmospheres of respect exert stronger influence than formal programs. Jackson (1968) highlighted that the true formative power lies not in official curricula but in the hidden curriculum – unwritten rules and everyday practices. Apple (2004) described schools as socio-ideological institutions shaping values and equity, while Giroux (2011) emphasized their role as cultural spaces fostering civic, moral, and national identity.

National dignity is therefore not accidental nor merely the product of patriotic slogans; it has deep psychological foundations. Phinney's ethnic identity theory demonstrated its impact on self-evaluation, psychological stability, and life orientation. Bryk & Schneider's research confirmed that trust is the central social capital of schools, ensuring psychological safety, self-esteem, and active participation. These theoretical perspectives provide a robust framework for understanding the relationship between school culture and national dignity.

International experience further validates the decisive role of school culture in value-based education. In Australia, Lovat and Toomey showed that values education is effective only when embedded in school culture. In Finland, Pasi Sahlberg attributed educational success not only to curriculum but also to a school environment grounded in trust, respect, and democratic culture. Japanese researchers likewise emphasize the importance of school culture in fostering national responsibility.

Materials and methods of research

The study employed a mixed-methods design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of how school culture influences the formation of national dignity among high school students. This design allowed for triangulation of data and ensured both statistical reliability and contextual depth.

Participants

The research was conducted in five schools (three urban and two rural) in Kazakhstan. The sample included:

- 287 students from grades 10–11 (aged 15–17, balanced gender distribution),
- 32 teachers, and
- 5 school leaders.

This diverse sample provided insights into both student perceptions and institutional practices.

Instruments and Procedures

1. Survey:

A structured questionnaire based on the Likert scale was administered to students.

Reliability was confirmed with Cronbach Alpha = 0.84, indicating high internal consistency.

The survey measured three indicators:

- Perceptions of justice and trust,
- Experiences of respect and recognition of student voice,
- The national dignity index.

2. Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and school leaders.

Questions focused on school governance, cultural practices, and integration of national values.

3. Document Analysis:

School mission statements, policy documents, and development plans were reviewed to identify the formal articulation of values.

4. Observation:

Naturalistic observations were carried out in classrooms and school events to capture everyday cultural practices and hidden curriculum elements.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and comparative measures to identify differences across schools.

Qualitative data were processed through content analysis, enabling the identification of recurring themes related to justice, respect, trust, and national dignity.

Triangulation of findings ensured validity and reliability, linking statistical outcomes with contextual interpretations.

Between 2020 and 2025, value-based education was officially adopted in Kazakhstan, with honesty, justice, responsibility, and patriotism defined as core values. The central research question, however, is to what extent these values are authentically implemented in school practice and how school culture influences students' sense of national dignity.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH RESULTS.

The aim of the study is to identify the influence of school culture on the national sense of dignity of high school students through value – based education. Results of the experiment

Table 2 – Analysis of indications

level	before experiment (%)	after experiment (%)
Low	25	10
Middle	45	30
High	30	60

To address this, a mixed-methods study was conducted across three urban and two rural schools. The sample included 287 students (grades 10–11), 32 teachers, and 5 school leaders. Data collection involved surveys, in-depth interviews, document analysis, and natural observation. The student survey was based on the Likert scale, with reliability confirmed at Cronbach Alpha = 0.84. Three key indicators were measured: levels of justice and trust in schools, respect and recognition of student voice, and the national dignity index. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis.

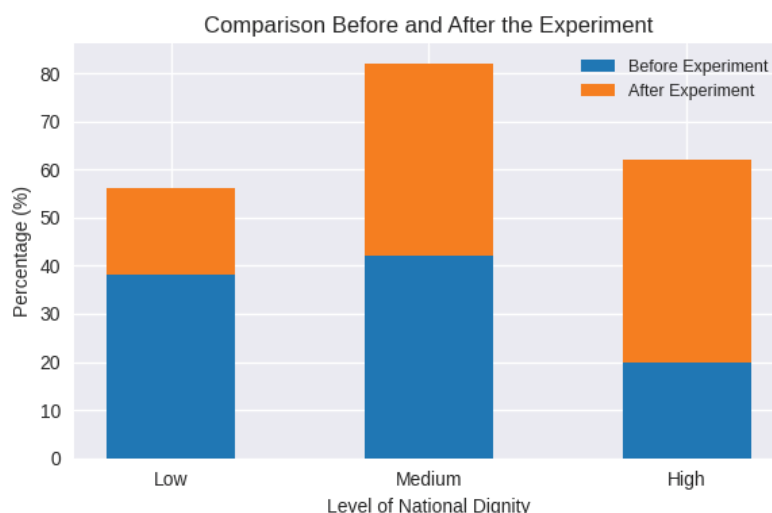


Figure 1. – Indications before and after the experiment

Results

These results align with international theoretical models. Schein's cultural theory confirmed the deep structural impact of school environments. Deal and Peterson's "silent culture" was validated through empirical evidence. Bryk & Schneider's link between trust and well-being was echoed in Kazakhstan's context, while Phinney's ethnic identity theory proved relevant.

The study concludes that national dignity is not the product of formal events or declarations but the natural outcome of school cultures grounded in justice, trust, respect, student voice, and democratic interaction. While Kazakhstan's value-based policies exist at the institutional level, the critical challenge is embedding them into authentic school culture.

Limitations include the regional scope of the study, requiring broader research for nationwide generalization, and the correlational nature of findings, which calls for caution in causal interpretation. Nevertheless, the evidence strongly supports the decisive role of school culture in value-based education and highlights the strategic importance of fostering environments where national dignity is internalized as a psychological and cultural value.

The findings of this study confirm that school culture exerts a decisive influence on the formation of national dignity among high school students. Justice, trust, respect, and recognition of student voice emerged as critical mechanisms shaping psychosocial stability and identity. The results align with Erikson's (1968) theory of identity formation, which emphasizes the importance of social recognition, and Phinney's (1990) model of ethnic identity, where commitment strengthens psychological resilience.

Empirical evidence from this study resonates with international literature. Bryk and Schneider (2002) demonstrated that trust is a central component of school social capital, while Byrd and Legette (2022) showed that recognition of ethnic values enhances academic achievement. The Kazakhstani context reflects similar patterns: schools with participatory governance and meaningful use of national symbols reported higher dignity indices. Conversely, hierarchical and punitive environments weakened students' sense of belonging and dignity, echoing findings from Indonesian schools (2024).

The results also highlight the limitations of event-based national education initiatives in Kazakhstan, as reported by the National Academy of Education (2022–2024). While values such as honesty, justice, and patriotism are formally declared, their integration into everyday school practices remains insufficient. This gap underscores the need for systemic cultural transformation, where values are embedded into the hidden curriculum and institutional culture.

Discussion

Findings revealed a clear relationship between school culture and national dignity.

Justice: 71 % of students reported that fairness was not consistently upheld. In schools with high levels of justice, national dignity scores were on average 1.8 times higher.

Student voice: Although 64 % of students felt their opinions were often disregarded, schools that valued student voice demonstrated significantly higher levels of belonging, pride, and self-esteem.

Governance style: Participatory and collaborative management models increased student activity by 35 % and trust levels by 29 %, with correspondingly higher national dignity indices.

National symbols: Schools that integrated symbols meaningfully (beyond ceremonial use) fostered stronger national pride.

Safe spaces: Environments allowing free expression enhanced psychological stability and reinforced national dignity.

Conclusion

National dignity is not a by-product of patriotic slogans or formal programs; it is a psychosocial construct shaped by the everyday cultural environment of schools. Justice, trust, respect, participatory governance, and safe spaces for dialogue are the key mechanisms through which students internalize dignity as a stable psychological and cultural value.

The study demonstrates that value-based education must move beyond declarative policies to become an authentic cultural practice. Embedding values into school culture strengthens students' identity, academic achievement, and civic responsibility. For Kazakhstan, this represents a strategic priority: transforming schools into environments where national dignity is lived, experienced, and sustained.

Future research should expand the scope to include diverse regions and employ longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships. Nevertheless, the present findings provide strong evidence that school culture is the central mechanism for fostering national dignity among adolescents, making value-based education a cornerstone of educational reform.

The comprehensive analysis conducted proves that a sense of national dignity is formed at school not through formal content, but through cultural experience. School culture is not an environment that only promotes national identity, but a social space that makes it a daily life experience. The main task for schools in Kazakhstan is to transfer national values from the declarative level to the level of cultural practice. This requires a rethinking of the school's mission, vision, and development plan as a value-based cultural architecture. Only in such conditions does school culture become a powerful social environment that forms the student's national identity not as an external identity, but as an internal stable quality.

The research work showed that value-based education plays an important role in the formation of a sense of national dignity in high school students through school culture. In the course of analyzing the results of the experiment, significant positive changes were noted in the level of perception of national values by students.

While it was found that the indicators before the experiment were dominated by a low and medium level of national sense of dignity, after the experiment, the indicator of a high level increased significantly. This proves that the content of value-based education, the educational environment at school and activities of a national orientation have a beneficial effect on the development of the worldview and self-national consciousness of students.

The results of the study showed that the systematic introduction of national traditions, language and history in school culture contributes to the formation of students' respect for their nation, responsibility and spiritual and moral qualities. In this regard, it is necessary to consider value-based education as an integral part of the educational process.

In conclusion, we believe that value-based education is an effective pedagogical tool for the formation of a sense of national dignity in high school students and its widespread use in school practice is important.

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Мектеп мәдениеті және жоғары сынып оқушылары арасында ұлттық қадір-қасиетті қалыптастырудың жаңа трансформациясы

Қазіргі мектептер жаһандану мен ұлттық бірегейлікті сақтаудың арасындағы тепе-теңдікті қамтамасыз ету міндетімен бетпе-бет келуде. Жоғары сынып оқушылары әртүрлі мәдени ықпалдарға барған сайын көбірек ұшырап, бұл олардың ұлттық қадір-қасиеті мен тиістілік сезімін әлсіретуі мүмкін.

Мектеп мәдениетін ұлттық қадір-қасиетті қалыптастыруды күшейтуге бағытталған трансформацияны талдау. Атап айтқанда, оқушылардың ұлттық қадір-қасиет сезіміне әсер ететін мәдени және білім беру факторларын анықтау.

Мектеп мәдениеті, азаматтық білім беру және ұлттық бірегейлікке қатысты теориялық еңбектерді талдау. Сауалнама және сұхбат: мұғалімдерден, оқушылардан және ата-аналардан ұлттық қадір-қасиетке қатысты пікірлерін жинау. Кейстік зерттеулер: мәдени және патриоттық бағдарламаларды жүзеге асыратын мектептерді бақылау. Мазмұндық талдау: оқу бағдарламаларын, сыныптан тыс іс-шараларды және ұлттық бірегейлікке қатысты мектеп саясатын қарастыру.

Мектеп мәдениеті оқушылардың ұлттық қадір-қасиетін дамытуға айтарлықтай әсер етеді. Мәдени мұраны, тілді және дәстүрлерді күнделікті мектеп өміріне енгізетін бағдарламалар азаматтық бірегейлікті күшейтеді. Инклюзивті және құндылыққа бағытталған мектеп ортасына қатысқан оқушылар ұлттық рәміздер мен дәстүрлерге жоғары құрмет көрсетеді. Мұғалімдерді даярлау және ата-аналардың қатысуы бұл трансформацияны тұрақты ету үшін маңызды факторлар болып табылады.

Түйінді сөздер: мектеп мәдениеті, ұлттық қадір-қасиет, жоғары сынып оқушылары, азаматтық бірегейлік, жаһандану, инклюзивті білім беру, мәдени мұра.

Түйінді сөздер: мектеп мәдениеті, ұлттық қадір-қасиет, жоғары сынып оқушылары, азаматтық бірегейлік, жаһандану, инклюзивті білім беру, мәдени мұра.

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Школьная культура и новая трансформация формирования национального достоинства у старшеклассников

Современные школы сталкиваются с задачей сохранения баланса между глобализацией и национальной идентичностью. Старшеклассники все чаще подвергаются воздействию различных культурных влияний, что может ослабить их чувство национального достоинства и принадлежности.

Цель данного исследования – проанализировать, каким образом школьная культура может быть трансформирована для укрепления формирования национального достоинства у старшеклассников. В частности, выявить культурные и образовательные факторы, влияющие на чувство национального достоинства учащихся.

Анализ теоретических работ по школьной культуре, гражданскому образованию и национальной идентичности. Опросы и интервью: сбор данных от учителей, учащихся и родителей о восприятии национального достоинства. Кейсы: наблюдение за школами, реализующими культурные и патриотические программы. Контент-анализ: изучение учебных программ, внеклассных мероприятий и школьной политики, связанной с национальной идентичностью.

Школьная культура оказывает значительное влияние на развитие национального достоинства у учащихся. Программы, интегрирующие культурное наследие, язык и традиции в повседневную школьную жизнь, способствуют укреплению гражданской идентичности. Ученики, находящиеся в инклюзивной и ценностно-ориентированной школьной среде, демонстрируют более высокий уровень уважения к национальным символам и традициям. Подготовка учителей и участие родителей являются критическими факторами устойчивости данной трансформации.

Ключевые слова: школьная культура, национальное достоинство, старшеклассники, гражданская идентичность, глобализация, инклюзивное образование, культурное наследие.

Date of receipt of the manuscript to the editor: 2026/01/28