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CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL TRADITIONS OF UKRAINE AND OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD

Culture and education together sustain the continuity and dynamism of societies. They weave collective memory into everyday life while equipping individuals for new challenges. In Ukraine, deeply rooted cultural practices such as Pysanka egg-decorating, communal borscht preparation, and kobza and wheel lyre music have been recognized by UNESCO for their role in transmitting aesthetic and social knowledge across generations. These practices are upheld by a rich network of national theatres, symphonies, museums, and scholarly institutions that form the backbone of Ukraine's cultural infrastructure [5].

Orthodox Christianity, the predominant faith, structures annual rituals that involve church attendance, traditional costumes, songs, and symbolic foods. These practices reinforce community bonds and shape moral values. Meanwhile, regional folklore and village festivals continue to preserve traditional songs, dances, and crafts, illustrating how informal cultural transmission complements institutional efforts.

Ukraine's educational traditions trace back to the Kyivan Rus era when early schools were established for the clergy and nobility. Today, education is centralized under the Ministry of Education and Science and follows European standards through a twelve-year cycle: four years of primary, five of lower secondary, and three of upper secondary education [2].

Children begin with nursery and kindergarten from age one to six, emphasizing socialization and basic learning. Formal education begins on 1 September and runs five days a week. Subjects include languages, science, mathematics, IT, and physical education, with a growing emphasis on English. Reforms launched in 2018 aim to standardize this structure nationwide,

replacing the eleven-point grading scale with a simplified five-point system.

Outside the classroom, extracurricular programs in sports, music, languages, and STEM fields foster civic participation and personal development. Since the war in 2022, over 7,000 Ukrainian students have joined Finnish schools, where governments are working to maintain Ukrainian cultural education within foreign systems.

Comparative analysis reveals diverse but interconnected traditions. Finland's education model relies on trust and equality. Its minimal standardized testing and emphasis on teacher autonomy produce one of the most equitable education systems globally. The Finnish tradition of “*Wanhat Tanssit*”, where students wear formal attire and perform classical dances, marks transitions in schooling while celebrating cultural continuity [4, p.26].

In Japan, daily “*ōsōji*” – the school cleaning ritual – builds responsibility and mutual respect. Students collectively clean classrooms for about 20 minutes each day, reinforcing a sense of ownership over shared space and strengthening communal ties. This practice complements Japan’s 6+3+3 system of compulsory education and instills lifelong learning habits [1].

In the United States, early public education reforms led to the creation of regular schools to train teachers. The formation of the U.S. Department of Education in 1980 marked a shift toward federal involvement in educational equity and research. For example, Title IX legislation, originally passed in 1972 and enforced by the Department, dramatically expanded gender equality in schools, serving as a model for international educational reform.

These case studies underscore the broader role of education in reflecting and shaping national values. Traditions like Finland's dance, Japan’s school cleaning, and the U.S.’s equity policies serve as living examples of how educational practices are both culturally specific and globally resonant.

International cooperation plays a vital role in protecting cultural identity. UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage enables nations to catalog and preserve living traditions as historical

records and dynamic practices.

In conclusion, cultural and educational traditions in Ukraine and beyond preserve identity while evolving through global exchange. Through institutional policies, grassroots practices, and international frameworks, these traditions remain vital to national heritage and human development.

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