PŮVODNÍ PRÁCE • PŘEHLEDOVÉ STUDIE

CULTURAL IDENTITY STANDARD OF (UPPER)[1] SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Úroveň kulturní identity u žáků středních škol

Veronika Mlčáková, Helena Skarupská

Department of Pedagogical Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University in Zlín, Czech Republic

Abstract

The presented article deals with the standard of cultural identity of upper secondary school students. The article is based on theoretical framework of identity evolution with its focus on cultural dimension. The main goal of the essay is the submission of results of the research focused on a cultural identity standard, which was implemented in the second and third grades of selected upper secondary schools in the Zlín region in Czech Republic. The research instrument was a questionnaire compiled from two standard questionnaires dealing with the individual components of cultural identity. The questionnaire includes as well complementary questions related to the political events and demographic data. The research was focused on two different aspects of its subject. While one part is dealing with the standard of cultural identity in relation to the civic competences, the other is focusing on analysis of civic competences within the framework of general upper secondary school curriculum. To compare the education in civic competences among the schools it was necessary to make an analysis that determined the level of the cultural identity.

Keywords: *Standard, cultural identity, civic competences, framework curriculum, upper secondary school students*

Introduction

The topic of cultural identity as a part of the civic competences of secondary school students was chosen based on the investigation of the process of shaping cultural identity in the school environment among the adolescents. We believe that this period is one of the most sensitive to the cultural identity issue. We think that upper secondary school students should already be able to realize their own cultural identity with the help of the cross-sectional themes included in the contemporary framework curriculum of upper secondary schools.

The goal of our research was to find out, whether upper secondary school students had a clear idea of their cultural identity, i.e. what the standard of their cultural identity is. Together, with the cultural identity we also studied the standard of civic competences of the same students. We collected the required information in accordance with the framework of the curriculum for grammar schools and other upper secondary schools, which should be followed not only by the students, but above all by the upper secondary school teachers who convey education on the above – mentioned concepts. This is the reason, why we will focus on these framework curriculums to see whether and how these competences are anchored in them and how much time is dedicated to them in the upper secondary school education.

The same process was also applied to the standard of civic competences, studied as well in selected sample of upper secondary school students. We were also interested in the opinions of the students, whether they would be willing to engage in a political action, as this is one of the views linked to cultural identity and civic competences as well.

Aim

The main goal of our work was to find out whether upper secondary school students had a clear idea of their cultural identity, i.e. what the standard of their cultural identity was. Together with the cultural identity we also studied the standard of civic competences of the same students.

Theoretical Assumptions of Study of Standard of Cultural Identity of Upper Secondary School Students

The main topic of our study was the formation of cultural identity of adolescents. To get an insight into the issue of cultural identity, firstly we must understand the concepts connected with it. The concept of identity comes from the Latin *identitas* derived from *idem*, which means *the same*. Thus, the literal translation of identity is sameness. The process of self-concept and identity formation became standardized at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. Cushman (in Kroger, 2004) depicts the historic process of identity formation and the process of self-concept formation as a phenomenon seen by many young people as relatively recent. The issue of identity formation relating to belonging to a defined group from the viewpoint of post-modern society was dealt with by Bauman (2002), who states, that identity is not given to man but must be sought and, that life is a sequence of such seeking processes in which identity is reached or not in one way or another. Identity consists of several parts and usually is divided to personal and collective identity. Collective identity includes two components, social and cultural identity. The formation of cultural identity depends on individual´s identification with a certain culture, i.e. a certain cultural society within, which the individual shares common beliefs and opinions. Culture can then be understood as „the nature of the groups we feel we belong to. Every group develops in a different life environment and if, the life conditions are different, people may also respond differently to them, creating different products, values, religions, etc. Their culture will then differ too "*(Cultural Identity, ©2011).*

Cultural identity is identification of an individual with social and moral standards of a certain social group (Ennaji, 2005). According to the above-quoted view of Berry et al. (in Průcha, 2010), they add that this identity is "attenuated" until it encounters another culture.

Cultural identity is shaping during the childhood, when the child forms its own cultural identity and accepts expectations of the society within which he shares common social and cultural characteristics (Morgensternová, Šulová, 2007).

We take into consideration, that no individual´s cultural identity is stable and permanent. Cultural identity is formed together with identity itself during the whole human lifespan.

Another concept connected with cultural identity is *national identity*. National identity is the picture of a country, including

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1   according to ISCED 1997, level 3

its culture, traditions, customs, language and politics. National identity may also be characterized regarding the roles it performs. These roles include integration, forming solidarity among community members and creating the feeling of belonging together (Piscová, 1997).

The last concept which we want to be defined in this context is adolescence. The period of adolescence is the period roughly between 15 and 20 years of age, or the second decade of the human life. It represents one of the milestones in identity formation. What is therefore important for the period of adolescence and its identity is, that the individual must come to understand him or herself and his or her purpose of existence and must be able to share it with another individual with whom he or she will feel the need to maintain an intimate relationship. Therefore, is clear the reason, why we chose to study the perception of identity in adolescence. Adolescence is a period, when, for the first time, the individual´s self comes to the foreground and the adolescent struggles with the problem of self-determination. Identity in adolescence has a built-in concept of the future, that reflects the awareness of one's own acting, but also includes important decisions about what the individual will further engage in (Tyrlik, Macek, Širůček, 2010).

Methodology

The research was conceived as quantitative and as a research instrument we have chosen a questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into four parts. The first part, which is named *The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)* is based on an already existing questionnaire created by Jean S. Phinney in 1992. For our research we had the questionnaire translated and adapted from English to the Czech language. The second part of the questionnaire is also based on an already existing questionnaire. This questionnaire was created by the American institution *Centre for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)*. We used an adapted Czech version of the questionnaire for our research (Protivínský, Dokulilová, 2012). The third part of the questionnaire includes questions about the students´ engagement in politics. The last part of the questionnaire includes questions about demographic data of the respondents. The total number of the questions in the questionnaire was 31. In the questions 1-27, we used the five-point Likert scale (1 – I strongly disagree, 2 – I rather disagree, 3 – I cannot say, 4 – I quite agree, 5 – I absolutely agree). The remaining four questions are closed questions with a single answer choice. To process the collected data, we used the descriptive statistical processing, t-test, ANOVA dispersion analysis, the mean, standard deviation and the correlation test.

Research Sample

The research was focused on students of the second and third grades of upper secondary schools of different orientations in the Czech Republic, i.e. adolescents of the age group of 16 – 18 years. These students were expected to have been taught the concept of cultural identity within the framework of the secondary education curriculum.

The basic research sample was represented by students of the second and third grades of upper secondary schools in the Zlín region. The main reason to choose this target group was the lack of similar existing data of the same topic. In the school year of 2015/2016, there were 46 upper secondary schools suitable for the research, that were chosen from the online database of the upper secondary schools of the Zlín Region in the Czech Republic (Schools online, © 2012 – 2016).

The target group of the research sample was limited to grammar school, secondary technical school, secondary pedagogical school, secondary nursing school and students from

the business academy, because we assumed, that the students interest in cultural identity perception may differ due to their study orientations. Another reason was, that the target age is the sensitive age, when the cultural identity is being formed and therefore, the schools should provide appropriate knowledge of cultural identity.

The population of respondents consisted of 529 students, 34 % boys and 66% girls. The proportion of students from the two grades was quite balanced: 53 % were second grade students and 47 % were third grade students. We contacted the upper secondary schools in Zlín, Uherské Hradiště, Kroměříž and Vsetín. As can be seen from the following text, the proportion of the school types was: the highest number of students came from grammar schools (30 %), followed by secondary pedagogical schools (21 %), secondary technical schools (19 %) and equal shares from secondary nursing school and business academies (15 % each).

Analysis of Framework and School Curriculum

Cultural identity is included in upper secondary school curricula and thus introduction of the concept to their students is included in the framework educational program (only FEP) of both grammar and other upper secondary schools. To what extent cultural identity is taught, depends on the upper secondary school type and its school educational program (hereinafter "SEP"). As for secondary vocational education, the social studies subject should be granted five lessons throughout the study program and the same length should be applied to aesthetic education. The same requirement is expressed in the FEP for grammar schools; the only difference is that civic and social studies subjects are compulsory for second grade students and optional for third grade students.

The most important competences included in the FEP for cultural identity education are civic competences and cultural awareness in secondary vocational education and civic competences in grammar school education.

The aim of the civic competences and cultural awareness is for the graduating students of the secondary vocational school to acknowledge values and attitudes essential for life in a democratic society and support values of national, European and global culture. Subjects, where the cultural identity might be taught include foreign language education and communication and geography. Another subject that might focus on cultural identity teaching at upper secondary schools are social studies, which emphasize themes of man in history, the contemporary world, man in human society, man as citizen and man and the world. The cultural identity of students may also be formed in the subject of aesthetics with its focus on the topic of human culture.

Civic competences promise, that graduating students from the grammar school will be able to consider the relationships between their personal interests and interests of a wider group, to respect the diversity of values, opinions, attitudes and talents of other people and to assess events and development of public life, including their place of residence and surroundings. Cultural identity at grammar schools is also taught in foreign language subjects and educational, personal and personality themes. Further areas of education including cultural identity topic include man and society, man as individual, man in society, the citizen in the state and international relations.

Cultural identity should be taught across subjects defined in the FEP, but for the purpose those mentioned above are best predisposed by their syllabus. Every school by formulating its SEP should focus on these areas and include the needed number of lessons in the timetables, that could deal with cultural identity.

The following table compares individual FEP of various secondary schools:

Table 1 *Analysis of FEP of Selected Upper Secondary Schools*

	Secondary pedagogical school	Business academy	Nursing school	Secondary technical school	Grammar school
School orientation	Preschool and extramural pedagogy	Business academy	Healthcare assistant	Civil engineering	Eight- and four-year grammar schools
Goal of study	Teacher Guardian Leisure-time pedagogue	Economist Accountant Referent Secretary	Inpatient and outpatient healthcare professional	Civil engineer	Assumption for university studies and further education
Key competences	For learning For problem solving Communicative Personal and social Civic and cultural awareness Work and enterprising activities Mathematical use of information and communication technologies	For learning For problem solving Communicative personal and social civic and cultural awareness Work and enterprising activities Mathematical use of instruments of information and communication	For learning For problem solving Communicative personal and social civic and cultural awareness Work and enterprising activities Mathematical use of instruments of information and communication technologies	For learning For problem solving Communicative Personal and social civic and cultural awareness Work and enterprising activities Mathematical use of instrument of information and communication technologies	For learning For problem solving Communicative Personal and social Civic Enterprising
Professional competences	Preparation, implementation and evaluation of educational and leisure-time activities focused on education and upbringing of pre-school and school children	Application of law knowledge in business enterprising Performance of typical business activities Effective management of finance	Basic nursing care and under guidance of general nurse or midwife with specialization in the field contribution to specialized nursing Provision of basic nursing care under professional guidance of general nurse, midwife or physician	Organization and assessment of preparation and implementation of investment projects Designing simple structures and parts of buildings including additional reconstructions Project documentation preparation Construction and assembly work management Building management and maintenance Production of building materials and products and their sales	Not defined
Cultural Identity	Social studies Aesthetics	Social studies Aesthetics	Social studies Aesthetics	Social studies Aesthetics	Civic and social studies

By evaluating the part of our research focused on inclusion of cultural identity in the framework curriculum with the methods of descriptive statistics, we can notice, that the concept of cultural identity and its education appears in multiple school subjects. It depends on the concrete upper secondary school, how will integrate the concept of cultural identity into the school curriculum. Cultural identity should be taught since the beginning of upper secondary school attendance across all main subjects, so the students should be able to acquire sufficient knowledge of it.

Results

Our research was focused on the standard of cultural identity of upper secondary school students, the standard of civic competences and involvement of upper secondary school students in politics and potential relations.

The research on the standard of cultural identity in upper secondary school students was also evaluated by the methods of descriptive statistics. Based on this evaluation, upper secondary school students have lack of knowledge of their own cultural identity, which is also documented by the calculated mean of $M = 2.994$.

The next part of the research studied the relation between the standard of cultural identity in individual upper secondary school grades. Our research sample included students of the second and third grades of upper secondary schools and we therefore compared these two grades. This question was evaluated by t-test with the result of no significant difference between second and third grade students, where second grade students reached mean of $M = 2.988$ and third grade students mean of $M = 3.005$.

The following stage studied the relationship between the standards of cultural identity at upper secondary schools of different types. The research question, therefore was, how the selected type of upper secondary school affects the perception of cultural identity of its students. This relationship was studied by the ANOVA dispersion analysis. The research sample included students of secondary pedagogical school, nurse school, technical and grammar schools as well as business academies. Our research revealed that the best results in the standard of cultural identity were recorded for students of pedagogical secondary schools with the calculated mean of $M = 3.196$. The worst results, much to our surprise, were achieved by grammar school students, with the mean of $M = 2.851$. Before the result evaluation was made, we assumed, that grammar school students would demonstrate a superior standard of cultural identity in comparison to secondary and students from secondary vocational school. The results of other upper secondary school students, did not differ significantly, with inability to answer with certainty, how they perceive their cultural identity.

The last part of our research concerned on the standard of cultural identity. The focus was on the relationship of cultural identity standard to the student´s gender. We used t-test for data evaluation and we did not see any significant differences between male and female students in their perception of their cultural identity. None of the upper secondary school students – whether females or males – could answer with certainty, how they perceived their cultural identity.

For the final summary of our findings about the standard of cultural identity among upper secondary school students, we used the method of descriptive statistics. Unlike with cultural identity, the standard of civic competences was much better in secondary school students, with the mean of M = 3.650. That means that civic competences are relatively important for upper secondary school students even more important than their perception of their cultural identity.

To better understand the results, we also studied the relationship between the standard of civic competences and the grade of upper secondary studies. There are no significant differences in the standard of civic competences between second and third grade students, with even closer approximation than in the standard of cultural identity. These data were evaluated by t-test, as above.

We also applied the ANOVA dispersion analysis to determine the relationship between the level of civic competence and the study orientation of the upper secondary school students. As mentioned above, our research sample included students of secondary pedagogical, technical, nursing and grammar school and business academies. We found out, that the lowest standard of civic competences is among the students of the business academies, with the mean of M = 3.256. The highest civic competences, as was in the case of the standard of cultural identity, was found among pedagogical school students, with the mean of M = 3.909. However, students of secondary nursing and technical schools closely followed them with means of M = 3.851 and M = 3,732. These results assume, that civic competences are relatively important for upper secondary school students.

The last part of the research based on the standard of civic competences studied the relationship between genders in civic competences standard. The relationships were studied by means of t-test. The results allowed us to draw the conclusion, that there are significant differences between genders in civic competences, where female students take their civic competences more seriously than male students. The mean calculated for female upper secondary school students in civic competences was M = 3.777, while the mean calculated for the male students was M = 3.397.

The part of our research, which concerns the relevance of engagement in politics in upper secondary school students was evaluated by descriptive statistics with the result, that upper secondary school students were unable to answer with certainty, whether engagement in politics was relevant for them or not. This is also evident by the result and the mean of M = 2.642. This, even allows us to say, that the engagement in politics is not very important for upper secondary school students.

This has also led us to the conclusion of our research, which examines the relationship between the standard of cultural identity and the standard of civic competences in the upper secondary school student population. The relationship was analyzed by correlation test with the result, that there is a positive relationship between the standard of cultural identity and the standard of civic competence in upper secondary school student population.

Our research found out, that the standard of cultural identity of the students is not high; one might say they do not deal with their cultural identity very much at this age. Therefore, we assume, that upper secondary school students are not clear about the role of cultural identity in their lives. Besides that, the standard of their civic competences was relatively higher, which means that the concept of civic competence is sufficiently covered by the framework curriculum for upper secondary schools.

These findings suggest more questions, such as what is the relationship of the teachers to their own cultural identity according to the level of their education. At the same time, we are also interested, how the concept of cultural identity is included in the school curriculum of the upper secondary schools and whether education of upper secondary school students in cultural identity should be improved or not. This was already outside the scope of our research, but is certainly worth for further research.

Conclusion

The topic of cultural identity could be conducted as a very actual problem, as people forget to perceive themselves or their own identity, focusing instead more on other cultural identities than their own. Of course, we did not confine our research to cultural identity alone; we were also interested in how identity is developed, when its formation takes place and what is the beginning and the end of that formation. Our insights have shown that cultural identity formation is a never-ending process; it begins when the individual is born and ends when the individual dies. The formation of the identity depends on the environment and the people we meet, but nevertheless, is still the matter of ourselves, our attitudes and the way we form our own social and cultural identity.

We should not forget the influence of education, that largely affects the formation of identity per se, as well as cultural and social identity. Due to the importance of it, we focused our research on upper secondary education, the period when human individuals grow up and become adults, which is a breakthrough period in human identity evolution. Based on this, we focused on framework curriculum of upper secondary schools to find out whether and in what ways cultural identity is anchored in them. Additionally, together with cultural identity, we focused on upper secondary school students´ civic competences, which are firmly established in framework upper secondary school curriculum.

The research focused on the students of the selected upper secondary schools and their standard of cultural identity, together with the standard of their civic competences and the relevance of engagement in politics. The results showed out, that the standard of cultural identity of upper secondary school students was not very high, being rather mediocre, and therefore upper secondary school students do not perceive their cultural identity too much at that age. Besides that, the result of the civic competences was more satisfactory, as the standard of civic identity was found to be relatively high. We may conclude, that the framework curriculum is well focused on civic competences, while formation of cultural identity of students is considerably lagging.

The results of the engagement of upper secondary school students in politics were not encouraging, but it was not a surprise as the research was focused on second and third grade students and they are still not allowed to be actively engaged in political events. Therefore, we hope, that as soon as they reach their adult age, their attitude to engagement in politics will change and they will take more seriously their own role in political elections.

We would also like to state, that upper secondary schools should increase their focus on formation of cultural identity of their students. More time should be devoted to this matter, so that the students would not forget about their own culture, be aware of their position in the society and be able to respect the values brought by our society.

Souhrn

Předložený výzkum je jeden z mála, který se v českém prostředí zabývá úrovní kulturní identity u adolescentů středních škol, a to ještě navíc ve vztahu k úrovni občanských kompetencí. Abychom vůbec mohli provést porovnávání úrovní mezi jednotlivými ročníky a typy škol, bylo nutné nejdříve analyzovat formou popisné statistiky rámcové vzdělávací programy gymnázií a vybraných středních škol, o čemž vypovídá tabulka 1. Z analýzy vyplynulo, že nejlépe je z toho pohledu zpracován rámcový vzdělávací program pro gymnázia. Hlavní těžiště výzkumu spočívalo ve zjištění úrovně kulturní identity žáků středních škol. K tomu byl použit dotazník jednoho ze současných nejcitovanějších odborníků na formování kulturní a etnické identity u adolescentů – J. Phinneye. Dotazník byl doplněn o témata vztahující se k občanským kompetencím. Zjištění nebylo nijak pozitivní, úroveň kulturní identity je nízká. Pozitivní je, že žáci zatím tuto oblast sebeurčení nijak neřeší. Z toho vyplývá, že edukace na českých středních školách, jež má vést k formování kulturní identity, je velmi slabá a je nutné ji do budoucna posílit. Jen tak můžeme obstát v globalizovaném světě a nevychovávat xenofobní a kulturně rigidní osobnosti.

Klíčová slova: *kulturní identita, úroveň, občanské kompetence*

Autors and contact:
Mgr. Veronika Mlčáková
Fakulta humanitních studií UTB/ Faculty of Humanities UTB
nám. T. G. Masaryka 1279
760 01 Zlín
Czech Republic
mlcakova@fhs.utb.cz

PhDr. Helena Skarupská, Ph.D.
Ústav pedagogických věd/ Department of Eduational Sciences
Fakulta humanitních studií UTB/ Faculty of Humanities
nám. T. G. Masaryka 1279
760 01 Zlín
Czech Republic
tel. +420576037423
skarupska@fhs.utb.cz

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Appendix

Questionnaire of cultural identities

For the following items, highlight your answers to the extent to which you identify with the given one statement on scale 1 – 5 when: 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – rather disagree, 3 – failing answer, 4 – rather agree, 5 – strongly agree.

Věnuji svůj čas k hledání více olnormací o mojí etnické skupině, jako je její historie, tradice a zvyky: *I spend my time looking for more information about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions and customs:*	1	2	3	4	5
Mám silný pocit sounáležitosti k mé vlastní etnické skupině: *I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group:*					
Docela dobře rozumím tomu, co pro mě znamená členství v mé etnické skupině: *I understand quite well what membership means to me ethnic group:*					

Často s ostatními řeším, aby se více učili o naší etnické skupině: *Often I deal with others to learn more about our ethnic group:*	
Často dělám věci, které mi pomůžou lépe pochopit můj etnický původ: *I often do things that will help me better understand my ethnicity origin:*	
Cítím silnou vazbu k mé etnické skupině: *I feel strongly about my ethnic group:*	
Jsem aktivní v organizacích či sociálních skupinách, které zahrnují většinu svých členů do své vlastní etnické skupiny: *I'm active in organizations or social groups that they include most of their members in their own ethnic group:*	
Mám jasnou představu o svém etnickém původu a jeho významu pro mě: *I have a clear idea of my ethnic origin and his meaning to me:*	
Myslím si, že můj život hodně ovlivní členství v mé etnické skupině: *I think my life will greatly affect my ethnicity group:*	
Jsem rád, že jsem členem skupiny, do které patřím: *I am glad to be a member of the group I belong to:*	
Jsem hrdý na mou etnickou skupinu: *I am proud of my ethnic group:*	
Účastním se kulturních zvyklostí mé vlastní etnické skupiny, jako je například příprava speciálních kulturních jídel, hudebních slavností apod.: *By participating in the cultural habits of my own ethnic group, such as the preparation of special cultural meals, music festivals, etc.*	
Je pro mě důležité pomáhat potřebným: *It is important for me to help the needy:*	
Je pro mě důležité dodržovat pravidla/předpisy/zákony: *It is important for me to follow the rules / regulations / laws:*	
Je pro mě důležité omluvit se, když udělám chybu: It is important for me to apologize when I make a mistake:	
Je pro mě důležitá schopnost se přizpůsobit podmínkám, ve kterých žiji: *It is important for me the ability to adapt to the conditions in I live:*	
Je pro mě důležitá společnost, komunita a okolí: *It is an important company, community and neighborhood for me:*	
Je pro mě důležitá spolupráce s ostatními: *It is important for me to cooperate with others:*	
Snažím se pomoci lidem, kteří to potřebují: *I'm trying to help people who need it:*	
Omluvím se, když někoho urazím: *I'll excuse myself if I'm offending someone:*	
S ostatními věnuji čas, ke zlepšení kolektivu a prostředí: *With others, I dedicate time to improving the collective and the environment:*	
Dodržuji pravidla, i když se nikdo nedívá: *I follow the rules even if no one is looking:*	
Rád spolupracuji na skupinových úkolech, projektech: *I like to work on group tasks, projects:*	
Snažím se přizpůsobovat se podmínkám a situacím, ve kterých žiji: *I try to adapt to the conditions and situations in which I live:*	
Je pro mě důležité zapojit se do aktivit v místě bydliště: *It is important for me to engage in activities in the place of residence:*	
Je pro mě důležité zapojit se do voleb (volby komunální, krajské, parlamentní, volby do evropského parlamentu, volby prezidentské): *It is important for me to engage in elections (municipal, regional, parliamentary, elections to the European Parliament, elections presidential):*	
Jsem ochoten se zapojit do občanského či politického hnutí: *I am willing to engage in a civil or political movement:*	

Mlčáková, V., & Skarupská, H. (2017). Cultural Identity Standard of (Upper) Secondary School Students. *Česká antropologie, 67*(2), 12-17.