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FEATURES OF THE SOCIAL IDENTITY OF UKRAINIANS*Alla KOVALENKO, Kateryna BEZVERKHA**Kyiv National „Taras Shevchenko” University, Ukraine*

The paper analyses the theoretical principles of the features of social identity, which made it possible to study deeply the problem of group membership, based on a questionnaire on social identity. The basis of the research is the theory P.P. Bellini [1], in which the emergence of social identity occurs from the moment of birth under the influence of the parent's family, but the maximum development it acquires during the interaction of rights in society, which later allows you to talk about changes in the relevance of the one or another structural characteristic of social identity. The family is in the first place in significance, which gives the person support for the realization of their own needs and self-development through membership in the group. But intercollective relationships are also significant, this makes it possible to find satisfaction, despite the strong sense of competition that arises.

The article reveals the age-old peculiarities of the transformation of social identity. It shows that with age, a person does not lose the need to identify himself with a particular social group, which gives her a sense of satisfaction from staying in it. Satisfaction of this need allows it to better reveal its potential in self-knowledge and self-development, as well as to realize itself in the system of group relations. Each age group has its own traits, which characterize the formation of a person as a social person. That is, with growing up and gaining responsibility for the establishment of one's own career, family, political and cultural views, social identity is updated, which is subsequently not dull, but transformed into a desire to meet their own needs through the group without its structural connections, intergroup relations, and based on the experience gained.

Key words: social identity, reference group, group belonging, age differences.

CARACTERISTICI ALE IDENTITĂȚII SOCIALE A UCRAINENILOR

În articol sunt analizate principiile teoretice fundamentale în studiul identității sociale, care au stat la baza investigării apartenenței de grup. Investigația se bazează pe teoria lui P.P. Bellini [1], conform căreia constituirea identității sociale începe din momentul nașterii, suportând influențele mediului familial. Însă, influențele decisive în dezvoltarea identității se produc prin intermediul interacțiunilor societale, care ne permit să vorbim despre schimbările relevante produse în structura identității sociale. Familia este prima în ordinea semnificației, fiind mediul care îi oferă individului suport pentru realizarea trebuințelor și a dezvoltării de sine, prin apartenența la acest grup. Însă, relațiile intergrupale sunt la fel de importante, relațiile cu ceilalți oferindu-i persoanei prilejul de a trăi stări de satisfacție, în pofida competiției care caracterizează, în fapt, relațiile intergrupuri.

În articol sunt evidențiate influențele pe care le exercită vârsta persoanelor asupra identității sociale. Rezultatele arată că, odată cu vârsta, nevoia de apartenență la un grup rămâne la fel de importantă, prilejuind indivizilor stări de satisfacție urmare a afilierii la un grup. Satisfacerea nevoii de afiliere favorizează cunoașterea de sine și dezvoltarea personală, implicit realizarea în cadrul grupului. Fiecare perioadă de vârstă își lasă amprenta asupra formării individului ca persoană socială. Astfel, odată cu creșterea individului, pe măsura responsabilizării acestuia pentru dezvoltarea unei cariere profesionale, crearea familiei, formarea convingerilor politice și culturale, identitatea socială este revizuită continuu, acest fapt fiind un mod de realizare a intereselor individuale în cadrul grupului, dar fără a fi influențați de conexiunile structurale ale grupului și de relațiile intergrupale, ci având la bază experiența acumulată.

Cuvinte-cheie: identitate socială, grup de referință, grup de apartenență, diferențe de vârstă.

Introduction

Today, large migration processes are observed in Ukraine [2,3] – more than half a million people are officially overseas every year. Villages and urban-type settlements become less suitable for life, people go to big cities for better living and salary. As Maria Caterina La Barbera points out, identity undergoes transformations over time with living area change, transforming social roles and routine behavior [4]. For each individual member of society, the given migration processes lead to changes in the environment and the composition of a specific social group. Subsequently, social identity undergoes transformation, as people who make up certain groups are replaced by others, which forces a particular individual to meet the new conditions of co-existence.

Maruice Mangum and Ray Block Jr., investigating the interrelationships between social identities and public opinion about migrants, identified social identity as the individual's belief in being a member of a

particular social group, and this belief is derived from a comparison between members of a selected group and another group [5]. Guided by these definitions, we applied the *Vas'kova Social Identity Questionnaire* (modified by A.B. Kovalenko and K.S. Bezverkha) [6] to identify the peculiarities of the social identity of Ukrainians during migration processes.

Results and discussions

The study was attended by 221 respondents (74 men and 147 women) who, by nationality and citizenship, are Ukrainians aged from 17 till 56. The survey found that the most significant group in respondents lives it is family (27.4%), and then friends (19.1%), colleagues (25.7%), groups of interest / values (10.8%), and others (17%) (see Figure 1).

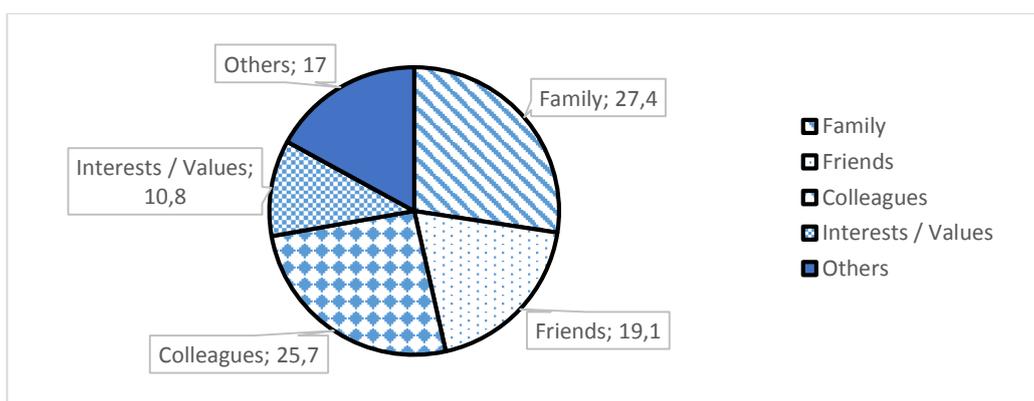


Fig.1. Reference groups of respondents (%).

It is on the level of social identity that the subjects scored an average of 174 points. This indicates the average level of social identity. If we consider social identity as a set of factors, that is, the scales of the methodology, then the respondents on average received the following results (see Table 1):

Table 1

Averages of the scale of the questionnaire of social identity (in grades)

Scale	Membership satisfaction	In-group grade	Self-understanding and self-development	Grade of belonging	Cohesion	Inter-group competition	Favor of informal relations
Grades	44	16	36	14	21	13	30

According to Table 1, the respondents on average received average values on the scale: membership satisfaction, in-group grade, cohesion and inter-group competition. On the scale of "grade of belonging" received a low level, and on the scale of "self-understanding and self-development" and "favor of informal relations", the subjects are high. That is, the subjects are lowly assessing their stay in the group and belonging to it, but at the same time they highly appreciate the influence of the group on self-development and misunderstanding, which makes it possible to feel the support of the group, to realize its needs in it and thus interact in the group, so that it has had a positive impact self-understanding and self-development. And, at the same time, respondents are highly evaluated by the influence of internal informal connections on self-perception of themselves as a member of this group.

The results of the study indicate that membership in the group is important for each individual, precisely because the group enables a person to feel support, which promotes self-improvement, self-development, and

fulfillment of their needs. However, it does not matter which group belongs to a person, and therefore may change a significant group for its own benefit if the new group provides better and highest opportunities for self-realization. So, Hogg et al. [7] wrote that membership in an in-group gives a person a subjective sense of superiority over others, by comparison with another group, called a positive identity and a person's sense of pleasure from staying in a group. The comparison process takes place continuously, and even then, if the comparison has a negative result, that is, a negative identity is formed, then a person is able to change the group to one that gives it more satisfaction.

For a more detailed analysis of the interaction of the scales and the selection of a particular significant group, we applied the correlation analysis (see Table 2). It should be noted that the digital code for a meaningful group was provided according to the tightness of contacts, where 1 is a family, 2 are friends, 3 are colleagues, 4 are interests / values, and 5 are others.

Table 2

The value of the correlation coefficients among the grades of social identity, the references groups, age and gender

	Membership satisfaction	In-group grade	Self-understanding and self-development	Grade of belonging	Social cohesion	Inter-group competition	Favor of informal relations	Social identity
Reference group	-,220*			-,221**	-,319**		-,274**	-,266**
Age	,315**		,254**			-,208**		,145*
Gender	,280**		,210**			-,243**		

*The level of significance $p < 0.05$, where * is a loosely correlation, ** is average correlation*

According to Table 2, the level of social identity is inversely proportional to the choice of a significant group, that is, the closer the contact. The more often a person chooses a family or friends, the higher the level of social identity it receives, which may be of little importance for the answers on issues such as "membership satisfaction", "grade of belonging", "cohesion" and "favor of informal relations".

This result can be explained by the fact that when someone selecting a family as a significant group, most likely, a person was guided by the family as a benchmark, and relations in the family are good. However, choosing colleagues or interest groups, people are more likely to feel such feelings as competition, affirmation, and more. Therefore, with the support of the family, a person appreciates his / her stay in it and satisfaction with it, feels the closeness of contacts and the positive impact of informal relationships on their own.

Table 2 shows links among age, gender and social identity. So, the older the person, the higher his level of satisfaction with the membership in the group, self-understanding and self-development, which are the result of group relationships, and lower inter-group competition. It should also be noted that the older the person, the higher his level of social identity. So, we can say that as age grows, the experience of membership in different groups increases, and this allows finding the place where it is most comfortable, which has a beneficial effect on self-understanding and self-interest. We can assume that it is the ability of self-development to affect the positive assessment of stay in the group. As a consequence of age growth, there is a lack of competition and self-affirmation, and of course a higher level of social identity.

Similar tendencies are observed in the sample of women. They were more satisfied with staying in a particular group, for them it is more important to meet their own needs and self-understanding through membership in the group. When they find the group they are satisfied with, they meet the needs of self-study, which does not make them want to compete. Also MariaCaterina La Barbera noted that age and gender are one of the social categories by which some individuals and groups consider and make the positions of themselves in relation to others [8].

To test the directly proportional relationship between age and social identity, we divide people into age groups: up to 25 y.o., from 25 to 35 y.o., and over 35 y.o. These groups were analyzed using the Kruskal-

Wallis test for independent samples, where the significance level $p < 0.05$ showed a statistically significant difference for such scales as: membership satisfaction, self-understanding and self-development and cohesion, where the groups had the following levels (Table 3):

Table 3

The difference in scale levels among age groups

	People under the age of 25	People aged 25 to 35 years	People over the age of 35
Membership satisfaction	Average	High	High
Self-understanding and self-development	Average	High	High
Social cohesion	Average	High	Average

The data in Table 3 clearly illustrates the differences among the components of social identity in different age groups. Individuals under the age of 25 have average levels on all scales, and individuals aged 25 to 35 have high levels in three scales. In turn, individuals older than 35 years old have high levels on all scales, except the "cohesion" scale.

If we summarize the results obtained, then it can be said that persons under the age of 25 have predominantly average levels on all scales, since social identity at the moment for them does not have an actualized state, since in most of them they are part of social groups, in active communication, etc., without thinking about the group membership. In contrast, individuals aged 25 to 35 who are just experiencing the moment of graduation in higher education, begin to build a career, family, etc., have overestimated indicators, because social identity is in the current state of understanding belonging to a particular group, the attitude towards, it assesses the group's ability to meet their needs (learning, gaining experience) and intra-group relationships.

Individuals over 35 y. o. are pleased with their membership in the group, as it promotes self-knowledge and self-development, since during the past years they already know exactly what they expect from social relationships, which should be based on their own needs, but no longer paying attention to intragroup relationships, group structure, etc.

Conclusion

On the basis of theoretical analysis, the results of empirical research have proved that membership in the group is important for every individual, precisely because the group allows them to feel support, self-understanding, self-development, and fulfill their needs. As long as the group provides this support or the opportunity to realize itself, a person will be in it.

The family, as a meaningful group, helps a person to feel more confident, to have constant support, which makes it possible to feel satisfied with staying in it and from close intercourse. The more often a person chooses, as a significant group, groups with less close interactions, the more it will feel such feelings as competition, assertion, and so on. It was also found that women, choosing a significant group, are more satisfied with her, which also affects their self-development and self-knowledge and reduces the need for competition.

From the ages, the person does not lose relevance in identifying himself with a particular social group, which gives her some satisfaction from staying in it and revealing her potentials in self-knowledge and self-perfection. Thus, social identity undergoes several transformations in the course of human aging: the normal unadjusted state of social identity for up to 25 years, which may be due to the fact that people at this age are mostly in the composition of certain social groups (university, parent's family, groups for interests), without much thinking about belonging, but simply being in them.

With age, a person feels the need for group relationships, in the understanding of group structures that may be related to the construction of a career, family, the world's picture as a political, and socio-cultural, etc., and in gaining experience through group affiliation, realization of own needs. And after becoming a member of a certain society, gaining experience, without losing the desire to belong to a group and satisfy its own needs and aspirations, it loses relevance in understanding the importance of the structure of the group itself, the relations among its members, etc., since such an experience already acquired by it earlier.

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