

## Transformation of Ukrainian Youth Values in Times of Crisis

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**Abstract.** The value system of a certain society is characterized by stability, transmitted from generation to generation and determines the direction of the socio-economic, political development of the country. In a fragile, non-linear and incomprehensible globalized world, a shift in society's values can be triggered by global upheavals that threaten the survival of humans as a biological species. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, society feels the danger of war, the threat of the spread of dangerous viruses, and the digitalization of all human life. The purpose of the conducted research is to identify the main values of Ukrainian youth and their transformation in the conditions of economic crises and war danger. Sociological research was conducted to verify hypotheses as to accelerating the transformation of Ukrainian youth values. The first wave of research on the value orientations of Kharkiv student youth was conducted in March 2014, similar research was conducted during November 2020 – January 2021, as well as in April-May 2022. The results showed that absolute and family values traditionally have a high level of priority for Ukrainian youth, regardless of living conditions and external factors. However, changes have taken place within value groups. With the aggravation of the military danger, the values of freedom, honesty, and preservation of life came to the fore. During the military threat, the importance of the group of civic and national values increased significantly. Among the national ones, the greatest growth was gained by the state independence of Ukraine, patriotism, readiness to defend the Motherland, love for the native culture, language, and traditions. Digital values have shown sufficient stability of results compared to pre-war times. Digital government services and digital technologies to improve energy efficiency have grown. The results of the study can be useful for building visions and strategies for the development of higher education institutions, modern youth regional policy

**Keywords:** youth values in Ukraine, digitalization of society, social research, economic crisis

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### ● INTRODUCTION

The values that are formed historically, at certain stages of social development and change over time with changing paradigms and the emergence of new phenomena are the determining factor in the development of mankind. Society recognized scientific values during the scientific revolution in the Renaissance. Educational values have become entrenched with the advent of educational institutions, information values are being formed in the XXI century with the widespread use of digital technologies. New living conditions of Ukrainians, caused by the danger of war and information confrontation regarding various spheres of social life, affect the consciousness, views, worldview, values of Ukrainians.

In the age of informatization, the process of transformation of values accelerated and became more manageable under the mass influence of information flows. Significant

shifts in the values of society can be provoked by economic, socio-political, military upheavals of society, accompanied by mass information attacks in conditions of information asymmetry and speculation of governments, institutions and organizations. The historical and logical development of information as a factor in the society progress at the present stage leads, on the one hand, to a sharp digitization of society, and on the other – to the gradual denial values of human civilization, live communication.

The whole world society is involved in the process of transforming the paradigm of human progress, which leads to an orderly digital life. The traditional world has completely changed and become fragile, disturbing, non-linear and incomprehensible in many ways.

In Ukraine, the process of transformation of society's values has accelerated as a result of the war, when

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among the value orientations are relevant those related to primary motives (saving lives, security, family care), social (collective protection and support), civil protection (state, their territories, homes), information (obtaining reliable information about events, critical attitude to the information space).

The most flexible social group is young people, who adapt faster and are more mobile. In Ukraine, this category is distinguished by the age of 14 to 35 years. The study of the transformation of the values of this social group, taking into account the conditions of military danger, was the subject of this study. The purpose of the study is to identify the main values of Ukrainian youth and their transformation in the conditions of economic crises and war danger.

## ● LITERATURE REVIEW

The values of society are formed under the influence of historical, cultural, economic, social, political and climatic factors, however, at the same time determine the possible direction of development of the state. Values play the role of integrative, communicative, socialization foundations in the life of society, ensure the spiritual and volitional unity of society, a high level of self-awareness and organization of its members. Social values are formed gradually as a set of habits, ways of life of a person, specific forms of behavior transmitted from generation to generation [1].

Value is the property of a social object to satisfy the needs of a social subject (people, groups of people, society); a concept that characterizes the socio-historical significance for society and the personal significance for a person of certain phenomena of reality [2]. Value determines the significance of certain realities from the point of view of human interests, satisfaction of material and spiritual needs; it is something that is meaningful and important to a person [3]. The system of values is the result of the spiritual work of society; it is the active side of social consciousness, taken in the unity of all its forms. In a way, it permeates all forms of social consciousness, uniting certain interests by various ideological, moral and aesthetic means, and becomes an important source of direct motives for behavior, stimuli of human activity [4]. Values play the role of integrating, socializing, communicative foundations in the life of society, ensure the spiritual and voluntary unity of society, a high level of organization and self-awareness of its members. Social values are formed gradually as a set of habits, methods of human life, specific forms of behavior, which are transmitted from generation to generation [5].

The international community is trying to understand how the values and beliefs of people of different nationalities, national traditions change over time, as well as how they affect the socio-political situation in the world. Since 1981, the World Network of Sociologists has been conducting a study of world values [6]. Based on the results of this study, a cultural map of the world of Inglehart-Welzel has been built, where countries are grouped by two pairs of social value groups (traditional values are opposed to secular values, survival values are opposed to the values of self-expression). The researchers propose to define the vector of change in each pair of values as indicators of intercultural change in the world. War in Ukraine has shown that such a trajectory of changing the values of societies in

the world does not exclude the possibility of inciting military conflicts between them. At the same time, intensive change of the environment is a factor in the transformation of society's values. Influences such as globalization, resource allocation, national and cultural integration, internationalization, digitalization of society, new conflicts in the world significantly affect the formation, transformation and functioning of values.

Digital technologies, information and communication methods, military danger change human values, make new requirements for the institutional provision of new "rules of the game", which is impossible without a critical rethinking of the processes of informatization of society and the development of new approaches to managing threats to business information and cyber security, organizations, institutions, the country as a whole. The dynamics of online digital platforms have affected the very essence of democratic processes and political communication. There are real security threats caused by social networks, as well as numerous privacy violations [7]. Support for enduring societal values such as tolerance, democracy, and transparency is increasingly undermined by the global "export" of American technology companies that dominate the Internet infrastructure in terms of the distribution of cultural goods online: video, social media, news, and private communication [8].

Implementation and development of an effective digital strategy provides significant competitive advantages in the economic development of the world. The digital strategy takes into account four different types of social values: civic, economic, administrative and social ones [9]. Digitalization is transforming the values of education and health. This process accelerated during COVID-19. For instance, in England Digitization of healthcare enables stakeholders to interact and co-create value. "Consultation line on health and safety", an occupational health and safety service, was introduced to provide support and advice to small and medium-sized enterprises [10]. COVID-19 has affected the economic viability, business viability and societal value of private education in England. Business spatiality was fundamentally rewritten. The social value of the industry was questioned because the service was vital and regressive in its distribution [11].

The new digital life of a man requires regulation of the information environment in terms of ethics and law. In the period from 1997 to 2000, UNESCO held conferences on the search for global ethical values in the new information environment [12].

Research of the digitalization impact on the values of Ukrainian youth was conducted in 2020/2021. The results showed that traditional values (absolute and family) have a stable high level of priority for Ukrainian youth. The importance of social values is differentiated and heterogeneous. Digital values are also becoming increasingly important, but still occupy a low position in the value structure [13].

The values of youth are the subject of sociological research in Ukraine, in particular, the annual study "The state of youth in Ukraine", commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Based on the Reports of sociological research on the situation of youth for 2016-2021 [14], it is possible to trace the transformation of values (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Transformation of youth values in Ukraine for the period 2016-2021, %

Group	Values	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021
Personal	Family happiness	71.7	63.6	59.9		63.4
	Happy own family				18.9	
	My children				16.3	
	Personal relationships				11.4	
	Health		53.6	53.0	49.8	53.4
	Make a career	48.1	39.3	36.6		42.7
	Wealth	25.0	28.1	23.5		31.7
	Material well-being				35.2	
	Be able to realize your talents and abilities	32.1	22.1	20.0		30.9
	Creative or professional self-realization				9.7	
	Personal development				24.1	
	Become a qualified specialist	18.6	14.2	19.4		14.4
	Start your own business				35.2	
	Interesting favorite work				10.4	
Social	Bring benefit to your country	12.7	8.1	9.9		6.2
	Be useful to society				20.0	
	Power	5.2	3.1	5.8		3.3
	Glory	3.8	2.0	3.4		2.8
	A sense of security and confidence in the future				27.6	
	Peace and opportunity not to interfere in anything	10.5	7.0	6.8		11.7
Civil	Be free and independent in their decisions and actions	38.0	29.1	28.2	12.8	27.7
	I have not participated in the activities of any civil society organization			80.5	54.2	84.4
	Took part in student self-government			7.9	25.4	31.0
	“Are you ready to defend Ukraine with weapons if necessary?": Yes, if I am mobilized	28.7			24.2	
	No, I'm not ready, but in time I may consider such a need	17.7			24.5	
	Yes, I have already taken part or am taking part in hostilities	2.4			3.2	
	“Are you ready to defend the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine by non-violent methods, such as volunteering, charity, etc.?": Yes, ready	43.7			47.9	
	Yes, I already did	8.3			12.6	

**Source:** Developed by the author based on sources [15-17]

The Table 1 shows that personal values (family happiness, health, career building, the opportunity to realize their talents and abilities) are most manifested in the youth of Ukraine. Much lower are social (to benefit one's country, to be useful to society, the desire for power and glory) and civic values (in the activities of any civil society organization). At the same time, there is a willingness to defend the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine (mostly by non-violent means).

Comparing the change in the manifestation of values indicates their sustainable nature over five years. Given the dynamics of world change in the global sense, it is important to consider the transformation of youth values, taking into account the renewal of the content of stable groups of values and the emergence of new ones.

Three groups of values can be distinguished among the main values of modern youth: 1) traditional values include absolute and family values, which are the basis of the spiritual sphere of a person; 2) social values include civic and national values that reflect the social significance of a person, their inclusion in the social community; 3) digital values that arose under the influence of the technical revolution, the development of information and communication technologies and digitalization.

Changing conditions of the social environment, external threats affect the content and speed of transformation of youth values in Ukraine.

The study of the transformation of youth values in Ukraine made it possible to put forward the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1. Global changes encourage the meaningful transformation of traditional values of young people in Ukraine towards their renewal and the emergence of new groups of values.

Hypothesis 2. Military danger accelerates the transformation of the values of Ukrainian society youth.

The challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (war, the danger of viral diseases, digitalization of society) radically change all areas of human activity, the state and values of young people. The implementation of digital technologies in all spheres of life affects the system of value orientations of young people. The novelty of the study is that “points of change” were recorded in the transformation of the values of young people during the crises of 2014, 2021 and 2022. In addition, a group of digital values, the significance of which for society is increasing, was added to the research methodology.

● **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The purpose of the study was to identify the basic values of Ukrainian youth, their transformation in conditions of military danger. The research method is an online survey of respondents using the Google form tool. For the collection of sociological information, a questionnaire containing 5 questions was developed. Each respondent was asked to choose from a list of values from 2 to 6 most important absolute human, national, social, family and digital values.

*Geography, timing and sample population of the study.*

The social research was conducted among student youth aged 18 to 35 in Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics. Three similar studies were conducted in different periods of turmoil in Ukrainian society. The first wave of surveys was conducted in March 2014 (the sample consisted of 78 respondents), similar surveys were conducted during November 2020 – January 2021 (the sample consisted of 135 respondents: women (83%), men (17%), and in April-May 2022, the sample included 77 respondents: women (81.8%), men (18.2%).

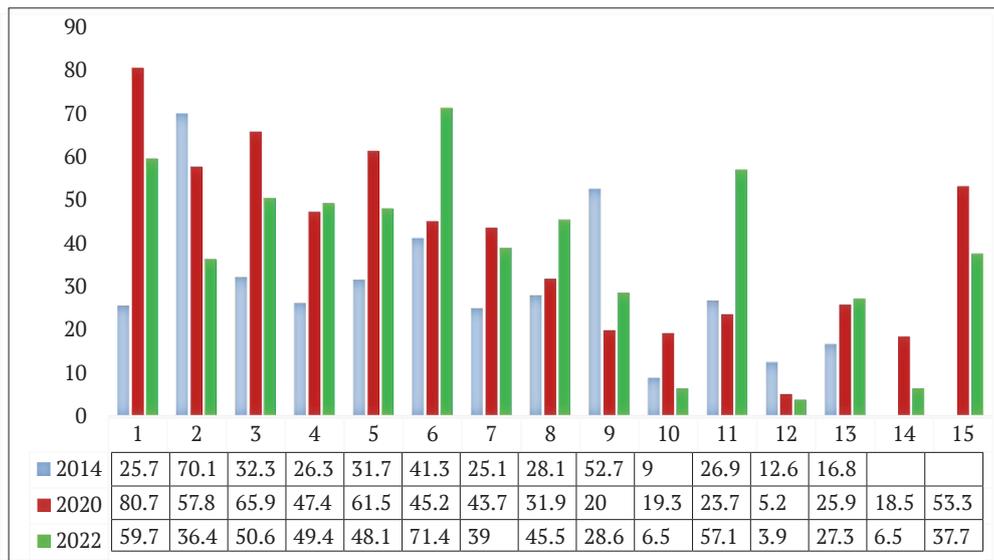
The organization and conduct of the study included the following stages: 1) preparatory (development of the program and research tools); 2) collection of primary sociological information; 3) the stage of information processing; 4) analysis of the received information, comparison of results with previous researches; 5) preparation of generalized results and conclusions.

● **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the survey of student youth in Kharkiv made it possible to obtain primary data on the values of young people and summarize them by groups of values:

- absolute values, such as honesty, love, justice, truth, kindness, freedom, dignity, faith, generosity, forgiveness;
- family values – care for children, care for parents, family loyalty, agreement and trust in the family, mutual love of parents, respect for ancestors;
- civic values – equality of citizens before the law, human right to life and self-esteem, right to freedom of thought, tolerance of other people’s views, respect for the law;
- national values – attention to the ecological state of the region, the state independence of Ukraine, the desire to build a fair state system, love for native culture, language, traditions, and historical memory;
- digital values – constant use of digital technologies, the possibility of using the latest technologies, energy efficiency, digital public services, remote monitoring, remote work, communication in social networks, electronic sales.

The results of the study revealed the priorities in the system of values of modern Kharkiv youth, and also recorded the “points of change”. The results of the social research are processed and presented in Figures 1-5.

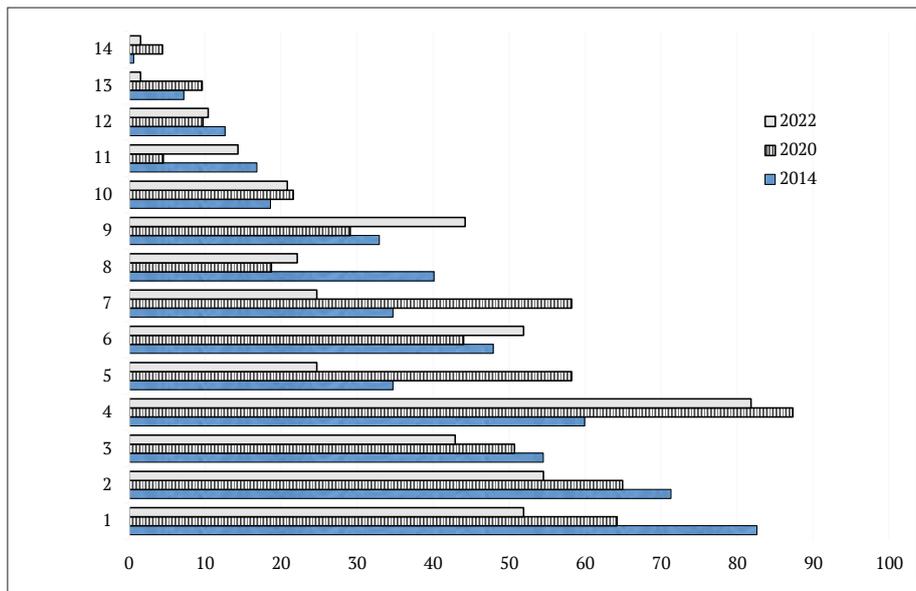


**Figure 1.** The importance of absolute values, %

1. Honesty, 2. Love, 3. Justice, 4. Truth, 5. Kindness, 6. Freedom, 7. Wisdom, 8. Dignity, 9. Faith, 10. Generosity, 11. Saving life, 12. Perfection, 13 Mercy, 14. Money, 15. Sincerity

Absolute values are basic and instilled in childhood, they are the least flexible and become a platform for the formation of family, community, national and digital values. In conditions of military danger, among the absolute values, the main value for the youth of Kharkiv has become freedom (70.1%), this value has increased significantly since 2014 and 2020. Also, the importance of preservation of life has increased significantly by 53.7%, while

such a value as honesty has high value (56.7%), but less than in 2020. Interestingly, according to the results of the eighth wave of the World Values Survey (WVS) in Ukraine in 2020 for 65.9% of the population security was more important than freedom (4.6% of respondents could not answer) [16]. However, during the war in 2022, according to our research, there were significant changes, at least in the values of student youth.

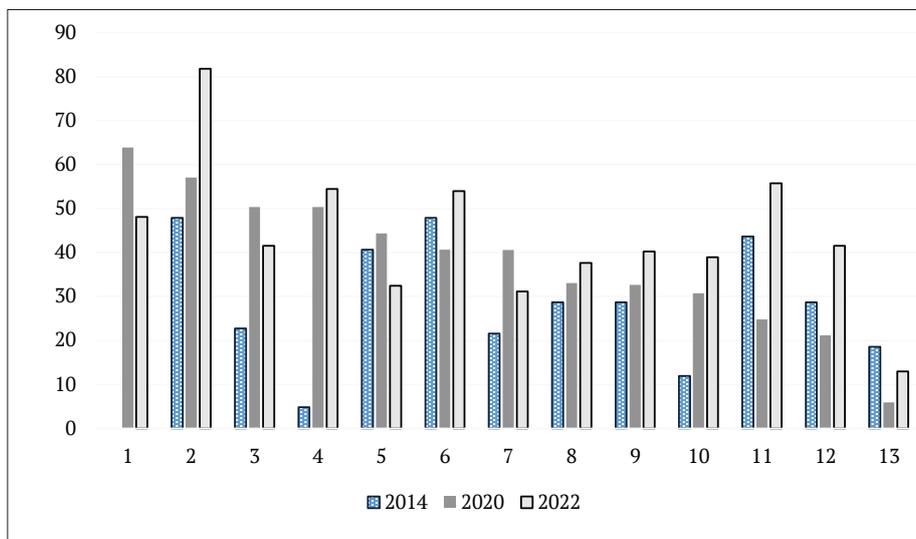


**Figure 2.** The importance of family values, %

1. Caring for children, 2. Caring for parents, 3. Family loyalty, 4. Consent and trust in the family, 5. Mutual love of parents, 6. Responsibility for family members, 7. Mutual love of parents, 8. Respect for ancestors, 9. Healthy lifestyle, 10. Democracy of relations, 11. Observance of folk customs and traditions, 12. Family openness to public life, 13. Cult of labor, 14. Large family

Family values have historically been a priority for Ukrainians, however, in a critical environment, family consent and trust have become paramount (80.6%). In a

situation of total danger, the value of mutual love between parents has become less significant. The importance of national and public values has risen in Ukrainian society.

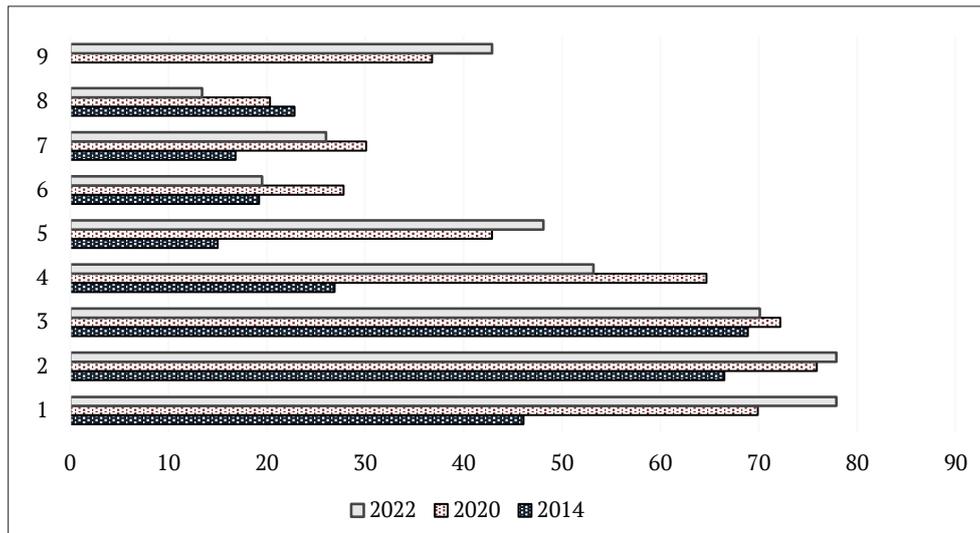


**Figure 3.** The value of national values, %

1. Attention to the ecological state of the region, 2. State independence of Ukraine, 3. Attention to strengthening the health of citizens, 4. The desire to build a just system of government, 5. Historical memory, 6. Love for native culture, language, traditions, 7. Careful attitude to national wealth, 8. Ukrainian language, 9. Sense of national pride, 10. Respect for the Constitution of Ukraine, 11. Patriotism, willingness to defend the homeland, 12. Respect for the national symbols, 13. Self-sacrifice for the freedom of the nation

The analysis of the survey results showed that the state independence of Ukraine came to the fore for Ukrainian youth (82.1%). In 2014 and 2022, during the aggravation of martial

law, there is an increase in patriotism among the student youth of Kharkiv. Attention to the region ecological state receded into the background and decreased from 63.9% to 43.3%.



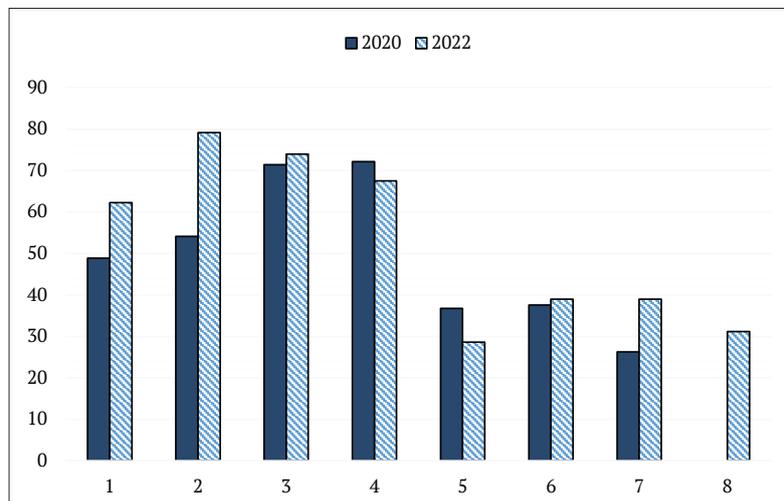
**Figure 4.** The importance of public values, %

1. Equality of citizens before the law, 2. Human right to life and self-worth, 3. Right to freedom of thought, 4. Tolerance of other people’s views, 5. Respect for the law, 6. Striving for social harmony, 7. Culture of social and political relations, 8. Upholding social and interethnic equality, 9. Anti-corruption.

Among civic values, the right to life and personal dignity (79.1%) and the equality of citizens before the law (77.6%) have become the most important in modern conditions. In the XXI century the transformation of values is influenced by information and communication technologies. Global coverage of digitalization processes has positive and negative effects on the society future. They have threatened the achievement of the world of civilization in terms of live communication, interaction, learning and cohesion. At the same time, the latest technologies provide

wide opportunities in a single global space for learning, employment and communication, especially in conditions of military aggression, uncertainty and illogical processes of the human environment.

The processes of digitalization in times of military danger in 2022 are of particular importance: access and transmission of information, in particular for the civilian population, support of communication through various applications, banking, the possibility of continuing online/offline training and work, receiving psychological assistance [18].



**Figure 5.** The importance of digital values, %

1. Digital public services, 2. Opportunity to use new technologies in medicine, 3. Empowerment of online learning, 4. Digital technologies to improve energy efficiency, 5. Development of electronic markets, 6. Electronic democracy, 7. News for all in social networks, 8. Empowerment of Internet marketing, 9. Available digital technologies to all and dissemination of digital awareness among all generations of the population.

During the war, the importance of digital public services increased significantly (77.6%). Young people have considerably greater adaptive abilities to digitalization processes, therefore the tendency to change values is more noticeable among this category of society. Youth is an

important progressive part of modern Ukrainian society, the bearer of the nation’s intellectual potential, a determining factor of the country’s socio-economic progress [19].

This research result does not contradict and complements the sociological research conducted among youth

aged 14-34 “Digital technologies in youth work in Ukraine”. The results of the study show that almost all young people use the Internet every day, young people mostly use smartphones to access the Internet (93.8%), communicate in social networks (92.8%), use e-mail (82.2%), and messengers (Skype, Viber, Messenger, etc.) (82.2%) [20]. Such involvement in the Internet increases the importance of digital values in a person’s life.

In this way, the proposed hypotheses regarding the meaningful transformation of traditional values of youth in Ukraine towards their renewal and the emergence of new groups of values under the influence of global changes and the acceleration of the transformation of values in the conditions of war danger were confirmed. The presented research has a certain limitation regarding the depth and scale of the sample of respondents who took part in the research, so further work is being carried out to research the values of young people from other regions, as well as people of other age groups, other social strata of society, and gender parity is also achieved.

The results of the presented empirical research should be taken into account in the future when conducting educational work in higher education institutions of Ukraine and forming youth policy of the region.

## ● CONCLUSIONS

Theoretical analysis of the results of previous and conducted during the period of military danger empirical study of the values of youth in Ukraine allowed us to draw the following conclusions:

The system of values is an important influential component of human consciousness, which shapes its worldview, patterns of behavior and incentives. The system of youth values is formed in the social environment under the influence of public consciousness and global challenges.

In the course of long-term research, the following groups of values were identified and generalized:

1) traditional: absolute, family; 2) public (civil, national); 3) new ones that appear under the influence of global trends in the development of technologies that are included in all spheres of life – digital.

The transformation of young people’s values is not happening quickly, but in times of crisis, the importance of certain values has changed. The group of absolute values remains the most stable and significant, but the significance of the values included in this group has undergone a significant redistribution. At the forefront were: freedom (71.4%), saving lives (57.1%), dignity (45.5%). The group of family values has hardly changed, except for the increase in responsibility for family members (51.9%).

During the military threat, groups of civic and national values increased significantly. Thus, among the national ones, of the greatest growth and significance were: state independence of Ukraine (81.8%), patriotism, readiness to defend the Motherland (55.8%), love for native culture, language, traditions (54.0%), respect for national symbols (41.6%), a sense of national pride (40.3%). Among civic values, the importance of the following has increased: equality before the law (77.9%), the right to life and dignity (77.9%), respect for the law (48.1%).

The manifestation of new values showed sufficient stability of the results in comparison with the pre-war period. Digital government services (79.2%) and digital technologies for energy efficiency increased.

Thus, the hypotheses regarding the meaningful transformation of traditional values of young people in Ukraine towards their renewal and the emergence of new groups of values under the influence of global change and accelerating the transformation of values in conditions of military danger were confirmed.

Further research will be aimed at studying the transformation of traditional, new (digital), educational values and personal values of the youth of Ukraine in the postwar period.

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## Трансформація цінностей української молоді під час криз

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**Анотація.** Система цінностей певного суспільства характеризується стабільністю, передається від покоління до покоління та визначає напрям соціально-економічного, політичного розвитку країни. У крижкому, нелінійному та незрозумілому глобалізованому світі зсув цінностей суспільства може бути спровокований глобальними потрясіннями, що загрожують виживанню людини як біологічного виду. У ХХІ сторіччі суспільство відчуває воєнну небезпеку, загрозу поширення небезпечних вірусів, цифровізації всього життя людини. Метою проведеного дослідження є виявлення основних цінностей української молоді, та їх трансформація в умовах економічних криз та воєнної небезпеки Для перевірки висунутих гіпотез, щодо прискорення трансформації традиційних цінностей української молоді, використовується метод соціальних досліджень. Перша хвиля досліджень ціннісних орієнтацій студентської молоді Харкова була проведена у березні 2014 року. Аналогічні дослідження проводились протягом листопада 2020 – січня 2021 року, а також у квітні-травні 2022 року. Результати показали, що традиційні цінності (абсолютні та сімейні) стабільно мають високий рівень пріоритету для української молоді незалежно від умов життя та динаміки оточуючого середовища. Однак всередині ціннісних груп відбулись зміни. При загостренні воєнної небезпеки на перший план вийшли цінність свободи, чесності, збереження життя. Під час воєнної загрози значно зросла значимість групи громадянських та національних цінностей. Так, серед національних найбільшого зростання та значущості набули: державна незалежність України, патріотизм, готовність до захисту Батьківщини, любов до рідної культури, мови, традицій. Цифрові цінності показали достатню стійкість результатів у порівнянні із довоєнним часом. Зростання значимості спостерігається щодо цифрових державних послуг та цифрових технологій підвищення енергоефективності. Результати дослідження можуть бути корисними для побудови візій та стратегій розвитку закладів вищої освіти, сучасної молодіжної регіональної політики

**Ключові слова:** цінності молоді в Україні, діджиталізація суспільства, соціальне дослідження, економічна криза