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YOUTH'S IMAGERY FEATURES OF THEIR OWN FUTURE AND FUTURE OF UKRAINE

У статті представлено результати емпіричного дослідження образу власного майбутнього та майбутнього України у молоді. Показано спільні та подібні риси образу майбутнього у трьох груп досліджуваних: тих, хто проживає за кордоном, мають міграційні наміри та мають наміри залишитися в Україні.

Ключові слова: образ майбутнього, асоціативний експеримент, біполярний семантичний диференціал, молодь.

Results of an empirical experiment about youth's images of their future and future of Ukraine are presented in this article. Similar and common features in the image of future are pointed in three examined groups: who lives abroad, who has migration intentions and who plans to stay in Ukraine.

Key words: image of future, association experiment, bipolar semantic differential, youth.

Relevance. Transformation processes, which go along with life in Ukraine, generate different phenomenon population's consciousness. On one hand, hopes for positive changes still remain in one part of people, on the other hand – a sense of despair, hopelessness and frustration are formed. Youth is the most sensitive part of the population, which plans its own future very strongly and radically. Seeing no essential changes in lives of society and other important spheres, young adults make a decision to link their fate with other more successful countries. Therefore, studying of youth's image of their own future and future of Ukraine seems to us urgent and relevant.

Status of problem's research. Problem of the image of future is being developed both in native and foreign psychological research (K. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, M. Ginsburg, E. Golovakha, A. Demina, D. Elkonin, M. Kagan, M. Kirillov, V. Kovalev, I. Kon, O. Kronik, J. Nyuten, A. Posatskyj, L. Sokhan, T. Titarenko, M. Titma etc.). These research indicate a presence of mature attitudes about the future at this age as a prerequisite for a further personal development. Youth is an essential age in periodization of personal development because at this time a self-identity in different spheres of life is developed. The image of future is a precondition for an implementation of self-determination, which is formed in youth with its main characteristics and features. The image of future reflects the potential of an individual, and its formation is considered as one of the indicators of a successful socialization (A. Volovich, A. Dubovska, E. Golovakha, A. Belinska, I. Demina, L. Pulkkinen).

Objective – detect youth's imagery features of their future and future of Ukraine.

Methods. Complex methods were used to solve assigned tasks:

– *theoretical* (analyzing the problem using psychological literature) allows to detect, compile and organize a variety of approaches and practical experience on the study;

– *empirical*: association experiment, bipolar semantic differential, projective technique «Geography of visual images», questionnaire;

– *statistical analysis of quantitative data*.

Theoretical analysis shows a tight connection between the image of the future and goal-setting, expectations, desires, person's ideas about the past and a future, therefore it reflects in those decisions which each individual makes.

Participants. In the study participants with completed high education or on the stage of its completion and also working people were recruited. All of them were Ukrainians. The total number of respondents is 102, aged varies between 20 and 33 years, 62 women, 40 men.

Via the questionnaire all of the participants were randomly allocated between groups in the ratio:

Group 1 – 30 people, who are currently living outside of Ukraine (migrants);

Group 2 – 31 people, those who plan to leave Ukraine in a year and due to this undertake specific actions (learning a language, accumulating money etc.);

Group 3 – 41 people, planning to stay in Ukraine.

For conducting an associative experiment and projective technique «Geography of visual images» there were people involved from 18 to

35 years old with various professional orientation. The overall number of sample is 35 people.

In order to explore the image of people's own future and the future of the country, there were created two semantic differentials: «My future» as a vision and an idea of a desired place of residence and «Future of Ukraine», as the actual place of residence.

1. The first step in creating the semantic differential was collecting data using method of association experiment.

Association experiment – method, aimed to detect associations developed through individual's previous experience. In this study, several different kinds of an associative experiment were used: controlled (answers in the form of adjectives) and free (not limited to respondents' reaction to the stimulus-word). The associative experiment was conducted verbally, stimulus materials consisted of two pairs of words: my future, future of Ukraine. At first, participants were asked to provide as many associations to the stimulus- word as possible, then it was necessary to provide the association in the form of adjectives.

2. Technique «Geography of visual images» of own future and the future of Ukraine. When creating a collage participants were asked to give each visual image a name. As a result, this technique, due to these specifiers, allows not only to get integrated collages but also to identify the values that used visual images represent.

Obtained by this technique interpretation of results involves usage of a special scheme developed by O. Sosnyuk [4] based on the ideas A. Branthwaite and L. Toiati [5].

By interpreting visual images a collage space is divided into five sections: the center of collage contains images that reflect the essence of a concept, the upper right side – rational intentions, the bottom right side – a person's experience, the upper left side – emotions and feelings associated with the concept, the lower left side – creative intentions related to the concept.

3. For describing a vision of the own future and a future of Ukraine the next step is constructing a semantic differential based on semantic constructs, selected as a result of the associative experiment and the technique «Geography of visual images».

4. The survey, where participants had to indicate their place of residence at the time of conducting this study (in Ukraine or abroad), to inform about plans about leaving or staying in Ukraine, to confirm or to refute the statement whether they undertake specific actions to implement migration intentions (language learning, accumulating money, etc.).

Using associative reactions and generated semantic nests, the image of «My Future» is characterized, on the one hand, by presence of a family and a family welfare, stable job, which will provide confidence about the future, health, vision of prospects and ways of own development; a lot of people imagine their future closer to nature, eventful, successful, active and happy. On the other hand, the future involves uncertainty, unknown, anxiety and fear of what lies ahead, the image is also uncontrolled and blurred. Some participants described the image as being approachable in the nearest future, while others saw it distantly. However, most respondents mentioned the presence of changes in the future.

On the one hand, «Future of Ukraine» was described as hopeless, full of obstacles, trials, anxiety, fear, continuation of war, poverty and misery; on the other hand — as a cohesive, happy, clean, changed, peaceful, united, full of strength and hope for the best, independent, rich, prosperous and generally optimistic.

Thus, both images contain positive and negative characteristics, which proves a complexity and multidimensionality of constructs. Bipolar constructs were allocated in the form of adjectives based on those image characteristics to construct semantic differentials.

On the next stage, a visualization of the own future and the future of Ukraine was conducted to describe a semantic load of concepts in-depth. To achieve that, participants were asked to create collages with main themes of «My Future» and «Future of Ukraine». As the result, integrated collages were compiled to represent differences and peculiarities of perception of both concepts.

Using available materials a generalized collage of an own future among Ukrainian youth was built. To reflect the main characteristics we used the brightest images.



Fig 1. Typical collage of youth's imagery with the theme «My future»

Analyzing the image of one's own future, built in collages, it may be described in the following way.

Essential characteristics: an image of own self, a vision of oneself as the one who controls the situation, or vice versa oneself in uncertainty and finding the right choice; in addition couples, family circle, loved ones, friends, colleagues are displayed on collages.

Rational intentions, preferences: the majority of participants put on this place desirable jobs, careers, dreams, concrete plans for the future, what they want to achieve (starting with birth and children till writing a diploma and completed Master's degree). Some participants saw their future in Europe, which may indicate a presence of potential migration intentions.

Life experience: what parents usually teach their children about the future, meaning a traditional idea of the future: one should be able to support oneself, build a house, maybe buy a car, and sometimes work as a representation of stability is shown.

Creativity: here we have basically places, participants would like to visit, also traveling, leisure, cycling; moreover, it is shown, what inspires one or brings harmony in life (yoga, sports, music), meaning those areas where one may discover its creative nature.

Emotions and feelings: a general mood of the collage can be defined as successful, participants put here things, that may help to achieve the desired goal – training, their own development, and what is a symbol of success – a stylish appearance, success in professional activities. However, there is an opposite emotional pole – great efforts must be made, many obstacles and uncertainties are waiting on the way to success.

Temporal analysis of collages shows the following.

The past of the image – friends, who are known for a long time by a participant, travel, leisure, some experiences, a house and a car, most likely as typical attributes of parental family.

The future image – own emotional and mental development, overcoming obstacles, creating their own family and having children, an opportunity to do things one love, living in Europe, implementation of their plans.

The current image – easy life, future in their own hands, uncertainty, graduation. Following the same algorithm an overall collage «Future of Ukraine» was created and analyzed.

Essential characteristics: geographical image of Ukraine and all belonging territories are placed in the center, national symbols with yellow and blue colors: a general image of the future is seen as united, cohesive, coherent, with renewed mentality.

Rational intentions, preferences: the majority of respondents put on this place desired resolution of a political situation in Ukraine – peaceful



Fig 2. Typical collage of youth's imagery with the theme «Future of Ukraine»

end of the military conflict, happy life with attached occupied territories. Ukraine is described as matured, democratic, revived state.

Life experience: mostly Ukraine's accession to the European Union, independence and freedom are represented, some participants placed here fruitless efforts. This can be interpreted in a way that most of the effort to improve the situation in Ukraine are vain, and comparing where Ukraine is now with the development of European Union, we may conclude a desirable membership of EU of the majority of today's youth.

Creativity: representation of economy and industry, necessary choices, changes and reforms in Ukraine. To make this future real one must use its creativity.

Emotions and feelings: a general mood of the collage can be defined as ambivalent, here participants have put feelings of hopelessness, despair, depicting infinity and repetition of events in Ukraine (elections), constant struggle and loss of territories, but this place also represents a bright sunny future, hope and faith in a better life.

Temporal analysis of collages shows the following.

The past of the image – integrity of territories, European Union's, changes, development, stability – unfortunately these are all evidence of futile attempts to change and former development and stability.

The future image – recovery and attachment of the lost territories, peaceful settlement of the conflict, hope for the best, but nevertheless an existing sense of hopelessness.

The current image – national symbols, yellow and blue colors, integrated territory. This may be interpreted by a necessity of maintaining a national spirit and patriotism of Ukrainians in order to achieve desired future.

Comparing images of the own future and the future of Ukraine, it becomes clear that perceptions about one's own future plans are formed more specific, with directly set changes and development, the emotional background is generally positive, nevertheless, a vision of one's own future yet is not to be directly connected with Ukraine. In the same time, the image of Ukraine's future reflects current conflict situation, and yet full of hope for the best, for restoring integrity and conflict resolution. In addition, many participants showed joining the EU, which may be a manifestation of migration intentions without necessarily changing of residence place.

Using results of associative experiment and geography of visual images, we have assembled a set of characteristics for a construction of two forms of semantic differential. Participants were asked to evaluate given images of one's own future and future of Ukraine on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 – fully meets the characteristics of the left column, 5 – fully meets the characteristics of the right column, 3 – hard to decide.

In the group № 1 perception profile of their future tends to the left pole (most values are from 1 to 3), where positively charged characteristics are presented. This suggests that most young people in this group tend to see their own future positively and in bright colors. The highest values get characteristics of saturation, development, success and optimism (1-1.5). In contrast, characteristics of «city life», «difficult» and «urban» gravitate toward the opposite pole, although they barely cross the midpoint of 3. This means that the participants prefer a fast life, full of events, which is typical for urban areas.

Variable «complex» may be a reflection of an undefined future, prediction of controversial decisions and the presence of obstacles in the future.

In the group № 2 (with migration intentions) perception profile of their future also tends to the left pole (most values are from 1 to 3), where positive characteristics are displayed. This indicates that the majority of young people tend to think of own future positively. The highest value get characteristics of development, health, wealth, success and optimism (1.5); on the edge with these stay variables «happy», «perspective» and «confident».

In contrast, characteristics of «city life», «difficult» and «urban» gravitate toward the opposite pole, although they barely cross the midpoint of 3.

This means that members of this group tend to perceive their own future hoping for changes and development, optimistic, with good health and well-being, also with living in urban areas, but the abstract perception and complexity may indicate that their future is more vague and uncertain.

In the group № 3 perception profile of their own future has the same tendency to gravitate to the left pole (most value from 1 to 3), where positive characteristics are displayed, and only two variables have crossed the midpoint mark 3. This suggests that most young people in this group also tend to see their own future positive and in bright colors. The highest values get characteristics of happiness, perspective, wealth, success and optimism (1-1.5). In contrast, characteristics of «city life», «difficult» and «urban» gravitate toward the opposite pole, although they barely cross the midpoint of 3. This time characteristic of «complexity» got the highest value that may be a reflection of the crisis in Ukraine. Overall participants of group № 3 tend to percept their own future with the possibility of self-improvement, ways of development, success, many opportunities, even staying in Ukraine. Nevertheless, it is believed that this future is not easy to achieve and many difficulties have to be endured. In addition, this group connects the life to living in the city.

To analyze a perception of the image «Future of Ukraine» a similar semantic differential was used.

Participants of group № 1 formed a perception profile of Ukraine's future, characterized by a tendency to averaging all values of semantic differential. Most values range from 2 to 4. This may be explained by the complexity of the construct being evaluated or lack of information for evaluating this construct. Nevertheless, on the left pole variables «happy», «effective», «friendly», «optimistic» are distinguished, while on the right pole potentially higher value rates get variables «tempestuous» and «disturbing».

The highest value through all characteristic profiles gets variable «challenging». In general, it may be said that this group of respondents believe in Ukraine's change for the better because everything is seen in an optimistic light, but to achieve this many challenges has to be overcome. Due to certain actions and quick decision-making Ukraine may get a perspective, optimistic future.

In group № 2, as well as in group № 1, there is a general trend to give an average value in responses (from 2 to 4), which indicates similarity in perceptions of the future of Ukraine between two groups. The highest values on the left pole getting such characteristics as «efficient» «cohesive» and «friendly». On the right pole — «inconsistent», «disturbing», «distant», «challenging». Summarizing this description of Ukraine's future, it may be defined, that at the moment and in the near future respondents of this group cannot imagine an optimistic development, and perhaps that's why they have intentions to migrate. However, changes are still possible due to coming together and selecting the course of action changing the future. Nevertheless, it remains unstable and with many challenges.

General profile image description of Ukraine’s future in group № 3 is slightly more differentiated than in the previous two groups, but variables do go beyond 2 and 4. This time more variables got high values on the left pole: «perspective», «developing», «efficient», «optimistic», «integrated», «cohesive» «holistic» «friendly» – those positive characteristics uses group № 3 to describe the future of Ukraine. Some of the characteristics of the opposite pole stand out: «challenging» and «disturbing». The overall image is described using more positively stained characteristics. Young believes that in the future people will come together, the country will have development perspectives and will actively move towards the goal. Despite a lot of challenges and disturbing events, a general image is described as «optimistic». Obviously, staying in the place of residence, it is desirable to have a brighter future perception.

Comparing the profiles of all three groups together, similarities and absence of significant differences are very noticeable. Most characteristics tend to the positive pole and the overall image of one’s own future is described in the emotionally optimistic mood.

After participants had filled both of semantic differential form out, profiles of the average values of each image were built using mathematical analysis.

Comparative characteristics of the image «My future» are shown in Fig. 3.

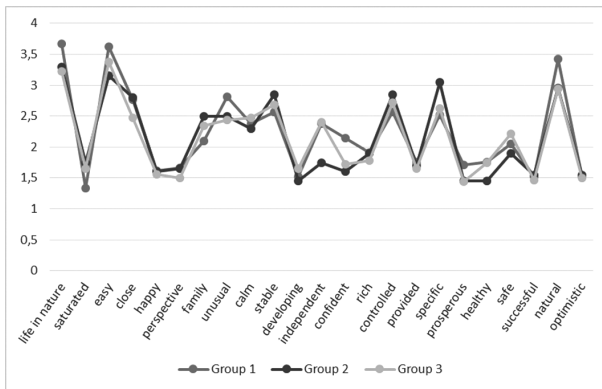


Fig 3. Comparison of average ratings of the image «My future» using bipolar semantic differential

Some indicators can highlight differences between groups. Thus, differences were found in the characteristics of «living in nature» (3.6, 3.3, 3.2), «saturated» (1.3), «simple» (3.6), «unusual» (2.8), «confident» (2.14),

«natural» (3.4). Those who live abroad see their future linked to a city, with rich variety of events, more likely connected with family and more traditional than the other two groups, where participants with migration intentions seek slightly less connected with family future, perhaps due to the transition, a moment of uncertainty, because they do not know where and how their future would look like and there is a lot to think about besides a family. Participants with migration intentions also see their future less stable, but one that is independent and develops. Perhaps this group feels that the future is in their hands, as they are now planning to drastically change lives, change their place of residence. As a result, this image also seems more chaotic and abstract. However, they have the most pronounced indicator of health than other groups.

It is worth noticing that in the group of participants who live abroad, the image of their future is less certain. In our opinion, this may be due to changing the cultural situation, living among another ethnic group, which may lead to feelings of isolation and uncertainty.

Participants of group № 3 are almost indistinguishable from the other two groups: all scores are within the variance of the other two groups. However, the rate of independence is slightly lower than in people with migration intentions. Perhaps participants feel depending on the country of living, which is not easy to leave.

Profile image of «Future of Ukraine» has a more differentiated distribution between groups, making it possible to determine the differences between the groups (Fig. 4).

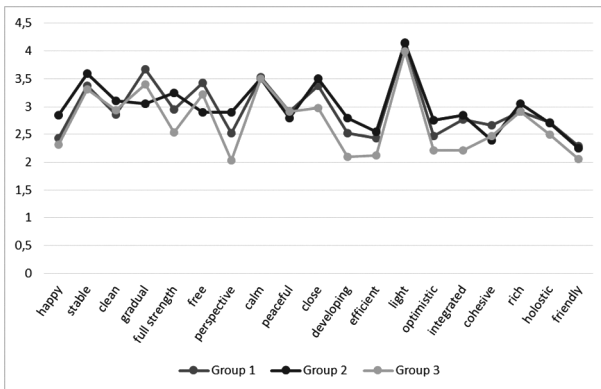


Fig 4. Comparison of average ratings of the image «Future of Ukraine» using bipolar semantic differential

The overall picture shows the averages in the differential, it is difficult to say that the figures tend to one of the poles (excluding variable

«easy»). Overall, all participants tend to percept the image of the future as complex. Of course, people are always worried about the future, so they are always preparing for the worse, wherever they are. Groups are also similar in evaluating characteristics of the image using variable «calm», «peaceful» and «rich». They equally believe that the future of Ukraine assumed as alarming, more hopes for a peaceful one and neither rich nor poor. The crisis in Ukraine affected equally those who currently resides in the country and those, who are abroad.

The group № 2 (with migration intentions) tends to perceive the future a little more negatively. They have a higher value for the variables «happy», «stable», «full strength», «perspective», «close», «developing» and «easy». Using these variables, builds up the image of a miserable, unstable, unproductive, difficult for living country, compared with the other two groups. This idea of home perception may really become an incentive to find a better place to live and own future, where here would be opportunities for self-realization and development.

The group № 3 (those who stay in Ukraine) has the opposite picture – characteristics are a little bit more inclined to the positive pole. Significantly fewer points get variables «full strength», «perspective», «close» «developing», «efficient», «optimistic» and «integrated». Therefore we may say that participants in this group see more opportunities for self-realization in Ukraine compared to other groups. On the one hand, this may be due to the absence of opportunity to relocate and therefore they have to look for perspectives here, on the other hand – overall more positive image of the country. Interestingly, the time dimension relates to more close future, facilitating making plans for their own future connecting them with the future of Ukraine. Overall, participants of this group suggest more dynamic and faster changed future for Ukraine.

Participants of group № 3 differ in assessing the image of future in characteristics of «gradual», «free», «cohesive», although a general review of the profile shows that these variables are between variables of group № 1 and group № 2. Using mentioned characteristics participants in this group tend to see the future of Ukraine dependent, but nonetheless cohesive and tempestuous.

Conclusions. Findings of this study have shown that the image of «My Future», on the one hand, is seen happy, with a family, close to nature, connected to development and leisure, secured, successful, stable, active, perspective, with time categories either close or far; on the other hand, it is described as unknown, uncontrollable, anxious. Its main point is the vision of oneself as the one who controls the situation, or vice versa undefined and one that is looking for the right choice; in addition,

couples, family circle, loved ones, friends, colleagues are represented.

The image of the «Future of Ukraine» on the one hand, perceived as hopeless, full of obstacles, challenges, anxiety, fear, continuation of war, poverty and misery; on the other hand, it is described as a, cohesive, happy, clean, changed, peaceful, united, full of strength and hope for the best, independent, rich, prosperous and generally optimistic. Its main essence is in the seeing Ukraine integrated, since the historical geographic area was pictured, also national symbols in yellow and blue colors were representing the basic idea as a reflection of ethnic identity, cohesion, and union.

A significant difference between groups in the perception of their own future was detected using bipolar semantic differential scales «dependent-independent», «simple-complex», «traditional-unusual», «confident-uncertain», «specific-abstract», «healthy-unhealthy».

Prospects for further research are related to an empirical study of social and psychological factors of migration intentions of modern Ukrainian youth.

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Abstract

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YOUTH'S IMAGERY FEATURES OF THEIR OWN FUTURE AND FUTURE OF UKRAINE

Transformation processes, which go along with life in Ukraine, generate different phenomenon population's consciousness. Youth is the most sensitive part of the population that takes changes in society in the perspective of their own prospects. Therefore, studying of youth's image of their own future and future of Ukraine is urgent and relevant.

For studying the image of the future were used: association experiment, projective technique «Geography of visual images» of one's own future and future of Ukraine, bipolar semantic differential, a questionnaire to determine the place of residence and plans for the future.

Findings of this study have shown that the image of «My Future», on the one hand, is seen happy, with a family, close to nature, connected to development and leisure, secured, successful, stable, active, perspective, with time categories either close or far; on the other hand, it is described as unknown, uncontrollable, anxious. Its main point has two sides: the vision of oneself as the one who controls the situation, or as the one who is looking for the right choice. On future is associated with feelings, family, loved ones, friends, colleagues.

The image of the «Future of Ukraine» on the one hand, perceived as hopeless, full of obstacles, challenges, anxiety, fear, continuation of war, poverty and misery; on the other hand, it is described as a, cohesive, happy, clean, changed, peaceful, united, full of strength and hope for the best, independent, rich, prosperous and generally optimistic. Ukraine appears integrated, with national symbols as a reflection of ethnic identity and patriotism.

A significant difference between groups in the perception of their own future was detected using bipolar semantic differential scales «dependent-independent», «simple-complex», «traditional-unusual», «confident-uncertain», «specific-abstract», «healthy-unhealthy».