

## National values of students in Lithuania

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### Suggested Citation

Abramauskienė, J. & Kirliauskiene, R. (2017). National Values of Students in Lithuania. *Contemporary Educational Researches Journal*. 7(2), 73-80.

Received December 22, 2016; revised April 17, 2017; accepted May 24, 2017.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Gulsun Atanur Baskan, Hacettepe University, Turkey.

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### Abstract

The national values from students' point of view are analysed in the article, aiming to answer the questions: which national values are the priority, what does it mean today to be a true representative of the nation, what factors influence students' expression of national values. Today's young people are characterized by high flexibility, mobility, adaptability to changing living conditions, constantly changing rules and norms. Every day new technologies are invented, a variety of new information flows promoting more different ideas. Therefore, youth's understanding of things and their use, attitude toward traditional relationships in society, family change, national values are viewed differently. In the article it is discussed whether globalized trends influenced the value position of respondents, and based on authors of pedagogy the attempt is made to uncover why in such society it is important to preserve the fundamental national values. The answers to these questions are based on the students' of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences survey carried out in 2016 and theoretical insights, which justify the importance of national values in modern society and their expression.

Keywords: Values, nationality, national education, Lithuanian folk music.

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## 1. Introduction

Nationality is understood quite differently, for ones it is a moral category, for others - a way of life, for some more – way of self expression, and so on. Nationality has all these qualities, which are inseparable from each other and during each historical period take on distinctive features. Grigas (2007) states that nationality expresses one's belonging to the spiritual, ideological, and on incremental value-based community. In fact, national values form the basis which determines each nation's moral, cultural identity and the uniqueness of nation's existence. Therefore, these values are formed among ethnic communities that form their own specific way of life, language, culture, religion and territory. According to Antinienė (2002), nationalism is a certain state, certain specific way of life that a person has acquired or created and which is associated with motivated, intentional involvement in the affairs of the nation. Maceina (1991) speaking of national identity claims that man as ontological being, may exist without a nation, but the man at full sense, as practical and creative person can only exist among people. At the same time the author states that the nation is the primal source from which one draws not only life for his or her works, but also develops in it. Thus, nationality for humans is a fundamental self-realization process. Research in recent decades (Lankauskas, 2002; Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Roccas, Schwartz & Amit, 2010; Haljasorg & Lilleoja, 2016) focuses on national values, national identity intersections and slips. In addition, some researchers of values (Roccas, 2003), identify the modern age as the period of weakening or even loss of national values.

An excellent tool to develop nationality is ethnic music. According to Maceina (1991), ethnic music as art of pure sounds speaks to the very depths of nature and its impact is much deeper than the other arts, because it touches the very essence of the nation and experiences the direct influence on national identity. In fact, while singing folk songs is gradually fostered national spirit, the ability to feel, love own country's of original traits, customs, historical and ethnic festivals. Simplicity of Lithuanian folk songs, abundance of folk instruments, accessibility provides opportunities to develop musical skills, sense of rhythm, ensemble skills and other properties. In addition, ethnic music is unique in that here everyone who wants can express themselves. It is not only singing, but also musicianship, dance, theater, etc. The importance of ethnic music was analysed by Katinienė(2003), effects of ethnic music revealed by Baltrėnienė and Palubinskienė (2005), Bruno (2010), Palubinskienė (2011) and Brumfield (2014).

While developing ethnic values education plays a big role. Teacher's as educator's of values role becomes very important, thus, ethnic value's of future teachers empirical studies remain relevant and imply the research problem - which national values are the priority, what does it mean today to be a true representative of the nation, what factors influence students' expression of national values. There is still not enough of such research, since more attention is paid to the overall value orientations, therefore, as the object of research are selected - LUES students' - future teachers' national values.

### *1.1. Purpose of study*

The aim of the research was to explore students' attitudes towards national values in Lithuania. Objectives: to find out the importance of national values in today's context and to explore the LUES students' attitudes towards national values.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Research model*

Analysis of scientific literature, the students' survey, quantitative and qualitative analysis of empirical data.

### *2.2. Participants*

In 2016 by purposive sampling method (only Lithuanian students selected) were surveyed 87 students from Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Specialty of Pedagogy of Primary Education, I-IV year of studies. All subjects were given an anonymous survey (original questionnaire), developed by the author. The questionnaire consisted of open and closed questions: is their nationality important for students; what they can be proud of; the importance of the place of residence; which values do they recognize; symbols representing Lithuanian nationality; expression of ethnic music.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

According to Jovaiša (2007), attitude - is the foundation of the personality, which determines the feelings, aspirations, thoughts, imagination, perceptual and other conscious processes. In his opinion, attitude's concept is closely related to the value orientations, influencing one's decisions. Thus, the attitude towards values is a certain indicator of how young people internalize them and how the values are involved in their lives. Nowadays young people are characterized by high flexibility, mobility, ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions. Constantly changing rules and regulations. There are new technologies, a wide range of new information and new ideas every single day. One to these changes young people constantly has new ideas, different understanding of objects and their use. Every people traditional attitude to relationship in the society, in the family, may differ their attitude to the national values.

In order to reveal what kind of national values dominate among the students it was asked whether their nationality is relevant to them. 87.1 percent of respondents say that their nationality is relevant to them, more than one tenth (11.3 percent) - it is difficult to say, and 1.6 percent – it does not matter. This shows that the majority of students treat nationalities as a value.

Further, it was important to find out why the respondents who said that their nationality is important to them are proud of it (see. Fig. 1).

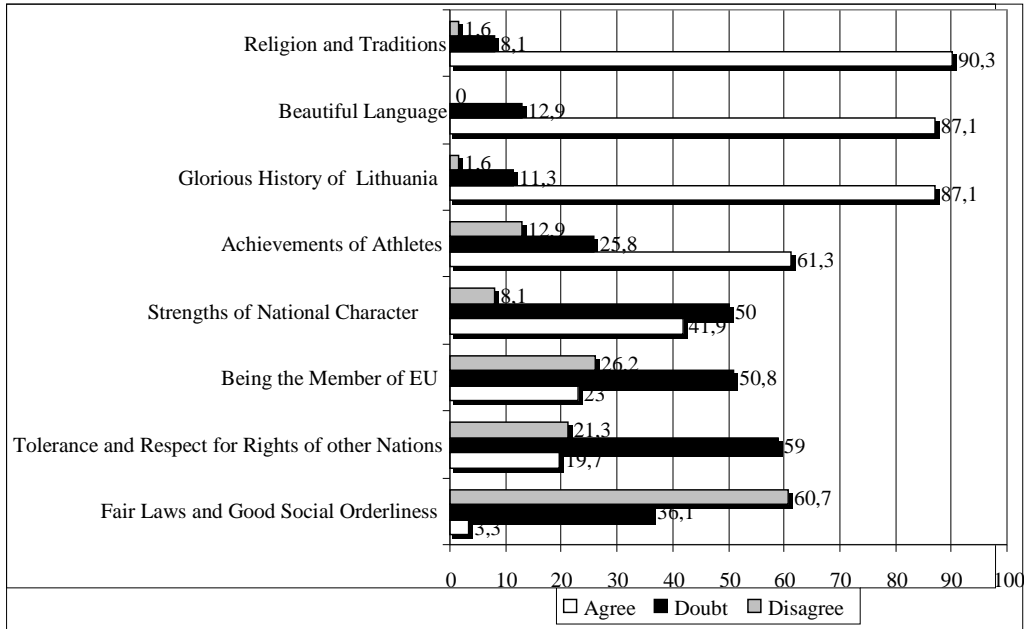


Figure 1. Reasons why students are proud of their nationality, in percent

The findings revealed that respondents are proud of their nationality because of religion and traditions (90.3 percent), glorious history of the State of Lithuania (87.1 percent), beautiful language (87.1 percent), and the achievements of athletes (61,3 percent). However, half of the respondents (50.8 percent) doubt about the membership in EU, national character strengths (50.0 percent) and tolerance (59.0 percent) for other nations. More than two-thirds (60.7 percent) of respondents do not agree that we have fair laws and good social orderliness. It can be claimed that answers chosen by students show their awareness of national identity, as the basis of analysis of the literature, namely, language, religion, customs and traditions, historical events are the basis of nationality.

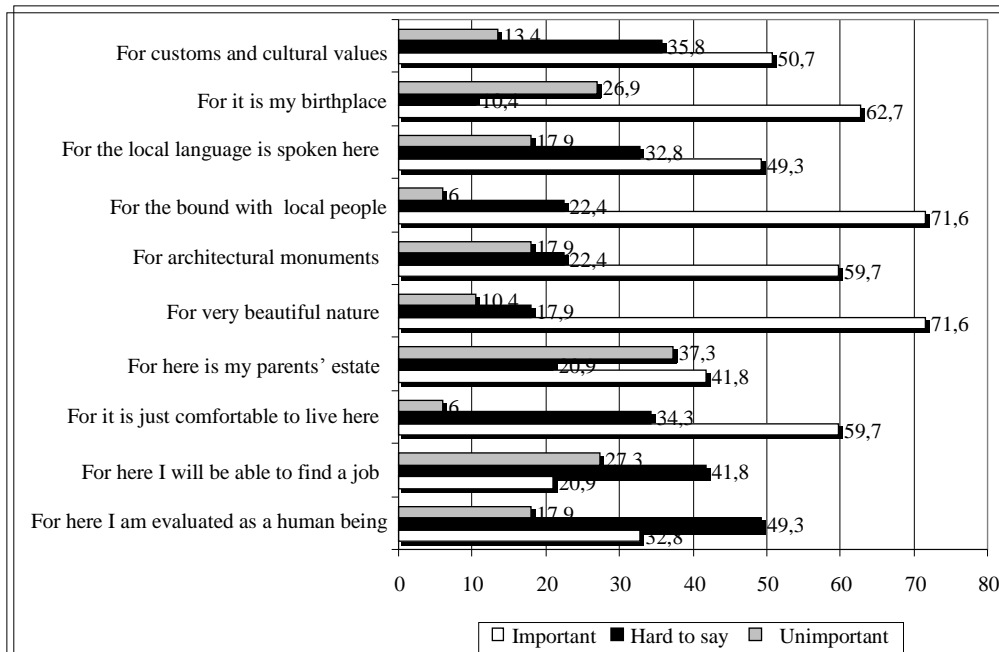


Figure 2. Importance of the place of residence, in percent

Another property representing the national values is residence, birthplace. Therefore, it was tried to figure out what is the respondents' residence. It turned out that more than half (67.7 percent) - live in the city, almost one-third (20.0 percent) - town, more than one-tenth (10.8 percent) - in rural areas and 1.5 per cent are living in a remote area. It was interesting to reveal why is their place of residence important for future teachers (see. Fig. 2). The data showed that the residence is important because of relations with local people (71.6 percent), because here is the birthplace (62.7 percent), very beautiful nature (71.6 percent), architectural monuments (59.7 percent), because it is convenient to live here (59.7 percent). Less than half of the respondents question will they be able to find a job and whether they are evaluated as human beings. The obtained data reveals the perception of national identity, but a pursuit of personal benefit and welfare is felt.

An important feature of national identity are symbols: the rituals, the flag, the anthem, and clothes. They strengthen the national self-image, ensure the historical continuity. In order to investigate the students' attitude to the national symbols they were asked to evaluate how do the following statements comply with their views. As we can see in Figure 3, 81.8 percent of students said that it is important to respect the flag of Lithuania, 87.9 percent know by hard the Lithuanian anthem, and 74.2 percent celebrate religious holidays. Less than half would like to see traditional clothes worn on national holidays and just more than one-tenth have national clothes at home. Lithuanian folk music is one of the national treasures, giving the Lithuanian nation some exceptional identity. Unfortunately, currently are observed quite contrary global trends, such as folk songs in Western Europe are generally seen as repertoire of ethnographic ensembles, while the current generation does not know them and no longer sing them for their children. What is the situation in Lithuania? More than half of respondents (56.1 percent) were told folk tales and sang folk songs. According to the respondents, the most common were *tales*, *singing of lullabies* and most seldom - *folk songs*. Most usually folklore was passed on by two or one family member. This was usually done by mother and grandmother, much less by father, grandfather, brothers and sisters.

More than two-thirds of respondents (80.3 percent) indicated that they know some of the Lithuanian folk songs. However, when they were asked to identify which in particular, more than a tenth were able

to identify (10.6 percent) - one song, 43.9 percent - two songs, 7.6 percent – three, 13.6 - four, and only a small part (4.5 percent) knew six Lithuanian folk songs. Neither of the songs could name more than one-tenth (16.7 percent) of respondents.

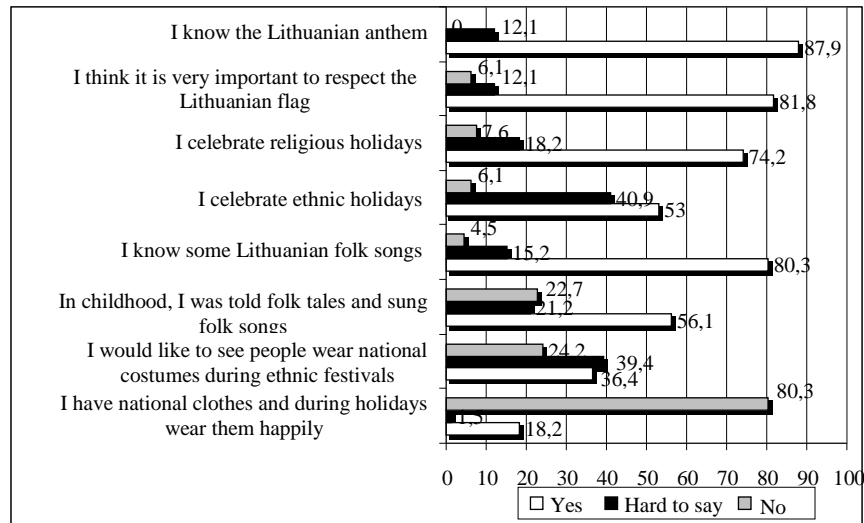


Figure 3. Respondents' attitudes towards national symbols, in percent

Baltrėnienė and Palubinskienė (2005) argue that in ethnic music lie in the nation's valuable spirituality webs that it is particularly important to national identity formation. According to the authors, while learning ethnic music, the role of the teacher is exceptional, which promotes interest for studying ethnic music and contributes to the maintenance of national values. In an attempt to find out the students' attitude to national values, the approach to folk songs was taken into consideration, whether in schools, in their opinion, should be taught Lithuanian folk songs. Most of the respondents stated that *"it is clear that Lithuanian folk songs must be taught"*, *"of course children have to know them, then pass on to their children so that they do not become forgotten. But they should be modernized, so that students would be interested"*, *"Lithuanian folk songs develop musicality"*, *"folk music enriches in the spiritual sense"*, *"it is a part of our nation"*, *"folk songs develop national identity"*, *"they are very beautiful"*, *"they are funny"*, *"folk songs provide knowledge"*, *"develop one's understanding of our culture"*, *"every Lithuanian has to know at least some of the Lithuanian folk songs"*, and so on. However, there were not only positive opinions: *"Lithuanian folk music is uninteresting and unnecessary"*, *"folk music is boring"*, *"I do not think that it is important"*. J. Jonušas (2006) has pointed out that the singing folklore – most emotional part of national creative works, what appeals to the emotions, influences mentality, arouses ethnic self-esteem and has the most influence on the formation of patriotic worldview. According to the author, ethnic culture's, as well as a art's in total, purpose is to make human values aesthetic while preserving their specifics. Furthermore, more than a third of the students noted that they love folk songs and actively represent them (*"I sing them in the family"*, *"I participate in concerts with folk music ensemble"*, *"I attend folk music concerts"*, and so on.). This means that only one of five students has expressed positive attitude towards Lithuanian folk songs. Of these, half of the students like folk songs since childhood, others learned to love them in recent years. In fact, respondents that love Lithuanian folk songs since childhood are not many, about 15 percent. Many more are of those who find it difficult to say whether they love folk songs or not. On Lithuanian folk song various ethnologists, musicians, and historians have focussed their attention. Folk song for Lithuanians was one of the fundamental values representing the Lithuanian people, expressing the spirit of the nation. Singing, as Z. Rinkevičius says (2002), is an indispensable tool for helping to foster a bright national identity, develop national identity, national consciousness. The author states that having learned enough Lithuanian folk songs, also developed values of youth in respect of folk songs, young people are gradually introduced into contexts

of other musical cultures. Thus, the respect for other nations, their ethnic, musical and general culture is developed.

Therefore, obtained survey data revealed the perception of national values, which means that academic young people have a positive attitude to ethnic music, but some of the respondents understand Lithuanian folk songs only partially, are aware of few folk songs, cannot justify the importance of ethnic music for national education. This can be explained by the fact that the surveyed students are from different cultural backgrounds or have not received sufficient national education. The reasons could be much deeper, for instance, that a song as the subject itself is regarded quite indifferently, as not very significant value. In fact, folk song can not exist and be understood without the contexts of general culture and musical culture. To develop love for a folk song is hardly possible without a close connection with the good for general love and meaningful music education.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

- On theoretical level prevail the aspects of the ethnic values study, but they do not lose their relevance in the twenty-first century as well. While many authors reveal differently, key elements of national identity are distinguished: language, traditions, customs, national symbols, historical events, and so on. Rapidly changing lifestyles are changing the national values too, creating new challenges for national education.
- The research showed that students of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences still have all the national values: they are still proud of their nationality, religion, traditions, proud of their beautiful language, their honourable Lithuanian state, beautiful nature and architectural buildings. Majority of the students said that it's very important residential place, because of its beautiful nature, their relationship with the people living here, because it is their birthplace, because of architectural monuments and their parents' real estate. However, more than half of the students doubt if they will be able to find good job based on their education, more than a third said it is difficult to live here.
- The research displays that the majority of the students know the Lithuanian anthem, believe that it is very important to respect the Lithuanian flag, to celebrate religious holidays and ethnic festivals, but only every five students expressed positive attitudes toward the Lithuanian folk songs, representing national values as a phenomenon. Some respondents have indicated not very profound meaning of national values: they know only few folk songs, cannot explain the importance of ethno music in nowadays education. Decrease in students' understanding of national values can be explained by the fact that they have not received enough national education in the past, which is influenced by the family, economic situation, positive attitude and lack of patriotism.

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