

## CHAPTER 6

CONSIDERING CULTURAL CONTEXT AS AN IMPORTANT  
CONDITION FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF  
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS IN UKRAINE

## CHAPTER 6

## ABSTRACT

The section examines the impact of cultural context on the implementation of international programs of social and emotional learning in the Ukrainian education system. The importance of adapting such programs to national cultural characteristics in order to achieve the effectiveness of their application in the educational environment is emphasized. Based on the model of cultural dimensions by G. Hofstede, an analysis of the Ukrainian cultural context is conducted. Special attention is paid to highlighting the cultural traditions of Ukraine, such as cordocentrism, collectivism, nurturing spirituality, and the desire for freedom, which were formed under the influence of historical, religious, and socio-economic conditions. It is determined that the cultural context of Ukraine is potentially favorable for the implementation of programs of social and emotional learning, since such programs emphasize the development of empathy, cooperation, and other social and emotional skills, in accordance with the cultural priorities of Ukrainian society.

Empirical research using both primary and secondary data included a comparative analysis of international practices, case studies of the implementation of the social, emotional and ethical learning (SEE Learning) program in Ukraine, and a survey “Cultural Context of the SEE Learning Program in Ukraine” of 43 teachers from 24 educational institutions that have been implementing the SEE Learning program for 5 years regarding ways to adapt the program to the Ukrainian cultural environment.

The study showed that adapting social and emotional learning programs to the specific cultural characteristics of Ukraine contributes to their effective implementation, increases the level of involvement of students and the parent community in the educational process, and promotes the development of students’ social and emotional skills. Based on the results obtained, recommendations are provided for educators, researchers, and practitioners on considering the cultural context when implementing social and emotional learning programs.

## KEYWORDS

Social and emotional learning, cultural context, G. Hofstede’s model, adaptation of educational programs, social and emotional skills, Ukrainian culture, social, emotional and ethical learning, national values.

The diversity of cultures that exist on the planet is determined by many factors, including natural living conditions, historical development of peoples, religious beliefs, etc. Culture is the most important factor in socialization, a significant stage of which takes place in social institutions, primarily in the education system, and regulates relationships in society. It is obvious that the cultural context has a significant impact on the functioning of the education system in a particular country. It is important for the research community to understand how a specific cultural context can influence the implementation of individual new educational programs, for example, social and emotional learning (SEL) programs, which are now becoming a trend in the national educational policies.

Research into cultural characteristics and finding ways to adapt these mainly international programs to the cultural context of countries are necessary for several important reasons. Thus, SEL programs are mainly created and driven by individual interested communities and are a priority of countries with a high standard of living [1], and therefore there is a need to adapt them to the cultural contexts of those countries where different socio-economic conditions and a different educational system operate, so that they are organically perceived and successfully implemented in other socio-economic conditions and a different educational system.

In addition, each culture has its own social norms, values, and expectations regarding people's behavioral skills, certain standards of upbringing. SEL programs, adapted to the cultural context, help students develop precisely those skills (the so-called soft skills or social and emotional ones) that meet these norms and expectations, which contributes to better social integration of such programs in line with the socio-cultural requirements existing in society. Similarly, different cultures have their own specific ways of perceiving and expressing emotions. For example, what is considered a normal emotional reaction in one culture may be unacceptable in another. Accommodation of SEL programs allows you to take these features into account and ensure greater clarity and effectiveness of learning.

Considering and recognizing cultural features demonstrates respect for the diversity of the countries where an SEL program is implemented or may be introduced. and ensures the development of intercultural competency in students, which is important in the context of globalization. The implementation of SEL programs in different countries of the world creates the prerequisites for a safe inclusive educational environment that promotes mutual respect for cultural differences, tolerance and successful cooperation of participants in the educational process.

Moreover, adapting SEL to the cultural context of countries and the study of this context are key for countries to create their own effective, inclusive and relevant SEL educational programs that meet the needs of modern societies.

Given the relevance of the issue raised, the purpose of the study is to substantiate the need to take into account the influence of the cultural context for the effective implementation of social and emotional learning programs among Ukrainian students and teachers and to provide recommendations for the successful adaptation of such programs in Ukraine (using the example of the social, emotional and ethical learning program – SEE Learning).

**Tasks:**

1. Analyze the classifications of societies in the context of values common to different countries.
2. Investigate the genesis and features of the Ukrainian ethos in comparison with other European countries.
3. Clarify what the main values of the Ukrainian cultural context are in terms of the development of social and emotional skills of students and which components of this context can be developed using social and emotional learning programs (using the example of the SEE Learning program), as well as which components of the program do not find a response in the Ukrainian cultural context.
4. Identify the main directions of adapting social and emotional learning programs to the Ukrainian cultural context.

**Research methods:** *theoretical analysis* – a systematic review of literature and scientific sources, in particular, classifications of cultural differences, which allows us to understand the cultural features of different societies, *analysis* of the Concept of the New Ukrainian School, Professional Standards for Teachers and School Principals; *empirical research* – studying specific examples and the impact of cultural features on the adoption and adaptation of SEL programs in Ukraine, using both primary and secondary data for analysis; *comparative analysis* – comparing practices of implementing social and emotional programs in other countries with the Ukrainian experience to identify potential problems and opportunities for adaptation; *case studies* – in-depth research on the implementation of the SEE Learning program in Ukraine, including the analysis of the impact cultural features have on the success of these programs; survey on the coincidence of Ukrainian cultural accents and the main concepts of the SEE Learning program “Cultural context of the SEE Learning program in Ukraine”.

In general, the methods used allow for a comprehensive approach to the issue of considering the cultural context when implementing educational programs, providing not only theoretical justification for the need to adapt social and emotional learning programs, but also providing practical recommendations for organizations, involved in the development and implementation of such programs.

## 6.1 ANALYTICAL REVIEW AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Analyzing the problem raised, we turned to various studies in the field of studying and modeling cultural differences in the globalized world in order to find a reliable theoretical basis, the so-called “starting points,” studying the cultural context for the effective implementation of SEL programs in the education system of Ukraine.

In this context, it is important to mention that the problem of organizing and identifying cultures was addressed by the US researchers A. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn [2], who argued for the existence of the universal cultural categories. Building on these foundational ideas, E. Hall

further expanded the discussion in his book “Beyond culture” [3], where he presented key insights from his research on cultural communication. Also, the cultural dimensions of F. Trompenaars and C. Hampden-Turner, published in their work “Riding the waves of culture: Understanding diversity in global business” [4], received wide recognition. The researchers added the factors of control and time perspective to the main cultural dimensions and created their own model for studying the values of national cultures.

Creating models of cultures in the current conditions of increasing globalization is a long-standing research trend. For example, the World Values Survey (WVS) was initiated by Professor R. F. Inglehart of the University of Michigan (USA) in 1981 and is a long-term comparative study [5]. The survey was launched on the basis of the European Values Study and over time became one of the most authoritative and widely used international studies, covering almost 120 countries and societies, which is about 95 % of the world's population [6]. Ukraine joined the World Values Survey in 1999 during the fourth wave of the study and participated in the fifth (2006) and sixth (2011) waves. The last study with the participation of Ukraine took place in 2020. In addition, studies were conducted in Ukraine within the framework of the European Values Study in 1996, 2008. The World Values Survey allows you to obtain data on the main features and values of individual societies and countries, track the dynamics of changes in social development and carry out a comparative analysis of different societies according to various thematic blocks and indicators. The main goal of the project is to assess the impact of stability or change in values on the social, political and economic development of countries and societies [7].

R.F. Inglehart's research, like the vast majority of other studies of cultures by the above-mentioned authors, concerns business, although recently there has been an increasing number of studies, including domestic ones, on the impact of cultural contexts of different countries on the education system. Researchers study the communication system in the “teacher – student” system, compare the features of educational programs of different countries in the context of their cultures, changes in educational systems in view of democratic reforms in the country, etc.

Ukrainian scientists actively study the influence of cultural context on the education system and the development of society through various pedagogical and socio-cultural approaches, associated with prominent figures in science. Thus, V. Andrushchenko, developing the philosophy of education, focuses on the cultural context of personality formation. He considers education as a process of cultural transformation, where upbringing is based on the integration of national traditions and global innovations. His concept of life-creation emphasizes the role of personal subjectivity in building one's own life path through the acquisition of cultural values. An important aspect is the humanization of education, aimed at the formation of moral responsibility, critical thinking and social activity in the conditions of globalization and democracy [8].

I. Zyazyun made a decisive contribution to the development of humanistic and culturological aspects of pedagogy, emphasizing the role of spirituality and moral values based on national culture. His concepts concern the modernization of pedagogical education, in particular the professional training of teachers and the formation of a personally oriented pedagogical worldview that contrib-

utes to the development of the individual and society through education and upbringing based on cultural traditions and democracy [9].

I. Bekh significantly influenced the study of the cultural context in education, paying attention to the spiritual and moral development of the individual. He developed a concept of upbringing that ensures the formation of value orientations through the cultural and moral norms of society [10]. In line with this approach, K. Zhurba explores the upbringing of meaningful life values as one of the priority areas of educating students [11].

It is worth noting that a distinct body of research, primarily conducted abroad, focuses on how ethnic and social factors influence the study of various educational programs, particularly the widely adopted SEL programs that are gaining global recognition. Thus, New Zealand researchers M. Webber and S. Waru-Benson (2022) examined how cultural stereotypes and ethnic identity influence social and emotional well-being. Studies have shown that the perception of one's ethnic identity can either support or hinder social and emotional well-being, depending on whether it is associated with positive or negative experiences. When there is a positive cultural stereotype, for example, a stereotype about the academic abilities of people of Asian origin, then the allocation of membership in the group has a positive effect on academic performance and social-emotional well-being [12].

It should be emphasized that when studying the issue of the influence of cultural context on educational systems, researchers from different countries, including Ukraine, often use the model of national culture by G. Hofstede [13] as a basis for comparisons and generalizations, which is one of the most famous and influential models in the field of contemporary intercultural research.

The model developed by G. Hofstede offers undeniable advantages, including its relevance to our research focus. However, it has also faced certain criticisms. To explore these aspects further, we will examine the model in greater detail, positioning it as a potential methodological framework for analyzing the implementation of SEL programs in Ukraine through the lens of the country's cultural context.

As advantages of the model we define its systematicity and structure. After all, the research of G. Hofstede became one of the first and most successful attempts at a consistent study of cultural differences. The author laid the foundations of a holistic research tradition that studies social differences, the so-called "comparative cultural studies" — an interdisciplinary field, whose roots and influence encompass sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, management research, psychology, and other fields [14].

The main advantage of the author's approach is the **"unpacking of culture"**—the idea of breaking down this complex phenomenon into distinct components and studying them individually [15, 16]. Ukrainian scientist O. Pryshliak emphasizes that "the theory of G. Hofstede is considered by researchers to be the most well-known and popular, largely due to its successfully identified set of universal parameters that allow for the analysis of cultures, regardless of the country or cultural context in which they exist" [17]. This confirms its value and effectiveness for modern tasks, including the study of the cultural context of the implementation of SEL programs in Ukraine.

G. Hofstede's approach laid the foundation for further research into the cultural context and is actively used in various fields, from business and human resources management to education, which allows integrating cultural aspects into various areas of activity. This confirms the practical value and universality of the research approach. G. Hofstede's cultural dimensions help to understand more deeply how cultural values influence people's behavior, their expectations and interaction. This is a key for the development and adaptation of SEL programs that consider national cultural characteristics.

There is some criticism of the model of G. Hofstede in the scientific discourse. The obsolescence of the data corpus, from which a large array was actually collected by the author in the 1970s–1980s, is emphasized. During this time, cultural emphases could have shifted, because the modern world has undergone significant changes. This, according to critics, may make the model less relevant for modern research due to the lack of consideration of modern contexts, for example, the global pandemic or the war in Ukraine.

Some opponents (A. Emundson, 2005; Goodstein, 1981; Hunt, 1981; Robinson, 1983; Baskerville-Morley, 2003, 2005; Holden, 2002; McSweeney, 2002) believe that G. Hofstede's model can simplify or stereotype cultures, not taking into account the internal diversity and composition of each nation. They also note the limited number of dimensions. After all, a limited number of cultural dimensions may not cover all aspects of cultural differences, which may lead to an incomplete understanding of the cultural context.

In addition, the model of G. Hofstede focuses only on the national level, not taking into account regional differences, subcultures and even corporate cultures, which may be important for understanding the cultural contexts of some multi-layered processes, such as the implementation of SEL programs at the level of individual communities.

Despite criticism, the model is considered relevant in research circles and has been used for many years to characterize many cultures, providing validity to general conclusions about cultural trends.

It is important to note that after the initial explorations in the 1970s and 1980s, the research base has been repeatedly updated and supplemented with fresh data. Today, the model is based on a large amount of data, collected from around the world, which makes it reliable and valid for the analysis of different cultural contexts. Moreover, the model itself is constantly being modernized, which allows it to take into account changes in cultural values.

For example, in 2010, two new dimensions appeared in the model:

- 1) long-term/short-term orientation;
- 2) assumptions or what expresses life satisfaction.

These dimensions were added by the author of the model in collaboration with other independent researchers of the cultural context M. Bond and M. Minkov and provided a clearer reflection of cultural features in a modern form. Although, despite the rapid changes in the modern world, the main cultural trends continue to remain relatively stable over a long period of time. Some aspects of culture have deep roots and do not change quickly, which allows us to use the basic results of G. Hofstede to understand long-term trends.

It is also worth noting that studies that appeared later (R. Inglehart, S. Schwartz, M. Bond, K. Welzel, M. Minkov and other authors) often confirm and creatively develop the main conclusions of G. Hofstede. This indicates that his model remains relevant and up-to-date due to its updates, stability of the main cultural trends, confirmation by further research and wide practical application in various fields.

Based on the theory of cultural dimensions of G. Hofstede, domestic researchers (O. Pryshliak [17], I. Ierastova-Mykhalus [18], D. Voronina-Pryhodii [19], I. Medvedieva [20], O. Shestakovskiy [21] and others) study the impact of cultural differences on communication, educational processes and business practices in Ukraine, which contributes to better cultural adaptation of international management and educational strategies, the development of international cooperation and the formation of a tolerant society.

A significant number of modern studies by foreign authors indicate a great interest in clarifying the issue of the impact of cultural context on the education system in different countries using the model of G. Hofstede. The importance of cultural context in building the educational process was emphasized by G. Hofstede himself: "Societal, national and gender cultures, which children acquire from their earliest youth onwards, are much deeper rooted in the human mind than occupational cultures, acquired at school, or than organizational cultures, acquired on the job. The latter are exchangeable when people take a new job. Societal cultures reside in (often unconscious) values, in the sense of broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others" [3, 13].

For example, Polish researchers A. Popyk and A. Perkowska-Klejman investigate how national educational programs of Poland and Ukraine define educational processes and relations between teachers and students depending on cultural contexts. This study, conducted on the basis of G. Hofstede's model, shows that both countries have significant cultural differences that affect educational processes. For example, Polish culture is more inclined to individualism and masculinity, while Ukrainian culture is more collectivist and feminine. However, both countries demonstrate high power distance and uncertainty avoidance [22].

Saudi Arabian scholar A. Alqarni investigates the influence of cultural aspects on student behavior and learning styles in different educational environments. Using G. Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions, the author analyzes how these dimensions affect the learning process in different cultural and linguistic contexts. For example, in countries with high power distance, the relationship between students and teachers is more formal, which affects students' initiatives and their ability to think independently. In countries with low power distance, on the contrary, there is more spontaneity and interaction between students and teachers. The article examines examples from countries, such as the USA, Korea, China, India, Australia, Japan, and some European countries, which allows us to draw conclusions about the impact of cultural differences on learning in different parts of the world [23].

I. Morera and C. Galván investigate the impact of educational culture on the learning process, using G. Hofstede's cultural dimensions model as an analytical tool. The authors conduct a diachronic study of the development of educational culture in Romania over the past 60 years, covering

the communist period, the period of reforms after the fall of the regime and the introduction of democracy to the present [24].

We would like to clarify that we plan to further reveal the impact of the Ukrainian cultural context on the implementation of social and emotional learning programs, using the example of the social, emotional and ethical learning program (SEE Learning), which is currently actively networked in Ukraine and has five years of experience in systematic experimental implementation at the all-Ukrainian level with the participation of the Institute of Education Content Modernization of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Institute for Educational Problems of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine and with the support of GIZ Civil Peace Service – Ukraine [25]. This program is one of the most widespread social and emotional learning programs in the world, created at Emory University (USA) and implemented in 144 countries around the world (24 of them at the system level, including Ukraine). Although the program was originally conceived as international, it naturally has certain cultural features that may not be entirely clear to Ukrainian teachers and students.

We believe that the application of G. Hofstede's model for analyzing the cultural context when implementing SEL programs in Ukraine, using this particular program as an example, will have a positive impact on developing a holistic vision of the process of adapting SEL teaching methods to Ukrainian cultural characteristics, making them more effective and acceptable to Ukrainian teachers and students. Also, a look at the implementation of SEL through the lens of G. Hofstede's model will contribute to a better understanding of the relevant cultural characteristics of countries for the correct choice of strategies for implementing international programs into the national education system, which will help in establishing more effective interaction between students, teachers and parents.

During the research, we take into account that when using the model of G. Hofstede in the modern educational space, it is important to keep in mind its limitations and constantly update knowledge about cultural changes, adapting it to specific tasks and conditions through additional local research to clarify current data. For example, in the case of social and emotional learning programs in Ukraine, we use the model of G. Hofstede as a base, supplementing it with modern data, conducting additional research among Ukrainian teachers to ensure its relevance.

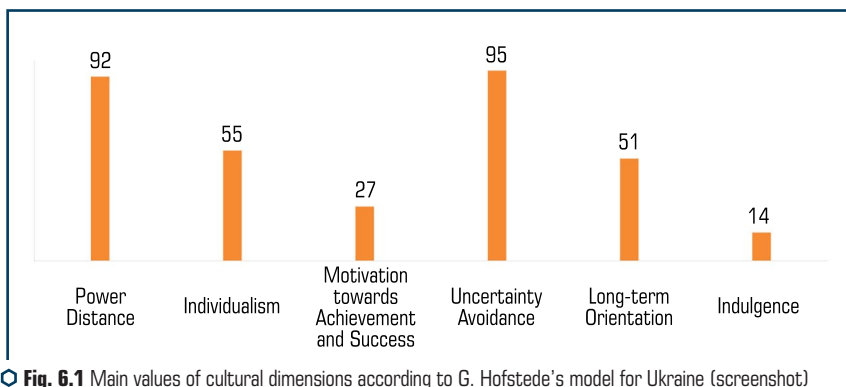
## 6.2 ANALYSIS OF CLASSIFICATIONS OF SOCIETIES REGARDING VALUE ORIENTATIONS IN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF COUNTRIES (ACCORDING TO G. HOFSTEDE)

When studying the problem of taking into account the influence of cultural context for the effective implementation of social and emotional learning programs, it is important to look at Ukrainian culture from the perspective of a general study of world cultures and their features, focusing on the exploration of the cultural context, carried out by a group of researchers, led by G. Hofstede [13]. The classification of cultures, developed by them, focuses on certain cultural features,



which we will consider for a better understanding in the perspective of this study. We will try to establish the features of cultures and, first of all, to investigate the features of Ukrainian culture and the influence of these features on the process of socialization and how the identified cultural context can influence the perception of the value of education by Ukrainian students, ideas about its importance in future life, and the acquisition of necessary skills, including social and emotional ones.

Let us consider the generalizations, presented in the above-mentioned study, and focus on the values of the dimensions/indexes, visualized on the Culture Factor Group website [26] (**Fig. 6.1**). Dimensions are understood as certain characteristics that are used to analyze complex objects, such as the characteristics of the culture of a society [27]. M. Minkov and other scholars consider cultural dimensions as conditional research constructs at the group level, created to better understand and explain national (and other group) differences [14].



**Fig. 6.1** Main values of cultural dimensions according to G. Hofstede's model for Ukraine (screenshot)  
Source: [26]

First of all, let us consider the value of the *power distance* dimension. It determines the characteristic perception of power as the most important part of life and a large or small distance from power. High power distance means that people are more accustomed to hierarchical structures and accept power as unevenly distributed. Low power distance indicates a desire for equality and democratic relations in society.

We see significant diversity in the world in the value of this index. In Ukraine, the value of this dimension is too high – 92 (the largest is 100) [26]. This means that the majority of society is almost completely disconnected from those who have real power, perceiving this part of society as its privileged, but far from real life element. People do not feel involved in decision-making in the country, and therefore do not consider it their duty to solve its problems and improve life in the country, placing responsibility on the representatives of power. Inequality and privileges are considered the norm of life, which is diametrically opposed to democratic values. In democratic countries of Europe, this dimension is much lower.

It is obvious that high power distance is in some way correlated with the level of socio-economic development of the country, and its decrease can contribute to such development. In terms of Ukraine's choice of a democratic path, the development of democratic institutions and individual civic activity, social trust and responsibility of each and every person is very important for our society, primarily through the implementation of relevant values and strategies in the education system, which today is happening through the implementation of social and emotional learning programs, especially the SEE Learning program, which has an ethical component. We assume that the reform of the education system and the introduction of SEL in Ukraine can become one of the factors that can reduce power distance by developing the social and emotional competency of the younger generation. However, the direct causal relationship of SEL with this cultural dimension still requires further systematic scientific substantiation.

The dimension of *individualism* (as opposed to *cohesion*) demonstrates the level of tendency to one's own goals and protection of one's interests. The highest values (up to 100) for this index demonstrate the importance of one's own interests, the confidentiality of representatives of countries. In Ukraine, this index is 55. This index demonstrates approximately the average value of the importance of personal goals and at the same time commitment to group interests. That is, in society there is the almost equal tendency to both personal goals and group goals. Currently, during the war, the tendency to collective goals is obviously increasing, since the cohesion of society against the common enemy and the orientation towards achieving the main common socially significant goal – victory over the aggressor – becomes very important. At the same time, nurturing one's own individual priorities and directions can become an additional resource for maintaining the resilience of citizens during the war. Moreover, in the future, with the development of a free, independent, democratic state, in which every person is a social value, it will be increasingly important to develop in students an understanding of the importance of personal goals and the desire for self-realization, in which social and emotional learning programs will also be helpful.

The next dimension is *masculinity/femininity*. In the classification of G. Hofstede, this dimension means a focus on achieving results in any case, under any circumstances, rivalry, self-confidence, purposefulness as opposed to respecting relationships and caring about the quality of life. It has different meanings in different countries. However, it is obvious that this dimension is not so much mutually determined by the level of socio-economic development of the country. For example, in Sweden this dimension is low, and in the USA it is high. Rather, it reflects the degree of entrenchment of certain ideas and values regarding patterns of behavior in the culture of peoples. This dimension also affects the formation of social norms and expectations, which may differ even between developed countries. Understanding these differences is important for intercultural communication and effective interaction in the globalized world.

In Ukraine, this dimension is 27, this index is not high. This index of masculinity/femininity in Ukraine indicates that the culture values relationships, caring for others, and work-life balance. This may mean that cooperation and shared achievements are more important in Ukraine than self-assertion and competition. Ukrainian culture, focused on mutual understanding and maintaining

the quality of life, may contribute to greater social cohesion, but at the same time, less desire for certain achievements.

This creates favorable conditions for the implementation of SEL programs, as such programs often emphasize cooperation, empathy, including for oneself, emotional support, and the development of skills to better understand one's own capabilities and boundaries. These programs can further strengthen social ties and increase the level of support among students, contributing to a better social climate in schools.

SEL can help overcome stereotypes and discriminatory practices by raising awareness of diversity and promoting greater empathy and understanding. Low levels of masculinity, which indicate a lower tendency to be competitive and aggressive, may contribute to more effective implementation of such programs.

The focus on quality of life and work-life balance, inherent in Ukrainian culture, may contribute to the acceptance and support of SEL programs that emphasize the importance of mental health and emotional well-being by educators and the parent community.

The *uncertainty avoidance* dimension demonstrates the degree, to which people perceive and respond to unfamiliar situations. In societies with a high value of this dimension, there is a high tendency to make fixed decisions. They are clearly structured. Perhaps only danger will require a different approach. In countries with a low uncertainty avoidance index, a supportive attitude towards manifestations of one's own initiative and even risky behavior in solving problems is characteristic; a high level of acceptance of possible differences and other points of view. It is obvious that in the modern world, where problematic situations of uncertainty constantly arise, requiring quick response and non-standard solutions, this dimension is very important. And we can assume that cultures where such behavior is cultivated will be successful, they are open to new innovative solutions. In Ukraine, the uncertainty avoidance index is very high – 95, which indicates a high probability of people's unpreparedness to solve emerging problems. It is obvious that it is this component of culture that needs to be developed, and the efforts of educators who teach SEL programs should be directed at this.

Another dimension – *long-term orientation* – shows the orientation to solving short-term or long-term tasks. In cultures with a high value of this index (Southeast and East Asia) there is stability, perseverance in achieving set goals, understanding the importance of education and accepting it as a necessary value. This is evidenced by the latest data of the international study of the quality of education PISA-2022, which showed that countries, such as the Republic of Singapore, the Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, are in the first places in terms of indicators [29].

In Ukraine, the value of this index is 51, which, with a maximum index of 100, is approximately half and is not low, but not high enough. For example, in some other countries with a Soviet past the index values are as follows: 24 in the Republic of Georgia, 38 in the Republic of Armenia, 51 in the Republic of Belarus, 51 in the Republic of Latvia, 71 in the Republic of Moldova, and 85 in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The index value of 51 indicates that Ukrainian culture tends to maintain a balance between short-term and long-term commitments. This indicates a willingness to invest in the future,

such as education and development, but also shows a certain dependence on immediate results and achievements.

Ukrainian culture has the potential to increase the level of long-term orientation through the implementation of policies and programs that stimulate long-term planning and perseverance in achieving goals. SEL programs can contribute to the development of long-term thinking in young people, helping them see the value of education, perseverance and planning for the future. SEL can help develop in students the skills necessary to overcome difficulties and achieve long-term goals, such as emotional resilience, self-regulation and motivation; contribute to the formation of values that support long-term orientation, such as patience, responsibility and focus on results. We believe that it is precisely the setting and support of such a vision regarding strategic goals that should help in the war and post-war times in the reconstruction of Ukraine.

The dimension of *indulgence (gratification)*, as noted by G. Hofstede, is a measure of happiness and a measure of satisfaction with the joy of life. Societies with high indexes of indulgence, such as the Kingdom of Sweden (78), the Kingdom of Denmark (70), the Kingdom of Netherlands (68), Iceland (67), are defined as those where it is quite free to satisfy basic human desires and enjoy life. Societies that value the pleasure of life are optimistic, encourage discussions and dialogue in decision-making, coaching and mentoring, and emphasize a flexible balance between work and private life. Freedom of speech is important for these societies; they focus on personal happiness and do not take life too seriously. The dimension of indulgence in Ukraine is quite low – 14. That is, it can be argued that there is a tendency towards pessimism, satisfaction with the ordinary joys of life is not sufficiently valued. Low scores on this dimension may indicate strict social norms and social control over the satisfaction of needs, which prevent people from enjoying life and expressing their emotions freely. In Ukraine, such social norms, often in the form of traditions or requirements for a person, can limit the manifestations of joy, freedom of action and self-expression, which can affect the overall feeling of happiness and well-being. SEL programs can play an important role in developing an appreciation of well-being and the joys of life in Ukraine. These programs are aimed at developing emotional literacy, which helps people better understand and express their emotions, reduce the level of pessimism and increase the overall level of life satisfaction. SEL teaches self-regulation skills, contributes to the formation of a positive emotional background and the ability to enjoy life, even in difficult circumstances. This can help change social norms and institutions, making them more lenient towards the satisfaction of needs and the expression of joy. Thus, we can draw intermediate conclusions from the study by G. Hofstede and his co-authors on Ukrainian culture. Ukrainian culture is characterized by a high degree of power distance, its perception as something superior and remote, as well as a high tendency to make fixed decisions, which is not productive in our uncertain world. As for individual goals, it is important, first of all, to develop empathy for oneself, understanding one's own goals and opportunities. Satisfaction with one's life and focus on one's own well-being are also of great importance.

The implementation of social and emotional learning programs in Ukraine can have a significant positive impact on culture, contributing to reducing power distance, stimulating adaptability, developing self-perception, and increasing the overall level of life satisfaction.

### 6.3 THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN UKRAINE THROUGH THE CHALLENGES OF WAR, SOCIAL POLARIZATION, AND THE PATH TO DEMOCRACY

he specific historical and cultural context of Ukraine certainly affects the development of the education system.

In order to better reveal the cultural context, it is necessary to pay attention to the peculiarities of the national spiritual values of the Ukrainian people, to which the scientific works of many researchers are devoted (V. Vasyutynsky, S. Krymsky, M. Boryshevsky, L. Mysiv, G. Sytnik, O. Stashevskaya, Yu. Surmin, etc.).

The culture of the Ukrainian people was formed under the influence of factors of a certain geographical environment (forest-steppe), which determined the living conditions and the associated farming traditions. For the Ukrainian people, agriculture is important as the main type of economy, and therefore a special attitude to the land and nature. The long life of the Ukrainian peasantry was determined by the calendar of agricultural work on the land. "In Ukraine, the symbolism of culture and communication with nature was brought to the idea of the third world by H. Skovoroda...", that is, the "Temple" and the shrine. In general, in the Ukrainian national culture, there is a parallelism of the depiction of nature and human life, an organic connection between the natural and the social. For a Ukrainian, the steppe is not just a geographical or ecological phenomenon, but a social ground [29].

Under the influence of specific natural and cultural circumstances, not just general values inherent in all cultures were formed, but a unique specific hierarchy of values, among which basic ones are noted, which became the basis of the national-cultural ideal and contributed to the formation of a unique national identity based on respect for nature, collectivism and spirituality. Thus, a large number of researchers in the field of philosophy and cultural studies (O. Stashevskaya, V. Khramova, I. Bychko, A. Bychko, Iu. Rymarenko, V. Tabachkovskiy, S. Krymskiy and others) consider cordocentrism to be one of the basic values of Ukrainian culture. This term, derived from the Latin word "cor" (heart), is used to describe a cultural identity that is focused on emotions, sensuality and intuition. Cordocentrism is defined in domestic research as the superiority of the sensual and existential over the rational, which expresses the dominance of the "heart" [30].

For the worldview and value consciousness of Ukrainian culture, it is characteristic to bring to the fore not the formalism of reason, but what is the root of moral life, the "heart" as a metaphor for the intimate depths of the soul. This archetype "philosophy of the heart" is revealed as the principle of individuality and "the feeling of God" (P. Yurkevich), as a microcosm, an expression of the inner man, the basis of humanity (H. Skovoroda), as a path to the ideal and harmony with nature (T. Shevchenko), as a source of hope, foreboding, providence (P. Kulish).

Given such fundamental elements of Ukrainian culture, we can argue that SEL programs are able to revive and naturally and organically strengthen the traditional context of Ukrainian culture and education (partially lost during modern times and the industrial revolution, as well as the dominance of the Soviet educational paradigm), which is based on the development of emotional sensitivity,

the cultivation of moral virtues and spiritual growth in children. Adaptation of SEL programs, including the SEE Learning program and its teaching methods, with an orientation to culturally significant elements, such as folk wisdom, literature, art and traditions, will contribute to the formation of emotional and ethical consciousness that will reflect the deep values of the Ukrainian people.

Ukraine has a long history of being under the rule of various empires, including the Russian and Austro-Hungarian. These historical periods contributed to the formation of a high power distance, where the power was perceived as something superior, distant and hostile towards Ukrainians. Thus, to a certain extent, an “inferiority” complex of the Ukrainian nation was formed, which was obsessively experienced during Ukraine’s stay in empires (primarily the Russian one).

The peculiarities of the historical background of the development of culture and education in Ukraine include historical traumas, attempts to establish statehood and the inability to maintain it, the horrors of dispossession and the Holodomor, persecution of the Ukrainian language, the tragedies of World War II – all this strengthened the tradition of authoritarian rule and distrust of government institutions. It is also necessary to remember the Resistance and the struggle of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) against the Soviet authorities during the war and post-war period, the persecution of Ukrainian dissidents.

Historical events, such as the struggle for independence, revolutions and wars, have shaped Ukrainians' *striving to achieve long-term goals*. Thus, on the basis of the historical context, such cultural features as persistence in achieving the goal of creating an independent state were formed in a certain way. At the same time, agricultural activity, which determined the lives of many generations, also contributed to the formation of long-term planning. The average level of long-term orientation (according to G. Hofstede's measurements) in Ukraine indicates a certain balance between the desire for immediate results and strategic planning for the future.

Despite the large number of historical traumas, scientists note that Ukrainians have managed to preserve and carry through social traits such as a characteristic as *optimism* [31]. This is one of the significant values of Ukrainian culture, which permeates all stages of Ukrainian history. It is likely that it was thanks to it that Ukrainian culture was able to survive in the terrible conditions of statelessness.

Ukrainian society has always had strong collectivist traits, which were reflected in culture, customs and way of life. In science, this value is designated as the “*solidarity*” of the Ukrainian people, emphasizing that it ensures integration in society and interaction between people [32]. This collectivist characteristic is deeply rooted in the culture and customs of Ukrainians, manifesting itself in various spheres of life: from family relations to public initiatives and volunteer movements. Responsibility to the community, mutual support and cooperation are basic principles that contribute to strengthening social ties and harmony. Such traits help society maintain unity and resilience in difficult times, and also create a positive moral climate where people feel part of a greater whole. Solidarity among Ukrainians is also evident in historical moments when the people united to achieve common goals, protect independence, and uphold cultural identity. This collectivist tradition is also an important factor in the formation of a national identity based on mutual understanding, trust, and shared values.

The collective farm system, forcibly introduced during the Soviet era, was formally supposed to strengthen collectivist values, but at the level of everyday life and interpersonal relations, individualism, which manifested itself through the desire for personal freedom and will, developed in contrast to forced collectivism. “Freedom is such a fundamental thing in our lives that we value it only when it is taken away from us. And the search for freedom and the struggle for it – and against various oppressions – is perhaps the most irritating force on earth. It is it that transformed freedom from a value of the Ukrainian people into its national mission”, writes researcher M. Rai [33].

In scientific studies, *individualism* is defined as the most essential feature of Ukrainian existence (V. Andrushchenko, A. Bidenko, V. Bogdanov, M. Boychenko, O. Donchenko, V. Ishchuk, N. Karaulna, V. Kremen, S. Krymskyi, V. Krysachenko, S. Kyseliov, O. Koval, O. Korkh, N. Latyhina, V. Liakh, M. Mykhalchenko, S. Naumkina, M. Pavlovskyi, I. Pytailo, M. Prymush, D. Chyzhevskyi, etc.). O. Remenets notes that Ukrainian individualism manifests itself only when it develops into personalism – a way of relating to the world, in which the value of the person does not deny the significance of the surrounding social life [29]. This also correlates with the average dimension of “individualism/collectivism” by G. Hofstede for Ukraine.

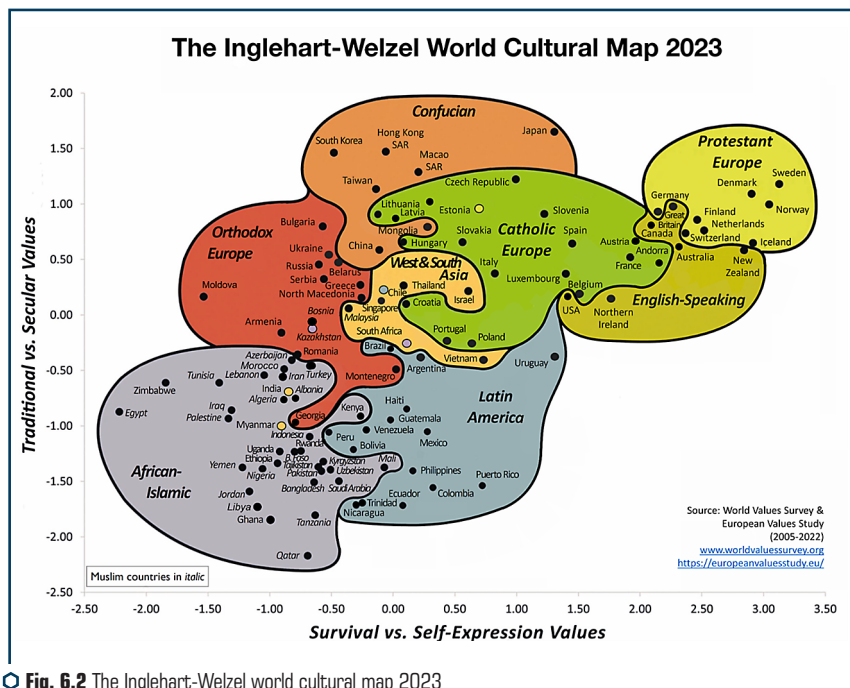
As we can see, Ukrainian history is rich in periods of political and economic instability. The feeling of danger and unpredictability that accompanied different historical eras formed a high level of *uncertainty avoidance* in society. Therefore, it is likely that the high level of this dimension (according to G. Hofstede) is explained by the fact that Ukrainians try to avoid risks and unpredictable situations, preferring clear rules and stability. This also affects the education system, where clear and structured teaching methods traditionally dominate.

*Worldview tolerance* also expresses the ability of the Ukrainian people to adopt the mental guidelines of other peoples and their cultures into their culture. Tolerance is an unconditional value in conditions of socio-cultural pluralism, in a society of competing interests, sometimes colored by national or confessional intolerance.

Another important aspect of Ukrainian culture is the ongoing challenges of building a young democracy following the restoration of independence. These challenges include the detrimental effects of multi-vector policies and prolonged uncertainty about the need to join the European Union and develop democracy. For a long time, the education system of independent Ukraine remained post-Soviet, which could not but affect the general development of society and, accordingly, the cultural context.

After gaining independence, Ukraine gradually reformed its education system, trying to move away from Soviet practices and introduce new approaches that would meet modern European standards. Educational reforms contributed to the democratization of the educational process, where students received more opportunities for self-expression and participation in decision-making. The new education system began to pay more attention to individual development, independence and creativity of students, which reflects the growth of individualistic tendencies in society. The introduction of more flexible programs, innovative methods and project-based learning helps to reduce the fear of the unknown and promote the development of critical thinking and adaptability.

The religious context is one of the components of culture, which in a certain way affects the processes of development or stagnation of countries. An analysis of the general trends in the prevalence of religious movements in the world indicates a connection between the religious context and the level of socio-economic development of countries [34] (Fig. 6.2). At the same time, we do not try to apply an evaluative approach to the "usefulness" of a particular religious movement in a socio-economic context. However, in our opinion, it is productive to trace the influence of traditional priorities and values of peoples, which arose on the basis of religious ideas, on the understanding of the success and well-being of a person and a country and on the construction of an appropriate educational system in it.



**Fig. 6.2** The Inglehart-Welzel world cultural map 2023

Source: [34]

The most prosperous and democratic countries in Europe (the Kingdom of Denmark, Iceland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of Norway, the Swiss Confederation, Kingdom of Sweden) are mainly Christian ones, and among the currents of Christianity, these are countries where Protestantism prevails. They are known for their strong economies, high levels of education, developed social security systems and stable political institutions. One of the possible factors of the prosperity of these countries is religious ethics and traditions, which emphasize the



importance of hard work, thrift and individual responsibility and social justice, which contributes to the development of social security systems. "As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, the classic of sociology M. Weber, in his work "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," tried to analyze the influence of Protestantism on the formation of capitalist relations and proved that it was the Protestant ethic that gave impetus to the development of capitalism. The impact of classical Protestantism on economic growth requires a comprehensive analysis of the reasons for the impact of work ethics on the economy in order to build a mature civil society in Ukraine," writes Ukrainian researcher K. Teteriatnykov [35]. The education system in such countries stimulates innovation and scientific research, in particular in the field of SEL, which contributes to economic growth and social well-being.

Countries where Orthodoxy is predominantly practiced (the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, Ukraine) are less economically and socially developed than countries where the Western Christian branch prevails.

It should be emphasized that within the Orthodox societies that were subject to the influence of the communist regime, such as the Ukrainian one, there are cultural and religious features, associated with the predominance of survival values, characterized by an ethnocentric worldview, preservation of traditions, low levels of trust and tolerance, which was largely a consequence of the political and social conditions of the communist era [34]. The formation of the value system of the peoples of these countries was influenced, among other things, by historical periods of political instability, external influences and conflicts, which negatively affected their economic and social development. Some of these countries had or still have authoritarian regimes, which hinder economic reforms and democratization, slow down or even distort their development. The lack of state investment in modern educational technologies and infrastructure leads to lower competitiveness of graduates in the global labor market.

Regarding the Ukrainian context, it can be noted that at certain moments Orthodox religious traditions could restrain the social growth and democratic development of the country, because, as K. Teteriatnykov notes, a certain religious worldview can both stimulate and hinder the process of social transformation. The scientist emphasizes that Ukraine "needs a religious impetus", because, according to him, "at the moment Ukrainian society, although it considers itself an Orthodox society, in fact is so only nominally" [35]. Since traditionally Ukrainian society associated itself mainly with Orthodox values, the importance of pan-European ethical principles was often overlooked. Only when faced with the challenges of socio-political choice and European integration processes Ukrainians begin to realize the significance of these principles. After all, the desire to live by European standards, without a deep understanding of the key ethical foundations of civil society, makes it difficult to achieve the necessary level of social transformations and reforms [35]. Moreover, it is worth considering that the religious context as a component of culture plays a certain role in the formation of the country's educational system and can influence the processes of implementation and dissemination of international innovative educational products, including SEL programs.

Taking into account the features of the Ukrainian cultural context that we have studied, we note that SEL programs, on the one hand, correspond to the cultural context of Ukraine and organically fit into it, on the other hand, they are capable of changing educational activities in a certain way, and possibly influencing the cultural background of educational activities in Ukraine. Thus, taking into account the features and challenges of the NUS competency reform in Ukraine and the results of the five-year implementation of the SEE Learning program in the domestic territories, we can argue that social and emotional learning can become an important tool for the further development of education and, most likely, will have an impact on the democratic progress of Ukrainian society as a whole. The SEE Learning program fits well into Ukrainian culture, which historically has strong collectivist features. The program focuses on the development of empathy, emotional sensitivity and social skills, supports the “values of the heart” inherent in Ukrainian culture; strengthens the traditions of mutual assistance and solidarity in society. This allows students to better interact with each other, ensures the creation of an empathetic environment where equality, empathy and social interaction are important.

The facilitatory approach to teaching SEE Learning and formative assessment of learning outcomes contributes to the democratization of the educational process, reducing the power distance between teachers and students, encourages the active participation of students in learning, develops their independence and critical thinking, which helps to reduce the traditional authoritarian approach to education.

The SEE Learning program ensures the development of adaptability and flexibility in children, helping them to cultivate resilience and self-reliance in times of war. Teaching social-emotional skills and the presence of an ethical component allows students to feel more confident in unpredictable situations, which is important in the modern world.

#### 6.4 THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL CONTEXT ON THE REQUIREMENTS OF MODERN UKRAINIAN SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Currently, in Ukrainian society and the education system, which is changing under the influence of the New Ukrainian School competency reform, there is a great need for the development of social and emotional skills of educators and students. Social and emotional skills are individual abilities, traits and characteristics that can be developed throughout life, which are important for a person's well-being, academic success, competitiveness in the labor market, active citizenship, social relations and cohesion, and include behavioral models, internal state, approaches to task performance, the ability to manage actions, understand emotional states and master them, ideas about oneself and the world, which are embodied in a person's relationships with the environment [36].

L. Hrynevych notes that the NUS reform shifted the focus of the educational process to “values: moral and ethical (dignity, honesty, justice, care, respect for life, respect for oneself and other people), socio-political (freedom, democracy, cultural diversity, respect for one's native language

and culture, patriotism, respectful attitude towards the environment, respect for the law, solidarity, responsibility). After all, reliance on values is the key to successful self-realization of a person and prosperity and interaction in society. This can be realized in life, in particular, with the tools of social and emotional learning” [37].

The NUS values are closely intertwined with social and emotional skills in the movement to build an ethical foundation for human behavior and interaction in society. Social and emotional skills, such as perseverance, responsibility, self-control, stress resistance, control over emotions, optimism, sociability, curiosity, creativity, tolerance, empathy, trust, help a person implement the formed values in everyday life.

It is known that the education system traditionally shows inertia in responding to socio-cultural transformations. There is a noticeable time lag between the evolution of social needs and the corresponding adaptation of educational programs. This dissonance indicates the conservative nature of education, which often fails to keep up with the dynamic changes in the macrosociety. At the same time, we can confidently state that the public demand for the development of social and emotional skills through the education system will continue to grow in view of the war and post-war development of Ukraine. The profound changes that have occurred and continue to occur in society and education will require the development of such skills as emotional regulation and stress resistance, systemic and critical thinking and adaptability, ethical awareness and civic responsibility. This will be facilitated by the need to cope with the huge number of victims of military actions, the return of traumatized (physically and psychologically) defenders, and the huge need for cohesion in the reconstruction of the country and joint work for this. Obviously, society will face such challenges as the spread of post-traumatic stress disorder among the military and civilian population, the problem of adaptation of those who have returned from abroad, as well as the need to overcome deep social gaps, caused by the war, including the loss of housing and loved ones. A breakdown in ethical norms and an increase in aggression in society are also possible. Solving these problems will require focusing the education system on developing communication skills, cooperation, empathy and tolerance, which are necessary for building strong social ties and creating a favorable climate in communities, forming ethical values and respect for other people.

The results of educational activities that graduates need for personal fulfillment and life success throughout their lives and that are needed by the state and employers – key competencies, consistent with cross-cutting skills, such as: critical thinking, the ability to solve problems, assess risks and make decisions, constructively manage emotions, apply emotional intelligence, and collaborate in a team – are set out in the Concept of the New Ukrainian School [37] and the analytical report “Teaching and Learning: How and Where to Grow for Ukrainian Teachers” [38]. Such learning outcomes well reflect important changes in the educational process consistent with modern global trends.

To a large extent, similar competencies and cross-cutting skills are also reflected in the professional standards of teachers and managers of various categories. For example, in the professional standard for the professions “Primary school teacher of a general secondary education institution,” “Teacher of a general secondary education institution,” “Primary education teacher (with a junior

specialist diploma)” there are GC.02 “Ability to interact interpersonally, work in a team, communicate with representatives of other professional groups of different levels (social competency)” and GC.04 “Ability to make effective decisions in professional activities and to take a responsible attitude to duties, motivate people to achieve a common goal (leadership competency)” [40]. It is worth mentioning separately the appearance of emotional-ethical competency (B2) in the teacher professional standard, which reflects social and emotional skills. Emotional-ethical competency includes: B2.1 – the ability to be aware of personal feelings, affections and emotions, needs, and to manage one’s own emotional states; B2.2 – the ability to interact constructively and safely with participants in the educational process; B2.3 – the ability to recognize and appreciate the interdependence of people and systems in the global world [40].

Such requirements for teacher training and activities will certainly contribute to the implementation of social and emotional learning in the educational process, and, as a result, the creation of an empathetic environment in educational institutions that encourages cooperation, mutual respect and emotional development of students. This, in turn, has a positive impact on academic performance and the overall well-being of all participants in the educational process, contributing to overcoming educational losses and gaps.

The cultural context, discussed in detail in the previous sections, largely determines which social and emotional skills are considered necessary and require active development, and which are not yet widely accepted in Ukrainian culture and, accordingly, education. In addition, the coherence of the Ukrainian cultural and educational context with the values and skills, embedded in SEL programs, is confirmed by the example of one of the most recognized and widespread programs in the world – SEE Learning, during the pilot survey “Cultural Context of the SEE Learning Program in Ukraine” of 43 teachers from 24 schools who participated in the all-Ukrainian experiment on its implementation (February–March 2024). Such a survey was conceived as a pilot in a series of long-term studies that will assess the impact of social and emotional learning programs on student learning and teaching in Ukraine and provide an in-depth study of the process of developing social and emotional skills in different cultural and social contexts, understanding the specific needs and challenges that may arise in individual cultures or regions, and how best to adapt social and emotional learning programs to these conditions.

The survey participants characterized the coincidence of Ukrainian cultural accents and the main ideas and practices of the SEE Learning program as follows: “*The SEE Learning program does not contradict the culture and religion of Ukraine*” and even “*...widely promotes the values of Ukrainian culture.*” According to the surveyed educators, the SEE Learning program reflected such important aspects of Ukrainian culture as kindness, mutual assistance, respect for traditions and the native language, etc.

During the survey, 31 people (72 %) noted that in the process of teaching the SEE Learning program, they did not encounter concepts that they personally found difficult to perceive, given Ukrainian culture and their own understanding of these concepts. 1 person (2 %) found the SEE Learning program partially understandable. 11 people (26 %) gave specific examples of concepts

that are not always perceived unambiguously in the current context of the war in Ukraine, such as: “compassion,” “kindness, love and compassion towards some of those around them (enemies),” as well as traditionally less common and insufficiently taken into account in the culture definitions “awareness, understanding of oneself and one’s feelings and emotions,” “body literacy.” It turned out that one of the challenges was to convey to children that “...first of all, there should be self love, because their interaction with others depends on this.” In the cultural context where collective values and self-sacrifice are often emphasized, it was difficult for children to understand the importance of self-acceptance and self-respect as the basis for healthy relationships with others. Although the teaching staff understands that the development of this skill, which is an important aspect of the SEE Learning programs, is fundamental for the formation of a stable, self-sufficient personality capable of effectively confronting the challenges of wartime.

So, as we can see, there are social and emotional skills that require more attention and development in the conditions of Ukrainian education, since they are not so deeply integrated into the public consciousness and until a certain time were almost not supported by culture, which also affected their importance in the education system. The attitude towards them changed with the NUS competency-based reform in Ukraine, because today scientific research and the experience of countries with a high level of socio-economic well-being prove that these skills are important and necessary for the future development of citizens.

Understanding the degree of coincidence of certain skills with the Ukrainian cultural context should become the basis for the integration of international SEL programs and the development of approaches to their organic implementation in the educational process. This is what will ensure the harmonious development of the individual within the framework of the national culture and the adaptation of the Ukrainian educational system to modern challenges.

Using comparative analysis, we have identified three groups of social and emotional skills of a person, which to varying degrees correspond to the cultural context of Ukraine and the requirements of modern Ukrainian society for the results of educational activities. For comparison, 40 frameworks of social and emotional skills (a framework is a set of key competencies that contribute to social progress and individual development [41]) were taken, which were created by various organizations in different countries of the world and presented in the well-known study of the SEL frameworks of the EASEL laboratory of Harvard University [42]. In some frameworks, social and emotional skills are presented in the classical sense, in some as combinations called “skill components” or “competencies”. A skill is designated in this way if several of its “components” are presented in the framework with a detailed explanation of what it consists of. Thus, the same social and emotional skill can be called a skill in one framework, and a competency in another. To avoid confusion, we will use the generalized designation “competency/skill” or social and emotional skill:

**1. The first group** – *social and emotional competencies/skills that are consonant with the Ukrainian cultural context* – is the most numerous, but not homogeneous. These social and emotional skills are integrated, albeit to varying degrees, into the national culture and education system of Ukraine, and are mainly recognized and supported in Ukrainian society, they naturally fit into

existing social norms and behavioral models. Among such skills: persistence, empathy, the ability to cooperate and support others.

For example, the competency/skill “*persistence*,” which is reflected in several SEL frameworks, corresponds to the domestic cultural context in the sense of significance in achieving the set goal and overcoming difficulties on this path. This competency is defined by the authors of the IRC Social and Emotional Learning Competencies framework as “a set of skills that enable one to overcome difficulties and continue working towards a realistic goal” [42]. In the world-renowned OECD framework, perseverance is defined as consistency, persistence, and endurance in completing tasks and activities until they are completed.

A common one within the framework of social and emotional skills is “*achievement motivation*,” which is mentioned in the list of skills, interrelated with “*persistence*.” Achievement orientation is defined by the OECD as “the ability to set high standards for oneself and work hard to meet them”.

It should be noted that “persistence” and “achievement motivation” as separately defined competencies are not presented in the NUS Concept, nor are they present in the SEE Learning framework, although “persistence” is mentioned in the methodological materials and its development is actually supported by the program [43]. Despite this, the integration of these social and emotional skills into the national educational process is actually taking place in the NUS reform movement and is a natural process that is close to the Ukrainian cultural context. Such integration, in particular, is ensured by the creation of an educational environment that supports and motivates children to overcome the challenges and difficulties they face. This can largely be ensured by implementing SEL programs, including SEE Learning, which are based on a facilitatory approach to learning and effectively contribute to the formation of resilience and the ability to achieve their goals in students, which is important not only for academic success, but also for later life.

The Ukrainian cultural context organically corresponds to the skill of “*compassion*,” although the more common term within the framework of social and emotional skills is “*empathy*.” Empathy is presented, for example, in the UNICEF MENA Life Skills and Citizenship Education – Conceptual and Programmatic Framework. The essence of this skill is revealed as follows: “the ability to understand the feelings of another and relive them yourself, while never judging.”

In Ukrainian culture, this term was rather attributed to the field of psychology and began to be used in the educational context relatively recently, often associating it with compassion, kindness, and humanism. Participants in the survey “Cultural Context of the SEE Learning Program in Ukraine” note that the concept of “*empathy*” is close to them precisely in this associative connection. One of the teachers, expressing her understanding, emphasized that the concept of “*empathy*” is identical to the Ukrainian concepts of kindness and compassion, which are key in the SEE Learning program: “*Kindness is manifested in sincere and kind feelings, a humane attitude towards people, which is the main value of Ukrainian culture.*”

It is worth noting that in the SEE Learning program, the concept of “*empathy*” is given precisely in such a broad context through compassion and willingness to help others, which is based on understanding the feelings and emotions of others in the context, paying attention to the reality shared with others, appreciating and cultivating various ethical institutions. In the SEE Learning

program, compassion is defined as “attitude towards oneself, others and humanity as a whole through the prism of goodness, empathy and attention to positive emotions and suffering” [43].

It should be noted that the use of the category of “compassion” that is natural for the social consciousness of Ukrainians in close connection with the definition of “empathy” that is less close to the Ukrainian cultural context causes a certain disorientation among teachers and students. One of the respondents to the survey “Cultural Context of the SEE Learning Program in Ukraine” cites one of the situations from the SEE Learning materials, on the example of which students should analyze the concept of “empathy.” The teacher notes that the children did not understand the emotions of the hero of the situation – their peer, because he did not voice them, which raised the question: *“Why didn’t he directly say that he did not want to participate in the event? How could others understand his feelings when he did not even voice them?”* This example shows that it is difficult for students to understand the concept of empathy. Although in general they were ready to show compassion and support the boy if he had said so.

In our opinion, this indicates the need for a clearer and more understandable explanation of these concepts at the teacher level and the development of strategies for communicating them to students. It may be worth including additional examples in the SEE Learning methodological materials that would better reflect the Ukrainian context and be more understandable for students. In addition, it is important to teach children to recognize and express their emotions, so that they can better understand the emotions of others and develop empathy. It is important that teachers have sufficient resources and methodological materials to effectively explain these important skills.

Analyzing G. Hofstede’s classification of cultures and the historical and cultural context of Ukraine, we saw that in the domestic culture, along with empathy and compassion, the ability to cooperate and support others is valued, which is present in one form or another in many SEL frameworks. Thus, the EU NESET Framework for Social and Emotional Education contains the skill *“social awareness,”* which is formulated as follows, “students are able to look at others and empathize with others, as well as recognize and value individual and group similarities and differences, diversity and social inclusion. They have a sense of connection and belonging to a community. They are able to seek out and appropriately use family, school and community resources in an age-appropriate manner. They demonstrate pro-social values and behaviors and are motivated to contribute to the well-being of their schools and communities. They also value and care for the physical environment.”

In the SEE Learning framework, *“helping others”* is presented as a separate skill in the component “Relationship Skills.” The survey notes that for Ukrainians it is customary to help others, care for them, “innate” solidarity. One of the respondents notes that this is one of the values of Ukrainian culture. Another respondent expressed the following opinion, *“People of our mentality do good deeds sincerely, and would never ask ‘What will happen to me if I help?’”*

In the group of skills that align with the Ukrainian cultural context, we can also see those whose content is interpreted very closely to national traditions. At the same time, they are sometimes perceived through the lens of traditions and even prejudices existing in society, which is most often explained by terminological controversies. For example, the skill of *“social recognition”* in the CASEL

framework is defined as “the ability to look at and empathize with other people, including people of different backgrounds and cultures, the ability to understand social and ethical norms of behavior and recognize resources and support from family, school and community” [42].

It is obvious that such a skill is consistent with the values of Ukrainian culture, such as tolerance, compassion, cooperation. It is important to adaptively translate these skills and explain to teachers their meaning and the benefits of applying them in practice. This will allow teachers to better understand how to integrate these skills into the educational process, which in turn will contribute to the development of a harmonious and adaptive personality. It will also help teachers to more effectively use social and emotional learning methods, taking into account the peculiarities of Ukrainian culture and context, which will significantly increase the effectiveness of the educational process and support students in their personal development.

The coherence of these and many other social and emotional skills with the Ukrainian cultural context allows adapting international practices to Ukrainian realities, increasing their effectiveness in the educational process, preparing for life as citizens. Such an approach will ensure greater compliance of educational programs with the needs and expectations of society, making education more relevant and practical.

In addition, taking into account the cultural context increases the acceptance and support of new educational initiatives among teachers, students and the parent community, which, in turn, contributes to the successful implementation of SEL in Ukrainian schools. This makes the educational process more harmonious and promotes the development of children in accordance with the cultural and social realities of their environment.

**2. The second group** is *social and emotional skills, which have certain similarities with the Ukrainian cultural context*. These skills require active development and support in the educational process. They are important for adapting to modern challenges and strengthening social cohesion but may not be fully integrated into the Ukrainian cultural context. Effective communication and conflict resolution, responsibility, critical thinking, etc. can be identified among such skills.

As mentioned above, Ukrainian culture emphasizes the importance of kindness, compassion, and mutual assistance. These values contribute to the development of effective communication skills, since communication with others is based on respect, empathy, and a willingness to understand and support each other. However, in Ukrainian culture, the skill of “conflict resolution” is not sufficiently developed due to historical, cultural, educational, and social factors. Ukraine still retains patriarchal customs that can contribute to resolving conflicts using authoritarian methods.

Although the Ukrainian education system is gradually introducing elements of social-emotional learning, traditionally schools have paid more attention to academic achievements than to the development of conflict resolution skills. This may limit children’s opportunities to learn constructive methods of resolving them.

This is a certain challenge for the education system, which positions the importance of students acquiring social and civic competency and its component – “skills to prevent and resolve conflicts, to reach compromises,” which is enshrined in the Concept of NUS [38].



This skill/competency is widely represented in the EASEL Lab's social and emotional skills framework at Harvard University. For example, the IRC Social and Emotional Learning Competencies framework defines the "*conflict resolution*" competency as "a set of skills that help to positively resolve problems and conflicts between people when they arise."

Such valuable social and emotional skills should be developed in school because they are very important in today's globalized world. As is the skill of "*responsibility*," which is represented in nine out of forty social and emotional skills frameworks, including such widely recognized ones as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development framework, where this skill is viewed as "the ability to fulfill commitments, demonstrate punctuality, and dependability." In the Developmental Assets (12–18) framework, this skill is similarly labeled "the young person accepts and takes personal responsibility." It should be noted that the skill of "*responsibility*" is not sufficiently represented in the cultural context, although it is very important in terms of building a democratic society.

The Singapore Framework for 21CC and Student Outcomes states that a responsible person is aware of his/her duty to himself/herself, his/her family, his/her community, his/her nation and the world, and fulfills his/her duties with love and dedication. The Kenya TVET Values and Life Skills (Vali) framework emphasizes that responsible learners are those who are able to realize their role and functions and actively fulfill them to the best of their ability, including taking care of personal property, fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities at home, at school and in the wider society. This emphasizes the importance of individual responsibility in different contexts and levels of social interaction, proclaims a systemic approach to the development of responsibility, where each individual understands his/her place in the system and actively fulfills his/her duties, contributing to the common good.

The USAID YouthPower Action Key Soft Skills for Cross-Sectoral Youth Outcomes framework shows another aspect of this skill. Responsibility is defined as:

- 1) the ability of a person to understand their role (in a specific context, i.e. at home, at school, at work, in relationships) and to reliably perform the tasks, associated with this role;
- 2) the belief that their choices and actions can influence events in their lives and lead to positive outcomes.

The importance of this skill is reflected in the NUS Concept already at the goal-setting level, which states: "Educated Ukrainians, comprehensively developed, *responsible* citizens and patriots, capable of taking risks and innovating, are who will lead the Ukrainian economy forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" [38].

Responsibility in the NUS Concept is presented not only as a skill, but also as one of the socio-political values, along with freedom, democracy, cultural diversity, respect for the native language and culture, patriotism, respectful attitude towards the environment, respect for the law, solidarity, which are aimed at in the educational process. In our opinion, the development of this skill will significantly influence the cultural background of Ukrainian society in the sense of strengthening democratic traditions through the education system.

We can argue that "*responsibility*" is closely related to "*citizenship*," since both competencies/skills contribute to the formation of conscious and active citizens who are able to interact effectively

in society. Responsibility involves making personal decisions and actions taking into account the consequences, which is the foundation for the development of civic consciousness. Citizenship, in turn, includes a sense of duty to society and participation in the community, which is impossible without a responsible attitude to one's actions and decisions.

The skill "*citizenship*" is disclosed in the Kenya BECF Core Competencies for Basic Education framework as follows: "it is a state endowed with the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a citizen, it creates a sense of belonging and friendliness to one's nation, a sense of citizenship helps young people to skillfully and tolerantly cope with a situation of conflict and disagreement, they are able to understand the consequences of their actions and the actions of the adults around them." It should be noted that such an understanding of the essence of this skill, consistent with the Ukrainian context, is reflected in the framework, developed in the country, which has also outlined its movement towards democratic transformations.

Interestingly, in the Singapore Framework for 21CC and Student Outcomes, developed by the Ministry of Education of Singapore, this competency is also presented in a comprehensive form as "civic literacy, global awareness and intercultural skills." This indicates the universal significance of this competency, regardless of socio-economic differences between countries. This emphasizes the importance of civic skills for the development of sustainable and cohesive societies, where each citizen understands his or her role and actively participates in community life.

It is important to note that "*citizenship*" is also presented among the 10 key competencies of the New Ukrainian School in the form of social and civic competency [38], which is fundamental for maintaining social stability, democratic processes and the common well-being of the country.

The skill of "*critical thinking*" is also important for life in a democratic society, as it ensures awareness, active participation of citizens, protection from manipulation, and contributes to the sustainable development of society as a whole. This skill is underrepresented in the Ukrainian cultural context for several reasons, including cultural characteristics, historical context, and the influence of the Soviet period. This can also be explained through the prism of G. Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, according to which Ukrainian culture is characterized by a high level of uncertainty avoidance. This means that society tends to avoid ambiguity and unpredictable situations. Critical thinking, which encourages doubt, questioning, and seeking alternatives, may conflict with the cultural tendency toward stability and predictability. Critical thinking, which involves questioning authorities and established rules, may not be as widespread in cultures with high power distance, such as Ukraine.

The NUS Concept clearly reflects the need of Ukrainian society for the development of critical thinking. Critical thinking is defined among the key competencies and cross-cutting skills. A NUS graduate is considered a holistic personality, comprehensively developed, capable of critical thinking.

In the Employability Skills framework, the "*critical thinking*" skill is described as follows: "the student demonstrates analytical and strategic thinking. This can be seen in discussing an issue, achieving understanding, evaluating a problem, and asking questions."

It should be noted that critical thinking requires an ethical approach devoid of prejudice. Incorrect or unethical use of critical thinking can lead to manipulation or a negative impact on other

people. The formation of such thinking in students involves not only the development of analytical abilities, but also the formation of respect for the opinions of other people, even if they contradict personal opinion. This requires a combination of critical and system thinking to solve problems, as is offered in the SEE Learning program, for example. These skills in complex help individuals not only analyze their emotions and behavior but also understand how these aspects interact with the broader social and cultural context, contributing to more effective and harmonious functioning in society.

System thinking focuses on understanding how different parts of a system interact with each other, and how changes in one part of the system can affect other parts. System thinking helps people see the connections between their actions and consequences and understand how their emotions and behaviors affect their environment and the overall dynamics of social situations. This enhances the development of critical thinking. Critical thinking helps individuals become aware of their own emotions and thoughts, as well as recognize and evaluate the influence of other people on their emotions and behaviors. It promotes the development of self-regulation and awareness skills.

Critical thinking allows you to analyze specific situations in detail and evaluate different factors. System thinking helps you understand how these factors interact in a larger context. For example, when resolving a conflict between peers, critical thinking can help you consider the causes of the conflict, and system thinking can help you understand how this conflict will affect relationships in the group.

In SEE Learning, both types of thinking are combined to develop skills that help people communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and manage their emotions in difficult situations. For example, in teaching self-regulation skills, critical thinking can help students evaluate their emotional responses, and system thinking can help them understand how these responses affect their relationships and the environment [43].

**3. The third group** is *social and emotional skills, which are not yet widely accepted or widespread in our culture* and need greater popularization and implementation, as they ensure the success and well-being of a person in the modern world. Thus, the implementation of such concepts as, for example, “self-acceptance and a positive attitude towards oneself”, “the ability to manage stress and emotional state” may encounter resistance due to cultural characteristics and traditions. The presence of such concepts was also confirmed by the results of the survey “Cultural context of the SEE Learning program in Ukraine,” during which social and emotional skills were identified, for example, emotion management, body literacy, bodily sensations, which turned out to be less acceptable or incomprehensible to teachers and students. We consider this group of skills as those that require some development in the context of Ukrainian culture.

The forced imposition of collectivism and suppression of individuality during the Soviet era of Ukrainian history led to the fact that issues of a positive attitude towards oneself, nurturing selfhood and individuality were unacceptable and even condemned, primarily in the education system. This is rooted at the level of everyday educational practices and can hinder the development of students' social and emotional skills and their personality in general. A teacher from a school implementing SEE LEARNING illustrated this as follows: “We are used to helping others, caring about

*others, and putting our own interests aside. I consider this to be one of the values of our culture. We have an “innate” solidarity, and children perceive caring for themselves as selfishness.”*

Instead, SEL programs contain significant potential for the development of individuality, without interfering with collectivism. Such programs provide for the development of emotional intelligence, self-reflection and self-regulation skills, which are key for realizing one's own goals and capabilities, and also help students learn to interact with others, supporting a culture of mutual respect and cooperation against the background of the development of individuality, which is the foundation of a democratic society.

Thus, the website of the EASEL laboratory at Harvard University presents a number of skills, aimed at cultivating individuality, including, for example, self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-awareness, and stress resistance.

*Self-knowledge* is interpreted as the ability to identify and understand personality/character traits, one's interests and preferences, one's strengths and weaknesses; to be honest with oneself, and to maintain a stable and consistent understanding of one's own identity and roles in different situations over time. The skill of self-knowledge is a reliable basis for the development of students' self-esteem.

*Self-esteem* is interpreted within the framework of social and emotional skills quite broadly, in particular, as belonging, a sense of one's own worth in society, showing kindness and understanding towards oneself (e.g., self-compassion, emotional self-respect, etc.), forgiving oneself for mistakes (e.g., accepting past actions and moving on with life). This skill is also based on understanding the impact of risky behavior (e.g., drug use, alcohol, tobacco, unprotected sex, etc.) on one's body and using this information to make responsible choices. Such an emphasis is extremely relevant for preventive work among today's adolescents, as is the emphasis on positive self-esteem. The Hilton & Pellegrino 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competency Clusters framework even designates this skill as “positive core self-esteem” – self-regulation (self-control, self-esteem, self-reinforcement), physical and psychological health.

The development of individualism, combined with respect for the collective, is an important task for Ukrainians in the modern context, which can be realized by increasing the awareness of teachers and students about their own individuality, interests and goals through education and self-education. By developing their interests and knowledge, people can understand themselves and determine their role in society. We believe that SEL programs will help Ukrainians develop individuality, while maintaining the importance of collective values and norms, which is essential for a harmonious society.

Within the framework of social and emotional learning programs, self-awareness is one of the key skills that help students better understand themselves, their emotions and their own strengths. Self-awareness includes several important aspects, including the ability to recognize and identify their emotions, understand how they affect behavior and interaction with others. Thanks to this, students master bodily self-help practices, learn to analyze their actions, thoughts and feelings, evaluate their successes and mistakes as an element of emotional literacy. The development

of self-awareness helps students not only better understand themselves, but also more effectively interact with others, which is an important component of successful socio-emotional development. This contributes to the formation of self-confidence and the ability to cope with challenges and stresses.

The SEE Learning framework includes a “self-regulation” component, consisting of three skills: balancing the body, cognitive and impulse control, and navigating emotions.

Cognitive and impulse control as the skill of “maintaining attention on an object, task or experience, avoiding distraction” is more understandable to Ukrainian teachers and students. Because “attention” as an important student skill is traditionally valued in the Ukrainian education system, although it is understood mainly declaratively.

At the same time, a deep understanding of the basis of this skill, which is provided by the body and emotional literacy of students, is not always perceived by Ukrainian teachers. Instead, all three skills are presented in a complex in the SEE Learning program. “Balancing the body” (body literacy) is understood as the skill of regulating the body and nervous system, especially during activation, stress or lack of energy, in order to optimize well-being, and “navigating emotions” (emotional literacy) is understood as the skill of responding constructively to impulses and emotions and developing behavior and attitudes that contribute to long-term well-being. The ability to constructively manage emotions, apply emotional intelligence is also among the cross-cutting skills of the NUS [38], which emphasizes the importance of these skills in Ukrainian education.

Difficulties in understanding emotional and especially body literacy were noted by the interviewed SEE Learning teachers. Thus, among the concepts that were difficult for them to perceive, given the Ukrainian culture and their own understanding, they often mentioned those practices that ensure the development of the skill of “body balancing”, such as: “tracking bodily sensations”, “grounding”, “resourcefulness”, “awareness, understanding of oneself and one’s feelings and emotions.”

At the same time, the teachers were convinced that in the current conditions of Ukraine, the skills that form the basis of self-regulation are critically important for supporting the stress resistance of students and educators. They allow them to maintain body and mental balance, make thoughtful decisions and manage emotions, which are key aspects of successfully overcoming stressful situations.

Stress resistance is an important component of social and emotional learning and is represented in many social and emotional skills frameworks. The skill “*stress resistance*” is defined in the ACT Holistic Framework as “the degree, to which a person can control feelings of anxiety and other negative emotions in order to function effectively in a variety of situations”. A similar skill, “stress management”, is present in the Building Blocks for Learning framework and is formulated as “the sustained change in cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as burdensome or exceed a person’s resources.”

The skill of stress resistance is particularly important in times of war for student learning, as students face numerous challenges that affect their emotional and psychological well-being. In war-time, developing the ability to cope with stress becomes critical to maintaining well-being.

However, in the cultural context of Ukraine, this skill has not previously received due attention, which is partly due to the neglect of personal experiences of a person and the dominance of traditional approaches in education, which emphasize academic learning to the detriment of individual needs. In Ukrainian culture, individual self-regulation strategies have always remained unappreciated. Given modern realities, the introduction of stress-resistance skills into the curriculum is necessary. This will not only contribute to the emotional stability of students but also increase their ability to adapt to difficult life circumstances. It can be argued that the skill of stress-resistance is especially important now in wartime, but in the cultural context it has not been given much attention.

As part of the survey “Cultural Context of the SEE Learning Program in Ukraine,” assessing the difficulties in the perception of certain concepts by students, respondents noted several main reasons. Thus, mentor explanations in Ukrainian schools are usually used in teaching, while the SEE Learning program requires students to understand and make their own conclusions independently. That is, it is very important to make a transition from a mentor type of teaching to a facilitatory type. Taking into account these difficulties can help teachers better adapt the program and methods for students to perceive concepts that are difficult for them.

The teachers’ responses demonstrate the need for further adaptation of the SEE Learning program to the Ukrainian educational and cultural context, as well as the need for a deeper study of the interaction of cultural, educational and psychological factors in the process of teaching SEL.

## 6.5 WAYS TO ADAPT SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS TO THE UKRAINIAN CULTURAL CONTEXT

Based on the experience, gained in implementing the SEE Learning program in Ukraine, we believe it is useful to take into account the aspects of adapting socio and emotional learning to the Ukrainian cultural context that we have identified, provided that there is an oncoming movement – the transformation of the educational approach in Ukrainian schools. Taking these aspects into account in scientific research and practice, on the one hand, will help make SEL teaching methods more sensitive to the cultural characteristics of the Ukrainian school, and on the other – will allow teachers not only to develop socio-emotional skills in students, but also to practice them in their pedagogical activities, master a facilitatory approach, and implement changes at the level of educational policies of schools:

1. Understanding and appreciation of Ukrainian cultural characteristics, such as a combination of collectivism and individualism, long-term orientation and appreciation of education, perseverance in achieving goals, as well as a natural tendency to mutual assistance and respect for traditions, in the educational process. These cultural features may contribute to a better understanding of some SEL concepts, but at the same time require flexibility and adaptability from the programs.

2. Transition from the traditional mentoring type of teaching in Ukrainian culture to a facilitatory approach. This means that the teacher should not simply become a source of knowledge but

instead support students in the process of independent cognition and making their own conclusions. Instead of just explaining the material, it is necessary to create conditions for the active involvement of students in discussions, practical tasks and group projects. This is important, in particular, given the great power distance (in this case, the teacher's) characteristic of Ukrainian culture. Such an approach will help increase the level of students' trust in the teacher, help students to more deeply and independently master the material of SEL programs.

3. The importance of correcting the teaching style. Teachers should use a variety of methods to explain concepts that are difficult for Ukrainian students, including practical exercises, reframing the material, and using examples from real life. This will help ensure that students better understand the material.

4. Incorporating into the educational process the fact that the adaptation, explanation and perception of some concepts of the social and emotional learning program, such as self-regulation, body literacy, requires greater efforts from the teacher, student and parent community. It is important to provide teachers, students and parents with supporting methodological materials for such topics that are perceived as complex due to the lack of appropriate cultural analogues.

5. Using Ukrainian names, examples from national literature and culture, referring to certain historical examples in order to make the material of SEL programs more relevant and understandable for students.

6. Active use of such categories as compassion, cooperation, kindness, which are especially understandable and acceptable to Ukrainians, since they reflect universal human values that actively contribute to the development of the individual and at the same time are an important part of the Ukrainian cultural context, for explaining the concepts of SEL programs.

## CONCLUSIONS

The features of Ukrainian culture, determined in accordance with the classification of cultures by G. Hofstede, have a significant impact on the implementation of social and emotional learning programs and may conflict with the values of some SEL programs. Thus, Ukrainian culture is characterized by a great power distance. This means that there is significant inequality in the distribution of power and authority in society. This creates challenges for the implementation of SEL programs, since such programs are focused on the development of self-government skills, democratic thinking and equal communication. Obviously, for the successful implementation of SEL programs, additional work with the pedagogical community and administration to change mentoring approaches to teaching, as well as management and creation of appropriate policies of educational institutions, will be required.

The middle value of individualism inherent in Ukrainian culture means an orientation towards both personal and collective values and group goals. This feature of Ukrainian culture will contribute to the implementation of SEL programs, since they include the development of social skills, cooperation and interaction in a team.

Ukrainian culture does not place much value on achieving results at any cost. This can be a positive factor for implementing SEL programs, as it makes it easier to form healthy interpersonal relationships, develop compassion, and ethical guidelines, which are key concepts of SEL.

The tendency towards fixed solutions can be a challenge for the implementation of innovative SEL programs, as the education system and the pedagogical community may be less open to new approaches and methodologies. For the successful implementation of SEL programs, additional professional development of teachers is required, as well as adaptation of programs to existing educational and cultural practices.

The orientation of Ukrainian culture to long-term prospects and readiness to invest in the future can facilitate the implementation of SEL programs, because such programs are aimed at developing skills that will benefit in the future, ensure continuity of education and subsequent well-being. This includes the development of self-regulation, resilience and social skills that help students succeed throughout their lives.

The low value of life satisfaction can be a challenge for the implementation of SEL programs because such programs are usually aimed at improving emotional well-being and life satisfaction. In this perspective, additional work is needed to raise awareness of the importance of emotional health and well-being among students, the parent community, and teachers.

Using comparative analysis, we have identified three groups of human social and emotional skills that correspond to varying degrees to the cultural context of Ukraine and the requirements of modern Ukrainian society for the results of educational activities:

- the first group – *competencies/skills that are consistent with the Ukrainian cultural context* (persistence, compassion, the ability to cooperate and support others, etc.);
- the second group of skills *has certain similarities with the Ukrainian cultural context*, but requires active development and support in the educational process (effective communication and conflict resolution, responsibility, critical thinking, etc.);
- the third group – *skills that are not yet widely accepted or widespread in our culture* and require greater popularization and implementation (self-knowledge, self-esteem and a positive attitude towards oneself, self-awareness, stress resistance and the ability to manage emotional state, etc.).

The implementation of social and emotional learning programs in Ukraine has revealed the importance of adapting international educational initiatives to local cultural realities. A survey of teachers participating in the SEE Learning program identified a need for deep integration of Ukrainian cultural values and ethos into the educational process. Approaches to learning that take into account cultural contexts increase the effectiveness of educational programs and contribute to better perception and assimilation of the material by students. There is a demand among teaching teams for more understandable exercises and cases, built on the basis of Ukrainian culture, as well as the implementation of exercises that will develop precisely those socio-emotional skills that are insufficiently developed in Ukrainian students.

The following areas of further research on teaching the SEE Learning program can be outlined, which will help create an educational environment that is sensitive to cultural characteristics and



will ensure more effective development of students' social and emotional skills. Among such areas, for example, is testing the effectiveness of adapted SEL programs in different regions of Ukraine, taking into account cultural characteristics. Conducting an in-depth survey of the expert community and practicing teachers will help assess the success of adapting SEL programs to the cultural context, and strengthen approaches and tools for teaching SEL.

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