

*Jasmina M. ARSENIJEVIĆ**

Preschool Teacher Training College of Applied Studies, Kikinda

*Nenad N. PERIĆ***

Institute for Serbian Culture Priština-Leposavić, Leposavić

HERITAGE AND FUTURE: CULTURAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY MANAGEMENT IN THE LIGHT OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES***

Abstract: This comprehensive review outlines the central role of formal education in cultural and national identity management and emphasizes the interdependence and synergy between culture and education. The study affirms the benefits of integrating cultural and national identity themes into the curriculum that promote critical thinking, tolerance and inclusivity. Through the study of history, language, the arts, collaboration with cultural institutions, organisation of cultural events or paying a visit to cultural sites, education can contribute to the understanding and preservation of cultural and national heritage. The report offers illuminating insights into real-life examples from around the world. It also highlights the need for a balanced and nuanced approach that addresses the challenges of globalization, diverse ethnic structures, and the coexistence of national and global citizenship education. Ultimately, the study argues that education is a powerful tool for the preservation of cultural and national heritage, both to preserve cultural heritage and to promote unity, social awareness and global respect.

Keywords: education, cultural identity, national identity, heritage, management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is considered one of the most important pillars and identifying features of a society and is closely linked to its national identity. Tradition, cultural heritage and national identity are closely intertwined, as cultural heritage forms the basis for shaping national identity, with tradition standing out as the main component of cultural heritage (Arsenijević, Perić, Živkov 2023). Together, these elements shape the way a nation perceives itself and its members and are crucial factors in the formation of a nation's collective identity. For this reason, any society that wishes to

* College professor, ORCID 0000-0003-2347-6573, arsenijevicjasmina@gmail.com

** Full Professor of Social Sciences and Full Professor of Arts, Senior Research Associate, ORCID 0000-0002-8332-0805, nesaperic@hotmail.com

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preserve these values makes considerable efforts to preserve, present and pass on its cultural heritage and national identity, especially to younger generations (Goodarzarparvari, Camejo 2018).

National identity is an important force and the psychological foundation for a country's existence and progress. National identity education contributes to cultivating national consciousness and cohesion, strengthening social unity, stability and responsibility, promoting the moral quality of citizens, and even promoting the competitiveness and innovation ability of citizens (Ji, Zhang 2023; Zhang et al. 2023).

The process of managing cultural heritage is of immense importance to a society. Cultural education means the expansion of individual and collective knowledge to ensure the appreciation, preservation and transmission of cultural heritage (Achille, Fiorillo 2022). Numerous studies have shown that "culture and the art improve the health and psyche of individuals, productivity and innovation, promote social inclusion and democracy, and contribute to the preservation of the environment" (Arsenijević, Milojević 2020: 55). Consequently, the use of cultural heritage is not only a strategy for strengthening cultural and national identity, but also a basic principle for achieving overall societal well-being.

The development of a cultural and national identity, combined with respect for diversity and the simultaneous promotion of tolerance towards other cultures and peoples, represents an important task for a society and its education system. However, this task confronts substantial challenges imposed by a different factors and modern, changing world (Klarides 2009; Perić 2011; Karataş 2022; Zhang et al. 2023). These factors include globalisation and increasing mobility, the migration crisis, digitalization and the development of a networked society, as well as the Europeanization of educational spaces and the internationalisation of education. All of these factors can have a confusing effect, introducing new languages and values and enabling a rapid exchange of influences. Therefore, now more than ever, additional efforts must be made to shape and preserve the cultural and national identity of future generations (Borca et al., 2019; Butin et al. 2022).

2. CULTURAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

Culture and education are interdependent and closely linked; a change in one of these two concepts will inevitably affect the other. First and foremost, culture depends on education: One of the most effective means of passing on culture in society is the education of new generations. The education system serves as the reproductive organ of any culture – it is widely believed that the school system is essential for promoting social cohesion and national unity. Whether through specific channels such as citizenship education or integration between curricula, education has historically been used to create national identity, patriotism and loyalty to the state (Wiborg 2000).

It is widely recognized that national identity education should begin in elementary school and continue in secondary school (Ibidem). In most countries, it has been included in curriculum (Idris et al. 2012; Goodarzarparvari et al. 2018; Mukhibat,

Effendi 2020). Countries where citizenship education serves the purpose of national or patriotic education are Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan and the United States (Leung 2003, cited in Yuen, Mok 2014). In Serbia, on the other hand, education does not contribute to national and cultural identity. Vasiljević and Semiz (2023) found that textbooks contribute insufficiently to the formation and strengthening of national identity of students in elementary school in Serbia. There is also evidence that cultural heritage in Europe is not adequately conveyed through education. A 2017 Eurobarometer survey found that 88% of Europeans believe that the teaching of European cultural heritage should take place in schools and that the European Union needs to provide more funding for the preservation of cultural heritage (Special Eurobarometer 466: Cultural Heritage).

On the other hand, culture influences educational practise by shaping the values upon which education is based and defining the social paradigm within which education takes place (Berry, Candis 2013). Each educational model is guided by the cultural norms of the community in which it exists. Kendel's formulation of this is as follows: "Each national system of education is characteristic of the nation that has created it and expresses something peculiar to the group that constitutes that nation" (Kendel 1933: 24, cited in Klerides 2009). For example, in a society with a culture centred on spirituality, the achievement of moral and eternal ideals of life would be the focus of education. Conversely, in a materialistic society, the education system will be designed to help people achieve materialistic comforts and values (Methews, Arulsami 2020).

A study on the regional differences in global citizenship education has shown that in the Asia-Pacific region, the focus is on providing students with global knowledge and skills to compete in a globalised world; in South and Central America, the main goal is to strengthen cultural and economic ties with the United States; in Europe, it is to promote social cohesion and acceptance of immigrants and minorities (Goren, Yemini 2017). This shows that culture as well as economic and political interests (which are linked to culture) determines the way cultural and national education is shaped, which is further evidenced by another research. Shuqi (2020) showed that the interplay of national and global identity education in China and Scotland was influenced by different societal goals: Civic education in China (as an inward-looking nation) focuses on social harmony and cohesion, while in Scotland (as a globally-oriented nation), maintaining social diversity is highly valued (Ibidem).

3. DOMAINS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

The first strategy by which education can facilitate the nurturing of cultural identity by *strengthening knowledge of history*. History is pivotal for understanding the origins and significance of cultural traditions and customs. By studying history, students can comprehend how their culture and national identity have evolved over time and how they have been influenced by social and economic factors (Low, Beer 2003; van Boxtel et al. 2016). In this way, they are more likely to value and cultivate their cultural identity. The construction of narratives about identity, origins, history and community is

crucial in shaping a sense of unity with others who belong to the same nation. Narrating the history and myths of the nation is what amplifies the preservation of national identity (Yuen and Mok, 2014).

Learning history with a holistic view of the development of cultural and national identity – an approach that is characteristic of the historical field – can assist new generations in discerning the relationships between cause and effect, continuity and change. This in turn encourages critical thinking and analytical skills. When combined with storytelling, using contemporary educational techniques such as role-playing, pantomime, and the like, the development cultural and national identity becomes even more effective. Recently, researchers in the field of heritage studies (Trofanenko 2013; van Boxtel et al. 2016; Kenneth Harris 2016) have explained how emotions in learning can lead to better understanding. Heritage learning can be achieved through the combination of playful or emotional teaching methods, contextual thinking and critical historical reasoning that recognises the possibility of different ways of seeing and knowing the past (van Boxtel et al. 2016).

Second strategy which can enable the preservation of cultural and national identity is *language development, the cultivation of literacy skills and the study of domestic literature*. Language is an essential component of cultural identity, and through language learning, individuals can preserve the richness of linguistic diversity. Language education enables people to better understand cultural values, norms and customs, thus contributing to the preservation of cultural and national identity (Bataller Català 2015). The native language is an important part of students' identity and a source of cultural pride and self-esteem (Coelho 2012). These topics can be implemented as part of the school curriculum, but also organized for the wider population and citizens, in a form of popular native language courses, workshops, literary evenings and lectures on national myths and legends.

The native language is an important component of students' identity and a source of cultural pride and self-esteem (Coelho 2012), while national myths play a vital role in constructing national identity (Yuen, Mok 2014). In that way, students can maintain connections with their community and preserve the richness of linguistic diversity. Speaking their own language can help students feel connected to their cultural heritage, protect their culture from erosion and better understand cultural values, norms and customs. Additionally, education can contribute to this by familiarising students with the cultures of other nations and countries. This not only contributes to the expansion of knowledge and understanding of other cultures, but also promotes the development of respect and tolerance towards others.

Another strategy to strengthen cultural and national identity through education is to *incorporate the arts and cultural skills* into the curriculum (Salam 2019; Eisner 1997). Students can learn about artistic creations from the local and national milieu, acquiring cultural skills such as dance, music, visual arts, cooking and traditional crafts. In addition, for students schools can organize workshops and courses for citizens to develop the same skills. Along with developing students' and citizens' interests and creative abilities, this is essential for fostering identity, tolerance, and international understanding. The ability to make sound decisions is a crucial skill that students need to deal with a variety of real-world difficulties, such as issues of cultural identity.

The acquisition of folk skills such as traditional dances or playing traditional music contributes significantly to the preservation of cultural and national identity. These skills are often passed down from generation to generation, and learning these skills helps to preserve such traditions. In Japan, for example, there is a traditional art of paper doll making that is passed down through generations. In Serbia, learning the traditional Serbian dance “Kolo” as part of formal primary education and organising performances in schools and local communities could contribute to the preservation of this tradition and the overall promotion of Serbian cultural and national identity. A positive example in Serbia is the study programme at the Teachers’ Training College in Kikinda for preschool educators for traditional play. This programme integrates pedagogical and methodological competences with the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to traditional play and music. In this way, not only is the cultural heritage of the region passed on to the students, but they are also enabled to continue this process in their professional careers.

Furthermore, *collaboration between formal educational institutions and art and cultural institutions* is another strategy for cultural heritage management and nurturing national identity. Cooperation between schools and theatres, cultural and art associations, museums and other cultural institutions can contribute to the formation and better performance of school theatres, ensembles, orchestras or painting colonies and revive artistic works or historical events characteristic of a particular nation. Students, as well as citizens can be their members. Cooperation with cultural institutions can also help to acquire forgotten skills that are important for cultural and national identity. In Serbia, for example, the museum “Ras” organises schools for learning traditional crafts such as calligraphic writing and silk thread embroidery for primary and secondary school students. In addition, the National Museum in Kikinda organises workshops or summer camps for school children, where they can learn forgotten skills such as honey cake making, glass painting or brick making.

It should also be noted that educational content can be better absorbed through a project-based, integrated and interdisciplinary teaching approach (Ivon, Kušćević 2013; Achille, Fiorillo 2022). “The very definition of education is changing today, and the requirements are increasingly shifting from the teaching of content to the training of critical thinking, problem-solving skills and interpersonal qualities” (Andevski et al. 2012: 883). When different subjects are integrated into the educational process, students learn more effectively about intangible cultural heritage. Batik, for example, is a type of handmade fabric that is taught to children in Indonesia in subjects such as history, art and science, with a focus on the natural dyes used in batik (UNESCO 2013). Students can also learn about their country’s history through project-based and integrated lessons: they can participate in dramatic interpretations of certain historical events or study famous literary works from national history through their dramatic interpretation, combining the learning of history, literature, and the practise of performing arts. In addition to the performing arts, visual arts, music, film, etc. can also be used for interpretation.

The fifth strategy is the involvement of schools in the *organisation of cultural events such as festivals, performances, concerts and games* (Niemi et al. 2014; Dewilde et al. 2021).

Schools can co-organise cultural events where students contribute to the performances (e.g., cultural performances, parades, festivals), or they can be the main organisers of cultural events where students are the sole performers (e.g. school plays or concerts). School performances can include various cultural and artistic activities such as music, dance, recitation, drama, etc. By preparing and performing these activities, students learn about cultural and national customs and traditions. By participating in cultural events and competitions related to art, history or culture, students can learn about and pass on traditional customs and cultural heritage. In some countries, for example, festivals are held to showcase traditional dances, music and customs that are passed down from generation to generation. In Japan, cultural festivals and events are often held in schools to celebrate Japanese traditions and customs (Okamura 2014).

Finally, *organising school trips and excursions* is a strategy that allows students to build their cultural and national identity in practise. It includes visits to museums, theatres, exhibitions and cultural festivals, as well as excursions to significant historical, geographical and archaeological sites. Teachers and students “should get out of the school ghettos, outside to a museum, an exhibition, archaeological excavations, city streets, squares, workshops, laboratories, studios and factories, wherever life is flourishing” (Smolec 2002: 16). Study trips allow students to learn about cultural heritage outside the classroom and expand their awareness of historical and cultural heritage in a relaxed and enjoyable manner. As a teaching tool, field trips help students become more aware of the past, take responsibility for protecting historical and cultural assets, and gain knowledge about academic topics (Bachleitner, Zins 1999; Hou et al. 2005; Yan, Bramwell 2008; Ocal 2016). Research has shown that study tours involving visits to historic landscapes and sites have a direct impact on students’ emotions, behaviour and cognition (Hui et al. 2004).

It should be noted that the above strategies can be implemented not only as part of the curriculum for students, but also as independent non-formal educational activities offered by a school to citizens and the wider population. An educational institution has the potential, but also the obligation, to be a “leading factor in the creation of social flows and activities, connecting and integrating the majority of social subjects ... and to represent the centre of the local community” (Arsenijević, Andevski 2010: 77). In this way, educational institutions can enable the strengthening of cultural and national identity not only of the new generations, but also of the general population, while at the same time fulfilling their leadership role in the local community.

4. BALANSING BETWEEN CULTURAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN EDUCATION

In the previous section, it was explained how the development and promotion of cultural and national identity in the teaching process, particularly in history lessons, can lead to increased critical and analytical thinking of students due to the analysis of cause-effect relationships. However, it is crucial to use objectivity and an unbiased analysis when narrating national history. Why? The use of education as a means of promoting national identity can be problematic if it is linked to prejudice. For example, Vickers (2005)

warns that national history and myths are often taught selectively and with bias. History may even be intentionally misrepresented to glorify the state (Kymlicka 2001). Therefore, when used objectively and without bias, the use of cultural heritage in education can serve to understand the processes of cause and consequence, continuity and change (van Boxtel et al. 2016). People today can make better decisions if they learn the lessons from the mistakes of their forefathers. In addition, the ability and ambition to create something new depends heavily on analytical and critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, it is important to balance the development of cultural and national identity with respect for the rights of minorities, especially in countries with greater cultural and ethnic heterogeneity. In ethnically homogeneous countries such as Japan or France, the development and nurturing of national and cultural identity is less complex than in countries with a more diverse ethnic structure. For example, the curriculum in Japan is designed to foster a sense of national identity and convey cultural values and traditions. In addition, the French education system is designed to produce citizens who are familiar with French history, culture and values. The French education system aims to promote a sense of national unity by emphasizing the importance of the French Republic and its values of liberty, equality and fraternity.

However, in countries where the ethnic structure is more complex, the role of the education system in managing cultural and national identity may be more limited. In countries with a diverse population and a history of ethnic or linguistic tensions, such as India or Canada, the education system may prioritize diversity and multiculturalism over a unified national identity. The education system can play a more neutral role in cultural and national identity management or even actively promote a more pluralistic and inclusive approach. An example of this is the education system in Singapore, one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world with plural ethnic groupings and nationalities as well as a variety of cultural and religious beliefs and practices. Singapore's current education system strives for cultural diversity and sustainability on the one hand and homogenization to promote social cohesion on the other (Tan, Tan 2014).

Thirdly, a careful balance is needed between developing an awareness of one's own nation and culture and promoting intercultural awareness. It is important to keep in mind that an excessive focus on one's own culture and nationality, without learning about other cultures and nations, can lead to a narrow worldview and closed-mindedness. This may result in a lack of understanding of other cultures and peoples and an inability to appreciate their perspectives and needs. Misunderstandings are the first step towards developing stereotypes, prejudices and xenophobia towards others. Therefore, intercultural or global citizenship education should play as important a role as national identity education. It should overcome differences based on national, ethnic, racial or other affiliations in order to create space for acceptance. In the age of globalisation and the increasing migration and mobility of citizens, this education is becoming ever more important for peaceful cohabitation and enables "efficient, responsible and committed civic action in a social milieu that is becoming globally generalised" (Arsenijević, Andevski 2015: 89).

On the other hand, an overemphasis on intercultural and global citizenship education can lead to less space being given to national and cultural identity in the curriculum.

A balanced approach is needed to give students a comprehensive understanding of both their own culture and the global community. In Scotland, for example, the balance in teaching national and global citizenship education has been achieved in the following way: Scottish national and cultural identity education meets the national needs and cultural heritage of Scotland while addressing the issue of global identity. In China, national and global identity education are also present at the same time. The aim of education is to produce patriotic Chinese citizens who can contribute to their country's prosperity and have an emotional attachment to China, while global identity education aims to assist students develop their global competitiveness (Shui 2020).

Careful consideration of content can not only avoid negative consequences but also promote positive outcomes. This approach fosters the development of citizens who are aware of their national and cultural affiliations while being open to diversity and willing to build bridges of understanding between different communities. Awareness of one's own cultural and national values and ideas is a precondition for accepting the differences.

It is important to keep in mind that the implementation of issues related to cultural and national identity must be done carefully and systematically, taking into account practical experiences and avoiding potential problems. The education system should be designed to promote the development of critical thinking, tolerance and inclusivity.

5. CONCLUSION

Formal education plays a decisive role in the formation of cultural and national identity. Through the study of history, language, the arts, collaboration with cultural institutions, organisation of cultural events or paying a visit to cultural sites, education can contribute to the understanding and preservation of cultural and national heritage. It is important that society as a whole is actively involved in the preservation of cultural and national heritage to ensure that these values are passed on to future generations.

The cultivation and development of cultural and national identity in education has numerous benefits, including the preservation of cultural heritage, the development of identity and belonging, critical thinking, social awareness and the promotion of creativity. Integrating topics related to cultural and national identity into the curriculum contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage and enables future generations to acquire knowledge about traditions, customs, language, art and other cultural aspects of their country. By analysing and understanding different cultures and customs and gaining insight into the history and social processes that have shaped their country, children can improve their critical analysis skills. Perhaps the most important benefit, however, is that generation who come into contact with cultural heritage and traditional practises in the classroom can develop not only their own identity, but also a social awareness and understanding of other cultures. This can lead to greater tolerance and promote respect for other people and cultures.

The use of education to promote national and cultural identity is a common practise around the world. While the education system can be an effective tool for promoting national unity and cultural values, it is important to strike a balance between valuing diversity and respecting and appreciating nations and cultures around the world.

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Јасмина М. АРСЕНИЈЕВИЋ

Ненад Н. ПЕРИЋ

НАСЛЕЂЕ И БУДУЋНОСТ: УПРАВЉАЊЕ КУЛТУРНИМ И НАЦИОНАЛНИМ ИДЕНТИТЕТОМ У СВЕТАУ ОБРАЗОВНИХ ПРАКСИ

РЕЗИМЕ

Рад даје детаљан приказ улоге формалног образовања у управљању културним и националним идентитетом, наглашавајући међузависност и синергију између културе и образовања. Студија потврђује предности интегрисања тема културног и националног идентитета у наставни план и програм, које подстичу критичко мишљење, толеранцију и инклузивност. Кроз проучавање историје, језика, уметности, сарадњу са културним институцијама, организацију културних догађаја или посете културним локалитетима, образовање може допринети разумевању и очувању културног и националног наслеђа. Преглед пружа корисне увиде кроз примере из стварног живота и различитих делова света. Такође истиче потребу за уравнотеженим и нијансираним приступом који се бави изазовима глобализације, различитим етничким структурама и коегзистенцијом образовања за национално и глобално друштво. У закључку рад аргументује да је образовање моћно средство за очување културног и националног наслеђа, као и за промоцију јединства, друштвене свести и изградњу националног поштовања на међународном нивоу.

Кључне речи: образовање, културни идентитет, национални идентитет, наслеђе, управљање.