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Educational policy on the quality of security of socio-cultural forms of higher education

Política educativa sobre la calidad de la seguridad de las formas socioculturales de educación superior

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the state of modern educational policy aimed at ensuring the quality and safety of socio-cultural activities in higher education institutions and to evaluate their impact on cohesion and safety levels. The research utilized a purposive sampling method involving 81 participants: 55.6% students, 29.6% teachers, and 14.8% administrative staff, selected based on predefined criteria (three indicators for staff and four for students). The results reveal a relatively high level of respondent involvement in socio-cultural activities, reflecting significant internal engagement within educational institutions. However, these activities moderately impact cohesion levels, as evidenced by dominant average scores of 3 and 4 on the scale. Regarding safety, the physical threat emerges as a significant challenge, with the ongoing Russian aggression critically undermining the security awareness of participants. The study highlights the need to



prioritize innovative approaches to organizing and conducting socio-cultural events. Enhancing communication, adopting advanced practices, and improving the safety measures for all educational participants are critical directions for future development. These improvements are essential to creating a supportive socio-cultural environment that ensures both quality and safety in higher education institutions.

Keywords: security of the educational environment, socio-cultural activities, HEI policy, social integration, challenges.

Resumen

Este estudio analiza la política educativa moderna enfocada en garantizar la calidad y seguridad de las actividades socioculturales en instituciones de enseñanza superior y su impacto en los niveles de cohesión y seguridad. Se empleó un muestreo intencional con 81 participantes: 55,6 % estudiantes, 29,6 % profesores y 14,8 % personal administrativo, seleccionados según criterios predefinidos (tres indicadores para el personal y cuatro para los estudiantes). Los resultados revelan un nivel alto de participación en actividades socioculturales, reflejando un compromiso significativo dentro de las instituciones educativas. Sin embargo, el impacto en la cohesión es moderado, evidenciado por puntuaciones medias predominantes de 3 y 4. En términos de seguridad, la amenaza física surge como un desafío clave, mientras que la agresión rusa continua afecta críticamente la percepción de seguridad de los participantes. El estudio resalta la necesidad de enfoques innovadores en la organización de actividades socioculturales. Mejorar la comunicación, adoptar prácticas avanzadas y reforzar las medidas de seguridad para todos los participantes son aspectos fundamentales para el desarrollo futuro. Estas acciones son esenciales para establecer un entorno sociocultural que garantice tanto calidad como seguridad en las instituciones de enseñanza superior.

Palabras clave: seguridad del entorno educativo, actividades socioculturales, política de las IES, integración social, retos.

Introduction

In today's innovative space, where the speed of change requires adaptability from all social institutions, higher education institutions (HEIs) perform an important mission in forming knowledge, competencies and values for the younger generation. In this sense, educational policy to ensure the quality of the educational process and socio-cultural security deserves research attention. These features are integral to the sustainable development of society, as they determine not only the effectiveness of professional training but also the process of forming a responsible civil society (Anlimachie & Avoada, 2020). The relevance of the study is stipulated by the need to ensure the implementation of current national strategies for building a safe and effective learning environment in higher education institutions, social guarantees of the legal protection of the rights of all participants in the learning space, and the formation of high-quality and safe conditions for the provision and receipt of educational services (Buriak et al., 2023). This research is of additional importance given the study of the main conditions for the formation of educational security of socio-cultural forms of higher education institutions with a view to the social realisation of students' intellectual, individual, psycho-emotional development, as well as increasing the potential of Ukraine's socio-economic development based on sustainability. However, several contemporary scholars have pointed out that educational policy in higher education institutions is currently at the intersection of global (increased competition between HEIs, unification of standards, large-scale digitalisation) and local (economic instability, limited funding, cybersecurity issues, lack of transparent mechanisms for implementing educational policy challenges, etc. Therefore, one of the most urgent tasks is to ensure the quality of education and the security of socio-cultural forms that define the internal environment of universities.

Given the preceding considerations, the key research problem is to analyse the state of educational policy to ensure the quality and safety of socio-cultural forms in higher education institutions and to describe the quality and safety of socio-cultural initiatives in modern educational institutions. Under the influence of



globalisation, digital transformation and changes in the socio-political environment, the risk of transformation of the main socio-cultural forms is becoming noticeable. Thus, the absence of a well-formed and effective policy for the development of basic socio-cultural forms (mechanisms of interaction, HEI norms, principles that determine the behaviour of community members, etc.) may lead to a loss of cultural identity, a decrease in trust in the HEI community, and generally affect the quality of the educational process. At the same time, traditional tools often do not consider the specifics and complexity of current challenges.

Given the current challenges, including military realities that affect the functioning of higher education institutions, the main focus of the work will be on analysing the theoretical foundations of educational policy, identifying the risks associated with the transformation of the socio-cultural environment, and finding modern practical solutions to form an effective and sustainable model of educational process management. To this end, the main focus of the study will be on conducting a survey among students, teachers and university administrators on the quality and safety of socio-cultural initiatives in educational institutions to identify the main trends and problems of educational policy about socio-cultural forms.

The purpose of the study is to analyse the educational policy aimed at ensuring the quality and safety of socio-cultural forms in higher education institutions and to determine the level of quality and safety of socio-cultural initiatives (e.g., determining the scale of cultural events, the role of student initiatives and associations, charity events, etc.).

Main research objectives:

1. Evaluation of the quality of socio-cultural events, determination of their potential for promoting cohesion of the educational community
2. Identification of the main effective socio-cultural activities in modern higher education institutions and description of the aspects that affect their effectiveness
3. Description of the main challenges to ensuring the educational policy of quality security of socio-cultural forms of higher education and prospects for overcoming them.

For this purpose, 2 research hypotheses have been formed that will require refutation or confirmation: In modern educational institutions, several important socio-cultural initiatives affect the quality of educational policy implementation.

The preservation of socio-cultural forms positively impacts the quality of the educational process and increases the level of trust and interaction in the HEI community.

The study provides an overview of the academic literature on the specified issues, describing the methodological foundations of the conducted survey. The results and discussion present the data obtained from the survey and demonstrate existing scholarly concepts regarding the outlined questions. This allowed summarizing the main points confirmed through empirical means in the conclusions.

Literature Review

In the current crisis conditions, forming a safe educational environment for all participants in the educational process is a key activity of higher education institutions. This is evidenced by the works of contemporary scholars who describe the primary mechanisms for creating an effective educational environment (Bondar et al., 2023; Chernukha et al., 2021). For this reason, an important aspect of a modern, effective learning space is ensuring socio-cultural security. According to the works of contemporary scholars, socio-cultural forms correspond to the basic norms, values, traditions and practices that define the identity of the university community (Ridei et al., 2022; Anteliz et al., 2008; Enwere & Afunugo, 2024). According to other studies, they also affect the ability of a higher education institution to collaborate and innovate (Marchenko, 2023; Şafak-Ayvazoğlu et al., 2021).



As demonstrated by Wang et al. (2024), who used a longitudinal study to track the impact of internationalisation programs on students' cultural adaptation, and Tran et al. (2023), who conducted a meta-analysis of international exchange programs, the trend towards the internationalisation of education requires careful consideration. While Wang et al. (2024) found that international programs significantly improve cultural adaptability and academic performance, Tran et al. (2023) highlighted the potential risks of cultural displacement and academic homogenisation, pointing to the need for a balanced approach.

Antoshkina et al. (2023) conducted a mixed-methods study that emphasised the importance of assessing the educational system's quality through academic performance and its capacity to foster personal development and social integration. This study revealed that socio-cultural initiatives play a critical role in supporting students' psychological well-being and sense of belonging, a finding echoed by Cantwell (2021), who used ethnographic methods to explore how university culture can support academic integrity and cultural diversity.

Şafak-Ayvazoğlu et al. (2021) conducted a survey-based study highlighting the importance of a stable psychological environment in learning spaces. However, the influence of digitalisation, as discussed by Bobro (2024) in a case study on digital learning platforms, shows both the benefits (increased accessibility and flexibility) and the challenges (reduced personal interaction). Barvinok & Pudło (2023) further expanded on these challenges through a comparative analysis of traditional and digital learning environments, noting that the latter can sometimes undermine the socio-cultural fabric of educational institutions.

The issue of multiculturalism and its impact on maintaining local university culture is critically examined by Debych (2023), who used qualitative interviews to explore the experiences of international students. Hartati & Riniati (2022), through a longitudinal study, argue that mobility offers significant benefits for academic collaboration and cultural exchange. However, Islam et al. (2023) warn against the overemphasis on internationalisation, presenting data from a survey that suggests it may lead to the erosion of unique local university characteristics. Thus, while the integration of new technologies and the growth of multiculturalism present opportunities for innovation and collaboration, they also pose significant challenges to the socio-cultural integrity of higher education institutions. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the methodologies, results, and limitations of existing studies, as well as the ability to synthesize these findings into a cohesive strategy for educational policy.

The identified challenges in the scientific literature are related to the integration of new technologies and the growth of multiculturalism and require a rethinking of approaches to educational policy. Unfortunately, not much attention has been paid to this problem in the scientific literature, and researchers have primarily focused on certain aspects of the formation of socio-cultural space (mobility, development of student groups, etc.). However, this problem requires a systematic approach that would pay attention to the views of students and teachers on this issue. Therefore, this study will try to address this gap and characterise and interpret the opinions of all participants in the educational process regarding the state of educational policy on the quality of security of socio-cultural forms of HEIs.

Methodology

Research design

This paper is based on a cross-sectional study, which collects data from different individuals in the same period. This type of research was chosen based on key advantages, including the speed of data collection and the ability to analyse large samples. This type of research is also convenient for involving different respondents, increasing the results' validity. This study also involves different participant groups, making the results more meaningful and representative. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that this cross-sectional study involved obtaining data and observing variables without directly influencing them.



Participants

The study involved representatives of 3 key groups in the HEI educational space: students, teachers, and managers (administration). Their involvement was based on purposive sampling, which involved including participants based on their relevance to the chosen topic.

To participate in the study, respondents must meet the following criteria:

For students:

Studying at a higher education institution for any course;
Studying at a higher education institution in any specialisation;
Understanding of significant social and cultural initiatives;
Experience of participation in socio-cultural initiatives (cultural and educational events, student associations, charity events)

For teachers:

1. Work in a HEI on a permanent or contract basis.
2. Experience of participation in various socio-cultural initiatives
3. Experience of interaction with socio-cultural events (assistance in organising events, mentoring in student associations)

For the administration:

1. Work in a HEI on a permanent or contract basis.
2. Inclusion of different representatives of the administration responsible for planning and organising individual initiatives in the HEI
3. The minimum work experience is 1 year.

In this way, 95 participants were selected for the study. All participants had to consent to processing their answers and personal data. However, several potential respondents refused to give their consent, so 81 people were included. Thus, the following sample distribution was obtained: students: 55.6%; teachers: 29.6%; administration: 14.8%. Table 1 provides a detailed description of the participants.

Table 1.
Description of included participants

Participants	N	Percentage of the sample (%)	Description
Students	45	55,6	Students of different years of study and different specialisations were included. Participants were introduced to the main socio-cultural forms of interaction
Teachers	24	29,6	The study included teachers with different lengths of service (from 2 to 40 years). The teachers were also familiar with the main socio-cultural forms of interaction and had experience in conducting various initiatives.
Administration	12	14,8	Representatives of the administrative staff involved in planning, implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of socio-cultural activities in HEIs are involved.
Overall	81	100	

Source: compiled by the authors

Tools and procedure

The research procedure was a multi-stage one; in particular, the participants were first informed about the purpose and objectives of this study, and their consent was obtained. The main instrument was a survey conducted among 3 groups of respondents. It was based on both open-ended questions and questions using a Likert scale (scoring from 1 to 5). The survey covered both certain demographic data and a description of the experience of involvement in current socio-cultural initiatives of higher education institutions.

Table 2.
Survey structure

Block	Question
Information	1. Indicate your status in the university 2. Your length of service or year of study: 3. Have you participated in current socio-cultural forms of interaction?
Quality level of socio-cultural events	1. How would you rate the quality of socio-cultural events in your HEI? 2. Rate the extent to which these initiatives contribute to the cohesion of the educational community (from 1 to 5) 3. What aspects affect the quality of these events?
Identification of initiatives	4. Which socio-cultural events were the most successful?
Security of the socio-cultural space	5. Does your HEI ensure an appropriate level of security for socio-cultural events? 6. What risks have you faced while participating in socio-cultural initiatives? 7. How can the level of security of the socio-cultural space of a higher education institution be improved?
Outlook	8. What should be changed to improve the quality and safety of socio-cultural events? 9. Are you ready to continue participating in socio-cultural events?

Source: compiled by the authors

Therefore, these questions were designed to be adapted for the 3 categories of participants. Another important stage was the interview process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of the administration in separate focus groups of 6 people. Thus, 2 focus groups were formed. These semi-structured interviews took place on the Zoom platform and lasted up to 1 hour. During this time, representatives of the administration could freely express their opinions on the specifics of implementing certain initiatives and supporting the cultural space of the university. These questions concerned the main challenges and the state of implementation of socio-cultural initiatives in HEIs.

1. What are the main challenges in planning and implementing socio-cultural initiatives in HEIs?
2. How does the administration determine the effectiveness of socio-cultural initiatives?
3. What criteria or indicators do you use to assess performance?

Data analysis

First, the data quality was checked to identify missing responses and duplicates. At the initial data analysis stage, the formats were clarified; text responses were transferred to one category, and numerical responses were transferred to a digital format. Google Sheets was used for this purpose, as this software has a wide range of basic statistics and visualisation tools.

To ensure the questionnaire's validation, pilot testing was conducted with a small sample of respondents to refine questions and address any ambiguities. Expert review was performed by professionals in the field to ensure content validity. Internal reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in an acceptable reliability score.

Next, the answers were coded. For open-ended questions, the main categories were identified: quality of socio-cultural forms, successful practices, risks, and prospects. Thus, the main themes in the textual responses were identified in the qualitative data. A thematic analysis approach was utilized for qualitative

responses, involving multiple coders to enhance reliability. The coders' consistency was ensured through regular meetings and comparing coding results to resolve discrepancies. A descriptive analysis was carried out for the quantitative data, and the percentage distribution of responses was made on this basis, graphs and diagrams were created. A comparative analysis of the responses was also done to identify specific differences. Methodological limitations of this analysis include potential biases in self-reported data, the limited sample size for pilot testing, and the subjective nature of qualitative coding despite efforts to ensure consistency. These limitations were acknowledged as part of our commitment to scientific transparency.

Results and Discussion

In the current conditions of development of a globalised society, the increase in digitalisation is a certain challenge to the increase in political, economic and social challenges. In such situations, higher education institutions formulate their policies by considering the factors of proper security, quality, and inclusive solutions in the formation of socio-cultural environments. The introduction of martial law has increased the importance of such initiatives several times over, as higher education institutions in such a powerful crisis are turning into important stabilisation platforms for social functioning. In particular, creating a safe environment makes it possible to introduce innovations and new educational programmes, which will have a qualitative impact on students' overall level of education. Certain sociocultural activities allow combining existing academic and practical practices and the development of soft skills, which are valued in the modern professional market. Psychological support in times of war is also extremely important. In such circumstances, socio-cultural initiatives serve as a mechanism for stability in students' psychological state and their adaptation to the present difficult conditions.

One of the practical manifestations of this condition is the organisation and holding of socio-cultural events. First, they include organising lectures, exhibitions, charity events, volunteering, workshops, sports events, using digital platforms to discuss the creation of study groups in certain social platforms, forums and conferences for higher education students, etc. In such circumstances, it is important to consider the activity of students, teaching staff and administrative staff of higher education institutions and their involvement in the conduct and organisation of socio-cultural forms.

Table 3.
Participation in socio-cultural forms

Have you participated in current socio-cultural forms of interaction?	Number of respondents
Regularly	30 (37%)
Sometimes	25 (31%)
Rarely	19 (23%)
Disinterested	7 (9%)

Source: compiled by the authors

The respondents demonstrated a relatively high level of involvement in socio-cultural forms. This indicates active internal work in educational institutions despite martial law. Socio-cultural forms of interaction are the organisation of social, educational and cultural activities that promote joint interaction, personal evolution, and the preservation of social and cultural values manifested in a particular community. In the context of the functioning of higher education institutions, such socio-cultural forms have different manifestations: educational initiatives and their implementation, individual cultural cooperation activities, including those aimed at creating social interaction, cultural exchanges, and further personal development of students and academic staff. Most respondents (68%) indicated that they regularly or at least occasionally participate in current socio-cultural forms.

An important manifestation of this process is also identifying the quality of socio-cultural events. In particular, respondents were asked to assess the quality of socio-cultural events in higher education

institutions and determine the extent to which such initiatives contribute to cohesion in education policy on a scale from 1 to 5 (Figure 1).

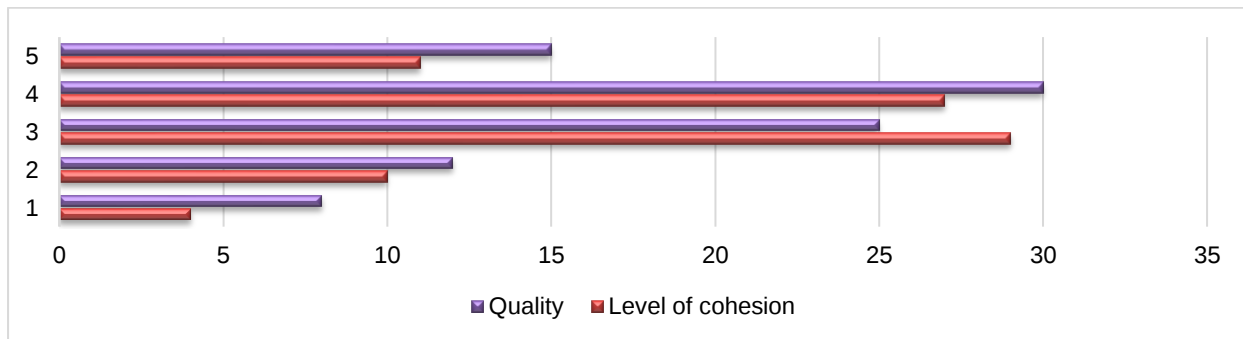


Figure 1. Assessing the quality of socio-cultural events and promoting cohesion
Source: compiled by the authors

Respondents generally emphasised that socio-cultural forms in higher education institutions contribute to a mediocre cohesion (average scores of 3 and 4 dominate). This is an average level of influence, noticeable but also insufficient. The situation needs further improvement, at least through a tool to determine which measures or initiatives are most successful for cohesion from the respondents' point of view. A method of obtaining data to improve such initiatives, such as socio-cultural forms, is also possible. Similarly, respondents rated the level of quality of socio-cultural forms of interaction in higher education institutions at 3 and 4 points on average. This is an opportunity to determine the extent to which socio-cultural forms contribute to improving higher education institutions' atmosphere and learning environment. According to the scores, respondents noted that such initiatives can significantly improve the quality of existing educational communities.

The respondents also noted the level of socio-cultural events and the aspects that influence this (see Table 4).

Table 4.
Aspects that influence the level of socio-cultural activities

What aspects affect the quality of these events?	Number of responses
Certain aspects of the organisation: - Successful planning, integration into the educational system of higher education institutions, and the level of organisation.	18 (22%)
Content elements: - Innovations, significance for cultural and social development, and relevance to interests.	32 (40%)
Information support: - Promotion of events and dissemination of information about them, activities of student self-government, scientific societies of teachers, etc.	20 (24%)
Involvement: - Working with the administration, collaboration with other external partners, active participants, etc.	11 (14%)

Source: compiled by the authors

Thus, the survey has shown that when determining the aspects that affect the quality and level of organisation of socio-cultural events, respondents primarily consider the content. These are elements such as innovation and relevance to the interests of students, teaching staff, and administrative staff of higher education institutions. Information support of events and their effective organisation are approximately the same level (20% and 18%, respectively). Among the outsiders are certain administrative aspects of work on the safety of socio-cultural forms of interaction, which were probably taken into account primarily by administrative staff.

To determine the strengths of the current educational policy on socio-cultural interaction, respondents were asked to answer the question about the most effective socio-cultural activities in their opinion (see Table 5).

Table 5.
The most effective socio-cultural events

What socio-cultural events do you consider to be the most successful?	Number of responses
Holding cultural events, weeks of culture and art events, theme nights, exhibitions, concerts	20 (25%)
Volunteering, holding charity events, providing assistance to those in need	41 (51%)
International cooperation (including participation in international projects or exchanges)	5 (6%)
Participation in sports competitions or other events with competitive participation (e.g. debate tournaments)	15 (18%)

Source: compiled by the authors

Obviously, in the context of martial law and due to the popularity of volunteering, students and teachers noted volunteering as one of the most successful forms of socio-cultural activities (51% of respondents).

Also, this form of activity is, to some extent, perceived as an investment in security, as volunteer work and support for the military and temporarily displaced persons in the current realities are certain investments in countering Russian aggression. Less popular are the organisation of various cultural initiatives and forums and sports competitions. International cooperation is in the last place. This can be partly explained by the fact that in wartime, there are serious restrictions on men travelling abroad, so such activities are possible only in the form of remote participation.

In such circumstances, it is important to assess the security of the socio-cultural space (see Table 6).

Table 6.
Security of the socio-cultural space

Nº	Question	Number of responses
1	In your opinion, does your higher education institution ensure an adequate level of security for socio-cultural events?	
A	Yes	61 (75%)
B	No	20 (25%)
2	What risks have you faced while participating in socio-cultural initiatives?	
A	Inadequate level of organisation of the event	8 (9%)
B	Physical threat	43 (53%)
C	Conflicts between participants of socio-cultural events, stressful situations	30 (37%)
3	How can the level of security of the socio-cultural space of a higher education institution be improved?	
A	Increase the level of physical security	38 (47%)
B	Increase the level of psychological security	26 (32%)
C	Ensuring proper information security (including information hygiene)	10 (12%)
D	Increase the level of social security (risk monitoring, etc.)	7 (9%)

Source: compiled by the authors

Respondents gave different assessments of security issues. First, most believe that their higher education institutions are adequately protected from external threats (75% of respondents). However, given the continuation of Russian aggression, the level of danger should not be misleading. The respondents partially agree with this, identifying the physical threat as one of the most obvious, even in conditions of relative security. The Russian threat is a decisive factor that negatively affects the state of security awareness. Notably, 37% of respondents noted conflicts among participants in socio-cultural events, which creates stressful situations. This indicates a lack of ethics in communication, on the one hand, but also demonstrates a certain "electrification" of society, which is ready to explode from psychological instability. Respondents also pointed to this when identifying ways to improve physical and psychological security as the most promising for further enhancing the level of protection of the socio-cultural space of educational institutions (79% of respondents in total).

The last block of questions was devoted to the prospects for the development of socio-cultural events and the assurance of their safety (see Table 7).

Table 7.

Prospects for further development of security of socio-cultural events

Nº	Question	Number of responses
1	What should be changed to improve the quality and safety of socio-cultural events?	
A	Innovations in events, higher level of communication	33 (41%)
B	Increase the level of security	33 (41%)
C	Improved organisational episodes, improved planning	10 (12%)
D	Inclusiveness and accessibility	5 (6%)
2	Are you ready to continue participating in socio-cultural events?	
A	Yes, but only if the overall situation improves	26 (32%)
B	Yes, without additional requirements	40 (49%)
C	No	15 (19%)

Source: compiled by the authors

The respondents pointed to the prospects for further development of security of socio-cultural events in higher education institutions. In order to further improve the security of socio-cultural events, it is important, according to the respondents, to consider innovations in the conduct of events and the need to increase the level of security. This opinion is supported by an equal number of respondents (41% each). Respondents also noted the need for improved organisational episodes, better planning, and access to inclusivity. At the same time, these requirements do not affect the respondents' overall desire to continue participating in socio-cultural events. Almost half of the respondents admitted they were ready to do so even without additional conditions. Only about one-third of respondents pointed to the need for additional security conditions. At the same time, only 19% of respondents believe they will not participate in the next socio-cultural events at their HEI. The information offered indicates the importance of such aspects in modelling the further development of the education sector. The main research problem was to determine the state of educational policy to ensure the quality and safety of socio-cultural forms in higher education institutions and to describe the safety and quality of socio-cultural initiatives in modern educational institutions. The first research task was to assess the quality of socio-cultural activities and determine their potential to promote the cohesion of the educational community. Accordingly, the results demonstrate that respondents showed a relatively high level of involvement in socio-cultural forms (almost all respondents had experience participating in or organising certain events). This indicator indicates the active internal work that is currently taking place in educational institutions. The study participants determined that the current socio-cultural forms in higher education institutions contribute to a mediocre level of cohesion (in particular, the average scores of 3 and 4 dominated).

Similarly, the participants assessed the quality of socio-cultural forms of interaction in higher education institutions with 3 and 4 points. Accordingly, these results demonstrate that such initiatives can significantly improve educational services' quality. These statements also confirmed the study's first hypothesis, which was that several important socio-cultural initiatives in the modern educational space affect the quality of educational policy implementation in general. These results also correlate with the opinions of other scholars who have pointed out that modern social or cultural events that take place at the university play an important role in building trust and cooperation in modern teams (Aba, 2019; Balsero et al., 2021; Golod et al., 2022). Also, according to other works, certain socio-cultural measures are effective only when they meet basic social and cultural needs and develop 21st-century skills (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2020; Oleksiyenko et al., 2023). Other scholars have emphasised the importance of conducting a long-term monitoring process of certain socio-cultural forms through the lens of inclusiveness (Lopatina et al., 2023).

At the same time, in comparison to this methodological approach, this paper focuses on a medium-term analysis, which allows us to consider not only the initial feedback but also subsequent transformations.

The next task was to identify effective socio-cultural events. Thus, it was determined that important socio-cultural forms in modern higher education institutions are the organisation of cultural events, weeks of culture and art events, theme nights, exhibitions, concerts, volunteering, charity events, international cooperation and participation in sports competitions or events with a competitive form. The analysis has shown that the greatest impact on engagement and social integration is made by activities promoting intercultural communication and those based on volunteering. This is due to the current military realities. These results partially correlate with other works. In particular, the authors point not only to introducing various forms of socio-cultural activities but also to the involvement of innovative solutions based on modern technologies (Zayachuk, 2024; Dzhyim et al., 2023). Thus, other scholars' results confirmed these opinions and pointed to the importance of using digital technologies that improve the efficiency of the educational process (Devterov et al., 2024; Kumar, 2024; Mystakidis et al., 2021). Other scholars have also pointed out the limitations of traditional formats that do not always meet the expectations of the digital generation and do not correspond to the innovative labour market (Elisa Raffaghelli, 2020; Lysenko et al., 2024; Wilson et al., 2022). These statements also contribute to the confirmation of the second hypothesis, which concerns the fact that the preservation of socio-cultural forms positively impacts the quality of the educational process and increases the level of interaction in the HEI community.

The next research task was to describe the main challenges and prospects for their solution to ensure educational policy in the security quality of socio-cultural forms of higher education. Thus, it has been identified that most higher education institutions ensure adequate security for socio-cultural events (75%). The most common challenges were physical threats and conflicts between participants of socio-cultural events and stressful situations. This is because respondents identified the impact of hostilities on various events. This also correlates with the findings of other researchers who have indicated that war has significantly changed the nature of organising and conducting events in higher education institutions. During the period of hostilities, the key challenges include the restriction of physical presence due to danger, emotional and psychological stress of students and teachers, and reduced resources (Abusamra, 2024; Cogorno et al., 2023; Streitwieser et al., 2018; Antoniuk, 2023). At the same time, as other authors point out, during this period, socio-cultural activities and individual innovative solutions are becoming important tools for maintaining psychological resilience and social cohesion of academic communities (Lugovyi et al., 2023; Skoryk et al., 2024; Safarli et al., 2024). The theoretical value of the study is to identify the main prospects for further development of ensuring the safety of socio-cultural events within higher education institutions. Therefore, to further improve the security of socio-cultural events, it is important to introduce innovative solutions in the conduct of events and the system of increasing security (Tekin & Tekdogan, 2015). A notable requirement is to improve organisational episodes, the planning system, and access to inclusiveness.

The methodology used in this study has its limitations, which should be considered when working with this article's main results. The survey method reflects certain aspects of subjectivity, as respondents' experiences may differ. Accordingly, the scores they give also require careful interpretation, as some respondents' experiences and perceptions may differ from those of other respondents. As a result, we can talk about certain adjustments in the results, although the answers received are generally unambiguous. For this reason, this limitation indicates certain details, while the general trends remain quite unanimous. Likewise, the Likert scale is subjective - this applies primarily to borderline ratings, as the difference between "good" and "very good" may not be decisive for individual experiences. However, such limitations do not negate the main results; they can only be a subject for further research.

Conclusions

Therefore, the educational policy of quality security of socio-cultural forms of higher education institutions is an urgent problem given current challenges. In particular, it is also due to the Russian armed aggression, as in such conditions, universities are turning into separate institutions to stabilise the social situation, including protecting young people. The survey showed a fairly high level of involvement in socio-cultural forms, demonstrating the active internal work in educational institutions, even during martial law. The



survey found that socio-cultural forms in higher education institutions strengthen the cohesion and quality of socio-cultural forms of interaction in higher education institutions. The survey has shown that when determining the aspects that influence the quality and level of organisation of socio-cultural events, respondents primarily consider the content. Information support for events and their effective organisation are also important. At the same time, volunteer activity is popular under martial law, which is, to some extent, perceived as an investment in security. The organisation of various cultural initiatives and sports competitions is considered less important. Although higher education institutions are adequately protected from external threats, the physical security challenge of Russian aggression dominates. The study pointed to a lack of communication ethics. The majority of respondents indicated the need to increase security and improve organisational episodes, planning and access to inclusiveness. At the same time, these requirements do not affect the general desire of respondents to continue participating in socio-cultural events.

It is important to consider a certain model, which the study further confirms, for the further development of the security environment of socio-cultural projects.

In particular, it is about the formation and further modernisation of security environments (ensuring physical, psychological and information security), the development of extracurricular initiatives for higher education students and teachers, strengthening social cohesion through joint participation in events, and improving the quality of education. Taking these norms into account will allow further development of socio-cultural forms of higher education. In general, the results obtained allowed us to confirm the hypothesis that the preservation of socio-cultural forms has a positive impact on the quality of the educational process and increases the level of interaction in the HEI community.

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