

# Educational Imperatives of the Administrative Culture in Ukraine: An Empirical Approach

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The paper explores the role of education in the formation of administrative culture. The objective of the research is to identify the attitude of civil servants to education in the context of shaping the administrative culture. The findings of empirical research in the educational practice (new curricula and disciplines, forms of teaching) and in the administrative activity helps to identify and solve pressing problems in the formation and implementation of new features of the administrative culture of civil servants of various ranks, of acting politicians, and of administrative managers. In the studying of administrative culture, we applied both, the latest and classic methods of research, such as the expert survey, in-depth interview, online-survey of respondents, scientific-practical developments on problems of education, science, politics and public administration, according to M. Weber. The research confirms that the educational process is determined by the values inherent in it. It is illustrated by the findings of surveys of civil servants from the national and local levels. The educational development strategy should be guided by the values available in society. Empirical research is measuring a correlation of educational process development. The Ukrainian experience may be of use to countries (especially in the former USSR area) that are reforming civil service by implementing changes into educational policy. The changes should be guided by the value imperatives of the educational process. This is the novelty of the research.

**Key words:** *Administrative culture, Education, Empirical research, Government, Society, The state.*

## **Introduction**

Present Ukrainian society and the state are gradually moving to the principles of public policy and public administration, thus requiring well-designed reforms in the social-political field. We believe that the need is vividly illustrated by the reform in the education sector, starting from general secondary education institutions and ending with the higher education institutions. Unfortunately, today they do not meet the needs of Ukrainian society, as noted in the 2019 World Bank Report about the education in Ukraine (World Bank, 2019). Hence, there are issues in the role and meaning of the administrative culture of officials from governmental institutions. The state is growing and acquiring completely new trends and mature reformist decisions. Open public policy also involves the interrelation and cooperation between the authorities and civil society organisations. The Ukrainian society will only benefit from it, since it will get new professional leaders at different levels, starting from local self-government and ending with the central government. In our opinion, solutions to educational and administrative issues come from the realm of critical social-political tasks of the Ukrainian authorities. It is necessary to apply both advanced educational and public administration technologies of the West (for example, such countries as Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, or USA), as well as our national heritage. Every society creates an education system according to its nature and level of social-economic development. The educational system reflects the challenges and needs of society in a particular historical period. In present-day society, education has ceased to be merely an institute of accumulation and translation of experience. Today, it is also an institute of innovation and prospective progress.

Therefore, we would like to explore the leverage and opportunities of education, knowledge, professionalism, competence, and science in the formation and consolidation of administrative culture among professionals in public administration. For this purpose, empirical materials have been used either to confirm or refute our research hypothesis. At the same time, educational process shall be treated as a separate aspect, as a component of civil servants training. Thus, we consider it necessary to determine the features of its impact on the formation of administrative culture, and to find out the attitude of civil servants to education and administrative culture.

## ***Research Hypothesis***

We put forward a hypothesis that the level of education, skills, and competences, managerial professionalism, as well as the peculiarities of the educational process, should play by far the most important role in the formation and promoting of administrative culture among leaders and civil servants from local and central government. Will our assumption be confirmed by survey results among Ukrainian civil servants?

## Literature Review

Scientific-theoretical and methodological problems of educational imperatives inherent in administrative culture have been tackled by Western scientists from different fields and countries, such as Germany, USA, France, and also from Ukraine. To exemplify with the global-scale classic authors, we should mention the prominent researcher of sociology, political science, and administrative ideas M. Weber (1998). One of the founders of sociology as a science, E. Durkheim, belongs to the same cohort. Other important contributions come from the works by an American philosopher and educator J. Dewey, and a social philosopher and psychologist E. Fromm (2004).

Education as a subject of academic research does not lose its relevance. Thus, the World Bank's 2018 World Development Report was first devoted entirely to education, which is central to global development (World Bank, 2018). Its internationally comparable learning assessments show that skills in many middle-income countries lag far behind, as compared to what those countries aspired for. Moreover, it highlighted that a crisis in education can be overcome upon taking an adaptive approach to reform. At the same time, it is emphasised that fulfilling the potential of education requires better policies — both within and outside the education system. The World Bank's 2019 Review of the Educational Sector in Ukraine (World Bank, 2019) also describes the Context for Education Reform in Ukraine, taking into account its historical, economic, and social features (Euromaidan, war with Russia, etc.). It provides a basis to find ways to implement real changes in Ukrainian education for the sake of prosperity. In our view, it could be possible when considering education as a tool for forming an administrative culture.

A new study published in the "Science" by Cornell University (Kim et al., 2018) found out that education can be leveraged to help enhance an individual's economic decision-making quality or economic rationality, which testifies to the impact of education on the formation of administrative culture through shaping of specific skills. A study by Sonja Kassenboehmer, Felix Leung, and Stefanie Schurer (2018) shows that university life and its duration, impact the formation of non-cognitive skills (for students from disadvantaged backgrounds) more than the degree-specific curricula of the academic course, or teaching quality. It prompts empirical studies of the educational process itself.

Regarding the administrative culture, MacCarthaigh, M., and Saarniit, L. (2019) recognise the varied interpretation of the term. At the same time, focus is made on the role of norms and values in the activities of certain organisations and in the interaction between them. This research prompts us to explore the value of educational imperatives in forming an administrative culture. In their work, Onder M. & Nyadera I.N. (2020) committed to comparing the public administration cultures in the developed countries (e.g., Canada, USA, and Western Europe) and in the developing countries (including Ukraine, Georgia, and Turkey) while

focusing on the differences. At the same time, it is argued that problems such as corruption, over-centralisation and nepotism are being overcome increasingly more often. Despite the fact that most developing countries are still lagging behind in this dimension, there are reasonable indications in the long run.

Recently, Ukrainian researchers have also embarked on this issue: V. Ohnevjuk considers the features of educational policy as a priority for the government policies (Ohnevjuk, 2014); M. Halchenko views the idea of freedom in education as a value (Halchenko, 2018). T. Hrebenyk (2018) emphasises the formation of the administrative culture of higher education applicants as a necessary component for their professionalism.

### **Research Methodology**

In the analysis and overview of current problems in educational imperatives of administrative culture, we used the primary empirical studies (public survey method) on experts who are taking courses at the National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine (hereinafter- NAPA), at the Institute for In-Service Training of Senior Executives, and at Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (hereinafter - ChNU). The survey used the questionnaire "Ways to Form an Administrative Culture" (in October and November 2019, 107 respondents were interviewed: 37 men and 70 women) (Honiukova & Perzhun, 2019). Further, we also used the secondary in-depth interviews and extensive online surveys of reform experts via the questionnaire "Research of Organisational Culture of Public Service in Ukraine" carried out in the period of 2018-2019, jointly with the "Professional Government Association" (PGA), Kyiv School of Economics (KSE), Centre for Democracy, Development and Rule of Law of Stanford University (California, USA), and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU) (Moskalu, 2019). 21 in-depth interviews (10 women and 11 men) were conducted, and 450 online questionnaires were submitted with 63 responses received (14%). Best practices in this field by M. Weber and contemporary Ukrainian researchers have also been used.

### **Results and Discussion**

In his work "Science as a Vocation and Profession," M. Weber analysed the social-historical progress of science as a kind of social phenomenon from which knowledge, cognition, and education actually came. He wrote that Socrates, in discussions with his students, claimed that understanding the beautiful, the good, and the mindful things about oneself through learning would lead to an understanding of how persons should act in their life as citizens of the state (Weber, 1998). M. Weber's perspective is reasonable because it is through knowledge, education, upbringing, and socialisation that the basic principles of administrative culture are formed in managerial activity, such as the world outlook, moral convictions, the spiritual

dimension of the leader, code of ethics, responsibility for their decisions, and openness (as far as possible and appropriate in specific state affairs).

Education and public administration are becoming an essential combination for politicians and managers today, since it is difficult to exercise management without specific and sufficient knowledge of philosophical, political, sociological, administrative, and economic ideas. Governing a state without education, knowledge, skills, and experience can lead to adverse consequences in the healthy functioning of society and the state. It is necessary to take lessons from history and not repeat the mistakes of past generations. This is the function the education, social and humanitarian knowledge, and science should have in shaping the values of the administrative culture. Such a history lesson is, in the words of I. Kant, a categorical imperative, a moral law (Kant, 2004), which should teach executives not to repeat the painful mistakes of the socio-historical past.

Due to difficult socio-political problems, modern Ukrainian society highly needs a good reform of all spheres of life, and especially some new approaches in the education of future executives. Due to its quality, the higher education in Ukraine is in a state of stagnation and needs reform in the context of European integration and globalization (Zaskaleta, 2019). Concerning academic issues, teaching and learning at universities remain focused on the acquisition of knowledge, often with outdated content that is not adapted to the needs of contemporary students or new trends, research or technology. In this respect, there is a critical imbalance in the Ukrainian education system. Ukraine's education system has been undergoing reform for many years. Today, there is no clear or coherent vision for the development of higher education or individual universities. This is a fundamental problem: higher education in Ukraine cannot meet the needs of people and of the economy without clear goals and strategy for achieving it (World Bank, 2019). In order to identify the needs in teaching civil servants, a survey was conducted, which findings results are presented further in this research.

Considering that the values of future generations are formed through education, scientists pay special attention to the fact that it (education) is the basis for the formation of values of civil servants. According to N. Sorokina, the efficiency of public administration reform and the effectiveness of carrying out social transformation depend on the world outlook of civil servants, their system of values, and social development guidelines. T. Lukina notes that education and all of its means help develop a moral and ethical culture of personality. Education develops professional competences (administrative, communication, evaluative, humanistic, strategic planning, etc.) of all public administration actors (public managers, public administrators, civil servants, representatives of local self-government bodies, active members of civil society, civil society, CSOs, and citizens in general) (Chyrkova, 2019). In our opinion, it is important to emphasise that education forms the future leaders. At the same time, leadership is a public administration paradigm, the essence of which corresponds to the current realities and trends of social development.

In general, the study of the phenomenon of education and its impact on the organisation of administrative activities allowed us to distinguish the following features:

- 1) education is the basis for the formation of values of both society and the individual, which makes it a means of overcoming value chaos;
- 2) education forms the values of public administrators who undertake responsibility for managing the state and solving public problems (for Ukraine, such values should be honesty, patriotism, intolerance to corruption and others, which will significantly improve the quality of government);
- 3) education is a consolidating factor that unites civil society, government and business (which, in turn, leads to enhanced democracy and overcoming of conflicts between the above institutions);
- 4) education is the basis for the formation of human capital which is able to accelerate the development of the state;
- 5) education is the foundation of economic, political, social and military power of the state (through the formation of values of society and human capital);
- 6) education contributes to the development of civil society, leading to increased levels of democracy and active and conscious participation of citizens in decision-making processes;
- 7) education is one of the factors contributing to the continuous development of the state;
- 8) education is a means of governing the society and public consciousness for the state's goals.

Therefore, all of the above suggests that education is a leading factor in the formation of administrative culture.

This view is one of the theories underlying the study conducted by the Professional Government Association (PGA), the Kyiv School of Economics (KSE) and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU). It consisted of two stages (Moskalu, 2019). The first stage of the study was a series of in-depth interviews, aimed at highlighting the cultural differences between the so-called "millennial" civil servants and the "previous" generation of civil servants (21 interviews with a sampling of the most knowledgeable civil servants from ministries and agencies). The second stage consisted of conducting surveys (open-ended survey) on the main factors of the new culture of government.

Main research questions are the following:

- Is there a "new" culture of public service? The Vision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (Ministerial Vision) and the Vision of Civil Servants;
- What are the expectations to the perception of attitude and behaviour/norms and values of Ukrainian reformers with Western education?;
- What is the change-making capacity of civil servants?;
- Is the mentality of civil servants change-oriented?;



- How do the Ukrainian ministries and the government incentivise changes and civil service reform proper?

The analysis of in-depth interviews identified the following findings:

- a lack of system-based approach in the cooperation between ministries and agencies; an insufficient ability to establish personal contacts, indicating to a lack or low level of communication skills;
- a lack of strategic understanding of the civil service reform, which indicates to some flawed analytical skills;
- some ideas have been expressed about the skill to simulative deception of the actual work; it can be seen as lack of responsibility as a value;
- the motivation for civil servants includes growth prospects, belief in political leadership, feeling of the result, ability of leaders to listen; value and respect for a civil servant;
- insufficient understanding of the usefulness of civil service for self-development;
- low initiative in the civil service is caused by the imperfection of the system, which "punishes" the proactivity;
- there is a perception of bureaucracy both as a positive and a negative phenomenon at the same time (in this respect, it might be useful for civil servants to get acquainted with M. Weber's doctrine on bureaucracy);
- morality is recognised as a crucial factor. At the same time, there is an opinion that "not to steal and not to lie is the maximum expectation and requirement possible;"
- meritocratic promotion is possible at lower levels, but higher levels require "assistance" or rather political co-ordination, indicating to a non-acceptance of integrity and partial presence of corruption;
- there is a fear among government officials for getting out of their comfort zone;
- the highest governmental agencies are characterized by irresponsibility, especially with regard to long-term commitments. (Moskalu, 2019)

Data from an open online survey of reform experts also show only a partial presence of honesty and responsibility, as well as insufficient encouragement for respect of ethical and moral principles, and lack of autonomy. Generally, the majority of respondents noted a certain level of professional culture. At the same time, some answers demonstrated the existence of a "division" of employees into the "old" (long-time workers) and the "new" ones (most of whom have modern Ukrainian or international education). The latter category is also referred to as the "outsiders."

It is important to note the types of answers that respondents as sources of administrative culture themselves offered to the question "What measures could improve the culture in the civil service?" They claimed that the culture of the civil service could be enhanced via education and training tools. The answers list, among others, the following methods: training workshops

on modern approaches to administration and teamwork, team building events, and informal communication.

Thus, it is worth noting, that scientific analysis of the research results reveals three key success factors for reforms: 1) genuine political will; 2) communication and education; 3) negotiations and participation. At the same time, we believe education to be a major factor among the above three. This opinion is confirmed by the findings of the World Bank researchers. The defining goal of all education systems is to improve the skills of people. The highest-performing, most effective and fast advancement education systems around the world have a clear vision of the knowledge and skills they want to shape to enable students to actively participate as capable employees and engaged citizens. Educational systems are structured and oriented towards the focus on learning, among other objectives they set. They align their frameworks, institutions, resources, and people to this goal. However, it takes time, effort, actions, and reforms from many people and institutions (World Bank, 2019).

Having analysed the survey results, we consider it appropriate to propose one of the recommendations for overcoming the negative phenomena. In particular, it is to continue the reform and enhance the system of training and advancement of qualification for civil servants. Notably, we suggest reforming the institutions that ensure their professional growth. The findings are not unexpected since they testify to the lack of various skills and competences, and to specific knowledge as such. Besides, there is not enough understanding of the importance of such things as cooperation, initiative, autonomy, honesty, or openness to social values. In our opinion, it is impossible to overcome the identified challenges without changing the education system. The most typical answers and proposals suggested by the respondents regarding the successful reform of public administration in Ukraine can be summarised as follows:

- system-based training is required to make reforms more effective, as it is difficult to learn policy analysis during some three training sessions;
- old-school civil servants noted that there were few people seeking self-development, such as to learn things and to acquire new knowledge, but at the same time they claimed the willingness to learn was rather common among the younger generation of civil servants;
- 50% of respondents stated the importance of competence in their work, while competence also depends on education and a certain level of knowledge;
- 39% of respondents believe that the success of programs to reform important spheres of society (medicine, education, social protection, economy, political institutions, etc.) depends in general on innovative approaches to work, especially among central authorities (Moskalu, 2019).



What measures, according to respondents, would further improve the implementation of administrative culture in the civil service? The vast majority of respondents (over 80%) believe the solution is in conducting various training workshops, lectures, practical lessons on modern approaches to administrative culture, as well as the importance of creating a consolidated team of professional administrators, informal communication, and a clear division of responsibilities in the work process. (Moskalu, 2019).

Thus, based on the opinions and suggestions of the respondents, the authors of the research hereby note that the success of reforms largely depends on the introduction of such concept in our public administration as *networkcracy* (governance through trust). Another important factor is the development of innovative administrative technologies which depend on education and interaction of two major components of administrative culture: human capital and social capital, where human capital is individual education, knowledge, skills, professionalism, etc., and social capital is a kind of healthy interaction between administrative culture actors at different levels, both among themselves and within civil society. Among the crucial factors of the reform programs implemented in present-day Ukraine, respondents mentioned the genuine political will of leaders and politicians, communication and education, negotiations, and participation in the reform of proactive and professional representatives of civil society. As respondents believe, successful continuation and implementation of reforms will largely depend on improved training opportunities for civil servants offered by the institutions providing for their professional advancement (Moskalu, 2019). These are the National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine; its regional institutes; the Institute for In-Service Training of Senior Executives; regional centres of local self-government; relevant faculties and departments of universities.

In order to study the principles and ways of forming the administrative culture among the representatives of public authorities in Ukraine, the Department of Public Development and Public-Government Relations of NAPA and the Department of Sociology, Social Security and Local Self-Government of ChNU joined their efforts in 2019 to run an expert survey among civil servants on the "Ways to Form an Administrative Culture." There was no common standard answer to the question "How do you understand the concept of the administrative culture?". We believe it is a positive outcome since experts have their own opinions, which is an important and relevant feature for the modern government official. Next follow some definitions of the administrative culture suggested by women experts: "Timely study and implementation of scientific developments," "The degree of responsibility for administrative actions," "The set of knowledge, values, skills, and behaviours of leaders, in particular, the etiquette, used in the administration of social systems and organisations," "Culture in general, culture and level of governing bodies, their actions for the development of society." The male respondents had the following answers: "The set of values, knowledge, skills, norms of behaviour of representatives of authorities," "Professionalism, experience, introduction of new

technologies," "Public administration culture is the ability to build a process of administration and organise work in society to achieve the tasks set," "This is a system-based concept that includes knowledge and administrative skills," "A set of professional, ethical, moral, psychological qualities of the administrator that define the peculiarities of their activity," "Methods and forms of planning, organisation, and implementation of measures to manage subordinates" (Honiukova & Perzhun, 2019).

Another question to illustrate it is "What do you think is the most important thing in the process of forming an administrative culture?" Here, education was mentioned by 45.9% of men and 47.1% of women. This result confirms that civil servants who acted as experts are aware, to a certain extent, that the level of education has an important role to play, both in general in administrative activities, and in the administrative culture of senior executives.

Other constituent elements of administrative culture that the respondents stated as relevant to education are found in the answers to the question "What do you think are the elements of administrative culture that are most important in public administration?" Thus, 83.7% of men and 84.2% of women listed public administration knowledge and skills. These opinions of experts suggest that despite basic education, respondents who have become civil servants feel the need to gain the knowledge in administration.

The questionnaire also included a question about the administrative culture of public administration actors, namely, "What structural elements of the administrative culture are fundamental for the modern manager?" The suggested answers listed knowledge, experience, practical skills, and professionalism. In fact, all of them can be attained through the educational degree of a civil servant. 75.6% of men and 72.8% of women selected this answer as crucial for the public administrator.

Thus, the responses appear to be almost perfect, particularly, in terms of education of government officials. They realise and comprehend the importance of knowledge, skills, experience, professionalism, communication skills, responsibility, in their work. The empirical research and comparisons of scientific approaches to the development of the administrative culture offer to us the grounds to distinguish the imperatives of the administrative culture of modern civil servants and the value of education:

- family upbringing, first-time education at a secondary school;
- further education at higher education institutions, where it acquires individual features and peculiarities, enrichment of knowledge, the shaping of the worldview of a personality;
- the gradual formation of a professional approach to administrative activities;



- continuous self-improvement, learning, self-development, acquiring new knowledge when "the first need following the bread is the need for learning," according to Georges Jacques Danton, a political figure of the French bourgeois revolution;
- affirmation of a certain system of values that meets both the requirements of society and the "ideal" administrative culture;
- expanding the range of educational services in the sphere of professional training for civil servants;
- increasing the number of entities providing such services (various forms of ownership) and creating conditions for fair competition among them.

## Conclusions

The empirical approach to research the role and importance of education in the formation of administrative culture is multifaceted. It is obvious we were not able to cover all aspects and problems of this subject. The main focus was on educational imperatives in forming the principles of the administrative culture, such as education, training, and further socialisation of an individual; professionalism in work based on knowledge and a certain educational degree; individual self-improvement, continuous training, acquisition of new knowledge, skills and abilities; formation and affirmation of value orientations when education is perceived as social value; expansion of public and private educational services; attraction of positive foreign experience in education and public administration. The education system of civil servants in Ukraine has not completed its formation yet. Identifying the needs of civil servants guides the education reform to the end result of highlighting the values of the educational process. The value-based approach is important for clarifying the level of ambitions introduced into the current reform agenda, and for identifying potential problems with its implementation. This experience of identifying values of educational imperatives of public administrators in Ukraine may be of use to other researchers.

We believe, further in-depth research is needed for scientific and practical visions, such as science and public administration; national social and cultural heritage of education and science; comparative studies of administrative activities and culture in Ukraine in different historical periods; the role and importance of the latest social technologies in education, science, and public administration; recent developments in policy-making, social-economic, and social-cultural areas in the leading countries of the world, and application of their best practices in Ukraine, etc.

Our research is independent, and it does not bear any conflicts of ethical standards with other studies.



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