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## **PEDAGOGICAL ELITE – UKRAINE'S NATIONAL POTENTIAL**

**Abstract.** This article offers a theoretical and practical analysis of the pedagogical elite, an important part of Ukrainian society. The authors aim to highlight issues related to the pedagogical elite through the lens of conflicting perspectives. Specifically, they address the ambiguous attitude towards the very concept of "elite"; the lack of research into the psychological and pedagogical traits of the elite; the absence of clear criteria for identifying the elite; and the growing importance of various types of elites in stabilizing, integrating, and developing the social system. It is emphasized that the pedagogical elite is the most professionally competent, authoritative, proactive, and creative segment of the pedagogical community.

The article reveals the importance of the pedagogical elite in shaping future citizens and highlights the close connection between the concept of the pedagogical elite and the main directions of civic education. It presents the historical background for the emergence and development of the term "elite." The social mobility of elite members is also noted. The authors point out that the pedagogical elite acts as the national potential of the state. It shows that forming elite awareness involves developing a clear civic stance – a conscious attitude of an individual towards society and the state.

The authors use the concepts of "elite," "pedagogical elite," "national elite," "scientific elite," and "elite education" as the theoretical foundation of the study, providing a basis for scientific approaches. The article identifies and describes various scientific approaches to interpreting elite consciousness as a key indicator of the formation of a pedagogical elite (psychological, philosophical, axiological). It also establishes criteria for assessing the level of development of pedagogical consciousness, including cognitive, value, and personal aspects.

**Keywords:** elite, pedagogical elite, national elite, elite consciousness, civic education, pedagogical education.

## **ПЕДАГОГІЧНА ЕЛІТА – НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ УКРАЇНИ**

**Анотація.** У статті запропоновано теоретико-практичний аналіз проблеми наявності педагогічної еліти – важливого складника українського суспільства. Автори пропонують розкриття проблематики педагогічної еліти через призму виокремлення суперечностей (неоднозначне ставлення до самого поняття «еліта»; недослідженість проблеми психолого-педагогічних ознак еліти та відсутність відповідних критеріїв виокремлення еліти; щораз більшим значенням різних типів еліт для стабілізації та інтеграції соціальної системи та її поступального розвитку, пошуку шляхів для їх реалізації). Наголошено, що педагогічна еліта – це найбільш професійно компетентна, авторитетна, ініціативна та творча частина педагогічної спільноти.



У статті розкрито значення педагогічної еліти для формування майбутніх громадян, показано тісний взаємозв'язок між змістовим наповненням поняття педагогічної еліти та провідними напрямками громадянського виховання. Показано історичні передумови виникнення та розвитку поняття «еліта», зазначено на соціальній мобільності представників еліт. Авторами зазначено, що педагогічна еліта є національним потенціалом держави; показано, що сформованість елітної свідомості передбачає формування чіткої громадянської позиції – усвідомленого ставлення людини до суспільства та держави.

Автори пропонують для теоретичної основи дослідження зміст понять «еліта», «педагогічна еліта», «національна еліта», «наукова еліта», «елітна освіта», що слугували для обґрунтування наукових підходів. У статті виокремлено та схарактеризовано наукові підходи трактування елітної свідомості як необхідного показника сформованості представника педагогічної еліти (психологічний, філософський, аксіологічний); визначено критерії оцінювання рівня сформованості педагогічної свідомості (когнітивний, ціннісний, особистісний).

**Ключові слова:** еліта, педагогічна еліта, національна еліта, елітна свідомість, громадянське виховання, педагогічна освіта.

## INTRODUCTION

**The problem formulation.** The humanitarian development of Ukraine primarily involves building a civil society based on democratic values and creating a new quality of life. This can be achieved through civil unity, political cohesion of Ukrainian society, and the integration of regions into a unified Ukrainian spiritual, humanitarian, political, and economic space.

An important factor stimulating this process is the provision of state standards and state social guarantees, a decent standard of living for every citizen. It is also obvious that the state strategy for forming a single humanitarian space should be based on ensuring the sovereignty of the Ukrainian cultural and information field and forming a national civic identity (New Course, 2010, p. 69).

The term elite began to be actively used in scientific terminology at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In a broad sociological context, it denotes the highest, relatively closed stratum of society that controls its main economic, political, and cultural resources. In scientific and educational contexts, the term “elite” is usually not used. Unfortunately, belonging to the scientific (educational) elite is not a very common or privileged phenomenon in our society.

At the same time, M. Veselsky, the director of the Radovel charitable foundation, emphasizes: “All other elites are formed by the pedagogical elite! The key person of this elite is the teacher. Teaching is service! The key skill of a teacher is to find talent” (Pedagogical Elite of Ukraine, 2023).

Talented elite scientists develop from gifted children, who need to be identified early in preschool and nurtured to prevent talent loss. The elite education of the nation's intelligentsia begins exactly at preschool age.

## PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

To reveal the content of the concept of “pedagogical elite”, to determine the features of the formation of the pedagogical elite through the lens of elite consciousness; to identify approaches to the interpretation of elite consciousness, and to determine the criteria for assessing the formation of elite consciousness.

## RESEARCH METHODS

In the research process, methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization were used to study and systematize the results of scientific research, identify leading scientific approaches addressing the issues of the pedagogical elite.

## RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

It is important to note that modern pedagogical education is seen as not only an independent branch of professional education but also as a system-shaping factor of the entire national education system, which should play a leading role among other types and levels of education. We emphasize that the leading role of pedagogical education involves:

- its fundamental nature;
- focus on developing readiness for innovative changes;
- assessing the quality of students' professional training based on the best global practices in teacher education;
- guiding students toward future professional competitiveness, etc.

The Encyclopedia of Modern Ukraine offers a definition of the term “national elite,” which is understood as a part of a nation that assumes the roles of its leader and manager across political, cultural, economic, and other spheres. The earliest modern theories of elites emerged at the beginning of the 20th century (including thinkers like V. Pareto and G. Mosca), and over time, various versions of these theories and the concept itself have evolved. Some researchers defend the idea that society does not have just one elite but many. The presence of multiple elites, along with their social mobility, creates numerous power centers, enabling control over various structures from the presidential apparatus to the media. The competitive nature of political and other social spheres helps slow monopolistic tendencies and promotes rational social decision-making. The openness of the social system, in turn, enhances personal freedom for citizens (Grabovsky, 2025).

We agree with the positions of H. Vasyanovych and O. Budnyk, who note that the concept of “pedagogical elite” reflects the activities of the most advanced scientific and pedagogical class aimed at the spiritual-moral, cultural-educational, and professional development of learners. Clearly, such activities are rooted in principles of a scientific worldview, humanistic values, freedom, and democracy. In this context, researchers also point out another aspect: the activities of the pedagogical elite are gaining special significance because they also attain the status of meta-activity;



therefore, through their efforts, a holistic new person is being cultivated. As a part of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, the pedagogical elite serves as a powerful carrier of spirituality, morality, the entire cultural heritage of the nation, and society as a whole. The authors, objectively evaluating this highly complex process, acknowledge that not all efforts of the pedagogical elite produce positive results. Naturally, this raises questions about the reasons behind this (Vasyanovych, Budnyk, 2017, p. 101).

On February 16, 2023, the International Pedagogical Forum "Pedagogical Elite of Ukraine: Value Guidelines" (<https://naps.gov.ua/ua/press/releases/2949/>) was held at the Mykhailo Dragomanov Ukrainian State University. The organizers of the Forum: the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Mykhailo Dragomanov Ukrainian State University, the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, the International Association of Rectors of Pedagogical Universities of Europe, and the Polish-Ukrainian Partnership Charitable Foundation. Educators from Lviv, Kharkiv, Vinnytsia, Poltava, Lutsk, Chernivtsi, and Khmelnytskyi participated in the Forum. The event was prompted by social demands for the modernization of pedagogical education in the global dimension of security, which require a specialist of a new formation – morally mature, with an awareness of national identity, able to work in the deoccupied territories with children who were under the influence of Russian propaganda for some time.

The president of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, academician of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine V. Kremen emphasized the innovative nature of the current stage of development of Ukrainian society. The importance of education in the development of the individual, as well as the training of teachers in the context of modern civilizational challenges, was noted. Based on the opinions and ideas expressed, the Forum adopted a decision. It stated that the participants of the Forum had come together to consolidate solidarity efforts in improving the professional skills of the pedagogical elite and developing strategies for continuous education and professional development to form the quality and safety of the educational space in cooperation with international partners. Furthermore, to develop sound organizational and managerial decisions to build a futuristic architecture of the sphere of education, science, and innovation at the cross-border, international, regional, national and departmental, institutional, and university levels (Pedagogical Elite of Ukraine, 2023).

We emphasize: the pedagogical elite is the most professionally competent, authoritative, proactive, and creative part of the pedagogical community, which plays a leading role in the development of education, the implementation of innovations, the formation of educational policy, and the values of society.

In the context of our study, we offer an overview of the content of the concepts of elite education and the scientific elite.

Elite education (translated from French – better, selected, chosen) is a special, privileged education for a narrow circle of young people who have the opportunity to receive it due to the high social status of their parents (social status, material and financial opportunities) or high intelligence indicators at various stages of selection and assessment (final exams in schools and colleges, competitions of talented children, etc.) (Encyclopedia of Education, 2008, pp. 261-262).

As I. Regeilo notes, the scientific elite is the leading stratum of the socio-professional community of scientists, which consists of highly qualified scientists whose professional achievements are significant in science, recognized by the scientific community, and who are aware of their social responsibility both to their socio-professional community and to society as a whole (Regeilo, 2014, p. 184).

The relevance of the researched issues, the state of research of this problem give grounds to assert that the pedagogical elite acts as the national potential of the state. The position of V. Bobrytska is noteworthy, which emphasizes that the state's educational policy provides for the formation of a pedagogical elite, taking into account the idea of civic education (Bobrytska, 2020).

The Concept of Civic Education Development in Ukraine defines the main content areas of civic education (2018). These are:

- human and citizen rights;
- participation of citizens and civil society institutions in conducting state affairs;
- use of the judicial system to protect civil rights; use of other mechanisms for protecting human rights at the national and international levels;
- participation of citizens and civil society institutions in the formation and implementation of state policy, solving issues of local importance, decision-making processes at various levels; responsible attitude to one's duties;
- national-patriotic education;
- critical thinking;
- media education;
- volunteering (Development Concept, 2018).

We are unanimous in the fact that it is the representatives of the pedagogical elite who become key figures in the implementation of the tasks of the main content areas of civic education. The formation of the pedagogical elite involves the formation of elite consciousness of the representatives of this elite. If we interpret consciousness as the ability to know the environment and oneself through attention, thinking, and reason, awareness, self-reflection, and metacognition, then elite consciousness, in our opinion, should be distinguished by certain specific features. First of all, we are talking about a high level of development of critical thinking and the ability to analyze complex, often super-sensitive, problems related to education, the activities of educational institutions, and specialists whose activities are related to education. Therefore, we single out the psychological context of the content of elite consciousness.



The term "consciousness" in philosophy is interpreted as the highest form of reflection of reality, which is inherent in people and is associated with their psyche, abstract thinking, worldview, self-awareness, self-control of their behavior and activity, and predicting the results of the latter. Human consciousness is a set of sensory and ideal images of reality, their activity, and themselves. Hence, the content of consciousness is the experience of their existence in the space-time dimension (Philosophy, 2025). So, in the context of a philosophical approach, we note that spirituality should be added to the signs of elite consciousness as a personal value that is significant for a person, determines the vectors of achieving personal and professional goals, building a professional career, etc.

The formation of elite consciousness involves the formation of a clear civic position, which we interpret as a conscious attitude of a person to society, the state, and the citizen of which is the individual himself. We believe that for representatives of the pedagogical elite, adherence to a clear civic position is the highest indicator of the formation of the personality. It is the educator – a mentor, educator, teacher – who influences the formation and development of the personality of pupils and students at different age stages, ensures the formation of civic competence and the necessary moral qualities.

### CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Thus, the problem of the pedagogical elite is a relevant, important, and little-studied area of domestic pedagogical science. The presence of contradictory aspects of the interpretation of the content of the concept of elite itself is due to the long-standing ambiguous attitude towards the very stratum of society, the elite, which for a long time was associated precisely with representatives of the ruling power in the state. We consider the substantiation of the criteria for assessing the formation of the pedagogical elite, which we define as: cognitive, value, and personal, as well as the search for appropriate methods for their verification, as prospects for further scientific research.

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