

# Formation And Development of National Identity Among University Students

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**Abstract:** The article discusses the essence and conceptual content of the notion of national identity, its role, significance, objectives, and functions in the life of an individual and society.

The author emphasizes that the cultural and spiritual heritage of our country serves as a key factor in the process of shaping national identity among the youth.

It is noted that, in order to develop the sense of national identity in the consciousness of young people, it is essential to cultivate such fundamental components of self-awareness as national consciousness, national pride, national honor, national sentiment, and national character.

**Keywords:** Identity, national identity, self-awareness, formation of national identity among youth, historical memory, ancestral heritage, information society.

**Introduction:** The historical development of humankind demonstrates that self-awareness primarily manifests itself through spiritual reality — through human dignity, honor, self-respect, and moral integrity. The comprehension of the meaning and purpose of life begins with self-understanding.

Self-awareness also entails the ability of a nation to foresee its own future prospects, which is closely related to the growth of national consciousness and the level of intellectual and cultural development.

An enlightened and highly cultured person lives not only to satisfy present-day needs, but also to foresee and prepare for the future. The ability to envision the future constitutes an integral part of national self-awareness.

To be self-aware means to understand one's homeland, its people, their past, culture, traditions, and values.

National identity, therefore, is an individual's awareness of belonging to a specific nation. It is an inner spiritual and psychological feeling connected with a person's national values, language, religion, customs, culture, and historical memory[1-326].

In other words, national identity encompasses the following dimensions:

- Personal awareness: the individual's perception of belonging to a particular nation;
- System of values: the acceptance, preservation, and appreciation of national language, culture, literature, art, customs, and historical heritage;
- Social belonging: the feeling of pride in being part of one's nation and contributing to its development.

Hence, national identity is a national-level response to the question "Who am I?".

Why is self-awareness important for us, especially in the context of the modern information society? The answer lies in understanding its significance for both personal and societal development.

The 21st century can justly be described as the era of rapidly developing information and technology. Every moment of our lives is marked by new discoveries and innovations that spread across the world almost instantly.

The information society represents a stage of social development formed on the basis of modern technologies, where the production, transmission, and dissemination of information become a dominant factor. In such a society, information and knowledge

emerge as the main resources, while technological progress and information–communication technologies deeply penetrate all aspects of economic, political, and social life.

In this context, new technologies play a crucial role. Innovations such as the Internet, mobile communication, digital platforms, and artificial intelligence have profoundly transformed people’s lifestyles, working patterns, and social interactions. As a result, individuals now spend much of their time in virtual social environments.

It is no secret that we can hardly imagine our lives without the Internet. Therefore, in the era of modern globalization, it is especially important for individuals — particularly for university students — to possess a strong sense of national identity. The deeper a person understands their ancestry and roots, the stronger and more sincere their love for the Motherland becomes. The deeper these roots are, the greater one’s devotion to their homeland will be.

National identity continually reminds individuals of “who they are” and protects them from the influence of alien and destructive ideologies.

National identity strengthens young people’s sense of patriotism — their love for the Motherland, their desire to protect it, and their willingness to contribute to its development. It teaches them to think not only of personal interests but also of national interests, ensuring that while mastering modern knowledge and technologies, they do not lose their sense of national belonging [2-15].

This, in turn, increases their social activity. Young people who are aware of and loyal to their national values do not remain indifferent to the fate of their homeland. They actively participate in social life and feel a deep sense of responsibility for constructive and developmental efforts.

Through national identity, cultural heritage, language, traditions, values, art, and historical memory are transmitted from generation to generation. It unites the people around common goals and ideals, strengthens solidarity and harmony, and ensures social stability. At the same time, it serves as an important factor determining the nation’s prestige in the international arena. Therefore, national identity is the fundamental foundation of an independent state.

In the age of globalization and digital technologies, preserving and developing our national identity has become one of the most urgent challenges facing our society. To foster national identity among young people, it is crucial, first of all, to help them deeply understand their history — to know their ancestry,

their forefathers, and their roots. Indeed, without knowing history, it is impossible to comprehend one’s true identity. This is why history is often called a great teacher, a source of education and moral example.

Modern technologies have created opportunities to widely disseminate national values, traditions, art, and literary works to the public. Today, young people spend much of their time in online spaces. Therefore, it is necessary to create digital content that promotes national values and strengthens self-awareness. Historical, cultural, and scientific heritage should be actively promoted among students through electronic libraries. Television programs, films, and articles that reflect the nation’s historical, cultural, and literary heritage also play a vital role in helping young people develop a deeper understanding of national identity.

Today, we can observe that young people’s interest in national traditions is increasing. There is growing enthusiasm among the youth for celebrating Navruz and Independence Day, for wearing national clothing, participating in cultural festivals, enjoying traditional cuisine, and preserving folk customs. Uzbek students studying abroad are also striving to represent themselves as Uzbeks and to promote national culture internationally [3-58]. In addition, there is a noticeable interest among young people in creating works in their native language and in developing their speech and communication culture.

Despite continuous efforts to promote national values across various spheres, the influence of Western culture on young people is steadily increasing. The widespread dissemination of foreign lifestyles, music, fashion, and patterns of communication through social media platforms has begun to negatively affect the worldview and thinking of youth.

Some young people tend to perceive national values only superficially. For instance, they often regard national holidays merely as days off or formal events, without understanding their deeper spiritual significance. Gaps in historical consciousness, insufficient knowledge of national history, and lack of genuine interest in one’s past are also becoming evident among certain segments of youth.

There are even young individuals who prioritize personal interests over national interests. Such tendencies place them at risk of losing their sense of national identity under the influence of global cultural currents. To prevent such negative developments, it is essential to instill in the hearts and minds of young people a profound sense of national self-awareness [4-67].

In this regard, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has emphasized:

“In the current context of globalization, when new threats — such as the danger of mass culture, dependency mentality, and the erosion of morality and values — are emerging, the preservation and enrichment of the sources that define the spiritual world of humanity and the culture of nations are more important than ever before.”

The ongoing processes of globalization clearly demonstrate their growing influence and impact. In such circumstances, every nation must strive to preserve and enrich its national values and traditions. This process can only be effectively sustained and transmitted to future generations through the active involvement of youth.

Therefore, to develop national self-awareness among young people, it is necessary to cultivate in them five essential criteria of national consciousness:

1. **National Consciousness** – a system of ideas and concepts that express the interests and objectives associated with a nation’s historical destiny and future. It directs the activities and aspirations of its members toward common national goals.
2. **National Pride** – a concept that reflects a sense of dignity derived from an individual’s awareness of their national identity. It encompasses pride in the material and spiritual heritage left by ancestors, the nation’s contribution to world civilization, and the respect and recognition earned by the nation among others.
3. **National Honor** – embodies all aspects of a nation’s moral and spiritual development, its heritage, and its present values. As economic and spiritual achievements increase as a result of national independence, the sense of pride in Uzbekistan — the national sentiment — continues to grow stronger.
4. **National Sentiment** – represents living in unity with the interests of one’s nation and understanding one’s true identity. A person who does not recognize their identity loses their sense of national pride. Belonging to a nation and preserving national distinctiveness are essential conditions of global human development; without national pride, no nation can truly exist as a nation.
5. **National Character** – refers to the distinctive spiritual and psychological traits of the Uzbek people, which have developed over centuries and gradually become deeply ingrained in their collective consciousness, forming part of their cultural and moral fabric.

These criteria constitute the foundation of genuine national self-awareness. Young people who internalize these principles will be capable of making meaningful

contributions to the progress of society. Such a society, in turn, will serve as a strong and stable foundation for a sovereign state.

Today, significant attention is being paid to youth. A notable example of this is the candid dialogue between the President of Uzbekistan and young people, held on February 14, 2025. The meeting, conducted via video conference, focused on expanding opportunities for youth and discussing relevant measures to support their development. During this session, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev openly addressed the numerous opportunities provided to young people, reviewed the initiatives undertaken, and engaged in a frank discussion regarding their achievements and challenges. At the outset of his address, the President expressed his satisfaction with the meeting and referred to youth as the “golden fund” of the nation.

Ensuring youth employment and creating conditions to support their aspirations have become priorities of national policy. The youth policy of Uzbekistan has also been recognized by the international community. Notably, Uzbekistan is among the ten countries actively implementing the United Nations’ “Youth-2030” strategy.

Education is considered the most effective solution for overcoming poverty. Therefore, children from disadvantaged families are encouraged to pursue education through interest-free student loans, additional grants, and assistance with tuition fees. For academically motivated youth facing financial difficulties, a new program, the “Bright Future” project, has been introduced to provide opportunities for studying abroad.

The meeting also addressed the importance of fostering national consciousness among youth and protecting them from ideological attacks and harmful information. Special attention was emphasized for children with difficult upbringings, ensuring that they receive guidance and support to find their place in society.

To strengthen patriotism and instill a sense of national identity, the “Vatan Tayanchi” (Pillar of the Homeland) movement was launched among 10th and 11th-grade students. Over 300,000 young people initially participated. The initiative has since been extended to vocational schools, technical colleges, and private educational institutions, now encompassing over 1 million students. Various competitions and contests are organized within this framework.

Participants in the dialogue emphasized that these programs and initiatives will create broader opportunities for youth, motivating them to pursue their aspirations. It is evident that comprehensive

support and the creation of new opportunities for young people are ongoing priorities, and similar meetings and initiatives are increasingly organized.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is essential to recognize that the responsibility for instilling the values and significance of a free and independent life in young people primarily lies with parents, educators, and mentors. We must remain attentive to the values, cultural orientations, and goals that guide today's youth. The development of national identity, the education of well-rounded individuals, and the maintenance of national statehood stability are all interrelated. By preserving national identity and passing it on to the younger generation, we can raise individuals who are not only loyal to national values but also capable of finding their place in global development as mature, competent, and well-rounded citizens.

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