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PROTECTING YOUNG STUDENTS FROM THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF MASS CULTURE ON NATIONAL CULTURE IN THE ERA OF DIGITALIZATION

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Annotation. This article describes the preservation of student youth from the non-conformity of mass culture to national culture during the period of digitization, mass culture, Homeland, education, information attack, information-psychological struggle, information-psychological operation, information-psychological impact, ideological prevention, idea, etc.
Key words: patriotism, national values, courage, friendship, dedication, national pride, national spirit, courage, loyalty, Homeland.

As a result of the rapid development of information and communication technologies and the processes of globalization, various peoples and ethnic groups across the globe—humanity as a whole, including our own nation—have found themselves exposed to ideological threats that can negatively impact spirituality.

"One can observe that the guidance offered by our ancestors to the younger generation—the principles and requirements for becoming a respected member of society, the heroic feats of our land's legendary figures (such as Alp Er Tunga, Tomyris, Shirak, Jaloliddin Manguberdi, and Temur Malik), as well as the customs and national virtues of our people—are all reflected in our oral folk traditions. These are embodied in proverbs, songs, fairy tales, *dastans* (epics), works created for children, and other genres that have been elevated to the level of true art" [5]. Under these circumstances, a critical task facing researchers and practitioners in the field of youth education is to foster a generation of students who possess a strong sense of national identity, patriotism, and devotion to national traditions and values, while remaining open to universal human values and maintaining a tolerant worldview. Currently, the most dangerous ideological threat capable of negatively influencing the worldview of our people—and the spiritual, moral, and cultural consciousness of our youth—is "mass culture." As the leader of our nation has noted: "We must not overlook the influx of so-called 'mass culture,' which brings with it spiritual and moral vices and base phenomena that are alien to us." In essence, "mass culture" stands in opposition to national cultures. It rejects cultural diversity; its true objective is to render the world uniform and devoid of distinct identity. It draws a person toward animalistic instincts, immorality, and moral decay. A spiritually deficient individual becomes indifferent to events unfolding within society. Such indifference can ultimately lead to serious negative consequences for both society and the state; for a person who is spiritually impoverished, sacred concepts—such as the Motherland, the nation, and the family—become alien and devoid of meaning [5]. This is precisely why our ancestors, when raising the younger generation, prioritized the spiritual development of the individual above all else.

The content and essence of our national spiritual culture and religious values are profoundly beautiful. Students who grow up outside the spirit of this national culture naturally become vulnerable to various foreign influences. The long-standing struggles our people have waged against adversaries—most notably the Uzbek people's fight for independence, their

aspiration to restore a national state, and their historical hopes—form the foundation of the ideas and ideology that have taken shape over the centuries. "The ideas of independence, the struggle to restore a national state, and the hopes of our people have shaped its ideas and ideology" [2]. This ideology is rooted in the people's enduring aspirations for freedom, justice, independence, and the right to determine their own destiny. Within the national culture of Asian peoples, moral virtues—such as a sense of shame, prudence, and respect—are strictly upheld.

"Mass culture" is a manifestation of immorality and malice that stands in opposition to our noble moral values—such as modesty, prudence, responsibility, love, and care—which form the foundation of our national identity. Unfortunately, the influence of "mass culture" is clearly evident today among some students: they dress in ways that run counter to our national culture, embrace and kiss when greeting one another, and participate in various holidays, such as Valentine's Day.

"Mass culture" seeks to undermine the lives and worldviews of young people aged 15 to 25—a critical period when their personalities are being shaped. The challenges facing the student population have always been a pressing concern. Youth is a crossroads where an individual determines the course of their future life. Will they choose the path of a highly cultured, honest, and honorable person, or will they turn toward a life of vice and shamelessness? This depends on both you and us. To shield our students from the threats posed by "mass culture," we must rely on a national ideology rooted in high human qualities and morality. Our focus should be on the pursuit of personal excellence, as well as on the traditions passed down by our ancestors, our beautiful customs, and our religious values—an approach that will undoubtedly yield the desired results. We must not betray our homeland, nor should we live with indifference, failing to contribute to its progress. It is essential that we protect our youth from such negative traits and devote serious attention to their upbringing. Let us encourage our children to engage in sports, pursue their education, master a craft, and cultivate modesty and noble manners. Furthermore, it is important to engage the younger generation in oral folk traditions, the study of crafts, and ancient customs and rituals. Today, the study of cultural heritage receives significant support at the state level; this fosters the spiritual awakening of our people, plays a vital role in educating youth based on national values, and cultivates respect for their own history, culture, language, and religion. It is well known that, from the very first years of our country's independence, a clear objective was set: "to revive national values and spirituality, to restore them to their authentic form, and to purposefully nurture the youth in the spirit of national spirituality" [3].

Today, particular attention should be paid to the content disseminated by mass media regarding such dangerous threats as "mass culture" and "information attacks." History shows that the development of human speech expanded the possibilities for transmitting information, while the advent of writing allowed knowledge to be preserved over long periods, conveyed across great distances—independent of its original creator—and passed down through the centuries. The emergence of newspapers and magazines increased both the speed and the reach of written communication. Radio and television subsequently enabled the transmission of information through sound and imagery, elevating it to a new qualitative level. The contemporary information revolution is linked to the rise of phenomena such as the Internet—rooted in modern computer technology—which synthesizes many of the methods of information transmission that originated in earlier eras.

"Developing young people into individuals capable of fully demonstrating an active civic stance in their behavior is a highly complex and challenging process. Within this process, it is essential to instill in them the ideals of national values" [4]. Thus, the younger generation of today will only be able to gain a deeper understanding of the true essence of their homeland's history if

they possess a thorough knowledge of their own culture, national values, language, religion, and customs. An ideology that guides a nation from revival toward elevation must also be built upon these national values. Mass media serve to rapidly transmit and disseminate information—through words, images, music, and similar means—to a broad audience. The scope of media reach—whether local, national, regional, or international (global)—is a key factor in determining the extent of its influence. Mass media have become a vital component of human life; yet, alongside their positive aspects, their negative influence has also been growing in recent times.

Today, some states employ "information attacks" far more effectively than they do atomic or thermonuclear weapons. This is because mass media possess an immense capacity to shape people's consciousness and emotions, as well as their patterns of thought and behavior. It should be emphasized that the modern evolution of mass media has dramatically expanded the scale and reach of ideological influence. A distinct feature of the ideological pressure exerted through mass media—which requires minimal financial expenditure—is that it operates in a way that is imperceptible to the audience or viewer, and it results in no direct casualties.

Forms of culture such as *bakhshichilik* (the art of the *bakhshi*—traditional folk bards/storytellers) play an important role in the upbringing of university students. In his address, the Head of State noted the following: "The art of *bakhshichilik*, which reflects the national identity of various peoples—their language, way of life, traditions, and customs—is an integral part of universal human culture and is valuable to us all" [1]. As a form of oral folk tradition, *bakhshichilik* is an essential component of national culture and serves as a vital instrument for the spiritual, moral, cultural, and aesthetic development of young people. This art form fosters national pride, historical memory, and cultural identity. Consequently, the preservation, development, and transmission of the art of the *bakhshi* to the younger generation constitute an integral part of national education. In this regard, it is particularly important to "actively utilize information and communication technologies, television, and the Internet to expand international cooperation, facilitate the exchange of experience, promote the art of the *bakhshi* on a broad scale, and increase the number of audio and video versions of folklore works" [6].

Information can be highly effective without the need to destroy an enemy or incur significant costs. Ideological influence involves a thorough study of the desires, mentality, and existing challenges of the populations in target countries, with the primary objective of shaping people's consciousness and worldviews, altering established national values, diminishing their regulatory role, or eliminating them entirely. Periodicals, radio, and television are skillfully employed to exert such influence.

To achieve these goals, methods for the negative manipulation of human consciousness have been developed for use through mass media.

These include "information-psychological warfare"—a complex set of measures carried out via information systems, processes, and computer networks, aimed at influencing human consciousness to gain psychological superiority over a chosen target, while simultaneously protecting oneself from external information-based influence. An information-psychological operation is a set of activities carried out in a specific location, using designated forces and resources, and directed at a target population with the aim of achieving political and military objectives through the coordination and preemptive alignment of actions. Information-psychological influence refers to psychologically oriented content designed to affect human consciousness, suitable for use in the aforementioned operations. An information attack is a type of weapon whose impact is inadvertently amplified by the very members of the society it targets. The most regrettable aspect of information warfare is that citizens of the state under attack often

contribute to it unwittingly; as people repeat the same information to one another, they tend to further exaggerate it.

Today, the Internet has become a crucial component of the information landscape. It can now be accessed not only through computer networks but also via satellite links, radio signals, cable television, telephone lines, and mobile communications. The Internet is becoming an integral part of human life—a fact underscored by the approximately 1.25 billion people who use it in some capacity. The growth of the Internet has also fostered a distinct dependency on the capabilities it offers; according to available data, roughly 10% of Internet users worldwide have developed a strong attachment to it.

It should be noted that certain socio-political actors skillfully exploit the Internet for their own self-serving ends. Given that the number of Internet users in Uzbekistan is rising rapidly—now exceeding 6 million—the importance of being well-informed and media-literate cannot be overlooked.

Consequently, it is vital for every citizen to develop the skills to use the opportunities provided by the information space rationally and to cultivate a culture of information consumption—a matter of practical, real-world significance. In this regard, in his address at an event dedicated to the art of *bakhshi* (traditional folk storytelling/singing), President Sh. M. ... Mirziyoyev noted: "The priceless cultural treasures created by humanity are, above all, embodied in the folklore of every nation—a fact well known to us all" [1]. To this end, whenever an individual receives information, they should first ask themselves: "Who is conveying this information?", "Why is it being conveyed?", and "For what purpose is it being conveyed?"—and then seek well-founded answers to these questions. Only in this way can one prevent various ideas from exerting an influence upon oneself.

The awareness of our national identity must be rooted in spiritual values, achievements in science and technology, and our significant contribution to the system of universal human values [7]. Developing this sense of identity is not a simple event, but rather a complex and demanding process. Its successful realization will, in the future, help to perpetuate the "self" of our nation.

In this context, "ideological prevention" refers to a range of ideological-educational and spiritual-ideological activities carried out by social institutions, encompassing the entire system of ideological upbringing. The purpose of ideological prevention is to eliminate ideological vacuums, prevent ideological fragmentation, or protect a specific region, social stratum, or group from the influence of alien and harmful ideas. This process employs a variety of methods and tools for ideological engagement.

The systems of education, upbringing, and public outreach all contribute to ideological prevention. Social structures—such as the family, schools, the *mahalla* (local community), and various state and public organizations—also play a vital role by fostering the integration of a sound ideology into the hearts and minds of the people. Furthermore, traditional folktales and epics, songs and dances, and various forms of spiritual and educational initiatives—which promote the interests of the nation and its people, as well as friendship, brotherhood, mutual respect, and tolerance—also serve as instruments of ideological prevention.

"New state and non-state preschool institutions, general education schools, higher education institutions, branches of prominent foreign universities, modern IT parks, cultural centers, and sports facilities—along with entirely new types of educational platforms being established in our country—all serve to cultivate a competitive and mature generation of professionals within the context of contemporary globalization" [8]. In our view, this initiative represents an important

social project aimed at organizing meaningful leisure activities for university students and fostering their development into spiritually and physically healthy, talented, and active individuals. The initiative strengthens social stability, promotes a healthy environment, and reinforces a commitment to national values and the ideals of patriotism. Consequently, it serves as a solid foundation for both the current and future generations.

The national animated films currently being produced in Uzbekistan serve not merely as entertainment for young people, but as a vital educational resource—a "school" that promotes noble ideals such as patriotism, national values, courage, friendship, and loyalty. Beyond providing enjoyment, these works shape the consciousness of young people and instill a sense of national pride. Supporting and developing this field is, therefore, one of the pressing tasks of our time.

In conclusion, it is a source of pride that our systems of education, upbringing, and outreach contribute to ideological prevention. Social institutions—including the family, schools, *mahallas* (local community organizations), and various state and public entities—play a crucial role in fostering a healthy ideology within the minds and hearts of students. In the context of educational and developmental work, the cultivation of an "ideological immunity" among students—the future of our nation—against various threats draws upon the rich heritage left by our ancestors. This serves as a powerful educational instrument that ensures national security while nurturing national pride, high moral character, and patriotic sentiment among the youth.

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