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THE ROLE AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANIST VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION: THE AZERBAIJANI EXPERIENCE

General presentation of the problem and its scientific or practical significance. Globalization processes have led to dynamic transformations in social, economic, and cultural relations in the modern world, fundamentally altering the directions of societal development. Especially since the first decades of the 21st century, global integration, the expansion of the knowledge economy, the rapid advancement of information technologies, and the relative weakening of cultural boundaries have created both new opportunities and complex challenges for education systems (UNESCO, 2021). In this context, higher education no longer fulfills solely a professional training function but also acts as an important social institution that ensures the social and moral development of individuals.

Against the background of intensified competition, the rapid growth of information flows, cultural diversity, and technological innovation brought about by globalization, strengthening the human factor, preserving social and moral values, and applying humanistic approaches aimed at the holistic development of the individual have become particularly relevant (Nussbaum,

2010). Humanist values – respect for human dignity, social justice, responsibility, tolerance, empathy, and ethical decision-making skills – are regarded as essential foundational components of modern higher education, not only in cultural and moral terms but also for socio-economic development (OECD, 2020).

Research shows that strengthening humanist foundations in higher education contributes to the development of 21st-century competencies among students, such as critical thinking, social responsibility, a culture of cooperation, leadership, and ethical decision-making (Bruner, 2012). From this perspective, integrating humanist values into the content of the educational process is of strategic importance at both theoretical and practical levels. Thus, the humanistic education model serves not only individual development but also the formation of democratic and sustainable societies as a whole (Delors, 1996).

In the Azerbaijani context, the relevance of this issue becomes even more pronounced. In recent years, educational reforms – particularly the modernization of quality assurance systems in higher education, the transition to student-centered learning, the strengthening of social

and moral components, and the implementation of competency-based curricula – have further increased the importance of humanistic approaches (Aliyev, 2021; Gasimova, 2020). The integration of Azerbaijan's higher education system into the European Higher Education Area, the requirements of the Bologna Process, and global competitiveness factors make a human-centered education model a necessity.

Nevertheless, both local and international studies indicate that the sustainable development of humanist values in higher education requires deeper transformations in curricula, teaching methods, the socio-cultural environment, and university governance models (Mammadov, 2022; OECD, 2020; Nussbaum, 2010). Therefore, the problem remains relevant not only in theoretical terms but also in the development of practical implementation mechanisms.

Analysis of recent research and scholarly literature. The role of humanist values in the educational environment and the mechanisms of their formation have long been among the key topics in international academic discourse. Contemporary scholars assess the core principles of humanistic education – such as respect for human dignity, the independent development of the individual, the cultivation of social responsibility, the strengthening of empathy, and openness to cultural diversity – as an essential foundation for sustainable societal development (Nussbaum, 2010). Recent UNESCO reports also emphasize that the humanistic orientation of education represents a fundamental model capable of responding to future global challenges (UNESCO, 2021).

Research conducted by think tanks, including the OECD, demonstrates that strengthening humanist components in higher education significantly contributes to the formation of students' ethical decision-making abilities, social responsibility, cooperation skills, and civic awareness (OECD, 2020). Authors such as Bruner (2012) substantiate that humanistic approaches in the learning process foster creativity, moral reasoning, and subjective experience. From this perspective, humanist values are regarded not only as an educational or moral dimension but

also as one of the methodological foundations of modern higher education.

In the Azerbaijani context, studies addressing the development of humanist values are often analyzed in connection with national and moral values, moral education, student-centered learning, and issues of socialization (Noddings, 2013). For instance, Gasimova (2020) examined the process of forming social responsibility in higher education, while Aliyev (2021) explored the humanistic orientations of higher education reforms. Hasanova (2019) theoretically described the pedagogical foundations of value-oriented learning. However, most of these studies pay relatively limited attention to how humanist values are transformed in the era of globalization and to the specific changes occurring in university governance models, curricula, and teaching methods.

An analysis of existing research indicates that the international literature offers a broader methodological framework concerning the formation of humanist values, including modeling approaches, social-emotional learning, technologies of humanistic pedagogy, and inclusivity in higher education (Bruner, 2012; Delors, 1996). In contrast, despite the growing number of studies in the Azerbaijani academic environment, empirical research on how humanist values in higher education are shaped under the ideological, cultural, and social influences of globalization, as well as their integration into modern curricula and teaching methodologies, remains insufficiently developed (Mammadov, 2022).

Furthermore, issues such as the evaluation of student experience through humanistic parameters, the analysis of universities' social responsibility policies, and the formation of an inclusive, culturally open, and transparent governance environment in higher education institutions have been only marginally studied in local research. This indicates the need for deeper investigations – both theoretically, methodologically, and practically – in order to fully understand the mechanisms underlying the development of humanist values in higher education.

Identification of unresolved issues.

The literature review indicates that although the role of humanist values in higher education has been widely studied, several theoretical and practical gaps remain. While international research has identified general methodological foundations for integrating humanist values into educational policy and teaching processes (Nussbaum, 2010; OECD, 2020), there is a noticeable lack of empirical comparative studies showing how these approaches are applied in specific higher education contexts.

The first gap – insufficiency of practical mechanisms. Practical mechanisms ensuring the integration of humanist values into higher education – particularly at the levels of curriculum design, teaching methods, teacher training, and university governance – have not been sufficiently specified. Although international recommendations exist (UNESCO, 2021), comprehensive information on how their implementation models function in different countries is lacking. In the Azerbaijani higher education context, while the theoretical and scientific foundations of these issues have been explored (Aliyev, 2021), unified models for practical implementation have not yet been developed.

The second gap – limitations of empirical research. Considering the breadth of humanist values, large-scale empirical studies measuring students' value-oriented behaviors, levels of social responsibility, tolerance, and empathy are virtually absent. Local research has mostly relied on theoretical frameworks, and methodologies for assessing the actual impact of values formation in higher education environments remain underdeveloped (Gasimova, 2020). This limits the objective evaluation of the current humanist educational environment in universities.

The third gap – limited research on the relationship between digital education and humanist values. The rapid growth of digitalization and technological innovations creates new behavioral patterns in education, reshaping the process of humanist values formation (Bruner, 2012). However, studies on how humanist values are preserved in digital learning environments, and how online education

fosters empathy, social responsibility, and academic integrity, are scarce. Although digital transformation is expanding in Azerbaijani higher education, its effects on humanist-oriented thinking have not been specifically investigated (Mammadov, 2022).

The fourth gap – insufficient study of the relationship between internationalization and humanist approaches. The international education environment – including student and faculty mobility, dual-degree programs, and global collaboration networks – is a significant factor influencing the formation of humanist values (Delors, 1996). Yet systematic analyses of how these processes affect the development of humanist thinking in Azerbaijani higher education, and how students' exposure to global cultures contributes to value-oriented development, are still lacking.

The fifth gap – methodological challenges in integrating competency-based education and humanist values. Despite the expansion of competency-based curricula, there is no unified methodology for integrating humanist values into this model, determining appropriate indicators, or defining effectiveness criteria (OECD, 2020).

In conclusion: All these gaps demonstrate that a scientifically grounded and practically applicable development of humanist values in higher education requires new theoretical, methodological, and empirical research. The present study aims precisely at addressing these gaps by examining the relevance, current implementation, and development prospects of humanist values in the Azerbaijani higher education system.

Aim and objectives of the article. Numerous international and local studies confirm that humanist values play a crucial role in the transformation of higher education systems in the era of globalization (Nussbaum, 2010; UNESCO, 2021; Aliyev, 2021). Nevertheless, comprehensive and systematic research on the current state, formation mechanisms, and development directions of these values within the Azerbaijani higher education context remains limited, which increases the relevance of the present study.

The primary aim of this article is to scientifically investigate the role, formation dynamics, implementation characteristics, and development prospects of humanist values in the Azerbaijani higher education system in the context of globalization, as well as to determine their strategic significance for the education system. Achieving this aim requires a multifaceted approach encompassing theoretical, methodological, and practical levels.

The main objectives of the article are as follows:

1. Theoretical analysis of the impact of globalization on the system of humanist values – to identify the socio-cultural consequences of contemporary global changes and their influence on personal development and higher education environments (OECD, 2020).

2. Assessment of the current state of humanist values integration in the Azerbaijani higher education system – to determine the real situation based on existing curricula, teaching methods, value-oriented components of the university environment, and students' experiences (Gasimova, 2020).

3. Identification of obstacles to the expansion of humanist approaches – to analyze the role of factors such as university governance models, teacher training, digitalization, resource provision, and student motivation in impeding the development of humanist values (Mammadov, 2022).

4. Development of practical recommendations for strengthening humanist values – to design adequate models, mechanisms, and strategies for Azerbaijani higher education based on international experience, UNESCO and OECD guidelines, and the priorities of national education policy (UNESCO, 2021; Delors, 1996).

These aim and objectives define the structure of the subsequent sections of the article, ensuring scientific consistency and logical coherence throughout the research.

Research Methodology. In accordance with the aim and objectives of the study, a comprehensive methodological approach was applied. To understand the mechanisms of humanist values formation within the higher education system, a complementary combination of theoretical,

analytical, and empirical methods was established. This allows for considering the multifaceted nature of the topic and enhances the scientific reliability of the results (UNESCO, 2021).

Theoretical-Methodological Approach.

The theoretical foundation of the study is based on humanist pedagogy, social constructivism, student-centered learning, personality-oriented development, and competency-based education models. These frameworks provide a fundamental conceptual basis for explaining the formation of humanist values (Bruner, 2012; Nussbaum, 2010).

Within the theoretical-methodological approach, the following methods were used:

- **Scientific-theoretical analysis** – defining the essence of the topic, interpreting concepts, and comparing existing models.

- **Synthesis and generalization** – systematizing findings from international and local research.

- **Comparative analysis** – identifying parallels between the Azerbaijani higher education system and global trends.

Analytical Methods. Analytical methods were extensively applied to examine the integration of humanist values into the higher education system, including:

- **Policy document analysis** – reviewing state strategies, higher education legislation, curriculum documents, and university development strategies (Aliyev, 2021).

- **Content analysis** – analyzing contemporary scholarly articles, international reports, and UNESCO and OECD recommendations related to humanist values (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

- **Structural-functional analysis** – evaluating the relationship between humanist values and the university's functions and individual components of the educational process.

Empirical Methods. The empirical phase was aimed at determining the actual state of humanist values in the higher education environment. The following methods were employed:

- **Survey and questionnaire methods** – exploring students' and teachers' opinions on the role of humanist values in education, the humanist nature of the learning process, socio-emotional environment, and behavioral spheres.

- **Observation method** – monitoring classroom processes, the system of social relations in the university environment, and student activities.

- **Qualitative analysis** – analyzing pedagogical approaches through focus groups and semi-structured interviews (Mammadov, 2022).

The main indicators measured in surveys and interviews included:

- Students' levels of empathy.
- Indicators of social responsibility.
- Attitudes toward tolerance and cultural diversity.
- Ethical behavior criteria.
- Humanist character of student-teacher relationships.
- Level of psychosocial support in the educational environment.

Measurement units were based on Likert scales, qualitative descriptors, and thematic coding principles.

Scientific Basis of the Methodology. The research methodology was developed according to international standards, taking into account the multi-component nature of humanist values. UNESCO and OECD recommendations on humanist education, as well as state documents applied in Azerbaijani higher education, serve as key methodological reference points (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2020).

The integration of these methods and approaches allows for logically and systematically determining the real picture of the formation of humanist values in Azerbaijani higher education.

Conclusions and future research perspectives.

Conclusions. The research has led to the following key findings:

1. **Importance of humanist values.** In the context of globalization, humanist values have become one of the strategic goals of higher education. The study demonstrates that principles such as human dignity, social responsibility, empathy, tolerance, and ethical behavior play a decisive role in students' social and personal development (Nussbaum, 2010; UNESCO, 2021; Aliyev, 2021).

2. **Current state in Azerbaijani higher education.** Universities in Azerbaijan have

programs and initiatives aimed at fostering humanist values. However, their integration into a unified institutional system has not yet been fully achieved. Surveys and observations reveal gaps in teacher training and curriculum design related to humanist pedagogy (Korthagen, 2017; Mammadov, 2022).

3. **Impact of digital transformation.** While digital education increases flexibility in the learning process, the weakening of student teacher and student-student interactions presents additional challenges for preserving humanist values. This necessitates strengthening social and ethical interactions within digital platforms (OECD, 2020).

4. **Factors hindering humanist approaches.** The study identifies key obstacles to the development of humanist values: the absence of a unified national strategy, insufficient coverage of humanist approaches in teacher training, weak integration of value-oriented components in curricula, and limited social interactions in digital learning environments.

5. **Integration of global and local contexts.** The development of humanist values requires adaptation of international best practices and recommendations to the Azerbaijani higher education system. This is strategically important for enhancing education quality and ensuring students' personality-centered development (Bruner, 2012; Delors, 1996).

Future Research Perspectives. Expansion of empirical studies. Comparative analyses of the formation of humanist values across different fields (e.g., technical and humanitarian disciplines) should be conducted in Azerbaijani universities.

1. **Digital education and humanist values.** Methodological research is needed to maintain humanist approaches in online and hybrid learning environments, alongside the development of new pedagogical strategies.

2. **Improvement of teacher training and curricula.** Teacher training programs and curriculum models should be designed in accordance with the principles of humanist pedagogy and tested through pilot implementations.

3. Adaptation of international practices. Recommendations from UNESCO, OECD, and other international educational organizations regarding humanist values should be adapted to the Azerbaijani context, and practical implementation mechanisms should be developed.

Thus, the research demonstrates that strengthening humanist values in higher education during globalization is a priority at theoretical, methodological, and practical levels. It represents a strategic direction for the development of Azerbaijani higher education and provides a rich scientific basis for future studies.

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Orujov V. O., Miriyeva N. S. The role and development of humanist values in higher education in the era of globalization: the Azerbaijani experience

This article examines the role, formation mechanisms, and development trends of humanistic values in the higher education system of Azerbaijan in the context of globalization. Humanistic values – such as empathy, social responsibility, tolerance, ethical behavior, and respect for human dignity – play a crucial role in the personal, social, and professional development of students, as well as in fostering democratic and inclusive educational environments. The research employs a comprehensive methodological approach, combining theoretical analysis, policy document review, curriculum assessment, surveys, interviews, and classroom observations to capture both systemic and

practical dimensions. The findings indicate that while Azerbaijani universities increasingly integrate humanistic values into educational processes, the absence of a unified institutional strategy and the uneven implementation across programs remain significant challenges. Moreover, digital education platforms, although providing flexibility and accessibility, sometimes weaken student teacher and peer-to-peer interactions, posing additional challenges for sustaining humanistic values in online settings. Key obstacles identified include insufficient teacher preparation in humanistic pedagogy, lack of systematic inclusion of value-oriented content in curricula, and limited institutional support for social-emotional learning initiatives. The article proposes evidence-based recommendations for strengthening humanistic education, including adapting international best practices, implementing UNESCO and OECD guidelines, promoting student-centered and ethical learning approaches, and fostering collaborative and inclusive learning environments. Overall, this study offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and enhancing value-centered education in Azerbaijan, providing strategic insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers aiming to cultivate ethically responsible and socially engaged graduates in a rapidly globalizing world.

Key words: humanistic values, higher education, globalization, digital transformation, pedagogy.

Оруджов В. О., Мірієва Н. С. Роль та розвиток гуманістичних цінностей у вищій освіті в умовах глобалізації: досвід Азербайджану

У статті досліджується роль, механізми формування та напрями розвитку гуманістичних цінностей у системі вищої освіти Азербайджану в умовах глобалізації. Гуманістичні цінності – емпатія, соціальна відповідальність, толерантність, етична поведінка та повага до гідності людини – є ключовими чинниками особистісного, соціального та професійного розвитку студентів, а також сприяють створенню демократичного та інклюзивного освітнього середовища. Дослідження здійснене за комплексною методологією, що поєднує теоретичний аналіз, огляд політичних документів, оцінку навчальних програм, опитування, інтерв'ю та спостереження за навчальним процесом для всебічного розкриття системних та практичних аспектів. Результати показують, що хоча азербайджанські університети поступово інтегрують гуманістичні цінності в освітній процес, відсутність єдиної інституційної стратегії та нерівномірне впровадження залишаються суттєвими проблемами. Цифрові платформи навчання, забезпечуючи гнучкість та доступність, іноді послаблюють взаємодію студентів із викладачами та між собою, що створює додаткові виклики для підтримки гуманістичних цінностей в онлайн-середовищі. Основні проблеми включають недостатню підготовку викладачів у сфері гуманістичної педагогіки, обмежене включення ціннісного контенту до навчальних програм та обмежену інституційну підтримку соціально-емоційного навчання. У статті запропоновано практичні рекомендації щодо зміцнення гуманістичної освіти, зокрема адаптацію міжнародного досвіду, впровадження рекомендацій ЮНЕСКО та ОЕСР, розвиток студентсько-орієнтованого та етичного навчання, а також формування спільного та інклюзивного освітнього середовища. Дослідження надає комплексну рамку для розуміння та вдосконалення освіти, орієнтованої на цінності, у контексті глобалізації.

Ключові слова: гуманістичні цінності, вища освіта, глобалізація, цифрова трансформація, педагогіка.

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