

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS OF MILITARY-PATRIOTIC EDUCATION OF SENIOR SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE CONDITIONS OF MARTIAL LAW



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**Abstract.** *The purpose of the paper is to determine and characterize the strategic directions of military-patriotic education of high school students under martial law based on the study of the current state of military-patriotic education of high school students. The research methods of the research are analysis of scientific literature, questionnaire, classification, comparison, and generalization. The conducted All-Ukrainian survey of high school students made it possible to clarify such issues as: the level of awareness among students of the connection between the events of Ukraine's historical past and its present and future as an independent state; determining their desire to connect their lives with Ukraine and work for its development and formation; the effectiveness of the content and forms of military-patriotic education in secondary education institutions, their compliance with the social order and demands of young people; the presence of a clear position on patriotism and its manifestation in the present; the attitude towards fulfilling one's duty as a citizen of the state to protect it; the specificity of high school students' actions on the path of moral and physical preparation for the defence of Ukraine in the future. The findings of the survey allowed to highlight the strategic directions of military-patriotic education of high school students of secondary education institutions under martial law: integrating military-patriotic education with the content of education; ensuring the unity of physical and military-patriotic education of high school students; developing the military-patriotic direction in the system of extracurricular education, in particular, club activities in secondary education institutions; applying modern digital technologies for the modernization of military-patriotic education; cooperating with military formations and veteran organizations, meetings with heroes of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The highlighted strategic directions of military-patriotic education under martial law are key for the formation of a new generation of Ukrainians who will be worthy successors of the heroic traditions of the Ukrainian people.*

**Keywords:** *military-patriotic education, all-Ukrainian survey, strategic directions, high school students of secondary education institutions, martial law.*

## INTRODUCTION

In modern conditions, when Ukraine is resisting Russian aggression, military-patriotic education of children and student youth is becoming particularly relevant as it is a key element in shaping a citizen capable not only of consciously defending the Homeland but also of actively participating in building a democratic, legal, and independent state. Military-patriotic education is also a powerful tool for forming national consciousness, educating a sense of self-esteem, and affirming Ukrainian and civic identity.

The regulatory and legal framework for military-patriotic education includes the Laws of Ukraine: “On the Basic Principles of State Policy in the Sphere of Affirming Ukrainian National and Civic Identity” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2023), “On the Basic Principles of National Resistance” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2021a), Military Security Strategy of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2021b), the Concept of National-Patriotic Education in the Education System of Ukraine (Ministerstvo osvity i nauky Ukrainy, 2022).

In the Law of Ukraine “On the Basic Principles of State Policy in the Sphere of Affirming Ukrainian National and Civic Identity”, military-patriotic education is defined as a comprehensive educational process aimed at forming in Ukrainian citizens a defence consciousness, readiness for national resistance, increasing the social significance and respect for military service, and motivating citizens to acquire the necessary competencies in the field of security and defence (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2023).

There is a logical continuity at all levels of education regarding national-patriotic and military-patriotic education. If at the level of preschool and primary education, it is primarily about national-patriotic education, then at the level of high school students, the emphasis shifts to military-patriotic education within the framework of the normative subject “Défense of Ukraine”.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of military-patriotic education for the younger generation has been explored in the works of modern scholars. Kovba has identified and summarized the theoretical and methodological principles of military-patriotic education for high school students in Ukraine’s education system (first quarter of the 21st century). It has been concluded that the main prerequisites for military-patriotic education of high school students are:

- political changes (creating conditions for the development of military-patriotic education;
- implementing principles of formation of national consciousness; new conceptual approaches to military-patriotic education; need to form the readiness of young people to defend the Homeland);
- economic (need to finance programs of national-patriotic and military-patriotic education of youth);
- limitations (complications in implementing military-patriotic education programs);
- adaptation of educational programs to prepare young people for service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other law enforcement agencies;
- socio-cultural (revival of national culture and historical memory;
- impact of social changes associated with globalization and information technologies; adaptation of approaches to education, including the use of innovations to popularize military-patriotic values).

We consider the strengths and weaknesses of military-patriotic education for high school students in Ukraine’s education system, as outlined by Kovba, to be valuable. The researcher highlights the following strengths: a devotion to one’s state, an emphasis on military-patriotic education in wartime conditions, a priority on mass forms, the use of joint classes and webinars, and support from state, local, and public organizations. The weaknesses of

military-patriotic education of high school students in general secondary education institutions are: lack of a holistic approach; low level of funding; lack of separate regulatory documents, etc. (Kovba, 2024).

Tymchyk & Kasich identify the main tasks of applied physical training in the context of the problem of ensuring the unity of physical and military-patriotic education of high school students. These are:

- increasing the levels of physical fitness of high school students, physical development and establishing their healthy lifestyle, taking into account the principles of military-patriotic education;
- hardening the body of high school students and increasing its resistance to the influence of adverse factors close to combat activity;
- creating conditions for patriotic and military-patriotic education of students in grades 10–11;
- involving schoolchildren in intellectual competitions in the process of applied physical training on military-patriotic topics;
- mastering the skills and abilities of hand-to-hand combat, overcoming obstacles, swimming in uniform, controlling a drone, providing first aid in physical education lessons and the subject “Defence of Ukraine”;
- educating moral and volitional qualities (purposefulness, self-confidence, resilience, determination, self-control, perseverance, discipline, etc.);
- conducting classes in military-applied, physical training in the process of physical education classes and “Defence of Ukraine” (Tymchyk, & Kasich, 2024).

Tymchyk, Skyrda & Lynnyk note that in the process of teaching high school students applied physical training and military-patriotic games, the efforts of teachers should be directed at: forming the younger generation’s love, loyalty and devotion to the people, the Homeland, the state, spiritual and moral stability; readiness for self-sacrifice; educating youth’s moral responsibility for the current situation in the state, responsibility to the heroes of Ukraine who defend the nation; assimilation of the growing personality to military-oriented patriotism as a spiritual value; forming awareness of the need for military-applied, physical training, military-sports games in the context of the unity of military-patriotic and physical education; studying tactical and technical elements in the process of military-applied training; forming students’ positive attitude towards military-patriotic and physical education classes; forming the readiness to defend the Homeland and serve in the Armed Forces of Ukraine; mass involvement of schoolchildren and students in military-patriotic and physical education; forming practical skills and abilities; ability to independently organize physical exercises and engage in sports (Tymchyk et al., 2023).

The scholars from the Institute of Problems on Education of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine has developed strategic directions for military-patriotic education of children and students within the Ukrainian education system. The relevance of developing these strategic directions is due to the insufficient level of the current state of military-patriotic education of the younger generation, since there is a violation of integrity and continuity in the organization of patriotic and military-patriotic education, multi-vector educational influences and incoherence of actions of various educational entities (educational institutions, family, children’s and youth associations, culture and sports) in creating a favourable environment for military-patriotic education of youth; the methodological level of military-patriotic education is not sufficiently effective. The strategic directions for military-patriotic education in Ukraine’s education system reveal the priorities of military-patriotic education for children and youth in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The main challenges of martial law and the country’s post-war recovery are highlighted, including institu-

tional, infrastructural, socio-cultural, and educational issues. The organizational and legal foundations of military-patriotic education of children and students are emphasized. Key ways of educating patriotism in children and youth are identified. The strategic directions of military-patriotic education of children and students in the education system of Ukraine are “a tool for the effective use of educational resources to increase the level of military-patriotic education of children and youth in the conditions of armed aggression of the Russian Federation; increasing the level of readiness of youth for service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the National Guard of the country, other combat formations to defence of Ukraine; protecting children and youth from the consequences of hostilities and hostile educational influence” (Bekh & Malynoshevskyi, 2023, p. 61).

Bekh, Kanishevskaya & Malynoshevskyi identified key ways of educating patriotism in children and youth: spiritual identification; perception of a historical figure or contemporary as a role model; involvement of a growing personality in everyday patriotically oriented affairs with their peers; spiritual reflection; appropriate independence; internal value potential of military-patriotic action; and fostering confidence in one’s military-patriotic action. The components of military-patriotic education of schoolchildren were identified: readiness to defend Ukraine (value-motivational, conscious, and operational-practical readiness for military-patriotic activity); the formation of a defence consciousness, the components of which are the formation of national and cultural identity, the preservation and protection of the spiritual and moral values of the Ukrainian people, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine (Bekh et al., 2023).

The analysis of scientific works on the topic of military-patriotic education of youth reveals a substantial body of research currently available on this subject. At the same time, we note the need to conduct the All-Ukrainian survey to study the current state of military-patriotic education of high school students and determine strategic directions for military-patriotic education of schoolchildren under martial law.

## METHODOLOGY

The following scientific approaches have been applied to study the strategic directions of military-patriotic education of high school students under martial law:

- *systemic*, which assumes the integrity and integration of the educational and educational process; unity and interdependence of theory and practice; educational influences and self-development of the individual throughout life; coordinated combination of efforts of all subjects of military-patriotic education;
- *axiological*, which determines the need to form in students a sense of patriotism as love for Ukraine, the people and statehood; acquisition of such values as loyalty, altruism, justice, sacrifice;
- *competency-based*, which assumes the use of the acquired knowledge in solving specific practical tasks related to protection, survival in emergencies, first aid, and life stability in peace and wartime;
- *person-oriented*, which entails taking into account the interests of schoolchildren, their age characteristics, abilities, opportunities, rights, in particular, through the chain “person – people – nation – state” the implementation of a promising and democratic model of military-patriotic education of schoolchildren, the value of each person, which constitutes human capital, is focused on the prestige of the defender of Ukraine, military personnel;
- *activity-based*, which assumes that the formation of the personality of a citizen-patriot will be carried out more intensively if a high school student takes an active part in military-patriotic activities, where patriotic values are tested in practice.

The research methods comprised analysis of scientific literature, questionnaires, classification, comparison, and generalization to study the current state of military-patriotic educa-

tion of high school students and determine and characterize the strategic directions of military-patriotic education of schoolchildren in conditions of martial law.

## MAIN RESULTS

To study the current state of military-patriotic education among high school students, we conducted an All-Ukrainian survey. A total of 28,464 high school students from secondary education institutions in 19 regions and regional centres of Ukraine participated in the survey. The respondents were surveyed by a questionnaire, which included sets of standardized questions developed in a digital format. This format was convenient for respondents to complete and for experts to summarize the data.

The results of the All-Ukrainian survey allowed us to analyse:

### ***1. The level of awareness among high school students of the interdependence of events in the historical past of Ukraine with its present and future as an independent state.***

To the question: "Does knowledge of the historical past affect the future life of the state and its population?" 49,7 % of students answered that the historical past of their country is significant for its development, and the history of Ukraine needs to be studied and known by modern youth; in contrast to 8 % of respondents who consider it not essential for the life of Ukrainians in the context of the present. 42,4 % of the surveyed high school students noted that events taking place here and now are more important. Therefore, the historical past is not significantly important for them.

Even though almost half of the respondents indicated the importance of events in the historical past and present for the future of our country and its inhabitants, a significant percentage of the surveyed high school students (42,4 %) are interested in the history of our country to some extent. This cannot help but worry, because a person's civic position is based on a solid knowledge of their country's history, including historically accurate facts. Therefore, they need to be known and understood.

### ***2. The desire to connect their lives and work for the development and establishment of Ukraine.***

The majority of high school students (60,3 %) plan to connect their future lives with Ukraine, to realize their opportunities and use their resources in its post-war reconstruction. 12 % of high school students expressed a desire to try to arrange their lives outside the country; 27,7 % of respondents decided on this issue due to the dangers associated with the war.

### ***3. Identify the effectiveness of the content and forms of military-patriotic education in secondary education institutions, their compliance with the social order and demands of young people.***

The need to update the content and forms of work with high school students was confirmed by the answers to questions about conducting lessons on the subject "Defence of Ukraine", hobby clubs, and extracurricular work. The respondents advocate changes in teaching the subject that meet their interests and needs, and indicate the need to supplement the content:

- 56,1 % of high school students consider short-term training in the military field conditions effective;
- 52,1 % of students emphasize the need to familiarize themselves with the basics of tactical medicine;
- 51.6 % of respondents – consolidating knowledge and skills on the subject "Defence of Ukraine" in military-patriotic games and quests, including in digital format.

No less important is the use of gadgets as a means of augmented reality (helmets, gloves, glasses, etc.), which was noted by 44,5 % of high school students, as well as 42.2 % of res-

pondents, who highlight the importance of implementing military-patriotic projects (designing drones, etc.) (Kanishevskaya & Ragozina, 2024).

#### **4. High school students have a clear position on patriotism and its manifestation.**

The respondents were asked to answer the question: "In your opinion, how does patriotism manifest?" The majority of respondents (79,9 %) believe that patriotism is manifested in service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and/or in volunteer activities.

Students also noted indirect signs of patriotism, namely: participating in patriotic events and/or celebrating national holidays (62,8 %) and wearing national clothes and/or popularizing national Ukrainian traditions in the world (50,6 %). High school students understand the importance of expressing patriotic feelings in action today, for example, by serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and supporting the army.

#### **5. Examples of practical assistance by high school students to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.**

The results of the All-Ukrainian survey showed that:

- 70,3 % of high school students, together with adults and classmates (parents, relatives, friends), donate to the Armed Forces of Ukraine;
- 39,7 % of respondents are engaged in volunteer activities (charity fairs, events, concerts), that is, they take an active position;
- only 17,5 % of the surveyed high school students are neutral to measures to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Therefore, it is necessary to promote the initiative of high school students in this direction as much as possible and encourage them by setting worthy examples.

#### **6. Specific actions of high school students regarding physical training for the defence of Ukraine.**

To the question: "Do you improve your physical condition for the need to defend Ukraine in the future?" the students answered as follows:

- only 40,3 % of them are active in the following direction: they play sports, attend self-defence or first aid courses;
- 34,5 % of high school students are in their usual physical training regime (walks, exercises);
- 25,2 % of respondents do not pay due attention to this.

An alarming signal was the indicator of physically prepared high school students: only 14 % of respondents regularly engage in sports and military training in clubs, 23,5 % do it rarely, and 62,5 % do not attend such clubs (Kanishevskaya & Ragozina, 2024).

The results of the All-Ukrainian survey enabled to identify the strategic directions of military-patriotic education for schoolchildren under martial law. These include:

1. Integration of military-patriotic education with the content of education.
2. Ensuring the unity of physical and military-patriotic education of high school students.
3. Development of the military-patriotic direction in the system of extracurricular education, in particular, hobby club activities in secondary education institutions.
4. Application of modern digital technologies for the modernization of military-patriotic education.
5. Cooperation with military formations and veteran organizations, meetings with heroes of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The integration of military-patriotic education with the content of education is a fundamental strategic direction that involves deepening the patriotic component in the content and methodology of teaching most academic subjects and ensuring a systematic and continuous process of forming national consciousness and readiness to defend the Homeland.

The integration of military-patriotic education with the content of education is carried out through:

- Cross-cutting implementation of military-patriotic education in the educational process of secondary education institutions.

- Expanding the content of the subject “Defence of Ukraine”, which is key in the military-patriotic training of schoolchildren. Its content should be constantly updated to meet the modern challenges and needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The practical component of the subject “Defence of Ukraine” should be as close as possible to real conditions. It is necessary to ensure proper maintenance and development of the material and technical base of secondary education institutions for the subject “Défense of Ukraine”, strengthening the activities of the founders of educational institutions in the development of material and technical support.

- Providing a patriotic component in the teaching of humanitarian disciplines (history of Ukraine, Ukrainian language and literature, civic education).

- Using interdisciplinary connections with natural and exact sciences (for example, geography – the basics of military topography; chemistry and biology – the basics of civil defence of the population; physics and mathematics – ballistics, optics, aerodynamics, trigonometry, probability theory and statistics, linear algebra; biology – home medical care; physical education – combat and applied physical training).

- Effectively providing the patriotic component in the process of teaching subjects requires appropriate training of teachers. They must have not only deep knowledge of the subject, but also understand the methodology of patriotic education, be able to create an appropriate atmosphere in the lessons, and use interactive and problem-based teaching methods. The development of high-quality textbooks, methodological recommendations, and didactic materials is the key to success.

The integration of military-patriotic education with the content of education is a strategic investment in the future of the nation, as it allows for the education of not just young people prepared for military service, but conscious citizens capable of defending their state.

The next strategic direction is to *ensure the unity of physical and military-patriotic education of high school students*.

Physical training for high school students assumes special significance when its tasks are combined with the values and methods of military-patriotic education. In this case, it contributes:

- to form moral and volitional qualities (endurance, determination, resilience, confidence) and values (justice, respect, dignity, freedom);
- to educate responsibility for personal and collective safety;
- to develop physical qualities for fulfilling standards and actions in real conditions (close-order drill, evacuation, orientation, moving across rough terrain, etc.);
- to develop skills in military-applied activities (drill training, shooting, throwing, overcoming obstacles, tactical games);
- to increase motivation to serve in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and readiness to fulfill civic duty.

Several forms of ensuring the unity of physical and military-patriotic education of high school students have been identified:

- Educational and training classes in physical culture using elements of military-applied orientation (obstacle course, grenade throwing, pull-ups, azimuth orientation, evacuation of a conditionally wounded person).

- Using tactical and sports and military-sports games, in particular “Obstacle Course”, “Tactical Reconnaissance”, “Escape from Captivity”.

- Using educational quests aimed at ensuring the unity of physical and military-patriotic education.

- Training, field training, and military-sports camps.

*Development of a military-patriotic direction in the system of extracurricular education, in particular, hobby club activities in secondary education institutions.*

The key ways to implement this strategic direction are:

1. Widespread implementation in extracurricular education of programs and activities aimed at preserving and increasing the historical memory of the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian people against the aggression of the Russian Federation.
2. Creation of a network of military-patriotic clubs, military-sports sections.
3. Implementation of educational programs of a military-patriotic direction.
4. Organization and financial support and scaling of the All-Ukrainian children's and youth military-patriotic game "Sokil" ("Jura"), modernization of its content.
5. Creation and implementation of educational programs on cybersecurity, media education, projects using geographic information systems, and digital products, in particular, on preserving historical memory, the heroic struggle of Ukrainians.

*The strategic direction – application of modern digital technologies for the modernization of military-patriotic education.*

The ways of implementing this strategic direction include the use of modern digital technologies in military-patriotic education for children and students, as well as educational platforms, online courses, social networks, and modern media.

We would like to note that gamification, the introduction of game elements into military-patriotic education, is becoming increasingly widespread, which stimulates the active participation of young people in training processes and fosters endurance, discipline, and team interaction. A prime example is the Ukrainian games "Battle for Ukraine", "Military Games about Ukraine", etc., which effectively combine educational and developmental functions, making education an interactive and emotionally rich process. A crucial component is the development of interactive knowledge bases and electronic encyclopaedias that contain information about military heroes, weapons, and equipment.

Implementing digital technologies into military-patriotic education is not only expedient but also strategically necessary. It contributes to the formation of interest in military affairs among young people, the development of readiness to defend the homeland, as well as the inculcation of values related to civic duty and national identity.

The next strategic direction – *cooperation with military formations and veteran organizations, meetings with heroes of the Russian-Ukrainian war* – is essential, as it unites young people with real defenders of the Fatherland. It provides schoolchildren and students with invaluable life experiences, knowledge, and moral guidelines based on a personal example of courage, resilience, and self-sacrifice.

The key ways to implement this direction are, first of all, organizing meetings and thematic events with the participation of veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war and participants in the Anti-Terrorist Operation/Joint Forces Operations (ATO/JFO). These can include lectures, roundtables, discussions, conferences dedicated to significant dates in Ukraine's military history and honouring the memory of fallen heroes, as well as joint military sports competitions and patriotic games, where veterans serve as instructors, judges, and mentors for young people.

A separate important educational role is played by mentoring and tutoring. The introduction of patronage, in particular, enables veterans to become mentors for young people, supporting them in life and professional self-determination, especially in choosing a military profession. It is also important to create joint projects – from collecting humanitarian aid for the front and weaving camouflage nets to writing letters of support for the military.

It is important to use the experience of veterans in methodological work on military-patriotic education. Cooperation with military formations and veteran organizations fosters

a deep respect for Ukrainian military personnel who risk their lives to protect the nation's interests, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. The personal example of veterans is the most powerful factor in influencing the minds of young people. At the same time, such cooperation helps those who feel a calling to make a conscious choice in favour of the military profession.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conducted All-Ukrainian survey of high school students made it possible to clarify such issues as: the level of awareness among students of the connection between the events of Ukraine's historical past and its present and future as an independent state; determining their desire to connect their lives with Ukraine and work for its development and formation; the effectiveness of the content and forms of military-patriotic education in secondary education institutions, their compliance with the social order and demands of young people; the presence of a clear position on patriotism and its manifestation in the present; the attitude towards fulfilling one's duty as a citizen of the state to protect it; the specificity of high school students' actions on the path of moral and physical preparation for the defense of Ukraine in the future.

The findings allowed us to identify and highlight the strategic directions of military-patriotic education of high school students of secondary education institutions under martial law:

- integrating military-patriotic education with the content of education;
- ensuring the unity of physical and military-patriotic education of high school students;
- developing the military-patriotic direction in the system of extracurricular education, in particular, hobby club activities in secondary education institutions;
- applying modern digital technologies for the modernization of military-patriotic education;
- cooperating with military formations and veteran organizations, meetings with heroes of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Therefore, the highlighted strategic directions of military-patriotic education during martial law are key to the formation of a new generation of the Ukrainians who will be worthy successors to the heroic traditions of the Ukrainian people.

The conducted research does not encompass the full range of theoretical and practical approaches to addressing the problem of military-patriotic education for high school students during martial law. Further scientific searches could be aimed at developing interactive forms and methods of military-patriotic education of schoolchildren.

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