



CREATIVE APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING INDIVIDUALITY AND PERSONAL SKILLS IN SCHOOLCHILDREN

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Abstract. In today's dynamic society, the evolving nature of personality influence necessitates novel methods for fostering student individuality and personal skill development, crucial for societal interaction and educational progression. The purpose of the study is to explore socio-cultural approaches to developing individuality and personal skills among secondary school students. The study employs a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative analysis of a questionnaire administered to 40 secondary school students and qualitative insights from educational innovation practices. The questionnaire focused on assessing student perceptions of various developmental methodologies, including creative projects, mentoring programs, and organized training events. The results of the study indicate that developmental preferences vary by age: 12–13-year-olds benefit significantly from creative projects, 14–15-year-olds from structured trainings and events, and 16-year-olds from mentoring and elective courses. This diversity underscores the effectiveness of individualized educational approaches tailored to developmental stages and personal preferences. Furthermore, students across all age groups responded positively to the integration of innovative technologies in their learning environments, highlighting the role of creative tools in personal and skill development. The study confirms the necessity of adopting age-specific, innovative educational strategies that effectively combine soft and hard skills to foster robust individuality and skill sets among students, preparing them for future academic and societal challenges.

Keywords: skills development, student individuality, cultural interaction, individual learning, teamwork, educational innovation.

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1. Introduction

In today's continuously developing and evolving world, the younger generation faces new challenges that they can only cope with if they have certain personal traits and developed personal skills. In addition, in the modern world, there is a need for professionals who are able to think creatively, communicate effectively in society, and stand out among others with their thinking and unique ideas. The formation of individuality and the development of skills that will be useful for the younger generation throughout their lives is most effective when they are studying in secondary schools, as it is during this period that the student's personality is most actively formed, due to the beginning of the process of self-determination and the increased need to understand themselves. The task of the educational institution and the

teaching staff during this period is to create a stimulating environment in which students can develop and grow personally, acquire the necessary skills, and reveal their individuality. The issue of developing individuality and personal skills in the educational process was studied by Nurlailah and Ardiansyah (2022), Maharani et al. (2024), García Piceno et al. (2024). Revealing the influence of the school environment on the formation of students' character and the relevance of sociological approaches in educational institutions, the researchers concluded that within the educational process, students should develop not only knowledge in certain disciplines, but also personal qualities that will have an impact on the socio-cultural interaction of students in the environment, such as high moral qualities, creativity, democracy, responsibility, and healthy lifestyle skills.

In order to develop the above qualities in students and reveal their individuality, educational institutions need to have a strategy for developing students' personal skills and abilities. However, traditional methods and approaches may not be enough to effectively develop students' individuality and personal skills. This issue has been studied by such scholars as Balercă (2023), who studied the methodology of forming students' thinking, Podlisna (2021), who studied the effectiveness of interactive learning in the development of students' personalities, as well as Thomas and Karalam (2024), who studied the peculiarities of personal skills development. The analysed studies note that in traditional educational approaches to teaching and upbringing of the individual, students play a passive role, while modern approaches require active involvement of students in the educational process, focusing on the needs of students and their area of immediate development. According to researchers, traditional teaching methods do not encourage students to think critically, take responsibility for their own lives and develop their individuality, which necessitates the development of more innovative approaches that can interest students. In today's world, where distance learning is a common norm, traditional approaches are not as relevant as they used to be, and modern technologies and interactive learning technologies may be more effective (Lee et al., 2023). Researchers also note that traditional teaching methods still provide a thorough knowledge of certain disciplines, but are not effective in developing practical abilities and life skills. Thus, traditional teaching methods, according to the authors of the analysed scientific sources, cannot be effective in the formation of specific personal skills and personality development in general, but the described studies did not provide modern methods of developing students' individuality and personal skills.

Modern and creative methods of developing individuality and personal skills have been studied by such scholars as Asadi and Mede (2024), who studied the personal growth of students through group counselling, Green (2024), who studied the blended learning approach as a method of personal development, Wardani and Mariae Tjandraningtyas (2023), Chano et al. (2022), who studied the initiative of students' personal growth. Scientists have identified the following as modern methods of developing students' personalities: group counselling aimed at improving academic performance and developing personal skills; blended learning, which should include positive psychological intervention practices; development of personal growth initiatives as a method of forming students' motivation for self-improvement throughout their lives. However, these methods are mainly aimed at improving the emotional state of students and increasing academic performance rather than developing individuality

and personal skills, and no methods were identified to improve students' cultural and social interaction as an important part of their personal development. The younger generation needs to develop certain personal traits and skills for successful socio-cultural interaction in society, which can affect their self-determination and compliance with the challenges of the modern world, and this can be done most effectively in secondary education. However, most educational institutions still use only traditional approaches to the development of students' personalities, ignoring modern methods and innovations. The innovative methods of personal development provided by scientists are not sufficient to meet the needs of modern society. There is also a problem in the lack of methods that would influence the socio-cultural interaction of students in society as part of their process of self-determination and building their own individuality.

The purpose of this study is to explore socio-cultural approaches to developing individuality and personal skills among secondary school students. It seeks to examine the relationship between individuality and personal skills and their influence on students' educational and professional development. The study also aims to identify specific personal skills that contribute to individuality and enhance socio-cultural interaction.

2. Materials and methods

This research was based on the study of the current state of development of individuality and personal skills in schoolchildren in the socio-cultural aspect, as well as on the study of modern approaches to their development within the pedagogical process. The study was focused on schoolchildren in grades 7–10, aged 12–16. The choice of this age group was due to the fact that it is during this period of time that students may face the most acute issues of self-development, self-determination, acceptance of their own individuality and uniqueness. However, this age range also presents challenges in terms of stability in self-perception, as adolescents frequently experience fluctuations in their opinions and attitudes, which can vary throughout the day. To address this issue and ensure the validity of the findings, the research employed several methodological strategies. Careful participant selection involved choosing a diverse group of students within the specified age range who were actively engaged in self-development, ensuring a representative sample. Standardized instruments, such as a well-structured online questionnaire, were used to assess students' perceptions of various methods for developing individuality and personal skills, providing consistent and reliable data. Additionally, clear instructions and objective rating scales in the data collection process minimized bias and encouraged honest responses. These tools collectively maximized the accuracy of the results, ensuring the robustness and validity of the research outcomes. The study of the development of individuality and personal skills among this particular category of students could make the recommendations provided in this study more effective and efficient for students who are currently facing or may face the problem of self-determination.

The first stage of the study was the definition of the research problem. Based on the definition of the research problem, the further direction of the study was established, and its significance for the development of students' personalities, for the improvement of the pedagogical sphere and for the overall development of modern society and the younger

generation was substantiated. The definition of the research problem and the direction of the study helped to substantiate its significance, on the basis of which the purpose of the study was formulated, as well as the objectives of the study. The next step was to collect and analyse data from scientific sources. After collecting, analysing, and verifying the data, the results of the study were interpreted. The interpretation of the results helped to reveal the role of individuality and personal skills in the development of students' personalities, their impact on the learning process, further education, and the quality of life of the younger generation in general. Interpretation was also used to reveal the relevance of 21st century skills, soft and hard skills, and to analyse their impact on the development of students, their preparation for further education and future professional activities. The interpretation of the collected and analysed data also helped to identify effective areas for the development of students' individuality and personal skills, their role in the formation of students' personality and their impact on the learning process and cultural and social interaction.

After collecting and interpreting the data, the comparison method was used to compare the studied methods of developing individuality and personal skills, which helped to identify their advantages and disadvantages, as well as to identify the most effective approaches. The method of comparison was also used in the process of analysing the skills of the 21st century, which helped to compare soft and hard skills and determine their role in shaping the individuality and personal abilities of students, as well as the peculiarities of their interaction and its impact on the learning process and the personality of students. The next stage was the provision of recommendations regarding modern directions for the development of individuality and personal skills of schoolchildren in the socio-cultural aspect based on the analysed pedagogical approaches, models and concepts.

In order to determine the most effective methods of developing individuality and personal skills among different age categories of schoolchildren (from 12 to 16 years old, from the 7th to the 10th grade), an online-questionnaire was conducted among 40 students of secondary educational institutions who are engaged in self-development, are students of the 7th-10th grades and belong to the age range of 12–16 years. Among the surveyed schoolchildren, 22 were female and 18 were male. The survey included questions aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of one or another method of developing individuality and personal skills in the opinion of schoolchildren (Table 1).

Table 1. Questionnaire form for determining schoolchildren's perception of the proposed methods of developing individuality and personal skills (source: compiled by the authors)

No.	Method	Evaluation				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	The use of innovative approaches					
2	Mentoring programmes					
3	Creative projects					
4	Organisation of events					
5	Trainings					
6	Introduction of a separate subject or elective in the school curriculum					

Respondents were asked to rate each of the proposed methods on a five-point scale, where, in their opinion: 1 – the method is not effective for the development of individuality and personal skills; 2 – low effectiveness of the method in the development of individuality and personal skills; 3 – the average effectiveness of the method in the development of individuality and personal skills; 4 – sufficient effectiveness of the method in the development of individuality and personal skills; 5 – high efficiency of the method in the development of individuality and personal skills. The data were processed using the statistical software package SPSS (version 25). Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated to summarise the data. Additionally, correlation analysis was performed to identify relationships between the effectiveness of methods and age groups. To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's α was calculated for the responses. The reliability coefficient was 0.87, indicating high internal consistency and validity of the survey instrument.

3. Results

In today's world, individuality and personal skills can influence a person's recognisability, distinguish them from other people, building their own image and shaping their perception of others and self-perception. The issue of individuality, personal skills, uniqueness, and self-perception is especially acute for students whose personality begins to develop, acquiring certain views of the world, culture, social interaction and forming certain character traits and behavioural patterns. During this period, educational institutions and teachers should create an environment in which students can explore themselves and the world around them, develop important character traits and skills that will be useful not only in the educational institution but also throughout their lives. However, today's children, especially teenagers, are technologically literate, which gives them greater access to information and allows them to find new means of communication and self-expression. On the one hand, this is a positive aspect, as it expands the range of methods that can be used to develop their own individuality and personal skills, while on the other hand, the lack of control over the content they consume can have negative consequences for the development of their personality. The task of an educational institution is to use the main differences of the modern generation to develop their individuality and personal skills that will benefit them and positively influence their personal growth.

According to the Dictionary of Psychology by American Psychological Association (2018), personality is defined as a set of interrelated behavioural, cognitive, and emotional responses of a person, including unique adaptation to life and personal traits, values, principles, and self-esteem. Personal skills, in turn, can be defined as human abilities that affect a person's ability to self-develop, self-reflect, interact effectively with others and interact effectively in society and adapt to the changes that are constantly taking place in the modern world. The interconnection of personality and personal skills is due to their complex impact on personality development. Thus, it is the individuality of a person that determines the priority of developing certain skills, the process of their development, and the possibilities of their application. Each student, based on individual personality traits, values, principles and views, determines the skills he or she wants to develop. Based on individual personality traits, the process of developing skills will also differ: some people develop skills faster and some

slower, some are able to develop them on their own, and some only under the supervision of teachers. The same applies to the application of acquired skills: some people will use the acquired skills only in the learning process, while others will use them throughout their lives in real life situations, developing new approaches to their use and constantly improving them. At the same time, a person's skills can determine their personality. For example, communication skills can influence the process of socialisation of an individual, his or her worldview and perception of themselves, pushing for internal changes, self-determination and understanding of their own uniqueness. Thus, it can be argued that individuality and personal skills are interconnected and have an equal impact on the development of students' personality and self-determination.

The skills of the 21st century are also important to consider: "hard skills" and "soft skills". "Hard skills" are practical or technical abilities (knowledge of foreign languages, information technology skills), while soft skills are abilities related to interpersonal interaction, emotional intelligence, adaptability (justice, honesty, empathy, teamwork) (Lamri & Lubart, 2023; Lyu & Liu, 2021; Rahma et al., 2023; Syamsuri et al., 2022). Usually, these two categories of skills are studied and assessed separately, but only if they interact and develop in a comprehensive manner, a person is able to form a type of thinking and behaviour patterns that will help him or her not only to study and work effectively, but also to interact effectively in society, develop throughout life and adapt more easily to environmental and internal changes. For example, a person who has excellent knowledge of foreign languages but is not able to cooperate in a team may be less successful than a person who has both a high level of foreign language proficiency and teamwork skills. That is, soft and hard skills are interconnected and interdependent, and both categories of skills are relevant for a modern personality seeking self-development in the XXI century. This determines the need to develop both categories of skills in the younger generation, but it is in their interaction that "hard" and "soft" skills can be considered as personal skills of the individual. Lamri and Lubart (2023) proposed their concept of personal skills based on the interaction of soft and hard skills. According to them, personal skills include five separate components (Figure 1).

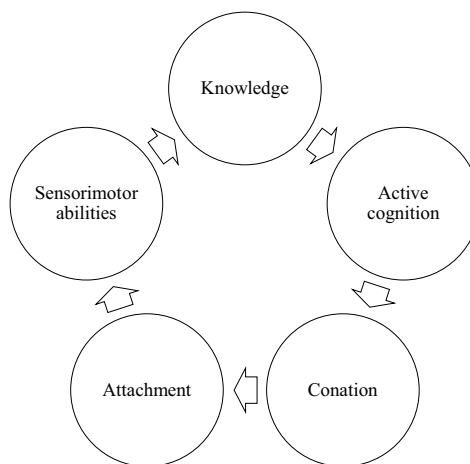


Figure 1. Structure of personal skills of a person (source: compiled by the authors based on Lamri and Lubart, 2023)

The researchers defined knowledge as the technical awareness of a person (knowledge of foreign languages, software, basic knowledge of the environment), as well as cognitive abilities of a person (memory, attention, thinking); active cognition is the ability to analyse information coming from outside and form one's own opinion, principles and values on its basis; conation is the ability to focus on achieving a goal, to maintain motivation to act in the short and long term; attachment is seen as the ability to empathise, reflect and self-reflect, the ability to communicate effectively with others; sensorimotor abilities include fine motor skills, balance and coordination.

The described structure of personal skills is important for an individual's social and cultural interaction. All components are aimed at successful interaction between an individual and others, and as a result, at understanding and developing one's own individuality and personal skills. For example, knowledge is necessary for understanding the topic under discussion, awareness of various areas and issues, and the ability to communicate information, discuss, and argue one's views and opinions. Active cognition is involved in processing information from the interlocutor, analysing it and forming one's own opinions and judgements based on it. Conation plays an important role in motivation to communicate and learn about the outside world, and helps to maintain calmness and self-confidence when speaking in public. Attachment affects an individual's ability to understand the problems of others, to be sympathetic and empathetic, which increases the effectiveness of communication. Sensorimotor abilities affect facial expressions and gestures, which can also affect the effectiveness of an individual's interaction with others, especially with representatives of other countries and cultures, because when communicating in a foreign language, facial expressions and gestures can play an important role in understanding the interlocutor, even in the event of errors in conducting a dialogue in a foreign language.

Thus, soft, and hard skills are interconnected and interdependent and together form a set of personal skills necessary for effective socio-cultural interaction and lifelong self-development. Personal skills include: in-depth knowledge in certain areas, technical awareness, ability to analyse incoming information, self-reflection, empathy, creativity, time management, effective communication skills, and flexibility, honesty and fairness. In addition, in today's world, where intercultural interaction and intercultural communication are important and do not require significant efforts (as they can take place online), personal skills that can help an individual in development and self-determination can include: understanding the culture of one's country, understanding cultural diversity, respect for cultures and traditions of other countries, openness to new experiences, ability to accept the opinions, values and beliefs of the interlocutor and build communication based on them. This makes the study of methods of shaping students' individuality and developing their personal skills in the socio-cultural aspect an important part of not only the development of the younger generation, but also the development of international interaction in general.

Personality and personal skills have a great impact on students' ability to learn and their academic performance, as well as on the quality of life in general (Shulman, 2023). Thus, in the learning process, personality can affect the quality of knowledge acquisition, the peculiarities of interaction with others, the ability to resolve conflict situations, and the approach to completing tasks. In turn, personal skills in the learning process can affect the ability to apply

the acquired knowledge in practice, the ability to work in a team, to perform both individual and team work, and the process of completing tasks. Individuality and personal skills in terms of students' quality of life can influence the ability to comprehend and analyse certain life events, individual reactions to them, the means of achieving a goal, and the ability to resolve conflicts in an environmentally friendly way. In other words, personality and personal skills do have a high impact on the learning process and on the quality of life in general. A person who understands his or her individuality, has developed personal skills and is able to use them can have better academic success, which will allow them to get a quality education, and in the future – a job and effectively carry out their professional activities. In addition, the awareness of one's own uniqueness and the availability of personal skills can affect the quality of life, including self-esteem, self-understanding, the ability to self-analysis, reflection, and the peculiarities of communication with others and its effectiveness.

There is also a relationship between individuality and personal skills and the socio-cultural aspect (Schwaba et al., 2023). Individuality can be formed in the process of socio-cultural interaction: communicating with different people, representatives of other cultures or representatives of the same culture who have different views, with representatives of different professions, social strata, one can hear different opinions and different views, better understand oneself, identify one's strengths and weaknesses, understand one's belonging to a certain stratum and/or culture, which can influence the process of self-determination, the search for personal uniqueness and the formation of individuality. Personal skills are more likely to be necessary for socio-cultural interaction than to be developed within it. Thus, for socio-cultural interaction, it is necessary to have communication skills, knowledge of foreign languages, empathy skills, the ability to self-reflection and reflection in general. It also proved the relationship between personality and personal skills: personality helps to develop personal skills and personal skills can influence the development of personality. It is possible to develop one's own individuality through the use of modern technologies, through communication and interaction with representatives of different professions, cultures and views, through creativity, through watching documentaries and feature films, reading scientific and fiction literature. Personal skills can be developed by participating in various trainings and by working under the guidance of a more experienced person. In the socio-cultural aspect, it is most appropriate to develop one's individuality and personal skills through communication with representatives of other countries and cultures and generally through communication with other people, and the role of modern technologies in the development of individuality and personal skills in the socio-cultural aspect is also high (Olkhova, 2022).

Innovative technologies really play a crucial role in the development of modern education. In the twenty-first century, it is important for educational institutions to take advantage of modern technologies and involve the younger generation in their use, as this can be a method of influencing students and improving the effectiveness of the educational process and personal development of students (Alshuaibi, 2023). The development of individuality through the use of modern technologies is possible due to their wide range of possibilities. For example, a technology such as virtual reality can be useful in understanding one's weaknesses and strengths. Virtual and augmented reality can be used to try out different activities, different types of occupations (different sports, different hobbies), which can help in

self-discovery and understanding of one's own personality. Virtual reality can also be useful in the development of personal skills, and artificial intelligence can be an auxiliary method within which it is possible to create tables, lists, algorithms of actions aimed at self-improvement and personal growth (for example, tables to be used for time management or a compiled algorithm of actions for learning foreign languages). Among the modern technologies that can be used to develop individuality and personal skills are social media. Modern social networks (such as *Instagram*, *TikTok*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*) can be used to understand and reveal one's uniqueness and develop skills, including communication skills. For example, on social media, students can engage in discussions, demonstrate their creativity, express themselves, communicate with representatives of other countries, cultures, and views, and their accessibility allows every student to use social media for self-development. This demonstrates the need to use modern technologies both in the development of individuality and personal skills of students and in the educational process in general, which can increase students' motivation to learn and develop themselves (Sindhura, 2023).

The study also showed that social interaction, including social interaction with representatives of different countries/cultures/views/professions, can be an effective method of developing individuality and personal skills. Communicating with different people broadens one's horizons, increases intelligence, and develops empathy. This has demonstrated the need for events that will organise meetings with leading experts in various fields from different countries. Based on the analysis of scientific sources, methods and approaches, recommendations were made on modern methods of developing students' individuality and personal skills (Figure 2).

It is advisable to consider each of the proposed methods in more detail. The use of innovative technologies in the development of students' individuality and personal skills is possible in the following areas: the introduction of virtual or augmented reality technologies into the educational process or interaction with students on social media. For example, it may be advisable to create an official website of an educational institution or pages on social media popular among young people, where information useful for students' self-development will be disseminated, psychological tests will be created and added together with a school psychologist, after which students will be able to learn more about themselves, their personality, their individuality, their skills and opportunities for their development, and separate posts will

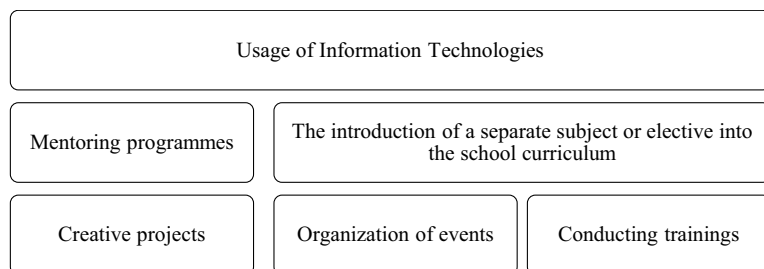


Figure 2. Modern methods of developing individuality and personal skills (source: compiled by the authors)

be created in which students will be able to discuss various topics. According to Alshuaibi (2023), such interaction with students through social media is one of the most effective tools for influencing them, as well as one of the most effective methods for improving communication between teachers and students, as well as between students of different ages, views, and interests.

It is also advisable to post information about both school and extracurricular activities (webinars, trainings, online meetings with experts, competitions, creative events, scientific conferences) on the social media of an educational institution, as modern youth may be more inclined to perceive information in a high-quality manner through social media, which will increase the likelihood of their attending the proposed events. In addition, social networks and the Internet in general can be useful not only for the development of individuality and personal skills of students, but also for establishing international interaction. In today's reality, the Internet and social media provide an opportunity for barrier-free communication between peers from different countries, which can contribute not only to the comprehensive development of students' personalities, but also to further international cooperation between educational institutions, which can provide students with the opportunity to receive education in other countries and build their careers there. Such communication can also affect the quality of social and cultural interaction: communication skills, understanding of cultural diversity, respect for cultures and traditions of other countries, and help to gain new experience. Communication on the Internet, monitoring social networks of representatives of other countries and cultures, exchanging experiences and opinions will help to learn more about the culture, traditions, and mentality of foreign countries, which in turn can affect the process of self-knowledge and self-determination.

Organising events aimed at students' self-development can also be an effective way to develop individuality and personal skills. The organised events should address topics that will contribute to students' self-development, such as how to understand their true desires, how to set goals, the basics of time management, how to resolve conflicts in an environmentally friendly way. These events may also include inviting experts on the issues raised, holding discussions, and providing an opportunity to ask questions of the invited experts (Dufynets et al., 2023). Trainings are also a similar method of developing individuality and personal skills, as they should also be aimed at self-development and can be conducted on the same topics. However, the main difference between organised events and trainings is that in the first case, students are not expected to actively participate and perform exercises: organised events are aimed at covering a certain topic, getting answers from experts and possibly discussions. In the case of workshops, students are active participants in the training process: they perform various exercises, work individually or in teams, interact with each other under the guidance of an experienced facilitator, who may be a teacher, school psychologist, social worker or invited trainer, who not only manages the entire training process, but also observes the reactions of participants, their actions and, at the end of the training, can provide his or her conclusions based on the analysis of what they have seen and heard.

Hadiyanto et al. (2021; 2023), who studied the effectiveness of short trainings in the development of 21st century skills, noted that trainings are an effective method of developing both soft and hard skills. The effectiveness of trainings in developing students' skills was also

studied by Demirok et al. (2023), Libertson (2023). The study revealed the features of personality-oriented development of students using digital technologies. It was determined that personal growth trainings, as well as organised events, are an effective method of personal development and the formation of the necessary skills. The students who participated in the study noted that important and interesting training topics could also include: the use of modern technologies in the process of self-development, communication skills, time management, emotion and stress management, cognitive skills development techniques, and creative training. Speaking about creative trainings, it is worth noting that creative projects can be an effective method of developing students' individuality and personal skills, as they provide a wide scope for self-expression, realisation of their ideas and development of creative thinking. Creative projects, as an author's method of developing students' individuality and personal skills, can be both team-based and individual. In the case of team creative projects, personal skills will be better developed: empathy, justice, the ability to communicate with others and resolve conflicts in an environmentally friendly way. In the case of individual projects, students will have the opportunity to better understand themselves, show their potential and talents. Taken together, team and individual creative projects can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of individual and personal skills development. Creative projects can include: creating presentations on specific topics (preferably, these topics should be covered not only on the basis of scientific sources, but also on the basis of students' own experiences and opinions, which will help in the process of developing individuality and personal skills), developing brochures and posters, organising exhibitions where exhibits are made/provided by students and have a certain history and meaning, organising school holidays, concerts, events, and actively participating in them. These creative projects can be useful in the process of self-expression of students and can provide an opportunity to implement their ideas, as well as influence the development of creative thinking.

Another method of developing individuality and personal skills is to introduce a separate subject or elective into the school curriculum, where teachers will develop students' personal skills and help them discover their individuality. This method can be ambiguously perceived by students, but the compulsory attendance of a school subject or elective motivates students to take active steps: to complete tasks, work on themselves, and independently study the topic of individuality and personal skills. A similar approach to developing students' individuality and personal skills was considered by Onyemaechi Ede et al. (2023). In their study, the researchers revealed the features of a psychoeducational programme aimed at solving students' personal problems and concluded that it is effective in developing the necessary psychological and behavioural skills. Haim and Aschauer (2024) analysed in their study their educational programme in which students are actively involved in the educational process and in sustainable development projects, which helps them to effectively develop their own skills and worldview. A final method of developing individuality and personal skills is through mentoring programmes. Under these programmes, each student (or, in a less effective way, a group of students) learns and develops under the guidance of a mentor, a more experienced person who can guide the development of students, help them solve problems, address concerns, and support them on their path of self-development and self-discovery. For junior and middle school students, mentors can be high school students, and for high school students,

mentors can be teachers/school psychologists/social workers, or, in case of cooperation between the school and other educational institutions, university students. Mentoring by pupils/students/teachers/psychologists from foreign educational institutions would be an interesting experience, as it would not only improve the development of individuality and personal skills, but also influence the social and cultural perception of students.

The effectiveness of mentoring programmes in developing the necessary knowledge and skills in students is also revealed in the work of Bishopp-Martin et al. (2023), Mavi et al. (2023), who believe that mentoring is a source of knowledge for mentees and helps to unlock their potential. Mentoring programmes are aimed at helping students develop their own individuality and acquire personal skills. This study also found that in the modern world, students have uncontrolled access to information on the Internet, which can have a negative impact on their personality. Within the framework of mentoring programmes, mentors, in cooperation with parents, can control the information consumed by students and explain it to students for the positive development of their personality. In order to understand the possible effectiveness of the proposed methods in the educational process, an online-questionnaire was conducted among students of grades 7–10 in the age category of 12–16 years, in the framework of which they had to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed methods of developing individuality and personal skills.

The results of the questionnaire showed that students aged 12–13 (grades 7–8) considered creative projects more effective for the development of individuality and personal skills. The data were processed and analysed using the statistical software package SPSS, which enabled the identification of significant patterns and preferences across the age groups under consideration. The creative projects were rated the highest by the 12- to 13-year-olds (mean = 4.3, SD = 0.5). The data indicated that training and event programmes were perceived as the most effective for 14–15-year-olds (mean = 4.6, SD = 0.4). Mentoring and electives were the preferred options among 16-year-olds (mean = 4.8, SD = 0.3).

At the same time, in their opinion, mentoring programs and the introduction of a separate subject and elective into the school curriculum are the least effective. This may be due to the fact that at the age of 12–13 schoolchildren, on the contrary, try to learn about themselves and the world around them and refuse mentoring and help, which is why, in their opinion, mentoring is an ineffective method of developing individuality and personal skills. At this age, schoolchildren can also experience stress related to learning, since it is at the border of 7–8th grade that more narrowly focused disciplines are introduced into the curriculum, which can cause negative emotions about learning and lead to reluctance to acquire knowledge, which is why the proposal to introduce an additional subject or elective may also be negatively perceived by students of this age category. Instead, creative projects allow to relieve stress caused by the introduction of new academic disciplines, understand own uniqueness, get positive emotions and improve psychological state (Katolyk, 2023).

The study showed that 14–15-year-old schoolchildren (grades 8–9) consider trainings, as well as specially organized events, to be the most effective methods of developing individuality and personal skills. This may be due to the fact that schoolchildren at this age need more communication, and the first problems in understanding themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, may arise, which can be helped by trainings and special measures aimed

at problematic aspects of the schoolchildren's personality. 15–16-year-old schoolchildren consider the most effective methods of developing individuality and personal skills to be mentoring and the introduction of a separate subject or elective into the educational process, in which students will have the opportunity to reveal their inner potential and develop the necessary life skills. Unlike 12–13- and 14–15-year-old schoolchildren, high school students are more focused on the educational process and gaining knowledge, which is due to the need to enter higher educational institutions and a change in life priorities. Understanding the importance of knowledge and skills for their future, realizing the need to reveal their own individuality, students aged 15–16 are ready to receive knowledge and skills from more experienced people and attend additional classes, which determines their choice of the most effective methods.

An important aspect of the research is that students of all age categories identify the use of innovative approaches as an effective method of developing individuality and personal skills. This may be due to the rapid digitization of modern society and the involvement of children in modern technologies from an early age. However, students of 12–13 years rated the effectiveness of innovative technologies in the development of individuality and personal skills lower than students of 14–15 and 16 years. This may be due to the fact that schoolchildren aged 12–13 do not sufficiently understand the possibilities of using innovations for personal development, which may be prospects for further research. Thus, it can be concluded that the development of individuality and personal skills of students in the socio-cultural aspect should include a combination of all these methods, as each of them is aimed at both the overall development of the individual and understanding of their own uniqueness, as well as the development of individual personal skills. However, at the same time, in the process of developing the individuality and personal skills of schoolchildren, it is necessary to take into account the individual characteristics and preferences of each individual age category, as well as the zone of proximal development of each individual student.

The ability to interact effectively in society, to be an active participant in the cultural life of one's own country and to accept and understand the culture and views of other people, empathy, justice, building one's own values and principles that do not contradict the norms of society and morality is the key to the development of the younger generation and all future generations. That is why educational institutions should make every effort to create an environment where students feel safe and can effectively develop their individuality and personal skills in interesting and acceptable ways.

4. Discussion

This study defines individuality as a set of interrelated behavioural, cognitive and emotional reactions of a person, including a unique adaptation to life and personal traits, values, principles, self-esteem, and personal skills are human abilities that affect a person's ability to self-development, self-reflection, the ability to interact effectively with others and interact effectively in society and adapt to the changes that are constantly taking place in the modern world. Nair and Fahimirad (2019), Grover and Amit (2024), Stiliadi (2024) studying the importance of personal skills for the development of students' personal and social competences,

concluded that the development of personal skills has a positive effect on an individual's social interaction with others, self-esteem, and self-perception, which is fully consistent with the results of this study. However, among the benefits of developing individuality and personal competencies not highlighted in this study, researchers highlight the strengthening of mental health, the formation of leadership skills and the reduction of social and behavioural problems.

This proves the need to develop individuality and personal skills, but this study found that traditional approaches to their development are no longer effective. This is consistent with the results of the study of cultural values in teaching personal skills by Agila and Jayachithra (2023), who emphasised that traditional education is aimed at acquiring knowledge, but is not always aimed at personal development. In addition, the researcher noted that the purpose of culture in the process of forming life skills in an individual is to focus on the principles and ideas that need to be formed in the younger generation, which determines the importance of forming individuality and personal skills in the socio-cultural aspect. A similar opinion is also traced in the study of Pellerey (2023), who in his work on personal competences, noted that traditional education develops cognitive skills, but the state and enterprises are interested not only in the mental abilities of employees, but also in the presence of certain character traits, which proves the need to find new approaches to the development of individuality and personal skills.

This paper has determined that the most effective way to develop individuality and personal skills is in the process of studying in secondary schools, because it is during this age period that a person's worldview is formed, and the issue of their own uniqueness and self-determination is acute. Zohar et al. (2019), analysing the development of temperament and character in adolescence, also concluded that it is in adolescence, compared to all other age categories, that the most active formation of personal traits takes place, which correlates with the results of this study. The current study also notes that in the modern world, socio-cultural interaction plays an important role as a method of establishing international relations and personal development of students. Lyu (2024), studying the development of intercultural competence in students, notes that intercultural competences that are important for socio-cultural interaction include cultural awareness, ability to communicate effectively, empathy, adaptability, and flexibility, which correlates with the results obtained in this study. This study also highlighted the use of innovative technologies, in particular social media, as effective methods of developing individuality and personal skills.

Revealing the impact of modern educational technologies on the development of skills of a modern personality, Alshuaibi (2023) notes, that the use of innovative technologies plays an important role in shaping the personality of students and in the educational process in general. In particular, the benefits of innovative technologies in the educational process include: improving the quality of education, the ability to reveal the uniqueness and individuality of each student, the possibility of using technologies that can provide students with experience that they can use in real life situations (for example, virtual or augmented reality), the development of new strategies and approaches to the educational process that will improve the formation of knowledge and skills in students.

Jialin (2023), analysing the impact of social media on intercultural competence, notes that social media can be an effective method of supporting intercultural communication, developing respect for the culture and traditions of other countries, adaptability, and flexibility, as they facilitate communication between representatives of different countries and cultures, which correlates with the results of this study. Findyartini et al. (2024), Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2013), studying the use of social media for learning and development, concluded that in the modern world, the use of social media is an effective way to develop the necessary knowledge and skills, which was also observed in this study. However, according to the researchers, modern youth use social media only for entertainment and communication with friends, while their use for learning and self-development is minimal. This proves the need to find new approaches to the education and upbringing of modern youth and the importance of maximum involvement of educational institutions and teachers in this process. Another method proposed in this study was personal growth training. Kara Erol (2023), studying personal growth seminars, notes that such forms of interaction are effective in shaping the knowledge and skills necessary for participants, as they ensure active participation of participants, individual and teamwork, which was also identified in this study.

The introduction of a separate subject or elective into the school curriculum, aimed at developing students' personalities, has also been suggested as a method of developing individuality and personal skills. Folger et al. (2023) in their study of the psychological health support curriculum concluded that the introduction of additional curriculum, aimed at developing certain knowledge and competencies into the educational process, is an effective method. However, in the course of their research, the scientists concluded that such educational innovations will be much better perceived if the new subject/elective is taught by a teacher who is already familiar to students, whom they trust and respect. This will increase the motivation of students to work with the new curriculum, as well as help them feel more comfortable and, as a result, more effective in developing the necessary knowledge and skills. Among the methods of developing individuality and personal skills not identified in this study, Serpil (2023), who studied the positive and negative factors influencing the formation of life skills, identified: volunteer work, sports and sports competitions, social support, as well as life skills courses, in which students will develop personal skills and individual character traits necessary for learning, as well as for improving the quality of life and the ability to learn and develop over the years.

The influence of traditional forms of education and the impact of studying certain disciplines on the development of individuality and personal skills are also insufficiently disclosed. For example, Kien and Nghia (2024), studying the impact of English language learning on the development of soft skills, concluded that English language learning affects the formation of teamwork, the development of adaptability and flexibility, and the formation of the ability to solve problems that arise both during the educational process and in real life situations. This may be due to the fact that when learning a foreign language, all cognitive processes are activated, and the process of using a foreign language in real life is associated with the need to adapt to the peculiarities of the interlocutor's speech, and the need to solve problems that arise in the course of communication due to the interlocutor's misunderstanding/his/her too fast speech/limited vocabulary.

Thus, the analysed scientific sources show the importance of developing individuality and personal skills not only for the formation of certain competences, but also for strengthening mental health and reducing social and behavioural problems in students. Researchers agree that the most favourable period for the development of individuality and personal skills is school age, as it is during this period that children and adolescents form their worldview and self-perception. Socio-cultural interaction is also identified as an important component of personal development, as well as the development of international relations between educational institutions and states. The analysed sources demonstrate the effectiveness of the methods of individuality and personal skills development proposed in this study, but they highlight additional methods: volunteer work, sports competitions, as well as the formation of individuality and personal skills through the study of school disciplines. It can be concluded that the use of innovative technologies in the process of developing students' individuality and personal skills is an effective approach in the modern environment that can motivate students to self-knowledge, self-development, and effective social and cultural interaction, which will ultimately form the necessary knowledge and skills. However, at the same time, it is important to analyse the possibilities of developing individuality and personal skills using traditional methods and within the framework of studying certain academic disciplines.

5. Conclusions

This study reveals the role of individuality and personal skills of students in their personal development, social interaction, further education. It is determined that personality and personal skills are interrelated: personality helps to develop personal skills and personal skills can influence the development of personality. The concepts of "soft skills" and "hard skills" are revealed. The soft skills include justice, honesty, empathy, teamwork, and other abilities related to interpersonal interaction, and the hard skills include practical or technical abilities, and the combination of soft and hard skills can be considered as personal skills.

The study concludes that individuality and personal skills, shaped by socio-cultural interactions, significantly impact students' development, education, and preparation for professional activities, emphasizing the need for targeted educational strategies within socio-cultural contexts. Individuality and personal skills in the learning process can affect the quality of knowledge acquisition, its practical application and the process of application, interaction with others, the ability to resolve conflict situations in an environmentally friendly manner, the ability to interact in a team, and perform individual and teamwork. Individuality and personal skills can also influence the quality of life: they determine reactions to certain events/stress factors, determine principles and values, and can affect the ability to comprehend and analyse certain life events, as well as the means of achieving a goal. The use of modern technologies and social interaction, in particular with representatives of different countries, cultures and activities, are identified as priority areas for the development of students' individuality and personal skills. The effectiveness of such activities is explained by the possibility of self-expression through the use of modern technologies, as well as the opportunity to gain new experience through communication with representatives of other cultures, thereby forming their own views.

Based on the information received, the following are modern approaches to revealing the individuality of schoolchildren and developing their skills: the use of innovations, including virtual reality, artificial intelligence and social networks; organisation of personal growth trainings; introduction of a separate subject or elective in the school curriculum, within which students will be able to develop personal skills and reveal their individuality; mentoring programmes aimed at revealing the hidden talents and abilities of schoolchildren; organisation of events with the invitation of experts; introducing into the educational process creative projects (both individual and group) within the framework of which students will be able to express themselves, show themselves and develop personal skills, in particular: communicative, creative and mental abilities. To understand the effectiveness of the proposed methods for different age categories of schoolchildren, a study was conducted among 40 students of grades 7–10, which demonstrated that schoolchildren aged 12–13 consider creative projects more effective in their self-development, students aged 14–15 – trainings and specially organized activities, and students aged 16 – mentoring and electives. The interviewed schoolchildren of all age categories consider innovative technologies to be effective in the development of individuality and personal skills. This demonstrates the need for an individual approach to each age group of schoolchildren.

Limitations of this study include the lack of experimental verification of the effectiveness of the proposed approaches to the development of individuality and personal skills, as well as the lack of research among teachers whose views and experience could provide more information about the realities of the modern educational process and the formation of individuality and personal skills within it. The results obtained could be improved by conducting an experimental verification of the effectiveness of the proposed methods and by researching among teachers of secondary educational institutions. Prospects for further research are also to study the impact of the educational process in general and individual disciplines on the development of individuality and personal qualities.

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