

International Models of Supporting the Spiritual and Psychological Development of Youth in the Education Financing System

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The article analyzes the conceptual principles and applied aspects of the development and implementation of international models for ensuring the spiritual and psychological development of youth within the framework of the educational financing system. The purpose of the study is to systematize leading approaches to integrating psychological well-being and spiritual and value development programs into educational budgets, analyze instruments of state, mixed, and program-targeted financing, and identify key trends in the formation and evolution of educational policy in the context of global social transformations. The methodological basis of the study consists of an analysis of scientific publications, international reports and recommendations, regulatory documents in the field of education, as well as a comparative analysis of practices for financing youth well-being support programs in the countries of the European Union, North America, and the Asia-Pacific region. Particular attention is paid to identifying financial instruments that ensure the systematic and sustainable implementation of spiritual and psychological initiatives in educational institutions. It has been established that the introduction of comprehensive and institutionalized financing models contributes to increasing the accessibility of psychosocial services, shaping the value orientations of young people, and strengthening their social resilience. It has been shown that the combination of state guarantees, grant mechanisms, and public-private partnerships ensures the flexibility and innovation of relevant programs. It has been concluded that international experience in supporting the spiritual and psychological development of young people can be effectively used to improve the national education financing system in order to increase its social orientation and ensure sustainable development.

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1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the intensification of socio-economic, cultural, and technological transformations necessitates a significant reassessment of the mission of education and its role in the formation and development of the individual. Education systems are increasingly focused not only on the transfer of knowledge and the formation of professional competencies, but also on ensuring the holistic development of young people, including psychological well-being, emotional stability, moral and value orientations, and the ability to achieve self-actualization. In conditions of increasing stress factors, social instability, and information overload, ensuring the spiritual and psychological development of youth is gaining strategic importance for the functioning and sustainable development of national education systems.

In line with these changes, approaches to the formation and distribution of financial resources in the field of education are also being transformed. Contemporary education policy increasingly views investment in psychosocial and spiritually oriented programs as a component of long-term human capital development. Internationally, this is reflected in UNESCO recommendations and analytical materials, which emphasize the need to integrate support for the well-being of learners into national strategies and funding mechanisms. At the same time, different countries apply different models of financing programs aimed at the spiritual and psychological development of young people, which is due to the historical, cultural, and institutional characteristics of their education systems. Some countries focus on full budgetary support for such initiatives, others on combining public resources with private investment and grant mechanisms, and still others on program-targeted funding with clearly defined performance indicators. This creates ample scope for comparative analysis and identification of the most effective approaches.

Alongside positive developments in the area of funding, a number of problems remain, related to the fragmented nature of support, unequal access to psychosocial services for young people, and insufficient integration of spiritual and value-based components into educational programs. In these conditions, it is particularly important to study international models of support for the spiritual and psychological development of young people in the education funding system, to conduct a comparative analysis of these models,

and to identify opportunities for adapting them to the national context.

Therefore, the study of international experience in the formation and implementation of financial mechanisms to support the spiritual and psychological development of youth is a relevant scientific task that meets the modern challenges of the development of the educational sphere and outlines promising directions for further scientific research.

2. Literature Review

The issue of supporting the spiritual and psychological development of young people in the education system is the subject of active interdisciplinary research in the fields of pedagogy, psychology, sociology, educational sciences, and public administration. In contemporary scientific literature, youth well-being is viewed as a multidimensional construct that encompasses psychological resilience, emotional intelligence, social adaptation, and value-meaning orientations of the individual (Salavera et al., 2020; Sarzhanova & Nurgabdeshev, 2025; Shengyao et al., 2024). Researchers emphasize the growing role of educational institutions in ensuring psychosocial health and shaping the life skills of young people. A significant number of scientific works are devoted to the concept of social and emotional learning as a methodological basis for supporting the psychological development of pupils and students (Umarova, 2024; Sofiawati et al., 2025; Boghian & Cojocariu, 2023). These studies emphasize the importance of developing self-regulation, empathy, responsible decision-making, and interpersonal interaction skills. At the same time, the authors emphasize that the effectiveness of such programs is largely determined by the availability of stable funding and proper institutional support.

A separate area of scientific research is devoted to analyzing the role of public policy and financial instruments in ensuring the psychological well-being of youth. Reports and analytical reviews by UNESCO (2022), the OECD (2024b), and the World Bank (2023) emphasize the need to integrate mental health and social-emotional development programs into national education strategies and budget planning systems. Works devoted to international comparative analysis highlight various models of financing youth well-being support: integrated public, mixed (public-private), and program-targeted (Sheehan et al.,

2022; Biermann et al., 2025; Bhat et al., 2025). Researchers note that countries with high levels of public investment in the social sphere demonstrate better indicators of the availability of psychological services in educational institutions.

Contemporary literature pays particular attention to the spiritual development and formation of value orientations among young people in the educational environment (Palahniuk & Fomin, 2023; Shohbozbek, 2025; Lappo et al., 2022). The authors emphasize the need to integrate ethical, civic, and cultural components into educational programs as a condition for the holistic development of the individual. Summarizing scientific developments, three key areas of research can be identified in the field of supporting the spiritual and psychological development of young people in the education funding system:

1. Theoretical and methodological – research into the essence of well-being and spiritual development of young people (Quinn, 2022; Reyes-Perez et al., 2025).
2. Political and economic – analysis of public policy and financial support models (Ulucanlar et al., 2023; Cao et al., 2025).
3. International comparative – studying foreign experience and opportunities for its adaptation (Lopez-Gavira et al., 2025; Liu & Huang, 2023).

Thus, analysis of the scientific literature shows that, despite the existence of a significant number of studies, the problem of comprehensively understanding international models of financing support for the spiritual and psychological development of young people and their adaptation to the national context remains insufficiently studied, which determines the relevance of further scientific research.

3. Methods

The study is based on an analysis of scientific, theoretical, regulatory, legal, and analytical materials devoted to the issue of supporting the spiritual and psychological development of young people in the education financing system in different countries around the world. The information base of the study consisted of publications in professional scientific journals on pedagogy, psychology, educational sciences, and public administration, materials from international scientific and practical conferences, reports and analytical reports from international

organizations, in particular UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank, as well as official documents from national education authorities. To ensure scientific reliability, open, peer-reviewed, and officially published sources were used.

The methodological basis of the study is a systemic approach, which made it possible to consider support for the spiritual and psychological development of youth as a component of educational policy, integrated through the interaction of financial, institutional, and pedagogical factors. In order to analyze the structure and content of financial mechanisms, structural and functional analysis methods were used to identify the key elements of funding models and their role in ensuring the accessibility and sustainability of relevant programs. The study used a comparative method, which made it possible to compare approaches to financing programs supporting the psychological well-being and spiritual and value development of young people in the European Union, North America, and the Asia-Pacific region, and to identify common features and differences in the organization of financial support, institutional mechanisms, and forms of program implementation. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of integrated, mixed, and program-targeted models of financing.

To summarize theoretical provisions and identify dominant trends, we used content analysis of scientific publications, strategic documents, and education development programs. This allowed us to systematize approaches to integrating psychosocial and spiritually oriented components into education budgets and to determine the priorities of education policy regarding youth well-being.

At the stage of conceptual understanding of the results, a modeling method was used to summarize international experience and form a holistic view of modern international models of supporting the spiritual and psychological development of young people in the education financing system. In addition, the analogy method was used, which made it possible to outline the possibilities of adapting individual financial instruments and programs to the conditions of national education systems.

The study also used the historical-logical method, which made it possible to trace the evolution of approaches to financing youth welfare support programs – from fragmented social initiatives to comprehensive institutionalized models. To summarize the results and form conclusions, methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization

were used, as well as secondary analysis of scientific sources.

Therefore, the methodological design of the study is based on a combination of analytical, comparative, and conceptual-modeling approaches, which provides a holistic and multidimensional understanding of the issues of supporting the spiritual and psychological development of youth in the education financing system.

4. Results

The effectiveness of programs aimed at the spiritual and psychological development of youth is determined by the level of stability of financial support and the rationality of its structural organization. In this regard, it is particularly important to study international experience, where support for the psychosocial well-being of the younger generation has long gone beyond purely educational initiatives and has been transformed into a strategic direction of state policy. An analysis of leading global practices reveals effective mechanisms for attracting resources and institutional frameworks that can be adapted to national conditions. In countries with developed education systems, support for the spiritual and psychological development of young people is seen as a strategic component of investment in human capital and ensuring long-term social stability. In most developed countries, these programs are not considered secondary social expenditures, but are integrated directly into national strategies for the development of education, health care, and social protection. This approach leads to the formation of stable budget flows and the creation of effective institutional mechanisms for monitoring the effective use of funds.

UNESCO and the OECD provide the methodological foundation on which national funding models are developed in EU Member

States, defining mental health, social and emotional learning, as well as spiritual well-being as important indicators of educational quality. For example, in Finland, mental health initiatives within schools are funded nationally through the state's budget and also receive financial support through municipalities and targeted funds. By providing these types of mental health support at this level, they ensure equal access to the necessary services regardless of the area you live in.

In addition to a combination of federal government funds, state government funds (also called Federal State Funding), and Non-Government Charitable Foundations, Germany has an alternative method of funding within their educational system called «mixed funding». The mixed funding model allows program providers flexibility in how programs are implemented and creates competition among service providers (educational institutions) to develop innovative programs designed to provide psychological support services or spiritual/moral educational services.

In Canada and the USA, educational subsidies, federal and provincial grants, and partnerships with the private sector have contributed to an increased usage of these funding programs. Additionally, a significant percentage of resources are being aimed at developing social/emotional skills, preventing stress disorders and developing resilient youth.

An evaluation of global experience enables us to categorize four general types of financing:

- government centered finance (typical in Scandinavian nations);
- mixtures of both government centered finance and decentralized funding (common in Federal systems, such as Germany);
- grant-based partnerships (common in North America).

The general characteristics of these models are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of international models of financing programs for the spiritual and psychological development of young people

Country/region	Type of funding model	Main sources of funding	Key areas of support
Finland	State-centralized	State budget, municipal grants	School psychologists, mental health, social-emotional learning
Germany	Mixed	Federal budget, state budgets, foundations	Counseling, stress prevention, spiritual and moral education
United States	Grant-based partnership	Federal subsidies, grants, private sector	Resilience development, social skills
Canada	Mixed grant	Provincial budgets, grants, charitable foundations	Psychological support, inclusion
EU	Multi-channel	State budgets, EU funds, donors	Comprehensive welfare programs

Source: systematized by the author based on analytical reports by UNESCO (2022), OECD (2024a), and World Bank (2023)

Figure 1 shows a diagram illustrating the ratio of public funding and grants to private funds in the countries under review.

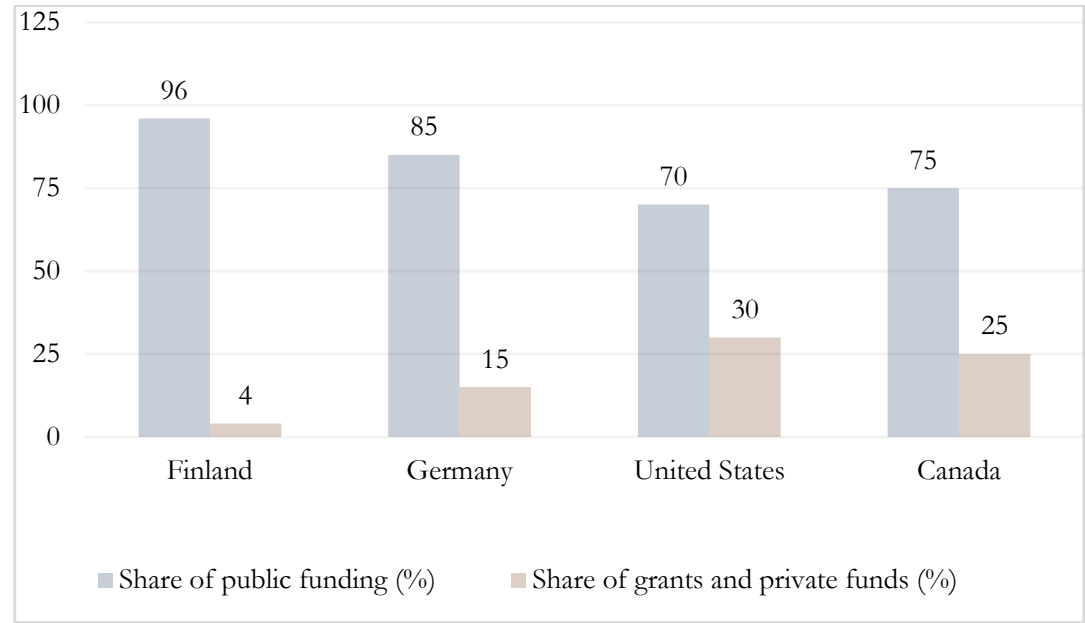


Figure 1. Structure of youth support program funding by source of revenue

Source: compiled by the author based on summarized official statistical reports from the OECD (Education at a Glance, 2023–2024)

A comparison of the results shows that the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at the spiritual and psychological growth of young people is associated with the diversity of financial revenues and the ability of management approaches to adapt to change. None of the countries

considered relies exclusively on market mechanisms or budgetary funding alone. Instead, multi-channel approaches that combine state guarantees of basic access with competitive grant allocation mechanisms and the involvement of civil society resources are recognized as effective.

For Ukraine, given limited budget resources and growing demand for psychological support, the most promising approach seems to be borrowing elements of mixed and grant-partnership models, which will not only increase funding but also improve the quality of services by involving innovative non-governmental providers.

Having enough money is important when trying to help youth, but having that money isn't enough. Many countries around the world have wasted a great amount of money because the institutions that use that money to provide quality services to youth were too weak or split up. Therefore, we need to examine the institutional mechanisms that decide who will provide youth with spiritual and psychological assistance and when and how this takes place.

In developed countries where there is an extensive network of programs to support the spiritual and psychological growth of youth, there is a relationship between institutional arrangements and financial resources provided to programs to help youth grow spiritually/mentally. This connection provides a framework for ensuring that the financial resources provided to these program(s) through various funding sources are utilized efficiently as well as effectively and help to align all the various sectoral (governmental, faith-based, and community) efforts toward meeting the needs of youth within their communities. Thus creating a common objective – assisting youth in developing their spirituality/mental well-being. International example shows that UNESCO and OECD recommendations on the integration of education, health, and social protection policies are important foundations for the establishment of mechanisms through interdepartmental platforms, joint strategies and coordinating bodies responsible for program planning; implementation and monitoring of programs for supporting youth in the countries analyzed above (Finland, Germany, United States, and Canada) as well as the countries of the UK and Japan with developed institutional models to coordinate in support of youth through such programs.

In the United Kingdom, the institutional model is based on national student welfare strategies, within which schools receive clearly defined standards for the provision of psychological services and funding for school psychologists, social educators, and counselors. At the same time, educational institutions have autonomy in choosing specific tools for implementing programs (training, group sessions, individual counseling), which increases the flexibility of the system.

Japan's institutional framework combines both state-managed systems of governance as well as some degree of autonomy given to the schools themselves. For example, central authorities provide schools a set of standards and training modules regarding the development of life skills and mental health, however, the local schools adapt those standards to fit their own cultural & social needs/characteristics. School counseling services and cooperation with local medical institutions play a significant role. In European Union countries, institutional support is often multi-level: national ministries formulate strategy, regional authorities are responsible for resource allocation, and schools and universities are responsible for the direct implementation of programs. This model allows for strategic coordination and the ability to respond quickly to regional challenges. Summarizing the approaches discussed, three typical institutional models can be identified:

1. Centralized management model – the state determines standards and strategic guidelines, and implementation occurs through a system of controlled institutions.
2. Partnership interaction – combining the efforts of government bodies, educational institutions, medical services and public organizations in the joint implementation of initiatives.
3. Autonomous implementation model – the state outlines general boundaries and requirements, and educational institutions independently select methods and tools for implementation.

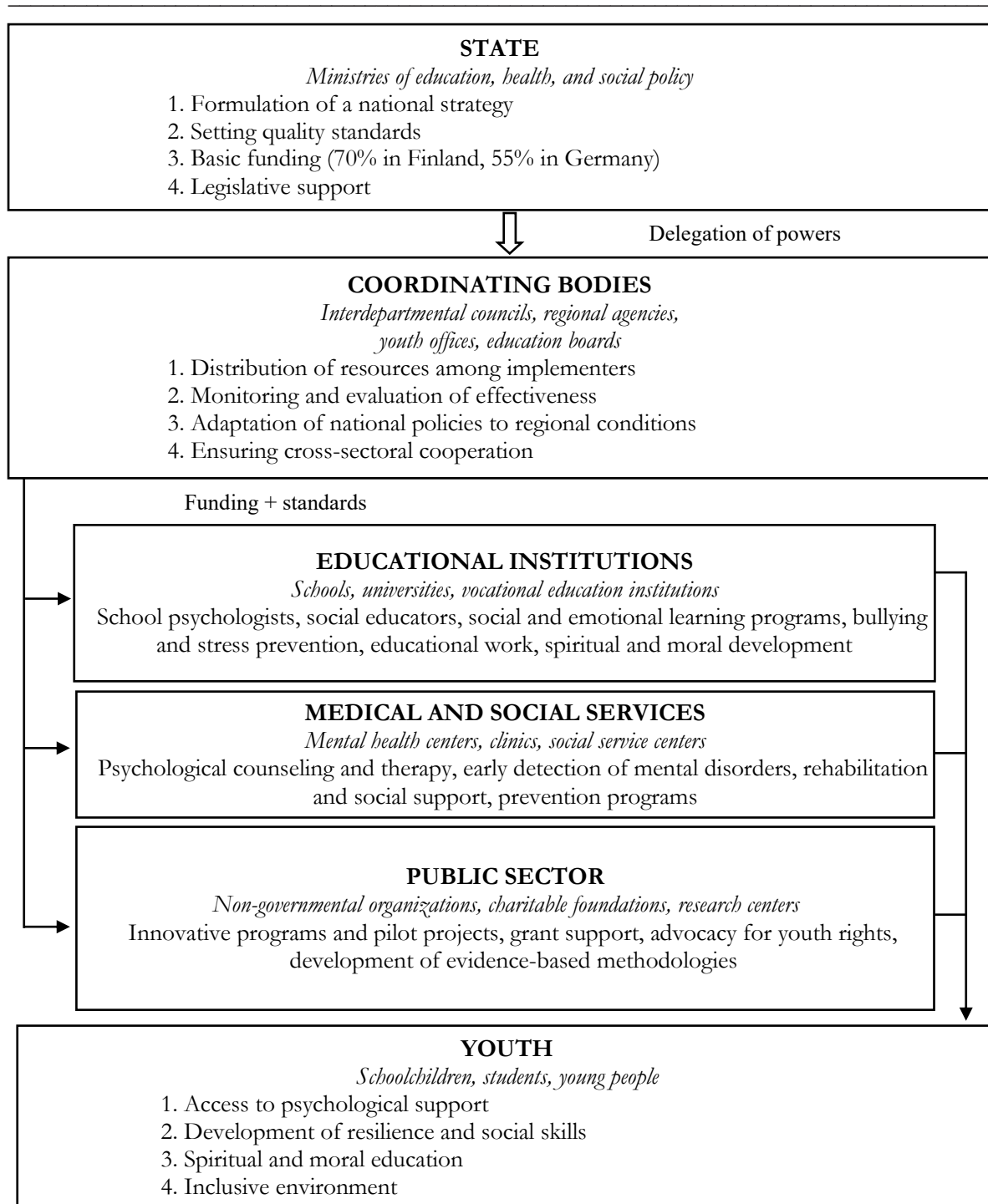


Figure 2. Typical institutional architecture for implementing programs to support the spiritual and psychological development of young people

Source: developed by the author

To visualize the interaction of key actors within the partnership model, which is becoming increasingly widespread in European countries, Figure 2 at presents a generalized diagram of the institutional architecture for implementing youth support programs. The results of the study confirm that hybrid models, in which the state acts as a coordinator and quality guarantor, while

educational institutions retain a sufficient level of autonomy, demonstrate the highest efficiency. This approach logically complements multi-channel funding models and creates a comprehensive system of support for the spiritual and psychological development of young people. At the same time, as the experience of the United Kingdom and Japan shows, the success of

institutional architecture depends not so much on strict centralization as on the ability to ensure effective communication between all participants in the process and rapid adaptation to the changing needs of the youth environment. Empirical analysis of statistical and analytical materials prepared by the OECD (2025) and UNESCO (2025) confirms the existence of a stable positive correlation between the level of funding for youth spiritual and psychological development programs and indicators of their psychosocial well-being, educational achievements, and social adaptation. In countries where the share of investment in relevant

programs is higher than average, there is a significant reduction in levels of anxiety, depressive symptoms, aggressive behavior, and school maladjustment, as well as an increase in student satisfaction with the educational environment. Research shows that systematic funding of school psychological services and social-emotional learning programs correlates with improved academic performance, reduced absenteeism, and fewer cases of early school leaving. The summarized results of this impact are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Impact of funding levels for support programs on key indicators of youth development

Level of program funding	Psychological well-being of young people	Academic performance	Social integration	Long-term social impact
High	Significant reduction in anxiety and depressive symptoms	Stable improvement in learning outcomes	High level of engagement and tolerance	Reduction in social and medical costs
Moderate	Moderate improvement in psychological state	Slight growth	Partial integration	Limited economic effect
Low	Preservation or increase of risks	Low dynamics of results	Social fragmentation	Growth in future budget expenditures

Source: systematized by the author based on generalized analytical reports by the OECD (2025) and UNESCO (2025)

A separate measure of the impact of funding is related to the spiritual and value component of education. Support for programs focused on the development of ethical guidelines, civic responsibility, and intercultural dialogue contributes to the formation of socially mature individuals capable of constructive interaction in a pluralistic society. Such results are manifested in increased tolerance, reduced social polarization, and strengthened social cohesion. Economic evaluations of investments made for psychosocial and spiritual growth in youth provide evidence of significant multipliers associated with these investments. By decreasing the occurrence of mental illnesses in youth and

decreasing the number of at-risk youth behaviors, future government spending on health care, social services, and law enforcement is also reduced. Additionally, improved educational performance through the development of «soft skills» will provide youth with greater competitive advantage in the labour market, as well as contribute to long-term economic productivity growth. For clarity, the summarized results of the impact of funding on psychological well-being, academic achievement, social integration, and the formation of civic responsibility are presented in the diagram in Figure 3.

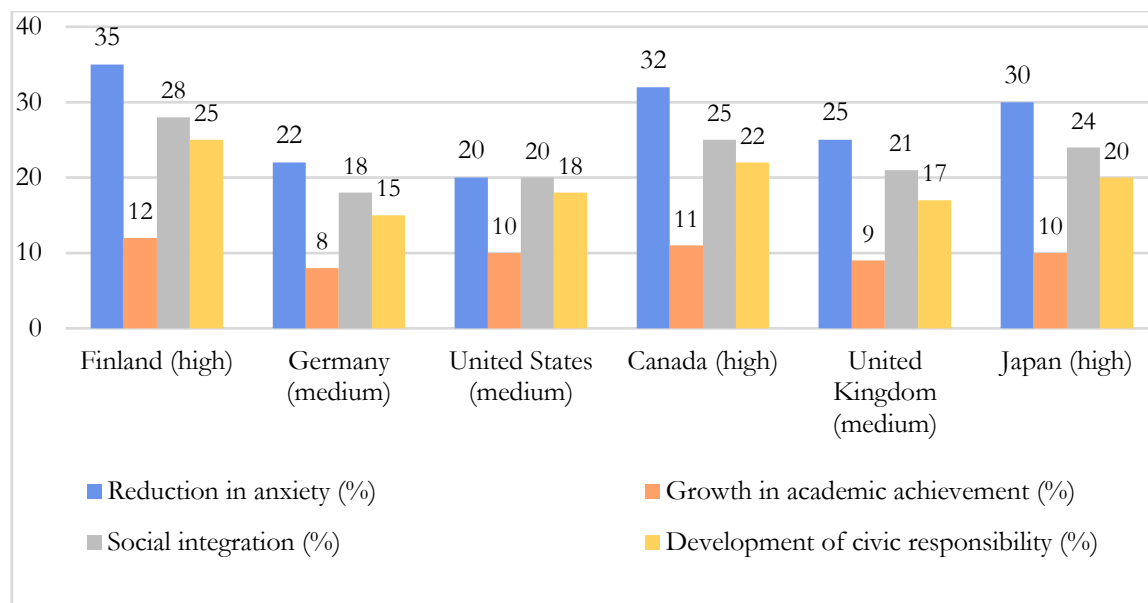


Figure 3. Impact of youth support program funding levels on key indicators

Source: summarized by the author based on OECD (2025), UNESCO (2025)

An examination of the data collected showed the greatest reductions in anxiety and improvements in social integration for the nations that invest heavily in their youth support programs (Finland, Canada, Japan) compared to average to less funding nations (Germany, USA, UK). There are positive effects present within each of these different types of funding, but the positive impacts are less evident when there is less funding. This shows that the success of any youth support program is solely based on the amount and stability of the financial resources backing it, with a multi-channel funding model resulting in the most optimal social effect.

In summary, it can be argued that funding for youth spiritual and psychological development programs should be viewed not as an expense but as an investment component of education budgets that forms the basis for sustainable socio-economic development.

5. Discussion

The results obtained are consistent with leading international approaches to understanding education as a multidimensional process that combines academic training with support for the psychological well-being and spiritual and value-based development of young people. In this context, the findings of the study confirm the positions set out in the analytical materials of UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank, according to which investments in psychosocial

and spiritually-oriented programs should be considered as part of a long-term human capital development strategy, rather than as an auxiliary social direction.

A comparative analysis of international funding models shows that the most effective are hybrid and multi-channel approaches that combine state guarantees of basic access with grant instruments and public-private partnerships. These findings expand on existing scientific positions on the effectiveness of mixed financing models, as they demonstrate not only their ability to ensure program sustainability, but also their role in stimulating innovation and local adaptation of initiatives.

At the same time, the results of the study allow us to critically rethink the thesis, widespread in some literature, about the dominant role of funding volumes as a determining factor of success. Empirical data show that even with high budget allocations, the effect may be limited in the case of weak institutional coordination, fragmented programs, or the absence of clear standards of service quality. Thus, financial resources should be considered in conjunction with institutional architecture, management practices, and the level of autonomy of educational institutions.

The question of the optimal balance between centralization and decentralization in the management of youth support programs remains open to debate. On the one hand, centralized models ensure equal access and uniform standards, while on the other hand, decentralized

and autonomous-adaptive approaches create conditions for flexible consideration of the cultural and social characteristics of regions. The results obtained lead to the conclusion that the most effective approach is a combination of these approaches, where the state determines the strategic framework and minimum standards, and educational institutions have the freedom to choose the tools for implementation.

Separate discussion of the spiritual and value dimensions of education, many countries regard as less formalised than psychological support, are necessary. There are good examples internationally of how ethical education, civic education and intercultural dialogue positively impact on social cohesion. However, the majority of national policies have no clearly defined financial mechanisms within the national standards for these components. Therefore, there is a need for additional development of performance indicators for spiritually orientated programmes and the integration into the budget planning system.

In the context of Ukraine, the results of the study can serve as a basis for the formation of a more socially oriented model of education financing, in which support for the psychological well-being and spiritual development of young people will be considered an investment in the sustainability of society. At the same time, the adaptation of international experience requires taking into account national economic capabilities, institutional capacity, and cultural characteristics. Future studies need to include a qualitative evaluation of the long term social and economic effects of youth support initiatives on both individual and community levels as well as to create a framework for combining financial, educational, and social indicators into one comprehensive model to evaluate effectiveness. This will deepen understanding of the role of spiritual and psychological development of young people in the education funding system and improve the soundness of management decisions in this area.

6. Conclusion

In this study, researchers found that there are many different international models that support the spiritual and psychological development of young people within the education funding system. These models are based on: integration of social oriented policy, cross-sectoral cooperation and multi-channel financial support.

This approach ensures that psychosocial well-being and spiritual and value-based development are considered strategic investments in human capital and sustainable social development.

A comparison of practices from multiple countries has shown there are several emerging similarities; most national education strategies have included both social-emotional learning programs and psychological support; they all use a mix of financing models, such as grants or other forms of partnerships; they provide state guarantees of access in return for allowing schools sufficient autonomy to choose their independent methods of providing social and emotional learning. At the same time, differences were identified in the degree of centralization of management, the extent of private sector involvement, and levels of institutional coordination, which allows individual countries to be considered as benchmarks for further improvement of national approaches.

It has been proven that the effectiveness of youth spiritual and psychological development programs increases when stable funding is combined with a clearly structured institutional architecture that ensures coordination between the education, health, and social protection systems. In this context, the recommendations of UNESCO and the OECD on integrating youth well-being policies into national budget planning and performance monitoring mechanisms are particularly important.

It has been established that the availability of financial resources alone does not guarantee high program effectiveness if there are no transparent mechanisms for evaluating service quality, training specialists, and coordinating actions between participants in the educational process. The most effective models are hybrid ones, in which the state acts as a coordinator and guarantor of standards, while educational institutions retain sufficient autonomy to adapt programs to local needs.

A review of international experience has made it possible to identify key areas for its adaptation to the national education funding system:

- introduction of multi-channel models for funding youth support programs;
- institutionalization of psychological and spiritual-value components in education budgets;
- development of partnerships between the state, educational institutions, public organizations, and the private sector;
- formation of a system for monitoring and evaluating the social and educational effects of such programs.

The research materials can be used to improve state policy in the field of education financing, develop programs to support the psychological well-being and spiritual development of young people, and justify investment decisions in socially oriented areas of education budgets.

Thus, the study confirms the feasibility of using international experience as a conceptual and practical basis for the formation of a socially oriented, flexible, and sustainable education financing system in Ukraine that is capable of ensuring the comprehensive spiritual and psychological development of young people and promoting long-term stability in society.

The proposed model indicates that effective inclusive education is possible when all three

components interact. This includes creating adequate organizational prerequisites (reducing the number of students in a class, introducing teacher assistants), providing access to differentiated teaching materials, continuous professional development of teachers, and forming communities for sharing experiences. In addition, the study will be expanded geographically and the number of respondents will be increased to confirm the trends observed. It is also important to develop and test professional development programs that meet the specifics of teaching strategies (elements of the Dalcroze and Orff approaches).

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8. Author Declaration

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The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, that could have influenced the research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or the presentation of the findings.