

# Ethno-confessional map of religious education in Ukraine

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The article explores the regional aspects of the formation of the religious environment in Ukraine within the field of education. The author analyzes contemporary research by Ukrainian scholars, particularly their academic works and publications that highlight various aspects of religious education. The study differentiates the concept of "religious education," examines the educational programs of religious educational institutions, and assesses their representation on the Internet. The research establishes the correlation between the historical continuity of religious education in Ukrainian territories and the modern educational landscape of the state.

The article provides a historical overview of the religious, cultural, and political factors that have influenced the development of denominational life in Ukraine. It describes the coexistence of representatives of various denominations, including Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and Protestants, while also analyzing the presence of other religious movements such as Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Krishnaists. The historical prerequisites for the formation of a specific religious-educational space in Ukrainian lands are examined in the context of the legal and regulatory framework governing the activities of denominational educational institutions. The study identifies the key characteristics of religious education in Ukraine.

Furthermore, the article systematizes information on the distribution of educational institutions, programs, and practices that take into account the ethnic and denominational structure of the population across different regions. The study emphasizes Ukraine's significant role as a platform for interdenominational and intercultural dialogue.

## Introduction

The relevance of this topic stems from multiple Religious education in Ukraine is a complex phenomenon closely linked to the ethno-confessional structure of society, which has been shaped by historical, cultural, and political factors. The country's multinational composition and the diversity of religious traditions have created unique conditions for the coexistence of Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Protestants, and representatives of other religious movements. This interaction has served as a foundation for the development of religious education as a significant element of social life.

Religious education in Ukraine is actively studied by scholars who analyze its development and impact on youth and society. The primary focus is placed on the formation of moral and ethical ideals, interdenominational dialogue, legislative regulation, and methodological challenges in teaching spiritual and moral subjects. Additionally, research explores the role of religious education in preserving religious traditions, the interaction between the Church and the state in the sphere of spiritual upbringing, and the regional characteristics of Ukraine's religious landscape. Among the most prominent authors in this field are V. Yelenskyi, L. Fylypovych, A. Kolodnyi, I. Lomachinska, V. Khromets, V. Krymsharel, Yu. Shulha, and others. The analysis of Ukraine's ethno-confessional map enables the identification not only of the number and location of religious educational institutions but also of their impact on shaping the spiritual, cultural, and educational identity of

various ethnic communities. The study of trends, challenges, and prospects for the development of religious education within the context of ethno-confessional diversity contributes to the harmonization of intercultural interactions and the improvement of educational practices.

## Research methods

The historical method made it possible to examine the origins of the influence of the Orthodox tradition on Ukraine's socio-cultural environment across different historical periods. Through the method of comparative analysis, the impact of other religious denominations, particularly Catholicism, on local material and spiritual culture was assessed.

The dialectical method facilitated the study of the subject in the process of its development, while the semantic method contributed to clarifying ideas and concepts related to the role of the Orthodox tradition in shaping a distinctive educational environment.

The methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization were employed to identify the interconnections between the confessional determinants of local religious education and the state's broader humanitarian policy.

## Results and Discussion

The ethno-confessional map of religious education represents a systematic depiction of the distribution of educational institutions, programs, and practices that take into account the ethnic and confessional structure of a specific

## KEYWORDS

*religious education, ethno-confessional map, Orthodox education, Catholic education, Protestant education, interfaith dialogue, ecumenism*

region or country. This concept integrates geographical, ethnographic, historical, and socio-cultural aspects of religious educational initiatives, emphasizing the peculiarities of interaction between ethnic and religious groups within the educational sphere. Such an approach enables the identification of the dynamics of religious and cultural ideas in a given region, as well as the examination of changes in public consciousness under the influence of socio-political challenges.

We support the position of T. Yevseieva, who emphasizes that "Orthodox culture has become the fundamental matrix through which, under the guidance of the Kyiv Church, the characteristic type of the Ukrainian, Ukrainian statehood, and national consciousness were formed and preserved over the centuries" (Yevseieva, 2004:5). In turn, V. Voynalovych emphasizes the key role of the "Orthodox complex" in the establishment of "Christian unity" and the formation of a "pluralistic model of interdenominational relations," whose roots trace back to antiquity (Voynalovych, 2023:148).

In the contemporary educational landscape of Ukraine, the interpretation of religious education proposed by A. Kolodnyi prevails. According to this definition, religious education is a process primarily aimed at transmitting knowledge on religious topics. This approach focuses on enhancing religious literacy and developing the ability to critically comprehend the fundamentals of a particular religious doctrine (Kolodny, 2000).

In Ukraine, religious education is regulated by the Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations," which establishes the secular nature of state education while guaranteeing citizens the right to study religious doctrine. Religious organizations are permitted to establish educational institutions for spiritual education.

The Law "On Higher Education" (2014) legitimized the specialty of "Theology," granting theological institutions equal status with state-recognized educational institutions. Religious organizations have the right to establish higher education institutions, as well as postgraduate and doctoral programs.

At the same time, state and municipal educational institutions remain secular, whereas private institutions, including religious ones, have the right to determine their orientation. Additionally, religious organizations are permitted to establish extracurricular educational institutions (Lomachynska et al., 2020:68-72).

The first direction is generally associated with professional religious education, which includes the study of theology, sacred texts, religious history, moral and ethical principles, as well as the practical aspects of religious activities, such as pastoral work, chaplaincy, teaching religious disciplines, and religious counseling. The second direction pertains to non-professional religious education, which encompasses various forms within Orthodox education, including preschool education (Orthodox kindergartens), compulsory general education (Orthodox schools, gymnasiums, and lyceums), supplementary education (Sunday schools at churches and catechetical courses) (Shulha, 2018: 98). For a comprehensive study of religious education, it is essential to consider institutions representing both of these categories.

In 1998, M. Matrenchik, a consultant for the World Council of Churches on Eastern European affairs, noted that prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Europe's dividing line was determined by ideological differences. However, in his view, this division has now taken on a confessional character. Some experts argue that a new

boundary is emerging between the West and the East, running along the eastern borders of Poland and Hungary. On one side of this boundary are countries belonging to the Orthodox (Eastern Christian) tradition, while on the other are states where Catholic and Protestant communities predominate (Matrenchyk, 2020:77).

Ukraine's geographical location between East and West shapes the division of the country's religious and cultural landscape both at the confessional level—between the Catholic-Protestant and predominantly Orthodox worlds—and at the civilizational level, situated at the intersection of Muslim and Christian civilizations (Voynalovych, Kochan, 2010:78). This necessitates special attention to the development of interconfessional and intercultural dialogue in Ukraine.

In 2019, the Council for Cooperation with Churches and Religious Organizations was established under the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The primary objective of this body is to ensure freedom of conscience, harmonize state-confessional relations in the field of education, foster constructive dialogue with religious communities, and utilize their potential in the educational process to achieve high social and educational outcomes (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, n.d.).

The increasing role of the Church in the socio-cultural sphere and educational practices of the state can be explained by the fact that "in Ukraine, the formation of the national education system took place in close connection with the local religious culture" (Shulha, 2018: 97). According to V. Voynalovych and N. Kochan, global processes of religious regionalization largely explain the specific nature of religious divisions in Ukraine. Within this framework, four main macro-regions can be distinctly identified, each characterized by its own confessional structure: Western (Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, and Chernivtsi regions); Central (Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Sumy, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, and Chernihiv regions); Eastern (Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, and Kharkiv regions); Southern (the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Mykolaiv, Odesa, and Kherson regions, as well as the city of Sevastopol).

Voynalovych and Kochan also associates the modern administrative-territorial division of the country with historical lands such as Bukovyna, Volyn, Halychyna, Crimea, and Podillia. The proposed classification appears entirely reasonable and well-founded for analyzing the regional characteristics of ethno-religious processes in education and their trends on a national scale. The boundary between the first two macro-regions roughly coincides with the former Soviet border of 1922–1939, highlighting significant differences in the levels of religious activity and the nature of religious processes (Voynalovych, Kochan, 2010:78).

The dynamics of religious processes are closely linked to the challenges faced by society. The ethnic component of the religious and cultural environment plays a crucial role in preserving national identity and fostering a sense of solidarity. This influence extends to all spheres of human activity, including education, facilitating the integration of cultural and spiritual values into public life through educational practices.

According to statistical data, in the year 2000, the majority of Ukrainians (53%) opposed a nationally oriented Church, while 29% supported the idea. Between 2010 and 2020, the proportion of opponents fluctuated between 37% and 43%, whereas supporters ranged from 31% to 34%. In

2021, survey data indicated an increase in support for the national orientation of the Church to 39%, while the share of opponents stood at 44.5%. Following the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2022, the percentage of citizens approving of the Church's patriotic stance rose to 49%, while the number of opponents declined to 32.5%. This trend reflects a growing societal demand for the Church's support of national values in times of social challenges (*Razumkov Center, 2022*).

According to information provided by the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience in response to a request from the Interfax-Ukraine agency, changes in the jurisdiction of religious communities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in favor of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine have been recorded since the latter's establishment in 2018. Specifically, in 2018, two communities transitioned to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU); in 2019, 319 communities; in 2020, 30 communities; in 2021, 25 communities; in 2022, 496 communities; in 2023, 471 communities; and in 2024 (as of December 23), 218 communities (*Religious Information Service of Ukraine, 2024*).

As of January 2025, information regarding the transition of theological educational institutions from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) remains limited. The list of religious organizations required to change their names includes 19 institutions affiliated with the UOC-MP. At present, there is no confirmed information regarding their transition to the OCU (*ACC, n.d.*).

According to statistical data from 2024, 70% of Ukrainian citizens identify as Orthodox Christians. Among them, the majority – 56% of the total respondents – belong to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), accounting for 81% of all Orthodox believers in the country. Additionally, 7% identify as Orthodox without specifying a particular denomination, while 6% associate themselves with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP).

Atheists constitute 12% of respondents. Notably, within the "other" category, some individuals described themselves as "agnostics" or "non-believers," avoiding identification as atheists while expressing similar positions. Meanwhile, 7% of respondents identify with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Other religious affiliations accounted for no more than 3% of responses (*Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, n.d.*).

Thus, the analysis of confessional educational institutions should be carried out from the broader to the narrower, taking into account their influence and distribution across different regions of the country.

Between 1991 and 2021, a multi-level system of spiritual-educational institutions was formed within the country. In particular, religious communities established 13,079 Sunday schools, aimed at children aged 3 to 12 years. Among them, 46% belong to Orthodox communities, nearly 40% to Protestant communities, and 13% to Catholic communities. This statistic demonstrates significant development in primary spiritual education, despite the fact that classes in Sunday schools are conducted only once a week.

The higher level of spiritual education is represented by seminaries and theological academies, which offer comprehensive curricula. These programs cover a wide range of disciplines such as the history of theological thought, hermeneutics, exegesis, homiletics, and apologetics, among others. The development of such institutions indicates a high level of interest from religious communities in

forming educated ministers and disseminating spiritual knowledge among the faithful (*Tyshchenko; Tytarenko, n.d.*).

The philosopher I. Lomachynska emphasizes the special role of social service by religious organizations, which is "rooted in the foundations of the social doctrines of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and serves as the ideological basis for the real involvement of the clergy in addressing complex social issues of the modern world. Religious organizations not only perform liturgical and worship practices, preserving traditional spiritual and cultural values, but also participate in various forms of social activity, charity, and cooperation with government authorities and public organizations. This necessitates the expansion of professional knowledge for graduates of the "Theology" program" (*Lomachynska et al., 2021*).

It is worth analyzing the educational standards and curricula of spiritual educational institutions, as well as their professional specifics. The educational standard for the first (bachelor's) level in the specialty 041 "Theology" is aimed at developing the professional competencies necessary to address complex issues in the field of theology. The primary focus is on the study of the Holy Scriptures, the history of theological thought, doctrinal teachings, and their significance in society. The program fosters the development of theoretical knowledge, an interdisciplinary approach, practical skills in working with texts, as well as moral-ethical values and civic consciousness. Special attention is given to a systematic approach to education, which includes the analysis of sacred texts, the study of religious-legal and liturgical practices.

One of the key features of the educational program is its interdisciplinary approach, which includes in-depth training in pedagogy, teaching methodology, and research approaches in the theological field. Students undergo pedagogical practice, engage in religious research activities, and write a thesis. This contributes to the formation of critical thinking, the ability to innovate, and the effective resolution of complex tasks.

The educational standard for the second (master's) level aims to prepare specialists capable of addressing complex professional, scientific, and innovative challenges. The program ensures in-depth study of the Holy Scriptures, theological tradition, contemporary concepts, and interdisciplinary research. Special attention is given to the academic autonomy of students, the development of research skills, and the integration of the theological knowledge into social and scientific processes.

Curricula, such as those of the Tavriian Christian Institute for bachelor's students and the Ivan Franko Academy of Ivan Chrysostom for master's students, harmoniously combine theoretical training with practical disciplines, including elements of ethics, sociology, cultural studies, and religious studies.

Graduates of these programs can hold positions as lecturers in theological disciplines, research fellows, consultants on social and religious issues, as well as engage in pastoral and administrative-consultative activities. The program prepares specialists capable of participating in social transformations, fostering interfaith dialogue, and shaping spiritual and moral values within educational and social environments.

The educational activities of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) are aimed at preparing qualified clergy and church specialists. These activities include theological, spiritual, and humanitarian education. The primary objec-

tives of OCU educational institutions are: theological training (study of theology, the Bible, church history, and canon law), spiritual development (formation of spiritual life and moral values), and humanitarian education (development of general knowledge in philosophy, history, languages, and literature).

As of January 1, 2024, there were 8,295 religious organizations in Ukraine affiliated with the OCU. Among them, there were 56 religious centers and administrations, which included 8,075 religious communities, of which 3,400 held legal entity status. Additionally, 87 monasteries and 16 brotherhoods were operational (*Interfax-Ukraine, n.d.*).

The Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) has five theological academies (Kyiv, Lviv, Volyn, Uzhhorod, Ivano-Frankivsk), one theological institute (Ivano-Frankivsk), and three spiritual seminaries (Rivne, Dnipro, Lviv). Additionally, at the Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, which collaborates with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine under a Memorandum signed by the Department of Spiritual Education and Theological Science, educational programs in "Theology" are offered for both the first (bachelor's) and second (master's) levels of higher education. Over 1,200 students are enrolled in these programs (Religious Information Service of Ukraine, n.d.). Thus, the primary geographic distribution of institutions of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) covers regions with stronger support for this church, focusing on the west and partially the center of the country.

During the same period, there were 10,919 religious organizations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (UOC MP) in Ukraine, including 51 religious centers/administrations, which encompassed 10,586 communities (6,037 of which had legal entity status) and 214 monasteries (104 female and 110 male); 34 brotherhoods.

The UOC MP has one spiritual academy (Kyiv) and one theological university in Luhansk (information on its current status is limited), eight seminaries (Kyiv, Volyn, Odesa, Poltava, Pochaiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Simferopol), and eight spiritual schools (Volodymyr-Volynskiy, Dnipro, Mykolaiv, Mukachevo, Korets, Dovzhansk, Chernihiv, Kamianets-Podilskiy). Three icon-painting schools operate (the Icon-Painting School of St. Andrei Rublev, the Icon-Painting School of St. Alipius the Iconographer, the Cherkasy Eparchial Icon-Painting School), as well as a department of theology at the Classical Private University in Zaporizhzhia (Ukrainian Orthodox Church, n.d.). Educational institutions of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (UOC MP) have a more even distribution across Ukraine, including the eastern and southern regions, where this church traditionally has more followers.

It is important to note that the Kyiv Theological Academy of the OCU and the Kyiv Theological Academy of the UOC MP both trace their origins back to the establishment of the Kyiv Brotherhood School in 1615. However, in the current context, the dialogue between the Churches is extremely tense, and the prospects for reconciliation in the future appear uncertain. According to a sociological survey conducted in 2024, there is a societal demand for a united Orthodox Church. This initiative was supported by 61% of respondents, while 16% opposed it, and 20% were indifferent to the issue (*Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, n.d.*).

In the same year, the head of the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience, Viktor Yelensky, noted that in the event of an appeal from the Primate of the

Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), Metropolitan Onufriy, requesting to join the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, a justified and fair model of integration would be proposed (*Interfax-Ukraine, n.d.*). The success of such initiatives will be determined over time. However, it can already be confidently stated that graduates of religious educational institutions must be prepared for ecclesiastical dialogue aimed at ensuring understanding within the local faith community.

An important aspect is the work with the youngest members of society, aimed at preserving and transmitting the religious and cultural heritage of the people. In Ukraine, there are Orthodox kindergartens that combine the general education curriculum with spiritual education based on Orthodox values. For example, in Kyiv, the private kindergarten of intellectual and spiritual development, Trinity Kids, operates, where great attention is given to the moral and spiritual upbringing of children based on Orthodox values (Association of Orthodox Journalists, n.d.). In Chernivtsi, the private Orthodox preschool "Dzyvnochok" operates, which is also focused on combining general education subjects with the spiritual upbringing of children (*Dity.in.ua, n.d.*).

The educational institutions of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) include the Ukrainian Catholic University (Lviv), the Ivano-Frankivsk Theological Academy, the Institute of Philosophical and Theological Studies of the Basilian Order named after Josyf Veliamyn Rutskyi (Bryukhovychi, Lviv region), the Ternopil Higher Spiritual Seminary named after Patriarch Josyf Slipyj (Ternopil), the Drohobych Spiritual Seminary of Blessed Priest-Martyrs Severyn, Vitaliy, and Yakym (Drohobych), the Lviv Spiritual Seminary of the Holy Spirit, the Ivano-Frankivsk Spiritual Seminary, the Kyiv Three-Hierarchs Spiritual Seminary (Knyazhichi, Kyiv region), the Saint Josaphat Theological Institute (Chernivtsi), and the Saint Josaphat Theological Institute (Ivano-Frankivsk).

The geography of UGCC educational institutions clearly emphasizes Western Ukraine, reflecting the historical and cultural center of the Church. However, the opening of seminaries in Knyazhichi signals the gradual expansion of the UGCC's activities into central regions.

Researcher T. Ryazantseva identifies the period of the late 1980s and early 1990s as the beginning of the modern history of theological education in evangelical churches in Ukraine. This period was characterized by the liberalization of state policy toward religion and education. This fostered the activation of evangelical churches and religious organizations, as well as the establishment of numerous theological educational institutions, reflecting the growing interest of Protestant communities in theological education (*Ryazantseva, 2021:54*).

The educational potential of Protestant churches is explained by their mission of positively transforming the world, as well as the historical context associated with the ideas of the Reformation, primarily bibliocentrism (*Solo Scriptura*) and the principle of the priesthood of all believers. Educational institutions founded by Protestants primarily train specialists in theology and church administration, as well as instill Christian values in children, schoolchildren, and students. This is aimed at ensuring that their graduates become worthy members of society while also being professionals in secular fields (*Merenkov, 2023*).

Protestant Bible schools play an important role in teaching Christian principles and preparing individuals for ministry. They offer intensive programs in various forms of learning (residential, distance, and blended), focused on

in-depth Bible study, the development of spiritual skills, and the practical application of faith.

These schools serve not only an educational but also a social function, helping students—often individuals with addictions or challenging pasts—integrate into society. The attendees primarily seek to build their lives on Christian values. An example is the "International Bible School," which has a 30-year history and offers both in-person and distance learning. The programs emphasize biblical principles, spiritual development, moral purity, family values, volunteering, and financial management, fostering the development of a well-rounded Christian personality (*Tyshchenko; Tytarenko, n.d.*).

Currently, Protestant education in Ukraine is represented by the following educational institutions: the Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary (Kyiv), the Kyiv Theological Seminary (Kyiv), the Kyiv Christian University (Kyiv), the Lviv Theological Seminary (Lviv), the Tavria Christian Institute (Kherson), the Odesa Theological Seminary (Odesa), the Donetsk Christian University (Vinnytsia, after relocation from Donetsk), the Irpin Bible Seminary (Irpin), the Christian Humanitarian and Economic Open University (Odesa), the Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary (Lviv), the Rivne Bible Seminary (Rivne), and the Theological Seminary of St. Sophia (Ternopil).

Protestant educational institutions cover all major regions of Ukraine, focusing on large cities. The highest concentration is in the central (Kyiv) and western regions of the country (Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil), which reflects the traditionally active development of Protestant communities in these areas. The presence of institutions in the southern (Odesa, Kherson) and eastern regions demonstrates an attempt to cover the entire territory of the country, despite the challenges posed by the ongoing war.

The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ukraine (DUMU), established in 1992, is one of the oldest Muslim organizations in Ukraine, continuing the traditions of spiritual administrations created during the Soviet period. DUMU follows a more traditional approach to Islam and maintains strong connections with the spiritual traditions of the Crimean Tatars (especially after the annexation of Crimea) and Muslims from Eastern traditions. The organization tends to adhere to traditional Islamic interpretations.

In 1993, at the initiative of the Mufti of Ukraine, Sheikh Ahmad Tamim, the head of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ukraine (DUMU), the Islamic University was founded as the highest spiritual educational institution, which has gained recognition among numerous Islamic academic centers worldwide. It actively cooperates with both foreign and Ukrainian higher education institutions. The university has branches in Sumy and Mykolaiv.

The program at the Islamic University lasts four years and covers a broad range of Islamic studies. Students study Islamic law (fiqh), Quranic exegesis (tafsir), rules of Quranic recitation (tajwid), the fundamentals of Muslim theology (aqida), monotheism (tawhid), Sufism (tasawwuf), ethical behavior (akhlaq), and other disciplines. Additionally, the curriculum includes general education subjects such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, research methodology, history of Ukraine, Ukrainian culture, and others. Special attention is given to language study – Arabic, English, and Ukrainian.

At the initial stage, teaching is conducted in the students' native languages, but depending on their level of preparation, the language of instruction gradually transitions to Arabic. The university also offers the possibility of

combining studies with other secular higher educational institutions.

Over the years, the Ukrainian Islamic University has prepared more than ten graduating classes of specialists, including imams and Islamic studies teachers. Its graduates are currently working in Muslim communities and centers in various countries around the world. Located in the heart of Europe, the Ukrainian Islamic University plays an important role in forming an objective and correct understanding of Islam as a religion, free from extremism, and promotes dialogue between the East and the West.

Based at the Islamic University, the international Islamic school "Al-Irshad" prepares youth for further higher education. There is also the Hafiz School "Al-Mahip." The Muslim kindergarten "Svitlyachok," located in Kyiv, implements the concept of harmonious child development, providing quality preschool education. Special attention is given to intellectual development, learning the Arabic language, spiritual growth, and preparing children for school (*Islam.ua, n.d.*).

The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ukraine "Umma" (DUMU "Umma") was established in 2008. The organization emerged as an alternative to existing Muslim structures in order to better address the needs of various ethnic Muslim groups in Ukraine. Known for its modern and open approach to Islam, it focuses on the integration of Muslims into Ukraine's multi-confessional society. It represents the interests of various ethnic groups (Arabs, Chechens, Uzbeks, etc.) living in Ukraine. While DUMU has historically been more prominent, DUMU "Umma" has been actively developing and attracting new communities. Both organizations work towards the spiritual development of the Muslim community, although their approaches and focal points may differ (*Umma.in.ua, n.d.*).

Jewish education in Ukraine has traditions that combine religious and secular aspects. It is implemented through institutions and programs that provide education for both children and adults. The main areas include religious schools and yeshivas, where the Torah, Talmud, rituals, and ethics are studied, as well as general educational schools and lyceums that integrate secular subjects with Jewish traditions. Synagogues also have educational centers offering courses on history, holidays, and Hebrew.

Jewish education is mainly concentrated in large cities with active communities, such as Kyiv, Odesa, Lviv, and Kharkiv. In Kyiv, there is the Jewish Gymnasium, which combines general education with religious learning, and the Jewish Cultural Center, which organizes programs for adults. In Odesa, the "Shaarei Tikva" school combines quality general education with the study of Jewish traditions. The Lviv "Tchia" school offers courses in Jewish culture alongside general education subjects. In Kharkiv, the yeshiva focuses on in-depth study of the Talmud and religious texts.

There are no specialized Buddhist educational institutions in Ukraine that are fully dedicated to Buddhist education. However, there are several communities and organizations that offer education and training based on Buddhist principles.

In Ukraine, there are educational practices of the Hare Krishnas, implemented through various programs and institutions aimed at spreading the philosophy and culture of Krishna consciousness. One of the key educational centers is the Spiritual Academy of Krishna Consciousness in Kyiv, which offers three levels of education for deeper study of the teachings and practices of Krishnaism (*Wikipedia, n.d.*).

Additionally, the "Ekadashi School" operates in Ukraine, teaching followers the proper observance of the Ekadashi fast, which contributes to spiritual development and a deeper understanding of the traditions. The religious practice of Hare Krishnas includes the repetition and chanting of mantras, worship of images of Vishnu-Krishna, the veneration of saints, and the performance of rituals such as yajna (fire sacrifices) and samskaras (domestic rites). These practices are aimed at achieving both inner and outer purity and involve several levels of initiation for followers. In Lviv, there is a Hare Krishna community that conducts educational programs and practices of bhakti yoga, particularly the glorification of God and mantra meditation (*Vedaem.com.ua., n.d.*).

The educational practices of Neopagans in Ukraine are aimed at reviving and popularizing traditional pre-Christian beliefs and the cultural heritage of the Slavs. These practices include the organization of lectures, seminars, festivals, and workshops dedicated to Slavic mythology, rituals, and folklore. For example, the organization "Svarha" conducts events aimed at promoting Rodnovery (native faith) as a variant of national identity.

Furthermore, Neopagan communities organize thematic clubs for youth, summer camps, and celebrate traditional calendar holidays such as Kupala and Kolyada. They also publish literature, including books and articles focused on the study of Slavic culture and religion. There are blogs and online communities that contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about the Neopagan worldview. These educational initiatives are focused on fostering ethnocultural identity and preserving traditional heritage in contemporary society (*Svarga.com.ua,n.d.*).

Researcher H. Lozko points out that "The actual dual faith of Ukrainians, which has a millennium-long history, convincingly demonstrates the phenomenal resilience of folk traditions" (*Lozko, 1994:79*), the preservation of which occurs in the daily life of the local population and may become the subject of a separate study.

### Conclusion

The article examines the regional features of the institutionalization of religious space in Ukraine, with a focus on the interconnection between historical, cultural, and religious factors that have influenced the development of religious education. It defines both professional and non-professional levels of religious education, providing a clearer understanding of the structure and functions of educational programs tailored to the needs of various population groups. The study demonstrates that religious education in Ukrainian lands has deep historical roots, which shape the current format and content of the educational space in Ukraine. Regional characteristics of religious space are determined by the confessional composition of the population, which directly impacts the development of educational practices in different regions. The research emphasizes Ukraine's role as a platform for the coexistence and interaction of representatives of different religious traditions, thus creating conditions for the formation of a tolerant society. It is noted that the current regulatory framework provides the necessary conditions for the functioning of confessional educational institutions, fostering the harmonious development of religious education within the general educational system of the state. The study also systematizes educational programs, practices, and institutions that consider the ethnic and confessional structure of the population, contributing to the preservation of Ukraine's cultural

diversity. Religious education in Ukraine serves as an essential tool for the formation of civic identity, intercultural understanding, and the preservation of spiritual heritage. Prospective areas for further research include the analysis of the impact of globalization processes on the development of religious education in Ukraine, as well as the exploration of new challenges facing the educational system in the context of religious pluralism.

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## Етноконфесійна мапа релігійної освіти в Україні

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У статті досліджено регіональні аспекти формування релігійного середовища в Україні в галузі освіти. Автор аналізує сучасні дослідження українських науковців, зокрема їхні наукові праці та публікації, які висвітлюють різні аспекти релігійної освіти. Дослідження розрізняє поняття "релігійна освіта", розглядає освітні програми релігійних навчальних закладів та оцінює їх представленість в Інтернеті. Встановлено кореляцію між історичною спадковістю релігійної освіти на українських територіях та сучасним освітнім ландшафтом держави. Окрім того, розглянуто релігійні, культурні та політичні фактори, що вплинули на розвиток конфесійного життя в Україні, описано співіснування представників різних конфесій, включаючи православних християн, католиків та протестантів, а також проаналізовано присутність на українській релігійній мапі інших релігійних рухів, таких як мусульмани, євреї, буддисти та кришнаїти. Історичні передумови формування специфічного релігійно-освітнього простору на українських землях розглядаються в контексті нормативно-правової бази, що регулює діяльність конфесійних навчальних закладів. Дослідження також визначає ключові характеристики релігійної освіти в Україні. В статті систематизовано сучасну інформацію про розподіл навчальних закладів, програм та практик, які враховують етнічну та конфесійну структуру населення в різних регіонах. Дослідження підкреслює значну роль України як платформи для міжконфесійного та міжкультурного діалогу.

**Ключові слова:** релігійна освіта, етноконфесійна мапа, православна освіта, католицька освіта, протестантська освіта, міжконфесійний діалог, екуменізм.

Received (Надійшла до редакції): 28.12.2024,

Accepted (Прийнята до друку): 01.03.2025

Available online (Опубліковано онлайн) 30.03.2025