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AFRICAN CHALLENGE: HIGH PRICE OF THE DECENT FUTURE

Abstract. *The present article deals with main challenges, which young people in Africa face in getting high-quality education, finding a job and achieving self-realization. The author analyzes, socio-economic basis for these challenges with the help of cross-cultural analysis methodology.*

Анотація. *У даній статті пояснюються основні проблеми, з якими стикається молодь Африки при отриманні гідного рівня освіти, пошуку роботи та можливість молоді до самореалізації. Автор характеризує соціально-економічні передумови виникнення таких проблем через призму методології крос-культурного аналізу.*

Key words: *Economic, political and social challenges, unemployment, collectivism, masculinity, femininity; inequality.*

Ключові слова: *економічні, політичні та соціальні виклики, безробіття, колективізм, жіночність, маскуліність.*

Statement of the problem. D. Acemoglu and J.A. Robinson in their book, *Why Nations Fail* write that global society is developing unevenly — while some get richer, happier and stronger, others must learn how to make ends meet. With every minute, the

social gap between nations is growing and it becomes more and more difficult for us to say that people are born equal. Behind the scenes, everyone divides the world into countries of the «Golden billion», «Third world countries», «Developed» and those «That are Developing» [1, pp. 234–237].

At a time when Europe and America are global financial, economic and political centers, Africa is only striving for this. However, no matter how the new generations of young African scientists, politicians, financiers, and sportsmen try to change this, they face many difficulties on their way. Only, if they find the key to solving these problems, we will be able to establish equality and respect among the main values of today's humanity. Their experience arouses considerable interest among researchers in other countries because African continent is rich in mineral resources, its business is booming, moreover, Africa's fast-growing population and markets present important opportunities for business in an environment of slowing global growth. Unfortunately, the potential of African continent is still underestimated by Ukrainian scholars and businessmen.

Furthermore, direct contacts of Ukrainian students and teachers with the representatives of African cultures have become inescapable part of academic process at a large number of universities in Ukraine. It is through mindful intercultural communication we may uncover our own diversity cultural identity. As E.T. Hall puts it, «We learn more from people who are different from us than from those who are similar to us».

Analysis of recent research and publications. B. Masika, G.G. Jalata, A. Norwood, K. Ighobor and others investigate the principles on which African society is built, the place of youth in it and the problems that young people face in their life journey.

These researchers explain in details all the challenges and experiences that arise in front of African youth. They analyze not only socio-economic difficulties such as unemployment, low quality of education, difficulties in access to food and water, but also internal conflicts of young people with themselves, their families and society as a whole. A significant contribution to the study of this problem was made by T. Zomahoun and T. Elumelu who tend to believe that most of the problems of African youth are caused by the economic post-crisis recession and oil shocks of the beginning of the 21st century.

Purpose of the research. The aim of the article is to investigate the challenges that African youth face every day in order to get a decent education, high-paying job and find out how cultural dimensions form the mentality and mindset of young people in Africa.

The key findings. The United Nations defines the youth as individuals aged between 15 to 24 years, whereas, the African Union's methodology defines this age in a range between 15 and 35 years. The African population is estimated to be more than a billion people of whom more than 65% of the population is young under the age of 35 and the youth make up 40% of Africa's working age population, whereas youngsters aged 15–24 account for 20.2 percent of the population. These young people live in a rapidly changing world, faced with many pressures. Young people on the whole experience discomforting confusion, disquieting irritations and perplexities as a result of

rapid social change as non-permanent socio-economic system creates a peculiar set of risks for young people. The key socio-economic challenges include the following: Poor governance, Corruption, Unemployment, Low education level [2].

Poor governance. During recent decades, African countries have undergone several forms of authorities. It was the long struggle for independence from the colonial rule, liberation and dictatorships. Now, many African countries are facing a struggle of getting proper democratic governance. Such political volatility creates uncertain environment for young Africans.

Corruption. Within the format of this abstract, corruption is examined as a lack of access to the best universities, jobs, textbooks and high material dependence. The impact of corruption cannot be underestimated. More than 43 percent of Africans are living in poverty while over US\$50 billion worth of stolen assets flow out of Africa every year. That is money that could be used to invest in jobs and social services, where additional resources are needed most. Individuals and families are also affected. In Sub-Saharan Africa one in two citizens reported paying a bribe on monthly basis.

Unemployment is considered as the most crucial and heaviest challenge that the young people in Africa face. According to African Bank of Development, the majority of youth in Africa do not have stable economic opportunities. Of Africa’s nearly 420 million youth aged 15–35, one-third are unemployed and discouraged, another third are vulnerably employed, and only one in six is in wage employment. Moreover, BBC states that South Africa’s unemployed youth struggle amid recession [3].

The youth face roughly double the unemployment rate of adults, with significant variation by country. The problem is not just unemployment but underemployment, which peaks at just over half of youth in the labor force in low income countries. While 10 to 12 million youth enter the workforce each year, only 3.1 million jobs are created, leaving vast numbers of youth unemployed. According to the data provided by the World Bank, global youth unemployment rates are the following:

Geography	Youth unemployment rates, %
South Africa	52,83% (World’s highest)
Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Botswana, Namibia	Between 40% and 50%
Mali, Somali, Congo, Angola	Between 30% and 40%
African average	29,64%
Europe average	13,78%
US	8,16%
World’s average	18,80%

Pic. 1. Youth unemployment rates, % [4]

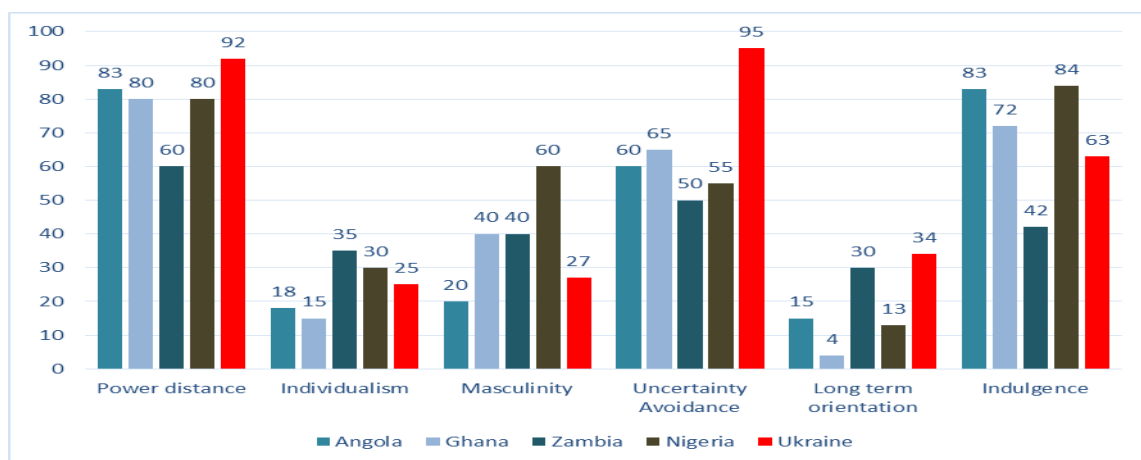
Low education level. The World Bank published «World Development Report (WDR) 2018 — Learning to Realize Education’s Promise», which highlights that low-income and developing African countries are most affected by the global learning crisis. In low-income countries, less than 5 percent of students in late primary school score above the minimum proficiency level for reading. This figure lies at 14 percent for mathematics. In sub-Saharan Africa, less than 7 percent of students in late primary

school are proficient in reading, against 14 percent in mathematics. The report states that the lags in primary education will affect the children’s preparedness for future job prospects, which are increasingly demanding in skills quality [5].

The mentioned above challenges can be of cultural character. G. Hofstede, Professor Emeritus of Organizational Anthropology and International Management at Maastricht University in the Netherlands tried to explain the origin of such problems through the lens of internal relations. His approach illuminates the connections between work attitudes, values and behaviour patterns on one hand and the structure and culture of society on the other [6].

He grouped countries including those in Africa — West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone); East Africa (Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia); and North African countries grouped among the Arab World. Though East Africa and West Africa were scored separately, the results were so close that they can conveniently be combined. This means that though these countries have diverse cultures they have striking similar cultural characteristics across ethnic groups that homogenise the people in terms of beliefs and values (see Pic. 1).

Most of African cultures are collectivistic. Therefore, these societies continue to profess values of their ancestors. Countries like Angola, Chana, Uganda, Zambia and Nigeria have a high score of Power distance, high femininity and short-term orientation indexes. Stratification, hierarchical structure and bureaucracy prosper in such countries. Nepotism and tribalism have eaten the very fabric of the society. Very often countries are divided along tribal lines, which spreads violence among the youth who have no shared national interests but regional interests. Their attitude to time explains why the youth find it easier to search for better life abroad the homeland. Most of African youngsters are not ready for big structural reforms in their native countries. High Femininity index characterizes the motivation of young people — «work to live», but not «live to work». The lack of motivation is the basis of all problems that young generation in Africa faces. High uncertainty avoidance score portrays the African’s anxiety to avoid future uncertainties and pride security as important element.



Pic. 2. Cultural dimensions of African society by Hofstede [6]

Conclusion. The historical vector of development of the African region has created a large number of barriers for young people. Such barriers directly relate to

access to information, knowledge, education, jobs, infrastructure, and sometimes food supplies. However, it is much worse that we are dealing with a lack of connection between generations. The attitudes and values of people change so rapidly that many people have nothing in common while living in the same society. As a solution to this problem, we see the provision of youth with access to governing the country. This conclusion may be referred to both African and Ukrainian representatives of young generation. Only in this case, the new generation will be able to independently determine the vector of development, create their future and understand the critical price of mistakes.

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