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MEDII AEVI in Ukrainian School Textbooks: Modern Paradigms and Contextual Analysis

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Abstract: The study on the representation of Medieval Times in Ukrainian school textbooks holds paramount relevance in the current educational landscape. As the world experiences dynamic changes in historical viewpoints and teaching methods, it becomes vital to comprehend how the medieval period is depicted in educational resources. The study's focused on textbooks published between 2020-2022 and addressed the need to evaluate a contemporary representation of the Middle Ages in light of modern historiographical advancements. With 76 participating history teachers, the research guarantees a wide variety of viewpoints, mirroring the intricate nature of history education in Ukraine. The research methodology employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to gain comprehensive insights into the representation of

Medieval Times in Ukrainian school textbooks. The primary methods included surveys, interviews, and textbook analysis. The results showed that teaching practices are significantly influenced by modern paradigms in historical science. However, school textbooks often exhibit conservatism, favoring information that has stood the test of time. The survey revealed that 59% of respondents considered Ukrainian school textbooks generally align with modern understandings of historical processes related to the Middle Ages. Conversely, 38% noted a lack of representation of modern historical science paradigms in these textbooks. In conclusion, the research illuminates notable shortcomings within the current educational landscape, specifically concerning the implementation of modern manuals and textbooks. A crucial observation is the insufficient emphasis on practical source utilisation, as well as the neglect of incorporating historical reconstructions, museum visits, and archaeological sites into educational practices. As a result, this research aids in comprehending the intricacies of historical education by uncovering the interaction between contemporary paradigms and customary portrayals in Ukrainian school textbooks. The findings underscore the evolving nature of historical education and the ongoing efforts required to align educational materials with emerging perspectives.

Keywords: medieval times, survey, textbooks, modern paradigms, challenges.

Introduction

Learning of the Middle Ages period in the school history course in Ukraine falls on the 7th year of study (from 11 total years). The existence of Rus', or the princely period of Ukrainian history, covers the 11th-15th centuries and is an important stage in the development of Ukrainian statehood. The students' in-depth understanding of complex topics can be attributed to the unique way they perceive information at a young age, as well as the distinctive educational program and textbooks designed to facilitate their learning. However, the issue remains quite relevant from a pedagogical point of view and against the background of historiographical confrontation over the "heritage of Rus'" between Ukrainian and Russian historians over a considerable historical period of "common" medieval past. Today, this topic becomes increasingly crucial, when the hybrid war between Ukraine and Russia continues, and the confrontation has shifted from active hostilities to covert struggle (including propaganda). At the same time, it is worth noting that studying the history of Ukraine and its ties with neighboring Central European countries helps establishing an agreement. The Middle Ages are a good representative material for demonstrating such relationships. Accordingly, the paper aims to analyse Ukrainian textbooks and manuals (devoted to medieval history), their comparison with Central European counterparts. Completing this task will aid in assessing the extent to which textbooks and teaching materials fulfill the educational standards for modern multicultural competence.

The theoretical part of the work is formed due to the systematic elaboration of modern historical and pedagogical literature. It is based on the generalisation of the previous scientific research conducted by both Ukrainian and foreign researchers. For example, Blevins et al. (2020) analysed the formation of critical historical research through the prism of pedagogy. Researchers also highlighted the significance of past events in the context of current globalisation changes and clarified the role of historian in the 21st century. De Groot-Reuvekamp et al. (2018) described the innovation professional development program in history. The researchers focused on a development program for improving students understanding of historical time. The problem of public history in modern summer schools was described by (Wojdon, 2018). Spencer (2018) studied the effect of historical literature on the formation of historical competence. The analysis of teaching

the history of the Middle Ages period in the Ukrainian schools is based on the professional research of Ukrainian historians. Baturina (2020) depicted the image of medieval Poland in Ukrainian textbooks. The researcher noted that in the texts of Ukrainian books, Poland and its inhabitants appear only sporadically; particularly, they were described as allies of Rus' princes. The position of historical education in Slovakia was studied by (Kudlacova, 2016). The researcher also described the main trends in historical education in Central and Eastern Europe

Research Problem

After a brief literature review it has become evident that the issue of teaching the Middle Ages in schools is not thoroughly examined. The study of how medieval times are portrayed in Ukrainian school textbooks holds significant relevance in today's educational environment. As the society undergoes dynamic changes, there is a growing need to evaluate and understand the ways in which historical narratives are constructed for younger generations. The medieval period in Ukrainian history serves as a critical foundation for understanding cultural, social, and political developments in the region.

Research Focus

This study aimed to examine the Middle Ages representation and the depiction in Ukrainian school textbooks, exploring the influence of contemporary educational paradigms and conducting a contextual analysis in order to understand the broader sociocultural and historical factors that shape the presentation of medieval history in educational materials. With the help of contextual analysis, the research aimed to highlight the connections between the depiction of the Middle Ages and the socio-political context of modern Ukraine, providing an understanding of the dynamics of history education and its role in the formation of collective historical consciousness. In addition, the study highlighted the use of certain modern pedagogical approaches in the education of a subtle understanding of the medieval era among Ukrainian students.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this research article was to scrutinise contemporary paradigms governing the treatment of the Middle Ages within Ukrainian textbooks. The articulated aim entailed the execution of tasks that pertained to the systematic examination of both empirical and theoretical data, thereby contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the subject matter. The research objectives were:

1. The evaluation of the representation of the medieval era in Ukrainian textbooks.
2. The determination of the main aspects covered in Ukrainian textbooks and their correspondence to modern scientific paradigms.
3. The analysis of teachers' attitude to integrated courses on the history of Ukraine and World History.
4. The highlighting of the main approaches used by modern teachers.

Literature Review

Teaching the Medieval period, or *Medii Aevi*, in schools poses a redoubtable challenge for educators, given the methodological complexity associated with introducing students to unfamiliar medieval sources. The curriculum delves into complex concepts such as annals, miniatures, and chronicles, demanding teachers to navigate and elucidate these complexities. Teachers shoulder the pivotal responsibility of conveying well-established facts within medieval history while also

articulating the terminological nuances intrinsic to this epoch. Additionally, there is a pressing need to logically integrate the historical narrative of medieval Ukrainian-Rus' within the broader European context of the time.

The current educational structure in Ukraine follows a compartmentalised approach to the study of "History of Ukraine" and "World History," running them concurrently but separately. This separation often leads to an imbalanced allocation of instructional time, with a tendency to emphasise the history of Ukraine more extensively. This occasionally results in temporal misalignments or conflicts between the teaching of Ukrainian history and world history, causing a confluence of students' knowledge. For instance, discussions concerning the participation of Rus' princes in the Crusades might precede the corresponding coverage in World History, leading to confusion among students and impeding their comprehension of key events in global medieval history.

In order to optimise educational efficiency, particularly in managing study time, a synchronisation of Ukrainian history and world history, specifically during the 7-11 grade period is needed. Addressing the issue of blending knowledge becomes extremely important in the higher grades, which requires a focused effort to synchronise the chronological order of historical subjects in both subjects. This proposal advocates for either an integrated approach or parallel instruction on specific thematic topics. By doing so, the aim is to foster a more coherent and comprehensive understanding of medieval history for students, mitigating potential confusion and enhancing the overall learning experience.

Why should students learn the Middle Ages period?

For decades, historical education researchers have debated in terms of the adaptation to the students' perception the historical content. Still, more attention has been paid to the transformation of epistemological concepts than to classroom teaching (Blevins et al., 2020).

The Middle Ages are a unique page in general history. Many phenomena in the life of modern nations and states have their roots in the medieval past: the establishment of social hierarchies in society, the development of nations and their distinct cultures, and the conflict between religious and non-religious perspectives. In Western Europe, a system of modern democracy appeared with its attributes - representative bodies (parliament) and a jury. In the Middle Ages, urban life was actively developing. The broad masses could join the cultural life because a printing press was invented at that time. People began to use porcelain, mirrors, forks, glasses, buttons, mechanical watches, and many other things from the Middle Ages, without which modern everyday life is difficult to imagine. The Crusades gave a new impetus to military affairs and armaments. The history of the Middle Ages teaches that modern schools and universities are the products of the development of those institutions that originated in the Middle Ages period. At the same time, as a result of studying medieval history, children must understand the peculiarities of the era with its knights and beautiful ladies and understand the brutality of wars and the negative impact of religious bigotry. In addition, this course is essential for students of Ukraine because the first mention of the word «Ukraine» is contained in the medieval monument of the twelfth century.

However, a great attention is paid to the educational aspects of the textbook. In the lessons on the history of the Middle Ages, students get acquainted with the critical process of modern European civilization formation in many manifestations: cultural, economic, political, and so on. Thus, cognitive and educational activities in world history lessons in 7th grade have their specifics, which are determined by the subject's content and the age characteristics of seventh-graders. Awareness of the dynamics of medieval Europe's social, economic, and political development gives children

the opportunity to understand many modern problems. It promotes the development of pragmatic aspects of education.

Researchers provided detail work, which contains a diverse range of scientific publications, related to history education, covering various aspects such as curriculum development, the role of history in shaping national identity, urban economics in medieval cities, the problem-solving process of underachievers in learning history, and the intersection of medieval studies and education.

The main attention is given to the papers concerning the educational process and the role of medieval history in school program. Hasan (2013) focused on history education within the context of the Curriculum 2013. This study delved into the changes and innovations introduced in the curriculum, presenting a new approach to teaching history. The examination of the curriculum involved discussions on pedagogical methods, historical content, and the overall philosophy behind the changes. Haydn (2012) explored the role of history in schools, specifically addressing the complex issue of "the Nation." The author discussed the contribution of history education in the construction and reinforcement of national identity, as well as the challenges and debates surrounding this topic.

Kim (2015) focused on the problem-solving process of underachievers in learning history at the high school level. The author examined the challenges faced by students who struggle in history classes and proposes insights into effective teaching strategies and interventions to address underachievement in history education. Klauke (2019) explored the intersection of medieval studies and education. The author discusses how the medieval period is incorporated into educational practices, potentially addressing the challenges and opportunities of using historical periods as educational tools. The insights from this work can contribute to the broader discussion on the integration of historical content into contemporary educational settings. Voet and De Wever (2020) investigated how teachers prioritise instructional goals, employing the theory of planned behavior to explain goal coverage. Schneider and Leon (2021) delved into the intersection of the discipline of history and modern technologies. Their study explores how the use of technology poses challenges and opportunities for the teaching and learning of history. The incorporation of digital tools, online resources, and other technological advancements in history education are examined, addressing both the benefits and potential drawbacks in the present educational landscape. Serrano (2010) described the specific inquiry of what specific aspects of medieval history should be taught and acquired in secondary schools. Sobehrad and Sobehrad (2022) provided a comprehensive exploration of medieval history in the modern classroom. Todd and Hubbard (2022) explored the concept of historical inquiry and power dynamics in the context of medieval social class structures. Their study is focused on the use of film as an educational tool to introduce students to these historical structures. Tuithof et al. (2021) researched teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, specifically in the context of two historical periods.

On the other hand, studies that reveal the peculiarities of the medieval development of Ukraine and Europe are also important. The general courses of Subtelny (2009) and Plokhly (2006) are important for further discussion. Their authors described some aspects of the medieval development of Ukraine against the background of neighboring states. Fedoruk (2014) showed the military activity of Prince Danylo Romanovych in the context of the military development of Central and Eastern Europe of the 13th century. Parshyn and Mereniuk (2022) analysed the multicultural space of medieval Ukrainian cities. Jedwab et al. (2020) examined medieval cities through the lens of urban economics. Their study explored the influence on the development and dynamics of medieval urban centers of economic principles and factors. The insights into the economic aspects of historical

contexts provided a richer understanding of the forces shaping societies in the past. Savelyev et al. (2021) researched economic Integration of the Višegrad Four and Ukraine in the context of historical narratives and global challenges. Researchers covers a spectrum of topics in history education, including the curriculum development, national identity, urban economics in medieval cities, strategies for addressing underachievement, and the integration of historical periods into education. Each work brings unique perspectives, thus making the collection highly valuable in acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the field.

Research Methodology

General Background

The study of medieval times in Ukrainian and Eastern European School Textbooks was motivated by the pivotal role that history education plays in shaping students' understanding of the past and its implications for the present. In the context of Ukrainian and Eastern European schools, where historical narratives have undergone significant shifts due to political and societal changes, the representation of medieval times in textbooks emerges as a critical area of investigation.

1. Historical Context:

a. Ukraine and Eastern Europe have a rich and complex history, marked by periods of cultural, political, and social transformation, with the medieval era serving as a foundation for subsequent developments.

b. The study aimed to explore how the portrayal of medieval times corresponds with current historiographical viewpoints and its impact on the overall narrative of national and regional identity.

2. Educational Context:

a. School textbooks serve as primary tools for transmitting historical knowledge to students, influencing their perceptions, values, and attitudes towards the past.

b. Changes in educational policies, curriculum development, and societal expectations may impact the content and interpretation of historical periods, necessitating a critical examination of the paradigms embedded in the portrayal of medieval times.

3. Societal Dynamics:

a. The geopolitical landscape of Eastern Europe has undergone profound changes in recent decades, influencing historical narratives and the emphasis placed on specific events or periods.

b. The study acknowledges the interconnectedness of historical education with broader societal discussions, including debates over national identity, historical memory, and the role of education in fostering civic awareness.

4. Research Gap

a. While previous studies have explored history education in various contexts, there is a paucity of research specifically addressing the representation of medieval times in Ukrainian and Eastern European school textbooks.

b. The study aimed to fill this gap by providing a nuanced understanding of the current paradigms shaping the portrayal of medieval history and their implications for historical consciousness. This is a mixed study: it involved the processing of qualitative and quantitative data.

Participants and Sample Procedure

a. *Selection Criteria:* The study involved 76 history teachers from various regions of Ukraine, encompassing both urban and rural settings. Participants were selected based on their experience, ensuring a diverse range of teaching backgrounds, including different school types.

b. *Inclusion Criteria:* Participants were obliged to have a minimum of 2 years of experience teaching history, ensuring a depth of understanding and exposure to various curricular changes over time (See Table 1).

Table 1

The Demographic Characteristic of Research Participants (Total 76)

Teaching Experience		
2-5 years	30 participants	39.47%
5-10 years	25 participants	32.89%
10-20 years	15 participants	19.74%
Over 20 years	6 participants	7.89%
Age		
25-35 years:	39 participants	51.32%
36-45 years:	18 participants	23.68%
46-55 years:	11 participants	14.47%
Over 55 years	8 participants	10.53%
Gender		
Male	19 participants	25%
Female	57 participants	75%

Source: Authors' own development.

Online platforms and social media channels were used to increase outreach and identify potential schools interested in participating. For this purpose, an official invitation letter was created with a detailed description of the research objectives, significance and participation criteria. Social media platforms (eg Facebook, Twitter) were used to widely distribute the invitations and to interact with school communities.

Email invitations were sent to selected schools through official email channels, providing a direct and efficient means of communication.

The invitations included detailed information about the research project and a link to the online nomination form for interested history teachers.

Requested school administrators or department heads to nominate appropriate history teachers using the online nomination form. The simplicity of the online process and the advantages of participating in the study were emphasised. Voluntary participation online was given importance. The online communications emphasised that the participation was voluntary and highlighted the potential positive impact of teachers' opinions on history education in Ukraine. A dedicated email address has been provided for further inquiries and clarifications.

Data Collection

Questionnaire: a comprehensive questionnaire was created to collect quantitative data. It contained Likert-type, multiple-choice and open-ended questions to cover a range of responses (See Table 2).

Table 2

The Template of Questionnaire

Section	Questions
Section 1: General Perception	1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the current representation of Medieval Times in Ukrainian school textbooks? (1 being very poor, 10 being excellent) 2. What aspects of Medieval Times do you think are emphasised the most in the current textbooks? 3. Do you believe the representation of Medieval Times in textbooks aligns with the modern understanding of historical contexts? (Yes/No/Not Sure)**
Section 2: Contextual Analysis	7. To what extent do you think the cultural and historical context of Ukraine during Medieval Times is adequately covered in textbooks? (Scale of 1 to 5, 1 being not covered at all, 5 being extensively covered) 8. How do you feel about integrated textbooks, which present the world history and the history of Ukraine together? 9. Are there any specific events or figures from Medieval Times in Ukraine that you feel are underrepresented in the textbooks? 10. Do you incorporate local historical examples from Medieval Times in your teaching, beyond what is covered in textbooks? (Yes/No/To some extent)**
Section 3: Teaching Approaches	4. How do you approach teaching Medieval Times in your classroom? 5. What strategies have you found effective in engaging students with the topic of Medieval Times? 6. In your teaching experience, what challenges do you face in presenting Medieval Times to students?

Source: Authors' own development.

Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with subgroups of participants (up to 10 teachers). Open-ended questions were used to prompt detailed responses. In this way, it was possible to get acquainted with the personal experiences of the teachers, the problems they face, and the strategies used when teaching medieval history.

Analysis of Selected Textbooks

This study centered on the analysis of contemporary school textbooks selected based on the criterion of relevance, with a specific focus on publications of 2020 year¹. The primary goal was to explore the representation of diverse textbooks to identify the key trends in the teaching system of

¹ *Note:* Since 2020, the history curriculum has not changed, so the history textbooks published then are relevant. The following changes in the curriculum (implementation of the New Ukrainian School) have not yet come into effect at the time of writing of the paper.

the medieval era. Additionally, insights into the practical aspects of working with specific textbooks were gathered through interviews.

The selected textbooks served as a reflection of the current educational landscape, allowing for an in-depth examination of how the Medieval Period is presented in Ukrainian schools. Textbooks were selected on the basis of the all-Ukrainian passing score - 40,000 copies (based on the choice of history teachers):

Dribnytsia et al. (2020);	Gisem and Martyniuk (2020);
Khlibovska et al. (2020);	Pometun and Malienko (2020);
Shchupak et al. (2020);	Sorochynska & Hisem (2020);
Vasylkiv et al. (2020)	

Additionally, through interviews with participating educators, the study aimed to uncover nuanced insights related to the practical implementation of each textbook. These interviews illuminated the diverse approaches and methodologies employed by educators in the classroom. This dual approach, with the integration of the content analysis with qualitative interviews, was designed to offer a comprehensive understanding of the prevailing paradigms and instructional strategies shaping the teaching of medieval history in Ukrainian schools. By delving into both the content nuances and the practical application of these textbooks, the study sought to provide valuable insights into the dynamic landscape of history education in the Ukrainian context.

At the same time, a clear timeline for data collection activities was established, including the survey distribution, the interview scheduling, and the document analysis (See Table 3).

Table 3

Research Timeline (Completed - September to December 2023)

Month 1: September 2023	
Week 1-2: Project Preparation	Finalised survey questions and format. Reviewed and selected relevant textbooks for analysis.
Week 3-4: Participant Recruitment	Contacted and secured participation from the 76 teachers. Obtained informed consent from participants.
Month 2: October 2023	
Week 1-2: Survey Distribution	Launched the online survey for participants. Sent reminders to enhance response rates.
Week 3-4: Individual Interviews	Scheduled and conducted individual interviews with selected participants. Began transcribing interview recordings.
Month 3: November 2023	
Week 1-2: Focus Group Planning	Developed a plan for organising and conducting focus group sessions. Selected appropriate venues or virtual platforms.
Week 3-4: Document Analysis	Began the analysis of selected textbooks. Identified key themes, biases, and gaps in the representation of medieval times.
Month 4: December 2023	
Week 1-2: Focus Group Sessions	Conducted 2-3 focus group sessions. Recorded and transcribed discussions for qualitative analysis.

Week 3-4: Data Synthesis and Reporting	Completed the analysis of survey responses, interviews, and focus group discussions. Drafted the research, including findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
Post-Research Activities	
Week 1-2: Review and Revision	Reviewed the draft report and made necessary revisions. Ensured coherence and consistency in the narrative
Week 3-4: Final Research Submission	Finalised the research

Source: Authors' own development.

This timeline reflected the completed research activities conducted from September to December 2023, providing a systematic and thorough exploration of teachers' perceptions of medieval times in Ukrainian school textbooks.

Data analysis

For quantitative data, descriptive statistics were used to summarise and describe the key characteristics. Created graphical representations such as charts and graphs to visually communicate patterns and trends in data. Qualitative data analysis involved the use of thematic coding techniques to analyse data obtained during interviews, the focus group discussions, and document analysis. A coding framework was developed based on identified themes related to medieval imagery.

Content Analysis

Conducting a content analysis of textual materials, focusing on identifying recurring themes, biases, and variations in the presentation of medieval history. The classification of textual content into predefined topics and subtopics.

Benchmarking

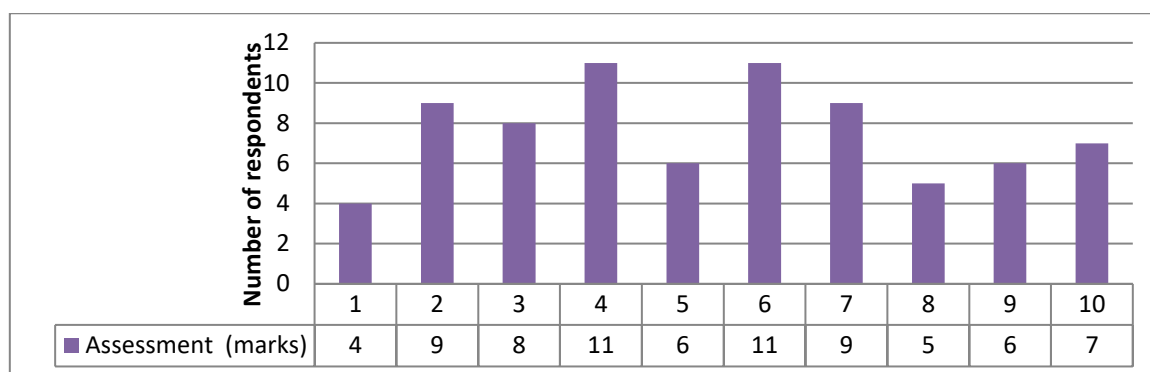
A constant comparative analysis was used to compare data from different sources and participants. Analysed qualitative data to identify common narratives, contrasting viewpoints, and emerging themes.

Results

The general analysis of the survey indicates that the majority of participants in the study have a satisfactory impression of the representation of Medieval Times in Ukrainian school textbooks. Respondents were asked to rate the portrayal of the medieval period in Ukrainian school textbooks on a scale from 1 to 10. The results are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Assessment of the Presentation of the Middle Ages in School Textbooks



Source: Authors' own development.

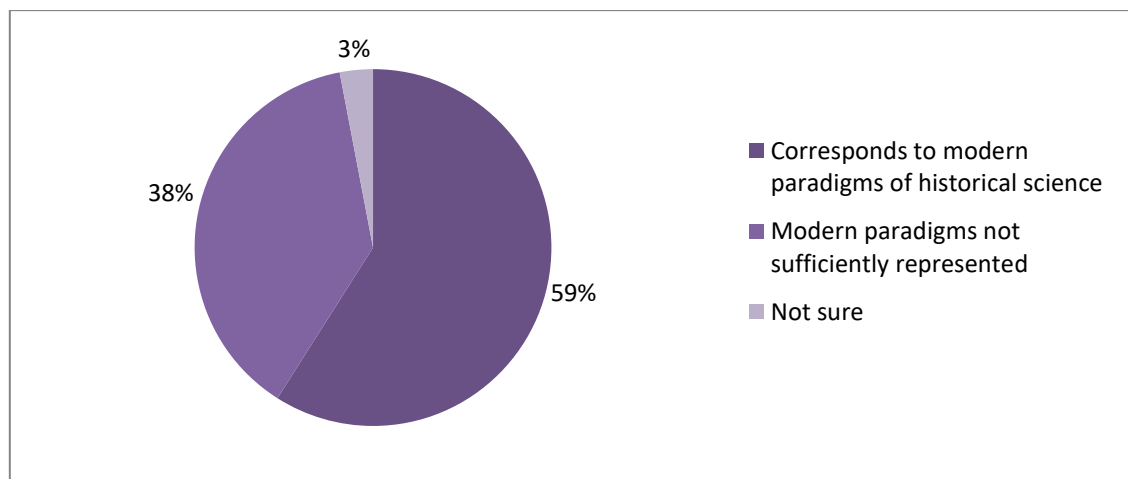
The average rating is approximately 5.44, indicating that the overall impression is satisfactory. The majority of participants indicated ratings of 4 and 6 (11 each). The square of the difference between each rating and the mean was calculated, these squares were summed, divided by the number of observations (76), and then the square root of the result was taken. Consequently, the standard deviation is approximately 2.31. The median rating (the average of the two central values from 1 to 11) is 6, suggesting that most participants rate the representation of Medieval Times above average. However, there is some variability in the ratings, reflected in a standard deviation of approximately 2.3.

The majority of interviewed teachers determined that the main focus of the current medieval history course (both in the world and Ukrainian contexts) is devoted to the events of political history. This was reported by 61 teachers, which is 80%. The proposed answer was quite expected, since the materials of Ukrainian history textbooks are devoted specifically to the political history of the development of medieval state entities. On the other hand, 19% of the interviewed teachers (14 people) determined that in modern textbooks on the history of the Middle Ages, significant attention is paid to the study of social processes, everyday life, and the culture development. This can be indicated by certain transformations in the preparation of educational programs, their focus on the study of such phenomena as conflicts and ways of overcoming them, the history of everyday life, emphasis on cultural achievements, etc. However, such changes are quite local in the didactic plan and are on the margins of the organization of the educational process. 1 respondent (1%) did not give an answer.

The modern approaches in the development of historical science have a noticeable influence on the teaching practices in schools. However, school textbooks tend to be quite traditional. Scholars suggest that only information that has been proven over time and widely accepted is included in these textbooks (Matruglio, 2018; Nokes, 2017). The conducted survey demonstrated that, according to teachers, the Middle Ages in textbooks generally corresponds to the modern understanding of historical processes. This opinion was expressed by 45 respondents, which is 59%. At the same time, 38% of respondents (29 people) admitted that modern paradigms of the development of historical science are not sufficiently represented in Ukrainian school textbooks. Such a rather high percentage can be explained by the fact that many modern Ukrainian teachers are actively interested in additional information about their subject. 2 respondents (3%) are "not sure" that modern Ukrainian textbooks reflect the latest ideas about the Middle Ages (See Figure 2).

Figure 2

Perception of Middle Ages in School Textbooks

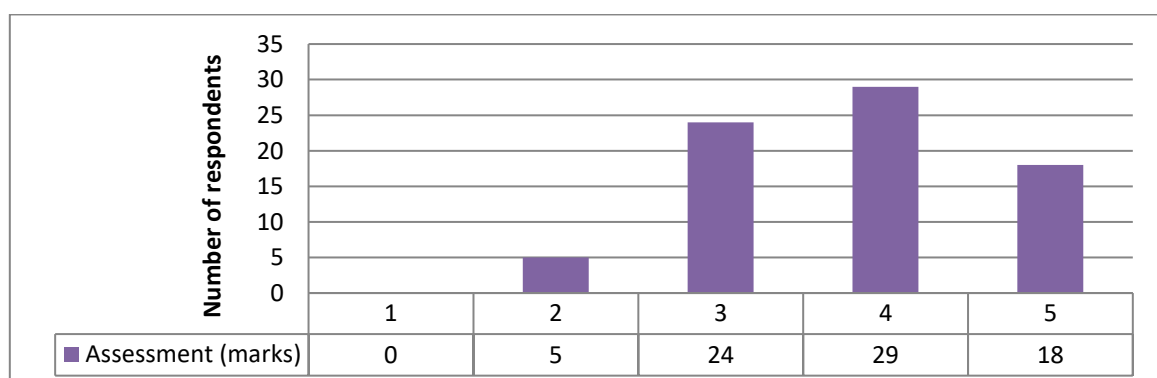


Source: Author's own development.

As educators play a crucial role in shaping historical perspectives, it is pertinent to explore their perceptions regarding the coverage of the cultural and historical context of medieval Ukraine in textbooks. Responding to the question on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 signifies no coverage at all, and 5 indicates extensive coverage, the survey sought to gauge the adequacy of this crucial aspect in educational materials. Recognising the predominant importance of the cultural and historical context in understanding the history of medieval Ukraine, assessing its adequacy in school textbooks demands careful examination. Teachers were asked to what extent they believed the cultural and historical context of medieval Ukraine was adequately addressed. According to the survey, 18 respondents (24%) assigned the highest rating, signifying an excellent coverage. Another 29 individuals (38%) expressed that the cultural and historical context of the Ukrainian Middle Ages was adequately presented overall, giving it a grade of 4. However, 24 respondents (32%) deemed the level of coverage to be moderate. Only a minimal number, 5 people (6%), perceived the demonstration of cultural and historical context at a low level (score - 2), with none indicating it as bad (See Figure 3).

Figure 3

Assessment of the Importance of the Cultural and Historical Context in Understanding the History of Medieval Ukraine in School Textbooks



Source: Author's own development.

The average rating of 3.7 reflects a relatively high level of adequacy, suggesting a commendable portrayal in textbooks. Nevertheless, this average also indicates room for improvement, highlighting the urgency of implementing necessary changes in educational programs and integrating them effectively into school textbooks.

During the interview, many teachers spoke in favor of the further introduction of an integrated textbook on the history of Ukraine, which would provide an opportunity to combine it with the study of the Middle Ages in world history. Thanks to this, the understanding of the overall processes that occurred in Ukrainian lands would be enhanced. This would enable to explain the events and phenomena that originated in Europe during that period and were uniquely manifested in Rus. The disclosure of such processes would become important for studying the peculiarities of medieval society, its mentality and culture (Parshyn & Mereniuk, 2023). At the same time, about half of the interviewed teachers are still not ready to use integrated history courses. Such fears can be explained by the reluctance to break the established and proven method of presenting information, which is generally characteristic of teachers not only in Ukraine (Stoddard, 2018). Another possible reason for such concern is the fear that Ukraine's history will "dissolve" in world history. Against the background of modern Russian aggression, the study of the past of Ukraine is extremely important, and therefore the integration of courses can create conditions for an unfair division of attention in favor of the study of world history.

The primary goal of school history education is to form a free person who recognises universal and national values, tolerates different religions, customs, and cultures. At the same time, teaching using human history, capable of a patriotic sense of belonging to one's state, is no less critical. As a result of studying the ancient past of Ukraine, schoolchildren should form a patriotic consciousness. The Rus' state was probably an imperial entity with its capital in Kyiv. Its territories united the modern lands of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Moldova, partly Poland, and the Baltic states. Accordingly, historians have long debates for the "legacy" of the once-powerful formation. For a long time (during the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union), historical schemes were depicted simply: power from the Kyivan princes gradually shifted to the Vladimir-Suzdal, and then - directly to Moscow.

At the same time, the shortcomings of this scheme were evident as early as the end of the 19th century but were openly or covertly ignored as a result of state coercion. Only with the collapse of the Soviet Union did the origins of Ukrainian statehood become relevant again for both research and school use. The issue of "division of the history of Russia" was the primary one particularly, during the formation of school programs and writing textbooks and manuals.

Over an extended period (spanning the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union), historical representations adhered to a simplistic narrative: authority transitioned gradually from the Kyivan princes to the Vladimir-Suzdal, culminating directly in Moscow. However, the inadequacies of this narrative had become apparent by the late 19th century. Despite this recognition, the acknowledgment was either overtly or covertly suppressed under state coercion. It was only with the dissolution of the Soviet Union that the origins of Ukrainian statehood regained relevance, prompting renewed exploration in both academic research and educational curricula. The question of the "division of the history of Rus" took precedence, especially during the formulation of school programs and the crafting of textbooks and manuals.

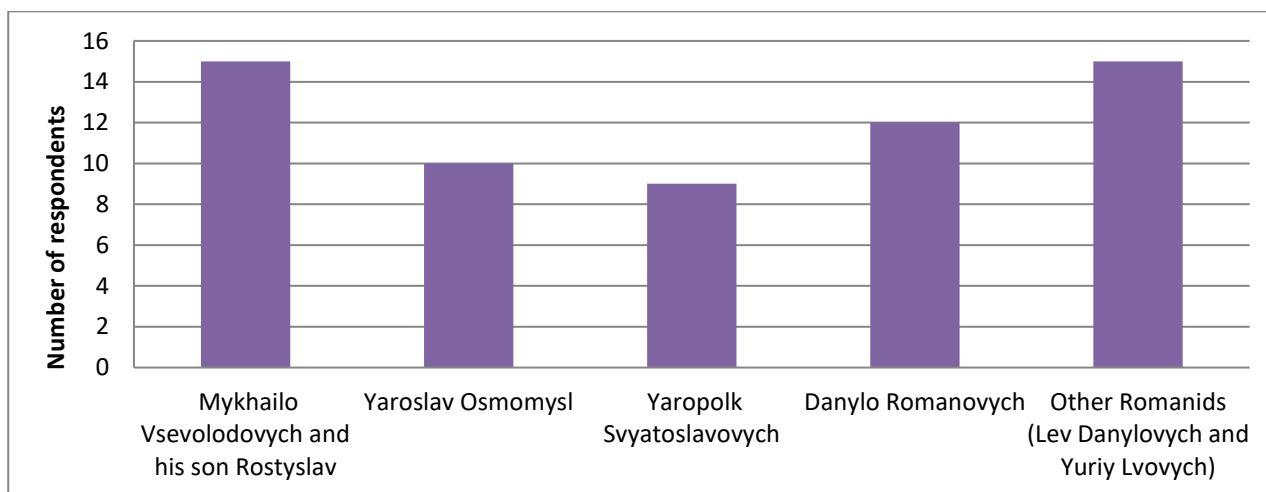
Over time, students' attention shifted towards pivotal stages in the evolution of Ukrainian statehood during the Middle Ages. Notably, the coronation of Galician and Volhynian prince Danylo Romanovych in 1253, a historical event repeatedly documented in European and Rus'ian sources,

had long been overlooked. Crucially, Danylo's successors recognised and emphasised this event by bestowing the royal title ("rex Rusiae") (Parshyn, 2020). In contrast, Rus' princes governing the "Russian lands" never received such regal recognition. Political considerations, including the fact that the crown was received from the Pope (whom Soviet times only permitted negative portrayals of) led to the relegation of this topic in history textbooks until after 1991. Nowadays this situation has changed. In general, the interviewed teachers noted that princes who did not rule directly in Kyiv, the capital of Rus, need more attention.

First of all, the branches of the princely family of the Rurikids, which ruled in Chernihiv (20% of the respondents, or 15 people) and Galych (25% of the respondents, or 19 people) were noted. According to the teachers, little attention is also devoted to the development of Rus'ian society during the Middle Ages (18% of respondents, or 14 people) and to the descendants of King Danylo Romanovych (15% of respondents, or 12 people) (See Figure 4).

Figure 4

The Figures Underrated in the Ukrainian School Curriculum



Source: Authors' own development.

The IX-XV centuries' knowledge of medieval society in the Ukrainian lands was also separately updated. In the modern Ukrainian textbooks it is noticeable that the difference between the social order in Rus' and medieval European countries existed but was not as prominent as one might think. Yes, Rus' belonged to the Orthodox world of the "Byzantine Commonwealth," but the mentality of the local nobility (leading social stratum) was close to the knightly (Mereniuk, 2022). Undoubtedly, there were severe differences in culture and life, management, etc. Still, the same differences can be identified between the lands of the Holy Roman Empire, the Italian and Spanish states, the principalities of medieval Poland, or the Kingdom of Hungary, and so on. Today, these aspects are gradually being integrated into the education of Ukrainian schoolchildren, as there is no further need to impose the Russian-Soviet idea of a "separate path of development" on medieval grounds. The class approach known since Soviet times has been revised. It became clear that in the future, to rewrite information about the oppression of the working population and popular uprisings as if the way to combat feudalism has become less critical. Modern textbooks emphasise the similarities between the social strata and culture of medieval Ukraine and Europe. For example, in the academic sphere, it has long been emphasised that paganism has had a lasting impact on the history of the Rus' lands. This is true if the "Rus' lands" are considered Russian - at that time (at least in the X-XIII centuries.) much of Vladimir-Suzdal was inhabited by Finnish tribes who really resisted Christianization. However, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Halych, and other "Ukrainian" principalities have no

information about the existence and spread of polytheistic cults or practices here. Thus, an appropriate distribution should also be present in the study of medieval history.

Important aspects are the attention to the harmonisation of the study of European medieval history and the princely era in Ukraine. Rus' can not be considered an "island", which was washed by the waters of the "world ocean". Mutual influences need to be demonstrated in learning, however, it should be approached with an emphasis on tolerance and objectivity, demonstrating unattractive examples of intolerant behavior to today's generation.

On the one hand, teaching the Middle Ages is interesting for children, and on the other hand, there are many myths and inaccuracies. The main task for the teacher is not to fall into this trap of myths and to explain to children certain points of discussion. Since the Middle Ages preceded the Renaissance, it is easy to assume that this period was less civilized, crueler, and more superstitious. However, in reality, the people who lived at that time were "positively medieval", they thought in the categories that were common at the time.

The Middle Ages were not as backward as the authors of the Renaissance wrote about them. The Christian church has found its place in the systems of state power. In the outlined status, the Christian cult met the invasion of barbarians and the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. Thus, it is not surprising that social cataclysms contributed to a somewhat aggravated worldview, gave rise to attempts to find answers to painful questions about the next fate of civilized humanity. At this time, philosophy received new religious traits. Leading philosophers and historians have tried to form certain laws of the world through the prism of providentialism and theology. Students need to emphasise a new vision of the world in order to perceive that medieval consciousness. At the same time, the notion that medieval people were much lower than the inhabitants of the post-medieval centuries has been dispelled by historical archeology. At the same time, as we have already noted, it is important to explain not only the peculiarities of the era, the emphasis on important events-markers, but also stories about the main achievements of the period. After all, each historical epoch is different from the previous or next, has its own characteristics that modern teachers must emphasise to students. Particularly, to point out the peculiarities of Ukrainian history of the time.

Contemporary history teachers employ various approaches to teaching the medieval period. Primarily, they rely on modern teaching methods such as group discussions, role-playing games, and the use of project-based methods (mentioned by 56 individuals). Another significant contemporary approach involves the integration of technologies, such as virtual tours, multimedia presentations, and historical videos (61 respondents). Individualised learning, actively implemented by 44 individuals, is also considered a crucial approach. 41 respondents noted that they actively use primary sources of information. Teachers observed that they mainly utilise materials found in textbooks or teaching guides. It is suggested that modern educators should more actively incorporate primary sources and engage in independent source research for teaching purposes. A small percentage indicated the use of historical reconstructions, museum visits, and archaeological sites in their teaching activities (31 individuals) (See Table 4).

Table 4

Approaches to Teaching the Medieval Period

Approach	Explanation	Respondents	%
Interactive Lessons	Implementing various methods such as group discussions, role-playing games or interactive projects can make the study of	56	73.68%

	the medieval period more engaging and memorable for students.		
Utilisation of Technology	Incorporating modern technologies, such as virtual tours, multimedia presentations, or historical videos, can help make learning more accessible and intriguing for students.	61	80.26%
Use of Primary Sources	Involving students in the analysis of historical sources, such as letters, documents, paintings, etc., can contribute to the development of analytical skills and a comprehensive understanding of events from different perspectives.	41	53.95%
Individualised Learning	Taking into account individual needs and interests of students in planning and delivering instructional material	44	57.89%
Connection with modernity.	Showing the importance of the history of the Middle Ages for the modern world and explaining the connections between the past and the present.	51	67,11%
Incorporation of Historical Reconstructions, Museum Visits, and Archaeological Sites in Teaching Activities	The use of historical reconstruction, visits to museums, reserves, which contributes to the development of practical skills in students, supports their interest in history	31	40.79%

Source: Author's own development.

Negative aspects include the fact that contemporary teachers do not pay as much attention to the use of sources in practice. Furthermore, a crucial aspect like the incorporation of historical reconstructions, museum visits, and archaeological sites in teaching activities is also not fully taken into account by modern educators.

The use of additional information supplementing textbook information is recognised as an important element of learning and building the educational process (Gómez Carrasco et al., 2021). However, among those interviewed, only 18 people (24%) gave an affirmative answer. 20 surveyed respondents (26%) gave a negative answer. Half of the interviewed teachers (38 people) recognised the partial use of additional materials that supplement the information available in the textbooks.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge the respondents' comprehension of interactive techniques. The data highlights that a majority of teachers, constituting 73%, favor contemporary and interactive teaching methods, reflecting a departure from traditional lecture-based approaches. This shift underscores a recognition among educators of the importance of fostering active engagement and critical thinking skills in students when exploring the complexities of the medieval period. Despite the evident benefits of interactive teaching approaches, there is room for improvement in incorporating diverse historical sources and immersive experiences into the educational process. The lack of attention to detail in his oversight might restrict students from gaining a thorough understanding of the medieval era. It is imperative for educators to strike a balance between modern

teaching methods and a more extensive utilisation of diverse historical resources to provide students with a richer and more nuanced perspective on the past.

Another important aspect is the use of modern digital technologies in student education. This is explained by the general trend towards digitisation in Ukrainian education. Furthermore, the findings suggest an emerging consensus among teachers on the need to adapt their pedagogical strategies to meet the evolving demands of modern education, encouraging a multifaceted and immersive learning experience for students.

On the other hand, modern teachers face several challenges when presenting Medieval Times to students. These challenges stem from the complex nature of the historical period, as well as the diverse needs and interests of contemporary students. The first aspect is the complexity and diversity of the Period. The medieval era spans a vast period and encompasses diverse cultures, events, and developments. The presentation of this complexity in a way that is accessible and engaging for students can be challenging. Teachers need to select and prioritise topics to avoid overwhelming students with information. The next problem is the limited and biased Historical Sources. The availability of historical sources from the medieval period is limited and existing materials may be biased or incomplete. This especially applies to Ukrainian history. Teachers must navigate through these challenges to provide a balanced and accurate representation of historical events, considering the perspectives of different groups. Moreover, students may find it challenging to relate to the distant and unfamiliar world of the Middle Ages. It requires creativity on the part of teachers to make the material relevant and interesting. Using interactive teaching methods, multimedia resources, and real-life connections can help bridge this gap. At the same time, teaching about the Middle Ages requires addressing cultural and social aspects that may be sensitive or unfamiliar to students. Teachers need to approach these topics with cultural sensitivity and provide context to help students understand the historical realities without perpetuating stereotypes or misconceptions. The next challenge is the integration of technology. While technology can enhance the learning experience, incorporating it effectively into the classroom can be a challenge. Teachers need to find a balance between traditional teaching methods and modern technologies, ensuring that the use of digital resources adds value to the learning experience. In addition, the limited time available within the school curriculum can be a constraint. Teachers may struggle to cover all relevant topics adequately. Prioritising the key concepts and events becomes essential to ensure a comprehensive yet manageable exploration of the medieval period. Nevertheless, teaching medieval history at school contains many controversial points included in the curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The first notable shortcoming is the parallel study of Ukrainian history and world history. There are often situations when children learn the same topic at different lessons, or, conversely, the presentation of world history events does not keep up with the history of Ukraine. This is because the Middle Ages of World History date back to 476, while the history of the Middle Ages in the Ukrainian lands has long been taught since the ninth century. However, this situation is somewhat changed in some modern textbooks, which leads to a parallel understanding of historical processes in Ukraine and Europe.

To understand the synchronicity of historical processes in Rus' and Europe or the Middle East, teachers are suggested to use tables in order to explain events that took place in different parts of the world at the same time.

Table 5

Examples of Parallel Events in the History of the Middle Ages in Europe and Ukraine

Events in Ukraine	Events outside Ukraine
1097 - convening a congress of Rus' princes in Lyubech	1096 - 1099 - the duration of the First Crusade
1113 - Nestor writes "The Tale of Bygone Years"	1113 - establishment of the Order of Hospitallers
1187 - Recording of the first written mention of the name "Ukraine"	1189-1192- Deployment of the Third Crusade
1199 - formation of the Galicia-Volhynian state	1196 - The Teutonic Order was founded
1202 - Galician-Volhynian prince Roman Mstyslavovich began to rule in Kyiv.	1202 - 1204 Deployment of the Fourth Crusade.

Source: Authors' own development.

Therefore, modern teachers should draw essential parallels between historical processes in Ukraine with events in Western Europe. This is important not only for the education of the political and patriotic worldview of students but also for a good understanding of the history of the Middle Ages.

In scrutinising Ukrainian school textbooks, designed for 7th-grade students, it is evident that they are oriented towards highlighting societal roles through a gender perspective. One significant objective of modern Ukrainian textbooks is to delve into the role of women in medieval society, aiming to explore and understand their contributions and significance. However, addressing this objective effectively requires a nuanced approach to accentuating key aspects. While the deliberate emphasis on the role of women in the Middle Ages is commendable, it is essential to ensure that it enhances the study of authentic historical events. Currently, there seems to be a lack in the representation of accurate biographies of women who made significant contributions and influenced the course of history in the Middle Ages. Therefore, it is important to shift the focus from superficial depictions of women's roles, such as mere illustrations, to emphasise authentic examples and factual accounts of the active involvement of medieval Ukrainian women in shaping the political landscape of Europe during that period – a topic that offers a wealth of information. By redirecting attention towards real-life examples, students can gain a more profound understanding of the significant contributions made by women in history. This approach aims to move beyond symbolic gestures and foster a comprehensive comprehension of the socio-legal, economic, and everyday life aspects that shaped the experiences of women during the Middle Ages. By doing so, students will not only acknowledge the significance of women in historical contexts but also comprehend the intricacies of their societal roles during that era.

Teachers should emphasise the prominent figures of medieval history and their influence on society's further development. In the context of teaching medieval history through the prism of gender vision, children must be able to:

- understand the role of men and women in the Middle Ages,
 - compare the legal and social status of men and women in Europe and Rus',
 - draw parallels between current and contemporary society,
 - identify the relationships between processes in the past and at the present stage,
- analyse social functions in the history of Ukraine in the context of European and world history.

As a result, the consideration of the social, scientific, and ethical aspects of the ancient history of Ukraine will be influenced by the perspective of gender roles.

By addressing these challenges through thoughtful lesson planning, incorporating diverse teaching methods, and fostering critical thinking skills, modern teachers can provide students with a meaningful and engaging exploration of Medieval Times. However, despite some negative aspects, modern Ukrainian textbooks are generally based on tolerance of the past of all nations. They do not contain provisions that threaten discrimination on the grounds of race, color, politics, religion, or other beliefs, etc.

Discussion

The comprehensive analysis of the survey results revealed a generally satisfactory impression among participants regarding the representation of Medieval Times in Ukrainian school textbooks. The current focus on the course of medieval history, both in the global and Ukrainian contexts, reflected an emphasis on political history, as reported by 80% of surveyed teachers. This concentration aligns with the materials in Ukrainian history textbooks, primarily dedicated to the political history of medieval state formations. Conversely, 19% of teachers acknowledged the value of attention shifts in modern textbooks, where increased focus is given to social processes, daily life, and cultural development. However, these changes manifested as localised in didactic terms and on the periphery of the broader educational process.

The results indicated that respondents recognised a dichotomy in the presentation of modern paradigms in the teaching of historical science. Although these paradigms significantly influence the teaching methodologies, school textbooks remain somewhat conservative, as corroborated by various contemporary works (Palikidis, 2020). The issue of conservatism in modern history textbooks is extensively described in the works of Matruglio (2018) and Nokes (2017).

In the results, approximately half of the surveyed teachers expressed reservations about implementing integrated history courses. This reluctance may stem from a resistance to deviate from established teaching methods or concerns that the history of Ukraine may be overshadowed in the global historical narrative. These findings find support in the research of Maloy et al. (2019), outlining the challenge of teacher resistance to innovation. Given the current geopolitical context, where the study of Ukraine's past holds significant importance, such apprehensions are understandable. Surveyed teachers highlighted areas that require more attention, such as a more detailed introduction of princes who did not directly rule in Kyiv. Additionally, the branches of the Rurikid princely family ruling in Chernihiv and Galicia were mentioned as underrepresented in educational materials, along with the development of Russian society during the Middle Ages and the descendants of King Danylo Romanovych.

Furthermore, the results indicated the presence of negative aspects in the teaching system of the Middle Ages: a limited emphasis on the practical use of sources and a low level of incorporation of historical reconstructions, museum visits, and archaeological sites into teaching activities. Although most teachers expressed a preference for modern and interactive teaching methods, only a minority recognised the consistent use of additional materials to complement textbook information. Thus, the results underscore the consensus among teachers regarding the necessity of integrating modern digital technologies into student education (Voet & De Wever, 2020). This reflects a broader trend towards digitisation in global education, indicating educators' awareness of the new demands of contemporary education (Hasan, 2013; Serrano, 2010; Stoddard, 2018).

Moreover, the survey results offered a nuanced perspective. While acknowledging the positive aspects of the representation of Medieval Times in Ukrainian school textbooks, there was recognition of areas that could benefit from further improvement, particularly in embracing modern paradigms in historical science. This nuanced understanding emphasises the ever-changing nature of historical education and the continuous efforts required to ensure educational materials align with evolving perspectives.

Hence, this study makes a significant contribution by evaluating the portrayal of Medieval Times in Ukrainian school textbooks, taking into account both international and domestic viewpoints. The focus on the dichotomy between traditional and modern paradigms enriches the understanding of historical education dynamics. By identifying underrepresented topics such as branches of the Rurikids princely family and the development of Rus'ian society during the Middle Ages, the study unveils gaps in the current educational approach. This contributes valuable insights for curriculum development.

Limitations of the study:

1. The sample Size: The study's reliance on a sample size of 76 teachers may limit the generalisability of the findings to the broader population of history teachers in Ukraine. Larger samples could provide more robust and representative results.

2. Geographic Scope: The study primarily focused on Ukrainian school textbooks, potentially overlooking regional variations in history education. A more extensive examination of regional differences could offer a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in diverse educational contexts.

4. Subjectivity in Ratings: The reliance on subjective ratings for the evaluation of textbook representation introduces an element of subjectivity. Incorporating additional quantitative measures or triangulating with qualitative data could strengthen the validity of the findings.

5. Temporal Context: The study's findings were situated within a specific temporal context, and the rapidly evolving nature of educational systems may render some observations time-sensitive. Periodic reevaluations could provide insights into the adaptability of history education to contemporary needs.

Despite these limitations, the study introduces a new perspective on the representation of the Middle Ages in Ukrainian school textbooks. As geopolitical factors continue to underscore the importance of understanding Ukraine's history, the study's findings can inform educational policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators about areas that require attention and enhancement in the representation of Medieval Times. In conclusion, this research makes a valuable contribution to the continuous conversation around improving historical education by adapting it to current viewpoints and cultivating a comprehensive comprehension of history.

Conclusions and Implications

The inclusion of medieval European history in the education system, especially in schools, is crucial for building the knowledge foundation of future generations. Despite the temporal gap from contemporary times, delving into the medieval era of Europe holds immense significance. This historical period played a pivotal role in the development of essential elements such as modern democratic parliamentary structures, judicial systems, municipal governance, and more. It is imperative to convey a thorough understanding of these historical processes to students. In Ukraine, the educational curriculum for medieval history encompasses both global history and the unique

aspects of Ukrainian history. However, challenges have arisen due to disparities in the allocation of planned lessons, leading to numerous issues in the curricula of both domains. These challenges are primarily associated with the interpretation of distinct terms and features, emphasising the need for careful consideration in the teaching methodologies employed.

Although, there is support for the introduction of integrated history textbooks covering events in the context of both Ukrainian and world history, approximately half of the teachers are not yet prepared to utilise integrated history courses. This hesitancy may arise from concerns about disrupting established teaching methods and proven approaches to information presentation. Concerns also exist that Ukrainian history might "get lost" amid global history, especially given the current situation with Russian aggression.

The study reveals a reconsideration of the Medieval Period in Ukrainian history, acknowledging historical events and figures that were previously overlooked, such as the coronation of Danylo Romanovych in 1253. Teachers pointed out a lack of attention to specific aspects of history, including the rule of the Rurikids in Chernihiv and Galicia, the development of Russian society during the Middle Ages, and the descendants of King Danylo Romanovych.

The research identified certain shortcomings in the teaching system and the use of modern manuals and textbooks. Specifically, there is insufficient emphasis on the practical use of sources and the incorporation of historical reconstructions, museum visits, and archaeological sites in educational activities. Therefore, there is a need for further improvement in utilising diverse historical sources and deepening the use of various means to provide students with a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the Medieval Period.

This study emphasises the importance of addressing the challenges associated with integrating history courses, recognising overlooked aspects of Ukrainian history, and enhancing the utilisation of diverse historical resources for a more enriched educational experience.

Suggestions for Future Research

Prominent avenues for subsequent scholarly investigations encompass the elucidation of the role played by integrated courses on the history of Ukraine and the practical application of such instructional approaches. The present-day paradigms underscore the growing support for the amalgamation of textbooks covering the history of Ukraine and World History, a trend notably more pronounced than in previous eras. Consequently, delineating the future prospects of further integration is of paramount significance, as it facilitates an exploration of associated challenges. One of the primary challenges necessitates addressing the compilation of educational material. While the Middle Ages may be encapsulated within a single textbook, subsequent historical periods may result in a voluminous publication exceeding five hundred pages. In order to avoid such a difficult situation, it is essential to carefully modify the curriculum and allocate resources effectively. Consequently, this direction demands further intensive research efforts.

Another pivotal consideration involves the imperative to integrate the history of Ukraine within the broader global historical narrative, not only at a formal level but also through a nuanced representation in textbooks. It is essential to include theoretical content in these instructional materials that clearly explains the role and position of Ukrainians, their history, and culture in the global context. A promising approach involves drawing parallels between historical events in different parts of Europe during specific epochs. However, the technological implementation of such a comparative method and its efficacy necessitate dedicated investigation as distinct facets warranting separate scholarly inquiry.

Moreover, another approach to research includes conducting surveys among students to gain a better understanding and description of their understanding of the Middle Ages as taught in educational curricula. Such surveys would not only provide insights into students' perceptions of the material but also facilitate the identification of both positive and negative aspects associated with the utilisation of new textbooks. Gaining a nuanced understanding of students' perspectives on the study of the Middle Ages can contribute valuable data for refining educational approaches, tailoring the instructional content, and improving the overall effectiveness of history education. This research initiative would assist educators and policymakers in effectively addressing any potential challenges and enhancing the learning experience for students.

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