REVISTA ESPACIOS

Organizational and pedagogical conditions for the formation of inter-ethnic and interreligious tolerance of high school students in the process of teaching social science subjects

Condiciones organizativas y pedagógicas para la formación de la tolerancia interétnica e interreligiosa de los estudiantes de secundaria en el proceso de enseñanza de asignaturas de ciencias sociales

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Content

ABSTRACT:

Interethnic and interreligious tolerance are multifarious socio-psychological phenomena of interethnic and interreligious interaction. These types of tolerance serve as a characteristic feature of the social development of a multi-ethnic society. This situation is also typical for Russian society. Due to the processes of globalization, the ethnic diversity of specific countries is sure to grow. This expansion can hamper the processes of intergroup and interpersonal interaction of representatives of various ethnic groups and confessions and provoke conflict situations. Evidently, starting from school stage, it is important to form interethnic and interreligious tolerance in polyethnic societies, to which Russia

RESUMEN:

La tolerancia interétnica e interreligiosa son fenómenos socio-psicológicos múltiples de la interacción interétnica e interreligiosa. Estos tipos de tolerancia sirven como característica del desarrollo social de una sociedad multiétnica. Esta situación es también típica de la sociedad rusa. Debido a los procesos de globalización, la diversidad étnica de países específicos está segura de crecer. Esta expansión puede obstaculizar los procesos de Intergrupo e interacción interpersonal de representantes de diversos grupos étnicos y confesiones y provocar situaciones de conflicto. Evidentemente, a partir de la etapa de la escuela, es importante formar la tolerancia interétnica e interreligiosa en las sociedades

belongs. The article presents the theoretical analysis of the concepts of "interethnic tolerance" and "interreligious tolerance", specifies the place of curricula of social science subjects in their formation, analyzes the results of the introduction of an elective social science course to the study of interethnic and interreligious tolerance, and determines the psychological and pedagogical conditions for the successful formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance.
Key words: tolerance, interethnic tolerance, interreligious tolerance, social science subjects, elective course, ethnocentrism.

poliétnicas, a las cuales Rusia pertenece. El artículo presenta el análisis teórico de los conceptos de "tolerancia interétnica" y "tolerancia interreligiosa", especifica el lugar de los currículos de asignaturas de ciencias sociales en su formación, analiza los resultados de la introducción de un curso electivo de ciencias sociales al estudio de la tolerancia interétnica e interreligiosa, y determina las condiciones psicológicas y pedagógicas para la formación exitosa de la tolerancia interétnica e interreligiosa.
Palabras clave: tolerancia, tolerancia interétnica, tolerancia interreligiosa, asignaturas de ciencias sociales, curso electivo, etnocentrismo.

1. Introduction

The concepts of "interethnic tolerance" and "interreligious tolerance" are relatively new for Russian social and liberal arts sciences. Their appearance and functioning relate to a polyethnic, polyconfessional environment, the structuring of which is determined by the existence of various ethnocultural and ethnoreligious communities and the power policy of the authorities. Today, the concepts of "interethnic tolerance" and "interreligious tolerance" are widespread in sociology, psychology, cultural studies and other social and liberal arts sciences, both in the studies of foreign and Russian scholars.

To understand the phenomena of interethnic and interreligious tolerance, their importance in the formation and development of polyethnic societies and understanding of their content, several points should be analyzed and related to the conditions under which they are formed. The primary concern is the linguistic origin of the term "tolerance", however, of much importance are the concepts of interethnic and interreligious tolerance.

Extensive research has shown that the concept of "tolerance" is rather extensional and ambiguous. The term has been a subject of many studies, psychology is the primary example (Asmolov, Soldatova and Shaigerova, 2001; Bondyreva 2003; Gaasholt and Togeby 1995; Heyd 2003; Stepanov 2006).

The term "tolerance" has the Latin origin of "tolerantia" and originally meant a voluntary transfer of suffering, passive patience. Subsequently, its importance has been transformed under the influence of various factors, in particular, the pressure of the social environment and psychological perception. This transformation affects the meaning of its use in different historical periods of society development.

Some researchers attribute the appearance of the term "tolerance" to the signing of the Edict of Nantes (Act 1598), which granted French Protestant-Huguenots the right to their religion, after which Protestants and Catholics found a compromise between their faiths. The Age of Enlightenment (XVIII century), gave a new impetus to the understanding of "tolerance" (conceptual primarily), as tolerance to others. It was with the educational movement in France that the term "tolerance" was introduced into scientific circulation and social practice (Sikevich 1999; Nederman and Laursen, 2000).

Recent evidence suggests that the concept of "tolerance" was actualized in the process of relations between the bearers of different, often opposing political, religious, cultural views and a different perception of the world (Kapustina 2008).

Researchers from different branches of social and liberal arts' sciences singled out the most characteristic features of the phenomenon of "tolerance", which are as follows: 1) tolerance as a specific form of personal relation to the existing sociocultural diversity, understood as tolerance to "otherness"; 2) personal tolerance which affects the level of consciousness as a personal relationship, and at the level of behavior as a conscious action or act; 3) tolerance, based on one's own established position of the subject, it forms a platform for an open dialogue; 4) tolerant attitudes which recognize the autonomy of subjects of interpersonal

relationships; 5) tolerance as a contributor to the formation of positive value orientations; 6) tolerance as a selector of objects, things, phenomena of the surrounding world; 7) tolerance as a phenomenon, characterized by a dynamic character which is associated with the dynamics of both object and subject of interaction in a specific social and cultural field (Lebedeva 2003).

The conceptualization of the terms "interethnic tolerance" and "interreligious tolerance" lies within the domain of ethnosociological and ethnopsychological research. Within the framework of ethnosociological knowledge there are established aspects of the following phenomena: the features of the interaction of the constituent components of this structure and the functioning of the phenomenon of tolerance in the social environment (Drobizheva 2003).

It is noteworthy, that ethnopsychologists primarily concentrate their attention on the ethnopsychological features of value orientations of the personality, which largely arise as a result of interethnic interaction (Krysko 2008). These orientations are based on the mechanisms of intergroup perception (under the influence of stereotypes, value orientations, where factors of interethnic and interreligious tolerance play a prominent role).

There is a growing body of literature that points out that extensive analysis of all the circumstances that influence the content of "tolerance concept" in specific conditions, in our case of psychological and pedagogical ones, result in a list of several important points in the process of describing the concepts of "interethnic tolerance" and "interreligious tolerance":

1) the idea of tolerance in its general sense was born and developed in philosophy. Later such subjects as psychology and sociology made a significant contribution to its development and the description of such concepts and terms as "interethnic tolerance" and "interreligious tolerance". Researchers note that traditionally tolerance is considered as one of the basic values of liberalism, especially when it comes to the psychological perception of a partner in interethnic and interreligious relations (Mills 1986);

2) interethnic and interreligious tolerance is not an obvious value, they require the argumentation of one's or another's attitude (perception) to certain values of ethnicity. This argument should be sought in the practices of interethnic and interreligious interaction of various polyethnic and polyconfessional countries. It is formed and functions under the influence of mainly socio-psychological conditions;

3) the ethnocultural pluralism of the modern world requires a pluralistic approach to the comprehension of ethnoreligious diversity, which is associated with the formation of a multivectored consciousness that can structure a tolerant consciousness in such a way that an individual can adequately respond to ethno-religious pluralism.

These findings bring us to the attempt to define interethnic and interreligious tolerance as specific forms of individual and personal relation to the existing sociocultural, ethnocultural and confessional diversity based on conscious tolerance and tolerance towards representatives of other sociocultural, ethnic and confessional communities, as well as their readiness for positive interaction with representatives of various ethnicities and religions.

The analysis of the programs of social science subjects of the 10th and 11th grades of general education schools showed that an important element in the formation of tolerance for high school students is the introduction of elective courses of the world outlook direction into the teaching and educational process (Aseeva 2008). In the process of studying social science subjects, students develop a negative attitude toward manifestations of anti-humanism, intolerance, disregard for other people, representatives of various ethnonational, ethnoconfessional and sociocultural communities, age, sex and professional groups; to manifestations of violence, hostility, permissiveness and prepossession in human relationships; to the restriction and violation of human rights and freedoms; to the lack of spirituality and immorality, dogmatism and fanaticism, cruelty and anger; to disregard of the rules and norms of communication; to attempts to use other people as a means to achieve their own goals; to mutilation and disrespect of human beauty; to disrespect of human beliefs and ideals.

2. Methods

The focal point of our research is the introduction of the elective course "Interethnic and interreligious tolerance" in the instructional and educational process. It is our belief that this course will contribute to the formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance of senior pupils in the process of teaching social science subjects. The instructional purpose of this course is the formation of tolerance understanding as the universal principle of human life; the teaching of tolerance as a personal quality of students. (Table 1)

Table 1. The structural and object-matter description of the elective course "Interethnic and interreligious tolerance".

No.	Class subject	The number of learning hours
	Introduction course	2
1	Tolerance. How should I understand it? (Part 1)	1
2	Tolerance. How should I understand it? (Part 2)	1
	Main course	10
3	A tolerant person. What is so special about a tolerant person?	1
4	Tolerance for myself. The sense of self-respect.	1
5	Tolerance for myself and others. Self-understanding.	1
6	Tolerance for myself and others. Tolerant communication.	1
7	Tolerance for others: the vision of different worlds.	2
8	Tolerance for others: the understanding of sympathy	1
9	Interethnic tolerance.	1
10	Interreligious tolerance.	1
12	The description of tolerance borders.	1
	Final course	1
12	Final class.	1

To assess the effectiveness at the beginning and at the end of the elective course, a questionnaire was conducted, according to the results of which quantitative and qualitative changes in the indicators of interethnic and interreligious tolerance were assessed.

3. Results

After the introduction of the elective course "Interethnic and interreligious tolerance", we

described its effectiveness, which was determined by comparing the indicators of interethnic and interreligious tolerance among high school students who had completed a course of study (27 people). The reliability of the obtained results of the experimental work was checked using the methods of mathematical statistics (Student's t-test).

The results of the study showed a rise in the positive attitude of high school students towards the polyethnic nature of Russian society (t = 3,126, p ≤ 0,01). A study of the change in the perception of the influence of representatives of other ethnic groups on the living standards of the citizens of the Russian Federation showed that the number of people who believe that foreigners are able to improve the standard of living of Russians has increased among senior pupils who have completed the course (t = 4.135 for p ≤ 0.01). The number of senior pupils, who believe that representatives of various ethnic groups are able to enrich Russia's cultural life, has also increased (t = 3,168, p ≤ 0,01).

Regarding the question, "In your opinion, how many people of other nationalities should be allowed to move to our country?", among the high school students who passed the training course, there were also visible changes (t = 4,613, p ≤ 0,01).

A study of the religious distancing of high school students showed that after the experimental intervention distancing changed in a statistically significant way (t = 3.804, p ≤ 0.015). In particular, the number of students, who may allow a representative of a different religion to their immediate surroundings - the family, increased from 11.11% to 29.62%. On the contrary, the number of the respondents who do not want to have contacts with representatives of a different religion have decreased by half (from 14.81% to 7.41%).

The study of changes in attitudes toward ethnics from non-CIS countries, who differ in skin color, allows one to draw conclusions about the readiness of high school students to reduce the distance with Arabs (t = 3,431, p≤ 0,01), Chinese (t = 3,857, p≤ 0,01).

Having carried out a generalized analysis of the results of the study after the formative experiment, we found a pronounced positive dynamics of indicators of interethnic and interreligious tolerance of senior pupils and found that:

- a high level of interethnic and interreligious tolerance is demonstrated by 34% (+ 8%) of the students;

- the average level of interethnic and interreligious tolerance is typical of 54% (+ 25%) of the students;

- the level of interethnic and interreligious tolerance, below the average, was diagnosed in 12% (18%) of the students;

- a low level of interethnic and interreligious tolerance remains inherent in 0% (-15%) of respondents.

Thus, the results of the diagnostic study confirmed the effectiveness of the elective course "Interethnic and interreligious tolerance" for the formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance among senior students.

4. Discussion

On the basis of the work done, we formulate psychological and pedagogical recommendations for the creation of psychological and teaching conditions to assist school psychologists, teachers and parents of pupils of senior school age to optimally develop their normative indicators of interethnic and interreligious tolerance.

Tolerance (especially interethnic and interreligious) is an individual choice, it is acquired through education, information and personal life experience (Tishkov 2003). The formation of an appropriate information and educational space for the school environment is extremely relevant. In our opinion, the process of forming such a space should provide for the mastery of two blocks of problems, on the basis of which it is worthwhile to build interaction. The measure

of the effectiveness of this process will be determined by the following psychological and pedagogical conditions:

1) informing students through various components of the educational process about the fact of the multiethnicity and polyconfessionality of the modern world, and of the Russian Federation mainly. Describing the trends towards the growth of the ethnocultural diversification in Russia. Identifying the advantages and risks of diversification. The process of formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance begins when different ethnic groups receive information about one another, which lays the foundation for building stereotypes of participants in interethnic and interreligious interaction in their minds.

2) The introduction of an objective perception of ethnocultural diversity and the corresponding response to it. This applies to individuals who are carriers of this diversity. Usually, an adequate perception of a person different from oneself, first of all, his cultural and behavioral characteristics (provided they are understood), forms the basis for a positive attitude towards interaction. It is important to remember that the researchers of the process of interethnic and interreligious interaction are likely to stick to the phenomenon of ethnocentrism, when some ethnic groups tend to ascribe all the advantages to themselves, and a set of shortcomings to their partners (Hammond 2006).

This brings us to the assumptions that the key moments in the formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance in the process of teaching social science subjects are as follows:

- the overcoming of excessive ethnocentrism manifestations and removing barriers that ethnocentrism builds in the interaction of representatives of various ethnic groups;

- the overcoming of ethnic stereotypes that take root in the mind due to the strengthening of ethnocentric tendencies in interethnic interaction.

With respect to what has been said, it turns out that in the overcoming of usually negative ethnic stereotypes and, accordingly, excessive ethnocentrism, the main emphasis should be made on the approach that provides participants with objective information about one another. This makes it possible to choose a system of measures leading to the formation of the foundations of interethnic and interreligious tolerance, and subsequently their consolidation in the minds and behavior of the participants of the interaction.

The perspective for the formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance is the inclusion in the educational process of a "special participant" (practical psychologist, social teacher, teacher-organizer) of the process of formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance that will deal with social educational issues. At least, today some of the functions of the "special participant" should be performed by practical psychologists, social teachers or teacher-organizers. Such a specialist is given a key role in the context of the formation of the foundations of interethnic and interreligious tolerance. This role is determined by the fact that he must ensure the fulfillment of one of the main tasks in the formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance – prevention and overcoming prejudices that arise on the basis of ethnic, religious, cultural factors.

The following circumstances determine the solution of this problem:

1) The need to engage in dialogue with representatives of various ethnic and religious communities and to develop this dialogue in multiethnic environment of both within school and outside of it.

2) The need to develop awareness of the importance of conflict-free coexistence of representatives of different peoples and carriers of various cultural and religious traditions by schoolchildren.

3) The need to increase the level of awareness of students about other peoples and cultures, including off-campus (educational activities, excursions).

So, a key figure in the formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance should be a specialist who has the necessary knowledge, skills, and methods to build a positive interethnic

and interreligious interaction.

The most important findings to emerge for reforming curricula on social science subjects, in our opinion, should be based on four rational approaches:

1) the approach of individual contributions of each nationality (the program includes information on the contribution of each nationality, individual to the common cultural treasury of mankind);

2) the adaptive approach, which offers the inclusion of concepts and themes in the programs related to multiculturalism;

3) the transformation approach, which consists in the fact that the structure of curricula should contain subjects and topics that offer opportunities for pupils to get acquainted with various ethnoconcepts and educate them in the ability to formulate their own point of view;

4) the approach of social participation (the participants of the educational process (students) are encouraged to participate in the formation of such programs and individual topics, as well as to participate in solving problems related to the phenomenon of ethnicity).

The present study was designed to identify the following two aspects:

1) to promote the formation of such psychological and social conditions that a priori exclude the possibility of the appearance of negative prejudices in schoolchildren;

2) the creation of psychological and pedagogical conditions that help overcome negatively marked (because of prejudice) stereotypes about the representatives of other ethnic and religious communities.

Let us note that in our opinion, in the current circumstances, the efforts of the educational process in the context of the socio-psychological conditions for the formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance should concentrate on the second aspect. Arguments to justify this viewpoint are determined by the fact that the social environment in which the students are located and from which they come to the school community leaves its imprint on their mindset. The students are the bearers of the stereotypes that exist in the family and society.

The findings of this research provide insights for basic psychological, pedagogical and social conditions for ensuring the formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance. They are as follows:

1) adults, especially children and adolescents, should be aware of their role and responsibility as citizens or members of the community in the functioning of inter-ethnic and interreligious tolerance. To do this, they must be armed with knowledge and facts that result from negligence of human dignity, and the fact that the epidemic of intolerance causes violence and predetermines the suffering of people;

2) students should be armed with knowledge about the history and culture of other ethnic groups that interact with them, about the representatives of the communities in which they live, and whose children can be their classmates;

3) curricula of programs on social science subjects should include opportunities for studying, sometimes even in-depth, different cultures, both those that are represented in their student environment, and those with which they do not come into direct contact;

4) schoolchildren should respect the special features and specific qualities of individuals as a manifestation of their inner self, as the values of each individuality, as a specific form of manifestation of their dignity;

5) the exclusion from the interaction any "moral" principles on which any form of intolerance can grow and replace them with those that stimulate the formation of positive trends in interethnic and interreligious interaction;

6) building relationships based on reciprocity and respect should become one of the most important conditions for the formation and functioning of interethnic and interreligious

interaction. It should take into consideration the interests of both the person you are communicating with and the wider community;

7) students in the upper grades need to create opportunities for independent decision-making to create an atmosphere of trust that would eliminate conflict situations in relations, and in case of conflicts, they should be resolved peacefully.

5. Conclusions

The results of the conducted research gave grounds for formulating the following conclusions.

We defined interethnic and interreligious tolerance of high school students as a positive attitude of students towards the existing sociocultural, ethnocultural and ethnoreligious diversity of the world, based on a conscious adequate tolerance and tolerance towards representatives of another socio-cultural and ethnic community and its individual representatives, and readiness for a positive constructive interaction with representatives of various ethnic groups and faiths.

The result of the introduction of the elective social science course on the study of interethnic and interreligious tolerance demonstrated the increase in the level of awareness of the essence of interpersonal tolerance and the factors that determine it, the objectification of psychological conditions for the recognition and reflection of ethnic identity, the increase in the level and expansion of the sphere of their successful interethnic interaction. The course also resulted in the growth of the positive attitude of the students to the polyethnic nature of Russian society.

The psychological and pedagogical conditions of the successful formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance among high school students are defined as follows: the formation of mutual trust and respect for representatives of other ethnic groups in the process of building interethnic interaction; the orientation of values and ideological principles that stimulate the formation of positive trends in interethnic and interreligious interaction, the exclusion from the interethnic interaction such phenomena as intolerance; the formation of respect for the individual and personal qualities of representatives of various ethnoreligious groups; the introduction of elective courses and elective curricula on the history and culture of the planet's ethnics; the use of various psychological and pedagogical approaches to the formation of interethnic and interreligious tolerance among senior pupils; the awareness and understanding of the polyethnicity of the modern world by high school students, the advantages and risks of ethno-cultural diversification.

Taken together, these findings suggest the psychological and pedagogical conditions and recommendations which ensure the use of those opportunities that are naturally instilled in social science subjects.

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