Psychological and pedagogical aspects of interaction between students and retro-students in the educational process at the Institute of the third age

Anatoly P. Smantser^{1*}, Tatiana A. Sidorchuk², Maria A. Sidorchuk^{3 1}

Belarusian state University, Minsk, Belarus

² Smolensk state University, Smolensk, Russia

³ Sechenov First Moscow state medical University, Moscow, Russia

Abstract. The article deals with the features of intergenerational interaction of students of different ages within a single educational environment and an ambiguous attitude to the social and psychological experience of generations. Empirical research has shown that within the framework of a gerontological unit all age groups of students have an opportunity to receive a qualitatively new social experience on a permanent basis in professional, cultural, leisure and volunteer fields. It should be noted that the younger generation has a positive attitude to retro students; they want to and can become retro students' mentors, helping the elderly to master modern competencies. Retro students, despite the difficulties of interpersonal relations, are ready as mentors to share their knowledge, social and life experiences with young people. The results presented in the article have shown that the most promising forms of cooperation between students and retro-students are master classes in various areas, and creation of gerontological faculties at universities is the strategic direction of gerontology education.

1 Introduction

Modern social conditions, the latest technologies in the field of medicine, technology, science allow us to physically push "old age" away, but they can not replace the need of older people for continuing education, creating a psychological strategy of positive ageing, as well as interaction with the younger generation. In 2002 the Second world Assembly on ageing adopted the programmes "Intergenerational relations" and "Achieving and maintaining intergenerational solidarity", according to which in different countries various social programmes, from family policy to volunteer activities, are implemented with the

*Anatoly P. Smantser, e-mail: a.smantser@mail.ru

participation of the older generation [1]. Recently, inter-generational educational projects have become promising.

The emergence in society of the idea of the need for lifelong learning has prompted people of the third age to engage in a continuous process of expanding their knowledge, acquiring new professions, establishing close interpersonal relations with the younger generation [2]. At the same time, it is necessary to identify the features of interaction and attitude to education of students and retro-students (elderly students), that is, different generational groups. In the process of identifying we should rely on new ways of thinking to create well-being of older people and to determine the meaning of their life as they are aging [3].

In the long term, the task of joint training of young and elderly students in a single educational space could be solved by the creation of gerontological faculties at the University bases, where representatives of different generations will be able not only to exchange professional experience during the school year, but also to communicate constantly, participating in cultural, leisure and volunteer activities. Thus, getting the right competencies according to the principle of mutually beneficial cooperation in the framework of a single educational space will help to harmonise inter-generational relations, to bring their systems of values closer together, and "harmonious relations between generations are one of the factors of stable development of human society" [4].

Creative interaction between students and retro students is one of the educational process strategies, which ensures the transfer of social experience from one generation to the next. From the psychological point of view, the interaction is considered as the influence of objects (subjects) on each other, in our case, students and retro-students influence each other [5, pp. 17-18]. All this will eventually contribute to the strengthening of family values and traditions of the Institute of modern family.

Nowadays psycho-pedagogical aspects of the problem of intergenerational communication and interaction of people of different ages are being studied by both Russian (M. V. Aristova, A. S. Robotova, L. A. Darinskaya, H. A. Morozova, N. Sh. Valeeva and others) and foreign (V. Draves, F. Bollnow, E. Smith and others) pedagogues, by Russian (M. A. Elyutina, M. I. Postnikova, A. M. Mitina, T. V. Smirnova, etc.) and foreign (P. Baltes, G. Craig, E. Erikson and others) psychologists, as well as by other scientists.

However, the problem of interaction between people of the "third age" and young students in the process of learning in educational structures has not been sufficiently studied. There is some experience in the organization of interaction between students and retro-students in some universities, including Smolensk state University, in which the Institute of the third age operates.

1.1 Purpose and methods of research

The purpose of the study is to identify the motives and value relations of retro students of the Institute of the third age to education, as well as the features of intergenerational interaction in the information and educational environment as a factor of socialization of students and adaptation of retro students.

The methodological basis of the study is made up of interdisciplinary, activity, institutional, axiological, systemic, personality-developing, subjective approaches.

The following research methods were used: theoretical analysis of the problems of intergenerational relationships between young students and students of the Institute of the third age, questionnaire survey, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results.

2 Research Results

The problem of intergenerational relations has always worried both the older generation and the younger one. Different groups of generations differ in their experience of interaction, value and semantic attitude to the social and psychological experience of generations, which, in turn, determines the complex dialectic of their social and psychological interaction and relations.

On the one hand, in various sciences the interaction of generations is considered as a conflict of "fathers" and "children" (M. V. Vdovina, E. I. Ivanova, K. Lorenz, J. Mendel, G. Marcuse, L. Feuer, S. Freud, G. Dickey and others). For example, L. Feuer in the work "Conflict of generations: the character and significance of student movement" wrote that "the conflict of generations is a universal theme in human history" and is a source of social progress [6, p. 527].

On the other hand, L. S. Vygotsky, B. G. Ananyev, S. L. Rubinstein, A. N. Leontiev, A. R. Luria, A. G. Asmolov have shown that the continuity of generations plays an important role in the formation of a generation as a special socio-psychological community, emphasizing the importance of the interrelation between different generations as a necessary condition for progressive development of society.

In all areas of social development the intergenerational crisis today is accompanied by negative manifestations: strengthening of ageism, spread of various types of gerontological violence, reducing tolerance towards older people, decline in moral and family values. All this is happening against the background of a sharp deterioration in the material condition and health of the elderly, decrease in social guarantees, which ultimately leads to the spread of an unfavorable stereotype of the perception of old age. In the new conditions the installation not on the historical past, but on the future, on the inevitability of changes in their professional, social and family-related activities is of special importance for older people [7, pp. 167-175].

It is necessary to develop new social projects in different areas of intergenerational infrastructure, including educational activities. In this regard, the most important research task is to study the features of social and psychological interaction of representatives of different generational groups in modern historical conditions as carriers of a kind of social experience and normative-value ideas. "But in the modern world there is an extremely acute generational situation, there is a deeper gap between different generations, on the one hand; and on the other hand, a process of rapprochement of people of different generations is taking place, their complex interaction occurs. Intergenerational relations are taking on new features, new aspects, which have not been investigated either in psychology, or in sociology, or in pedagogy"[8].

Intergenerational educational projects related to interaction "student-retro-student" are based on a systematic personal-developmental approach to the study of psychological foundations of human professional activity, developed by L. M. Mitina, the basis of which is the problem of creative activity, self-development and internal determination of human life activity [9]. Many scientists studying various aspects of social behaviour of older people do not agree with modern stereotypes, where older people are given only a passive role in the life of society and their own life activity [10].

In the last few years, various practices of intergenerational interaction have begun to emerge actively in the domestic socio-pedagogical space [11]. In many cities of Russia university master students teach students of institutes of the third age such subjects as bases of computer literacy, skills of possession of terminals, dance therapy, foreign languages, landscape art, and others. But the reverse process, that is, transfer of professional and life experience by elderly mentors to young students on a constant basis is not yet effectively adjusted.

In Smolensk since 2012 an educational project "Education through life" has been realized at Smolensk state University. This project provides simultaneous training for

people of different ages at the Institute of the third age. During the seven years the Institute of the third age exists, we have been able to implement a comprehensive multi-level long-term gerontological educational programme. This year the first retro students have already passed to the seventh year of study.

Joint training in a single educational space for students of different generations provides a number of advantages. Firstly, we have a permanent mentoring platform, where students will receive the necessary professional competencies throughout the academic year within the framework of their practical training. This platform can be a great place for mentoring where the older generation transfer experience to younger, because up to 70% of retro students have higher education and rich experience in their work. Secondly, while students and retro students interact in a single educational environment, we will, in addition to professional tasks, solve the problem of spiritual, moral and Patriotic education of young people.

At Smolensk state University a study of the features of intergenerational interaction in a single educational environment has been conducted in the framework of a comprehensive project on polysubject interaction "student-retro-student". The Institute of the third age is a division of the state University. During the school year full-time students, part-time students, as well as retro students have regular classes in the Institute.

3 Discussion

The comprehensive study has touched the priority directions of interaction, points of contact, where both age groups would like to come into contact.

50 students of full-time and part-time departments of social and psychological-pedagogical faculties of the University and 50 retro-students of the "Institute of the third age" as a division of the University took part in the first comparative study "Analysis of students' and retro-students' ideas about the moral and professional potential of each generation" in the framework of the project "Interaction of student-retro-student in a single polysubject community.

The analysis of the results has showed that 96% of young respondents treat retro students positively, regardless of their specialty and course. To the same question "What is your attitude to the younger generation?" 80% of retro students respond positively, 20% express a neutral opinion. As for intergenerational attitudes, the older respondents most often note a lack of attention and communication, 59% of students feel a lack of communication with grandparents, 41% are concerned about the lack of mutual understanding. However, 28% of students are not interested in communication with the elderly and reject it in principle. 6% of young respondents do not have family traditions, and it is in their upbringing that their grandparents did not participate.

80% of young students want to and can teach retro students the following subjects: computer courses, cell phone skills, dance therapy, fitness, foreign languages, modern image, time- management. 20% of young respondents refuse to interact with the elderly because of a lack of experience.

To the question "Would you like retro students to share, as mentors, their knowledge and experience with you and in what areas?" the young students have given mostly positive response; they would like to adopt experience in the following fields: pre-school and school education-48%, history-58%, experience in social work-35%, general professional and life experiences-13%, the activities of different institutions-15%, other-10%. Only 6% of the students answered in the negative. Retro students would be able to share with the young people their life (social) experience-22%, professional experience-44%, and hobby-12%. The answer "no wish to share experience" (I have no time, I do not know...) was given by 22% of elderly students.

Communication with retro students can give young students the following: experience-44%, increased outlook-15%, information about the past-20%, positive emotions-8%, the ability to understand them-20%; nothing -39% (it is on the Internet). As for the retro students they in the process of interaction with young people receive both emotional (charging with energy; vitality; optimism) and professional and social (to transfer experience, to get help) experience.

4 Summary

On the basis of the study the following conclusions and generalizations have been made:

1. 100% of students of different ages are interested in further interaction and cooperation in a single educational space. If earlier the interaction of students of different generations took place mainly only in the cultural and leisure area, now within the framework of gerontological units it is possible to open a professional platform for the exchange of experience and knowledge between students and retro students on a permanent basis. 96% of students have noted a positive attitude to the older generation and 80% of retro students - to the younger generation.

2. 78% of retro students are ready to become mentors for young students, 80% of young students are ready to share their knowledge and skills with the older generation.

3. 6% of students who are not ready to interact with the older generation haven't had any family traditions. The lack of experience and of parents' and grandmothers' behavior pattern prevents young people from full socialization in modern society; therefore, it is important to develop a dialogue of generations in the family.

4. Master classes in various areas are the most promising form of cooperation between students and retro students in a single educational space. The problem of tolerance and gerontophobia is very important when we talk about intergenerational interaction. For this reason, it is necessary from the first courses of universities to introduce into the educational programme the course "Psychology of ageing", so that the younger generation can form a holistic, systematic view of the social group of elderly and old people.

5. Creation of gerontological faculties at universities becomes a perspective direction of geront education. Such faculties give an excellent opportunity to form a single educational space for effective interaction of people of different generations. Young students will be comprehensively engaged in the training of older people, providing them with the necessary competencies for development and self-development, and retro students, passing their experience to the young, will become excellent mentors for work in various fields.

6. "Silver volunteering" and all types of volunteer intergenerational activity are considered as a socially significant pattern of behaviour, fostering a value attitude to social norms, altruism and humanism. 44% of young people and 26% of older ones have given the highest preference to the cultural sphere; 31% of students and 38% of retro students—to the educational sphere; 51% of older people and 60% of young people—to cooperation in the sports sphere. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize volunteering as one of the necessary and effective activity area of any University.

The implementation of the results of the study can become the basis for the formation of effective intergenerational practices that provide systematic and objectively determined interaction between the elderly and young people within a single educational space.

5 Conclusion

The problem of continuity and conflicts in the relations between "fathers" and "children" can be considered as the interaction of counter-flows of information and activities, as

specificities of the transfer of cultural values from generation to generation [12]. In modern society, in which the mechanisms of "social inheritance" and ways of self-affirmation of new generations change, in which young people gain greater self-sufficiency and independence from the older generation, the emergence of innovative intergenerational educational projects will not only strengthen family traditions, but also harmonize the value orientations of different generations, socializing young people and adapting older people [13].

Thus, intergenerational interaction between students and retro-students within a single educational environment allows all age groups of students to be successful and to get a qualitatively new social experience both in professional and cultural, leisure and volunteer areas. In this sense, retro-education is not the final component of continuing education but, like the water cycle in nature, continually flows into student education-mentoring. This strengthening of intergenerational ties contributes to the improvement of socialization of both the younger generation and the older generation, keeping the elderly as an active and useful part of society.

References

1. The Russian Federation Government Order "Strategy of actions in the interests of citizens of the older generation until 2025"[electronic resource][https://mtrud.rk.gov.ru/ru/document/show/980\(2016\)](https://mtrud.rk.gov.ru/ru/document/show/980(2016))
2. Project "lifelong learning" [electronic resource]<https://hr-academy.ru/hrarticle/obuchenie-v-techenie-jizni-life-long-learning.html> (2014)
3. T. A. Sidorchuk. Collection of materials i/n scientific and practical conference "Social policy and social work in the socio-cultural XXI century."University J. КохановскиUJK, Poland. 583–588 (2018)
4. M. I. Postnikova. Psychology of intergenerational relations in modern Russia. Abstract. dis. doct. psych. sciences. SPb. (2011)
5. A. P. Smantser. Collection of scientific reports Association of professors of Slavic countries (APS) Bulgaria, 17–23 (2018).
6. L.S.Feuer, *The Conflict of Generation: the Character and Significance of Student Movement*. New York (1969).
7. V. I. Paniotto, V. S. Maksimenko, *Quantitative methods in sociological research*. Kiev (2003).
8. D. I. Feldstein, Education and science. News of the Ural branch of RAO **3(51)**, 3–11 (2008).
9. L. M. Mitina, *Psychology of personal and professional development of subjects of education*. St. Petersburg: Nestor-History (2014)
10. O. V. Agapova, T. M. Kononygina, Education of the elderly. A guide for practical work. Orel: Publishing house of NP "Orlovskaya Pravda" (2001)
11. T. A. Sidorchuk, Smolensk State University News. **4**, 433–444(2016)
12. H. N. Sadykova. Sociocultural determination of continuity in intergenerational interaction. Abstract. dis. kan.soc. Sciences, Tyumen (2016).
13. S. G. Spacibenko, Socio-political journal. **3**, 112–125 (1995).