Ethnic Tolerance of Students as a Necessary Condition for Intercultural Interaction

Minazova Venera¹, and Magomedova Zuhra²

¹Kadyrov Chechen State University, Sheripova Street, 32, 364024, Grozny, Russia
²Chechen State Pedagogical University, Subra Kishieva str. 33, 364068, Grozny, Russia

Abstract. The article deals with the problem of ethnic tolerance of students - future teachers-psychologists - as a necessary condition for intercultural interaction. The specific features of student age are emphasized, which allow to “fix” at a more conscious level the foundations of tolerant behavior laid down at previous age stages. The results of a study aimed at suggesting that the level of development of ethnic tolerance of students of the psychological and pedagogical direction in some of its components is insufficient, and therefore it is necessary to analyze the psychological and pedagogical conditions for the formation of ethnic tolerance of university students. The collection of information about the knowledge and ideas of students about tolerance and the forms of its manifestation was carried out as part of training sessions on the formation of intercultural competence. The results of the study confirmed the need for targeted work with students on the formation of tolerant qualities, and the article reveals the possibilities of the university in the formation of ethnic tolerance in the course of professional training of future educational psychologists. The main directions of psychological and pedagogical work on the formation of ethnic tolerance are determined: educational work; educational work; carrying out diagnostic procedures for the study of ethnopsychological phenomena; student’s independent work; student’s research work; public relations. The experience of the implementation of each direction in Kadyrov Chechen State University.

1 Introduction

The negative phenomena of modern society, which permeate almost all spheres of social life - intolerance, xenophobia, extremism and terrorism, etc. - become the cause of interethnic, interreligious tension, conflicts between states, etc. In this regard, there is a need to find ways to resolve destructive conflicts.

At present, the relevance of the problem of finding methods and means of raising children in the spirit of respect for others is of particular importance [1]. Of course, the formation of universal human values and virtues in the younger generation has been relevant at all times. However, today the issues of aggressive behavior, intolerant attitude towards others, egocentric attitudes in children from the very first stages of personal development are particularly acute. Children are increasingly showing anger, intolerant attitude towards peers, negativism. In their behavior, there are various patterns of

*Corresponding author: veneraminazova@mail.ru

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unfriendly attitude towards others. It can be assumed that tensions in society through the social environment of children, primarily the family and various means of disseminating negative information (television, the Internet) penetrate the consciousness of the emerging personality.

At all times, among the universal values, the ability to establish friendly relations with people of various categories, to live in peace and harmony with friends, neighbors, representatives of other countries and cultures, stood out [2]. To denote this virtue, the concept of “tolerance” was introduced. Tolerance in all forms of its manifestation (personal, ethnic, religious, etc.) has become the object of a wide range of scientific research. Despite the various interpretations of this term in the natural and social sciences, as well as its rejection and criticism by some researchers, the concept of “tolerance” is firmly rooted in psychological and pedagogical science.

Various aspects of the problem of tolerance, both at the theoretical and methodological levels, are quite well reflected in foreign and domestic psychological and pedagogical literature [3]. So, for example, in the works of T. Adorno, A. Aronson, G. Allport, the ideas of the nature of prejudice (intolerance) are revealed. Modern domestic researchers A.G. Asmolov, B.S. Gershunsky, V.N. Gurov, G.U. Soldatova, P.V. Stepanov, L.A. Shaigerova, V.A. Sitarov and others study the factors of ethnic tolerance/intolerance and put forward ideas for the formation of tolerant attitudes.

Tolerance, in the most general sense, is understood as a respectful attitude towards others, “strangers”, those who are distinguished by their physical and psychological characteristics; it is the ability to respect the rights and freedoms of others. According to the domestic teacher B.Z. Wulf’s phenomenon of tolerance comes down to a person’s ability to coexist with people of a different way of life, whose behavior and attitude to the world are determined by a different system of values, criteria for assessments, needs [1].

Tolerance is a necessary condition for the existence of a democratic society. The intolerant attitude of people towards each other is one of the most common causes of human rights violations, interethnic and interfaith conflicts, and other forms of violence.

Thus, the formation of tolerant attitudes and tolerant behavior of the younger generation is put among the priority tasks of education [4]. The solution of educational tasks in this direction requires the creation of psychological and pedagogical conditions for the organization of advanced positive experience of tolerance. The effectiveness of the process of forming tolerance depends on the organization of a platform for direct or indirect interaction with people from other communities that differ in their typical features.

2 Research Methodology

Within the framework of this article, the problem of ethnic tolerance is posed as a necessary condition for intercultural interaction in relation to student (adolescent) age. In our opinion, it is at this age that the opportunity arises to “fix” at a more conscious level the foundations of tolerant behavior laid down at previous age stages. The culture of tolerance begins with the development of motives for the child’s behavior, reflecting his attitude towards other people - politeness, honesty, tact, kindness, empathy. In preschool and primary school age, the mechanisms of personal development clearly work, such as the shift of a motive to a goal, identification and the mechanism for mastering and assimilating social roles. It is known that with the right tone and style of education, there is an excellent opportunity to transform the goals of education into independent, own motives for the child’s behavior. In adolescence and youth, the mechanisms of self-building are “turned on”, which is associated with the presence of self-consciousness as a leading mental neoplasm, the emergence of the ability to reflect, a critical attitude to social norms and rules [2].

It is undeniable that the formation of moral ideas and qualities, including tolerant attitudes, among the younger generation is relevant at all times and has been brought to the
fore in the content of educational programs [5]. Within the framework of psychological and pedagogical science, there is a constant search for ways, methods and means of solving these problems.

The tasks of forming intercultural competence, which is based on worldview attitudes towards social tolerance, are associated, first of all, with the formation of ethnic tolerance. Ethnos is the most striking, unique group with which a person identifies himself from the first moments of awareness of his belonging to society. For a multicultural society, ethnic tolerance is recognized as the most relevant.

The scientific literature presents various approaches to the definition of ethnic tolerance. In the variety of characteristics attributed by researchers to this category, one can single out the most common ones - adequate perception and understanding of one’s own and “other” peoples; tolerant attitude towards “other” values, customs, traditions, mores; readiness to establish positive relations with “foreign” ethnic groups [6]. So, L.G. Pochebut defines ethnic tolerance as “an attitude towards a tolerant, friendly attitude towards people belonging to foreign ethnic groups, brought up on the samples and values of a different culture” [5, p. 38]. According to V.G. Krysko, ethnic tolerance is a person’s ability to show tolerance for the unfamiliar lifestyle of representatives of other ethnic communities, their behavior, national traditions, customs, feelings, opinions, ideas, beliefs, etc. [3, p. 385].

Due to the particular acuteness of the problem of interethnic interaction and the rather high level of tension in these relations, the tasks of developing the ethnopsychological competence of children and youth, based on the principles of tolerance, should be put forward as a priority [7]. The formation of a tolerant attitude towards the ethnic diversity of the world is called upon to engage in various institutions of socialization. As part of the study, we are interested in the role of higher education institutions in solving these problems. The university not only develops the general cultural, general professional and professional competencies of the future specialist, but also, from the first day of the student’s stay in the educational space of the university, has a direct impact on his personal development, raising the level of socio-psychological culture.

Student years coincide with the period of adolescence and youth. Highlighting the main characteristics of this qualitative stage of human mental development, psychologists emphasize the consolidation in the emerging self-consciousness of all its components, including ethnic self-consciousness. In adolescence and in the period of youth, a person is determined with a system of views, attitudes, interests, needs, values [8]. Despite the independent thinking of boys and girls and the actualization of the processes of self-education and self-improvement during this period, the help of specialists in the formation of the phenomena of ethnic competence is needed.

The sample for our study, we identified students - future educational psychologists. In the process of preparing a competent specialist in the psychological and pedagogical direction, the formation of ethnic tolerance is one of the important tasks. In our opinion, the orientation of the personality of a person who chooses psychological and pedagogical specialties should imply the presence of motives for a respectful attitude towards people, altruism, and a high level of sociability [9]. Also, the study of the psychological characteristics of the manifestation of tolerance by students of the psychological and pedagogical direction will determine the place of the phenomenon under study in the context of the profession and identify the possibilities for the formation of ethnic tolerance in the course of professional training.

The study was conducted in order to study the features of the manifestation of ethnic tolerance of students - future teachers-psychologists - and to determine the ways of its development in the university.

We assumed that the level of development of ethnic tolerance among students - future teachers-psychologists - is insufficient in some of its components, and therefore it is necessary to analyze the psychological and pedagogical conditions for the formation of ethnic tolerance of university students [10].
To achieve the goal of the study, solve the tasks and test the proposed hypothesis, the following research methods were used: theoretical - analysis, comparison, concretization, generalization of scientific information; empirical methods - participant observation, survey, conversation; methods of quantitative and qualitative processing of research results.

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Philology of the Kadyrov Chechen State University. As a sample, students of the direction of training 44.03.02 Psychological and pedagogical education in the amount of 34 people were identified, of which: girls - 31 and boys - 3.

3 Results and Discussions

The collection of information about the knowledge and ideas of students about tolerance and the forms of its manifestation was carried out as part of training sessions on the formation of intercultural competence.

The data recorded by us indicate that more than half of the surveyed students (58.8% of the entire sample - 20 students) received the first idea of tolerance while studying at school; 14 students (41.2% of the total number of training participants) first heard about the problem of tolerance in the media; 12 students (35.3%) participated in tolerance activities as part of the educational plan in the holiday camp. During the survey and conversations, it was found that the topics of tolerance-intolerance are also often discussed in friendly conversations.

Highlighting the spheres of intolerant manifestations that are possible in relations between people, students gave examples of interethnic tension, the cause of which are: mutual hatred, disrespect for each other, existing negative stereotypes, acting as one of the leading mechanisms of people’s perception of each other, negative attitudes. The students emphasized that interethnic rejection arose “not from scratch”, but developed in the course of the history of peoples, the processes of interaction between ethnic groups, significant events in which ethnic groups participated.

In the process of training sessions, along with the term “ethnic tolerance”, the concept of “religious tolerance” was introduced. The topic of interreligious and interconfessional relations is of particular interest to students, which is not surprising in the context of conflicts occurring in the world on the basis of religious intolerance [3-4].

The category of “tolerance” was also used by us in relation to other social groups: racial tolerance; political tolerance; geographic tolerance; social tolerance; age tolerance; gender tolerance.

The term “personal tolerance” in the classroom denotes a psychological quality, which consists in the ability of a person to treat another with respect, understanding and recognition of his right to be unique, original, unrepeatable. A tolerant person shows a willingness to accept the surrounding people in a friendly way, emphasizing the value and significance in each social group or in the individuality of an individual.

The issues of tolerance, tolerant behavior, the formation of tolerant attitudes, the causes of intolerance and the conditions and methods for educating a tolerant personality are ambiguous, difficult to analyze and cause discussions among the participants in the discussion [5-6]. The opinions of students in some cases not only did not coincide, but were diametrically opposed. For example, when discussing the factors and conditions for the upbringing of a tolerant personality, the following approaches emerged in the group:

- the third part of the group (32.4% of the training participants - 11 students) emphasized the close relationship between the psychological climate in the team or society and tolerant relations;
- a little more than half of the entire group (53% of the total number of students invited to classes - 18 people) believed that a negative (intolerant) attitude towards other cultures, including other ethnic groups, is formed due to a person’s lack of a broad outlook of
common knowledge and ideas about the specifics of cultures of different ethnic groups, religions, confessions, races.

In the course of participant observation of students’ reactions and statements about interethnic and interreligious relations, we noticed an ambiguous attitude of students to this complex socio-psychological phenomenon. The main part in the group shows an average level of tolerance and empathy towards representatives of other cultures (we found the criteria for determining the average level in the equal representation of positive and negative positions in the assessment of “strangers”). Some part of the group showed a pronounced tolerance towards social groups and a high level of personal tolerance. These students demonstrated empathic qualities, respectful attitude towards people, regardless of their belonging to “other” cultures, showed interest in the identity of cultures, showed willingness to interact and cooperate with representatives of “foreign” cultures. In relationships with classmates and other people, these students were polite, friendly, used strategies of compromise and cooperation, and respected the opinions of others, even if it contradicted their own position. These observations allow us to state a high level of tolerance in this part of the group.

In the surveyed training group, students with a low level of tolerance were identified, which was manifested in their comments and reflections on the topics and issues discussed during the classes [7]. These participants allowed themselves to speak disrespectfully about other cultures, give negative assessments of their appearance, elements of culture, behavior, worldview positions. At the same time, young people compared, compared the traditions and customs of other cultures with their culture, exposing themselves in the best light. Aggressive tendencies were also manifested in the attitude towards the opinion of some participants of the training.

Thus, the results of the study confirmed us in the need for targeted work with students - future teachers-psychologists - on the formation of tolerant qualities. The subject of our study was ethnic tolerance.

We have analyzed the psychological and pedagogical potential of the process of training a specialist in the psychological and pedagogical direction in terms of the formation of ethnic tolerant attitudes.

Within the framework of the curriculum of this area of training, disciplines are presented that form the competencies of such categories of universal competencies as “Communication” and “Intercultural interaction”: “Russian language and culture of speech”, “Chechen language”, “Foreign language”, “Ethnopsychology and ethnopedagogy”, “History (history of Russia, general history); “Chechen traditional culture and ethics”, “Polycultural education” [8]. The content of these competencies is aimed at developing students' ability to adequately perceive the intercultural diversity of society, acquire knowledge, information about the identity of other cultures, show respect for their socio-cultural traditions, tolerantly and constructively interact with representatives of other cultures at the verbal and non-verbal level, taking into account the specifics of a particular culture, another social group.

As part of the implementation of the curriculum, students of the psychological and pedagogical direction go through a whole block of practices: educational and familiarization; pedagogical, research, undergraduate. The bases for internships were determined - educational institutions of the republic: preschool, general education, higher educational institutions. In the course of practice, there is an understanding of the importance of theoretical baggage, the need to acquire practical skills and a deeper understanding of professional functions. Communication with students of different age categories and interaction with the teaching staff expands the professional and social experience of the trainee. Future teachers-psychologists show independence in the organization of the children’s team; implement all areas of professional activity; collect material for scientific work; interact with specialists who solve the problems of training and education; take an active part in the work of the educational institution.
In the educational institutions of the Chechen Republic, a specific ethno-cultural situation has developed in connection with the socio-political processes launched since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since the 90s of the last century, representatives of the so-called Russian-speaking cultures began to leave the multinational Chechen Republic. Practically in all spheres of the social life of the Chechen society, a mono-ethnic picture has developed, which persists to this day [9]. In connection with this feature of the ethnic environment at the places of internship, students are deprived of the opportunity of direct communication with students of different nationalities, which makes it difficult for the full development of ethnic tolerance, namely, the behavioral component of this unique phenomenon. However, the annual plan of teachers (educators, teachers, class teachers, head teachers for educational work), as well as the teacher-psychologist of an educational institution, includes multicultural activities. Students reflect in their individual practice plan activities that coincide with the period of its passage, or offer their own ideas. Thus, future educational psychologists have the opportunity to demonstrate and expand their ethno-cultural knowledge and skills.

Along with training sessions at the university, serious educational work is carried out to form the student’s personality. Educational activities carried out with university students are aimed at expanding the personal experience of young people, raising the level of general and professional culture. Purposeful work on the formation of personal qualities necessary for young people to become familiar with universal human values and integrate into the world community presupposes the development of ethnocultural competence.

Awareness of ethnic diversity as a norm for the existence of human society and the personal value of each person occurs in the process of celebrating the significant dates of the peoples of Russia. Quizzes, competitions, round tables, discussions, concert events, amateur performances, festivals, etc. contribute to strengthening the cognitive and emotional-value components of ethnic tolerance. – we are talking about the ethno-cultural theme of these events [10].

Undoubtedly, in recent decades, in connection with the development of practical psychology, active forms of socio-psychological work have become especially popular, among which training is most valued. In addressing issues of intercultural interaction and intercultural competence, ethnocultural trainings (intercultural training; training in the formation of ethnic tolerance; training in interethnic competence) are of particular importance. Let us give an example of an effective program of training sessions that has been tested and has proven itself as an effective technology for the multicultural education of university students. The training technology is built on the psychological and pedagogical potential of the stories from the collection “The Power of Good”. Properly used educational resource and therapeutic potential of stories about enduring universal virtues (justice, honesty, mercy, forgiveness, non-violence and reconciliation) contributes to the successful formation of tolerant attitudes among the participants of the training. The book offers stories based on real stories of people from different countries, nationalities, religions. The plots of the stories impress the listener with the inner strength of the characters, which consists in a respectful attitude towards others, regardless of what culture they belong to. The discussion of the tolerant actions of people who find themselves in difficult situations of interpersonal, intergroup and intrapersonal conflict is carried out on a high emotional wave of the collision of different points of view of the participants in the event. Worthy examples of the “human” behavior of the heroes of the listened stories leave a deep “educational” mark in the minds and emotional sphere of students. The practice of reflection at the end of each training session makes it possible to observe the internal transformations of the participants and the dynamics of the development of the components of ethnic tolerance [4].

In our opinion, in the work on the formation of ethnic tolerance, it is necessary to use the educational value of the objects of identification - referential people for students, certain authorities, “reference” personalities. The life experience of significant adults is very
interesting for student youth. In casual conversations, teachers and faculty members talk about their own practice of intercultural interaction. Diluting their stories with vivid examples of international friendship, mutual assistance of people of different ethnic communities, real situations of cooperation and mutual support from their personal lives, adults convey the experience of international relations.

Spiritual and moral education is the fundamental direction of the educational program of the university. The upbringing of a tolerant personality, capable of understanding, respecting and accepting others who are not similar, is included in the context of the spiritual and moral development of the personality. One of the effective factors in the education of spiritual values is the factor of religion. The canons of Islam are an important regulator of the behavior of young people. Conviction in revealing the tolerant potential of Islam as the youngest world religion contributes to young people’s awareness of the value of tolerant qualities and their spiritual growth and improvement.

The essence of educational work is to provide students with information on a specific topic, form ideas about the key points of this topic and teach them the skills necessary for the practical application of the acquired knowledge. In the context of our study, we are talking about educating students on the topic of tolerance and intolerance and the types of their manifestation in interethnic communication; the formation of objective ideas about the culture and psychology of various ethnic groups.

The main forms of educational work are: extracurricular lectures held for a specific audience on a given topic, preparation and demonstration of presentations, seminars, master classes, round tables, discussions. Let us especially emphasize the enlightenment of student youth by spiritual leaders. Lectures, conversations on religious topics, confirming the universal values of respect for each other, mercy, the ability to forgive, regardless of nationality and religion, held in an informal, relaxed atmosphere, have a deep educational meaning.

Diagnostic work should be aimed at identifying the level of self-esteem of the subjects, the intensity of the manifestation of ethnic stereotypes, the level of ethnic self-awareness and personal identity.

Independent work of students may include searching for information on the topic of tolerance in additional literature, on the Internet, as well as watching and discussing various animated, documentary, feature films that address this issue.

The research work of students includes writing articles, abstracts, term papers and final qualification papers on the topics of intercultural communication and interaction.

Work on solving the problems of the designated areas requires the development of optimal methods and technologies, taking into account the specifics of the socio-psychological conditions of the environment and the characteristics of the contingent.

4 Conclusions

Undoubtedly, work on the formation of tolerant ethnic attitudes among students requires an integrated approach. Firstly, it should involve all subjects of the educational process, and secondly, use the capabilities of all components of the educational space.

The goals and objectives of psychological and pedagogical work on the formation of ethnic tolerance of future teachers-psychologists should be formulated in accordance with the following areas: educational work; educational work; carrying out diagnostic procedures for the study of ethnopsychological phenomena; student’s independent work; student’s research work; public relations.

Each of these areas has its own specific content and resources to increase the level of ethnopsychological competence of future psychologists in education, in particular, ethnic tolerance as its important component.
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