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**PROBLEMS OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION OF STUDENTS  
IN RUSSIA: WAYS OF ITS SOLVING**

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***Abstract***

The timeliness of the problem is based on the process of integration occurring in socio-economic, politico-military and cultural spheres demanding international cooperation. This gives significance to multicultural education. Pedagogical theory and practice of Russian education pays attention to the development of universal human values and culture of international relationships in the younger generation, their ability to live in harmony with other people who might have different views, habits and convictions as well as their respect for the cultural heritage of all peoples inhabiting our planet. It is stated in the Concept of Multicultural Education Development in RF that the Russian Federation, which is composed of many ethnic groups with various languages, cultures and religions, lives under the conditions of multiethnicity and multiculturalism believing in the ideal of cultural diversity of humanity. The Russian educational system, growing from cultural and historical traditions and simultaneously looking far ahead, is now developing in a three-dimensional space of regional, national and global culture. In view of this it becomes a strategic task to form citizenly identity which would harmoniously unite ethnic and regional, pan-Russian and universal identities. The aim of the article is to study the genesis of multicultural education in Russia and to bring to light the problems of the development of senior high school students' multicultural identity. Literature analysis shows that researchers of the problem of citizenly identity formation have not reached a unanimous opinion concerning the definition and structure of this phenomenon.

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## **I. Introduction**

The timeliness of addressing the problem of multicultural identity formation is dictated by the necessity to unite the efforts of world communities so as to oppose international terrorism and counter the threats of ecological and thermonuclear catastrophes which can be prevented by mutual understanding, good neighbourly relations and business partnerships. Integration of effort is feasible on the basis of equitable cultural dialogues and respect of human dignity. Multicultural education is an integral part of the unified educational system and is based on the general guiding principles of government educational policies which are enshrined in Russian legislation. Preserving the national and cultural independence of territorial entities of the Russian Federation, the pan-Russian citizen identity must provide socialization of the younger generation under the conditions of Russian multicultural civilization, and prepare them for functional collaboration within multi-ethnic citizen groups on a regional, pan-Russian and international scale. Russian schools educate representatives of different people with diverse national cultures, various national customs, psychological patterns and mentality, due to which there often occur instances of intolerance and hostility towards people of other cultures resulting from failure to understand their traditions and mentality.

## **2. Problem Statement**

**2.1.** The problem of the research is how to keep a balance between such interrelated cultural components of multicultural education as ethnocultural, regional, pan-Russian and global, which collectively contribute to the formation of citizen identities. Addressing this issue is identified as a high-priority task both in the Concept of Multicultural Education Development in RF and the Public Standard of Secondary General Education. Citizen identity formation becomes a key factor for the reinforcement of Russian statesmanship.

The difficulty of solving the problem also results from the fact that, among researchers of the problem of citizen identity formation, there exist no general consensus concerning the definition or the structural components of this phenomenon.

### **2.2. Genesis of the idea of multicultural education in Russia**

In the soviet period some aspects of multicultural education were considered as part of patriotic and international upbringing, which had a social class bias. Although the concept of 'citizen identity' was not used in pedagogic research, it was perceived as a sense of belonging to and love for a great state - the Soviet Union and the community of the 'soviet people'. The viewpoint that multiculturalism embraces rather than contradicts knowledge of own culture and patriotic attitude towards motherland and home area is shared by modern educators too (Bezrukova, 2013).

Socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism were proclaimed as moral principles determining people's behaviour and their attitude to other nations and peoples, unaccepting nationalism and chauvinism. Emphasis was made on the active approach - willingness and ability to put their heart and soul into the struggle for peace, freedom and independence. In the 90s these concepts become less ideologically-driven. Development of students' patriotism and internationalism is associated with the

struggle for peace, for human survival in the face of ecological and thermonuclear catastrophe and for international relationships based on mutual understanding, good neighbourly relations and business partnerships (Kharlamov, 1990). It may be argued with good reason that the tasks of multicultural education were tackled within the scope of international upbringing - respect for all nations large and small and their sovereignty, willingness to live in peace and unity with all nations (Ilyina, 1984); formation of the sense of solidarity, friendship, equality and brotherhood, uniting people of Russia, culture of cross-national relations, and unacceptability of national narrow-mindedness (Likhachev, 1992). Herewith, a big role was assigned to the use of such means as: the Russian language for multicultural communication among the people of Russia, multinational culture; a foreign language, which makes students accustomed to other countries' culture, to learning about their ways of thinking and daily routines.

In the 90s, owing to the fall of the Soviet Union, the enhancement of self-determination processes of Russian people and the growth of their self-identification, researchers start paying more attention to a component of multicultural education - ethnic identity; which is defined as belonging of an individual to an ethnic community on the basis of the notion of common territory, language, culture and history as well as ethnic values and interests (Efimenko, 2013).

The notion 'citizen identity' is relatively new in Russian pedagogy, having appeared at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is generally accepted that this is a socio-pedagogical problem, which requires integrating scientific knowledge on the basis of cross-disciplinary studies, pedagogical reference to the sciences studying their identities and formation (Morozova, 2013).

Many researchers define citizen identity as an approximation of personality to national status, willingness and ability to obey the laws of their nation, comply with civil obligations, exercise rights and participate in nation's life. They consider the image of a state occupying a certain territory and people inhabiting the state with their culture, language and traditions as identifying features

A sociologist Drobizheva has a different opinion. Separating the notions of 'citizen identity' and 'state identity', she claims that citizen identity, unlike state or even more so ethnic identity, doesn't imply a common culture, one system of values or a mythical 'national territory'.

Raising the problem of positive compatibility of national-citizen identity and ethnic identity and analyzing sociological data, she argues that for the majority of Russian residents, citizen identity includes patriotism, obedience to the law, respect for the Constitution, a sense of responsibility for the country. The structural components of citizen identity, as well as ethnic identity, are the following: cognitive (beliefs about of the community), emotional (pride, resentment, disappointment, shame) and regulative (willingness to act) (Drobizheva, 2008). In pedagogy, the last component is closely connected with activity or behavioural components which is made of actions: participating in civil campaigns, meetings, social protests, volunteer clean-ups, keeping the peace and others (Efimenko, 2013). In addition to these components there is also identified a connotative component (accepting values on emotional level) and an axiological (realizing values) one (Deberdeeva, 2014).

Morozova (2013) applies the axiological approach in pedagogy to the study of citizen identity, supporting her viewpoint by the fact that, in the period of school education a person builds a system of values that incubates the meanings of life. These values constitute a core element of their activity and cooperation with other human beings and the outside world. In recent years, the notion of citizen identity

has been receiving closer attention in pedagogy due to the fact that the task of developing students' citizen identity was set in the Public Standard of Secondary General Education of the Second Generation. In accordance with the Standard, the Approximate Basic Educational Curriculum for Secondary Education sets a goal of developing citizen identity, civic stance of an active and responsible member of the Russian society, aware of their constitutional rights and duties, respecting the law and public order, possessing a sense of dignity, and knowingly accepting traditional national and universal values of democracy and humanism.

Multicultural approach to citizen identity formation was researched by Belogurov (2002), Gasanov (1999), Dzurinski (2001), Kuzmin (1999) and others. In the context of Russia's multicultural diversity, paramount significance is attached to a system of communication where each person is a culture-bearer of different social communities as well as tolerance, latitude in religion and sensitivity to other people's feelings. Syrodeeva (2001) regards multiculturalism as the principle of coexistence, according to which 'each person retains the right to be themselves....but within the limits of not violating others' rights'.

One of the modern tendencies of the development of multicultural education is combining integration into the global cultural and educational system with preservation of ethnic identity. These processes have never been painless in Russia. The reason behind it is instability of Russians' national self-esteem, developed under the influence of such streams of social thinking as Westerners and Slavophiles. The problem is many Russian students as representatives of a diverse nations feel indifferent towards their folklife culture. Modern music and brand-name clothes have replaced Russian songs and dances, as well as Russian ornaments. Another side of this process is the assimilation of students of non-titled nations in mono-national communities. Members of ethnic minorities living in remote Russian villages assimilate the Russian culture. At best, such students have a basic level of their native language, but they have no command of the literary language or knowledge of their folklife culture.

### **3. Research Questions**

How can love for the small and big motherland, respect for historical and cultural heritage of numerous peoples of Russia and appreciation of the value of the world culture and common history of humanity be cultivated in the younger generation? How should extra-curricular activities be organized at school in order to provide a good balance between the structural components of multicultural education: ethnic and regional, citizen and universal identity? These goals need to be reached in order to prevent international terrorism, thermonuclear and ecological catastrophes, as well as achieve peace and harmony between people and countries.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

**4.1.** To analyze teacher's plan of actions and draw up a programme of extra-curricular activities on multicultural education of senior high-school students and assess the level of formation of their multicultural competence.

#### **4.2. The hypothesis of the research**

The analysis of theoretical literature and pedagogical experience revealed that in organizing multicultural education of students there is no harmony between auto-stereotypes (knowledge of their own ethnic group) and hetero-stereotypes (knowledge of other ethnic groups). It helped define the hypothesis of the research: the efficiency of multicultural education increases, if extracurricular educational work is organized systematically to form a multicultural personality on the basis of polylog of cultures.

### **5. Research Methods**

#### **5.1. Research Goals**

- 1) analysis of the governing documents and academic literature on the subject;
- 2) analysis of teacher's plan of actions;
- 3) drawing up a programme of extra-curricular activities on multicultural education;
- 4) assessment of the level of formation of senior high school students' multiculturalism.

A variety of methods complementing each other was used to test the hypothesis:

- theoretical methods: analysis and synthesis of regulatory documents; studying psychological educational, scientific, methodological, philosophical, and sociological literatures; content analysis of the French language textbook.

- empirical methods: students' questionnaire, conversations with teachers and pupils, pedagogical experiment, qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results of the experiment.

#### **5.2. Research premises**

«8А» form of secondary school № 60 (Kirov), 2014/15 academic year.

#### **5.3. Stages of the research**

The research consisted of three stages:

At the first stage – the search-and-theoretical stage – understanding and stating of the research problems took place; the goals, hypothesis, and objectives of the study were defined; the research plan was made; the criteria and indicators of multicultural competence of students were identified.

At the second (experimental) stage a programme of extracurricular educational work aimed at forming students' multicultural competence was made.

The pedagogical experiment including the dialogue between cultures was conducted, its results were analyzed.

The third stage is generalizing the findings of the study. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results and their theoretical justification were made. The results of the experiment were systematized and generalized; the major research conclusions were drawn.

## 6. Findings

The experimental work consisted in: 1) analysis of the form-teacher's plan; 2) development and realization of the programme of extracurricular educational work; 3) diagnostics of the level of formation of the students' multicultural personality.

**6.1.** The plan analysis. The plan includes regional components of multicultural education (a lecture for parents 'The role of traditions in modern family life', a class hour 'My small native land'); pan-Russia components (discussion 'Remembrance Day of Political Repression Victims', a discussion 'Heroic deed of a Russian soldier') and global components (a slide-presentation 'Our Earth', a discussion 'Global problems of our planet', 'the French language week'). However, not enough attention is paid to ethno-cultural components which enables the formation of ethnic identity. The students were all Russian, only one student was of a different nationality.

**6.2.** The programme of extra-curricular educational work offset the identified lack of attention to ethno-cultural component of identity. It comprised of 4 extra-curricular events: 1) a virtual journey 'World Wonders'; 2) the Festival of International Friendship; 3) a discussion 'Twin-cities'; 4) a dispute 'What is tolerance?'.

1. The virtual journey 'World Wonders' is aimed at increasing the students' knowledge sights and places of interest of such countries as France and Germany and developing a sense of pride for cultural achievements of Russia and other counties.

The teacher's report was supported by a Power Point presentation which included pictures of cultural monuments: Great Pyramid of Giza, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, Hanging Gardens of Babylon, temple of Artemis at Ephesus, Lighthouse in Alexandria, Colossus Rhodes, Statue of Zeus at Olympia, Valley of Geysers in Kamchatka, Manpupuner rock formations, Lake Baikal, Mount Elbrus, Mamaev kurgan and Statue named Motherland Calls, St. Basil's Cathedral, Peterhof, Kungur ice cave, Eiffel Tower, Triumphal arch, Cathedral of Notre Dame, Brandenburg Gate, Neuschwanstein Castle, Koln Cathedral. During the discussions, the students were asked questions: 'Do you think it is correct to say that there are only 7 wonders in the world?', 'Which sights you would like to see and call the Wonders of Russia, France and Germany?' to develop the students' cognitive activity. The implementation of the principle of cultural conformity contributed to familiarizing the students to the cultural achievements of mankind and realization of the world and national cultural values.

2. The Festival of International Friendship was held to reveal ethnic variety of cultures, to develop a sense of respect for the cultural heritage of other people.

At preparation stage, the students were divided into 7 groups, and wore national costumes of Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldavia, Uzbekistan and Udmurtia; the students performed a song in Russian, the Georgian national dance, the Ukrainian dance 'hopak', the song 'Belarus', the Moldavian national dance, the traditional dances of Uzbekistan and Udmurtia and recited poems with patriotic content, in which friendship among the people living on the territory of Russia was enlightened. At the end of the festival, the students expressed their positive attitude to different ethnic groups in the following way: 'I enjoyed being a Ukrainian and dancing hopak' (Sasha); 'I like the Belarusian language so much that I would learn a few songs in it!' (Alyona); 'Let's invite real Georgians, Udmurtians, Belarusians and

Ukrainians to the next holiday. I want to get acquainted with them!’ (Ruslan). The polylog of cultures contributed to the formation of multicultural personalities in students.

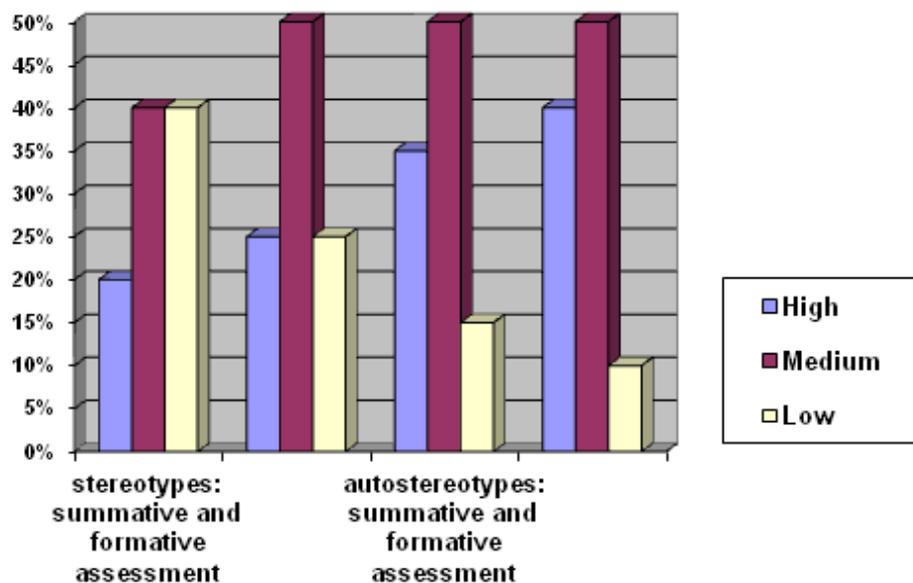
3. The discussion ‘Twin-cities’ helped the students learn more about the cultural and economic relations of different nations, their business partnership. It turned out that in the 1960s, there was a World Federation of Twin-cities, due to whose efforts about 300 cities of the former USSR found ‘relatives’ in 71 countries of the world, and in 1991 a new public structure – International Association ‘Twin-cities’ began performing its functions mainly in helping the cities of the states of CIS coordinate their external relations within the commonwealth. The students were particularly surprised learning that not only people, but cities of different countries can be ‘relatives’.

4. The dispute ‘What is tolerance?’ made the students conclude that in life, a man communicates with representatives of various nationalities, cultures, confessions, social layers, that is why it is important to live in peace and harmony with all people and to strive for equitable cooperation.

The developed and tested programme of extracurricular educational work on the formation of students’ multicultural personality contributed to the formation of the students’ positive emotional-valuable attitude to ethnic differences, adequate auto- and hetero-stereotypes, and tolerant behaviours.

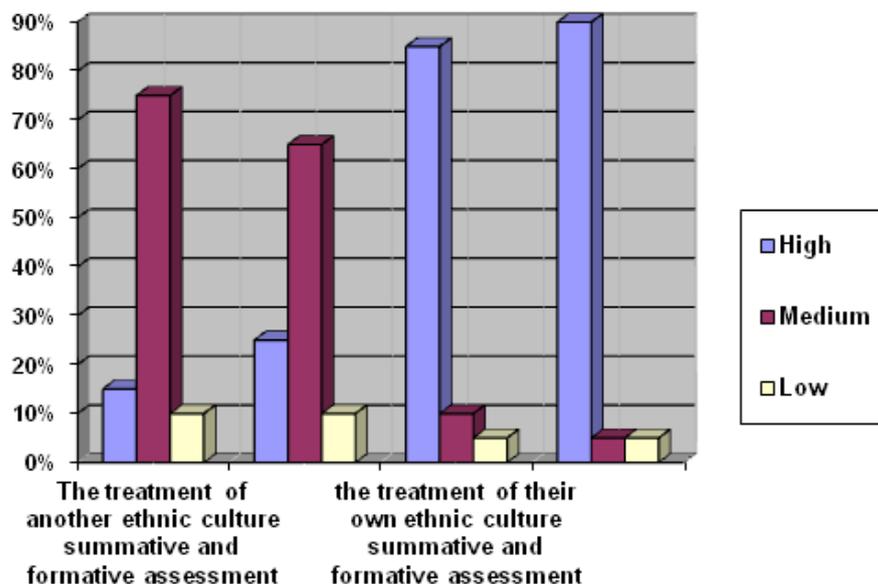
6.3. In accordance with the established, in pedagogic criteria there were developed indicators of multicultural competence of students (cognitive: hetero-stereotypes including awareness of other ethnic groups, their traditions, holidays, culture; auto-stereotypes including awareness of their own ethnic group, their traditions, holidays, culture; emotional-valuable: attitude to other ethnic culture, language, traditions, material culture and to their own; behavioral – realization of a pattern of behaviour towards their own and other people) and diagnostics of the degrees of formation of a student’s multicultural personality using a modified questionnaire of O.L. Romanova (Tatarko, & Lebedeva, 2011).

Analysis of the diagnostics results after the completion of the experimental stage showed a positive dynamics in levels of formation of multicultural competence in senior high school students. Comparative analysis of the results is introduced in Figure 01, 02 and 03:



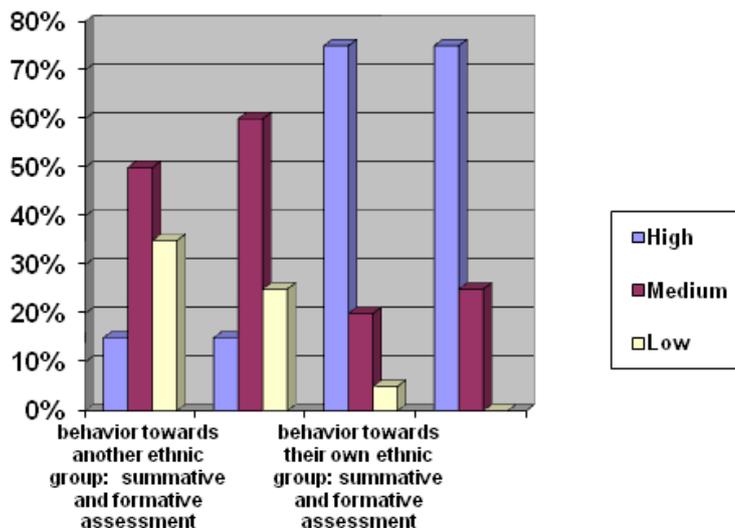
**Figure 01.** The dynamics of students’ ethnic identity formation according to the cognitive criterion

The diagram shows that the level of senior high school students' ethnic identity formation has risen. The high level of the students' knowledge about another ethnicities has increased by 5%, the medium level – by 10%, the low level has decreased by 15%. Withal, the high level of the students' knowledge about their own ethnicity has risen by 5%, the medium remained the same, and the low level has decreased by 5%. This might be attributed to the fact that an educational and extracurricular activity was organized at an experimental stage. The organized programme has allowed to broaden the students' minds and increase their awareness about their own ethnicity, the language, culture and customs.



**Figure 02.** The dynamics of senior high school students' ethnic indicators formation according to the criterion emotional of values

From this chart we may judge that the level of ethnic indicators formation has a positive dynamics. The high level of the students' treatment of another ethnic culture has risen by 10%, the medium level has decreased by 10%, the low level remained the same. The high level of the respondents' treatment of their own culture has increased by 5%, the medium has decreased by 5% and the low remained the same. This is due to the fact that educational and extracurricular activities were organized at an experimental stage. The questionnaires showed that the treatment of other culture as well as their own culture, language, customs and tangibles has improved.



**Figure 03.** The dynamics of senior high school students' ethno-tolerance formation according to the behavioral criterion

The chart the students' ethno-tolerance formation levels according to their behavioral criterion shows that the tolerance level towards another and their own ethnic group has risen. The high level remained the same, the medium has risen from 50% to 60% and the low has decreased from 35% to 25% of respondents. This is the evidence of students becoming more tolerant towards other ethnic groups, which is reflected in their behavior. Withal, the high level of behavior towards their own ethnic group remained high – 75% of students showed it, the medium level has risen from 20 to 25% of students, and none of the students showed a low level of behavior. We may then assume that the educational and extracurricular activities organized at the experimental stage influenced the positive dynamics.

## 7. Conclusion

We may conclude that extracurricular upbringing activities aiming at engaging the students in their own people's culture, and other people's culture have allowed to harmonize ethnic, pan-Russian and universal components of multicultural education, formed respectful treatment to different nations and the desire to possess universal values in their lives.

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