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CURRENT STATE OF INTERETHNIC RELATIONS AMONG
UNIVERSITY YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract

The rapprochement between the peoples of different countries of the world becomes more and more possible in the modern information multiethnic society due to innovative telecommunication means. Interethnic contacts turn out to be more frequent. The ethnic diversity of many regions and countries of the world can provide prerequisites for the tense interethnic communication on the whole. The data obtained in the study are analyzed by statistical methods, including SPSS. The article actualizes the necessity of forming constructive interethnic relations among students through the development of knowledge about the national culture, mentality, ethnic traditions and peculiarity of their ethnic group and the ethnic groups inhabiting the region, and the country. Besides, the formation of emotional and value relations and willingness to interact with representatives of different ethnic groups is described. It is marked in the article that it is necessary to pay attention to special events, psychological and pedagogical methods and means of eliminating the negative manifestations of interethnic relations among students. The necessity to create conditions positively influencing the development of cognitive, emotional and value, regulating, motivational components of the student's personality taking part in international communications in educational organizations is concluded.

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Keywords: Ethnic tolerance, interethnic contacts, interethnic relations, multicultural personality.



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1. Introduction

The urgent need to study the problem of interethnic relations in the student educational environment is due to the current state of the society, characterized as informational, and multi-ethnic. Modern trends in the world are connected with disturbances caused by increasing tension in inter-state relations. The mass media is a powerful translator of all the events taking place in the society. They influence the multidirectional perception of the information received by students. Besides, the relevance of the issue lies in the fact that the comprehensive study of interethnic relations enables identifying factors that reduce their constructiveness, and purposeful creating conditions in the educational process to develop multiculturalism of an individual (Van der Zee, 2000), as a capability to be ethnic tolerant (Lukina, 2017) to representatives of different nationalities, their traditions, customs, and national peculiarities. Students present a special socio-demographic group of a society, being in the constant information traffic (Berezhnaya & Beloshitsky, 2008). The formation of worldview, the development of personal attitudes, value orientations and life choices are typical of the student age. And it is especially important for students to have got a high level of personal reflection, enabling them to analyze efficiently the events taking place and to make sound and objective conclusions. The analysis of philosophical, acmeological, psychological and pedagogical, sociological scientific works shows that the study of the problem of personality development in the context of interethnic relations has significantly widened in recent years (Astashova, & Bondyreva, 2016; Batarchuk, 2017; Bondyreva & Gorelov, 2017; Derkach, Stepnova, Karpenko, Batarchuk, & Batarchuk, 2017; Drobizheva, 2017a, 2017b; Gukalenko & Borisenkov, 2016; Khotinets & Molchanova, 2016; Khukhlaeva, Khakimov, & Khukhlaev, 2015; Vyunova & Ivanova, 2017), but at the same time there is a lack of its spatial organization. The empirical researches in the field of interethnic relations promote developing some tactics and strategy of the educational process focused on the creation of psychological and pedagogical conditions for the student's personality development in the ethnic diversity of the society and the information environment.

2. Problem Statement

The Russian Federation is a multi-ethnic country with the population comprising more than 160 ethnic groups. The modern world is characterized by complex processes increasing people migration. And therefore, one of the main problems is preservation of constructive relations between representatives of different nationalities. This is due to the necessity to preserve the country's integrity, to ensure its national security, to preserve cultural diversity and value relations of different nationalities. Various mass media offer young students great opportunities for education and information enrichment.

This allows students by means of the Internet to quickly and easily find the information needed, to get acquainted with the studying young people of different citizenships, religions, and nationalities. At the same time, from the point of view of the cognitive approach it is necessary to be ready to interact, to objectively explain what common and different between the representatives of different ethnic groups in the student environment and society as a whole. Numerous problems of interethnic relations in the society increasingly require new scientific approaches to the study of a student as a personality (Merzlyakova & Bibarsova, 2017), capable and willing to a positive interethnic interaction on the basis of socially significant

guidelines. A personality, capable of the constructive inter-ethnic dialogue (Aristova, Berdysheva, Kritarova, 2017) has a high level of multiculturalism. The problem of personality development in the interethnic interaction is studied by psychologists, teachers, and philosophers (Gukalenko & Pustovoitov, 2017; Khakimov, 2011; Khotinets, 2014, 2017; Koval & Sakhno, 2015; Lipsky, 2004; Lukina, 2016; Mikheeva, 2018). But in science a common understanding of the personality, possessing multiculturalism, is not enough developed on the basis of certain evaluation criteria taking into account the nature and specificity of behaviour in the social structure of ethnically diversified society. So, the peculiarities and complexities of interethnic relations under present-day conditions, expressed, on the one hand, in the growth of national consciousness, on the other, in changes in the political system, democratization of national cultures result in the problem of strained interethnic communication in multinational collectives.

3. Research Questions

Solving the research problems, it is important to highlight the contradictions, arisen in modern science between the need for a multicultural student personality and the lack of overall view on the nature, structure, typology, components, functions and levels of its development; between the need for specialists to provide the appropriate support in the development of multiculturalism of the person and the absence of science-based psychological and pedagogical support of this process; between the desire of a person to preserve his ethnic identity and life circumstances in an ethnically diversified society. From our point of view, these contradictions can be resolved if a system of factors both positively and negatively affecting the successful development of a multicultural personality of students and their interethnic relations is identified. To resolve the given contradictions it is necessary to elaborate the concept of multicultural personality development in the education process. The problem considered is widely studied in the interdisciplinary perspective at the interface of such humanities as philosophy, acmeology (Derkach, 2009), linguistics, pedagogy, psychology, sociology, ethnology, anthropology, culturology, politology, as well as a number of interdisciplinary areas, such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, linguoculturology, etc.

The experience of numerous studies of domestic and foreign scientists shows the increasing role of the problem under study, both scientific and practical. The results of the presented empirical research confirm the need to solve this scientific problem as well.

4. Purpose of the Study

The objective of the study is to consider the current state of interethnic relations among the students of the Russian Federation; and to propose recommendations for psychological and pedagogical support when forming the readiness for constructive interaction between students of different nationalities on the basis of the principles of ethnic tolerance, cultural dialogue, and value and sense guidelines, taking into considerations the findings.

5. Research Methods

Given the relevance of the subject and its popularity at the present time, the empirical studies were conducted using the students' questionnaire survey. It involved 2,037 young people (n=2,037) studying at

the higher educational institutions of the Russian Federation (the Astrakhan State University, the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (Bryansk branch), the Siberian Federal University.

The diagnostic tools were questionnaires "A diagnostic relation test", "Identification of ethnic and cultural competence", "Ethnic stereotypes", "Participation in ethnic contacts", "Tolerance index", "Social-distance scale", "Personal and situational anxiety scale", "Diagnostics of the reflexivity development level". The calculations were performed with the computer program IBM SPSS Statistics 21.

6. Findings

The obtained data (the average value of the respondents' group) showed a positive attitude among the interviewed (the Russians, the Moldovans, the Kazakhs, the Tatars, the Kalmyks, the Armenians, the Nogais) towards their national identity (the result ranging from 0.08 to 0.3). At the same time some negative, neutral and positive attitudes of the members of one ethnic group to the other was revealed. The Russians expressed a positive attitude to the Belarusians (0.3), the Germans (0.18), the Armenians (0.08), the Jews (0.12), the Ukrainians (0.04), the British (0.05), the Afro-Americans (0.09), the Spaniards (0.15), the Georgians (0.05), the Tajiks (0.08), the Italians (0.08), the Tunisians (0.5), the Kazakhs (0.18), and the Tatars (0.48). Some negative attitude was shown in relation to the Chechens (-0.03), the Daghestanians (-0.08), and the Lezghins (-0.02). A neutral attitude was to the Americans (0). The Moldovans displayed their positive attitude to the Armenians (0.24); the Tatars to the Russians (0.04); the Armenians to the Greeks (0.42); the Nogais to the Kalmyks (0.06); the Kazakhs to the Koreans (0.43), to the Russians (0.04), and to the Tatars (0.17). Some negative attitude to the Chechens (-0.04) was found among the representatives of the Kazakh nationality.

Analyzing the data obtained, the complementary diagnostic interviews were carried out with students, and it was found out that the negative attitude to other nationalities was owing to their insufficient knowledge concerning the culture, history, traditions, and national specificities of various ethnic groups. The negative, neutral and not clearly expressed positive attitudes towards the representatives of other nationalities are also due to the students' inadequate ability to regulate their mental and emotional state; and the lack of the formed value system of national diversity. Besides, it is connected with stereotypes and perception on the emotional level.

The study of ethno-cultural competence of the students resulted in the following data (see Figure 01).

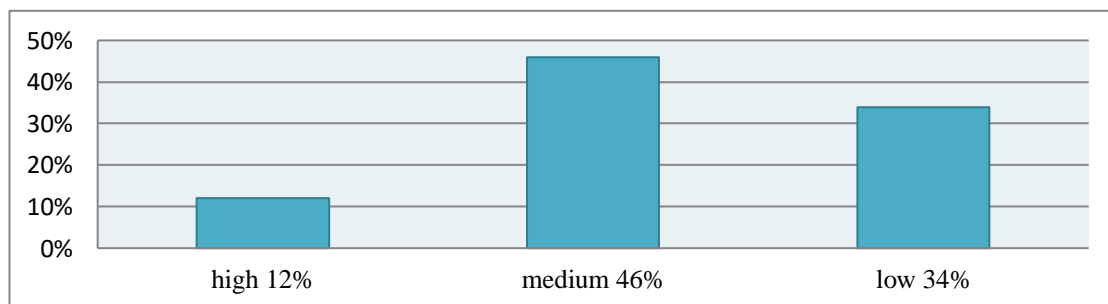


Figure 01. Levels of ethno-cultural competence of the students

The Figure shows the formed levels of ethno-cultural competence of students (low, medium, high).

The typical characteristics of the low level are proneness to conflicts, low level of knowledge and information awareness of the culture of one's own and other ethnic groups, unwillingness to the constructive interethnic dialogue, and the existence of national stereotypes. The medium level reflects the fragmentation of ethno-cultural awareness of the national specificities of ethnic culture of different ethnic groups, partial experience of constructive interaction with representatives of different nationalities. The high level implies the necessary knowledge of students concerning the traditions, history, culture, national peculiarities of ethnic groups inhabiting the region, the country and the world as a whole. It should be noted that the term "ethno-cultural competence" refers to the total available knowledge concerning national specificities of one's own and other ethnic groups, skills, experience and willingness to interact with representatives of different ethnicity.

Next, the most important results to characterize the current state of interethnic relations among students are presented.

It is revealed that students are interested in cultures of other peoples: the Russians (68.4%), the Kazakhs (72.3%), the Moldovans (78%), the Tatars (63%), the Kalmyks (57%), the Armenians (71%), and the Nogais (69%). The dominating sources of information about the culture of other peoples for all representatives of ethnic groups participating in the survey are the media and communication experience with representatives of other nations. These data indicate the lack of ethno-cultural awareness of the students, thus provoking the proneness to the students' information perception at the level of national stereotypes. The students have an inadequate worldview. The Russians (65%), the Moldovans (57%), the Kazakhs (73%), the Tatars (65%), the Kalmyks (48%), the Armenians (62%), and the Nogais (73%) expressed the desire to replenish the knowledge about the culture of other peoples. All the students under the study noted that there are notable national differences in the communication; and they affect the quality of understanding between them in different ways. The respondents also mentioned that "the more they look into the peculiarities of ethnic groups, the more unbiased the interpretation of various actions, caused by national peculiarities, is" (the students' quotation in the course of the study). And the fact that the majority of students (69%) are motivated to make friends with different ethnicity is rather positive.

Having obtained these findings, another survey was conducted. It was aimed at studying students' participation in ethnic contacts being one of the important components of the problem of youth interethnic relations. As a result, participation in varying degree is established in the ethnic contacts, proper and different ethnic ones, in such areas as work, leisure, family relations, and communication.

The greater degree of participation (62%) and the will to participate (63%) in the ethnic contacts proper, as well as in different ethnic ones has been revealed among the representatives of such nationalities as the Russians, the Armenians, the Kazakhs, the Moldavians, the Azerbaijanians in the sphere of work and leisure.

The students (the Daghestanians, the Tatars, the Kalmyks, and the Nogais) displayed the position of participation oriented only on the ethnic groups of the nationality they belong to, both in the sphere of work and leisure. The data analysis indicates a positive correlation (k) between the high level of tolerance and the expressed willingness to participate in different ethnic contacts ($k = 0.7$). It shows the relation between such personal qualities as tolerance and readiness to cooperate with representatives of different ethnic

groups. In addition, the group of the Tatar, Kalmyk, Nogai students (previously expressing the orientation on the interaction only in their own ethnic group) was additionally investigated on such an indicator as the anxiety level and ethnic stereotypes. It was carried out due to the necessity to establish the causes of the lack of students' will to participate in different ethnic groups and to consider the representatives of other nationalities as their friends at the leisure, work, and communication time. In the course of the correlation analysis of the diagnostic data on the scales of "anxiety level", "ethnic stereotypes", "participation in the ethnic contacts" it is found out that the data on the scale of "anxiety level" positively correlate with the scales of "ethnic stereotypes" ($k = 0.77$) and "participation in the ethnic contacts" ($k = 0.82$).

It is significant to note that the higher level of anxiety in the students' interethnic relations to a much greater extent is a factor of stereotypical perception and attitude to representatives of other nationalities, which is also manifested in the unwillingness to interethnic communication.

Solving the problems of the study further, the diagnostics on the scale of "social distance" were conducted. The data obtained were subjected to mathematical treatment. The values implied "0" (a neutral distance), "from -1 to -3" (an increase in social distance), "from +1 to +3" (the minimum social distance, and its absence). As a result, the following average values of social distance for the representatives of the nationalities mentioned by the respondents were obtained: "Possible social acceptability" (SAp) – the Russians (1.04), the Kazakhs (1.07), the Tatars (1.3), the Turkmens (0.0), the Ingushes (0.0), the Chechens (0.0), the Armenians (0.0), the Azerbaijanis (0.0); "Real social acceptability" (SAr) – the Russians (-0.3), the Kazakhs (3.54), the Tatars (4.6), the Turkmens (0.0), the Ingushes (0.0), the Chechens (0.0), the Armenians (0.0), the Azerbaijanis (0.0); "Possible social expansiveness" (SEp) – the Russians (1.002), the Kazakhs (1.0), the Tatars (1.03), the Turkmens (1.06), the Ingushes (1.2), the Chechens (1.0), the Armenians (1.22), the Azerbaijanis (1.47); "The real social expansiveness" (SEr) – the Russians (0.18), the Kazakhs (0.42), the Tatars (0.38), the Turkmens (0.29), the Ingushes (3.7), the Chechens (-2.14), the Armenians (-2.3), the Azerbaijanis (1.3).

These data indicate the dominance of the positive tendency in relations between some peoples involved in the study and the given respondents. It is established that the reduction in the social distance is characteristic of the representatives with a higher level of tolerance. Thus, 85-94% of the participants in the study marked their readiness to start a family with the representatives only of their nationality; 4-32% - to have them close friends; 4-63% - their neighbors; 3-55% - fellow workers and colleagues; 14-44% - citizens living in the same country; 16-42% - only as visitors and travelers. These relations were revealed to such peoples as the Armenians, the Ukrainians, the Russians, the Daghestanians, the Chechens, the Karachais, the Tatars, the Turkmens, the Georgians, the Azerbaijanis, the Greeks, the Germans, the Belarusians, the Nogais, and the Jews.

The study of the problems of students' interethnic relations was completed with the technique revealing the level of personal reflection as an important personality factor and the ability to carry out self-analysis of their actions and deeds. Thus, data processing resulted in the following reflection levels: low (44.10%), medium (53.38%), and high (2.52%). The data are presented in Figure 02.

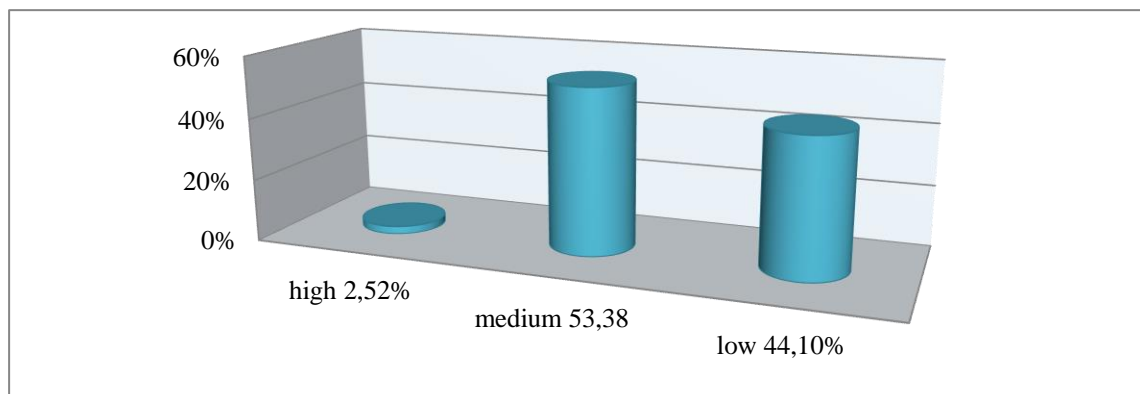


Figure 02. The levels of students' reflexivity development

The data in Figure 02 show that medium and low levels of reflection are prevailing. Unfortunately, only 2.52% of students possess a high level. According to Karpov (2003), reflexivity as a mental property is one of the main facets of the integrative mental reality, which corresponds to reflection on the whole. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the diagnostics of the reflexivity properties have to take into consideration the differentiation of its manifestations based on orientation as another important criterion. According to it, scientists distinguish two types of reflection, conventionally denoted as "intra- and intersychic" reflection. The first one refers to reflexivity as the ability to self-perception of the own psyche and its analysis, the second one to the ability to understand the psyche of others, including the mechanisms of projection, identification, and empathy along with reflexivity as the ability to "put oneself in somebody's place".

7. Conclusion

The present research is a continuation of the study of the problem of interethnic relations, conducted in 2016-2017. The number of the participants increased by 491 students, as compared with the previous study. All results were confirmed again. This is a positive fact of the results reliability.

Thus, the analysis of the study results has shown that the main internal factors affecting interethnic relations in multi-ethnic students' environment are the following: the level of ethno-cultural competence; the level of ethnic tolerance; willingness to participate in different ethnic contacts; the level of anxiety, and ethnic stereotypes; the ability for critical thinking, one's personal reflection and awareness of one's own behaviour; value orientations. The external factors are the content of the educational process, ethnic diversification of the society, the nature of relations, and the mass media, peculiarities of education and socialization, and place of residence (region). The obtained results indicate that it is necessary to develop a special concept of personal development in the educational process, capable of constructive dialogue and interaction with representatives of one's own and other ethnic groups.

The given results have induced the necessity to identify the main psychological and pedagogical conditions enabling to change the problem of interethnic relations constructively. It is necessary to develop technologies, forms, tools and methods that create an educational environment for the development of the students' multicultural personality; to improve such students' qualities as respect, kindness, ethno-

tolerance; to form the culture of interethnic communication; to intensify the need for ethno-cultural awareness; to elaborate value orientations, primarily focusing on peaceful coexistence with representatives of different ethnic groups and mutual enrichment; to introduce the best experience of overcoming inter-ethnic tensions in the educational process, including in the curricula such courses as "Ethnopedagogics and Ethnopsychology", "Culture of Interethnic Communication", "Socio-Pedagogical Adaptation of Refugees and Migrants", "Pedagogics of Tolerance" and others, as well as conducting extracurricular activities (national holidays, festivals, theme conversations, pedagogical situations); to exercise in educational organizations scientific support to create conditions for the harmonization of interethnic relations.

Thus, there is a need for a significant expansion of multicultural education. In this connection the development of a multicultural personality, admitting universal and cultural values, becomes particularly important. The development concept of multicultural personality will create a solid base for constructive students' interethnic relations that can become a model with practical value for the society and the country as a whole.

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