



Development of Multicultural Value Orientations in Future Specialists in the Context of a Higher Education Institution

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ABSTRACT

The importance of this study is determined by the fact that fundamental social and economic changes in contemporary Russian society have led to imbalance in the common system of values that forms the basis of a teacher's comprehensive world outlook. Under conditions of a constant development and change of the value priorities' nature the problem of forming a stable system of future specialists' value orientations that provides the foundation for cross-cultural communication in a democratic society is of current interest. In this connection, this article is directed towards the study of the development of university students' multicultural value orientations as a pressing problem of contemporary professional education. The leading approach to scientific research aimed at this specific problem is the theoretical and methodological approach that allows us to comprehensively consider the problem of developing future specialists' multicultural value orientations in a context of a higher education institution. It has been substantiated in the article that a key moment in the activity directed towards the development of students' multicultural value orientations is the identification of objectively existing difficulties in a value perception of another culture and transference to the category of goals, the attainment of which facilitates the development of multicultural value orientations. The materials of the article can be useful for psychologists-practitioners, social workers as well as staff members of educational institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

In view of the multinational character of the Volga region the intercultural interaction the success of which is ensured by a person's multicultural nature is of vital importance to future psychologists. Multiple studies, as well as communication practice with bearers of another culture show that people very often fail to come to an agreement due to the difference of cultural traditions which is determined by a specific character of the world view and event interpretation. The contacting parties cannot always adequately perceive information from one another. The necessity of interacting with representatives of another culture, who possess different experience of behavior, predetermines an ambiguous attitude of people to specific features of a culture.

It should be noted that the formation of a person's multicultural qualities is often related to education and upbringing in scientific literature. A multicultural character of a man's personality is defined as an ability to interact constructively and reasonably with representatives of other cultures which can be achieved by multicultural education. With the development of multicultural education as a field of scientific knowledge, this term was ambiguously treated by scientists and various approaches were recommended to implement the theoretical bases in the instructional and educational practice. The analysis of content, functions and specific features of multicultural education gives a possibility to identify the content-related aspects of a person's multicultural value orientations [1, 2, 3]. Multicultural education in the ideas of N.A. Berdyaev [4], S.I. Gessen [5], K.D. Ushinsky [6], P.F. Kapterev [7], represents an interrelation of the national and universal human features in the process of upbringing and teaching young people. For example, P. F. Kapterev called for developing a sense of belonging to the whole mankind in learners, «how long can we stand eradicating the thoughts at school that a native people is the only bearer of true culture, and other peoples must be auxiliary to this given». According to the thinker's assertion to bring up learners' personality that possess common human thinking it is necessary to consider culture of not a specific people but to turn to culture of many ethnic groups for the purpose of comparing their values and norms. Through such comparison young people will be able to learn to borrow and replenish their national ideas with ones of a different culture striving to become familiar with common human values. In S. I. Gessen's opinion, «national education cannot exist without the Russian people's joining world culture» [8].

METHODOLOGICAL BASES AND METHODS

The conducted theoretical and methodological analysis allows us to make a conclusion that contemporary domestic researchers [9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14] are of the opinion that multicultural education is education that contributes to continuous development of multicultural value orientations of a future specialist's personality.

The study of foreign scientists' works help to get a full understanding of multiple aspects of multicultural education. Some of them suggested the models that describe the stages of teachers and learners' multicultural education [15], others suggested concrete approaches to the introduction of the principles of multicultural education into the educational process [16]; and still others – recommendations on the analysis of existing textbooks, programs and tests with respect to their multicultural character as well as some recommendations on their improvement [17]. The most valuable definition that is very valuable for understanding the meaning of multicultural education is the one that was given by H. Thomas: «Multicultural education occurs when a certain person strives to understand while communicating with people of another culture their specific system of perception, cognition, thinking, their system of values and deeds, he strives to incorporate new experience in his own cultural system and to change his own thinking and activity in conformity with it, when contacting an alien culture. Along with understanding an alien culture multicultural education impels one to analyze the system of one's own culture» [18]. In this connection E.G. Cohen's ideas seem to be of great importance [19]. He enunciates the pedagogical goals of multicultural education which are, in our opinion, the foundation of developing a person's multicultural value orientations:

- to develop tolerance towards a different lifestyle and style of behavior;
- to cultivate a sense of respect for an alien cultures or life styles;
- to form a persuasion that one's own culture – this is only one of the many cultures, to learn to understand causes and motives of behavior of other culture's representatives;
- to incorporate the elements of other cultures in one's own system of thinking and values.

It is known that since the moment of birth a person has been in a cultural environment which makes a contribution to the formation of a man's personality, provides him with behavior models and models of solving ontological problems. That is why in his activity, deeds, emotional reactions to all what is happening, in reflections he unconsciously relies on the acquired patterns accepting them as an indispensable part of their personality. While contacting an alien culture people experience certain discomfort that is expressed in the manifestation of ethnocentrism, i.e. the division of people into natives and aliens, in perceiving a habitual way of life as the best and solely true, in a hostile sentiment to everything that is alien and incomprehensible. At the same time a person can ignore intercultural differences, evaluate other people's actions from the point of view of his own culture, he can be aware of the existence of a cultural diversity, be tolerant of the differences influenced by it [20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25].

In the studies of V.A. Wagner [26], M.J. Bennet [27], N.K. Ikkonnikova [28], K. Oberg [29], T. G. Stefanenko et al. [30] it was shown persuasively enough that the process of comprehending cultural differences take place on a staged basis. For example, M.J. Bennet [31] identified six stages of accepting the cultural diversity of the world – negation, protection, derogation, recognition, adaptation, integration – and combined them in two blocks – centrist and relativist. The centrist block is characterized by the idea of one's own

culture as occupying a better and higher position in comparison with the others, but the relativist block is typical of accepting cultural differences. With a more detailed examination of the identified stages one can see that negation is characterized by numerous barriers that arise from race, ethnic, religious and other issues. The state of protection is perceived as a threat to one's own culture, owing to which a subconscious intention arises to eliminate this threat by ascribing negative qualities to members of other cultural strata. Derogation is connected with the acceptance of cultural differences as not exerting an essential influence on the relationships of representatives of different cultures. Recognition is marked by a neutral attitude to bearers of other cultures and, in M. Bennet's opinion, is the most favorable period for acquiring and accumulating knowledge about the cultural diversity of the world, specific features of different cultures, their traditions and way of life. At the stage of adaptation culture is evaluated as a dynamic developing process creating conditions for improving alternative and communicative skills and behavior models. Integration represents the highest stage in the formation of a multicultural personality that is ready for accepting a vast array of existing cultural realities and building positive relations in compliance with the norms of multicultural diversity [31].

The second stage is characterized by the notion «cultural shock» which was introduced into scientific use by K. Oberg [29] to describe the disoriented state of an individual when he goes into the environment of another culture. V. Wagner explains a cultural shock as a result of the mismatch between expectations and difficulty of determining one's personal identity which very often is expressed in a hostile attitude to representatives of another culture, depression, anxiety, frustration and etc. A cultural shock is characterized by as a negative phenomenon [26]. However, T. G. Stefanenko [32] finds it important to pay attention to «a positive aspect of this phenomenon which consists in the fact that overcoming the initial discomfort contributes to self-development and personality growth». The third stage of a person's interaction with a new culture is characterized by sound understanding of everything that happens and realistic evaluation of the situation and occurs only in case of overcoming a cultural shock. Familiarizing with an alien culture takes place through the minimization of differences, the accumulation of cultural diversity knowledge, the development of alternative communicative and behavioral models, a relevant evaluation of the communication situation and application of relevant techniques. At the same time the position is accepted to consciously exclude the stages of negation and protection, because the development of future specialists' multicultural value orientations in the setting of higher professional education is based on the research results that confirm students' primary interest in another culture and the absence of a negative attitude to its representatives in them. However, it should be pointed out that students do not have substantive knowledge to identify cultural differences and they evaluate the situations of cross-cultural contacts without taking specific features of the other party's world perception into consideration.

Domestic and foreign authors' publications, one's own scientific inquiry, teaching experience show that it is the development of personal qualities that requires a more attentive attitude since it is connected with the change of habitual models of attitude and behavioral strategies of students both within a cultural group and in cross-cultural contacts [33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38].

RESULTS

On the basis of the analysis of studies, through generalization the definition of multicultural value orientations has been formulated, significant qualities and characteristics of a multicultural personality have been identified, their objective and subjective aspects have been considered. Since multicultural value orientations are a personal new construct then the process of their development must be conscious. According to conceptual clauses of the «school of the cultures' dialogue» it is necessary to ensure an effective development of cognitive, affective and conative components of a personality that is oriented to the values of multiculturalism. In the general methodological framework of implementing techniques and technologies of future specialists' vocational training a certain dominant idea is observed that addresses cognitive, affective and conative aspects of the personality's consciousness of a brought up person. A cognitive component is formed with the help of such a means of effect as the word. It is it that fosters students' interest in knowledge through a skillful command of it and it is a means of expressing the power of intellect. A cognitive component is manifested in the acquisition, use and handing down the knowledge of the studied culture, specific features of a set of mind, norms and rules of conduct, customs and traditions of representatives of this culture and etc. The amount of knowledge available about another culture which is sufficient to establish relations with its representatives is an index of this constituent's formation. In the formation of a cognitive constituent of multicultural value orientations major stress was laid on the identification of differences between cultures, the renunciation of a stereotype perception of other cultural groups' representatives, knowledge accumulation about cultural diversity. Here an emphasis was placed on the learning principles in the context of cultures' dialogue and cultural self-analysis, the material analysis through the prism of a native culture, focusing on the new. The development of an affective component takes place as a result of the personality's enrichment of the emotional and sensual sphere due to penetration into a culture sought. The affective component of multicultural value orientations is connected with a demonstration of interest, compassion, empathy with bearers of another culture, readiness for productive interaction with them, an ability to control one's own emotions and feelings, reacting to something new properly. The empathic and tolerant attitude to representatives of a studied culture, the orientation to cooperation with them serves as the index of the affective component's formation. A practical action, a deed, a person's behavioral act who asserts himself in a new quality demonstrate the level of the conative component's formation. The conative component of multicultural value orientations is characterized by behavior in a multicultural milieu, an ability to build positive relations with subjects of an alien culture, an ability to create a comfortable atmosphere of communication. An ability to choose the variants of behavior is suitable for a communicative situation serves as the index of a behavioral constituent's formation. In the framework of the activity on the formation of a behavioral component of multicultural value orientations a major emphasis is placed on the study of behavioral strategies in different cultures and evaluation of their significance in the process of cross-cultural contacts. It is important that the formation process of future specialists' multicultural value orientations should meet young people's internal needs, not causing rejection in them, creating a desire to avoid the influence of organized activity, on the contrary, could awaken striving for professional and personal self-improvement [39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46].

DISCUSSION

The content of vocational training in the context of a higher education institution has great potential for exerting formative influences on learners' personality. While doing the course «The history of psychology» to solve similar problems students were proposed problem situations aimed at perceiving themselves as multicultural subjects in the native milieu, at understanding that the group affiliation changes depending on the context of communication and interaction. Careful attention was paid to the study of specific differences within the existing behavioral models, ethnic mindsets, religious affiliations as well as rules of conduct, rites, national holidays and religious festivals, gestures that determine an understanding of relations between bearers of culture, features of rendering social assistance among ethnic groups which inhabit the Volga region. Such approach gives future specialists cognitive support and professional preparedness for meeting with cultural variability. An understanding of the nationally-colored cultural specifics, an interpretation of culturological facts, highlighting the required historic and cultural information – all this contributes to successful development of professionally significant qualities and formation of a social and cultural image at large.

The causes of cross-cultural conflicts, as a rule, are hidden in behavior of the majority of people who are guided by the values and norms of their culture and they seldom give careful thought to the normative and value foundation of deeds of other cultures' representatives. In this case it is very important that a participant in one act of communication could take a manifestation of not only his cultural features, but also his partner's into consideration. In fact, this is the practical embodiment of M.M. Bakhtin's idea of culture's existence solely in a cross-cultural dialogue. That is various value orientations, forms of behavior and activity can be combined in people's thinking and activity which, beyond any doubt, will require a developed state of such qualities as empathy and tolerance [47].

Tolerance means the recognition of another person's rights, perceiving him as an equal, entails building interrelations on the basis of agreement and mutual respect. However, one should bear the existence of tolerance boundaries in mind. Accepting the idea of the renunciation of domination, the idea of acknowledging a diversity of cultural models of behavior, one should keep in mind that communication with other cultures' representatives must not be reduced to conformism and an infringement of one's own interests. It is important to strive for the formation of communicants' active interested attitude aimed at dialogue, cognition of another culture and simultaneous presentation of native culture as interesting and deserving attention. At seminar classes participants are proposed to act out the situations where there were signs of disagreement, misunderstanding or a conflict between participants of intercultural communication. L.S. Vygotsky's ideas were taken as the basis of providing such scenarios according to which the formation of a person takes place through the learning to use historically developed forms and ways of activity [48]. Building a multicultural educational situation requires one to take the context of learning and educational interactions into consideration, the period of their implementation and characteristics of space interrelationships in which these interaction data are implemented. Students with great enthusiasm agree to participate in less time consuming scenes and

episodes with a small number of participants. After acting out a situation they are recommended to swap the roles for deep sensing the internal state of a partner in interaction, to see what is happening from the viewpoint of the other person. Thus during the role play students set an objective to keep a positive sentiment and construct a correct dialogue with communication partners, they determine the norms of ethical conduct for themselves, learn to have a tolerant attitude to a manifestation of another culture. In the process of such interaction one can solve the problems of forming the system of multicultural values, of developing future specialists' creative thinking. This technology brings a pedagogical condition to ensure learners' subjective position into action. They act in modeled situations of their professional activity where the principles of cultures' dialogue are realized, the unity of the personality's socialization and professionalization, the axiological and context approaches are implemented in the learning process [49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54].

CONCLUSION

Thus a key moment in the conducted measures was the identification of objectively existing difficulties in a value perception of another culture and their transference to the category of goals, the attainment of which facilitates the development of multicultural value orientations. Students get fairly full explanations due to the fact that the majority of problem situations connected with perception and evaluation of communication of the representatives of different cultures can be successfully solved in case of a positive view on the existing order of things. In a narrative discourse students are informed about various situations in which multicultural ignorance and communicants' unpreparedness for a dialogue of cultures lead not only to fun facts, embarrassment, an emotional breakdown, a rift, but sometimes to negative consequences for the contacting parties up to the manifestation of aggression [55, 56].

By joint discussion, analyzing the situations exemplified by a teacher, future specialists become convinced of the necessity to develop multicultural value orientations for subsequent effective professional activity.

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