

Value and Meaning Attitudes as a Factor of Forming Tolerant Ethnic Consciousness in the Multicultural Milieu of a Higher Education Institution

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ABSTRACT

This article is directed to the study of value and meaning attitudes as a factor of forming students' tolerant ethnic consciousness in the multicultural milieu of a higher education institution. The leading approach to research into this problem is the theoretical and methodological approach. The results of the theoretical analysis of tolerance as a social and psychological category are presented in the article. Personal values have been considered which are viewed as internal carriers of social regulation having rooted in the personality structure and they are genetic derivatives from the values of social groups and communities of various sizes. The conclusions have been drawn that tolerance is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon comprising an attitude to the unification of different points of view for the purpose of attaining concord and which testifies to personal maturity that manifests itself in an orientation to the personal self-realization and preference for constructive strategies of coming out of stressful situations. Fostering tolerance should be viewed as an urgent, important task of forming a full-fledged person, needed and useful for society. Tolerance as a personality quality which is set against stereotypes and authoritarianism is considered to be required for successful adaptation to new intercultural, interreligious, interethnic conditions. Besides, it has been proved that personal values serving as internal carriers of social regulation rooted in the personality structure are genetic derivatives from the values of social groups and communities of a different scale. Selection, adoption and assimilation by an individual of social values are mediated by his social identity and values of small contact groups significant for him which can serve both as a catalyst and a barrier to the adoption of big social groups' values and also universal human values. The materials of the article are of practical value to psychologists-practitioners as well as staff members of educational institutions.

Keywords: attitudes, value and meaning attitudes, tolerance, interethnic interaction, student milieu

INTRODUCTION

The human civilization at present has entered a qualitatively new phase of development which is characterized by the intensification of life internalization, the growth of informational, cultural, economic cooperation. The autonomous existence of cultures and peoples is becoming impossible since the growth of migratory and

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demographic processes, an increase in the number of ethnically mixed families, the formation of multinational groups in social institutes expand the boundaries of intercultural and interethnic communication [1, 2, 3].

Russia, this is not only a country with rich, many centuries long culture, traditions, but is one of the most multinational countries. Current educational institutions of Russia with their multinational composition need the scientific and methodological base, the programs that will take multi-ethnicity of interaction subjects into account but at the same time will focus on the formation of a value attitude to Russian national culture.

In the process of vocational training and educating a future specialist's personality it is required to make provision for specific features of ethnic communities that live and interact in one multicultural educational space of a higher educational institution, mechanisms of ethnic groups' functioning at a local level, adaptation conditions of other nationalities' representatives and migrants to living conditions in a new place of residence. The study of value and meaning attitudes, specific features of culture, life strategies and behavior of representatives of different nationalities makes it possible to determine the approaches to the formation of tolerance as a psychological and value norm of regulating social and group interaction [4, 5].

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many definitions of the concept «tolerance». The phenomenon of tolerance is the target of research of many sciences – politology [6, 7], [8, 9], philosophy [10, 11], sociology [12, 13, 14], psychology [15, 16].

Pedagogical aspect of the problem of tolerance is treated in the following areas: the formation of learners' attitude to tolerance as a socially significant value [16, 17, 18], the formation of school students' tolerance in multiethnic regions where there is a higher level of interethnic tensions [19, 20, 21], the formation of school students and students' tolerant consciousness [22, 23, 24], fostering tolerance in the system of secondary professional education [25, 26, 27], pedagogical tolerance [28, 29, 30].

Initially this term means toleration and accepting something or somebody. Examining this term in every detail in this context it is necessary to set some frames of toleration and acceptance. Tolerance or toleration, aspiration and ability to establish and maintain communion with people who are different in a way from the prevailing type or do not adhere to commonly accepted opinions. Tolerance is a difficult and rare achievement for a simple reason that family consciousness is the foundation of the community. We unite in one community with those who belong to the same ethnic group. In essence, common language and a sense of ethnic affinity throughout all the history of the mankind serve as the bases of a community. At the same time we tend to treat the «others» with enmity and fear – those who differ from us. The difference can take place at any level of biologic, cultural or political reality [31, 32, 33, 34].

Tolerance is the ability of a system or a body to withstand changes of incoming effects in a certain range without failures in work and infringement of the rules of work. From the first reading this definition is not understandable. The contemporary dictionary of foreign words gives the definition of tolerance: «Tolerance» - (Latin *Tolerantia* – patience) –toleration, condescension to somebody, something. Such definition is sufficiently diffuse and do not embrace a wide circle of problems that also touch upon the student community. One could speak about a student's tolerant attitude to a teacher, interrelations between the students of different years (confrontation «freshmen – seniors», for example). But in this case one should treat more concrete definition which reveals the essence of tolerance as a social phenomenon: tolerance – sincere, consciously respectful toleration, a specific psychological attitude that orients to respectful perception of alien ethnic, religious independence, other cultures, customs and a way of life, moral values, worldview persuasions and opinions, manifestations of human individuality as worthy of respect connected with an active psychological process, directed to internal independent psychological overcoming or abatement of the reaction to some unfavorable factor in interreligious, interethnic, and on the whole, in interpersonal relations and aspiration to peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding. There is one more definition that deserves attention: in UN documents «tolerance» is the acknowledgement, respect, observance of rights and liberties of all people without distinguishing social, class, religious, ethnic and other specific features [35, 36].

In N. A. Bondyрева's [37] view, tolerance can be defined as “the keynote of the renunciation of aggression”, as “an individual's ability without objections and confrontation to perceive other individuals' opinions, a way of life, a manner of behavior and some other specific features that are different from his own”.

On the basis of the absence or presence of an individual's negative reaction the authors identify “natural” and “problem” tolerance. Besides, when an individual has grounds for a negative reaction, he restrains himself, the following types of problem tolerance manifest themselves: “tolerance of subordination”, “tolerance of profit”, “tolerance of intent”, “tolerance of manners”. In S. K. Bondyрева's [37] opinion, “tolerance of subordination” and “tolerance of profit” – are the manifestations of “forced tolerance”. If an individual “still endures unpleasant behavior for him of someone who he wants to mislead with his intentional tolerance”, then “tolerance of intent” is manifested. If tolerance becomes one of the ways of personal self-assertion for an individual when he “disdains to

show intolerance” then one can speak about “tolerance of manners”. Moreover, S. K. Bondyрева [37] believe that there are “inborn tolerance” when the individual initially “pre-tuned to tolerance” in some aspect, issue, situation and “acquired tolerance” which is determined by attitudes, habits, values, the worldview formed in a person.

According to A. G. Asmolov’s [14] view, who is the manager of the federal program «The formation of tolerant consciousness attitudes and extremism prevention in Russian society», «tolerance means an acknowledgement of other people’s opinions and is a universal norm of coexistence, cooperation, social interaction». As a sequence, tolerance is a decisive factor reducing the situations of violence, discrimination, human rights infringement [14].

Value and meaning attitudes serve as the key factor of forming tolerant ethnic consciousness and influence the formation of an individual’s needs; they determine the content features of the psychological personality structure’s components; they identify specific features of its activity and behavior.

The value and meaning sphere is the most important component of the personality structure. Being mastered by an individual consciousness values and meanings from the point of view of psychology are of interest not as much as universal categories but as the determinants underlying the choice of a walk of life and determining a person’s behavior [38, 39, 40].

The meaning of life is the highest value chosen by a person or the leading idea to the service of which a person is ready to devote his life. The outcome owing to the guiding idea of a person’s conscious activity can become the acquisition of the meaning of life. This idea (a conscious choice of the highest life value) is being formed in the process of a person’s development by the action of a multitude of factors among which individual-personal and socially conditioned determinants are distinguished.

Values as the most important component of the psychological structure of personality, while it is analyzed in the framework of the educational process, are characterized by: the sphere of reality, the most significant for a subject.

Since the formation of values is, first of all, a process that manifests itself at a certain level of the personality’s functioning, the researchers more often single out the following levels of values:

1. intellectual – is characterized by a cognitive constituent reflecting the analysis of behavior and activity and knowledge i.e. personal and social normative standards;
2. behavioral – reflects the prescribed patterns;
3. emotional-motivational – is characterized by emotional, evaluative and motivational manifestations.

The existing classifications of values are generated on various grounds: on satisfying the needs by a subject (public, group, personal); on the content and orientation of values (professional, corporate, political, economic, pedagogical, educational); on the forms of public life (cultural, social, life values).

N. S. Rozov singles out the following components in the structure of values: values themselves; ideals; principles of behavior; principles of consciousness; concrete values. The values at the individual level are manifested as value orientations [41].

D. I. Feldstein considers “value orientations as an integral property and a condition of a person’s readiness for a conscious determination and estimation of his location in time and space of the natural and social environment, the possibility to choose the style of behavior and orientation of activity based on one’s personal experience and in conformity with certain conditions of a changing situation” [42].

Quite different definition is offered by A.G. Zdravomyslov [43] who defines value orientations as the relatively stable, selective attitude of a person to the totality of material and spiritual boons and ideals which are viewed as objects, aims or means to satisfy the needs of a person’s life and activity. The whole life experience sort of is accumulated in value orientations, which was amassed in the individual development of a person.

The formation and functioning of value orientations has a number of specific features. The regulation determination of a person’s behavior goes from two sides:

1. from the side of the world, external conditions, the development level of culture, natural factors and etc.;
2. from the side of the person himself, his desires, preferences, values and meanings, motives and interests.

The systems of a person’s value orientations as the highest regulatory construct not only do they determine the forms and conditions of his incentives’ realization but become the source of targets. A.V. Sery [44] points out that value orientations guide and correct the person’s process of goal-setting exerting influence on the choice of profession, social attitudes. Value orientations provide the foundation for a choice of aims and means out of existing alternatives, for the order of preferences to select and assess these alternatives setting the boundaries, controlling and guiding our actions. Consequently, the system of value orientations determines the life prospect being the most important internal source and mechanism of the personality development. There is no denying the fact that the system of a person’s value orientations being the reflection of the social environment’s values itself also exerts influence on the groups’ norms and values.

D. A. Leontyev [15] believes that the individual hierarchy of value orientations represents the sequence of dissociated units. He presents possible groupings of values combined in units or blocks on various grounds, something like the polar value systems.

Among the terminal values the following ones are contrasted:

1. certain life values (health, job, friends, a family life) – abstract values (cognition, development, freedom, creativity).
2. individual values (health, creativity, freedom, a busy life, leisure activities, confidence in oneself, a financially secured life) – the values of interpersonal relations (having friends, a happy family life, happiness of the others).
3. active values (freedom, a busy life, a productive life, an interesting job) – passive values (nature and art's beauty, confidence in oneself, cognition, life wisdom).
4. the values of professional self-realization (an interesting job, a productive life, creativity, a busy life) – the values of personal life (health, love, having friends, leisure activities, a family life).

Among the instrumental values D. A. Leontyev [15] singles out the following dichotomies:

1. ethnic values (honesty, irreconcilability with shortcomings), the values of interpersonal communication (good manners, cheerfulness, consideration) – the values of professional self-realization (responsibility, business efficiency, strong will, promptness).
2. individualistic values (high demands, independence, strong will) – conformist values (promptness, self-control, responsibility) – altruist values (toleration, consideration, broad-mindedness).
3. the values of self-assertion (high demands, independence, irreconcilability, courage, strong will) – the values of accepting the others (toleration, consideration, broad-mindedness).
4. intellectual values (education, rationalism, self-control, the values of direct emotional view of life (cheerfulness, honesty, consideration) [15].

Value orientations – are, first of all, the reflection of values and significant moments in a person's consciousness recognized by him as strategic life goals and common worldview landmarks. The concept of value orientations came in post-war social psychology as an analog of the philosophical concept of values. Now the definition of values as an aspect of motivation is widely accepted and of value orientations as subjective conceptions of values or different types of social attitudes.

The system of a person's value orientations comprises relatively stable but not fully comprehended the person's attitude to different elements of the social structure and to values themselves.

In its turn, ethnic consciousness represents a complex structural construct involving the comprehension of the national affiliation (national self-identification), interest and respect for the history of one's nation, striving for the development of a national language, culture and character of interrelationships with other nations.

Culture is not only altered but is also preserved, transferred and broadcast. Ethnic groups differ from one another mainly in culture which is viewed as the soul and face of a people.

Some scientists view culture as a way of human activity [45], others – as the historically developing system of material and spiritual values created by man [46].

Culture is understood as a specific way of organizing and developing human life and activity that is presented in the products of material and spiritual labor in the system of social norms and persuasions.

National culture is a way of life of the people in a certain nation in which the regulation is carried out on the basis of interinfluence and interaction of different peoples' values and traditions reliably tested with time and historic selection of family values of many generations in the monoethnic and interethnic family.

National culture contains the diversity of human interrelations that determine a humane character of upbringing children. Common human and national cultures are inseparable from one another. F. F. Kharisov [47] believes that a person himself is in the center of national culture as the one that produces and masters its values for his people; such achievements which represent a cognitive, artistic, moral value for a person as a bearer of this culture should be regarded the phenomena of national culture.

In M. I. Bogomolova's [48] opinion, traditional culture of upbringing rejects national frictions, it purposefully forms the interest in spiritual treasures of not only one's own people but also of other ethnic groups. Such an approach makes it possible to determine that it is the family that must actively assist in fulfilling the tasks of bringing up a younger generation on the basis of traditional culture, to reveal one's ethnic group's identity, traditional features and spiritual culture as well as to foster a respectful attitude to other nations, their customs and language.

RESULTS

The formation of ethnic consciousness must be conducted not only by educational institutions but also fostered as a value already in the family. The family is a source, a cradle of national consciousness, family values and value and meaning attitudes.

The holistic approach to upbringing in the spirit of patriotism, peoples' friendship, faith toleration should be implemented on the basis of the following principles:

1. public and state regulation of activity of educational and cultural institutions, public organizations, the mass media and family to foster culture of interethnic communication;
2. recognition of the character of national relations, specific features of various categories of the population (preschool children, school students, students, inhabitants of cities and villages);
3. preservation and development of historically established friendly relations between ethnic groups that live in the territory of Russia, their cohesion in the unified state. Assistance to a peaceful resolution of interethnic contradictions and conflicts, equality of peoples and national minorities, the provision of the equality of rights and liberties of a person and a citizen irrespectively of his nationality, race language and religion;
4. making provision for national, civic and patriotic, common human values in the youth's upbringing, mutual understanding and cooperation between people, peoples, ethnic and religious groups;
5. the formation of national consciousness in the youth open to the perception of other peoples' values [49, 50, 51].

Z. T. Gasanova's researches treat purpose-oriented upbringing as a process of a person's socialization the organization of which is intended to arrange the influence of people on the ethnosocial milieu, to form their own positive experience of interethnic communication in them, to weaken a possible negative effect of interethnic relations on them. In her opinion, educational institutions must coordinate the influence on students of the ethnosocial milieu, inform them of scientific knowledge aimed at shaping up a positive attitude to their people and other peoples fostering patriotism and peoples' friendship [52].

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The conducted theoretical analysis has made it possible to find that education is that milieu where the formation of a person's fundamental value and meaning attitudes take place. Further these attitudes become a leading factor of forming tolerant ethnic consciousness in the multicultural milieu of a higher education institution.

National and ethnic stereotypes have been adopted by a person since his childhood, and subsequently, function at the subconscious level mainly. That is why such features of unconscious behavior as emotiogenicity, alogism, symbolism and weak justification of rational arguments of performed actions are peculiar to ethnic conflicts.

The analysis of the tolerance formation mechanism shows its low effectiveness determined by drawbacks of preventive influence. The algorithm of improving the tolerance formation mechanism includes, firstly, the provision of basic conditions of forming tolerance (conceptual understanding of Russian society's multiculturalism in a democracy, consolidation of all social institutes of Russian society regarding the tolerance formation and long term practical implementation of a complex of measures directed to the solution of this problem), secondly, the optimization of education (conceptual understanding in pedagogical thinking and normative documents of forming tolerance as an independent educational task and its realization at educational institutions of all levels) and propaganda guideline of prevention (legal and normative support of the tolerance formation in the mass media, activation of the regional authorities activities and some information companies to form the youth's tolerance by means of the mass media).

Reforming cognitive, affective, behavioral components of a man's personality that involve familiarizing oneself with culture and traditions of other peoples, being aware of oneself as a worthy representative of a national group with ancient traditions and interethnic ties, a communicative interethnic competence in classroom and extracurricular activity and etc., that are purposefully carried out in educational space of a higher education institution, leads to a decline of aggressiveness, demonstration of interest and positive attitude to the diversity of national cultures. In the course of purpose-oriented work to reform value and meaning attitudes of the youth the smoothing of specific features of perception of reality takes place which are based on traditions of many generations, rested on prejudices and stereotypes; the emergence of a tendency to the expansion of interpersonal relations through communication with people of other national groups; a decline of a tension degree and level of concern to «defend» one's own nation; the rise of a level of understanding the importance of peaceful and friendly relations between nations [53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58]. The balance is achieved at the expense of developing and forming an optimum level of tolerant consciousness which incorporates value and meaning attitudes to interaction through a dialogue - the orientation to equal communication, cooperation, joint creativity, striving for mutual self-expression, the development without suppressing another person's interests or the renunciation of one's own values and persuasions in the systems «teacher-student», «teacher-group». Dialogue in the chain «teacher-student»,

beyond any doubt, proves to be an effective means of fostering tolerance since it represents the process of the meaning formation, value and meaning attitudes in a confrontation, in the fight with interethnic conflicts.

The materials of the article are of practical value to psychologists-practitioners as well as staff members of educational institutions.

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