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**Psychology of subculture: Phenomenology and Contemporary  
Tendencies of Development**

**ETHNO-CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF EDUCATIONAL  
PSYCHOLOGISTS**

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***Abstract***

In the country the ethnic diversity leads to the need for specialists that have competence for cooperation with representatives of various national and cultural groups. It manifests itself in a set of objective ideas and knowledge about a particular ethnic culture. This competence is implemented through the development of all the skills, habits, and behavior patterns that contribute to effective interethnic understanding and interaction. Psychologists should be competent in interethnic interactions when working with clients. The study presents the analysis of scientific literature, review of the media, generalization of advanced pedagogical experience of the ethno-cultural competence formation of teachers and psychologists in the field of secondary and higher education. The article clarifies the basic notions of “competence” and “ethno-cultural competence”. The required professional competences of a psychologist are analyzed. The methods of ethno-cultural competence formation of university students are allocated. In the course of the study the basic concepts of the topic were clarified, and the methods of students’ ethno-cultural competence formation were singled out. Here the restriction of the study must be noted: students are trained in the field of “Psychological and Pedagogical Education”. Ethno-cultural competence is characterized by the willingness and ability of a person to adhere to ethno-cultural traditions; by the possession of the ethnospecific skills of his/ her people; by the readiness to study various ethnical cultures in order to establish a comfortable existence in a multi-ethnic environment. The formation of ethno-cultural competence presupposes students’ involvement in the dialogue between different nationalities and cultures.

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## 1. Introduction

About sixty million people to date have been included in migration flows. In this regard, intercultural interactions with representatives of other ethnic groups and nationalities are expanding. The Russian Federation, which is home to as many as 150 nationalities with different religions, cultural peculiarities and its own historical trajectory, is actively involved in the migration processes.

## 2. Problem Statement

The problem of interethnic interaction is one of the most relevant problems in the country (Chernyak, 2015). Today it is not uncommon to see mixed marriages, kindergartens and schools with children who are speakers of other languages, and multinational production collectives. The above-mentioned things predetermine the transformation of the country's social environment into a multi-ethnic environment.

To certain extent, it is the education sector together with the family that is responsible for how a personality is formed in a multiethnic environment. Scientific studies show that the parts of population may demonstrate changes in ethnic identity and tolerance level in multiethnic regions. Psychological and pedagogical support contributes to the awareness of one's own identity, harmonious acceptance of the "other" and respect for other cultures. It is a well-known fact that in order to preserve his ethnical culture, a mature person can study and combine his/ her belonging to other cultures. The process of ethno-cultural competence formation has a long-term character, starting with a family and a kindergarten.

The system of higher, secondary and pre-school education encounters the problem of development of new educational paths for the formation of students' ethno-cultural competence. In the system of higher education, federal educational standards include general cultural, general professional and professional competences including the ability to organize interpersonal contacts, communication etc.

The formation of an educational psychologist's ethno-cultural competence involves the creation of such a personality who recognizes the importance of all people, who seeks to learn about his/ her origins and peculiarities of other cultures, who is able to form an effective consultative and therapeutic alliance based on trust and unconditional acceptance of the client.

According to Poshtareva (2005), ethno-cultural competence is a personal property that manifests itself in the totality of fair views and knowledge about a particular culture. This competence is actualized through the skills, habits and behaviour patterns that contribute to effective interethnic understanding. This personal property reveals itself in a higher understanding, acceptance of both national and psychological characteristics of other people who have their own cultural identity.

## 3. Research Questions

The article considers the basic features of the ethno-cultural competence manifestation and formation of psychologists working in the field of education. On the one hand, the multicultural orientation of modern education brings unique opportunities to contribute to the expansion of knowledge about the nations, the ability to understand other cultures and to form tolerance. On the other hand, the

diversity of cultures with different mentalities and systems of values leads to the increased tension and ethnic conflicts in the country.

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

The study shows the true nature ethno-cultural competence as a phenomenon. The article determines the features of students' ethno-cultural competence formation at the Faculty of Psychology and Education.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The research is based on general scientific ideas of foreign and domestic researchers on the ethno-cultural competence of the personality and its specifics, ethnic consciousness, tolerance, and ethnic identity (Lebedeva, Luneva, & Stefanenko, 2004; Soldatova, 2006; Korobkov, 2007).

The theoretical basis of the research is based on the studies reflecting the ethnic and cultural aspect in the educational process (Balitskaya, 2008; Poshtareva, 2005; Vasyagina, Vasyagina, & Seryy, 2018) as well as the researches concerning the problems of an educational psychologist's professional pedagogical training in order then to work in a multiethnic educational environment (Balitskaya, 2008; Urusova & Dzhanibekova, 2014; Vasyagina, 2010; Kazaeva, & Vasyagina, 2015).

From the domestic researchers' point of view, the components of ethno-cultural competence include:

- cognitive factors (knowledge of a person about his culture and other cultures, ideas about the similarities and differences of cultures, understanding and recognition of the importance of cultural diversity etc.);
- affective factors (friendly attitude to representatives of another culture, empathy etc.);
- behavioral factors (the ability to adapt to the peculiarities of another culture, the presence of skills to adequately perceive non-verbal differences);
- motivational factors (the need for communication with representatives of other cultures, flexibility in adopting other norms and rules of behavior, systems of values etc.).

The experimental research of ethno-cultural competence formation of psychology students was held in the Far East from 2009 to 2019. The following methods were used: questionnaire for the study of ethno-cultural competence and ethnic tolerance (Eromasova & Qutbiddinova, 2010), the methodology of "Tolerance Index" (Soldatova, 2006), "Intercultural competence" (Soldatova, 2006), "The Study of Ethnic Identity" (Lebedeva et al., 2004), the test "Who am I?", "Ethnic Identity Scale" (Lebedeva et al., 2004), method of measurement of ethno-cultural attitudes (Eromasova & Qutbiddinova, 2010).

#### **6. Findings**

The term "intercultural competence" was described abroad in 1970 during the formation of intercultural communication as an independent research area. It should be noted that in this study the terms "intercultural competence" and "ethno-cultural competence" are considered to be synonyms. The studies of intercultural competence conducted by foreign scientists are mainly based on behavioral

concepts. They refer to the consideration of human behavioral characteristics in interaction, lack of prejudice in contact with the “other”, tolerant attitude to another person`s behavior and uncertainty, the ability to accept another person`s point of view, and empathy. Foreign authors emphasize that for successful communication a person should become familiar with historical development of the country, the peculiarities of his culture, art, economic activity, and language. Thus, a person should have a comprehensive knowledge of the country`s culture (Vasyagina, Grigoryan, & Kazaeva, 2018; Izieva, 2015).

In the Russian Federation, “ethno-cultural competence” refers to a set of knowledge, skills, and habits that help a personality to establish harmonious relations with representatives of other ethnic groups, nationalities and cultures, to effectively cooperate and achieve their goals. According to the definition of Stefanenko (2000), “ethno-cultural competence” is a set of fair views and knowledge about a particular ethnic culture, which allows a person to choose an appropriate interaction model with representatives of different ethnic groups, thereby contributing to positive intercultural interaction and harmonization of interethnic relations.

The problems of ethno-cultural competence, tolerance and harmonious interethnic communication in the Russian Far East, particularly in Sakhalin are quite relevant and interesting for studies (Afanasyev, 2015; Eromasova & Qutbiddinova, 2010; Queen, 2011).

In order to form the ethno-cultural competence of psychology students in the Sakhalin region, we have developed and implemented a programme.

The objectives of the formation programme include:

1. To introduce the concept of “ethno-cultural competence” in different aspects of scientific knowledge in particular: philosophy, ethnopsychology, ethnopedagogics, social psychology, and cultural studies.
2. To increase civic sensitivity to the ideas of tolerance as universal human value.
3. Lay the foundation for students to build an educational path based on the principles of ethno-cultural competence and tolerance, readiness for productive interethnic, confessional and multicultural interaction.
4. To contribute to ethno-cultural competence formation of all participants of the educational process.
5. To acquaint the students with the main organizational forms of training sessions according to the programme “Formation of ethno-cultural competence of a personality”.

The programme includes the following topics

- ethno-cultural competence of a modern educational psychologist in the context of harmonization of interethnic relations;
- the specifics of intercultural communication (ethno-psychological factors of ethnic interaction: ethnicity (population, ethnic group, race, ethnicon); ethnic identity (ethnicity, ethnic identity, negative and positive identity etc.);
- the pedagogy of tolerance (tolerance as a principle of humanistic pedagogy; general description of pedagogical conditions, purposes and objectives of pedagogical tolerance; training and education in a

multicultural society; ethno-pedagogical conditions of teaching tolerance; modern psychological and pedagogical technologies of formation of ethno-cultural competence);

– the diagnostics of ethno-cultural competence (criterion tests: tolerance index, ethno-cultural attitude test, social distance scale, test of types of ethnic identities; projective methods: “everyday dialogues”, case study).

In the course of experimental research, the testees were observed. The experimental results show that almost a half of the testees have a negative attitude to living in the area of people of different nationalities.

Psychological diagnostics showed that the group of testees has a low level of ethno-cultural competence and a moderate ethnic identity level. This level of development of intercultural competence and ethnic identity of future educational psychologists causes impatience and ethnocentrism as well as to intolerance of other ethnic groups.

The high level of ethno-cultural competence of testees was not revealed. 6 testees (30%) have moderate level of development of ethno-cultural competence. 14 (70%) have low level of development of ethno-cultural competence. 3 testees (15%) have high level of ethnic identity, 15 (75%) – moderate, 2 (10%) – low.

The greater part of testees have high indicators of ethnicity. They take pride and have calm confidence in their ethnic group. 14 persons (70%) take pride; 4 persons (20%) have calm confidence; 2 persons (10%) have no feelings.

By the method of “Who am I?” it was found that the majority of respondents (50%) distinguish the following characteristics: “a girl”, “a personality”, “a person”, “a student”. Respondents preferred the following response categories in different ways: “a daughter” (40%), “a Russian citizen” (25%), “a Russian” (20%), “a teacher” (15%), “a sister” (25%) etc.

According to other methods, it has turned out that the respondents generally prefer to communicate with representatives of other nationalities (60%), all the others are afraid of it and are not willing to be friends with the representatives of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Caucasus (40%).

Most of the participants identify themselves as “the Russians”, being the representatives of their own nationalities (50%); poorly identify themselves as representatives of their own ethnic groups (20%).

More often the testees do not feel themselves closer to other ethnic groups and understand them (65%). According to the majority of respondents, they have never experienced negative attitude towards themselves on the part of people of other nationalities (70%).

At the ascertaining stage, following the diagnostic procedures, the formative work with students was carried out.

The implementation of this programme contributed to ethno-cultural competence formation of psychology students. It manifested itself in the increasing level of the testees’ motivation and in their belief in the necessity to conduct such practice-oriented courses with children and parents.

According to the results of the survey, the following was found:

1. 98% of the respondents agree that harmonization and preventive treatment of interethnic relations are essential under the conditions of any educational institution in the Sakhalin region.

2. The majority of respondents argue that prevention and harmonization of interethnic relations should be carried out by the family and public organizations (96%).

3. Some of the respondents claim that in the Sakhalin region the problem of interethnic relations is only relevant to migrants (86%).

4. Most participants answered in the affirmative to the statement: "There are no problems with interethnic relations and interethnic tension at our educational institution" (18%). Most respondents claim that ethnic tension exists at their educational institution, but preventive treatment methods and tools are not available. For example, the family resource relating to ethnic aspect is poorly used.

5. According to most respondents, to work effectively at harmonization of interethnic relations modern teachers and psychologists must have a professional level of ethno-cultural competence (92%).

6. Some respondents believe that a modern educational psychologist does not have a professional level of ethno-cultural competence (80%). An educational psychologist doesn't have a sufficient number of resource books, recommendations, diagnostic materials for the prevention of ethnic tension and harmonization of interethnic relations.

## 7. Conclusion

The results of psychological and pedagogical researches conducted in the Sakhalin region as well as our results in the context of this research allowed us to draw the following conclusions: students, teachers, psychologists working at educational organizations do not perform ethno-cultural functions that society and the state on the whole expect. Traditional methods of ethno-cultural and ethno-psychological competence formation of future educational psychologists do not meet the modern requirements of society.

Deep and comprehensive theoretical analysis of psychological and pedagogical, sociological, philosophical literature as well as the results of experimental research allowed us to formulate a number of conclusions. The cross-cultural aspect is currently of great importance for pedagogy and psychology. The need for ethno-cultural training of psychological and pedagogical staff is caused by objective conditions: ambiguous socio-cultural situation, high level of migration, multinational and multicultural community development.

The experimental research allowed us to achieve the goal and solve all the objectives: theoretical analysis of scientific literature; study of the basic concepts; selection of reliable and valid methods of psychological diagnosis; explanation of the need to prepare educational psychologists for intercultural interaction and activities in a multicultural social environment; realization of a formative experiment with future psychologists, and summarizing the ideas.

In the context of this study, ethno-cultural competence is considered one of the integral parts of a modern educational psychologist's professional activity. The formation of this competence refers to realizing the difficulties of intercultural communication and actualizing the ability to overcome them; learning the laws of acculturation; acquiring the skills of ethno-cultural and communicative competence; mastering the methods and norms of professional and personal communication; acquiring the interaction and intercultural skills; mastering the formation methods and techniques of cultural and ethnic tolerance; comprehension of the basic principles of intercultural sensitivity; mastering the psychological techniques,

principles and rules of intercultural communication; acquiring the skills to assess the needs and demands of the target audience in ethno-cultural context.

In order to study the process of ethno-cultural competence formation of a modern educational psychologist, we conducted an experimental research in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. The experimental research was conducted from 2014 to 2019 at Sakhalin State University. 50 undergraduate and graduate students acted as study subjects. The average age of students was 22 years. To carry out the research, we used reliable and valid methods that are used to study the aspects of ethno-cultural competence of a teacher.

The psychodiagnostic survey data showed that at the ascertaining stage the testees had average low ratings of development of ethno-cultural competence and tolerance, high ratings with respect to the development of ethnic conflicts and intensification of conflict situations.

At the formation stage, the programs and courses on development of students' ethno-cultural competence were implemented.

At the control stage, the results of the experiment proved the effectiveness of the formation programme. Tolerance index, ethno-cultural competence, and the level of personal tolerance increased significantly.

Mathematical methods of statistics allowed us to prove the hypothesis that ethno-cultural competence is one of the key components of an educational psychologist's professional activity in a multicultural environment.

Thus, the implementation of this programme contributed to the ethno-cultural competence formation of educational psychologists. A practicing psychologist, with a high level of ethno-cultural competence, not only knows self-consciousness peculiarities of representatives of other nationalities and is able to determine his/ her clients' value orientations but also becomes an active user of knowledge and skills in the consultative process.

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