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PERSONAL GROWTH AND DYNAMICS OF IDENTITY IN A MULTICULTURAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Abstract: The scientific report presents ideas that rethink the social meanings of diversity, which nowadays provokes pedagogical interaction in the school institution. The need to support global education is revealed on the basis of a detailed analysis of the findings on the social role of the "student" and the main characteristics of the role inherent in the role. The global dimensions of modern societies are beginning to dominate, which necessitates a change in traditional pedagogical practice. The term "global education" gives rise to a discussion of the formation of knowledge, skills and attitudes based on cultural pluralism, interdependence and international economic competition. School age is the time when the individual accumulates knowledge about the world. The introduction of global education means that students understand the importance and complexity of globalization processes and build an identity for intercultural interaction and existence in an interdependent world. In its dynamic structure, identity is a phenomenon related to the peculiarities of values, way of life, regulation of relationships based on history, ethnology and cultural development. The implementation of a targeted educational policy for equal rights goes hand in hand with the idea of acquiring competencies for interconnection, consolidation and partnership in a multicultural environment. Promoting the philosophy of awareness

of the concept of "global education and identity" is a psychological and pedagogical model of cultural relativism.

Introduction

"Becoming a person" happens in an environment where the need to unite with others and the world plays a leading role. Therefore, intercultural interactions are both an essential means of conceptualizing and an adequate response to the messages arising from social surrounding in the mind of the individual. Intercultural interactions form the basic characteristics of self-identity making them more coherent and flexible.

In terms of mental reflection, social communication during the school age pervades for a relatively short time span (from birth till the age of 18) the mind of the individual since young people find themselves in an environment other than family, where the actual socialization to the macro environment begins (Winnicott, 1999).

The transition to "school age" is associated with the psychosocial readiness of the individual.

Pedagogical practice abounds in cases when young people encounter difficulties in adapting to the intercultural environment and the standards of the school institution (Stoykov, 2004).

In modern pedagogical practice all these problems which have negative effect to the overall adaptation and integration of children from all ethnic and cultural groups in school, are analyzed as a result of the dynamics of the psychosocial climate. This determines the necessity of creating global education environment during the school years.

The Student as a Social Role and Personal Motivation for Intercultural Integration

Starting school requires a certain amount of knowledge, skills and habits along with needs and interests that provide the surroundings necessary for a specific kind of psychological and personal growth.

This precisely is the beginning of the secondary socialization stage or the so-called institutionalization of personality – a lengthy process of acquiring educational qualifications and developing organizational behavior.

This stage is characterized with learning as mental activity having a priority over the other two types of activities (work and play). At the same time the processes of getting to know objective reality are also carried out with respect to taking hold of interpersonal space as a phenomenon that supports the process of inclusion and development of a sense of belonging to one's own kind and the social world.

By laying the foundations of literacy, the psychic apparatus acquires more differentiated structures and is utilized mainly through functions of the conscious activity. In the course of their training the person expands their individual-practical scope of self-understanding and understanding of others (Antsiferova, 1991). Because of its structure and organization, the school institution gradually starts the development of young people's social skills at orientation and behavioral response adequate to the social stratification of society and the context of the particular situation.

The full functioning of the individual during the school years is certainly refracted through the focus of the school as a social institution.

It is the structure of the school as an institution that forces and requires young people to accept and comply with the norms of social behavior:

• on the one hand – as a relevant expression of the adopted specific rules, norms and values;
• on the other hand – as an authentic expression of social control and sanctioning.

The daily organization of behavioral forms of interpersonal interaction in school is not reduced simply to the practical guidance and functioning of institutionally set communication and relationships between systems (student, classmates, teachers, principals, support staff) but acquires:

- order, discipline and efficiency in accordance with the institutionalized formal relations;
- predictability and an organized state in accordance with the system of relatively stable institutional norms, values and rules.

Global aspects are becoming dominant in contemporary societies, which requires a change in the traditional pedagogical practice. The term "global education" raises discussion on the formation of knowledge, skills and attitudes based on cultural pluralism, interdependence and international economic competition.

Without absolutism, the institutionalized personality of the pupil is the one that manages to integrate with the social context topics in general and to perform the social roles, according to an adequate or appropriate behavioral repertoire. Practical mastery of social behavior in the school institution is associated with assuming social roles and it predetermines the success of the individual in the broader social environment – as a citizen. Such an understanding affirms the importance of school age to the success of social adaptation and identifies it as the right time, when the awareness of globalization in the world and the skills of cultural relativism are formed. School age is the time when the individual accumulates knowledge about the world. Implementing global education means that pupils understand the meaning and the complexity of the processes of globalization and form their own identity for intercultural interaction and existence in an interdependent world. Furthermore, the conflict-free adjustment to the rules of the school itself, as a specific institutional model of social reality, is an indicator of normalcy regarding the acceptance of social order, and in fact is a criterion for social maturity of the individual.

In opposition to the concept of man as an autonomous entity, the Role theory (Charles Cooley and George. H. Mead) enters into polemics with the concept of the self as an integral part of the social order, i. e. – the social role is a specific determinant of human nature. P. Berger defines the role as "a typified response to a typified expectation" and stresses that "the role provides the pattern according to which the individual is to act in the particular situation" (Berger, 1996).

Thus, in the context of this study two major trends gain importance that define the socio-cultural development of the individual during the school age:

- obtaining personal uniqueness, so called individuality, on the one hand;
and
- formation of sociability, i. e. – establishing a behavioral stereotype that supports the social integration of individuals in a multicultural environment, on the other.

Though ambivalent, the aggregate trends thus outlined result in Personality – a quality that differentiates substantially the human being from any other living creature.

As a main forum and condition for personal self-manifestation, self-expression and self-affirmation, the school is at the same time that indirect link in the process of socialization, which defines the statutory behavior of the person and lays the foundations of the motivation to master the patterns of polycultural behavior and active citizenship.

As an institution it is the school that is the scene on which the young person performs different social roles (a pupil, a friend, a leader, a member of an informal community, a member of the formal team, a performer, etc.), and acquires skills to maintain formal and informal relationships which stimulate the globalization process.

Being a pupil covers the dynamics of the establishment of a versatile identity of a particular person by revealing the effects or difficulties in integrating him/her to a particular institutional model.

Internalizing the role of the pupil in the individual consciousness represents a modelled image for the young man imposed by the duties of his/her current social functions. The balanced

behavioral and emotional dedication to the specific meanings of this role is a proof for a person's mental adequacy. Moreover, identifying with the role of the pupil is the first manifestation of the readiness to accept heteronomy in human life and the readiness for social orientation towards the established civil rights of living.

In this context, the study of the behavior of pupils has psychological grounds regarding the sociability skill of the person, i. e. – identifying with the role of the pupil must also be compliant with the imperativeness of the school as an institution.

It's important for the aspect of social pragmatics discussed here to clarify the procedure interpreting the achievement of harmony and integrity between the "inner world" and the institutionally established "external explication" of the social participation of the pupil in the life of the school as an institution. Thus, in the foreground, stands out the need to master a wide range of social skills through which the characteristics of the specific role content inherent in the organization at school are exteriorized.

Therefore, the daily life of the pupil validates the essential components (style, norms, ethics of relationships) of behavior at this age. In other words, it is trough the aspect of adaptation to the institutional order at school that the person develops mechanisms to effectively organise their own behavior, relevant to current social and regulatory expectations and assessments. This is how the mechanism of the child's identifying with the specific social role (pupil) operates.

"Global Education" as a Doctrine for the Promotion of Cultural Relativism

Implementing global education means that pupils understand the meaning and the complexity of the globalization processes and that they form identity of intercultural interaction and existence in an interdependent world.

In its dynamic structure, identity is a phenomenon associated with the peculiarities of values, lifestyle, and regulation of relationships, based on history, ethnology and cultural development.

Carrying out a targeted policy for global education is consistent with the idea of acquiring competences for interconnection, consolidation and partnership in intercultural environment.

Promotion of the concept of "Global Education – Personal Identity in the School Age" is an example of the philosophy of psycho-pedagogical model for cultural relativism.

The "Global Education" doctrine provides time and space to acquire the respective skills of behavioral reflexivity and stylistic variation of personality regrading the rights and obligations of the pupil, respectively the citizen. Cultural relativism education provides opportunities to stimulate awareness of interculturality and adoption of behavior for exercising the rights of the European citizen in the context of cross-cultural contacts established in school environment. Growth towards motivation for active citizenship is of particular importance for the young man's personality based on the demand for recognition, inherent to the period.

The social communication taking place in the school institution reveals the existence of a proportional correlation between the degree of rejection of the sociocultural standards (school norms) of social behavior on the one hand and on the other – the risk of destabilizing the formal and informal status of the pupil's personality. A similar trend raises concern among researchers and practitioners of developmental psychology during school age, with a view of the progressive deepening of these negatives in later age stages to the extent of asociality. In this sense, the need for non-formal inclusion of pupils in the education for cultural relativism is a necessity and an extremely powerful factor in overcoming that trend.

Promoting the global education philosophy aims to meet the commitments inherent in modern sets of social roles, formed in the historical context of intercultural development of society. In their role of a mediator between pupils and the environment, the teacher for global education

is an active social subject, who not only stimulates young people's self-awareness in outlining the boundaries between 'appropriate-inappropriate", "acceptable-unacceptable" as a pattern of behavior, but he/she also trains skills in socially acceptable behavior, according to the adopted institutional order and relationships with the others as equal partners.

"Cultural Relativism" and Modeling of Self-identity in an Educational Environment

It is a well known fact that achieving social sustainability in understanding the surrounding world and the relationships in it is a complex, complicated (and sometimes fruitless) process (Selye, 1997).

Human subjectivity based on his/her activity, is often a cause of imbalance in the experiences of the individual and acquires the functions of an intense irritant when subjective expectations do not correspond to the objective reality (Kennerly, 1997). In the individual consciousness such an irritant is identified as a problem.

It is in such times of uncertainty, tension and anxiety that the young person has a need for adequate educational support. Placed in an educational situation every pupil retains their function as an active participant.

Preparing young people for successful adaptation to the contemporary intercultural realities is associated with the partnership between the member countries of the European Union. To support globalization processes means that opportunities for social civic activity shall be provided to the young that reflect their own peculiarities, the need to understand themselves, their individual situation and problems.

The uniqueness of the educational interaction in the context of promoting global education philosophy is expressed in the provision of transpersonal space in which the pupils shall have conditions for self-analysis and recognition of the need for change, according to the skills of intercultural integration.

The inclusion of pupils in cultural relativism education offers each pupil the opportunity to explore, and on this basis, to reassess their current life situation by discovering new meanings in it, that help to redefine his/her own role, i. e. – to "find " their selves in a new way (Shulman, 1997).

Understanding the learner's personality in the context of the "global education" concept, changes his status from subject of interaction to subject of change.

Such an interpretation of the learner's role helps to set an accurate objective and to determine the final outcome of promoting the cultural relativism education.

Hence it can be summarized that the support of the globalization process during the school years should be directed both to the inner world and the outer reality of the pupil. Only trough searching for their mutual consistency, the characteristics of the particular situation can become "visible" and possible alternatives for intercultural identity and self-realization can be formulated. It is an important fact that the changes taking place in the learner's personality in the process of their integration in cross-cultural environment always correspond to the logic "from the inside to the outside" i. e. – from understanding to behavior.

Implementing a targeted policy for global education is consistent with the idea of acquiring competences for interconnection, consolidation and partnership in a multicultural environment.

Variability of the applied models in support of the globalization process during the school age is reciprocal to the paradigms of personality and its development that are principally established in the socio-psychological theory and practice. Within the respective working model the teacher in cultural relativism education shall interpret the life situation of the learners and on this ground they formulate hypotheses about the learners' thoughts, feelings, experiences and attitudes. This allows to determine the participants' level of psychosocial development and to choose the

adequate approach to the expansion of personal identity in the direction of intercultural identity and practices of active citizenship.

The main focus of cultural relativism education is on becoming aware of the circumstances hindering the individual self-realization and promoting non-discriminatory behavior when making an autonomous choice of effective solutions in order to secure the smooth implementation of the integration process in the social environment – including schools.

Promoting cultural relativism education as a conceptual model to support the globalization process in the educational institution is determined by the above development priorities throughout the school age. The global education philosophy as a psychological and pedagogical model of cultural relativism is defined in terms of the individual needs and the dynamics of the learners' development. At the same time, the concept of educational interaction is always preconditioned by working with the personality structural levels at the school age stage.

Development of Intercultural Sensitivity by Working with the Structural Levels of the Self

Direct observations on the psychosocial development during childhood have found that due to their complexity, irreversibility and intensity, formation of the basic stages of personality development has always been a complicated psychological process (Stamatov, 2000).

At this point of the identity development, the components of personality are in a state of diffusion and competing for dominance. The above described inner psychological functioning is a reason to experience frustration that finds expression in extreme emotional states and behavioral responses (varying from apathy through encapsulation and passive obedience – to frustration, hostility and anger-aggressive tendencies of reactions). Therefore, the deliberate and concentrated psychosocial and educational work with the individual components of personality, including pro-cultural identity is an appropriate mechanism for effective support of intercultural sensitivity throughout the school years.

Depending on the degree of expression of cultural centrism in representatives of the minority and the majority, deficits in the following structural levels of the Self are possible (Kozhuhar, 1994):

1. Level of 'hedonism' – the main motive and purpose of the subject is to receive pleasure at all cost, which means neglecting their own identity and allowing full assimilation by the majority.
2. Level of 'frustration' – the main motive is fear for the self, which implies either assimilation or increased hostility towards the Others that are different from the me.
3. Level of 'domination' – the main motive is the desire to dominate which is a prerequisite for interpersonal interaction based on oppressing the Others who are different.
4. Level of 'isolation' – the main motive is the fear of loneliness, of being rejected by the world, which implies interpersonal interaction based on inner oppression, i. e. – when representatives of social minorities assume that they are "second hand" people.
5. Level of 'ethnic identity' – the main motive is the inability of self-determination and identity.

This results in the following two effects:

- the representatives of the ethnic minorities minimize the values of their ethnic identity and mythologize the characteristics of the majority;
- the representatives of the ethnic minorities "turn away from" the values of their ethnic identity and get guided by the cultural similarities of the dominant social group or population.

6. Level of 'prosociality' – the main motive is development of a humanistic orientation and altruism, which is a prerequisite for social integration with the different others or for the application of cultural relativism to the ethnic identity of the person I face.

The levels of the structure of the Self presented above trace alone the path of personal growth and change with regards to the understanding of one's own identity during the school years. They are both connected to each other and penetrate into each other. As seen in the model described, the changes of personality at the stage of the school age express the meaningful aspects of the dynamics of development in the following direction:
- from egocentrism to individuation and integration;
- from the acceptance of myself to acceptance of the others.

Discussion and Conclusion

The presented analytical and interpretive analysis draws in a justified manner the following significant generalizations:

1. The school age period is the most important stage in life in view of establishing personal identity.
2. The adolescent person goes through a series of physical, emotional and social changes that determine the degree of applying cultural relativism towards the people different from them.
3. In principle, the processes of social integration start earlier in age (in the family), but they also continue later in life – during the school years (at school and within a wider social environment).
4. Along with the physical changes, psychological and cognitive transformations and development of the other areas related to personal identity, the events experienced during school age have a long-lasting impact and can sometimes have traumatic effects on humans.

School age can be a difficult and confusing stage of differentiation of personal identity, but more importantly, this is the time when the individual becomes aware of his/her own resources, i. e. – for each adolescent, there exist conditions for developing a sense of responsibility to life and skills to manage it.

The professionals from the school institutions who accompany the young people along their way of self-realization in life should know and understand the above interrelated changes in the awareness of the Self-identity and the different development areas, because young people's transition from school age to adult life is filled with critical situations and challenges.

Successful development throughout the school years requires awareness of the need for intercultural integration with the social environment/the others and in this sense, development of polycultural identity attitude and formation of active citizenship self-awareness.

Undoubtedly, expanding personal autonomy and self-organization, penetration into the rules and norms of public life during the school age period is positioned within the framework of interaction between the adolescent and the social environment. This process does not exclude failures and declines. Therefore, in times of crisis and destabilization of the Self, it is the school – being the referent social environment that should develop and offer effective mechanisms in support (both psychological and pedagogical) of the globalization process. In terms of their format such support mechanisms should be specified according to the specifics of the personal identity and aimed at updating and maintaining the motivation of the fundamental meanings of existence and patterns of self-realization.

In this context, overcoming the difficulties and the negative experiences from the clash with the socio-cultural differences during the school age period requires psychological and pedagogical work with the young people, that is:
- based on the acceptance of the person as a whole;

- aimed at self-discovery of the inner resources and encouraging their use in everyday life.

Given that every young person at certain times and in certain areas of development has experienced setbacks due to incoherency of the Self, this paper emphasizes the need to provide targeted psychological and pedagogical support of the globalization process in the school age period.

The importance of promoting the philosophy of global education as the educational policy for formation of cultural relativism identity has the following core projections:

- support for adequate polycultural integration;
- effective establishment of inner psychological state;
- creating conditions for equal access and symmetrical social interactions, regardless of the cultural differences;
- identification of one's own needs, aspirations and intentions and implementation of life situation tasks.

It is necessary to promote the philosophy of global education as a conceptual model of educational policy for development of cultural relativism skills in the school age period in order to reflect the interconnected changes in various areas of pupils' development regardless of their social and personal identity.

The participation of young people in educational activities for raising awareness of the concept of cultural relativism is a guarantee for overcoming critical situations in the school age stage and for opening of vital perspective towards growth and maturity in the context of polycultural perspective of individual development.

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LEARNING TO LEARN (WISDOM): INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO PHILOSOPHY

Abstract: The aim of this text is to illustrate some of the features of the Introduction to philosophy course at the Institute for philosophy. In the hope that the way to wisdom can be illuminated through teaching, the Introduction to philosophy course's objectives center around the inauguration and elaboration of philosophical concepts and categories, the promotion of critical thinking, and the improvement of oral and written expression in the students (who are in their first semester of the first year of the degree).