

# Studying Tolerance In Students From The Pedagogical Specialties

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## **Abstract:**

This article deals with the formation of tolerance as a must have job-related personal quality in students from the pedagogical specialties, as it is a mandatory precondition for their successful career.

Presented are the specifics of this process as a part of the overall educational process at university as the latter is seen as an important social institute where formation of a culture of tolerance in the students takes place.

On the basis of a pedagogical experiment involving 42 students from the “Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy” programme at the Faculty of Education, Trakia University, analyzed is the level of their overall tolerance, as well as the level of their ethnic tolerance, social tolerance and personal tolerance.

**Key words:** tolerance, personal quality, students, pedagogical specialties.

## **Introduction**

At the present stage of social development, the phenomenon “tolerance” is more and more becoming the subject of numerous scientific research studies and, hence, turning into an intercultural issue.

The ongoing reforms in the educational system based more and more on the principles of humanism, individualization of education and democratization of the pedagogical interaction, draws the attention of the researchers also on studying tolerance in a pedagogical aspect.

Focusing on the educational sphere and in particular, the university educational process as a source of tolerance formation, can be explained by the fact that universities are the place where students develop not only a system of knowledge system but where they are strongly influenced also by the individual psychological characteristics of the individual. Therefore, nowadays universities are an

important social institute where formation of a culture of tolerance in the students takes place.

Tolerance is seen as a complex mental phenomenon whose development starts in early childhood. The university training of the future pedagogues allows formation of these components of tolerance which at a later stage will be needed for implementation of the pedagogical interaction. This requires a tolerant interaction with children or students, team work, understanding and respecting the other people’s opinions, resolving conflict situations and finding compromised-based solutions.

T. Uglova defines the following personal skills determining the tolerant attitude towards others:

In the emotional-volitional sphere these are: tension, emotional stability, sensitivity and normativity.

In the communication sphere, these are: suspicion, egocentrism, straightforwardness, communicativeness, social courage.

In terms of self-awareness: adequacy of the self-assessment. In terms of beliefs, this is the significance of the self-transcendence and conservatism in the tolerant and the self-elevation and hedonism in the intolerant. In terms of behavior-orientation towards self-improvement, strive for sensual pleasure and readiness for changes in the intolerant, and conservatism in the intolerant (Uglova, 2008)

Analyzing the different fields of study in the programmes of the Bachelors, Masters and Specialists, A. Narshabaeva notes: „all standards necessarily have in the list of competencies which are aimed at the formation of a constructive, non-conflict interaction with other people, the ability to be tolerant of the opinions of others, which confirms the importance of developing tolerance among students.“ (Narshabaeva, A, 2022)

According to the same author „An important condition for the realization of these goals is the formation of tolerance, as well as compliance with the principle of tolerance in the organization of the educational process at the university.“ (Narshabaeva, 2022, p.3)

The Pedagogue forms skills and habits in the children and students, helps them build knowledge, but also has a very strong influence on the development of their personality. The main instrument for this is the Pedagogue's own personality due to which a special attention should be paid to the Pedagogue's level of tolerance as it is responsible for facilitating the creation of an atmosphere of trust and tolerant behaviour in the course of the pedagogical interaction.

R. Kuzmenko points out that „tolerance in the educational process means respect and understanding, a well-wishing attitude towards the teacher and in the reciprocal direction. This attitude reflects

equality in the expression of thoughts, ideas and views. Education without upbringing is worthless. We could not conceive of any educated person who behaves rudely and in an intolerant manner to the Other, not being able to cooperate, to work in a group or team. The ability to cooperate is especially important in any educational, scientific and professional environment.“(Kuzmenko, 2020, p.10)

In this connection, studying the psychological characteristics of tolerance in the students from the pedagogical specialties would allow its better understanding in the context of the teaching practice and would provide new possibilities, tools and conditions for its formation as part of the university training programmes.

Analyzing the scientific and methodological literature and good practices for the formation of tolerance in students, T. Shaposhnikova, M. Romanova, and N. Tarasenko point out the following unsolved problems: „models of students' tolerance forming process are not sufficiently developed from theoretical and methodological point of view; insufficient level of tolerant interaction between teachers and students; its informative and didactical base is not systematic, factors, conditions and mechanisms of tolerance formation in students are not sufficiently developed.“(Shaposhnikova, Romanova, Tarasenko, 2013, p.325)

In the process of forming personal tolerance in the students from the pedagogical specialties, the university being also a social institute, plays a special role. Therefore, special work is needed to train future teachers in the methods, techniques and means of developing tolerance of schoolchildren, which will enable the future generation of the competence of the younger generation to live in a multicultural society, independent thinking skills, ability to peacefully solve conflicts, develop the ability to respect each other, live with people of other cultures, languages and religions. (Arutiunian, 2005)

## Theoretical Framework

The professional activity of the contemporary Pedagogue requires them not only to transfer knowledge and life experience between generations and to transfer reproductive functions, but also to design and maintain a particular pedagogical environment forming in a certain way the personality of the children and students. In this connection, one of the main goals in the education of students from the pedagogical specialties is the formation of their personal and professional qualities associated with the successful creation of this environment. Tolerance can be pointed out as one of the most important qualities which in the opinion of A. Akulova should be developed in the context of a personality – oriented educational process. (Akulova, 2007)

Winiarska and Klaus define tolerance as "respect for dissimilar opinions, behavior, life styles, assuming that we do not share them, and sometimes do not agree with them and judge negative but treat the person who propagates them as equal to us. Therefore, tolerance understood this way assumes both the respect of freedom and human being dignity, i.e. refers to the duty of respecting humanity in ourselves and in others"(Winiarska, Klaus, 2011, p.15)

Abdulkarimov, G. associates tolerance as a patient attitude towards other people, respect towards their opinion, with the ability to listen and understand the other person. In his opinion, tolerance is a personality trait which finds its expression in communication and is manifested as self-control, respect, understanding and compassion towards the other people even when their opinion, beliefs, racial or religious affiliation differs from our own. (Abdulkarimov, 2003)

Tolerance has been proposed as giving a positive notion to difference but has also

been criticized for failing to do so because it reproduces notions of normative dissent and deviation. Tolerance can be understood in different ways, and there are different tolerance discourses that work out differently in construing "us-them" distinctions (Verkuyten, Kollar, 2021)

Bernard Crick defines tolerance as the degree to which we accept things of which we disapprove. (Crick,1971)

Education is one of the main sources by which a culture of tolerance is formed in the individual.

This is determined by the fact that namely in the process of pedagogical interaction, the foundations of the tolerant relationship are laid and where the individual psychological characteristics of the student's personality are formed. Last but not least, it is the Pedagogue with his/her professional status and professional characteristics setting a standard and becoming a role model.

All of the above determines the Pedagogue's special place in this process with regard to the level of his/her personal tolerance being of crucial importance for realization the principle of tolerance in the context of the educational interaction.

B. Rierdon points out three highly important goals of education: teach adolescents live in the diverse world; teach them resolve conflicts constructively; teach them undertake responsibility. Namely the Pedagogue is assigned with the task to cultivate tolerance in school and kindergarten, in students, children and their parents. (Rierdon, 2001)

The importance of tolerance for the process of upbringing conducted by the Pedagogue, is justified convincingly in the psychological and pedagogical theory of the "I-Concept". In the context of tolerance,

personal values and choices become especially important.

Reflection facilitates formation of the value orientation and adoption of a personal meaning with regard to them. Reflecting on the individual's interaction with the other members of the society, and analyzing his/her relations with the other people, the individual gradually adopts a personal meaning with regard to tolerance.

Within the frame of the "I-concept", tolerance is one of the determining factors for the formation of the child's positive attitude towards themselves. This means that if the Teacher-Student, and in particular the Student-Teacher interaction lacks tolerance, this may result in formation of a negative I-attitude towards themselves.

The personal dimension of tolerance encompasses most of all the individual's value system comprising of values such as respect for the other person, his/her rights and freedoms, his/her worldview and life position. In fact, the personality-based approach is a system-forming factor regulating the action of all psychological components of tolerance.

On this basis, personal tolerance may be seen as the individual's stable personal position or behavior. A. Rean analyzes tolerance in the sphere of social relations and reckons that behind it there are certain personal attitudes and the personality-specific system of relations with the surrounding world: other people, their behavior, oneself, the influence of others, and life in general. (Rean, 2002.)

The psychological analysis of the manifestations of tolerance in the pedagogical interaction demonstrates that in all of its aspects tolerance appears to be an important job-related quality of the future teacher, due to which its purposeful formation is needed. That is why its purposeful formation is needed. For this purpose, professional tolerance can be seen as also as a special form of the teacher's

activity aimed at increasing the effectiveness of his/her work.

In this sense, formation of tolerance as an important professional and personal quality of the students as future pedagogues should become a priority task. It should be noted here that the process of tolerance formation to a large extent has a personified nature and is determined by national, historical, religious traditions but also by religious characteristics and personal inclinations.

Dynamics of tolerance in students is affected by both internal and external factors. The educational system itself can be seen as an external factor by which tolerant behavior is formed, tolerant meaning and tolerant attitude. On the other hand, the specially designed educational activity resulting in a change in the personal characteristics can be seen as an internal factor.

Looking at tolerance as a value means that this process of change suggests inclusion of the tolerance-related values, their consolidation in the individual's behavior and realization of the importance of tolerance for the implementation of an effective pedagogical interaction in the student's future professional activity.

Of significant importance in this case is the Teacher-Student interaction based on the understanding that tolerance suggests not that much knowledge or behavioral skills, but first and foremost – developing the student's personal attitude which is a reflection of his/her value attitude towards the other person. This can be achieved by mutual exchange and update of the emotional state of the participants in the interaction as part of the educational process, by the developing a positive value attitude towards themselves and others.

One of the most effective models facilitating formation of personal tolerance in students is the Social Interaction Model. It comprises of the following stages as part of the process of personal tolerance formation:

-motivation: includes developing and maintaining an interest for the culture of other countries and people;

-concretization: perceiving the unique specifics of the other cultures;

-assimilation and accepting the universal human values, norms and rules in life but also the legal framework of the principles of interethnic tolerance.

-developing skills for establishing contacts in a different ethnic environment;

-developing habits and skills for establishing a tolerant interaction in a multicultural environment. (Dubasenyuk, 2007)

Summarizing and systemizing the scientific approaches to tolerance formation, N. Savchenko, N. Kotelianets Y. Kotelianets and I. Kindei point out the following pedagogical requirements needed for the successful implementation of this process: ensuring the readiness of scientific and pedagogical workers to form knowledge about tolerance; creating a tolerant environment in an educational institution; methodical provision of the process of selfeducation of tolerance for future teachers; the use of interactive methods and techniques in the training of future teachers. According to the same authors: „One of the pedagogical conditions for the formation of the tolerance of future teachers is to ensure the readiness of scientific and pedagogical workers to gain knowledge about tolerance. The process of forming tolerance involves the unity of education and upbringing, and the pedagogy of tolerance provides methods and receptions of education and upbringing. It should be kept in mind that learning and education in a real pedagogical process are interrelated with each other and reflect the pedagogical activity of a student and a

teacher“ (Savchenko, Kotelianets, Kotelianets, Kindei 2018, p.6)

A Islamov, I. Rassolov , S, Petunova, A. Albov, I. Zaikinag and T. Shulga, making a reference to various authors, point out the following mechanisms for formation of a tolerant behavior in students: 1) the organization of a special event-activity environment (project competitions, contests, promotions) 2) personal and role-based development of tolerant behavior in the process of education ( "lecturer", "expert", "speaker", "observer", "organizer / participant of public movement", "researcher", "assistant", "adviser") 3) the creation of situations of success in building and implementing strategies for sustainable professional interaction taking into account ethnic, cultural and religious differences; 4) the use of implicit measures in the formation of students' personal-significant sense of tolerance and the capacity for sustainability and conscious actions on the basis of consensus and social partnership (ability to listen to students and to respect their opinion, respect for the student's honor and dignity, respectful treatment to the students, the friendly tone of communication , the ability of the teacher to admit if he is wrong, a sincere recognition of the students' achievements; expression of approval on the slightest luck of students, the ability to establish contacts; properly defend their point of view in the debate; the ability to manage their own emotional state, suggestion) 5) formation of a stable intergroup tolerance (possession of cooperation skills, recognition of individual differences and methods of individualization, universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, mutual respect of interests, values, attitudes, importance of personal qualities that ensure prevention and effective resolution of conflicts in the process

of training and professional activities. (Islamov, A. et al, 2016)

R. Chumicheva, O. Sirotkin and A. Reznichenko point out the following educational technologies for teaching tolerance as pedagogical instruments for renewal of the university students' personal resource in the manifestation of their personal tolerance towards representatives of different cultures:

-project technologies provided the organization of long-term pairing and team projects with representatives of different nationalities and educational opportunities, in which the teacher created social and problematic situations that required understanding of the other and decision-making:

- research technologies as social team technologies of studying the problems of life in a multicultural space, requiring students to be independent in choosing partners in the study of the problem (pedagogical, social, cultural), prevention of possible conflicts on the basis of not conformity of views and points of view on the study problem or the nomination of a hypothesis;

- dialogues-reflexive, creating a discussion field of contradictory positions, points of view, judgments and opinions in the discussion of the topic of lecture or seminary, actualizing personal-significant and socially significant goals of the future teaching profession and realizing of their place in the multicultural environment;

- information and communication technologies (multimedia presentations of their cultural identity, computer simulation of life situations and means of solution: national and international content, role-playing computer games for communication in a different environment, etc.) (Chumicheva, Sirotkin, Reznichenko, 2020)

The Pedagogue's low level of tolerance may trigger the formation of barriers

in communication and impossibility for solving not only the tasks related to upbringing but also education.

In the opinion of T. Gershkovich, the low level of tolerance might be the cause for manifestation of disharmonization of the trainee's personality, producing a situation of a permanent discomfort, but also to an overall negativism in the expectations and evaluations referring to various aspects of behavior with which these expectations are associated. (Gershkovich, 2005.)

This gives grounds to look at tolerance not only as a personal quality of the Pedagogue but also as a requirement towards him/her in terms of the effectiveness of the pedagogical activity performed. In this case, its formation becomes one of the important tasks of the educational process.

### **Methodology**

To determine the level of the overall tolerance in the students as future pedagogues, the Tolerance Index Quick Questionnaire elaborated by G. Soldatova, O. Kravtsova, O. Khukh-laev, and L. Shaigerova has been used.

It is based on practical experience gathered from the international research studies on tolerance formation. The stimulus material includes statements reflecting not only the general attitude towards the surrounding world and the other people, but also the social positions in different spheres of interaction, where either tolerance or intolerance is manifested.

The Questionnaire includes statements outlining the attitude of the diagnosed to different social groups and such studying the communication attitude. Particular attention is paid to ethnic tolerance. It comprises of three components: ethnic tolerance, social tolerance and tolerance as a personality trait.

The results obtained are subject to qualitative and quantitative analysis. For the qualitative analysis the overall numerical result

is used without breaking it down acc. sub-scales.

The individual and group results in evaluating the level of tolerance takes place using the following scale:

Low level of tolerance: 22-60 points. Such a score demonstrates a high level of intolerance and presence of a clear manifestation of intolerant attitude towards other people.

Average level of tolerance: 61-90 points. For the respondents with this score typical is the combination of tolerance and intolerance characteristics. In some social situations they demonstrate tolerance while in other-intolerance.

High level of tolerance: 100-132 points. The representatives from this group clearly show themselves as tolerant personalities.

The quality analysis of tolerance is based on its evaluation according to three scales: ethnic tolerance, social tolerance and tolerance as a personality trait.

Ethnic tolerance is an expression of the individual's attitude towards the representatives of other ethnic groups and the individual's attitude in the sphere of intercultural interaction.

Social tolerance is seen in the attitude towards the different social groups. Tolerance as a personality trait is formed by personality traits, attitudes and beliefs which in a larger degree determine the individual's attitude to the surrounding world. (Pochebut, 2012)

To determine the three levels of tolerance using these three sub-scales, we have used the method introduced by N. Shevandrin. (Shevandrin, 2016)

1. Finding the maximum possible score. In our case for the sub-scale "Ethnic Tolerance" the maximum possible score is 42 points, for the sub-scale "Social Tolerance", the maximum possible score is 48 points and for the sub-scale "Tolerance" as a personality trait, the maximum possible score is 42 points.

2. Finding the mean value: In our case, for the sub-scale "Ethnic Tolerance", the mean value is 21, for the sub-scale "Social Tolerance", the mean value is 24 and for the Tolerance as a personality trait, the mean value is 21.

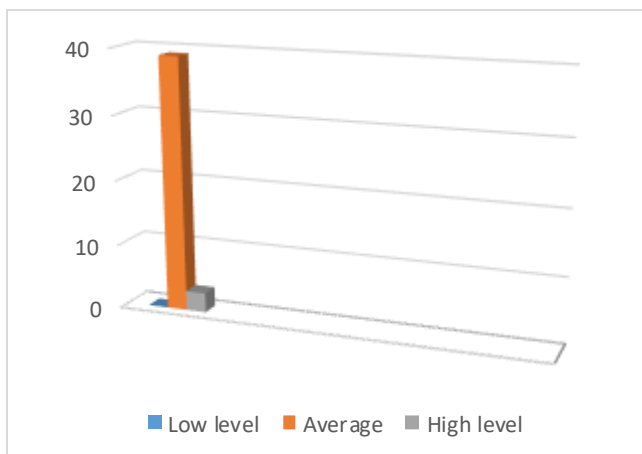
3. Finding the standard deviation. For this purpose, the maximum possible score is divided in 4, meaning that for the "Ethnic Tolerance" the standard deviation is 10,5, for "Social Tolerance" it is 12, and for "Tolerance as a Personality Trait" it is 10,5.

4. Finding the minimum and the maximum points of the intervals for the low, average and high level of tolerance.

- High level of ethnic and personal tolerance: from 31.5 to 42;
- Average level of ethnic and personal tolerance: from 10.5 to 31.5;
- Low level of ethnic and personal tolerance: from 0 to 10.5;
- High level of social tolerance: from 36 to 48;
- Average level of social tolerance: from 12 to 36;
- Low level of social tolerance: from 0 to 12.

In the study 42 students from the Master's programme "Pre-school and Primary School Pedagogy" at the Faculty of Education, Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, took part.

Diagram 1: Distribution of the number of students in evaluation the overall tolerance



From the Diagram, it can be seen that 32 (92%) of the students taking part in the study, demonstrate an average level of tolerance. This characterizes them as personalities combining both tolerance and intolerance characteristics. In different social situations they may demonstrate either tolerant or intolerant behavior depending on the circumstances or the social group they are a part of.

It can be assumed that the predominant average level is a result of a number of factors, some of them affecting each other oppositely.

In the educational environment in the university, students develop their tolerant behavior influenced by the interactions with their teachers within the framework of the subjects taught as part of the relevant scientific fields, under the influence of specialized trainings and practicals, and last but not least – by the positive example set by the teachers themselves.

## Results

The results from evaluation of the overall tolerance can be seen in the Diagram below:

On the other hand, there is the influence on side of all the channels for mass communication and information with a number of examples for the opposite behavior in the society. Due to this, very often students find it difficult to assimilate and assess the information coming from these two opposite directions and influencing them.

There are no students with a low level of tolerance. This can be explained by the fact that the specifics of the profession they have chosen does not suggest manifestations of intolerance in the interaction with children, students, parents and colleagues. On the other hand, tolerance is seen as one of the most significant professional qualities of the accomplished pedagogues.

Only three of the students who have taken part in the experimental study demonstrate a high level of overall tolerance. This means that they usually are tolerant towards the other people and are aware that every individual is unique



which is seen as an important pre-condition for the implementation of an effective pedagogical interaction. It should be noted that for the formation of a high level of tolerance, of significance is the psychological family climate and the educational impacts on the students in their childhood.

Ethnic tolerance may be studied in several aspects:

-as a complex property of the group or its particular representative manifested by accepting and recognizing the culture, traditions and values of the other ethnic group;

-as a general culture of empathic perception of the surrounding world and one's own ethnic identity;

-as a vector orientation of the ethnic consciousness of respect for the other person, their rights and needs;

-as a system-forming principle of the activity and behavior focused on stabilizing the interethnic, intergroup and interpersonal relations. (Valiullina, Schiller, Borovikova, 2019)

The results from evaluation of the ethnic tolerance can be seen in the Diagram below:

Diagram 2 Distribution of the number of students in evaluation the ethnic tolerance



A high level of ethnic tolerance is demonstrated by 7% of the respondents participating in the experimental study. It is assumed that they establish and realize successfully interpersonal relations with representatives of different nationalities and ethnic communities considering the increasing number of challenges with regard to particular importance of the skills and competences needed for work in a multicultural pedagogical environment.

An average level of ethnic tolerance is demonstrated by 93% of the students. This suggests alternating tolerant and intolerant behavioural reactions in the interactions with representatives of different nationalities and ethnic groups.

By evaluating the social tolerance, analyzed is the attitude of the respondents towards different social groups, organizations and groups, but also individuals. The results can be seen on the following Diagram.

Diagram 3 Distribution of the number of students in evaluation the social tolerance



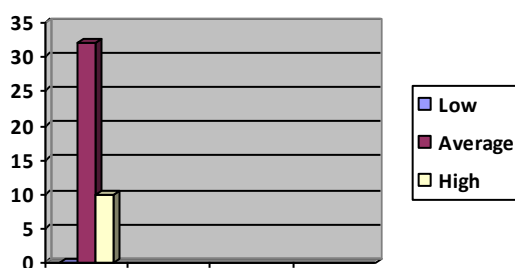
A high level of social tolerance is seen in 12% of the students. It suggests that these students successfully establish interpersonal interactions with the representatives of different social groups, regardless of their personal characteristics, some of them often unaccepted by others.

An average level of social tolerance is seen in 88% of the respondents involved in the experimental study. In this case, there is a tendency for a positive attitude in the interaction with representatives of the

above-mentioned groups and a strive for accepting their individual characteristics and means for self-expression. There are no students demonstrating a low level of social tolerance.

By evaluating the personal tolerance, analyzed is the respondent's attitude towards other people as a whole, the surrounding world and the specifics of his/her world view.

Diagram 4 Distribution of the number of students in evaluation the personal tolerance



A high level of personal tolerance is seen in 23% of the students – future pedagogues. This suggests that they realize and accept the uniqueness of the others, their worldview and the specifics related to their self-expression. All of this can be seen as a pre-condition for their successful future career closely related to

accepting the uniqueness of the child personality and on this basis-implementation of the personality-oriented approach.

An average level of personal tolerance is seen in 77% of the students. This suggests that they possess skills for searching and finding an agreement

through compromise or cooperation. The students from this group are able to perceive their interlocutor emotionally, try to respond adequately to his/her moods and experiences.

In order to analyze the relation between the overall tolerance and the ethnic tolerance, the Spearman's rho correlation coefficient has been used.

**Correlations**

Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1,00	,447**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,003
	N	42	42

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As seen, there is a significant positive correlation between the levels of the overall tolerance and the ethnic tolerance, which is logical considering the multicultural ethnic environment as this is where most of the students involved in the study come from, and

the particular importance of the ethnic tolerance as a component of the overall tolerance.

There is also a significant positive correlation between the levels of the social and the overall tolerance.

**Correlations**

Spearman's rho	VA R00001	Correlation Coefficient	1,00	,816**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
		N	42	42

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In this case, it can be assumed that the positive attitude towards particular social groups are largely dependent on the level of the overall tolerance.

Analyzing the correlation between the levels of the overall tolerance and the personal tolerance, there is also a significant positive correlation.

**Correlations**

Spearman's rho	VA R00001	Correlation Coefficient	1,00	,476**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,001
		N	42	42

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This should be seen as a natural result based on the assumption that the higher level of personal tolerance is a pre-condition also for a higher level of the overall tolerance.

There is a statistically significant negative correlation between the levels of the personal and social tolerance, as well as between the personal and ethnic tolerance, and between the social and ethnic tolerance. This correlation is an indicator for the absence of a direct influence between these in the students-future pedagogues.

### Conclusions

The high levels of personal tolerance in the students – future pedagogues is a requirements for the creation of a future comfort educational environment encouraging as much as possible manifestation of the full potential of each child or student, seen as an unique personality.

With regard to the search of optimal conditions for formation of tolerance as a personal quality within the educational process in the university, the category “tolerance” should be seen as integrative and multifaceted, influencing on one hand the content of the professional training and on the other hand-the methods for organizing the educational and cognitive activity of the students.

The main goal with regard to developing tolerance is associated with the student’s development of readiness to interact effectively with individuals or groups regardless of their national, religious or other identity.

The results from the research study conducted show that among the students–future pedagogues, predominant is an average level of the overall tolerance. This suggests that they combine both tolerant and intolerant characteristics. In given social situations they may demonstrate tolerant behavior while in other-intolerant.

Analysis of the theory and practice of the educational process in the university related to the purposeful formation of tolerance as a personal quality needed for the students’ future career as pedagogues, shows a contradiction between the objective requirements with regard to the professional and personal profile of the Teacher, of which tolerance is an important component, and the fact that the special pedagogical forms and programme systems focused on its accelerated formation are still underdeveloped and with limited applicability.

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