

## **A TOLERANT PERSONALITY AS AN OBJECTIVE NEED OF THE MODERN CIVIL SOCIETY**

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***Abstract.** Regularity of development of the modern society and the process of the European integration led to globalisation, expressed in the process of interaction and interrelation of different countries and peoples. Mobile and dynamic society needs a personality that is ready to mutual understanding and interaction, prepared for life in conditions of multicultural environment and is able to see oneself not only as a representative of a native culture and living in a particular country, but also as a global citizen. The Aim of the research is to consider the problem of tolerance as an integral quality of teenager's personality and to examine the level of tolerance of teenagers in Latvia.*

***Keywords:** tolerance, personality, teenagers', modern society, values, behaviour.*

### **Introduction**

„If I'm not like you, I don't offend you with it, but I endow you”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

In the beginning of the XXI century, the problem of tolerance has become especially relevant due to the globalisation process. Multinational states and population migration led to social interaction of representatives of various nationalities, cultures, religions and values. Development of the civic society is impossible without consciousness of fundamental values, one of them being the tolerance value as a dominant condition for development of the modern society. “Freedom to be as you are and living side by side with millions of other people respecting their distinctions is the basis for the modern global world” (Soldatova, 2002).

Adolescence, when child's personality is shaping, is an optimum period for development of the tolerant conscience, formation of tolerance settings. This age frontier is characterised with the child's passage to new social environment: he/she starts living according to the adults' society laws, developing himself/herself as a subject of social relations, bearing responsibility for his/her actions. This is the period, when you can trace the variety of mental manifestations: purposefulness, perseverance, impulsivity and, instability.

***The Aim of the research is:** to consider the problem of tolerance as an integral quality of teenager's personality and to examine the level of tolerance of teenagers in Latvia.*

***The Methods of the research are:***

***The theoretical base of the research includes:** humanistic paradigm (Z.*

*Chehlova*), psychological analysis, affecting various aspects of tolerance as a complicated socially psychological phenomenon (*Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, UNESCO; G. Allport, G. Soldatova*).

**The empirical research includes:** a questionnaire for measuring tolerance (*G. Soldatova, O. Kravcova, O. Huhlaev, L. Shaygerova*); methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis of empirical data; mathematical and statistical methods of data processing.

**The results of the research are the following:** theoretical analysis on the problem of the research of philosophical, psychological and sociological literature was done; empirical research was done and as a result the level of Latvian teenagers' tolerance was defined and factors influencing tolerance development were defined.

### **Tolerance as the main principle of mutual relation in the modern society**

“Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human” (*Declaration of principles on tolerance, UNESCO*)

Globalisation of the modern world is constantly reminding the today's man that the world is a diverse and single body at the same time that different approaches to the same processes are inevitable due to the variety of cultures, but they are dangerous both for specific social subjects and for the world as a whole. Thereafter, studies of tolerance as the main principle of people's interrelation are very important at the moment.

Research and the daily routine show that one of the specific features of the modern society is the fast growth of aggressiveness, rejection of other people's different opinion, judgement and needs. Development of the modern humane society is impossible without development and increase of the level of the modern man's tolerance, because “humanisation is harmonisation of the man's personality' relations with his essence and people around him” (*Chehlova, 2014*).

Urgency of development of tolerance is grounded in the fact that „mutual understanding” stands out as a social and personal value, since it gives the possibility to ensure interaction between people for the development of the society. Absence of mutual understanding leads to destruction of the integrity of social interrelations, and as a sequence – to self-destruction of the personality, to aggression. Presence of interaction, based on mutual understanding, on the contrary, contributes to development of the individual's feeling of safety, confidence in his actions and as a sequence – to development of the person's values.

The problem of tolerance is rather new in research both in Latvia and abroad. First studies on this topic appeared only in the middle 90s (*Gordon Willard*

Allport, Borba Michele, Kamungeremu David, Vogt W. Paul, Wandberg Robert). The important factor of the world acceptance of the necessity to study the given problem became the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance approved by Resolution 5.61 of UNESCO General Conference on November 16, 1995. The Declaration provides the international definition of the meaning of tolerance and the opposite concept, i.e. intolerance. As appears from the above, „tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace. Consistent with respect for human rights, the practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one’s own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are. It also means that one’s views are not to be imposed on others. Intolerance is rejection of other people, unavailability to co-exist with other (different) people; it is expressed with destructive, conflict and aggressive behaviour” (*Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, UNESCO, 1995*).

Despite the defined meaning of the concept, in every culture there is a specific definition for tolerances, which are mostly similar to each other, but have some different features. Some definitions of tolerance in the most spread languages of the world:

- *tolerance* (French) – confidence that other people can think and act in the manner that differs from our own manner (*Le Robert quotidien, 1996*);
- *tolerance or toleration* (British) – readiness to be tolerant, indulgent, to allow co-existence of various views without their discrimination (*Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2014*);
- *tolerancia* (Spanish) – ability to accept ideas and opinions, which differ from own views and opinions (*Enciclopedia Espasa, 2003*);
- *kuan rong* (Chinese) – to accept other people as they are and to be generous to other people (*Berkshire Encyclopedia of China, 2009*);
- *tolerance* (American) – ability or realisation of acceptance and respect to other people’s faith and beliefs (*Encyclopedia Americana, 2006*);
- *tasamul'* (Arabic) – indulgence, charity, total mercifulness, ability to accept other people as they are and to forgive;
- *толерантность* (Russian) – ability to tolerate (control oneself, endure), acknowledge, accept existence of somebody, to reconcile, to bring to conformity with oneself to somebody or something, to be indulgent to something, somebody (*Толковый словарь русского языка, 2008*);
- *tolerance* (Latvian) is a feature that accepts that other people have their own opinion that is different from your own, which they confirm. It requests certain freedom of mind and ability to understand other people. It is also

necessary to suppress arrogance and to be able to understand that you do not consider yourself the only one who is right (*Pedagoģijas terminu skaidrojošā vārdnīca, 2000*).

We see that each definition is specific. The British one contains indulgence, the Chinese definition has generosity, the Russian – ability to tolerate, the Latvian – understanding of other people.

In connection with the described above it is necessary to concretize features of tolerant and intolerant personalities. One of the first scientists who offered general characteristics of tolerant and intolerant personalities was a representative of humanistic psychology *Gordon Willard Allport*. In his work „The Nature of Prejudice” (1954), he laid methodological foundation of studying tolerance as a psychological phenomenon, separating out the following parameters of tolerant and intolerant personalities: (see Table 1).

Table 1

**Parameters of tolerant and intolerant personalities (*Allport, 1979*)**

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Tolerant personality</b>	<b>Intolerant personality</b>
<b><i>Self-orientation</i></b>	More self-oriented in work, creative process, theoretical reflection. In problematic situations this person usually blames himself/herself, but not the surrounding people. Such people seek after personal independence more that after belonging to external institutes and authorities, because they do not need anyone to hide behind.	In problematic situations, this person blames other people more that himself/herself. He/she seeks after belonging to external institutes and authorities.
<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>	Does not abdicate all responsibility, is ready to be responsible for his/her actions.	Believes that events happening around do not depend on him/her. Tries to disclaim responsibility for everything that is going on around. This peculiarity leads to development of prejudice to other people. The position is following: I don't hate people and I don't harm other people, but they hate and hurt me.
<b><i>Need in distinctness</i></b>	Sees the world in its variety.	Divides the world into two parts: black and white. There are only two kinds of people: bad and good. Emphasises differences between „our”

		and „alien”, has a difficulty to accept event neutrally. This person accepts or does not accept them.
<b><i>Empathy ability</i></b>	The ability is defined as a social sensitivity, ability to formulate more adequate judgements about other people, i.e. these people assess adequately both tolerant and intolerant people.	Assesses his/her partners in his/her own image.
<b><i>Knowledge about oneself</i></b>	Tries to understand his/her merits and demerits. Has a critical attitude to himself/herself and restrains from blaming other people in all his/her troubles.	Sees more merits in himself/herself than demerits. Is disposed to blame other people in his/her troubles.
<b><i>Immunity</i></b>	Usually feels safe, and therefore does not need to protect from other people. Absence of threat and confidence that it is possible to cope with it is an important precondition on upbringing the tolerant person.	Has difficulties in living both with other and with himself/herself. Is afraid of the social environment and of himself/herself: is afraid of instincts, feelings, lives with a constant feeling of threat.
<b><i>Freedom and democracy preference</i></b>	Does not pay attention to hierarchy in the society, prefers living in a free, democratic society.	For this person the social hierarchy is extremely important, regulates his/her life in the authoritarian society with strong power. This person believes that strong discipline is very important.
<b><i>Sense of humour</i></b>	Has a sense of humour and is able to laugh at himself/herself, his/her demerits and does not strive for dominancy amongst the others.	Does not have sense of humour and is not able to laugh at his/her demerits.

The optimal age for development of the tolerant cognition and tolerance settings is juvenile age, because it is the age of development of mental processes and formation of personality. It is the stage of development, which gives the best possibilities for purposeful formation of his/her physical, mental and sociocultural characteristics. This age boundary is characterised by the child's transition to another social conditions, when he/she starts living according to laws of the adult society, he/she is actively developing as a subject of social relations and starts bearing responsibility for his/her actions. In this period you

can trace the polarity of mind: purposefulness, perseverance – impetuosity, instability; increased self-confidence, refusal to compromise in judgements – vulnerability and uncertainty in oneself; need in communication – wish to seclude oneself; aggressive behaviour – timidity; romantic appeal – cynicism, prudence; tenderness – cruelty. This age is ready for development of the life platform of motives and values, own views, beliefs, ability to react adequately on remarks, true and incorrect criticism, the ability to stand up for own opinion without disgracing other people.

„Values of tolerance – self-respect, justice, absence of violence, cooperation – obtain personal sense only when the schoolchild makes himself out, assesses his actions, their motives, when the moral self-control and the readiness for self-perfection of the personality are developed. Tolerance is always internal freedom, these are relations on equal terms, it is always the dialogical level of interaction” (Soldatova, 2003).

### **Empirical Research**

The aim of the research is: to examine the level of teenagers' tolerance in Latvia. The participants of the empirical research: pupils of the 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> forms (in total 172 respondents) of various institutions of general education in Latvia.

*The methodological part of the empirical research includes:* questionnaire “Index of tolerance”(G. Soldatova, O. Kravcova, O. Huhlaev, L. Shaygerova).

### **Questionnaire “Index of tolerance”**

For diagnostics of the general level of tolerance the express questionnaire “*Index of tolerance*” was used. The basic material for the questionnaire were 22 statements reflecting general perception of the environment and other people and social settings in various spheres of interaction, where the teenager's tolerance and intolerance can be seen.

Each answer to the direct statements was evaluated according to the point scale from 1 to 6. Answers to contrary statements were assessed with reverse points. Then the points were summed up. As a result:

- 22-60 – low level of tolerance;
- 61-99 – middle level of tolerance;
- 100-132 – high level of tolerance.

For the qualitative analysis of tolerance aspects the division into sub-scales was used:

1. *Ethnical tolerance*: 2, 4, 7, 11, 14, 18, 21 (reflects the teenager's attitude to other ethnic groups and his/her settings in the sphere of international interaction).
2. *Social tolerance*: 1, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 20 (gives the possibility to examine

expression of tolerance and intolerance to various social groups as well as to investigate the individual's attitude to some social processes).

3. *Tolerance as a personality trait*: 3, 5, 9, 13, 17, 19, 22 (includes points diagnosing personality traits, attitude and beliefs, which to the considerable extent define the teenager's attitude to the environment).

The questionnaire gave the possibility to diagnose the general level of tolerance according to the quantitative characteristic, and on the basis of the subscales to reveal the distinction of social, ethnical tolerance and tolerance as a teenager personality trait in Latvia.

**The general level of tolerance** allowed of defining if teenagers have got such a personal characteristic as tolerance, taking into account the distinction of this characteristic in relation to the surrounding people. This indicator reflects rather the level of the society's tolerance than the level of teenagers' tolerance (see Figure 1).

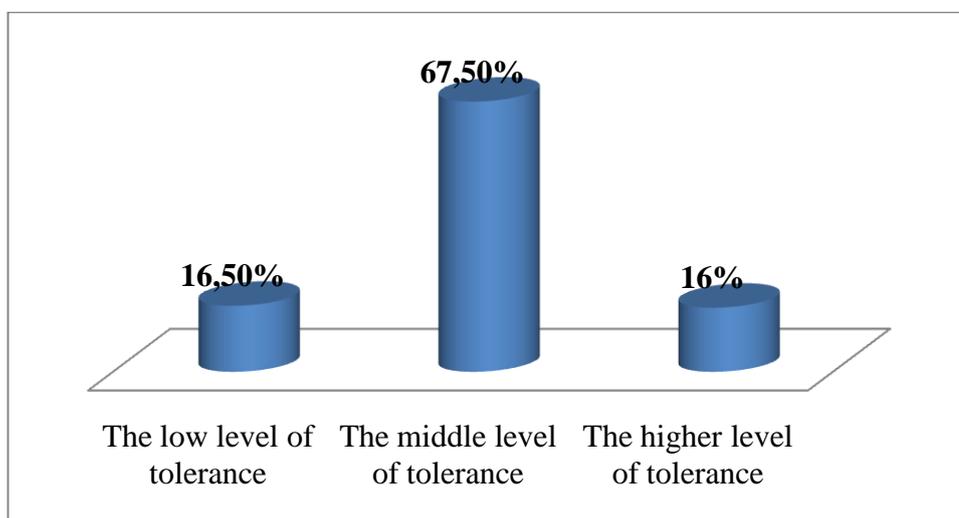


Figure 1. The level of general teenagers' tolerance in Latvia (Marchenoka, 2014)

The results of the research (Figure 1) showed that 67.5% of respondents have got the middle level of tolerance. The results indicate that this part of teenagers can behave in various ways depending on social situations. In some situations they display tolerance, but in other cases – intolerance. Almost equal are indicators of the high level (16%) and the low level (16.5%) of tolerance. The low level of tolerance is the most dangerous, because it is an indicator of social conflicts brewing in the society. Our discovered data, i.e. 16.5%, are still within the norm, and this situation is determined by the fact that Latvia has historically been multi-ethnic and socially varied and it led to the reduction of negative attitude to the “alien” culture and different world outlook. Owing to this historical fact, modern multi-ethnic classes in Latvian schools do not cause critical conflicts, as it happens in some other countries. 16% of respondents who displayed the high level of tolerance, on the one hand, demonstrate the good

level of stable developing society, but on the other hand, it also can illustrate other trends indicating that “borders of tolerance” are being blurred out, and it is related, for instance, to psychological infantilism and tendencies to indifference. **Ethnic tolerance** is the most striking indicator of the level of society’s development, because in the process of globalisation of the world and culture confrontation, “*understanding*” and “*accept*” of another culture is the highest indicator of its democracy and stability. Statements that were included into assessment: “It is correct to consider that your people is better than other.”; “I want to have friends of various nationalities.”; “It is difficult to have respectful attitude to some peoples.”; “Any religious currents have the right to exist.” As we can see, this unit includes the ethnical prejudice, being the most urgent in the modern society, related to representatives of other nationalities (according to the racial characteristics) (see Figure 2).

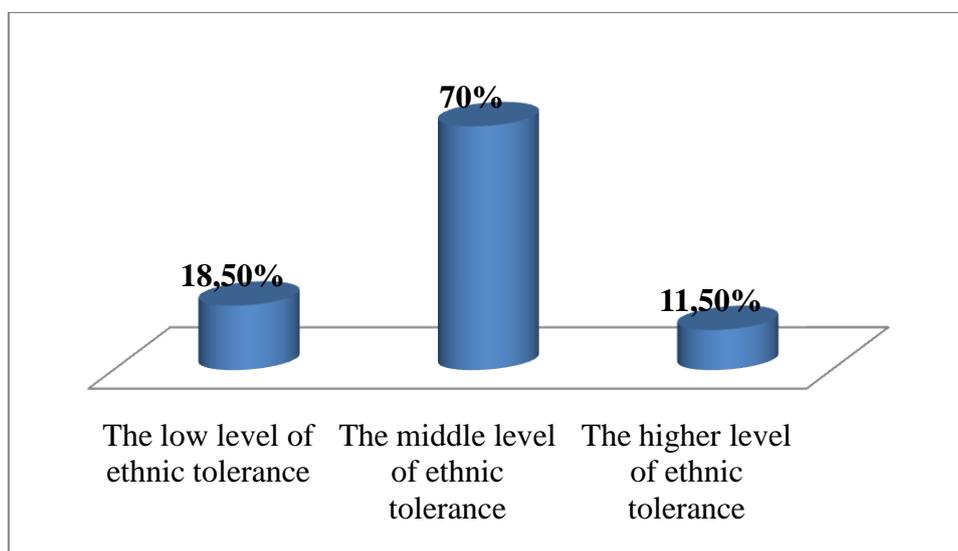


Figure 2. Teenagers’ ethnic tolerance in Latvia (*Marchenoka, 2014*)

The results of the research showed that the largest part of the interrogated teenagers have the middle level of ethnic tolerance – 70% (*Illustration 2*). Intolerance was expressed by 18.5% of the respondents. It is rather a high indicator. It indicates that representatives of this group, first, will experience difficulties in adapting in the society, and second, they represent potential “nationalists”, which is not acceptable within the framework of globalisation of the world building the policy of intercultural dialogue between cultures and nations. 11.5% of teenagers expressed the high level of ethnic tolerance. This indicator can be evaluated in two ways: on the one hand, it is warrantable taking into account the region of the questionnaire, but on the other hand, the accuracy of these data cannot be evident in the context of the respondents’ internal knowledge of “correct” answers, and it does not mean that they share this opinion. But even in this case, the result is also positive, because the wish to be tolerant is a step toward development of a tolerant society.

**Social tolerance** allowed of examining expression of tolerance and intolerance to various social groups and to investigate individual's attitude to some social processes. This unit included the following statements for assessment: "In mass media any opinion may be displayed."; "If the beggary and vagabonds have problems, it's their own fault."; "It is unpleasant to communicate with untidy people."; "All mentally diseased must be isolated from the society."; "We can help refugees not more than any other people – local people have no less problems."; "Newcomers must have equal rights with the local people" (see Figure 3).

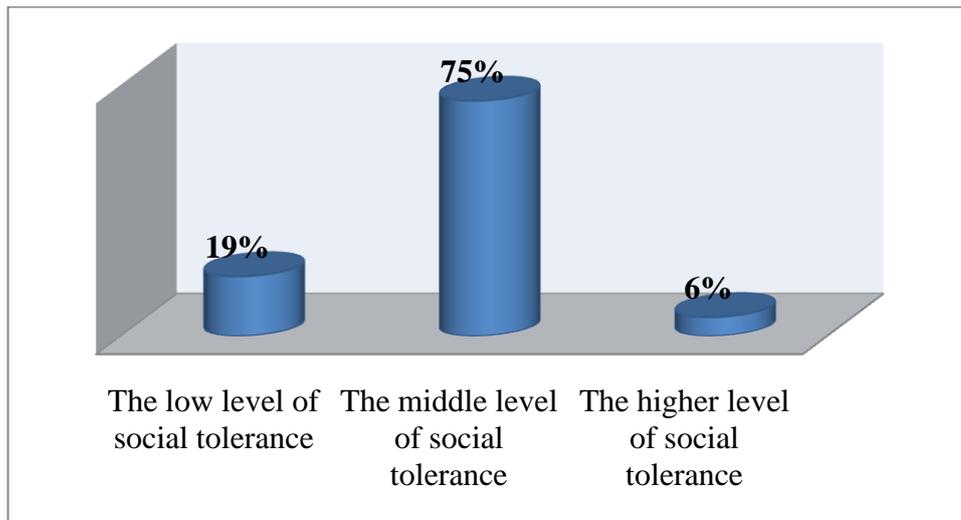


Figure 3. Teenagers' social tolerance in Latvia (*Marchenoka, 2014*)

The research showed the following results. The high level of tolerance was expressed by 6% of the respondents, the middle level – 75% and the low level – 19% (*Illustration 3*). The high level is as 6% as lower than the high level of ethnic tolerance discovered within this research. It indicates that the social situation in Latvia is more critical than ethnic one in attitude to various social groups. It is necessary to comment that the juvenile age is more categorical and aggressive. The teenagers expressed particular aversion to such social groups as tramps and ill people. Almost 100% of the respondents replied that they do not want to communicate with untidy people. The statement that newcomers must have equal rights with the local people also received positive assessment.

**The sub-scale "Tolerance as a personality trait"** diagnoses personal characteristics, attitude and beliefs defining the person's perception of the surrounding world, mostly in relation to other people from the point of view of dissent and different behaviour. This unit of evaluation of tolerance included the following statements: "If your friend betrayed you, you must revenge."; "In a dispute there may be only one correct point of view."; "Even if I have a different opinion, I'm ready to listen to other viewpoints."; "If somebody is rude to me, I'll pay him/her back."; "The person having another opinion than me, irritates

me.”; “Disorder irritates me.”; “I’d like to become more tolerant to other people” (see Figure 4).

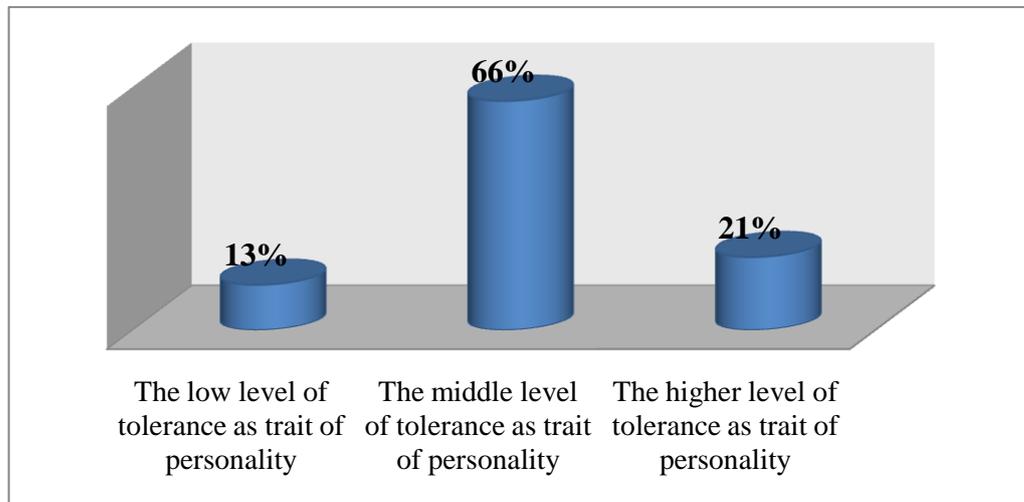


Figure 4. **Tolerance as personality’s trait of teenagers in Latvia (Marchenoka, 2014)**

The results of diagnosing of this sector of tolerance are the highest if we consider the indicator of the higher level of tolerance, which reached 21% and is the highest in comparison with the previous blocks; it indicates that tolerance to other people in interpersonal aspect is more developed in modern teenagers in Latvia. The middle level reached 66%, and the low level was shown by 13% of the respondents. These teenagers (13%) are so-called “problematic” children, who usually have bad relations with parents and other teenagers due to the high level of egoism and egocentrism.

### Conclusions

- Today tolerance is a multi-aspect category, and its value is human dignity, justice, absence of violence, cooperation and it gets personal significance for teenagers only when he/she gains an understanding of himself/herself, evaluates his/her actions and motives;
- Development of the teenager’s civil consciousness is influenced by:
  - ✓ Heredity;
  - ✓ Environment;
  - ✓ Social environment;
  - ✓ Purposeful upbringing and conscious self-education, directed to recognising values significance in life.
- In this process, the interaction of regularities of nature, society and upbringing is expressed. That is why in the process of the teenager’s civic education, in the society also adults must take into account systems, factors, mechanisms of these interactions, which can positively or negatively influence the teenager’s values orientation;

- The level of general tolerance gave the possibility to define that 67.5% of the respondents have the middle level of tolerance, 16% - the high level of tolerance and 16.5% - the low level of tolerance. The low level of tolerance is the most dangerous, because it is an indicator of social conflicts brewing in the society;
- The results of the research of ethnic tolerance showed that the largest part of the interrogated teenagers (70%) has the middle level of tolerance, 11.5% expressed the high level of ethnic tolerance and intolerance was expressed by 18.5% of the interrogated teenagers. Despite the fact that the society in Latvia has always been multicultural society of and the research group was ethnically heterogeneous, the level of ethnic intolerance was rather high indicating that in case if the respondents do not change their standpoint in the future, they will have difficulties in adapting in the society and they can be considered as potential “nationalists”, which is not acceptable in the process of globalisation of the world building the policy of intercultural dialogue between nations and cultures;
- It was discovered that social intolerance is higher than the ethnic intolerance (19%); it is mainly expressed in a version of beggars as free members of the society and the dislike of the diseased. It indicated that the social situation in Latvia is more critical than ethnic;
- The teenagers were more tolerant in interpersonal relations, when it is necessary to accept “different” points of view and behaviour and showed the high level of tolerance as a personality trait (21%). 13% of the respondents displayed the low level of tolerance in this subscale; these respondents mostly represent so-called “problematic” children, who usually have bad relations with parents and other teenagers due to their high level of egoism and egocentrism;
- The research showed that the Latvian society has not reached the level of civic and democratic society, where the level of tolerance must be represented in all the scales. It determines tasks for development and upgrading of methods for formation of tolerance in teenagers and achieving better results in the future.

### **Kopsavilkums**

Mūsdienu sabiedrības attīstības un Eiropas integrācijas procesā notika globalizācija, kas izpaužas dažādu valstu un tautu mijiedarbības un savstarpējās saistības procesā. Mobilajai un dinamiskajai sabiedrībai ir nepieciešama personība, kura būtu gatava mijiedarbībai un savstarpējai sapratnei, kas iekļautos daudz kultūru vides apstākļos un kas būtu spējīga redzēt sevi ne tikai kā noteiktā valstī dzīvojošu dzimtās kultūras pārstāvi, bet arī kā globālo pilsoni.

#### ***Izpētes mērķis:***

- izskatīt tolerances problēmu kā pusaudža personības integrālo īpašību un izpētīt pusaudžu tolerances līmeni Latvijā.

**Izpētes metodes:**

**Izpētes teorētisko bāze:** humānistiskā paradigma (Z. Čehlova), psiholoģiskā analīze, kas ir saistīta ar dažādiem tolerances aspektiem kā sarežģīta sociāli psiholoģiskā parādība (*Deklarācija par tolerances principiem, UNESCO; G. Olports, G. Soldatova*).

**Empīriskā izpēte iekļauj sevī:** aptauja tolerances pētīšanai (*G. Soldatova, O. Kravcova, O. Huhlaevs, L. Šaigerova*); empīrisko datu kvalitatīvās un kvantitatīvās analīzes; matemātiskās un statistiskās datu apstrādes metodes.

**Atslēgas vārdi:** tolerance, personība, pusaudži, mūsdienu sabiedrība, vērtības, uzvedība.

**Pētījuma rezultāti:**

- Mūsdienās tolerance ir kategorija, kas sastāv no daudziem aspektiem, un tās vērtība ir cilvēka cieņa, taisnīgums, vardarbības neesamība, sadarbība, tā kļūst pusaudzīm personīgi svarīga tikai tad, kad viņš iegūst sapratni par sevi, ir spējīgs novērtēt savas darbības un motīvus;
- Šajā procesā izpaužas dabas, sabiedrības un audzināšanas likumsakarību mijiedarbība. Līdz ar to pusaudžu pilsoniskās izglītības procesā arī pieaugušajiem jāņem vērā šīs mijiedarbības sistēmas, faktori un mehānismi, kas var pozitīvi vai negatīvi ietekmēt pusaudžu vērtību orientāciju;
- Vispārējās tolerances līmeņa diagnostika parādīja, ka 67,5% respondentu ir vidējais tolerances līmenis, 16% - augsts tolerances līmenis un 16,5% ir zems tolerances līmenis. Zemais līmenis ir bīstamākais, jo tas norāda, ka sabiedrībā birst sociālie konflikti;
- Etniskās tolerances pētījuma rezultāti parādīja, ka lielākai daļai pusaudžu (70%) ir vidējais tolerances līmenis, 11,5% respondentu bija augsts etniskās tolerances līmenis un tolerances trūkums bija raksturīgs 18,5% respondentu. Neskatoties uz to, ka Latvijas sabiedrība allaž ir bijusi daudzkulturāla un pētījuma grupa bija etniski heterogēna, etniskās intolerances līmenis ir diezgan augsts, kas norāda uz to, ka gadījumā ja respondenti nemainīs savu viedokli nākotnē, viņiem būs grūti adaptēties sabiedrībā un viņus var uzskatīt par potenciāliem „nacionālistiem”, kas nav pieņemams globalizācijas procesā, kad pasaule veido starpkultūru dialogu starp tautām un kultūrām;
- Autore atklāja, ka sociālās intolerances līmenis ir augstāks nekā etniskās tolerances līmenis (19%); tas vairāk izpaužas situācijā ar trūcīgu cilvēku kā pilntiesīgo sabiedrības locekļu uztveršanu, un ar nepatiku pret slimiem cilvēkiem. Tas norāda uz to, ka sociālā situācija Latvijā ir kritiskāka nekā etniskā;
- Aptaujātie pusaudži ir bijuši tolerantāki starppersonisko attiecību situācijās, kad jāpieņem „atšķirīgs” viedoklis vai uzvedība, un 21% respondentu ir parādījuši augstu tolerances līmeni kā personības raksturīgo īpašību. 13% respondentu bija zems tolerances līmenis šajā skalā; šie bērni lielākoties ir tā saucami „problemātiskie” bērni, kuriem parasti ir problēmas ar vecākiem un citiem pusaudžiem viņu augsta egoisma un egocentrisma līmeņa dēļ;
- Pētījums parādīja, ka Latvijas sabiedrība vēl nav sasniegusi pilsoniskās un demokrātiskās sabiedrības līmeni, kad tolerances rādītājiem jābūt augstākiem visās skalās, nekā šobrīd. Šī situācija nosaka uzdevumus metožu izstrādei un uzlabošanai, lai varētu attīstīt pusaudžu toleranci un nākotnē sasniegt labākus rezultātus.

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