

# Formation of Tolerance and Intercultural Competence in Future Educators in a Preschool Educational Institution

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## Abstract

In globalised world, the acquisition of intercultural competence requires special attention, since this aspect is used already in the training of preschool children. The purpose of the article is to study the possibilities of forming tolerance and intercultural competence in future educators in preschool educational institutions. The realisation of the proposed goal involved the use of certain scientific methods. In particular, it is a content analysis of professional scientific literature, a systematic approach and comparison were also used, which made it possible to compare the results obtained with the data available in other scientific works. The results indicate that addressing tolerance and intercultural competence in future preschool teachers is important for the functioning of the teacher education system. Firstly, this is a consequence of current trends in the development of education. Secondly, the acquisition of tolerance and intercultural competence is seen as a long-term process, so modern preschool teachers and assistants should have sufficient knowledge in the field of intercultural pedagogy. It is also important to maintain an adequate level of motivation and the ability to learn independently even after graduation. The conclusions emphasise that it is important to add interethnic tolerance to the value systems of students.

**Keywords:** preschool education, competence formation, educators of preschool institutions, intercultural learning, pedagogical training, inclusive education, development of tolerance, intercultural interaction

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduce the Problem

The modern development of preschool educational environments has been significantly influenced by globalization. Cross-cultural interaction under such conditions turns into an extremely important element that should be in the refresher training of specialists of the appropriate level. The application of new techniques and methods will require a review of the existing training practices of educators and specialists in working with preschool children, taking into account the existing realities, which may be complicated by additional factors. In particular, we may be talking about the next global pandemics based on the destructive impact of COVID-19. Another challenges are military. As an example, the Russian aggression against Ukraine demonstrated that in the XXI century. there is room for destructive power scenarios of political development (Kalmykova, 2022; Tsekhmister et al., 2023). These and many other challenges clearly complicate social life in general, and the functioning of the educational sphere in particular. External challenges also become a problem for the preschool world, and although they are distributed between state structures, parental attention, and civil society, great responsibility is also found in the sphere of activities of educators.

### 1.2 Importance of the Problem

Acquiring the necessary professional skills, competencies and abilities by future specialists in preschool education is turning into a necessity dictated by modern requirements. Taking into account the work with modern children's collectives, the problem of forming the necessary levels of intercultural competence, which will make it possible to

take into account the intercultural challenges of the functioning of a children's collective, requires special attention. In addition, preparation for further life will require preschoolers to master basic knowledge of tolerance and religious tolerance. Among the tasks of modern educators is also the need for timely formation of such skills among children, so the requirements for appropriate professional and pedagogical training will grow. The search for optimal models of professional training of future educators, taking into account all modern requirements, turns into an important problem that must be considered from the point of view of scientific analysis.

### *1.3 Relevant Scholarship*

The scientists investigated certain aspects of the indicated problems. Their conclusions are important and relevant from the point of view of identifying both the problematic aspects of training modern educators in preschool education and possible ways to overcome them. In particular, the experience of analyzing individual countries and individual practices used in the world is important. Hrechanyk (2020) using the example of the analysis of the Ukrainian pre-war experience established how relevant the acquisition of intercultural competence is for students of higher pedagogical education. Bencéné Fekete (2021) showed the Hungarian experience of introducing preschoolers to the modern multicultural society. Herwartz-Emden (2020) characterized the need to establish cooperation with parents during the organization of the educational process in a preschool educational institution, offered chapters on the corresponding training model for understanding tolerance between parents and educators in the German environment. Features of teacher training in Estonia were proposed by Timoštšuk, Uibu and Vanahans (2022).

Among the attention of scientists are certain important aspects of the development of tolerance among the students of pedagogical education, which has an impact on the appropriate education of preschoolers. Mereniuk and Parshyn (2024) showed that the acquisition of a tolerant attitude among preschoolers is important for subsequent schooling, especially against the background of the need to research unethical and non-tolerant experiences throughout the historical process. Lazareva, Myroshnychenko, Sanakuiev and Gontarenko (2023) studied the philosophical transformations of modern culture, which made it possible to establish specific educational needs in the training of educators and teachers.

Danilyan, Arbeláez-Campillo and Rojas-Bahamón (2022) addressed a similar issue by examining the main markers of cultural development based on an analysis of scientific literature. Among other things, researchers have also repeatedly emphasized the importance of intercultural competence among educators even through the prism of economic relations (Ha & Park, 2021; Suprunenko et al., 2023). Yonata (2022) also drew attention to the importance of further consideration of the scientific problem of spreading the appropriate level of tolerance among preschoolers by preschool teachers. At the same time, many issues still need to be revealed and analyzed, in particular those related to the formation of a generalized picture of the peculiarities of the training of future educators. Therefore, the purpose of the article is to analyze the possibilities of forming tolerance and intercultural competence among future educators in a preschool educational institution. The indicated goal involves the implementation of the following problems: the study of relevant professional literature, consideration of the problem of the importance of tolerance in the modern educational process, determination of the features of the formation of tolerance and intercultural competence among future educators of preschool education institutions.

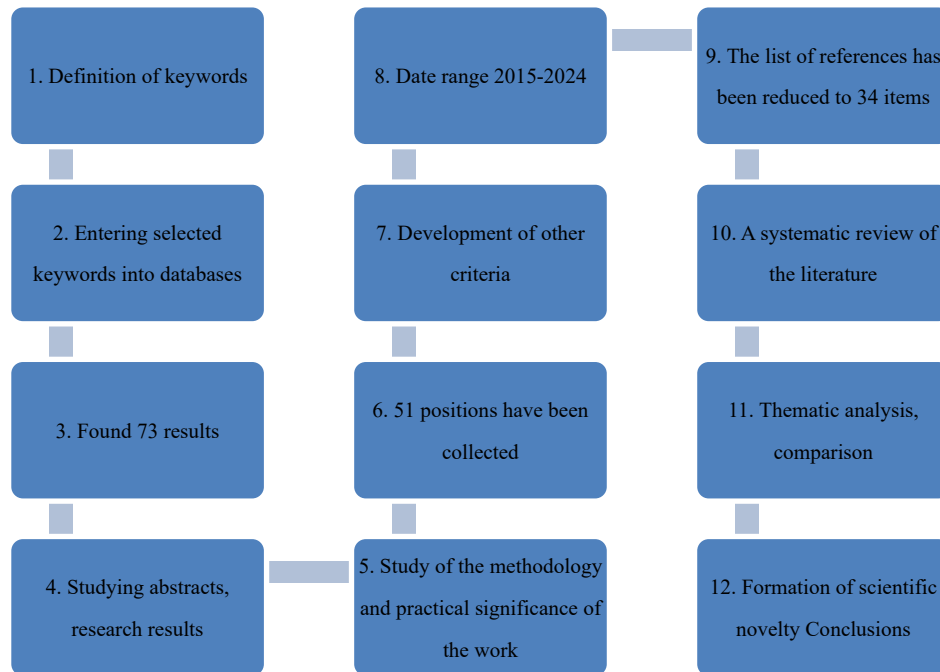
The aim of the research is to study the possibilities of forming tolerance and intercultural competence in future educators in preschool educational institutions.

## **2. Method**

In view of the extensive topic of the study of tolerance and intercultural competence among future educators, a qualitative research approach was used. In particular, qualitative data was obtained from the literature analysis.

### *2.1 Data Collection*

Data collection was done in stages. Each stage had its own purpose for collecting materials for research (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Stages of Research

Source: Authors’ development

As can be seen from Figure 1, at the first stage, key words for research were defined and entered into the search of scientometric databases. These key words related to "tolerance", "intercultural competence", "preschool education". Initially, 73 items of literature were found that would correspond to such keywords.

The next stage involved a thorough study of the abstracts and the results of the selected studies. After a brief analysis of these parts and the research methodology, the number of articles was reduced to 51 positions.

In order to select only relevant literature, only modern literature was selected (research from 2015). This is done in order to analyze only current, relevant data. Preference was also given to works written in English, or at least with an English-language abstract. Works that have only English-language abstracts are included in the analysis only if their results are very important. Thus, 34 items of literature were collected.

*2.2 Data Analysis*

**Table 1.** Stages and Methods

Stage	Method	Utilising
First	Content-analysis	The main trends present in the literature are determined The main opinions of scientists regarding the formation of intercultural communication and tolerance skills among teachers have been determined.
Second	Systematic revision	It was determined that intercultural communication and tolerance are important principles and systems that are developing in accordance with global trends.
Third	Contemporary analysis	A comparison of the results obtained from the content analysis and the information contained in other modern works was made
Fourth	Generalization Integrative method	A summary of the research was made

Source: Authors’ development.

In order to study the peculiarities of the formation of intercultural competence and tolerance among future teachers, a content analysis of modern literature was carried out. It took place in stages and was aimed at identifying the main trends and opinions regarding intercultural competence and tolerance that are present in the literature. A systematic approach and comparison were also used. In particular, as a result of the use of comparative analysis, it was possible to compare the obtained results with data that are present in other works. Based on the generalization and integrative method, it was possible to combine the received information and make a summary (see Table 1).

So, on the basis of such a methodological approach, it was possible to outline the main trends and conditions for the formation of intercultural competence or tolerance for future educators of preschool education.

### 3. Results

#### *3.1 Tolerance and Intercultural Competence in a Modern Preschool Education Institution: Needs for Implementation*

Multiculturalism, as defined by modern researchers, means the preservation of original practices, spiritual cultures, practical languages for certain ethnic groups, migrants, etc. This ensures their equality in staying on the territory of states that are not their homeland. The implementation of such intentions is difficult. Despite the many measures and their implementation, the popularity of interculturality, intercultural dialogue and interethnic relations in the general public, many scholars believe that the complete elimination of the dominance of the mainstream culture in favour of interculturality is not possible to implement in full (Bogush, 2023). In particular, modern society is defined as a society of borders, which, in addition to the purely physical sphere, also include symbolic, real, and imaginary environments. The main trend towards the formation of borders between different societies, cultures, spaces and people is often declared even chauvinistic (Berezovska, 2023; Tsekhmister et al., 2023). However, the real consequences of such accusations remain unclear and their impact is questionable. Further calls for cultural cooperation demonstrate the importance of this process in the future.

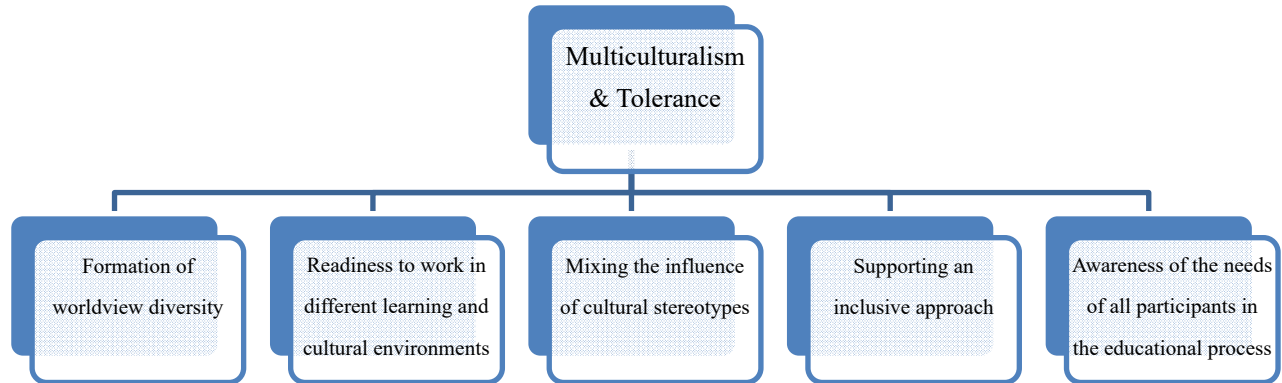
The main focus of multiculturalism in education is an attempt to transform the way individuals think, to promote reconciliation, to overcome prejudice, fixed ideas, a focus on themselves, their needs and culture, idealisation and admiration for only a few cultures. Multicultural competence, acquired during the educational process, is one of the tools for achieving multiculturalism. One of its main goals is to teach students to identify the differences between their own culture and the cultures of other people. This competence allows one to understand and accept the existing differences, but does not deny the rejection of one's own cultural environment.

In fact, according to researchers, multiculturalism in Europe aims to eliminate Eurocentrism and other forms of discrimination. Education has become an important element in achieving this goal (Olsson, 2022; Bader et al., 2021). In particular, the importance of intercultural pedagogy lies in the implementation of the principle of living and acting in diversity. For this reason, the acquisition of relevant competence and the implementation of tolerance should be primarily addressed in the environment of people from different cultures, foreigners who speak many languages, have different traditions and worldviews. Scholars believe that in such environments, people will form new ways of interaction, updated versions of skills and general behaviour, the use of which will allow them to respond consciously and subconsciously to the characteristics of people from different cultures (Róg, 2015). That is, there will be a gradual development of intercultural competence.

Learning the rules of tolerant acceptance of others should begin in preschool. Through such integration, it is possible to achieve the impact of education on changing the outdated hierarchical relations between the dominant cultural majority and smaller ethnic/national groups in the education system. The acquisition of intercultural competence involves much more than the simple integration of foreigners into the social system (Yörüko, Özel & Dalgat, 2024). First of all, it is about the formation of appropriate moral qualities that shape attitudes towards other people. In the practice of preschool education, this is manifested in the fact that, taking care of a child's upbringing, the educator must have certain attitudes, understand that the child lives in a certain social framework, but may leave it in the near future. For this reason, there is a need to intensify intercultural communication and increase preschoolers' knowledge of its value already in preschool age.

In the light of the new social paradigms, preschoolers should monitor their behaviour, compare it with the interests of other children and find agreements that best suit the circumstances. This is clearly facilitated by the authority of the caregiver, as when such authority is present, children are able to compare their actions with it and form similar behavioural patterns (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Likewise, the authority of the educator can suppress the emergence of prejudices that may periodically appear in the children's group. Therefore, competent educators know how important it is to learn and apply an intercultural approach to early childhood education (Ates & Şahin, 2021). In practice, this

means that, when planning their activities, educators should pay attention not only to those children who are foreigners or from a different culture, but also to children who come from different backgrounds. In this way, they will develop them through social and pedagogical interaction, instilling in them a sense of empathy, methods of establishing dialogue, overcoming prejudice and related resentment.



**Figure 2.** The Importance of Developing Intercultural Competence and Tolerance for Educators

Source: Authors' development

The acquisition of intercultural competence does not simply mean that a new discipline is added to the traditional curriculum to show the peculiarities of life of national minorities. It is important to gradually integrate the understanding of tolerance into all educational areas, which will contribute to the acquisition of relevant competences of future preschool teachers (Stankov, Vuletić & Jovanović, 2020). Therefore, preschool teachers and teaching assistants are required to have sufficient knowledge in the areas of multicultural and intercultural pedagogy. This also includes knowledge that allows them to address the challenges that arise in societies with many different cultures.

### *3.2 Building Tolerance and Intercultural Competence among Future Educators*

Effective development of interethnic tolerance among students of higher pedagogical education, future preschool teachers, may depend on the creation of certain pedagogical conditions for their education. For this reason, the possibility of organising cooperation with various socio-cultural institutions is important. Another relevant tool is the specification of the content components of the professional training of future educators, taking into account the specifics of their future activities in the field of multicultural environments, in particular through the use of competence-based and situational methods, which is implemented through the development and implementation of special courses in multicultural education.

Effective solutions are also possible against the background of initiatives of several higher education institutions: the formation of a single tolerant environment, mutual attendance of lectures and practical classes, work on the formation of attitudes to tolerance, which also involves the interaction of heads of educational institutions, teachers and students (future educators) through equal dialogue, variability in the use of teaching and learning methods that promote tolerance in the student environment. Some researchers define additional requirements for acquiring the necessary level of intercultural competence: special emphasis on the development of communicative tolerance skills of all participants in the educational process; implementation of additional programs to improve psychological and pedagogical training; implementation of personality-oriented methods of interaction between teachers and students during the educational and upbringing processes, which significantly increases the opportunities and skills of communicative tolerance, creates certain prerequisites for the following re For this purpose, it is necessary to introduce the organisation of various trainings and develop intercultural immersion among students.

**Table 2.** Tools for Building Intercultural Competence and Tolerance

Instrument	Characteristic
Innovative educational programs	Modern educational institutions should pay great attention to the inclusion of special modules on the development of intercultural communication and tolerance.
Organising intercultural seminars and trainings.	Such practical classes contribute to the formation of intercultural competence among students and reduce the influence of stereotypes about certain cultures.
Immersive intercultural environments	Training or internships in special intercultural environments are an important element of modern innovative education. They are aimed not only at acquiring practical skills but also at introducing students to the traditions of different cultures and nations.
Formation of special intercultural projects	The creation of special intercultural projects or events will help students to get acquainted with students from different countries. Their involvement in such joint projects will help build respect for students from different parts of the world.

Source: Authors' development

Other researchers have determined that the basis for tangible transformations in teacher education systems for future teacher educators should be specific methodological principles that define and emphasise the role of the teacher as a subject of moderation and interaction in a multicultural environment (Stankov et al., 2020). In fact, this understanding is based on the analysis of leading philosophical trends in the impact on the educational space. First of all, we should take into account globalisation, which has a significant impact on teacher education and its features in the field of intercultural interaction. Researchers also emphasise the combination of adequate intellectual resources, the involvement of international cooperation in education, which is based on the principles of seeking cultural dialogue and opportunities for cultural interaction (Vasiljević-Prodanović, Krneta, & Markov, 2021). Regionalisation also plays an important role, i.e. taking into account regional multicultural features in teacher education, the need to take into account the cultures of indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, etc.

At the same time, the pedagogical component is based on the use of the relevant foundations of the educational process. Therefore, the relevance of educational disciplines for the pedagogical training of future educators should meet the needs of the region and the general concepts of individualisation, increasing motivation to learn, developing initiative in performing tasks, and using creativity in learning (Yörüko et al., 2024). Against this background, it is important to use the world and national heritage, which contributes to the development of value orientations, the latest digital technologies, knowledge, skills, ethical standards of behaviour, and the maximum use of the personal potential of future educators in cultural, social and pedagogical aspects.

The essence and content of interethnic tolerance and intercultural competence of future preschool teachers is also characterised as the result of the realisation of the potential of teachers in the difficult conditions of a multicultural human community, which also depends on the combination of optimal forms with demonstrable interethnic relations and interactions. Accordingly, one of the main qualities that fundamentally forms interethnic tolerance is the addition of multicultural values to the personal value systems of students - future educators in preschool institutions. This will make it possible to turn tolerance into a general principle that will become the foundation for future professional work. Education is a relevant means of fulfilling this task, because it is the one that comprehensively and harmoniously develops the personality of future educators.

#### 4. Discussion

The results obtained indicate the importance of developing intercultural competence and tolerance for future preschool teachers. In particular, it is determined that the process of forming intercultural competence does not simply mean that a new discipline should be added to traditional curricula to show the life of national minorities. The main focus should be on the gradual integration of the understanding of tolerance into all educational areas, which will contribute to the acquisition of relevant competencies of future preschool teachers. In addition, it has been determined that important tools for developing these important skills are the organisation of various intercultural seminars and discussions, the formation of immersive intercultural environments and special intercultural projects that will help students to get acquainted with representatives of different cultures and nations. The results obtained

are also confirmed in modern works, in particular Becerra-Lubies (2021) and Gómez-Parra (2021), which describe the main elements of intercultural communication and determine the importance of multiculturalism as an innovative approach to modern education.

The findings also resonate with the study by Ates & Şahin (2021), which describes the opinions of preschool teachers on the multicultural approach. The authors noted that modern educators should understand the differences between representatives of different nations, tolerate and respect them. At the same time, the global challenges of our time have only exacerbated this need (Hermansson et al., 2021). On the other hand, the study by Hajisoteriou, Karousiou & Angelides (2020) demonstrates students' attitudes towards the development of intercultural competence. The researchers noted that most students still understand the differences between representatives of different nations and respect them. These opinions confirm the theses from this study about the importance of intercultural competence for modern preschool teachers. At the same time, Hmelak, Lepičnik Vodopivec & Barbareev (2020) emphasised that parents play an important role in fostering tolerant attitudes towards representatives of different nations. Therefore, it is important for parents to create an appropriate atmosphere in the family regarding the attitude towards representatives of other nations.

The paper emphasises that intercultural immersive environments play an important role in the development of tolerance in future teachers. Also, according to current research, one of the important competences of preschool teachers is professionalism and standards in synthesis with such skills as values and knowledge (Zdanevych et al., 2020). Nevertheless, modern research also emphasises that the intercultural competence of preschool teachers is particularly important for the formation of modern children (Lenkauskaitė & Malinauskienė, 2022; Androsova, 2023).

Preschools, where children leave their home environment and enter learning for the first time, are places where each child brings their own diversity of self and family values (Acevedo, 2017; Wahlström Smith, 2020). This is where interaction and communication with both teachers and peers develops. Therefore, it is important for teachers to have intercultural competence and to put multiculturalism into practice. Thus, the importance of this study lies in the comprehensive characterisation of the peculiarities of the formation of intercultural competence and tolerance for future teachers of preschool education. The main limitations of the study are the analysis of only modern literature (since 2015) and the neglect of previous fundamental research. At the same time, it is also worth emphasising the possible subjectivity found in modern works. Nevertheless, this work is an important theoretical basis for studying the basic conditions and tools for developing intercultural competence and tolerance in modern teachers.

## 5. Conclusions

Therefore, in general, it has been determined that the formation of tolerance and intercultural competence in future preschool teachers plays a significant role in the system of teacher training. First of all, this corresponds to the current trends in the development of educational paradigms, which are focused on globalised social environments in which there are many representatives of national minorities, foreigners or indigenous peoples. Although it is understood that a completely conflict-free society is more of an illusion, this ideal is the main guideline for implementing measures to promote tolerance.

As a result, important elements are integrated into the educational process, as the acquisition of knowledge about tolerance is a gradual process that does not end with the formal introduction of relevant subjects into the curriculum. Since modern preschool teachers and assistants need to have sufficient knowledge of intercultural pedagogy, it is important to include practical implementation opportunities in the training. If regionalisation or direct cooperation with international institutions is not possible, the use of person-centered methods of interaction between teachers and teacher education students may be a situational option. This will already increase the opportunities and skills of communicative tolerance, and create some prerequisites for the subsequent independent development of tolerant communication skills. It is also important to add interethnic tolerance to the value systems of students. This will allow future teachers of preschool education to turn tolerance into a general principle that will become the foundation for their future professional work.

Regarding the prospects of further research, the article can be directed to the definition of the most effective methods of teaching tolerance and intercultural competence. This may include the analysis of different pedagogical approaches, the use of interactive methods and the development of new curricula. The paper can also explore opportunities for collaboration between different cultures and nationalities in an educational environment. This may include exchange of experiences, joint projects and interaction between students from different countries. It is

important to study what knowledge and skills on tolerance and intercultural competence students acquire during their studies. This may include developing evaluation tools and measuring improvements.

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