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**Preconditions for Tolerance Development at
Higher Educational Institution**

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Preconditions for Tolerance Development at Higher Educational Institution

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Abstract

Educational institution and the teacher are responsible not only for knowledge conveying to the student, but also for personal development. It is necessary to take care of value integration into educational content. Values have to become part of the spirit of the whole educational institution, to be integrated into the educational environment and relationships. Tolerance is one of the most important aspirations for educating young people and shaping humanistic attitudes and respect for human values. The importance of developing tolerance as a core of democratic society is underlined in the documents of the Council of Europe. Increasingly, in assessing social skills in the labor market, there is a clear need to educate tolerant citizens, especially teachers who are able to communicate and collaborate with others, constructively resolve conflicts, think democratically, and respect other people's beliefs and opinions. To develop a tolerant personality is a long and difficult process. The relationship between teacher and learner must be based on mutual respect and trust, the principle of equality between the teacher and the learner as a personality, since only then there can be mutually beneficial cooperation that enables the development of tolerance in the community of the educational institution. Tolerance of the teacher is of particular importance to the learner's tolerance. This article defines the concept of tolerance, examines the true conditions of tolerance, highlights the development of a tolerant personality, that is part of the development of a common personality, due both to internal and external factors, describes the aspects of tolerance development and reveals the preconditions that make up the development of tolerance.

Keywords: *tolerance development, preconditions, pedagogical tolerance, toleration, educational environment*

Introduction

Tolerance acts as an attribute of the developed civil consciousness, the main to which lines are: mutual respect and acceptance of views and judgements of people, recognition and development of cultural pluralism in society, equal rights, duties and opportunities for all citizens, effective participation of all and everyone in adoption of all decisions concerning human life in society, justice for all, freedom of choice, respect of solutions of the majority at protection of the rights of minority. Education of tolerant consciousness is required not only for increase of tolerance to each other, but also for high-quality growth of efficiency of modern economy – development of the country in many respects depends on successful formation of culture of dialogue, art of search of compromises (Obukhov & Kendirbekova, 2017). Nowadays, countries of the European Union, including Lithuania, belong to the global economy, share common information, technological and cultural space. In order the changes brought about by globalization to play a constructive role in society, it should be realized that this is inevitably linked to the practical implementation of the fundamental values of democracy, peace, human rights and tolerance. At the state level, tolerance is manifested in the fairness and impartiality of state laws, equal treatment of every citizen, applying the same criteria in the administration of justice and in the provision of social and economic opportunities. While respecting rights and freedoms, the state cannot discriminate against any citizens on the grounds of religion, race or social status. The principle of tolerance towards a person or social groups must be observed not only by the state and its institutions, but also by the people and social groups themselves. Higher educational institutions are part of society, and they are the largest community of young people who are the future and real wealth of the nation, therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the role of higher educational institutions in the development of the country and the promotion of peace in society by instilling principles and values of tolerance among students (Belyakova & Zakharova, 2019).

Tolerance is one of the most important preconditions educating the young generation in spirit of humanism and respect to general human values. To educate tolerance is one the most important objectives nowadays and, therefore, it is very important to create necessary preconditions for it as Lithuanian society have chosen a democratic way and have open space to multi-cultural Europe. The importance of tolerance education, as the basic value of democratic society, is highlighted in the documents of UNESCO and Europe Council. The task of a modern educational institution is to promote formation at youth of skills of independent thinking, critical judgement and development of the judgements based on moral values (Obukhov & Kendirbekova, 2017).

The aim of the article is to reveal the preconditions for tolerance development at Marijampolė University of Applied Sciences by carrying out a comparative analysis. The following objectives of the research were set: 1) to define the concept of tolerance prevailing at the university during the comparative analysis of 2 groups; 2) to find out students' attitude towards tolerance as a value and the level of internalization of tolerance; 3) to determine students' attitudes towards the

importance of teaching methods in developing tolerance; 4) to analyze the peculiarities of the relations between the main participants of the interaction - students and lecturers - from the students' point of view.

The Concept of Tolerance

The etymological dimension and significance of the term “tolerance” addresses the notion of tolerance in the history of European culture at the beginning of the 16 century, reflecting the humanistic thinking represented by Erasmus of Rotterdam in his effort to combat religious fanaticism, as well as John Locke (1632-1704), Voltaire (1694-1778) and Gotthold Lossing (1729-1781). ‘To tolerate’ has its roots in Latin, where *toleratus* and *tolerare* imply to endure or to put up with. Merriam Webster (2014) gives one meaning of “tolerance” as “a sympathy or indulgence for beliefs and practices differing from or conflicting with one’s own”, and “the act of allowing something.” In 1995, the UN adopted the “Declaration of Principles on Tolerance,” which reveals the essence of the key concepts of human relationships – tolerance. According to this document “Tolerance is a term that means respect for different views and beliefs, behaviors and practices” (UNESCO, 1995).

In the scientific literature the notion of tolerance is defined by many different authors. Vogt (1997) describes it as “<... intentional self-restraint in the face of something one dislikes, objects to, finds threatening, or otherwise has a negative attitude toward-usually to maintain a social or political group or to promote harmony in a group”. Professor Reardon, the author of many peace education works, argues: “tolerance is according others the right to have their persons and identities respected”. According to Lickona (2016):

“Tolerance as an ethical virtue does not require us to accept other people’s beliefs or behaviours. Tolerance does require us to respect every person’s human dignity and human rights, including legitimate freedom of conscience. Freedom of conscience, however, is not absolute. It is the liberty to make personal moral choices as long as those choices do not infringe on the rights of others or undermine the common good”.

As Levi-Strauss (1983) points out, tolerance is possible only with a strong value position and a perceived identity. From Levi-Strauss’s (1983) point of view, tolerance is not a contemplative attitude, dispensing indulgence to what has been or what is still in being. It is a dynamic attitude, consisting in the anticipation, understanding and promotion of what is struggling into being. We can see the diversity of human cultures behind us, around us, and before us. This view is supported by many foreign contemporary authors (Loewen, 2013; Tucicov-Bogdan, 2001; Stan, 2004; and others). Following Loewen (2013) “Tolerance is the ability to build peace between different peoples. Education opens the way to tolerance and its scope is continuously expanded. This expansion will be tempered by the basic values of human dignity and integrity. To practice tolerance does not mean making concessions, being indulgent, or giving up your own beliefs. It is not compulsory, but absolutely necessary in the family, school and society”. Tucicov-

Bogdan elucidates: “To practice tolerance does not mean making concessions, being indulgent, or giving up your own beliefs. It is not compulsory, but absolutely necessary in the family, school and society”. One more very interesting point of view on tolerance is expressed by Stan: “Education always involves positivity, and tolerance, besides making a certain, unproblematic entry in the register of positivity, is even one of the assumptions of education. To be tolerant means to prefer to laugh rather than to criticize in a world where we need to share our joys, to help us in times of distress, to achieve personal or group goals for the social and economic progress of all”. Norwegian scholars Anker and Afdal consider tolerance as endurance of what is wrong. Tolerance as endurance takes place when theories of what is right and true conflict with another. Thus, tolerance is not an aim in itself but a way to handle difference in opinions and in actions.

Lithuanian authors such as Jakavonytė (2003), Plečkaitis (1998), Žemaitis (1997) and others also analyzed the phenomenon of tolerance and tolerance development, as the traditions of tolerance in Lithuania have been cherished by people of different nationalities and religious beliefs for centuries. Žemaitis presents the following definition: “Tolerance can be discussed as a principle when a person not only has his/her own opinion, views, but also critically evaluates others and defends his/her own ones. In this way, by arguing with the views or beliefs of others, one can test oneself. By learning not only from one's own but also from other mistakes, each person improves. Therefore, tolerance requires respect for different views and beliefs”.

An essential aspect of tolerance is the limits and the conditions of true tolerance. Plečkaitis (1998) focuses on the conditions of tolerance: “The first condition is that we can only tolerate what we value negatively, what we disagree with, what is unpleasant. Therefore, a tolerant, which can be a person, a group of people, society, must feel dissatisfaction, hostility to a certain phenomenon, to see a certain evil in it. The notion of tolerance should not be confused with indifference, because a person who values nothing can only be indifferent, but not tolerant. This notion is not appropriate when under certain circumstances (for instance because of helplessness) we need to put up with certain evils. The second condition of tolerance is the belief or knowledge that one can resist something that is viewed negatively. Thus, the tolerant must endure the evil, even though he could resist it. What is impossible to resist cannot be tolerated either, because tolerance out of fear or helplessness cannot be considered a tolerant position. Determining by free will to endure what is unacceptable is the third condition for true tolerance. Such a determination expresses respect for the rights of the other person. We therefore tolerate only when we disagree, disapprove and oppose other people's ideas and actions, and we have a real power to prevent these actions, but while respecting the autonomy of those individuals and groups and recognizing their rights, we refrain from violence against them. And that violence can manifest itself not only as outright hostility, intimidation, contempt, rejection, but also as ridicule or ignorance”.

To sum up, we must admit that in different cultures, the concept of tolerance is interpreted slightly differently if we follow Boghian's (2017) point of view.

The authors examining the theoretical problem of tolerance usually distinguish the following areas of tolerance: political, moral, social, religious (Reardon, 1997; Plečkaitis, 1998). Deveikienė and Manelis (2004) distinguish eight types of tolerance, defines their content, concepts and states that “an educated person must know the types of tolerance - political, moral, social, religious, legal, creative, taste, thought - and be able to to allocate them”. It should therefore be noted that tolerance covers practically all areas of life. The object of tolerance can be people’s views, beliefs, tastes and inclinations, principles of behavior, habits and customs. Although tolerance is proclaimed as perhaps the most fundamental modern virtue, and various international conventions and educational programs encourage to foster it, not always enough attention is paid to a deeper analysis of the development of this value.

The Importance of Tolerance Development

In the modern society of the twenty-first century, the values of tolerance, respect and openness are the basis for the successful development of the individual, so it is important to properly shape the attitude towards them among students during their university studies (Al Majali & Al Khaaldi, 2020). The skills and characteristics of a person’s relationships with other people and the social environment, which belong to the field of social competence, are increasingly valued in the labor market. Therefore, it is necessary to study the social environment and to transfer to it ideas of tolerance, selecting for this purpose the corresponding forms, methods (Obukhov & Kendirbekova, 2017). It is clear that there is a need to develop tolerant citizens who are able to communicate and cooperate with other people, to resolve conflicts constructively, to think democratically, and to respect the opinions and beliefs of others. Tolerance is one of the values of a democratic society. This value is a prerequisite for learning to live in peace in the world full of differences. According to Boghian (2018) “Tolerance is a central value of 21st century education. It is not a feeling inherited by birth, but acquired through education”.

Țurcan (2015), as cited in Boghian (2017) states that “Education for tolerance is a new dimension of education, which through specific objectives, contents and strategies ensures the development of human values of tolerance (acceptance of diversity, empathy)”.

As we could see from the quotations in the previous section, almost all of them are related to education. So, it is possible to state that tolerance is acquired through education. It has been posited that tolerance can be learned both directly and indirectly, through socialization and instruction (Vogt, 1997). Many researchers argue that indirect teaching of tolerance is more effective than direct teaching. Cristea (2004), as cited in Boghian (2017) claims that “Speaking in strictly pedagogical terms, tolerance is not an end in itself but a means and the goal of education in the spirit of tolerance lies in recognizing and respecting the dignity and integrity of all human beings”.

The general objective of education for tolerance is the formation and development of tolerant attitudes by enhancing the capacity to accept diversity and active involvement in social life. These attitudes are intended to be developed and formed both at teachers and students (Gutu & Boghian, 2019).

The development of personality, as well as the spread of tolerance, is determined by both innate, inherited personality traits and external circumstances. The development of a tolerant personality is part of the general development of the personality. The influence of an educational institution on the development of learners' tolerance is determined not only by the content of education conveyed in lessons, but also by the favorable internal climate, learners' relations with teachers and peers, and teaching methods. At academic level, methods specific to tolerance education may be applied at all disciplines (Gutu & Boghian, 2019). Although the importance of tolerance as a principle in the relationship between teachers and learners has been recognized by many world-renowned teachers, a special role has been played by the proponents of humanistic education that encourage to pay greater attention to learners' individual needs taking into account their interests and personal qualities, as well as to recognize the greater autonomy, creativity and initiatives of learners themselves. At the same time at trainees it is important to cultivate such qualities as political awareness, conscious participation in political life of society, ability to make a compromise at disagreements and disputes, justice in the relations with people. Dialogization of educational space and a support on cooperation as the leading type of interaction are obligatory for observance of the principle of tolerance (Obukhov & Kendirbekova, 2017).

Reardon (1997) argues that "tolerance education actually designates the education of a culture of peace that involves the development and maintenance of positive relationships, social responsibility and ethical maturity in decision-making concerning social behaviors and relationships. Tolerance is, therefore, a general-human value of education". She also points out that success in creating tolerant relationships in an educational institution can only be expected by teaching tolerance in a complex way: teachers show it by their posture practically and in various ways by creating a classroom and educational atmosphere in order to ensure learners' safety, to promote the sense self-esteem, mutual support and trust, to improve learners' communication skills, to be favourable to their self-expression. Thus, teachers who want to teach tolerance, must themselves be tolerant personalities as well as to possess pedagogical tolerance as a professional competence. Žemaitis (1997) argues that "Pedagogical tolerance requires that the teacher should be as patient and tolerant as possible". However, according to the author, pedagogical tolerance must also have limits. Only accidental misconduct or unmotivated bad behavior can be adequately assessed by the educator, but when the behavior is deliberately malicious, the limits of pedagogical tolerance end. The author emphasizes that the limits of pedagogical tolerance are much wider than the limits of tolerance in general. Therefore, the teacher must be much more tolerant for learners' behavior. A tolerant teacher is not a non-interfering teacher – she is an inclusive and caring teacher. A tolerant teacher is active, not passive, not limited to particular choices of action. Furthermore, tolerance is not primarily

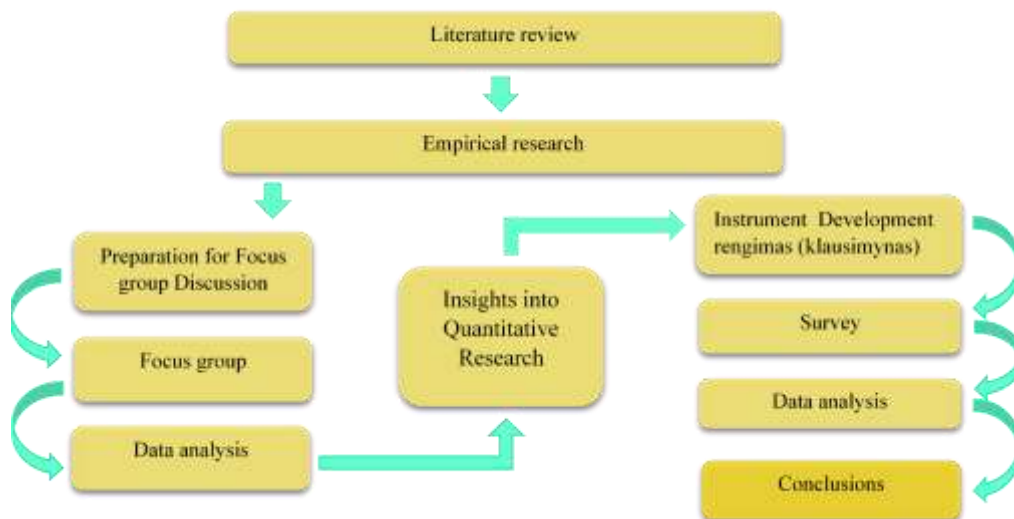
restricted to rational justifications but is expressed in the teachers' body and by emotions and empathy (Anker & Afdal, 2018).

Lithuanian researchers mostly focused on tolerance itself and the problem of tolerance limits. However, so far in Lithuania, preconditions for tolerance development have been little researched and especially at higher educational institutions.

Methodology

The stages of the research organization on preconditions of tolerance development at Marijampolė University of Applied Sciences from the point of view of students in different periods are presented in in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Research Organisation Scheme*



The model of the research was based on Charles and Mertler (2002), Bitinas (2006), Rupšienė (2007). The research methodology was grounded on humanistic theory. According to Maslow (1989), the representative of this approach, the educator seeks to teach students to live based on shared human values and in the pedagogical process tries to create an environment for students in which they can learn about values. Humanism is a system of attitudes that recognizes respect for human dignity, the right to liberty and equality. The basic idea of the theory of humanistic personalities is to unconditionally accept and respect each person as he/she is. A key feature of the humanistic approach to personality is the assumption that each personality is shaped only by its own perception of the world. This approach is inherited from existential philosophy.

In order to achieve the aim and to set the objectives of the research, the qualitative and quantitative methodology and the descriptive type of research were chosen. The following research methods were used for the study:

1. Review of scientific literature.
2. Focus group method.
3. Questionnaire survey method (Likert scale).
4. Statistical data analysis (SPSS).
5. Comparative analysis method.

Various research methods were used to better understand the aspects of tolerance education and to explore the assumptions of such education at university in a more comprehensive way. Tolerance as a value orientation is basically a qualitative feature, but the mass of information gathered through a questionnaire survey was extremely important for describing educational phenomena.

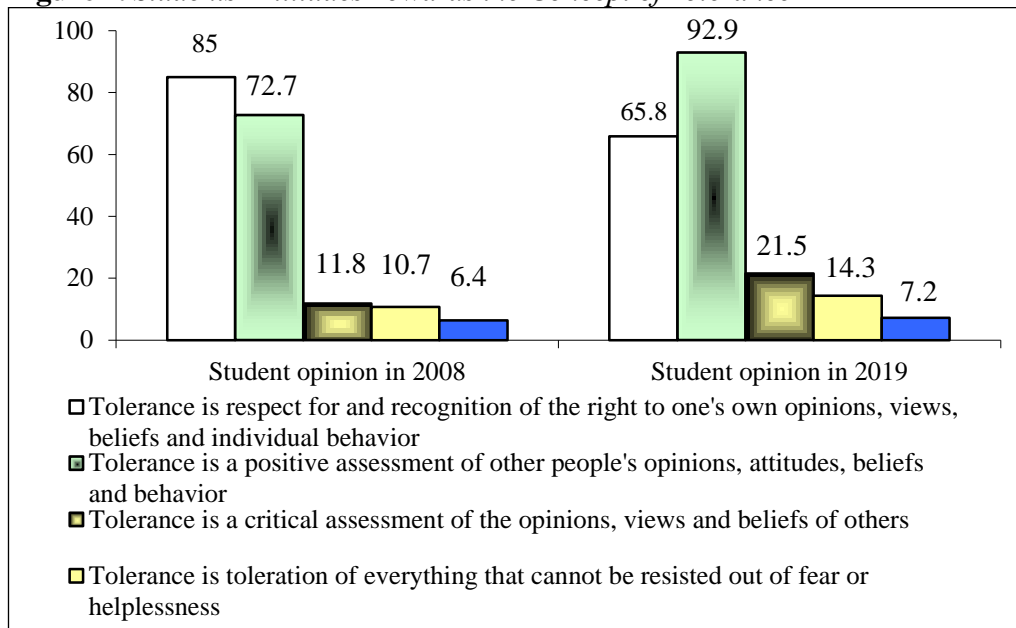
In order to investigate students' attitudes towards preconditions for tolerance development 97 students of the Faculty of Educational Studies and Social Work (40 students of Childhood education study programme and 57 students of Social work study programme) were researched at Marijampole University of Applied Sciences in 2019. In 2008, 30 students of Childhood education study programme and 38 students of Social work study programme participated in the research (in total 165). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 45 years old, 127 female students and 38 male students were participants of the research. The attitude of students of Childhood education and Social work study programmes were chosen to examine students' opinion shift over a decade on preconditions of tolerance development at one of Lithuanian universities of Applied Sciences. The data were processed by using the SPSS software package.

Results

Students' Attitudes Towards the Concept of Tolerance

When analyzing the respondents' attitude to the preconditions of tolerance development, first of all, an attempt was made to find out what concept of tolerance prevailed in the environment of Marijampole University of Applied Sciences, whether tolerance was perceived as a value. 100% of the respondents in 2019 considered tolerance as a value. There were no indecisive and unspoken opinions on this aspect expressed by the respondents.

Figure 2. Students' Attitudes Towards the Concept of Tolerance



Meanwhile, in 2008, 92.2% of the respondents indicated that they valued tolerance. 85.0 % of the respondents defined the concept of tolerance as respect for and recognition of the right to one’s own opinions, views, beliefs and individual behavior, and in 2019 the majority of the research participants described this value as a positive assessment of other people’s opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. In 2008, the minority of the respondents agreed that tolerance was indifference to other people’s opinions, views, beliefs, behavior (6.4% of all students) and toleration of everything that cannot be resisted out of fear or helplessness (10.7% of all students), similar assessments were in 2019, respectively – 7.2% and 14.3%. The data presented in Figure 2 show the respondents' attitude to the perception of the concept of tolerance according to the study programs in different periods.

Table 1. Respondents' Attitudes towards the Perception of the Concept of Tolerance in Different Periods According to the Study Programmes (%)

| Study programme | Statement about tolerance | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | Respect and recognition | Positive assessment | Critical assessment | Toleration of everything | Indifference |
| Childhood education in 2008 | 83.3 | 76.7 | 13.3 | 6.7 | 16.7 |
| Childhood education in 2019 | 60.0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Social work in 2008 | 81.6 | 76.3 | 10.5 | 15.8 | 7.9 |
| Social work in 2019 | 71.5 | 85.8 | 42.9 | 28.6 | 14.3 |

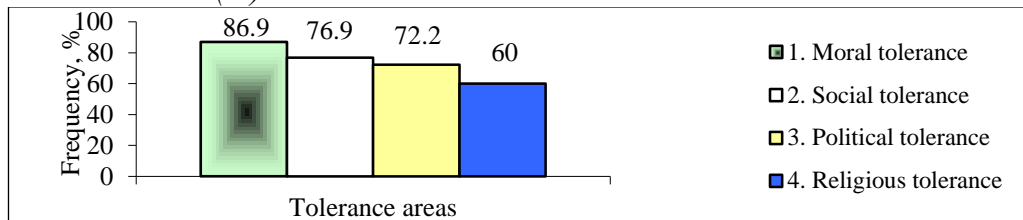
The number of respondents interpreting tolerance as a positive assessment of other people's opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behavior increased especially among the students of Childhood education programme (100%), and 85.8% of the

students of Social work study programme (see Table 1). In the latter study programme, there was a significant increase in the number of respondents who interpret tolerance as a critical assessment of others' opinions, views and beliefs (from 10.5% to 42.9%), who believe that it is possible to tolerate everything that cannot be resisted by fear or helplessness (from 15.8% increased to 28.6%, and considering tolerance as indifference to other people's opinions, views, beliefs, behavior (from 7.9% in 2008 increased to 14.3% in 2019).

Students' Attitude to the Development of Tolerance Areas

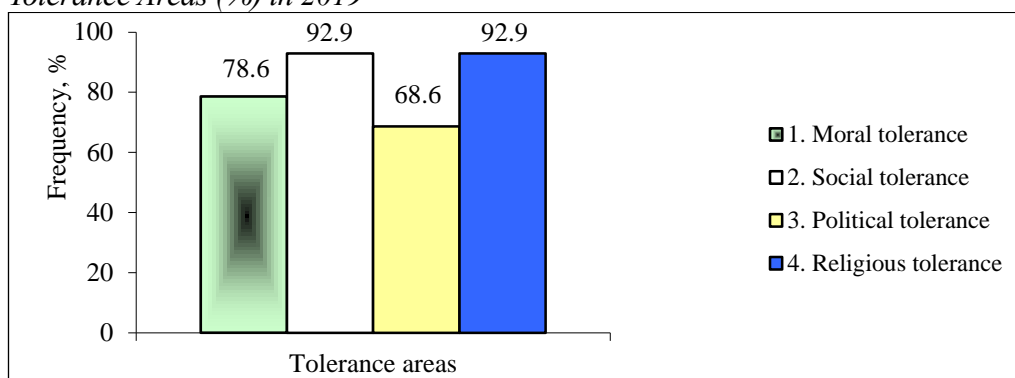
Students were presented with four statements that could reflect four areas of tolerance: political, moral, social, and religious. Most of the respondents in 2008 agreed that all of these areas were included in the educational process. Students emphasized the moral side of tolerance, since as many as 86.9% of the respondents stated that they were taught to respect and recognize human dignity at university (see Figure 3). As a second priority, the students chose the area of social tolerance. More than half of all researched students (76.9%) admitted that there were discussions on equality of citizens, regardless of their race, gender, nationality, origin, education during classes and seminars. In the third place was the aspect of political tolerance for the majority of respondents, as 72.2% of the respondents argued that human rights, freedoms, and ways to ensure them were explained at university.

Figure 3. *Students' Attitudes According to the Importance of Development of Tolerance Areas (%) in 2008*



According to the respondents' opinion, the least attention was devoted to the religious area of tolerance – 60% of all students. In this way, taking into account all respondents' attitudes, the following ranking positions in the areas of tolerance were revealed: 1st moral, 2nd social, 3rd political, 4th religious.

Figure 4. *Students' Attitudes According to the Importance of Development of Tolerance Areas (%) in 2019*



In 2019 respondents' views were slightly different: according to the most students' opinion, social and religious tolerance was most emphasized at university (see Figure 4), as equal attention was given to these tolerance development areas – 92.9%. Compared to the results of 2008 it was possible to argue that there was a particular increase in the focus on the religious dimension of tolerance development. Therefore, it could be stated that during classes and seminars at university, equality of citizens was discussed, regardless of their race, gender, nationality, origin, education, and people of other cultures and confessions were taught to be respected. From the point of view of most respondents, other areas of tolerance development were also emphasized at university.

From the point of view of the students of Childhood education study programme, the emphasis on all areas of tolerance development increased and even to three areas of development were given maximum attention during the classes and seminars – 100% (see Table 2).

Analyzing the opinions of the students of Childhood education study programme, it became clear that in this study programme the teachers paid more attention to the development of tolerance in comparison with the students of Social work study programme. It could be concluded that the reason for such a situation was caused by a different field of the study programme, i.e., much more attention was paid to tolerance development in the study programme within educational field.

Table 2. *Students' Attitudes towards the Development of Tolerance Areas in Different Periods According to their Study Programmes (%)*

| Study programme | Moral tolerance | Social tolerance | Political tolerance | Religious tolerance |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| | Teaches to respect and recognize the dignity of the individual | Deals with equality for all social groups | Interprets human rights and freedoms | Teaches respect for people of other cultures and religions |
| Childhood education in 2008 | 100 | 80.0 | 73.3 | 70.0 |
| Childhood education in | 100 | 100 | 80.0 | 100 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|
| 2019 | | | | |
| Social work in 2008 | 73.7 | 73.7 | 71.1 | 50.0 |
| Social work in 2019 | 57.2 | 85.8 | 57.2 | 85.8 |
| All students in 2008 | 86.9 | 76.9 | 72.2 | 60.0 |
| All students in 2019 | 78.6 | 92.9 | 68.6 | 92.9 |

Student Self-Assessment

Going deeper into the phenomenon of tolerance, an attempt was made to reveal the personal traits of the respondents, i.e., how students assessed themselves, whether they consider themselves tolerant individuals.

First, how students internalize the understanding of tolerance was analyzed. In this way, the respondents of this target group were asked nine questions related to their behavior and attitudes towards other people, different from their opinion, the unique behavior of others.

The obtained results of the research showed that the majority of students in 2008 described themselves and appreciated their behavior, i.e., sought consensus with other people (96.3%), respected other people’s opinions, views, beliefs, their unique behavior (91.8%), tried not to violate other people's rights (88.8%), did not blame others for their failures (98.3%), knew how not to give in to anger, not to use violence (83.2%), did not take revenge on people for wrongs (89.0%), treated people kindly in various situations (74.6%) Two thirds of students (see Table 3) thought that they avoided extremes when assessing and criticizing other people (66.9%).

The majority of respondents seeking consensus with other people and respecting different opinions and behavior in 2008 belonged to Childhood education study programme (96.7%). They also stated that they tried not to violate human rights (93.3%) and did not give in to anger or did not use violence (90.0%). It was important to note that in 2019 the level of tolerance internalization of students of this study programme increased. The absolute majority of the respondents in this study programme stated that they all sought consensus with other people (100%), tried not to violate human rights (100%), were in no rush to condemn others (100%) and avoided extremes in judging others. Among them, nobody took revenge for others for the wrongs, while in 2008 there were 16.7% of such respondents in this study programme. The level of tolerance internalization in the study programme of Social work was slightly lower, but compared to 2008 also rose. Among them, the absolute majority also stated that they sought consensus with other people (100%), tried not to violate human rights (100%) and behaved nicely in any situation (100%). However, if in 2008 there were no students in this study programme who blamed others for their failures, in 2019 there were 14.2% of such respondents. In summary, it could be concluded that the study programme influenced the internalization of tolerance, although most students considered themselves tolerant, i.e., sought consensus, respected the beliefs and views of others, did not violate the rights of the individual, did not

blame others for their failures and did not rush to condemn others, did not give in to anger, did not use violence and did not take revenge for the harm done to them.

Table 3. *Students' Opinion According to Tolerance Internalization (%)*

| Study programme | Seek consensus with other people | Respect different opinions, behaviors | Strive not to violate human rights | Do not rush to condemn others | Do not give in to anger, do not use coercion | Treat other people nicely | Avoid extremes in judging others | Revenge for wrongs | Blame others for their own failures |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Childhood education in 2008 | 96.7 | 96.7 | 93.3 | 83.3 | 90.0 | 83.3 | 73.3 | 16.7 | 3.3 |
| Childhood education in 2019 | 100 | 80.0 | 100 | 100 | 80.0 | 80.0 | 100 | 0 | 20.0 |
| Social work in 2008 | 94.8 | 86.8 | 84.2 | 78.9 | 76.3 | 65.8 | 60.5 | 5.3 | 0 |
| Social work in 2019 | 100 | 71.5 | 100 | 14.3 | 87.6 | 100 | 42.9 | 14.3 | 14.2 |
| All students in 2008 | 96.3 | 91.8 | 88.8 | 81.1 | 83.2 | 74.6 | 66.9 | 11.0 | 1.7 |
| All students in 2019 | 100 | 75.8 | 100 | 57.2 | 83.8 | 90.0 | 71.5 | 7.2 | 17.1 |

Comparing attitudes towards their behavior among students of different genders, it was observed that female respondents more often than male respondents avoided extremes in criticizing others, but not all and not always treated other people kindly and beautifully. Such behavior also differed between students of different age groups. Older (26-year-old) students were more likely than younger (up to 25-year-old) students to state that they avoided extremes in judging others and behaved kindly in various situations. In addition, some students in the youth group (under the age of 25) admitted that they did not always treat other people kindly and beautifully.

It was possible to conclude that, regardless of the study programme, age differences and gender, most students tried to be tolerant, i.e., sought consensus, respected beliefs and views of other people, did not violate the rights of the individual, did not blame others for their failures and did not rush to condemn others, did not give in to anger, did not use violence and did not take revenge for the harm done to them (see Table 4). On the other hand, almost two thirds of all students in 2008, regardless of their study programme, age and gender differences, would like to be more tolerant personalities (61.9%) and believed that it was possible to learn tolerance at university (59.9%).

Table 4. *Students' Attitudes towards Self-Assessment in Different Periods According to Study Programmes (%)*

| Study programme | Would like to be a more tolerant personality | | | It is possible to learn tolerance | | |
|-----------------------------|--|----------|---------|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|
| | Agree | Disagree | Unaware | Agree | Disagree | Unaware |
| Childhood education in 2008 | 63.3 | 16.7 | 20.0 | 56.7 | 23.3 | 20.0 |
| Childhood education in 2019 | 20.0 | 40.0 | 40.0 | 60.0 | 20.0 | 20.0 |
| Social work in | 60.5 | 15.8 | 23.7 | 63.2 | 21.1 | 15.8 |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 2008 | | | | | | |
| Social work in 2019 | 57.2 | 42.9 | 0 | 42.9 | 42.9 | 14.3 |
| All students in 2008 | 61.9 | 16.3 | 21.9 | 59.9 | 22.2 | 17.9 |
| All students in 2019 | 38.6 | 41.5 | 20.0 | 51.5 | 31.5 | 17.3 |

In 2019, respectively 38.6% of the respondents would like to be more tolerant, and 51.5% of them believed in the possibility to learn this at university.

Expression of Tolerance in Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching methods are important in developing tolerance, so the aim was to find out how educational activities for students were organized at university.

The majority of students in 2008 agreed that teachers used a discussion method during classes and seminars (98.7% of all students) and that they often had to collaborate with each other when performing various tasks (87.7% of all students). However, it was observed that in 2019 the focus on this training activity slightly decreased, i.e., 92.9% of respondents indicated that the teachers used the method of cultural discussion, and 70.0% of respondents noted that the teachers used a collaborative group approach (see Table 5). On the other hand, the results of the research revealed that in 2019 slightly more teachers organized teaching activities in teams in the process of education (85.8% of all students, while in 2008 there were 68.2% of respondents stating that). The focus on project activities also increased from 57.9% in 2008 up to 65.8% in 2019.

Table 5. *Students' Opinions on the Use of Teaching Methods in Different Periods (%)*

| Study programme | Cultural, reasoned discussion | Collaboration in student groups | Sufficient training activities in teams | Sufficient attention to project activities |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Childhood education in 2008 | 100 | 83.3 | 60.0 | 50.0 |
| Childhood education in 2019 | 100 | 40.0 | 100 | 60.0 |
| Social work in 2008 | 97.4 | 92.1 | 76.3 | 65.8 |
| Social work in 2019 | 85.8 | 100 | 71.5 | 71.5 |
| All students in 2008 | 98.7 | 87.7 | 68.2 | 57.9 |
| All students in 2019 | 92.9 | 70.0 | 85.8 | 65.8 |

The lack of educational activity organization in groups and teams was felt more by older students (from 26 years of age) than by younger students (under 25 years of age). No gender differences were observed. However, comparing the two study programmes, it was possible to see that in the educational process of implementing Social work study programme in 2019 as well as in 2008 discussions and group work methods predominated, while in Childhood education study programme in 2019 teachers' attention to group work significantly decreased (from 83.3% in 2008 to 40.0% in 2019), but time spent on teamwork decreased from 60.0% in 2008 increased to 100% in 2019.

Based on the research data, it could be stated that various forms of educational activities - reasoned discussion, cooperation with each other, group work, project activities - were organized quite often at university.

However, a significant proportion of the students researched expressed their additional preferences, i.e., they would like to see as many active teaching methods as possible in the teaching process and wished the teachers to pay even more attention to developing tolerance. Thus, half of all students wanted even more active teaching methods in the study process (55.1%), and that teachers to pay more attention to the development of tolerance (51.9%).

Influence of Educational Environment on Students' Attitude to the Preconditions for Tolerance Development

In order to go deeper into the preconditions of tolerance development at university, the aim was to find out the influence of the educational environment on the development of tolerance. To this end, two blocks of environmental interaction were identified: the interaction of students and teachers, and the interaction of students themselves. The interactions among the participants of this environment showed the influence of the educational environment on tolerance development.

Interaction Between Students and Teachers

Adherence to the principles of tolerance is first and foremost reflected in human interaction. Therefore, in the further analysis, an attempt was made to reveal the peculiarities of communication between students and teachers, whether their relationship was really based on each other's respect, trust and responsibility.

To this end, ten statements related to student-teacher interactions were identified (see Table 6) that could reveal students' attitudes and allowed for comparison.

According to the 2008 research data, it was obvious that the majority of teachers respected students' opinions, views, beliefs (69.0%), gave advice and suggestions on how to complete tasks (80.7%), paid enough attention to each student (86.6%), promoted their sense of self-esteem (72.2%), encouraged and supported students (70.6%), reasoned their criticism (61.5%). However, as many as two-fifths (41.2%) of all students admitted that teachers tended to moralize. Only a small proportion (36.9%) of all students agreed with the statement that teachers devoted sufficient time to foster communication habits among students. There were also teachers at the university who were annoyed by the clothing style and manners of some students (15.0%) and downgraded students for unusual behavior (18.7%). In 2019, the percentage of teachers who promoted students' sense of self-esteem decreased significantly (from 72.2% in 2008 to 58.6% in 2019) and the number of teachers who reasonably criticized students (from 61.5% in 2008 to 31.5% in 2019). It should be noted, that still there were teachers who were annoyed by the clothing styles and manners of some students (7.2%), and lowered the grade for students for their unusual behavior (1.8%).

Table 6. *Distribution of Attitudes Towards the Interaction Between Students and Teachers in Different Periods (%)*

| Comparative statements about the interaction between students and teachers | Percentage of students who agreed with the statement in 2008 | Percentage of students who agreed with the statement in 2019 |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Students are given tips and suggestions on how to complete the tasks | 80.7 | 82.9 |
| 2. Teachers encourage and support students | 70.6 | 68.6 |
| 3. Teachers respect students' opinions, views and beliefs | 69.0 | 68.6 |
| 4. Teachers promote students' sense of self-esteem | 72.2 | 58.6 |
| 5. Teachers criticize students by making arguments | 61.5 | 31.5 |
| 6. Teachers are annoyed by the clothing styles and manners of some students | 15.0 | 7.2 |
| 7. Teachers lower the grade for students for their unusual behavior | 18.7 | 1.8 |
| 8. Teachers tend to moralize | 41.2 | 31.5 |
| 9. Teachers devote enough time to foster communication habits among students | 36.9 | 30.0 |
| 10. Teachers pay enough attention to each student, they do not ignore them | 86.6 | 75.8 |

Assessing the opinions of the respondents at different times, it could be concluded that the relationship between teachers and students was based on respect, cooperation and tolerance.

Student Interaction

Further deepening the influence of the educational environment on the development of student tolerance, an attempt was made to reveal the interaction between students. As expected, most students not only communicated with each other but also collaborated with each other. 68.3% of students indicated that they received peer advice and assistance in carrying out their tasks in 2008 (see Table 7). This percentage increased slightly in 2019 (up to 72.9%). In 2008, almost two-thirds (57.9%) of all students and 75.8% in 2019 stated that their peers showed enough attention, listened carefully, and that they felt each other's support. Comparing the same study programmes in different periods, no significant changes were observed, except that there were no fellow students in Social work study programme who criticized without arguments (in 2008 there were 26.3% of them). In this study programme, the percentage of students receiving peer support increased (from 63.2% in 2008 to 85.8% in 2019) and attention (from 52.6% in 2008 to 71.5% in 2019). It should be noted that no significant deviations from the general opinion were observed between students of different age groups and genders. Although many of the researched students cooperated with each other, they received the respect and peer support, especially the students of childhood education study programme, but the majority (77.5%) of all respondents in 2008, and in 2019 more than half of the respondents (55.8%), however, wished even more respect and friendliness in student relationships.

Table 7. *Students' Opinions on the Signs of Interaction According to Study Programmes (%)*

| Study programme | Receive peer assistance | Receive peer attention | Feel peer support | Receive peer respect | Receive non-argumentative peer criticism | Would like more respect in the relationship |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| Childhood education in 2008 | 73.3 | 63.3 | 60.0 | 66.7 | 23.3 | 73.3 |
| Childhood education in 2019 | 60.0 | 80.0 | 60.0 | 60.0 | 40.0 | 40.0 |
| Social work in 2008 | 63.2 | 52.6 | 42.1 | 44.7 | 26.3 | 81.6 |
| Social work in 2019 | 85.8 | 71.5 | 42.9 | 42.9 | 0 | 71.5 |
| All students in 2008 | 68.3 | 57.9 | 51.1 | 55.7 | 24.8 | 77.5 |
| All students in 2019 | 72.9 | 75.8 | 51.5 | 51.5 | 20.0 | 55.8 |

Thus, it could be argued that student interaction was based on respect, support, and positive appreciation of each other, which formed the main preconditions for developing tolerance within oneself regardless of social demographic (age and gender) factors.

Conclusions

The empirical research, described in this article, elucidates the aspects of tolerance development at the higher educational institution. Interrelations and educational activities of all participants in the educational process determine the preconditions for tolerance development at Marijampole university of Applied Sciences. Active teaching methods are based on communication and cooperation, which creates the conditions for the development of tolerance. At Marijampole University of Applied Sciences, teachers use active teaching methods and they are the predominant form of teaching. The educational environment is important for tolerance development. At Marijampole University of Applied Sciences, the mutual relations between the main participants of the interaction - students and lecturers - are based on respect and trust. This creates excellent conditions for the spread of tolerance, as only tolerant teachers can teach tolerance. Still there are cases where teachers criticize students without arguments (31.5%), teachers are annoyed by students' clothing or manners (7.2%), teachers reduce students' grades for unusual behavior (1.8%), teachers tend to moralize (31.5%). There could also be more respect and support in the relationships between the students themselves, especially among those studying Social work study programme.

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