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Development of tolerance among parents of students with special educational needs

In the article the very important issue of parental attitudes towards children with special educational needs was examined, the number of which increases every year. The legislative framework of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in adherence to international instruments safeguarding children's rights, has incorporated the notion of children with special educational needs and the principle of equitable entitlement to high-quality education for all students, considering their individual capabilities. Contemporary environments for children increasingly manifest malevolence, bitterness, and aggressiveness. This surge can be attributed to various factors such as mutual intolerance, cultural selfishness disseminated through mass media, and the familial and social spheres influencing schools. The primary objective of this study was to assess and ascertain the level of tolerance among parents. The investigation involved 32 parents of students attending a specialized boarding school in Taldykorgan, Kazakhstan. Specifically, 16 parents participated in a specialized course designed for parents of children with special educational needs. The assessment of parental tolerance commenced with pre and post-experimental phase testing, utilizing a self-translated questionnaire titled "Everyday Multicultural Competencies/Revised Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy" (Mallinckrodt, et al., 2014). The questionnaire comprises 10 statements that are assessed on a seven-point Likert scale.

Keywords: tolerance, development, parents, students, special educational needs, interpersonal relationships, competence, experiment.

Introduction

In contemporary society, there is a persistent trend indicating a rise in the number of children with special educational needs. According to statistics from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the current count stands at 139,887 individuals in Kazakhstan classified as having special educational needs. This includes 37,970 preschool children, 95,497 students enrolled in general secondary education institutions, 2,900 students — in colleges, and 3,520 — in higher educational institutions.

The essential values and principles crucial for collective survival and unrestricted development, such as the ethics and strategy of nonviolence, the concept of tolerance towards diverse perspectives, values, and cultures, the promotion of dialogue and mutual understanding, and the pursuit of mutually acceptable compromises, are emphasized. The family is accorded a central role in the socialization process of children with special educational needs. Within the family, a child gains initial exposure to interactions with the external world, acquires communicative skills, learns various forms of interpersonal interaction, and develops behavior and appropriate responses.

Research conducted by both Kazakh and international scholars underscores a notable oversight regarding the issue of parental attitudes towards their children. It is evident that within the family, a child garners primary experiences in interacting with others, receives lessons in communication, learns communication techniques, and develops the capacity to respect the opinions of others and treat loved ones with respect. Consequently, there is a vital necessity to instruct parents on the manifestation of tolerance towards their children.

The concept of tolerance spans a diverse range, with each culture offering distinct definitions. Despite variations, these often converge on the ability to accept a person or phenomenon without protest, alongside values such as respect for the freedom of others, allowance, recognition, generosity, patience, a willingness to reconcile, and acceptance of others. The various interpretations of tolerance underscore its critical status as a social value, a norm in social life, a guiding principle in interpersonal relationships, and a personal quality. At its core, the fundamental requirement of tolerance is oriented towards recognizing another person as equal, encapsulated internationally in the phrase "we are all different from each other, but we are all equal".

Konovalova's examination of the concept of "tolerance" uncovered a pedagogical interpretation, defining it as an integrative quality of the personality. In this context, tolerance is viewed as a system that expresses itself through tolerant relations with the surrounding world [1].

Establishing balance in interpersonal relationships and bringing people together, tolerance, as an emotional attitude, does not imply consent, disregard or indifference to all kinds of issues and concessions regarding one's own beliefs and self-identity, but acknowledging differences and showing tolerance for different ideas and identities [2].

Tolerance is the willingness to have opinions or behaviors that someone does not like or disagree with [3]. Tolerance is the acceptance of differences between people. Being tolerant means realizing that people are often different from expectations [4]. Also, tolerance is respect for another belief, another opinion. The current problems of a multicultural society show that tolerance alone is not enough for sustainable coexistence; it is necessary to learn to respect different groups. The appropriate degree of tolerance is the strength of interpersonal relationships and a necessary prerequisite for it [5].

So, tolerance, along with freedom of conscience and expression, is listed as the main component of the universal dignity of a person. Tolerance primarily reflects the attitude or quality of a person towards tolerance [6].

"Tolerance is the knowledge that each person is unique". This short but very deep idea is very important in terms of managing and developing a multicultural team. The leader of a multicultural group can use resilience in situations such as [7]:

a) when new solutions and opportunities are found that allow all members of the group to express their (unique) opinions, fantasies, suggestions without any criticism;

b) to create a flexible work environment that enables each participant to work at an individual pace, employing their unique practical methods and steps, all while working towards specific goals;

c) by protecting the creative atmosphere and establishing relationships in the group, allow team members to ask others and their leader about understanding, patience, and preparation, and ask at the same time;

d) recognize small mistakes in the work and communication between the members of the group when improving the effectiveness of the group, but insist on compliance with rules, norms, expected results, etc. without a compass.

We posit that the aforementioned capabilities are indispensable not only in the administration of a specific group but also in engagements with particular teams or adults, particularly parents of children with special educational needs. We contend that educational and nurturing processes should intertwine with the principles of trust, patience, and respect to yield optimal outcomes. In this regard, we identify parents as a crucial bridge, and we emphasize the significance of cultivating their competence in tolerance for the effective realization of these principles.

"In the present day, there is a pressing need to cultivate a culture of tolerance right from the initial days of education. Global education aims to instill in students a sense of responsibility and awareness for both the current and future state of the world they inhabit. This educational approach is grounded in the understanding that prejudices against foreign cultures often stem from people's insufficient knowledge about other societies, their relationships, and their respective national cultures and traditions. The formation of tolerance is a very long process and it should be started as early as possible. An adult stands out as a model, therefore, a huge responsibility is assigned to him in the formation of tolerance. It is necessary that adults themselves show a tolerant attitude by personal example and show it in behavior" [8]. Actively involving teachers and parents in instilling tolerance among schoolchildren serves to engage their pedagogical stance and prompts a reevaluation of adults' own attitudes and behaviors. It is crucial that the knowledge acquired is emotionally imbued, firmly rooted in the child, and translated into motivating factors for actions. Subsequently, the child becomes self-aware of their behavior, engages in analysis, and evaluates it. In this process, the adult's role is subtle yet essential, serving as an invisible presence with a coordinating and guiding function. Adults should assist children in cultivating positive self-esteem and the capacity for introspection regarding their actions. We believe that fostering tolerance is a journey towards developing a liberated and humane personality, and it should unfold through the application of a humanistic, personality-oriented approach.

Indeed, tolerance can be considered a manifestation of general cultural competence. It serves as the foundation for an individual's personal development, rooted in a value-based approach towards people. Essentially, a person, guided by their life principles, respects diverse perspectives, concepts, and actions of others, demonstrating an ability to construct relationships based on differing points of view [9].

It is crucial to highlight that tolerance is not synonymous with indifference or a passive acceptance of everything. Instead, it represents an active and conscious stance taken by the individual. Merely overlooking the uniqueness and vulnerabilities of others or passively observing ongoing processes and phenomena does not qualify as tolerance. Tolerance involves actively advocating for human rights and dignified opposition against any form of discrimination.

In the realm of modern pedagogy, the goal extends beyond merely teaching a child to respect "others" and fostering a general attitude of acceptance. Rather, the aim is to instill in the individual a specific quality characterized as active tolerance, wherein the person actively defends human rights and protests against any form of discrimination in a dignified manner.

Methods and materials

The initial assessment of parental tolerance levels in the study involved using the "Everyday Multicultural Competencies/Revised Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy" questionnaire (Mallinckrodt, et al., 2014) [10]. This assessment took place before the experimental phase commenced. Specific items from the factors "Cultural Openness and Desire to Learn", "Anxiety and Lack of Multicultural Self-Efficacy", and "Empathic Perspective-Taking" were chosen and translated into Kazakh. The questionnaire comprised 10 statements, each assessed on a six-point Likert scale. Exploratory factor analysis, utilizing the principal components method, suggested that the optimal model for the collected data is a three-factor structure. Employing the promax rotation method, this three-factor structure accounted for 27.61 % of the total variance. Confirmatory factor analysis further validated the three-factor structure of the questionnaire, with all items exhibiting acceptable loadings on their respective factors (0.306 - 0.450). The model fitness indices were satisfactory ($\chi2$ (32) = 32.356 (P = 0.449); RMSEA = 0.011 (0.0 - 0.079); CFI = 0.994; TLI = 0.991; SRMR = 0.062), indicating both the structural validity of the construct and the alignment of the theoretical three-factor model with empirical data. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was affirmed by the total coefficient α (0.645 (0.524 - 0.745)), the half-split coefficient (0.720 (0.574 - 0.816)), and the average of correlated points (0.21). These metrics collectively suggest a satisfactory level of internal consistency for the questionnaire.

The study involved parents whose children were enrolled in a specialized boarding school in Taldykorgan. Participation was both voluntary and anonymous, with approval from the local ethics committee for the research protocol. The potential participants were screened for eligibility criteria at the recruitment stage. To be included in the research, individuals had to be: (a) a parent of a student with special educational needs living with them full-time, (b) aged at least 18 years, and (c) able to read Russian or Kazakh. Recruitment occurred in autumn 2023, with 37 individuals invited through social media and teacher groups. However, only 32 parents (23 females, 9 males) ultimately completed the electronic questionnaire twice. The survey forms were emailed to the parents via the Qualtrics platform.

Results and discussions

The findings from the survey conducted prior to the initiation of the experimental exposure are outlined in Table 1.

T a b l e 1

Descriptive statistics for the scales of the questionnaire before the experiment

Factors	μ (σ)	
	Control group (n = 16)	Experimental group (n = 16)
I. Cultural openness	4,73 (0,81)	4,75 (0,73)
Item 1	4,69 (0,87)	4,71 (0,55)
Item 2	4,76 (0,71)	4,73 (0,78)
Item 3	4,73 (0,84)	4,80 (0,84)
II. Interaction	4,72 (0,90)	4,61 (0,76)
Item 1	4,67 (0,83)	4,60 (0,78)
Item 2	4,82 (1,03)	4,64 (0,80)
Item 3	4,73 (0,86)	4,62 (0,81)
Item 4	4,64 (0,88)	4,58 (0,66)
III. Empathy	4,69 (0,88)	4,61 (0,81)
Item 1	4,76 (0,80)	4,82 (0,81)
Item 2	4,58 (0,89)	4,42 (0,66)
Item 3	4,73 (0,94)	4,60 (0,91)

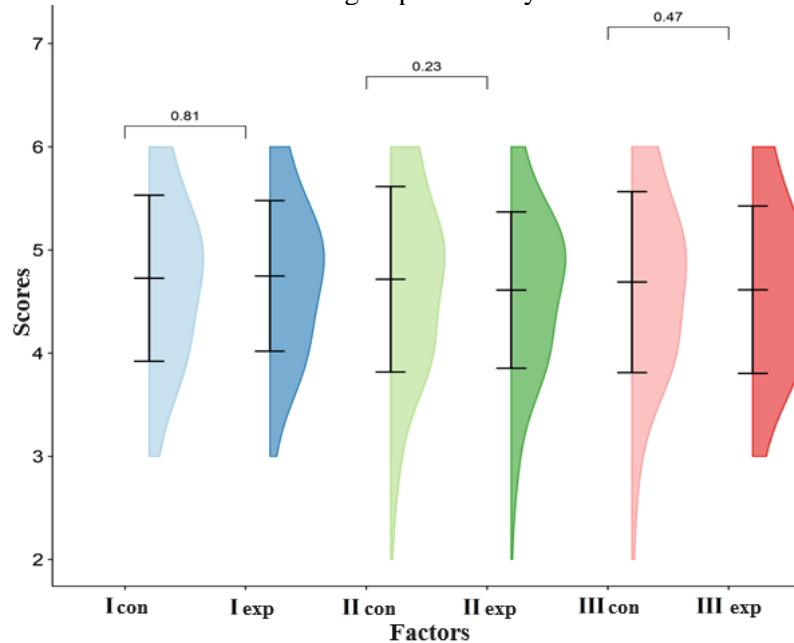Figure 1 represents the differences between groups for every factor.

Figure 1. Values according to the scales of the questionnaire before the experiment

The curved area visually represents the density of the distribution of numerical data. Within this, the black segment indicates the mean (center marker) and standard deviation (side markers). Above the square brackets, you can find the P values, derived from a two-sample t-test.

Therefore, prior to the commencement of the experiment, there were no statistically significant differences in tolerance observed between the study groups.

The post-experimental survey results were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis, which affirmed the appropriateness of the questionnaire's three-dimensional structure. The items displayed satisfactory loads on their respective factors, as illustrated in the diagram portraying the posteriori model of the questionnaire's structure (Fig. 2).
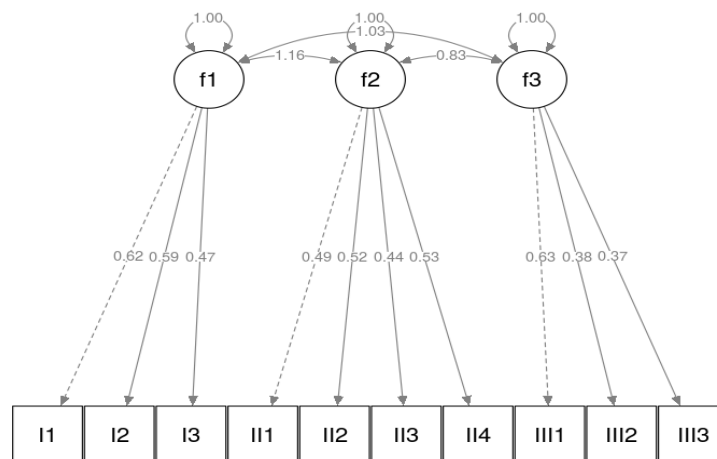

Figure 2. A posteriori model of the questionnaire structure

The factor loads of points (squares) on factors (circles) are depicted at the center of the arrows. While not all model fitness indices were deemed satisfactory ($\chi 2$ (32) = 55.854 (P = 0.006); RMSEA = 0.091 (0.049 - 0.130); CFI = 0.852; TLI = 1.122; SRMR = 0.073), the overall coefficient α (0.777 (0.701 - 0.840)), the half-splitting coefficient (0.784 (0.671 - 0.858)), and the average of correlated points (0.33) indicate the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The survey results conducted at the conclusion of the experimental exposure are detailed in Table 2.

Descriptive statistics for the scales of the "Everyday Multicultural Competencies/Revised Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy" questionnaire after the experiment provide a summary of key measures, such as means, standard deviations, and other relevant statistics, to describe the distribution and characteristics of the collected data

Factors	μ (σ)	
	Control group (n = 16)	Experimental group (n = 16)
I. Cultural openness	4,69 (0,81)	4,94 (0,78)
Item 1	4,64 (0,83)	4,98 (0,78)
Item 2	4,78 (0,70)	4,96 (0,74)
Item 3	4,64 (0,88)	4,89 (0,83)
II. Interaction	4,66 (0,85)	4,81 (0,74)
Item 1	4,62 (0,83)	4,71 (0,79)
Item 2	4,73 (0,94)	4,84 (0,74)
Item 3	4,67 (0,85)	4,82 (0,78)
Item 4	4,60 (0,81)	4,87 (0,66)
III. Empathy	4,71 (0,70)	4,79 (0,78)
Item 1	5,00 (0,67)	5,09 (0,76)
Item 2	4,58 (0,72)	4,69 (0,67)
Item 3	4,56 (0,62)	4,58 (0,81)

For the survey results of each respondent, an arithmetic mean was calculated, which was interpreted as low (1-2 points), average (3-4 points) or high (5-6 points).

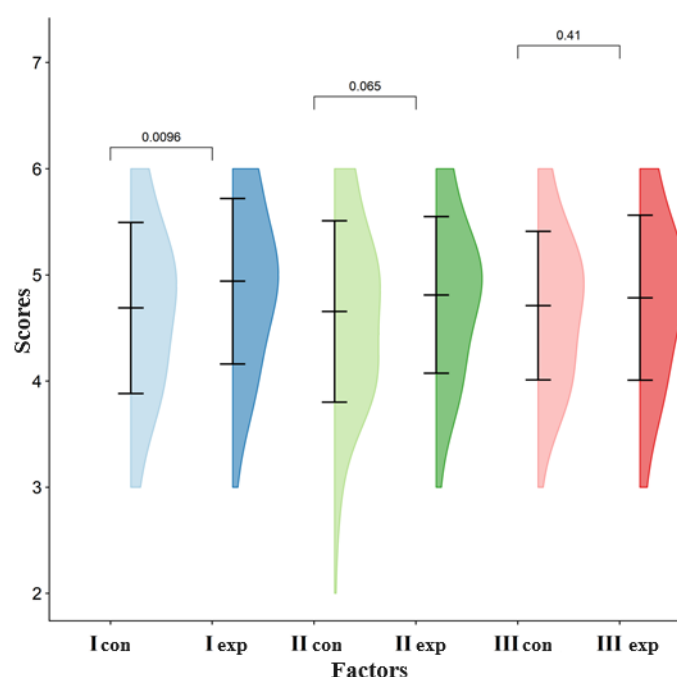Figure 3 represents the differences between groups for every factor.

Figure 3. The values based on the scales of the questionnaire after the experiment.

The curved area in the figure represents the density of the numerical data distribution. Within this, the black segment showcases the mean (center marker) and standard deviation (side markers). Positioned above the square brackets are the P values, obtained from a two-sample t-test.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the study conducted a comprehensive examination of parental tolerance levels, particularly among parents of children with special educational needs. The "Everyday Multicultural Competencies/Revised Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy" questionnaire (Mallinckrodt, et al., 2014) was employed as a reliable tool for assessing parental attitudes. Prior to the experimental phase, a preliminary assessment was

conducted, incorporating factors such as "Cultural Openness and Desire to Learn", "Anxiety and Lack of Multicultural Self-Efficacy", and "Empathic Perspective-Taking".

The application of exploratory factor analysis revealed that a three-factor model was optimal, explaining 27.61 % of the total variance. Confirmatory factor analysis further validated this structure, demonstrating that the selected factors were well-aligned with the collected empirical data.

Significantly, the study confirmed the internal consistency of the questionnaire, as evidenced by satisfactory values for the total coefficient α, the half-split coefficient, and the average of correlated points. These findings affirm the questionnaire's reliability in consistently assessing parental tolerance. In essence, the findings suggest that the selected questionnaire is a robust instrument for assessing parental tolerance. The identified factors provide a nuanced understanding of the elements contributing to parental attitudes, laying the groundwork for targeted interventions or educational programs aimed at enhancing parental tolerance, especially within the context of children with special educational needs.

Consequently, individuals who underwent a specialized course in the designated group rated their tolerance level significantly higher (P < 0.01) on the cultural openness scale compared to respondents in the control group. No statistically significant differences were observed between the study groups on the other scales. These study findings can serve as a diagnostic foundation for crafting tailored programs and for individual interventions when working with parents of children.

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Ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері бар оқушылардың ата-аналары арасында толеранттылықты дамыту

Мақалада саны жыл сайын артып келе жатқан ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері бар балаларға ата-аналық қарым-қатынастың өте маңызды мәселесі қарастырылған. Бүкіл өркениет жалпыадамзаттық моральға және әлеуметтік әділеттілік заңдылықтарына сәйкес білім беру шеңберінде балаларды кемсітуге, құқықтарын бұзуға жол берілмейтінін түсінді. Қазақстан Республикасының заңнамасымен Балалардың құқықтарын қорғау саласындағы халықаралық құжаттарға сәйкес ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері бар балалар ұғымы және жеке мүмкіндіктерді ескере отырып, барлық оқушылар үшін сапалы білім алуға тең құқықтар қағидаты енгізілді. Бүгінгі таңда мейірімсіздік, ашуланшақтық және «агрессивтілік» балалар ортасында жиі кездеседі. Мұның көптеген себептері бар. Бұқаралық ақпарат құралдары, балалардың әлеуметтік ортасы, отбасы арқылы өзара төзбеушілік пен мәдени өзімшілдік

мектеп жасындағы балаларда кең таралған. Зерттеудің мақсаты — ата-аналардың төзімділік дағдыларын бағалау және анықтау. Зерттеу Талдықорған қаласындағы (Қазақстан) мамандандырылған мектеп-интернат оқушыларының 32 ата-анасының қатысуымен жүргізілді. Олардың 16-сы арнайы түрде ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері бар оқушылардың ата-аналарына арналған және ұйымдастырылған арнайы курсқа қатысты. Зерттелген ата-аналардың толеранттылығын бағалаудың бастапқы нүктесі зерттеудің эксперименттік кезеңіне дейін және одан кейінгі мәліметтермен, яғни «Күнделікті көпмәдениетті құзыреттер/қайта қаралған этномәдени эмпатия шкаласымен» (Mallinckrodt et al., 2014) дәйектелді. Сауалнама Лайкерттің жеті балдық шкаласы бойынша бағаланған 10 мәлімдемені қамтиды.

Кілт сөздер: толеранттылық, даму, ата-аналар, оқушылар, ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері, өзара қарым-қатынас, құзыреттілік, эксперимент.

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Развитие толерантности среди родителей учащихся с особыми образовательными потребностями

В статье рассмотрена очень важная проблема родительского отношения к детям с особыми образовательными потребностями, число которых увеличивается с каждым годом. Законодательством Республики Казахстан в соответствии с международными документами в области защиты прав детей введены понятие детей с особыми образовательными потребностями и принцип равных прав на получение качественного образования для всех учащихся с учетом индивидуальных возможностей. Сегодня недоброжелательность, обидчивость и агрессивность становятся все более распространенными в детской среде. Для этого есть много причин. Взаимная нетерпимость и культурный эгоизм через средства массовой информации, социальную среду детей, семью все больше проникают в школу. Авторами отмечается важность семьи, благодаря которой осуществляется социализация ребенка с особыми потребностями, но семьи часто не готовы к взаимодействию со своими детьми с особыми образовательными потребностями. Цель данной работы — оценить и определить навыки толерантности родителей. Исследование проводилось с участием 32 родителей учащихся Специализированной школы-интерната в городе Талдыкоргане (Казахстан). 16 из них были зачислены на специальный курс, который был создан и организован для родителей детей с особыми образовательными потребностями. Отправной точкой для оценки толерантности исследуемых родителей является «повседневная мультикультурная компетенция/пересмотренная шкала этнокультурной эмпатии» (Mallinckrodt et al., 2014) до и после экспериментального периода исследования. Опрос включает 10 утверждений, оцененных по семибалльной шкале Лайкерта.

Ключевые слова: толерантность, развитие, родители, учащиеся, особые образовательные потребности, межличностные взаимоотношения, компетенция, эксперимент.

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