

SOCIAL SELF-DETERMINATION OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT IN THE CONTEXT OF HUMANIZATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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Abstract. *We regard the social self-determination of senior secondary school students as the basis for their education as citizens of Latvia and citizens of Europe. This underpins the need to actualize the problem of social self-determination. The aim of the research is to determine the essence and structure of social self-determination of senior secondary school students and to identify the conditions for the development of social self-determination in secondary school students in the process of education. Research methods include observation, questionnaire, survey, comparison, experiment, and mathematical statistics. Research results are the following:*

- *as a result of the study, there was determined the content and structure of social self-determination as a systemic personal formation, representing the relationship of two components: citizenship and intercultural identity;*
- *the conditions for the development of social self-determination have been identified, including the humanization of the educational process based on a certain system of moral values and beliefs;*
- *the key strategy for organizing the educational process has been suggested: changing the content of education by introducing a cultural component, which would contribute to a change in all structural components, from the goal to the result;*
- *this implies a change in the procedural aspect of education: the organization of a personal cultural dialogue; the dialogue is regarded as the basis for communication in the pedagogical process;*
- *the key values of secondary school students were determined in the process of a fact-finding experiment.*

Keywords: *citizenship, intercultural identity, social self-determination.*

Introduction

Research topicality. The study presents the pedagogical foundations for the development of social self-determination in secondary school students in accordance with the principles of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2016). It defines the context and structure of social self-determination - a complex personality trait of a high-school student, which makes it possible for a teacher to work out a technology for the educational process in order to develop social self-determination in secondary school students.

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The essence and structure of social self-determination

Serious socio-political changes in the European Union have led to the development of a new culture. This is due to the development of the integrity of European culture where national identity becomes the basis for intercultural identity. It has become necessary to educate European citizens on the basis of a system of universal key values, which thereby implies a single educational space with regard to meanings, values, and communication (Chehlova, 2006). The search for an optimum model of education in Europe, corresponding to a new type of culture and meeting the current needs of modern civilization: the development of intercultural identity, civic responsibility, and professional self-determination, has intensified (Matsumoto, 2007).

In the aspect of social-political changes, the issue of social self-determination has acquired a particular relevance. The methodological foundations of self-determination were laid in the works of L.S. Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1972). According to Vygotsky, the self-determination of personality is regarded as an important factor in the mental development of an individual, and it is a new formation at the period of adolescence. Vygotsky's conclusion that self-determination is a complex personality trait, an integrative personality formation is important. The senior secondary school age when students can solve problems concerning the relationship between 'I' and 'society' to define

themselves in society, which is only possible on the basis of values and personal meanings, is a sensitive period for social self-determination (Vygotsky, 1972). Modern researchers consider self-determination as a process and result of a person's choice of goals and means of self-determination in specific circumstances of life (Dubrovina, 1987; Elkonin, 1989; Gilbukh, 1995; Neimatov, 2002; Ross, 2006).

Self-determination is the central mechanism for the formation of personal maturity, which involves a person's conscious choice of his/her place in the system of social relations. The ultimate goal of personal self-determination is individual's ability and willingness to actively make moral choices. However, self-determination is not only a process of choice, but also a continuous process of acquisition, formation, and development of a person and, consequently, their life trajectory. Vygotsky singles out three aspects of self-determination in adolescence: personal self-determination, professional self-determination, and social self-determination. The subject of our research is social self-determination. Researchers distinguish two components in the content of social self-determination: citizenship and intercultural identity (Alijevs, 2021).

Citizenship represents the socio-political aspect of social self-determination. As a systemic formation, citizenship includes the following personality traits: civic engagement, political culture, civic duty, civic responsibility, patriotism, and internationalism.

Intercultural identity expresses the moral and legal aspects of social self-determination and includes the following properties: a positive attitude towards national culture, the culture of the Latvian people, and the European culture. The components of social self-determination are interrelated and interdependent.

Each structural component of social self-determination has its own characteristic features. In their real functioning, all components are in dialectical interconnection and interdependence. Integration of the components of social self-determination allows individuals to adapt to the changing conditions of their lives. Citizenship and intercultural identity are complex systemic formations. In this regard, it is necessary to analyze criteria for their formation.

Criteria for the formation of citizenship are the following:

- the cognitive criterion – knowledge about civic responsibility and the state, understanding of one's responsibilities, understanding of one's legal and moral obligations to society and the state;
- the axiological criterion - the attitude to oneself and other as a value, respect for the state and society;
- the behavioral criterion – the ability to comply with moral and legal norms, to fulfil social and moral obligations in accordance with one's civic position. The ability to engage in a dialogue with other citizens and professional activity for the benefit of society are the indicators of conscious citizenship.

Based on these criteria, we conclude that citizenship is an integrative personality trait that reflects moral and legal culture, expressed in a harmonious combination of patriotic, national, and international feelings, in self-esteem, respect and trust in other citizens and the state, the desire to work for its prosperity. Senior secondary school students are aware of themselves as the citizens of Latvia and are proud of their status.

Intercultural identity is seen as an integrative formation (Ginzburg, 1994). Criteria for the formation of intercultural identity are the following:

- the cognitive criterion - ideas and notions about the specific features of Russian and Latvian cultures in Latvia, about the common and distinctive features in the customs and cultural traditions of Russians, Latvians and other ethnic groups in Latvia;
- the axiological criterion – a positive attitude towards the Russian culture, a positive attitude towards the Latvian culture, the need to deepen one’s emotional and evaluative attitude to various cultures of the world;
- the behavioral criterion – the need and ability to participate in the cultural life of Latvia, to use dialogue in communication with the representatives of other cultures.

Intercultural identity is viewed as a personality trait that characterizes a person’s need and ability to understand and accept the rich diversity of Latvian culture, Russian culture, cultures of the world, as well as various forms of self-expression and ways of manifesting human individuality. The importance of this personality trait is underpinned by the fact that it is focused on the preservation and development of both positive cultural identity and cultural tolerance (Ross, 2006; UNESCO, 1995).

The statuses of cultural identity:

- diffuse identity or loss of identity, when a person loses some significant reference points and ceases to feel the certainty of his/her “self”. The system of consumer values focused on material goods, their acquisition and consumption prevail. The moral norms and their assessments have not been fully formed yet. There can be observed insufficient level of knowledge about the culture of the Russian and Latvian peoples and no desire to expand it.
- achieved identity, when a person has a certain system of values and beliefs about himself/herself and his/her life. Value orientations are based on universal humane principles, where the dominant values are freedom, personal autonomy, respect for the rights of other people and the desire for self-actualization. A student seeks to expand his/her knowledge about Russian and Latvian cultures, participates in cultural events in Latvia, communicates with the representatives of other nationalities in extra-curricular activities, at concerts or while jointly

developing research projects. We regard intercultural identity as achieved identity. In the contemporary historical and cultural situation, dialogue is becoming a universal way of the existence of culture and a person in culture (Kernberg, 2004).

It can be concluded that conscious citizenship and achieved intercultural identity are indicators of developed social self-determination.

The process of self-determination of senior secondary school students in the process of learning:

1. A student is aware of himself/herself as part of a society in which social norms, values and assessments operate;
2. correlates the requirements of society and the norms of his/her own life; civic responsibility is formed;
3. compares himself/herself with others and evaluates himself/herself, thereby forming an adequate self-esteem;
4. chooses a social role, civic position, values, and profession in accordance with his/her abilities and moral attitudes;
5. The experience of social interaction and the culture of communication are formed in business and interpersonal communication; life values are also formed.

Conditions for the humanization of the educational process for the development of social self-determination

One of the conditions of humanization is a change in the content of education. The educational process should be organized based on a humanitarian model of education, where a student is a value (Čehlovs, 2011). This implies the introduction of a multicultural component into the content of education, which will contribute to the change of all structural components from the goal to the result (Čehlovs, 2011).

The second pre-condition is a change in the way communication takes place in the educational process. Communication is based on dialogue (Alijevs, 2021). Dialogue is regarded as the key form of communication in the pedagogical process, a way of the existence of culture and a person in culture.

Analysis of social self-determination in senior secondary school students

A fact-finding experiment was conducted within the framework of the study. The aim of the experiment was to explore the life priorities of a secondary school student as the basis for social self-determination. There was used the personal maturity test questionnaire developed by Gilbukh (Gilbukh, 1995). The

experiment was conducted in Riga Classical Gymnasium (RCG, 20 participants) and in Riga State Technical College (RSTC, 20 participants).

To study the motivational component of social self-determination, senior secondary school students were offered the questionnaire “Your Life Priorities”. They were asked to answer the question “What would you like to achieve in life?”

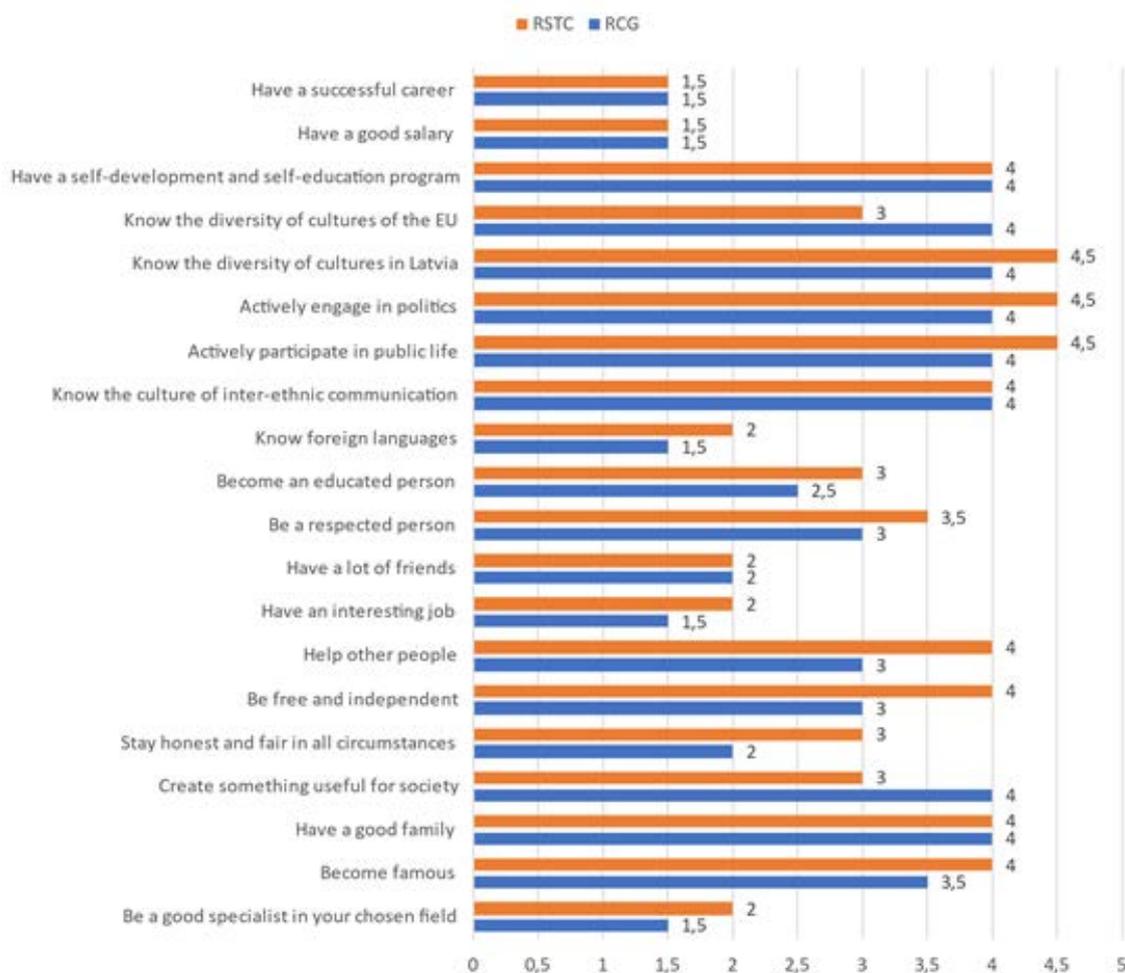


Figure 1 *Life priorities of the surveyed students (created by the authors)*

The analysis of the survey data showed that personal well-being, career, and a good salary are dominant priorities for the secondary school students. Civic responsibility and community service are not among their priorities.

As to the choice of a profession, the public orientation and the realization of one’s abilities for the benefit of society turned out to be low priorities for the surveyed secondary school students. The analysis of the results of the questionnaire “Your life Priorities” showed that secondary school students have insufficiently developed civic responsibility.

The students were also offered the questionnaires “Where would you like to study and work?” and “Where would you like to live?” (see figure 2).

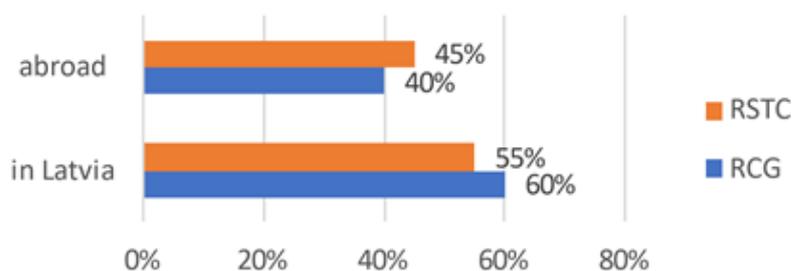


Figure 2 Respondents' preferences where to study, live and work (created by the authors)

The analysis of the results of the questionnaire “Where would you like to work and study?” showed that most of the students from Riga State Technical College (55%) would like to work abroad, whereas 45% intend to work in Latvia. In Riga Classical Gymnasium, on the other hand, 60 % of senior secondary school students intend to work in Latvia, while 40% would like to work abroad. Unfortunately, the trend of young people leaving the country is continuing. After finishing secondary school, the respondents intend to study in different countries, depending on their interests and the knowledge of languages.

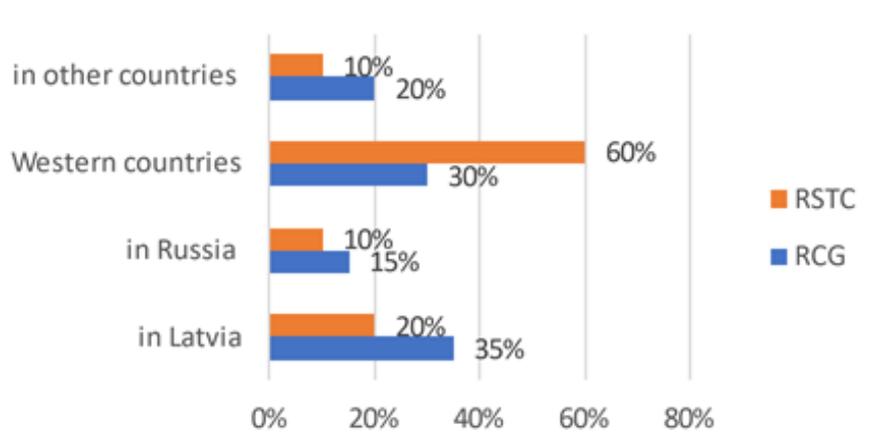


Figure 3 Respondents' preferences concerning the place of residence (created by the authors)

When asked about the possibilities to choose a place of residence (see Figure 3), we see that in total 45% of respondents would prefer to live in Western countries, 28% of respondents choose to live in Latvia, 15% would like to live in other countries, but 12% would choose to live in Russia. The answers show the students' desire to take control of their lives by choosing a place and environment that suits their values and needs. This means that students develop self-determination skills.

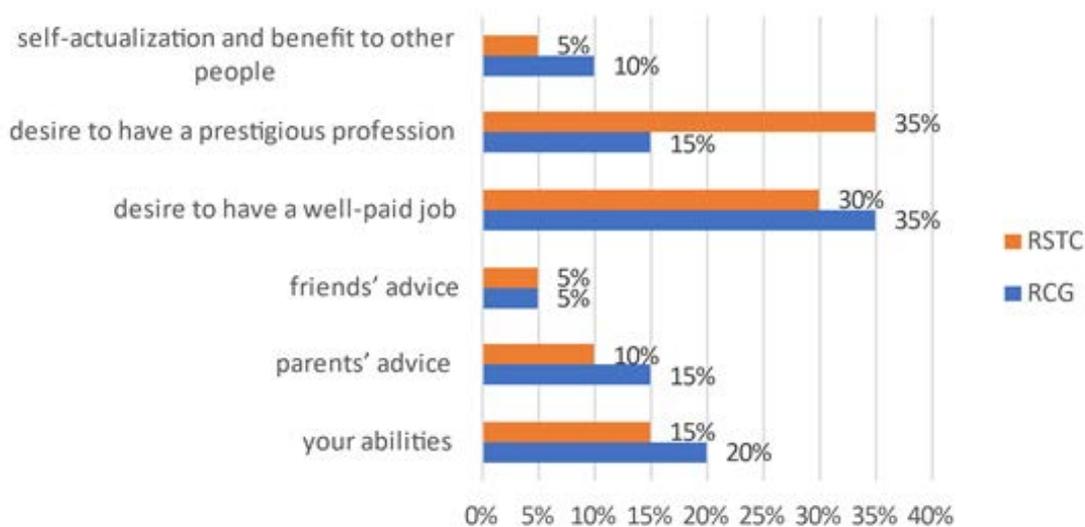


Figure 4 Respondents' criteria concerning the choice of study profile (created by the authors)

The theory of self-determination focuses on internal sources of motivation, such as the need to acquire knowledge or independence (known as essential motivation) (Sainte, 2022). The answers to the question about the choice of study direction (see Figure 4) also show that students develop self-determination skills, which are expressed in the desire to acquire an education and a profession in which it is possible to create a quality personal life.

The essence of personality values and meanings is fully revealed from the point of view of existential analysis, substantiating the existence of personality self-determination, determining the formation and maturity of value meaning entities (Pochtareva, 2021). The students were offered a questionnaire “Attitude Towards Other as a value (Tolerance)”, which aimed to determine pupils' attitudes towards other people.

In order to determine the students' attitude towards people of other nationalities, they were asked about the mutual relations and where these relations take place (see Figure 5).

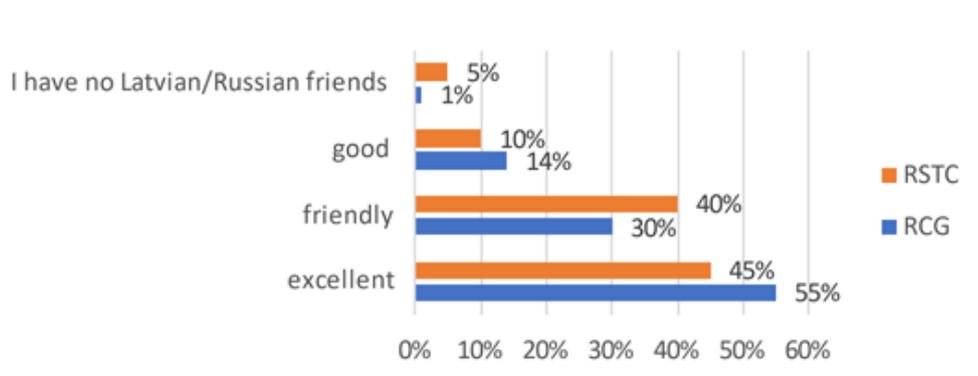


Figure 5 Relations with persons of other nationalities (created by the authors)

From the answers we can see that 85% of all respondents consider their relationship to be excellent or friendly. 12% of students consider their relationship to be good and only 3% of those surveyed say they have no friends of another nationality. The obtained results show that most of these relationships are formed in interest groups, sports activities, as well as entertainment venues. This shows that students have a tolerance for people of other nationalities, which in turn influences the development of self-determination.

The analysis of the survey showed that the attitudes of Latvian and Russian secondary school students towards the representatives of other nationalities are excellent and good; they successfully cooperate in various fields of activity, especially the students of Riga Classical Gymnasium.

Conclusions

1. As a result of the study the content and structure of social self-determination of senior secondary school students has been determined: it is a systemic formation, a complex personality trait.
2. Social self-determination is underpinned by a certain system of moral values and beliefs.
3. Dialogue is regarded as the basis of communication in the pedagogical process, a way of the existence of culture and a person in culture.
4. The key pre-condition for the development of social self-determination (civic responsibility, tolerance) has been determined: it is the humanization of the educational process organized on the basis of a humanitarian model of education, where a student is a value (Čehlovs, 2011). This implies the introduction of a multicultural component into the content of education, which will contribute to the change of all structural components from the goal to the result (Čehlovs, 2011).

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