

The attitudes of IBSU students towards other national traditions and cultures

Rtveladze Tatia Zakharovna

E-mail: tatiartveladze@gmail.com

In recent years, students tend to prefer moving from their native location to foreign country/region for educational purposes. This aim can cause difficulties among both - locals and newcomers. The barriers could be met in various aspects, such as different culture, language, traditions, and nationalities. The goal of the research is to examine the attitudes of International Black Sea University (IBSU) students towards other national traditions and cultures. The paper explores how the tolerance of students influences their views on variety of issues: projects made together at the university; working and the desire of marriage with representatives of other national traditions and cultures than theirs. The problem is provoked by the fact that national minorities in Georgia, settled in the regions Kvemo-Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti, witness social barriers of integration at some point. This paper will aim to investigate whether the same issue is met by foreign students of IBSU. In addition, the student's age (18-22 years) is a critical period in the development, strengthening and consolidation of ethnic identity. While studying at the university ethnic identity of a young individual extends his/her conception of the world and strengthens his/her position [Vorobyova, p.303]. The respondents were individually interviewed. Purpose of the individual interviews was to clarify students attitudes toward other national traditions and cultures in IBSU. Interviews included questions about national and cultural background of the respondents and the influences they got from their family members; how the respondents dealt with other students of other nationalities and cultures; what difficulties they did have while integrating with students of other nationalities and cultures; and how they viewed the team work and marriage with a person of different nationality and culture. For collecting data a few methods were be used. First, researchers got information from the IBSU administration by asking whether there are problems that foreign students of IBSU face while integrating with each other. Second, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to identify the problems that students of IBSU face on a daily basis by integrating students with non-identical culture and traditions. Based on the qualitative data patterns of attitude of IBSU students towards national traditions and cultures were be identified. Finally, eight interviews were conducted with students of IBSU in order to analyze their attitude in addressing this particular issue. Based on the survey and individual interviewing of IBSU students, there are results that clarify attitudes of students towards other national traditions and cultures. Students were chosen from different faculties with a different national background. Most students think that they do not face problems with different nationalities and to make a project with different cultural representatives makes no difficulty for them. On the contrary, they like having contact with people who have different cultural backgrounds, different customs and traditions. This makes them feel as part of the world community, which is diverse and this diversity makes the world more interesting and beautiful. One of respondents said: "IBSU gave me opportunity to have classes with other nationalities like Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Nigerians, Uzbeks, etc. Thus, my group is pretty mixed, and I love the diversity of it." Individual interviews proved that not everybody would love to marry a person of a different national tradition or culture than theirs. When talking about relationship between persons of different national traditions and cultures, consequently having different values, some respondents make it clear that they are not against marrying a person of other national tradition and culture, on the contrary, it is preferable for them. Based on a survey most respondents have positive attitude towards the representatives of different national traditions and cultures, and they enjoy working with them - "Yes, diversity

is awesome. Always enjoy learning from people other than those who share my worldview.” According to findings, seven out of eight respondents said that they do not have problems or misunderstandings with representatives of other national traditions or cultures, in a studying process. They enjoy communicating with each other and most of the respondents are fond of IBSU cultural festivals and are willing to take part in diverse festivals of such spectrum. Cultural festivals, as such, give students a platform to open up for something challenging; they give students an opportunity to represent their own national traditions and cultures. Consequently, festivals will promote cooperation and establishment of friendly relations between students of different national traditions and cultures. However, according to some respondents, the gap of communication is evoked by the fact that not only there are differences in language, but also some students do not have a desire to engage in intercourse with the representatives of other national traditions and cultures. The other factor of the existing problem is that students may consider representatives of other national traditions and cultures, do not speak their native language: “Besides almost everyone knows English we still have some misunderstanding, for example during break time most Georgian students are together and not many of them tries to have a communication with foreigners just because they are Azers, Turkish and so on.” – says a non-Georgian respondent. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents have a positive thought about relationship with students of other national traditions and cultures - “I’m really proud of having such group-mates with other nationalities and having good relations with them.” In the conclusion, based on answers of respondents, the attitudes of IBSU students towards people of other national traditions and cultures are perceived as positive. Despite the language differences, or feasible perceptions towards others actions (non-engagement in communication because of unwillingness), the general picture is the following: IBSU students respect representatives of other national traditions and cultures than theirs; they are willingly communicating and making friends with them; they would like to work and marry a person of other national tradition and culture than theirs and destroy prejudices. For the most part, students do not have daily discords between each other. Among eight respondents there was no one who would mention about any conflict or misunderstanding because of difference in national tradition or culture, with other students. As it is mentioned before, the main purpose of the research was to find out attitudes of students towards representatives of other national traditions and cultures. Method of the research was qualitative and respondents were individually asked, during the interviews, by specially formulated questions. Respondents expressed several problems such as language barriers and in some cases distant relations between students of different national traditions and cultures. As it is concluded, based on respondents’ answers, problems arisen are not profound and they can be solved through deep communication, taking part in various festivals at the university, such as cultural festivals, that will make students be involved in multinational and multicultural projects.

Works Cited

Tatyana V. Vorobyova, Larisa G. Poleshchuk: *Ethnic Tolerance Among Students*, p.303. Yurga Institute of Technology, Tomsk Polytechnic University, 2015.