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DOROBANȚU-DINA ROXANA-GEORGETA

FORMATION OF THE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PUPILS

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President of the Commission:
1. Barbăneagră Alexandra, Doctor in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University.
2. Scientific Adviser:
Cojocaru Victoria, Dr. Hab. in Pedagogy, Full Professor, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University.
3**. Scientific Secretary**:
Zagaievschi Corina, Doctor in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University.
Official reviewers:
4. Goraș-Postică Viorica, Dr. Hab. in Pedagogy, Full Professor, State University of Moldova.
5. Sadovei Larisa, Doctor in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University.
6. Necula Gina Aurora, Doctor in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, " Dunărea de Jos" University, Galați, Romania.

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President of the Defense Commission
Barbăneagră Alexandra, Doctor in Pedagogy, Associate Professor

Scientific Adviser
Cojocaru Victoria, Dr. Hab. in Pedagogy, Full Professor, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University.

Author
Dorobanțu-Dina Roxana-Georgeta

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CONCEPTUAL BENCHMARKS OF THE RESEARCH

Topicality and importance of the problem addressed. Romania, as well as the Republic of Moldova, knows the phenomenon of globalization as an action to transform the world into a unit, where the issue of interculturality must be appreciated as topical and of utmost importance. Interculturality supposes first of all inter-relationship and inter-communication. For their development, school education plays an essential role. Moreover, only an educated person perceives the world from an intercultural perspective.

The problem of education through diversity is addressed by a series of European documents: the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities; International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Paris Declaration; The Recommendations of the Council of Europe; The Intercultural Integration Strategy of the Committee for Education;

Considering the current national curriculum, since 2009 the Romanian education system has been centered on educational skills. Thus, the European training profile of the middle school graduates is organized on the basis of the eight key competencies, among which a special place goes to the competence *of cultural awareness and expression*. [26, 30]

In this regard, the specialists in the field give the intercultural education and competence a considerable importance, in their understanding intercultural education is a model of peaceful and constructive coexistence, in a society where the members of several ethnic groups live together. As it emerges from the specialists' opinions [5], [27, p. 4], etc., the intercultural or spiritual issue was the starting point in the outbreak of some conflicts, whether of a historical, geographical and, more importantly, social-economic at national or global level. In this context, education and intercultural competence can be the way to contribute to the configuration of the means of communication, help, acceptance, integration, interaction, valorization, without the delimitation of "us - the others", in an environment of natural and harmonious coexistence [35 , p. 130].

In the area of these ideas, the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils should be one of the essential concerns of the school. Regardless of the nature of the discipline they learn, above all the content communicated, the human being, from the time of schooling, should be trained interculturally.

In the hectic pace of everyday life, marked by the phenomenon of globalization and migration, the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils constitutes one of the main objectives of the current school curriculum. Referring to intercultural competence, we have in mind both verbal communication skills, but especially those that develop sensitivity, mutual help, acceptance of cultural differences and adaptability to new things, cultural diversity, interaction, non-verbal communication - which define the cultural essence of an ethnic group or national minority [61, 62, 63].

On this background, there can be deduced the idea that the formation of intercultural competence constitutes the premise of human inter-relationship, and the necessary qualities to relate well in an intercultural environment are: the capacity for empathy; the capacity for suppleness and flexibility; the ability to listen to others; the ability to command respect; the ability to accept the relativity of one's own perceptions and knowledge; the ability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty.

Thus, on the basis of national and international legislative documents and the analysis of the social situation, the role and importance of the formation of pupils' intercultural competence is recognized, which can lead to the solution of several problems generated by globalization, migration, the exchange of human resources, etc.

Description of the situation in the research field and identification of the research problem

Many authors from different fields, such as: history, philosophy, pedagogy, demography, psychology, have referred to interculturality or defined the concept of intercultural education, precisely because this is a field of maximum interest. The conclusive and intense approach regarding interculturality and intercultural education can be found in the works of the authors: M. Abdallah-Pretceille [45]; P. Batelaan [48]; S. Bernat [6]; F. Gauthey, D. Xardel [55]; C. Cucoş [21, 22]; C. Stork [5]; Z. Plugaru, M. Pavalache [40]; L. Ciolan [11]; N. Butnari [7]; V. Goraş-Postică, T. Cartaleanu [27]; A. Nedelcu [38]; R. Polenda, Bro. Ruegg, C. Rus [41]; S. Popescu [42]; T. Cozma [18] etc.

The concept of competence can be found in the works of authors Victoria Cojocaru [12, 13, 14, 15], C. Hampden-Turner [57]; A. Gillert, [56]; L.A. Arasaratnam [46]; C. Cucoş [23]; Vl. Guţu [31]; M. Hădîrcă [32] etc. Among the basic characteristics of the competence, they also indicate the following: the ability to express something; a mix of knowledge, skills, abilities; structured sets of knowledge and skills; the ability to solve a problem; a set of capabilities and performances etc.

The concept of *intercultural competence*. A major importance in the treatment of this concept belongs to the authors in the field: Rakotomena [60]; B. Rey, St. Pacearcă, V. Carette [43]; A. Fly Sainte Marie [54]; A. Feng, M. Byram, M. Fleming [52]; A.E. Fantini [51]; J. Aubret, P. Gilbert [47]; T. Cozma, S. Butnaru, N. Popa [18]; D. Mara [35]; A. Chiriac [8, 9, 10]; A. Nedelcu [37, 38] etc., who state that the intercultural competence is the ability to conveniently manage cultural aspirations; the ability to gain the approval of others; consider cultural differences; to act correctly in relation to a person of another ethnicity, etc.

Referring to *intercultural education*, we state that pupils demonstrate the cultural values they received at home, and the natural course of life develops the pupil, if there is a healthy education. The today's pupils, tomorrow's adults, must discover diversity, dialogue and intercultural education from the school age; for example, communication skills are formed through special activities, everyone's rights are respected and equal opportunities are given to all pupils. Therefore, the purpose of the school is to form skills through which the pupil first knows himself and others, to form skills to interact through a positive attitude in a multi- and intercultural environment. [75, 77]

The approach to education from the perspective of competences remains a difficult one in terms of conceptualization and implementation in the educational practice, although in the tradition of organizing education the model based on competences finds an increasingly secure place.

The research problem: What are the *theoretical-applicative pedagogical benchmarks* for the conceptualization, design, organization, realization of some *co-curricular or extracurricular formative activities* of intercultural competence, in the context of the increasingly active promotion at European level of the need to train pupils' key competences, among which is included the key *competence of cultural awareness and expression*?

The purpose of the research consists in the theoretical-applicative substantiation, elaboration and validation of the *Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils* in order to connect it to the current educational requirements.

Research objectives:

1. Establishing the theoretical framework of intercultural education, intercultural competence, through the study and development of basic concepts.

2. Studying the factors generating cultural diversity (globalization, demography, migration, refugees, linguistic diversity), as meanings of educational changes.

3. Examining the specifics of the intercultural approach and the formation of the intercultural competences of middle school pupils (evolution, characteristics, functions, perspectives, dimensions, acceptances), as a success factor in building the educational approach to form the middle school pupils' intercultural competence.

4. Elaborating the *Referential Technology* of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils, as a basic training tool.

5. Valorizing experimentally the *Referential Technology* and validating the results obtained in the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

Research hypothesis: The formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils becomes possible if the respective process is based on:

• the theoretical-praxiological delimitations regarding intercultural education;

• the highlighted elements that form the basis of the formation of intercultural competence;

• the establishment of subsequent educational guidelines;

• the referential technology spotted on a clearly defined phenomenon (curiosity fulfilled)

and is additionally carried out in a distinct co-curricular (extracurricular) context.

The methodology of scientific research. The research was based on *theories regarding globalization*: L. Antonesei [1]); the theory of *personal identity* (B. Rey [43]); the theory of *intercultural education* (L. Plugaru [40]; *visions regarding the directions of the contemporary world* (D. Cazal, J. M. Perreti [49]); *the principle of interdisciplinary approach* (M. Paiu [39], R. Lăudat, M. Bărăitaru [34], A. Gremalschi [29]); *conceptions regarding the dimensions of education* (Victoria Cojocaru, V. Gh. Cojocaru, A. Postica [17], M. Cojocaru-Borozan, L. Sadovei [16], Vl. Guțu [31], A . Gherguț, L. Frumos [28], E. Joita, V. Ilie [33]; S. Cristea [20]); *views on intercultural education* (H. Hubert [59], G. Hofstede [58], C. Cucoș [21, 22], L. Antonesei [2], L. Bârlogeanu [4], C. Rus [41], S. Popescu [42]); *the approach to education from an intercultural perspective:* M. Abdallah-Pretceille [45] , P. Batelaan [48], S. Bernat [6], P. Dasen [24], C. Cucoș [22], C. Bârzea [5]; *rules of intercultural education* (Camillieri, L. Drăghicescu [25], C . Cucoș [23]); *concepts of competence and intercultural competence* (T. Cozma T., S. Butnaru, N. Popa [18], B. Rey [43], A. Nedelcu [38], A. Feng, M Byram [52], A. Fly Sainte Marie [54], M. Fleming [53], M. H. Rakotomena [60], Л. А. Petrovskaya [62], L. N. Bulygina [61] etc.

Scientific research methods:

- *theoretical*: scientific documentation, data analysis and systematization; induction and deduction; structuring theoretical benchmarks; the method of analogies; modeling;
- *praxeological:* pedagogical observation; application tests, quizzes, practical tests; categorization; data file;
- *hermeneutics*: data interpretation; scientific commentary; comparison; opposition;
- *experimental*: pre-experiment, basic pedagogical experiment;

- *statistics*: mathematical analysis of data (percentage average).

Scientific novelty and originality. The research is circumscribed in the extra-curricular middle school environment, which means that the activities were organized in the context of the curriculum, but not in formal activities, by identifying the directions of intercultural competence formation. This process includes the theoretical-applicative benchmarks needed to change attitudes and behaviors focused on interculturality. From this perspective: there was conceptualized the Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils; there was designed **FCIE Referential Technology** (10) and capitalized on the **idea of "Satisfied Curiosity**"; there was developed the **Matrix of educational strategie**s in order to form the middle school pupils' intercultural competence; there was elaborated the **Teacher Training Construct** in order to form the intercultural competence; there was developed and tested the **Teaching Aid** "Intercultural Education - 6th grade" for teachers.

The obtained results that contributed to the solution of the scientific problem consist in the conceptualization of the Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils, a fact that generated the structuring and valorization of the FCIE *Referential Technology* (10) in direct training activities, with a view to form the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

The theoretical significance of the research lies in the determination of the theoretical benchmarks of intercultural education and competence, the reconceptualization of the notions of *intercultural education, intercultural competence, satisfied curiosity, referential technology,* the delimitation and interpretation of the aspects of intercultural competence related to the directions that generated cultural diversity; the theoretical substantiation of the *Model* of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

The applicative value of the research is found in the establishment and confirmation of the *formative tools*, which find their relevance in practical utilization, having general value and constituting, at the same time, the premise of supplementing school activities in order to be effective.

Implementation of scientific results. The scientific results were valorized in the educational institutions in Romania (I.C. Lăzărescu Secondary School, Țițești, Argeș county; Micești Secondary School, Argeș county), with 255 pre-experiment and experiment pupils and in other schools in the county, with 54 teachers.

The approval of the research results was achieved through the presentations at the scientific conferences: *Training the middle school pupils' intercultural competence* In: *Axiological and trans-disciplinary dimensions of education through culture*, section Cultural coordinates of the didactic approach. Iasi, Spiru Haret, 2018; *The Intercultural communication – factor of the optimization of the instructive-educational process*, International Symposium Intercultural communication in educational situations knowledge – methods – didactic skills. Craiova, 2019; *Intercultural education – a new challenge for the education system*. International multidisciplinary conference of teachers *Special ... but equal*. Dâmbovița, Petrești, 2019; *Management – the art or science of leading*. National Conference of Teachers Education in the Future. Arges, Pitesti, 2019; *Intercultural education – the current orientation trend in Romanian education*. The International Scientific Symposium *The Voice of Education at European level. Aspects, orientations and perspectives of educational sciences in contemporary society*. Bacău, 2020; *Specialized study - the didactic framework promoting intercultural education in the context of globalization*. The

International Scientific Conference *Problems of Social Sciences and Modernization of Education.* "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University, Chisinau, 2020; *Specialized study on the specificity of the culture.* The international conference *The Voice of Education at European level. B*acău, 2020; *The new educations – contemporary orientations in continuous training.* National Conference of Teachers Education in the Future. Arges, Pitesti, 2020; *Formative dimensions of intercultural competence in computer-assisted lessons.* The international conference *Research and innovation of education from the perspective of the current demands of the labor market.* Tiraspol State University, Chisinau, 2021; *The interdisciplinary approach in the formation of the middle school pupils' intercultural competence.* The international conference *Education in the face of new challenges.* Chisinau, 2021; *Romanian cultural values - the key to intercultural communication.* The International Conference *Contemporary Challenges in Teaching Romanian as a Second Language.* "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University, Chisinau, 2021; *The staged historical course of intercultural education in order to form intercultural competence.* The Annual Scientific Conference of PhD Students *Current Issues in the Social and Human Sciences.* "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University of Chisinau, 2022; The didactic game method in the formation of communication and interpersonal skills of students with mental deficiency. In: *Journal "Success - Curriculum support for special education",* no. 5/16/06/2021. Suceava 2021; *Intercultural Competence - Way to Solve the Problems of Today's World.* In: "*B*" *Eastern European Journal of Regional Studies.* Volume 7/2, Chisinau 2021; *Educational policies and practices for the formation of the middle school pupils' intercultural competence.* In: *"B" category Studia Universitatis Moldaviae Journal*, Chisinau 2022, no. 5 (155); *Conceptual-methodological aspects in the formation of the middle school pupils' intercultural competence.* In: "*B*" *category journal* Intertext, Chisinau 2022, no. 1 (59); *School-family educational partnership - optimizing factor in the formation of the pupils' prosocial behavior. In: "B" category Studia Universitatis Moldaviae Journal,* Chisinau, no 9 (159) 2022; *Teaching Aid Intercultural education 6th grade - for teachers.* Pitesti: Argeș Teaching Body House, 2022. 185 p.

Also, the results were approved within the Teachers' Council from the Secondary School, I.C. Lăzărescu" Șițești, Argeș county, at the meetings of the "Man-Society" Methodical Commission. The results of the research were disseminated in the School Journal no. 1-6 of 2021-2022 "Different and yet the same", by accessing the educational website "Transnational educational partnership "People, places, facts" concluded with the "Visegrad" Gymnasium in Calfa, Anenii Noi district (Republic of Moldova), "Adrian Păunescu" Gymnasium Chisinau; General secondary education institution of I-III degree with teaching in Romanian, Biserica Alba village, Ukraine; General School "Zarko Zrenjanini" Banatsko Novo Selo (Satu Nou), *Serbia and Titesti-Arges School* and Facebook page *Intercultural education.*

THESIS CONTENT

In the **Introduction**, it is argued the importance and topicality of the research theme, it is described the situation in the research field, and it is formulted the research problem. Also, there are presented the purpose, hypothesis and research objectives, there are exposed the epistemological benchmarks of the investigation and it is described the synthesis of the research methodology.

Chapter 1 "**Intercultural competence in the field of education: theoretical diversification"** highlights the basic concepts: cultural diversity, intercultural approach,

intercultural education, competence, intercultural competence, arguing the importance of intercultural education in the process of the development of the pupils' education. Thus, it is demonstrated the undoubted connection between the cultural values and the level of education, respectively, behavior, materialized in intercultural competence. [70, 72] Equally, the ideological benchmarks presented are the basis of the postulate that supports: the influence of behaviors (acquired in the family, but improved in school), which act on education and the role that intercultural education has on modeling the prosocial behavior of the middle school pupils.

There are established the premises of cultural diversity in education and it is proved how cultural diversity is expressed through intercultural projects [73, 79].There are also highlighted the qualities of the multicultural person and the priorities that should be achieved for the formation of intercultural competence. According to researchers [5], [21] the easiest way to form intercultural competence is by learning new behaviors from others, acquiring new ways of solving problems, a fact that guides us towards the reconciliation of cultural values, which is the first step towards ameliorating dissensions in order to improve communication and increase group cohesion.

Based on the holistic *principles of education* and the principles of intercultural education, we can identify the interdependence between moral education, moral-civic education, education for citizenship rights and intercultural education, which contribute to the formation of the IC (intercultural competence) of middle schooI pupils. A special role is played by the fundamental dimensions of intercultural education and the principles underlying the effective teaching-learning-evaluation activity [41, p. 11], where groups of pupils belonging to minority groups live and study alongside the majority (B. Rey [43], H. Hubert [59, p. 63], P. Dasen [24, p. 180], etc.) Investigating and emphasizing the basic concepts facilitated highlighting the fundamental elements promoted by intercultural education, necessary for the formation of intercultural competence.

Attention is paid to the highlighting of the staged evolution of intercultural education for the formation of intercultural competence. The context of the formation of the middle school pupils' intercultural competence had a special place, benefiting from increased attention; based on the study of the basic concepts: intercultural education, competence, intercultural competence, there was argued the importance and undoubted connection between cultural values and the level of education.

Currently, *intercultural education* is gaining more attention; this is seen as a solution to the social, military, economic and cultural problems of the world today [66]. As proof of this fact is the inclusion of the discipline in the school curriculum - the common core, starting from the reality that: *through intercultural education pupils can know elements of the culture of those they come into contact with; it deepens the cultural elements of our people; work groups can become more cohesive; bridges can be created between pupils, starting precisely from some similarities or differences: cultural, social, religious, linguistic, etc. [74]*

Approaching education from an intercultural perspective, as an opening to the new, diverse, unknown, an opening of equal opportunities for all individuals, without discrimination of ethnicity, race, sex, religion, social condition, can and must contribute to the formation of the middle school pupils' intercultural competence [64, 67]. Interculturality defines the interpersonal relationships in which members of different cultures are involved. Referring to intercultural, by using the prefix "inter" we mean *interaction, exchange, openness, solidarity,* etc. The word "culture" has the broad meaning of: recognition of values, lifestyle, respect for family, heroes of the nation, spoken

language, national heritage, people's relation to symbolic representations, interaction between people and understanding of the world, appreciation of their importance, of interactions concurrently within the same culture and between different cultures. The global and lasting perspective of the world is one: overcoming the barriers from a "mono" world to an "inter" time logic [24, p. 181].

The main objective of intercultural education is to prepare pupils to perceive, accept, respect and experience otherness. Through intercultural education carried out in the school environment, pupils are in interaction, alongside and in contact with those who belong to other ethnicities, religions, races, cultures, etc. [19] In interaction with the "others", pupils better discover themselves, become aware of the cultural values that represent them and discover what is specific to others [21].

Considering the fact *that intercultural education can be formed within several school disciplines*, we can say that it can be easily approached interdisciplinarily within the homework and in the implementation of activities that contribute to the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils [69, 71]. According to specialized studies, some researchers associate the concept of intercultural competence with expressions such as: cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural awareness, cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural interaction, intercultural cooperation, etc. [36]

The conceptual approach to intercultural competence is as varied as possible, as it results from the definitions that have appeared over time: according to the opinion of the researcher C. Cucoș, intercultural competence is "the ability to change, adapt the attitude, behavior and knowledge to the interaction with people belonging to other cultures" [22, p. 39]. We observe the direction towards which intercultural education is heading: "Intercultural education aims at developing an education for all, in the spirit of recognizing the differences that exist within the same society, intercultural education means the integration in the act of teaching-learning-evaluation of democratic beliefs and values, which are the basis of cultural diversity in a society in continuous development and interdependence, in full process of globalization; intercultural education represents a philosophy of culture, which begins to make its presence felt in school activity; intercultural education is the essential form that can be the basis of the education of all pupils, in order to respect human rights, cultural diversity, for equal opportunities, tolerance and social integration; intercultural education is the basis of respect for human rights, an essential requirement for harmonious coexistence, interaction between people.

According to G. Hofstede's research [58, p. 82] regarding the complementary perspectives of intercultural education, there are seven of them:
• the compensatory perspective – assumes the best chances of school success for minorities;
• the perspective of cultures knowledge;
• the heterocentric perspective;
• the isolationist perspective - through which the activities of learning the language and culture of minorities are highlighted in distinct actions;
• the anti-racist perspective - through which non-discriminatory education is promoted;
• the perspective of civic education - having as its essential point the promotion of human rights and democratic values;
• the perspective of cooperation, based on the relations of interaction and cooperation between pupils belonging to groups that are different in nature.

In this context, ***intercultural competence*** *has been defined as one that supports the easy management of relationships between people in a multicultural environment*. [68, 76]

In this way, ***in conclusion***s to the chapter: *there are established the premises of cultural diversity in education and it is demonstrated how cultural diversity is expressed through intercultural projects*. We also emphasized the qualities of the multicultural person and the priorities that should be achieved for the formation of intercultural competence. According to the researchers, the easiest way to form intercultural competence is by learning new behaviors from others, acquiring new ways of solving problems, a fact that orients us towards the reconciliation of cultural values. Thus, *the reconciliation of values is the first step towards ameliorating dissensions, improving communication and increasing group cohesion, and simple emotional touch can be a step forward for the formation of intercultural competence [44]*.

Moreover, based on the *holistic principles* of education and the principles of intercultural education, there can be established the interdependence between moral education, moral-civic education, education for citizenship rights and intercultural education, which contribute to the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils. According to the opinion of the specialists [78], the family has many resources, those sociocultural values that are bequeathed to children, which are valued systematically and organized in the school environment. A special role is played by the fundamental dimensions of intercultural education and the principles underlying effective teaching-learning-evaluation activity. Investigating and emphasizing the basic concepts facilitated the highlighting of the fundamental elements promoted by intercultural education, necessary for the formation of intercultural competence. [3]

In Chapter 2 **"Methodological framework of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils"**, there are synthesized the theoretical and applied benchmarks that form the basis of the formation of intercultural competence of middle school pupils. In the context of the *use of praxeological methods*: application tests, questionnaires, we state that pupils re-find elements of intercultural education in their behavior. However, these must be inserted into an extracurricular educational framework. There are determined the qualities of the multicultural person, according to S. Chevrier [50], and the priorities that should be achieved for the formation of intercultural competence.

A special place is assigned in this chapter to the highlighting of the interdisciplinarity [65] of intercultural education and the necessity of the relevance of carrying out practical activities with pupils in a co-curricular educational framework. Taking into account the age characteristics of the middle school pupils regarding the attachment, understanding, thinking, abstraction of intercultural phenomena and situations in the school and extracurricular environment, it is elaborated the *Matrix of educational strategies for the formation of intercultural competence.*

There are analysed the epistemological benchmarks and *the results from the pre-experiment*, it is determined *the interest of the teaching staff* regarding the formation of intercultural competence and *the need for their formation in the field of intercultural education*. The application of the *Teacher Training Construct* for forming the intercultural competence of middle school pupils confirms the idea that the activity of training teachers can later lead to better results in the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils. Considering the fact that intercultural competence is the effect of the connection between the affective, cognitive, relational (behavioral) component and the didactic teachers' training, there are specified the parameters of a

psychological, pedagogical and social order specific to the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

The chapter describes the *Model* of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupuls, the content of which offers the possibility of the formation of intercultural competence. Thus, there are determined two essential coordinates regarding its implementation in the pedagogical experiment and it includes the *FCIE Referential Technology* (10), "*ten"* meaning ten intercultural competence training activities; its finality will be reflected in the positive, desirable attitudes and behaviors shown by the pupils. At level I of the Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils, there are the theoretical benchmarks from the perspective of cultural diversity, intercultural approach and intercultural education, by specifying the factors, perspectives, dimensions, rules, principles that contribute to the success of the formation of pupils' intercultural competences. Level II of the Model specifies the purpose of approaching the pedagogical phenomenon of interculturality: *Learning to live together with the others.* At level III of the *Model* there is the methodological component, which confirms the possibilities of forming pupils' intercultural competence from an axiological and praxeological perspective: the educational guidelines in the field, the Matrix of educational strategies, the training of the teachers involved in the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils. The *FCIE 10 Technology* is placed at level IV of *the Model*, structured on the basis of taking into account some specificities of middle school students: age, learning specifics, aspects of their own character, relationships. The valorization of Technology has as a finality the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

The term *referential,* in this context, as perceived by F. Voiculescu [110, p. 331-337], is a term that belongs to the pedagogical language, established, in fact, in the French pedagogical literature, being used in connection with a design of components such as contents, objectives, results, etc. In the design plan, the Referential is the tool that describes, in concrete terms, the destination of the respective entity. The author defines the Referential as a unitary and coherent system of reference points, criteria, indicators, based on which the dimensions, components, contents of an education (training) programme are circumscribed. The essential meaning of the Referential is that of *a reference system* to which an entity (project, programme, etc.) is related and according to which its results are designed and evaluated. Gradually, the referential technique has diversified both in fields of application and as functions.

In designing the purpose of the training activity of intercultural competence, we started from the idea of one of the most important ingredients of the learning process, which reflects the *desire to know* something new or unusual. Thus, this is represented by curiosity, which, unlike *interest*, as an active orientation that implies a burning desire to know and understand something, involves the factor of new or unusual. Actually, curiosity influences academic performance. This assumes that a curious pupil is more likely to do well in school because curiosity makes learning easier. The pupil understands more easily the information they are curious to know, but also the adjacent one. Curiosity causes pleasure, because when we are curious, not only the area responsible for memory is activated in the brain, but also the area responsible for pleasure, the one that keeps information in memory for a longer period of time. When we are curious and open to the world, we get excited, we are more attentive to how things work around us, our mind is moving, we see more scenarios and possibilities around. Curiosity has a pragmatic component, for the discovery of useful and useful things, but more important than the utilitarian perspective is the humanistic perspective: curiosity is about the authentic experience of life, about discovery, about the joy of the unusual.
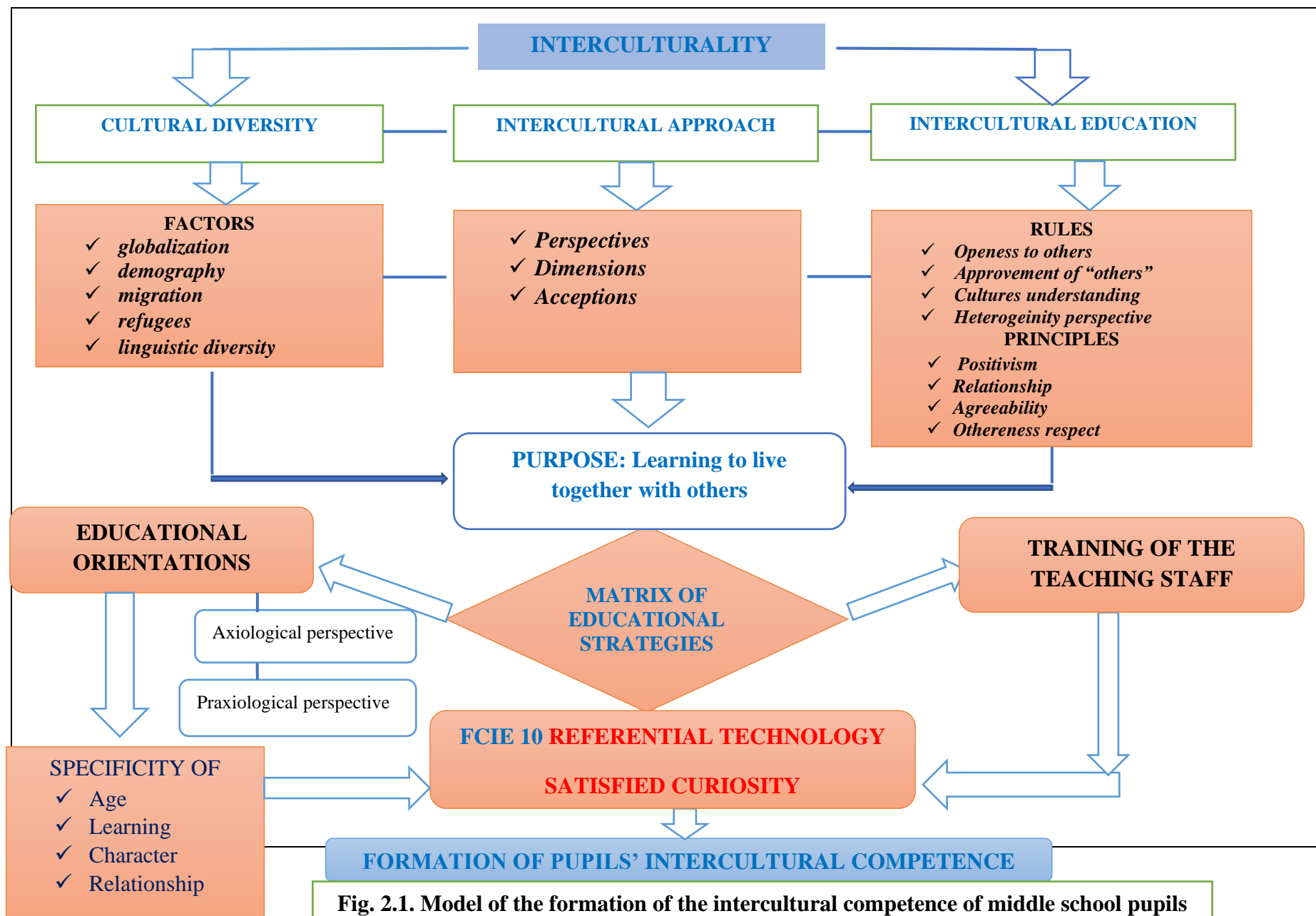
INTERCULTURALITY

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

INTERCULTURAL APPROACH

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

FACTORS
- ✓ *globalization*
- ✓ *demography*
- ✓ *migration*
- ✓ *refugees*
- ✓ *linguistic diversity*

- ✓ *Perspectives*
- ✓ *Dimensions*
- ✓ *Acceptions*

RULES
- ✓ *Openess to others*
- ✓ *Approvement of "others"*
- ✓ *Cultures understanding*
- ✓ *Heterogeinity perspective*

PRINCIPLES
- ✓ *Positivism*
- ✓ *Relationship*
- ✓ *Agreeability*
- ✓ *Othereness respect*

PURPOSE: Learning to live together with others

EDUCATIONAL ORIENTATIONS

MATRIX OF EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

TRAINING OF THE TEACHING STAFF

Axiological perspective

Praxiological perspective

SPECIFICITY OF
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Learning
- ✓ Character
- ✓ Relationship

FCIE 10 REFERENTIAL TECHNOLOGY

SATISFIED CURIOSITY

FORMATION OF PUPILS' INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Fig. 2.1. Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils

Here we must specify that the formation of intercultural competence is *an imperative* of the today's society, the preadolescent assimilates qualities by which *he can define the elements of his own culture, appreciate the culture of those with whom he interacts*, he is *open to help, teamwork, has a critical attitude towards the phenomena of violence, hatred, marginalization, oppression, conflict situations*, etc. It is very true that learning activities in middle school contribute to the formation of team spirit, *making sincere friendships*, engaging in actions that develop feelings of appreciation and *assertiveness,* but these *develop with the passage of time*.

The principle of the interdisciplinary approach to intercultural education is relevant and leads to:
  ➢ *the creation of a common axiological system*, supported by the values that are the basis of socio-human disciplines;
  ➢ the creation of a value system *of information and vocabulary* from the sphere of socio-human disciplines;
  ➢ the formation of *social*, personal, moral-ethical and intercultural competences, by transferring pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes into practical actions.

The major goal of intercultural education is the integral development of the pupil's personality, his social responsibility, the formation of the pupils' skills of social integration, self-realization and self-knowledge, the pupils' training for having equal opportunities and adopting moral-civic decisions. In this context, we support *the need to expose the character traits of middle school pupils* in accordance *with elements of age specificity*. In this way, teachers can propose and implement the most suitable educational strategies.

Consequently, there was developed the ***Matrix of educational strategies for the formation of intercultural competence***, related to the specificity of the needs of middle school pupils. The basis of its design, which represents *a working tool for the teaching staff*, substantited the study and analysis of specialized documents, the works of the researchers in the field. They refer to the *particularities of age*, knowledge and understanding, assimilated to the middle school pupil. We also refer to the set of *strategies* harmonized with the principles that are the basis of education, along with the methods of knowledge.

In order to establish the attitude of the subjects in relation to intercultural competence, **a pre-experimental stage** was carried out, through four tests, applied to both middle school pupils and teachers: attitude questionnaire, thematic discussions, training construct, initiation guide, applicative tests. The answers of the pupils and teachers questioned in the pedagogical pre-experiment highlight a conclusive picture of the *actual state of intercultural education in order to form the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.*

Here we must mention that *each workshop started with activities centered on the trainee*, focused on creating the most suitable *socio-affective* environment, it started with concrete examples, from the immediate reality, and as the trainees discovered the fidelity of the examples, some of good practice, others of unsuccessful, but of great importance, as a precautionary measure for the future, it continued with a variety of exemplifications, particularly useful and interesting. As an element of originality, in the training workshops for the teaching staff in order to form the intercultural competence of middle school pupils, there were invited representative persons from the historical diaspora, who brought the maximum amount of information regarding interculturality in these regions (Serbian Banat, Voivodeship Province (Serbia), Timocului Valley

(Serbia), Chernivtsi Region (Ukraine), Chisinau, Anenii Noi district (Basarabeasca) Republic of Moldova.

In the evaluation of the results obtained at the teacher training workshop regarding the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils, there was paid due attention to the principles of interpersonal communication: countering cognitive arrogance is given by the recognition of one's own cultural limits; cognitive empathy supported by understanding the evaluator's ideas and opinions; cognitive democracy which assumes that assessment is perceived as a dialogue where everyone learns from everyone; the premise for achieving success consists in the moral support of the evaluator; feedback is the measure of the trainer's quality in the teacher training process. In the process of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils, it is absolutely necessary for teachers to know how to form pupils' intercultural competence. Thus, there is a need for the teachers' continuous training, regardless of the discipline taught, in order to prepare them for the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

The benchmarks of the development of the FCIE Referential Technology (10) are made up of the aspects presented below. Intercultural competence is demonstrated by the effective solution of problems arising in an intercultural context. It includes the following components: *cognitive, affective and behavioral.*

The *cognitive component* supposes the existence of adequate cultural and intercultural perception. At this level it is involved the recognition of the fact that the subjects involved in the experiment interpret the same behavior differently. The *affective component* includes all attitudes of respect, recognition, openness, valorization, curiosity towards the other. The *behavioral component* involves the ability to empathize, to tolerate the presence of the other in everyday life, to find and effectively use ways of adaptation and harmonious coexistence in an intercultural environment. The values included in the goals of intercultural education cannot be achieved by themselves. Openness to others, their acceptance, tolerance are not innate but are built into the personality through systematic educational approaches. From the perspective of cultivating and promoting these values, the role of the school is particularly important in transforming these differences into a chance for personal and community development - and hence reducing them as a source of prejudice, tension and discomfort. The school has the task of providing, through intercultural education, a model of peaceful and constructive coexistence in a society where members of several ethnic groups live together.

In this way, the **FCIE Referential Technology (10)** contains the following components: subsequent elements of intercultural competence, training activities, intercultural competences formed, training methods/techniques.

Table 2. 1. FCIE Referential technology (10)

Subsequent elements of intercultural competence	Formation activity	Intercultural competences in formation	Methods/techniques for formation
	Activity 1. What is culture?	I.C. Correct use of notions specific to intercultural education with reference to facts/events/processes in contemporary society. I.C.. Identifying one's cultural identity	- conversation -explanation - the communication workshop -directed observation - ordering

		landmarks, by referring to various cultural reference systems.	- essentialization - problematization
Understanding other people's views on the world. Adaptability/Adaptation to a new cultural environment	Activity 2. What does cultural diversity mean?	I.C. Analysis of situations in agreement/disagreement with the values and principles of the intercultural society.	-heuristic conversation -explanation - creative activity -directed observation - the discussion network -discovery - the didactic situation
Openness to learning a new culture and meeting people from other cultures	Activity 3. Cultural heritage	I.C. Manifesting a positive attitude towards oneself and towards others, towards one's own cultural identity and towards the identity of those who belong to different cultures. I.C. Forming the belief that cultural heritage must be protected both by laws and by individual actions.	-practical tests (supplementary) -explanation -interpretive reflection -work in pairs - the conversation - problematization
Sociolinguistic skills (awareness of the relationships between languages and their understanding in a social context)	Activity 4. Conservation and promotion of cultural heritage	I.C. Manifesting a positive attitude towards oneself and towards others, towards one's own cultural identity and towards the identity of those who belong to different cultures. I.C. Developing the right attitude towards the preservation of cultural traditions.	- the case study - the critical incident - cultural assimilators -explanation - the discussion network -discovery
In-depth knowledge and understanding of others' cultures	Activity 5. Patriotism and its manifestations	I.C.Manifesting a positive attitude towards oneself and towards others, towards one's own cultural identity and towards the identity of those who belong to different cultures. I.C. Developing the feeling of patriotism.	- the conversation - the communication workshop -explanation - the discussion network -discovery - the critical incident
Ability to adapt to a variety of intercultural communication methods and different learning styles	Activity 6. What does multiculturalism and interculturality mean?	I.C. Manifesting a positive attitude towards oneself and towards others, towards one's own cultural identity and towards the identity of those who	-explanation -heuristic conversation - the bunches - brainstorming - the discussion network

Respect/empathy for other cultures		belong to different cultures. I.C. Developing the ability to accept elements of culture different from one's own	-discovery
Understanding the value of cultural diversity	Activity 7. Equal treatment and solidarity	I.C. Manifesting a positive attitude towards oneself and towards others, towards one's own cultural identity and towards the identity of those who belong to different cultures.	- group work - cultural assimilators - group work -heuristic conversation -explanation
Understanding the role and impact of culture, as well as the situational, social impact and the historical contexts involved	Activity 8. What is intolerance and how does it manifest itself. What is discrimination?	I.C. Participating in solving community problems by using the ability of cultural empathy in dealing with people from different cultures.	-heuristic conversation -explanation - the discussion network -discovery - problematization - the critical incident
Acceptance of ambiguities and involvement in them	Activity 9. The person and cultural rights	I.C. Analysis of situations in agreement/disagreement with the values and principles of the intercultural society. I.C. Solving in pairs/teams some tasks related to life in an intercultural society	- the debate -heuristic conversation -exposure with the opponent -directed observation - the discussion network -discovery - problematization
Analysis, interpretation and cultural communication skills	Activity 10. Intercultural dialogue. Rules and principles of intercultural communication	I.C. Analysis of situations in agreement/disagreement with the values and principles of the intercultural society. I.C. Participation by carrying out an intercultural project, solving community problems and promoting intercultural dialogue. I.C. Participation in solving community problems, showing cultural empathy in dealing with people from different cultures.	

Taking into consideration the analysis of the theoretical bases and the experiences, observations, pre-experiment results, we *can deduce the following*:

There was illustrated *the importance of the interdisciplinary approach* to intercultural education for middle school education, *as a natural consequence* of the fact that the formation of intercultural competence is carried out at the level of several socio-human disciplines. Thus, the *presentation of the correlations between some school disciplines and intercultural education*, lead to the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils. There *were clarified the debated aspect*s *through a multiple approach*, from the perspective of several disciplines, in order to form intercultural competence.

Through the analysis of the epistemological benchmarks and *the results of the pre-experiment,* there was established *the interest of the teaching staff* regarding the formation of intercultural competence and there was determined the *need for their training in the field of intercultural education*. The application of the Teacher Training Construct for the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils confirmed the idea that the techer training activity can later lead to better results in the formtion of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils. Taking into account the fact that IC is the effect of the connection between the affective, cognitive, relational (behavioral) component, there was elaborated the ***Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils***, which, through its content, offers the possibility of the formation of intercultural competence.

In Chapter 3 "**Experimental coordinates of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils**" it is disclosed the experimental research design and information on the pedagogical experiment. It is also illustrated that in the context of the training activities carried out based on the *FCIE Referential Technology (10)*, there was determined the pupils' active presence in all training events, as receivers, transmitters and participants, openly expressing their attitudes, feelings, opinions, establishing a stimulating educational relationship in a variety of behaviors, which generated an active involvement in the formation of intercultural competence. Through the activities undertaken, there was proven the interest in the learning experience of the specifics of interculturality, with the pupils showing curiosity, even if this often generated aspects of cognitive discomfort. The development of the tendency to know more, the stimulation of the desire to discover, constitute co-formative elements. According to the results from both samples, a 33% difference was found between the experimental sample and the control sample. These data illustrate, thus, that the activity of forming the intercultural competence of middle school pupils was a fruitful one, the applied tools generated changes that appeared over time, which ensure the valorization of that competence. Since there are several perspectives on training, there have been dynamized several educational relationships: some subordinating and others preceding training.

In order to establish the level of the intercultural training of middle school pupils, the experimental approach was mainly oriented towards extra-curricular or co-curricular intercultural education activities, referring to a set of activities organized in addition to the content of the disciplinary curriculum with the aim of completing the training of the pupil's personality. The co-curricular activities were organized in relation to certain objectives that inspire and challenge the learner, both for his educational success and for his success in everyday life. These have an important value both for the social and personal development of the learner, through specific and particular approaches. Although the activities specific to co-curricular education pursue certain

objectives mentioned previously, they do not make use of skills such as: the development of interpersonal skills, teamwork, initiating and implementing personal or team projects, learning skills of how to learn etc.

The purpose of the pedagogical experiment: Experimental validation of the FCIE Referential Technology (10) in middle school classrooms.

Stages of the experiment: the ascertaining experiment (school year 2020-2021, grades VI-VII), the formative experiment (2020-2021, grades VI-VII) and the validation experiment (2021-2022, grades VII-VIII). The school institutions where the pedagogical experiment took place: Secondary School „I. C. Lăzărescu" Țițești, Argeș county, 69 pupils - the experimental sample (EE-27 pupils); the control sample (EM-42) and Micești Secondary School, Argeș county, 84 pupils – the experimental sample (EE-53); control sample (EM-31). Total: 153 pupils. (Table 2.2.)

Objectives of the experiment:

- obtaining preliminary information regarding the level of forming the intercultural skills of middle school pupils;
- specifying the variables and the content of the tests in the training context;
- elaborating materials and developing the training/formative stages;
- specifying the investigative tools in the validation activity.

Table 3.1. The pedagogical experiment

STAGES	SUBJECTS	INSTRUMENTS
ASCERTAINMENT 2020-2021	153 subjects (pupils, .VI-VII grades) EE-80 EM-73	Questionnaire •criteria • motivation means • contents • conditions
FORMATION 2020-2021	80 subjects (27 pupils, VI-VII grades Țițești; 53 pupils, VI-VII grades, Micești)	Valorizing *FCIE Technology (10)* Activities for training students' intercultural behavior (10 activities)
VALIDATION 2021-2022	153 subjects (69 pupils, VII-VIII grades, Țițești; 84 pupils, VII-VIII grades, Micești)	Questionnaire (pupils) Educational project

The initial data regarding the level of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils were obtained by applying the questionnaire, which aimed at:

- establishing the level of pupils' interest in intercultural education;
- determining a hierarchy of specific, preferred activities within intercultural education;
- identifying didactic means and methods agreed by the pupils, useful and necessary for the formation of intercultural competence;
- determining the level of awareness and appreciation of the usefulness of intercultural activities;
- identifying the types of activities that pupils consider enjoyable and effective for the formation of intercultural competence.

The questionnaire applied in the ascertainment stage was based on five criteria. As a result of the application of the investigative tools in the ascertainment stage, the following data resulted, summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. General data of the questionnaire (ascertaining stage)

Criterion	Variants of Questions	Answers EE %		Answers EM %	
		yes	no	yes	no
1.Motivation Necessity	a) Do you like the discipline Intercultural Education?	56	44	58	42
	b) Would you like the discipline Intercultural Education to be two hours/week?	36	64	44	56
	c) Would you like an optional course in Intercultural Education?	42	58	40	60
	d) Would you like the Intercultural Education classes to take place with modern means: computers, video projector, Internet connection, audio-video digital resources?	100	0	100	0
	e)Do you need knowledge of Intercultural Education for Life?	72	28	68	32
	f) Is knowing Intercultural Education important for your cultural development?	65	35	58	42

The implementation of the FCIE Referential Technology (10) aimed at further study and reflection on the idea of interculturality, as a comprehensive, comprehensive notion, as a reaction to the new existential realities, in a field of action closely related to the basic educational practice, with concrete educational situations and actions. With this, it was intended to coordinate the theoretical relations with the dynamic and constantly changing educational practices. Thus, a reflexively designed educational option takes on a praxiological shape and aimed at contributing to the development of the pupil's personality through the formation of intercultural competence. The valorization of *FCIE Referential Technology (10)* aimed at stimulating pupils in the assimilation of field-specific knowledge through direct activity, which would validate this knowledge, provide them with points of reflection, and suggest new approaches. It was also oriented towards the formation and development of the capacity for self-assessment and objective self-regulation. The corpus of practical acquisitions is present in an obvious formation, contained in the following aspects: the descriptive and explanatory character, the reflexive character, the normative-prescriptive character, the prospective character. Its purpose is to ensure the success of the training activities, carried out in the designed training context.

The entire technological construction is based on the idea of "*Satisfied curiosity*", which implies the completion of any activity with the formulation of a synthetic task based on formulas such as: "What if...what do you think..."; "If..., then..."; "Could it be true that...". Curiosity, as such, is a character trait that drives human beings to seek information, data, facts that meet their needs. The pupils, while searching for information/solutions/answers, are open-minded to explore and energize a wide range of knowledge, experiences, capabilities, attitudes, which support their own assumptions or conclusions. They formulate questions, use information sources, consult experts, search in their experience, that is, they go through several steps, which give meaning to their search. Curiosity is the pupil's need to look further to what he knows, not to be satisfied with what he already knows. He wants to "come out" to the fact that it has to do with that thing, with his

everyday life. The *"Satisfied Curiosity"* technique involves self-searching, which expands pupils7' neural networks. Curiosity "feeds" the pupil's mind, providing a higher level experience. His mind transforms and comes into direct contact with reality, it stimulates his interest in the world around him.

As an illustration, we show one of the 10 activities.

Training activity 1. WHAT IS CULTURE

The purpose of the activity: *Discovering the elements that form the basis of a people's culture and its importance for us and for the future generation.*

Intercultural competences:

I.C. Correct use of notions specific to intercultural education with reference to facts/events/processes in contemporary society;

I.C. Identifying one's cultural identity benchdmarks, by referring to various cultural reference systems.

Subsequent Competencies:

- defining notions: culture, attitude, value;

- delimiting the elements related to surface culture and deep culture of the "iceberg of culture";

- understanding the role and importance of culture in the life of people and a nation;

- showing interest in the proposed content for the formation of culture, as an element of national identity.

Table 3.3. Activity 1. What is culture?

THE ACTIVITY OF THE PUPILS	Methods /techniques
Pupils answer the questions: -What legends do you know about our country? -What national heroes first come to your mind when you hear the word "national heroes"? -Name the first three institutions that come to your mind when you hear the word "culture". -List three pieces of advice you received from your grandparents/parents that are transmitted from generation to generation. -Write on your notebook five words that best define Romanian traditions. -How do you explain the proverb: "Hello hat, the master has no mouth!" After viewing the following material related to culture, a short analysis is made.	Communication workshop conversation Explanation Directed observation
Pupils: - define the notions: culture, attitude, value; - make a delimitation of the elements related to the surface culture and the deep culture of the "iceberg of culture"; - understand the role and importance of culture in the life of people and a nation. **Curiosity satisfied***: If everything related to culture were hermetically sealed in a box, what do you think would happen in the world?*	Ranking Essentialization

The pupils analyze the etymology of the word "culture" and insist on understanding the fact that, in essence, *culture* is a set of essential value and attitudinal patterns through which social behaviors are reflected, being transmitted from generation to generation. Culture is acquired over time, it is not innate. A people's culture includes: history, art, heroes, legends, norms of life, greetings, the language we speak, the way we dress, how we communicate, what and how we eat, communicate and relate to our peers, traditions, customs, respect for parents, time management, hospitality, etc.

In the applicative aspect, a series of analyzes were made regarding the positive role of general and personal culture in everyone's life. *The pupils have made an unwritten commitment to "enrich" themselves culturally through the various activities the school offers.*

The validation experiment was carried out after a three-month break, in order to verify the results of the training activity, two evaluation tests being applied: the questionnaire and the educational project, taking place over nine months (school year 2021-2022).

As a result of the application of the investigation tools in the validation stage, there resulted more conclusive data, some of them being summarized in Table 3.4.

Table 3. 4. General data of the questionnaire (validation stage)

Criterion	Tick the answer to each question	Answers (EE) %		Answers (EM) %	
		yes	no	yes	no
1.Motivation/Necessity	a)Do you like the Intercultural Education discipline? Formulate an argument for your answer.	97	3	65	35
	b) Would you like the Intercultural Education discipline to be two hours/week? Why ?	90	10	58	42
	c)Would you like an optional course in Intercultural Education? How will this course help you?	85	15	45	55
	d) Would you like Intercultural Education classes to be held with modern means: computers, video projector, Internet connection, audio-video digital resources?	100	-	100	-
	e)Do you need knowledge of Intercultural Education for Life? When are intercultural skills useful?	72	28	54	46
	f) Is knowing Intercultural Education important for your cultural development? But what do you mean by intercultural development?	95	5	58	42

The test of the *Educational Project* made us highlight the level of the involvement of the pupils of both groups in carrying out the tasks proposed within the intercultural project, in solving community problems and in promoting intercultural dialogue, based on three criteria:

- *the involvement of all pupils to achieve the goal proposed within the project;*

- *the establishment of communication links with pupils from other schools based on educational projects;*

- *the manifestation of cultural empathy in relation with people belonging to different cultures.*

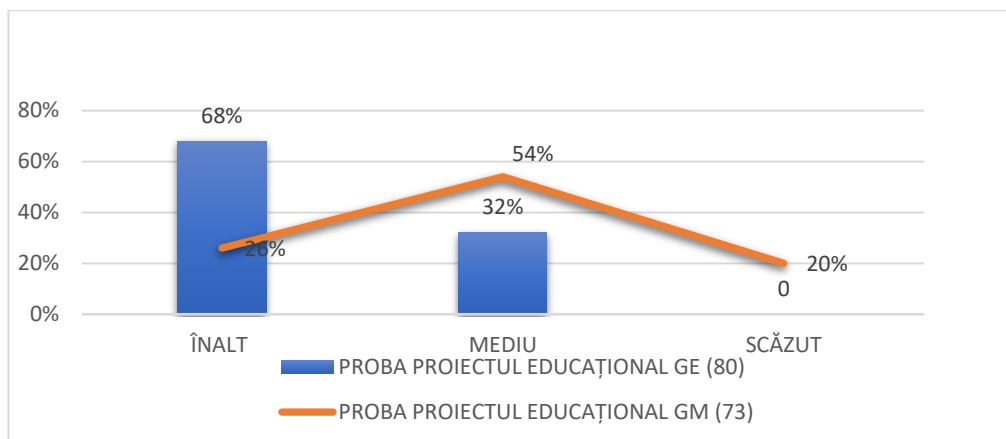Thus, in Figure 3.1. there are presented the test results of the educational project.

Figure 3. 1. Results of the Educational project test (GE 80 and GM 73)

The educational project was elaborated based on the case study, which has the task of putting the pupil in the simulative context of real problems, for which he looks for solutions, verbalizes and analyzes them, and later presents and argues the decision taken. When developing the case, the following aspects were taken into account: the pupils were presented with the case, which could be: a summary account of a situation, inspired by everyday life, from media news; a sequence of artistic text, from which informative parameters were easily deduced; an image or film sequence, relevant to a topic-issue, etc. The case was appropriate to the pupils' age and relevant to them; it should not require/claim extensive additional information or thorough documentation to be understood. Also, the case was selected or formulated according to the competence we intended to evaluate, so that the analysis capitalized on the knowledge, skills, but above all, the pupils' existential skills and the product - the solution offered was convincing.

We note that often the identification or formulation of the problem is the impediment to the solution. The case may seem obvious to an adult, but the pupil may not intuit either the problem or the possibility of solving it. The requirements for formulating the problem must be conciseness and clarity. The case is to bring to the fore a single problem, in order not to disperse the pupils' attention and interest towards the problem and the solution to fall in due time. In Figure 3.2. we present the level of intercultural competence within both samples.
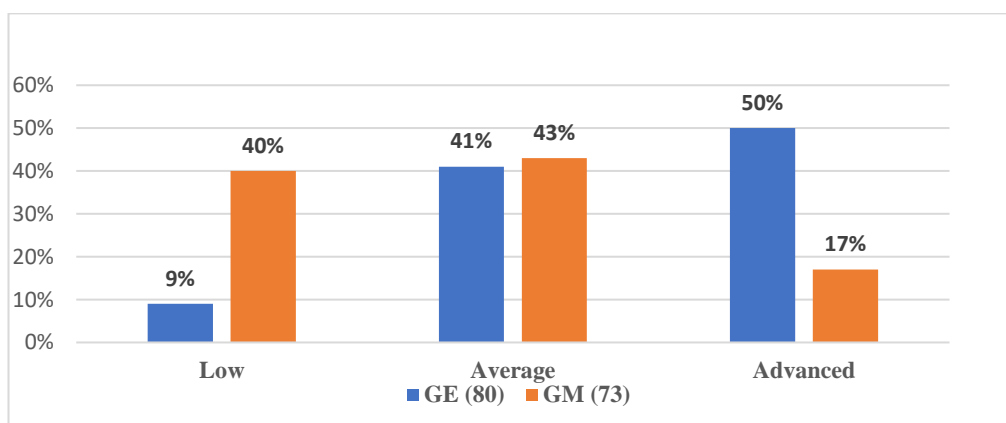

Figure 3. 2. Level of intercultural competence (post experiment stage)

According to the results of both tests, we deduced the level of intercultural competence based on the criteria of the previously proposed grid. Thus, 9% at the low level in the experimental group; average level 41% and advanced 50%. Within the control group, 17% prevail at the advanced

level, 40% at the low level and 43% at the average level. We find that the ***advanced level*** of EE is 33% ***difference*** from the control sample, *the average level is 2% difference and the low level is 31% difference.*

In **conclusion**, there were highlighted the following aspects. The reflections on the data provided in the pedagogical experiment indicate that the achievement of intercultural education must emphasize both the definition and understanding of the respective phenomenon as such, as well as various consultations offered to pupils in the problematic context of understanding and interpretation. The achievement of intercultural education and the formation of intercultural skills involve important dimensions, which acquire specificity depending on the particularities of the field and the formulated tasks: cultural differences, cultural variants, traditions, specific behavior, patriotism, values, etc. The selection of training tools must take into account the performance of the pupils involved, which condense the essence of the training process. The importance of identifying pupils' attitudes, preferences, thoughts, as we have found, can support the process of formation and redefining the formative process, keeping a convenient relationship between knowledge, acceptance, application and ensuring a relatively stable sedimentation of what is new.

In the context of the training activities carried out based on the FCIE Referential Technology (10), there was determined the pupils' active presence in all training events, as receivers, transmitters and participants, openly expressing their attitudes, feelings, opinions, establishing a stimulating educational relationship in a diverse variety of behaviors, a fact that generated an intensive involvement in the formation of intercultural competence. Through the activities undertaken, there was proven the interest in the learning experience of the specifics of interculturality, with the pupils showing curiosity, even if many times this also generated aspects of cognitive discomfort. The development of the tendency to know more, the stimulation of the desire to discover, to engage were co-formative elements.

According to the results of both samples, there was determined a difference between the results of the experimental sample and the control sample. These data illustrate, thus, that the activity of forming the intercultural competence of middle school pupils was a fruitful one, the applied tools generated changes, which ensure the valorization of the given competence. Since there were several perspectives on forming, there were dynamized several educational relationships: some subordinating and others preceding the formation. Delineating a comprehensive picture of the significant variability of FCIE Referential Technology (10) brought relevant data.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The theoretical reflections, considerations, analyzes and approaches structured in the respective chapters are circumscribed to a vision of a sociocultural nature, configured by several functionally solidary dimensions. They suggest that the process of the formation of intercultural competence in the school context is fundamentally dynamic and is a part of an essential educational phenomenon. The cultural dimension "comes under the pupils' control", with consequences for multiple components of the educational process. Synthesizing the lines of the investigations generated the following general conclusions.

1. Through reflexive synthesis it was established that the vision offered by the theoretical context enhances the idea of the opportunity to research the respective problem. Based on the study

of the basic concepts: *cultural diversity, intercultural approach, intercultural education*, *intercultural competence*, there was argued the importance of intercultural education in the process of pupils' development and education. Thus, it was demonstrated the undoubted connection between cultural values and the level of education, respectively behavior, materialized in the intercultural competence formed in the middle school context. Equally, the ideological benchmarks presented are the basis of the postulate that supports the influence that behaviors have on education and the role that intercultural education has on shaping the prosocial behavior of middle school students (Chapter 1, subchapter 1.2.).

2. There were identified the *premises of cultural diversity* in education and how cultural diversity is expressed through intercultural projects. There were also illustrated the qualities of the multicultural person and the priorities that should be achieved for the formation of intercultural competence. According to the researchers, the easiest way to form intercultural competence is by *learning new behaviors (from others)*, acquiring new ways of solving problems, a fact that orients us towards the reconciliation of cultural values. Moreover, based on the *holistic orientations* of education and the principles of intercultural education, it was identified the interdependence between moral education, education for citizenship rights and intercultural education, which contributes to the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils (Chapter 1, subchapter 1.1.).

3. Regarding the illustration of the problems of intercultural education, following the idea of several syntheses, we state that a special role is played by the fundamental dimensions of intercultural education and the principles underlying the effective teaching-learning-evaluation activity, where groups of pupils belonging to minority groups alongside the majority. Logically speaking, the investigation and underlining of the basic concepts facilitated the highlighting of the fundamental elements promoted by intercultural education, necessary for the formation of intercultural competence. Through the analysis of the characteristic features related to the specificity of the age of middle school pupils in the context of the formation of intercultural competence, there was elaborated the *Matrix of educational strategies related to the specificity of the needs of middle school pupils in order to form intercultural competence*. The basis of its design, which represents a valuable working tool for the teaching staff, was the study and analysis of the specialized documents and the works of the researchers in the field. Also, there was conceptualized the *Scheme of the intercultural values-social moral values ratio*, which is a pedagogical tool necessary for the teachers in the didactic process, in order to form pupils' intercultural competence (Chapter 2, subchapter 2.2.).

4. The logic of reasoning obviously required the illustration of the importance of the interdisciplinary approach of intercultural education for middle school education, as a natural consequence of the fact that the formation of intercultural competence is carried out at the level of several socio-human disciplines. Thus, the presentation of the correlations between some school disciplines and intercultural education, lead to the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils. The debated aspects were clarified through a multiple approach, from the perspective of several disciplines in order to form the intercultural competence (Chapter 2, subchapter 2.1.; 2.2.).

5. In order to understand in its dialectical roots the process of the formation of intercultural competences, there was determined the teachers' interest regarding the formation of intercultural competence and the need for the teachers' training in the field of intercultural education. The

application of the *Teacher Training Construct in order to form the intercultural competence of middle school pupils* confirmed the idea that the teacher training activity can later lead to better results in the formation of intercultural competence of middle school pupils. Considering the fact that IC is the effect of the connection between the affective, cognitive, relational (behavioral) component and the didactic training of teachers, there were specified the parameters of a psychological, pedagogical and social order, specific to the formation of IC of middle school pupils. Also, there was highlighted the normative, teleological, decisional, operational and appreciative dimension of intercultural education (Chapter 2, subchapter 2.3).

6. The reflections on the data provided in the pedagogical experiment indicate that the achievement of intercultural education must emphasize both the definition and understanding of the respective phenomenon as such, as well as various consultations offered to pupils in the problematic context of understanding and interpretation. The achievement of intercultural education and the formation of intercultural competence involve important dimensions, which acquire specificity depending on the particularities of the field and the formulated tasks: cultural differences, cultural variants, traditions, specific behavior, patriotism, values, etc. (Chapter 2, subchapter 2.3; chapter 3, subchapter 3.2.).

7. It was analytically deduced that the selection of training tools must take into account the performance of the pupils involved, which condense the essence of the training process. The importance of identifying pupils' attitudes, preferences, thoughts can support the process of the formation and redefining the formative process, keeping a convenient relationship between knowledge, acceptance, application and ensuring a relatively stable sedimentation of what is new.

In the context of the training activities carried out based on the FCIE Referential Technology (10), there was determined the pupils' active presence in all training events, as receivers, transmitters and participants, openly expressing their attitudes, feelings, opinions, establishing a stimulating educational relationship in a diverse variety of behaviors, a fact that generated an intensive involvement in the formation of intercultural competence. The examples provided within the pedagogical experiment highlighted the fact that the activities undertaken proved the interest in the learning experience of the specifics of interculturality, the pupils showing curiosity. The development of the tendency to know more, the stimulation of the desire to discover, to engage were co-formative elements. According to the results from both samples, there was identified a 33% difference between the experimental sample and the control sample. These data illustrate, thus, that the activity of forming the intercultural competence of middle school pupils was a fruitful one, the applied tools generated changes that appeared while ensuring the valorization of that competence. Taking into account several perspectives on training, there were dynamized several educational relationships (Chapter 3, subchapter 3.2., subchapter 3.3.).

Our main intention was not to substitute the forms of training, but, rather, to bring to the fore a wide range of interpretive possibilities in the pedagogical designation of the formation of the pupils' intercultural competence by substantiating the *Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils,* elaborated according to four basic levels: theoretical benchmarks (cultural diversity, intercultural approach, intercultural education); the purpose of approaching the respective pedagogical phenomenon; the methodological component; referential technology (Chapter 2, subchapter 2.4).

In this light, we conclude that the results obtained in the pedagogical experiment contributed to the solution of the **scientific problem**, which was configured in the need to determine the

theoretical-applicative pedagogical benchmarks for the conceptualization, design, organization, realization of co-curricular or extracurricular activities for forming intercultural competence, in the context of the increasingly active promotion at the European level of the need to form pupils' key competences, including the key competence of cultural awareness and expression, structured in the Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils in order to meet current educational requirements.

The problem and the purpose of the research were solved due to the achievement of the **objectives:**

1. Establishing the theoretical framework of intercultural education, intercultural competence and competence, through the study and development of basic concepts.

2. Studying the factors generating cultural diversity (globalization, demography, migration, refugees, linguistic diversity), as meanings of educational changes.

3. Examining the specifics of the intercultural approach and the formation of the intercultural competences of middle school pupils (evolution, characteristics, functions, perspectives, dimensions, acceptances), as a success factor in building the educational approach to forming the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

4. Elaborating the Referential Technology of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils, as a basic training tool.

5. Exploiting experimentally the Referential Technology and validating the results obtained in the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

Consequently, in context with the research carried out, we propose the following recommendations:

- By synthesizing the results of the application of the *FCIE Referential Technology (10),* it is opportune to design and implement the ODS - *Optional at the school's decision* "Through cultural diversity to intercultural communication" as an *objective necessity*, addressed to middle school pupils, which would be focused on the values of interculturality from the perspective of changes in education, determined by the transformations occurring in society.

- Elaboration of the *Didactic Guide for pupils*, "My Intercultural Journey", which would highlight various aspects of interculturality from the perspective of constructivist pedagogy in its capacity as a theory of viable knowledge, through constructs built experientially by pupils.

- The results of the research can identify the phenomenon of the formation of pupils' intercultural competences, by designing *a fundamental work* "Methodology of pedagogical interculturality", which would lay the methodological foundations of the respective field, guiding the teaching staff in this formative process, clarifying the theoretical-applicative essences of the phenomenon of interculturality.

- The current desires of the continuous training of the pre-university teaching staff can also be achieved by valorizing the research results given in the training activities, in the context of revealing the training priorities. For this purpose, there can be structured a *Training Package* with the generic "Cultural identity and intercultural perspective - cultural and educational dialogue".

The research carried out opens new and real perspectives for investigating the values of interculturality from the perspective of changes in education, determined by the transformations occurring in society.

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ADNOTARE

Dorobanțu-Dina Roxana-Georgeta
Formarea competenței interculturale a elevilor din clasele gimnaziale,
teză de doctor în științe ale educației, Chișinău, 2023

Volumul și structura tezei. Teza este structurată din introducere, trei capitole, concluzii și recomandări, bibliografie 181 surse, 24 anexe, 13 figuri, 13 tabele. Total 150 pagini.

Cuvinte-cheie: interculturalitate, diversitate culturală, educație interculturală, competență, competență interculturală, tehnologie referențială, globalizare, atitudine față de altul, curiozitate împlinită.

Domeniul de studiu se referă la teoria generală a educației.

Scopul cercetării constă în fundamentarea teoretico-aplicativă, elaborarea și validarea *Modelului de formare a competenței interculturale a elevilor din clasele gimnaziale* în vederea racordării la cerințele actuale din învățământ.

Obiectivele cercetării: Stabilirea cadrului teoretic al educației interculturale, a competenței și competenței interculturale, prin studiul și dezvoltarea conceptelor de bază; studierea factorilor generatori ai diversității culturale (globalizarea, demografia, migrația, diversitatea lingvistică etc.), ca semnificații ale schimbărilor educaționale; examinarea specificului abordării interculturale și a formării competenței interculturale a elevilor din clasele gimnaziale (evoluție, caracteristici, funcții, perspective, dimensiuni, accepții), ca factor de reușită; elaborarea *Tehnologiei referențiale* de formare a competenței interculturale a elevilor (FCIE 10), ca instrument formativ de bază; valorificarea experimentală a *Tehnologiei referențiale* FCIE (10) și validarea rezultatelor obținute.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică. Cercetarea se circumscrie în mediul școlar gimnazial extracurricular, prin identificarea direcțiilor de formare a competenței interculturale. Acest proces include reperele teoretico-aplicative necesare pentru schimbarea atitudinilor și comportamentelor axate pe interculturalitate. Din această perspectivă: a fost conceptualizat *Modelul formării* competenței interculturale a elevilor (clasele gimnaziale); a fost proiectată și valorificată *Tehnologia referențială* FCIE (10), reperată pe *ideea „Curiozității împlinite"*, a fost elaborată *Matricea strategiilor* educaționale în vederea formării competenței interculturale a elevilor din clasele gimnaziale; s-a configurat *Constructul de formare* a cadrelor didactice în vederea formării competenței interculturale; a fost elaborat și testat *Auxiliarul didactic* „Educația interculturală – clasa a VI-a" pentru profesori.

Rezultatele obținute care au contribuit la soluționarea problemei științifice constau în conceptualizarea *Modelului formării competenței interculturale a elevilor* (clasele gimnaziale), *fapt care a reperat* structurarea și valorificarea *Tehnologiei referențiale* FCIE (10) în activități formative nemijlocite, *în vederea formării* competenței interculturale la nivelul elevilor din clasele gimnaziale.

Semnificația teoretică a cercetării rezidă în determinarea reperelor teoretice ale educației și competenței interculturale, reconceptualizarea noțiunilor *educație interculturală, competență interculturală, curiozitate împlinită, tehnologie referențială,* delimitarea și interpretarea aspectelor competenței interculturale raportate la direcțiile care au generat diversitatea culturală; fundamentarea teoretică a Modelului formării competenței interculturale a elevilor.

Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării se regăsește în stabilirea și confirmarea *instrumentelor formative*, care își găsesc relevanța în valorificarea practică, având valoare generală și constituind, în același timp, premisa suplimentării activităților școlare în vederea rezultativității.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice Rezultatele științifice au fost valorificate în instituțiile școlare din România (Școala Gimnazială „I.C. Lăzărescu" Țițești, județul Argeș; Școala Gimnazială Micești, județul Argeș), la nivelul a 255 elevi pre-experiment și experiment și în alte școli din județ, la nivelul a 54 cadre didactice.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Доробанцу-Дина Роксана-Джоржета

Формирование межкультурной компетенции учащихся средней школы, докторская диссертация по педагогическим наукам, Кишинев, 2023 г

Объем и структура диссертации. Диссертация состоит из введения, трех глав, выводов и рекомендаций, библиографии 181 источника, 24 приложений, 13 рисунков, 13 таблиц. Всего 150 страниц.

Ключевые слова: интеркультурность, культурное разнообразие, межкультурное образование, компетенция, межкультурная компетенция, референтная технология, глобализация, отношение к другому, удовлетворенное любопытство.

Область исследования относится к общей теории образования.

Цель исследования состоит в теоретико-прикладном обосновании, разработке и апробации Модели формирования межкультурной компетенции учащихся общеобразовательных школ с целью ее привязки к современным образовательным требованиям.

Цели исследования: Создание теоретических основ межкультурного образования, компетентности и межкультурной компетентности посредством изучения и разработки основных понятий; изучение порождающих факторов культурного разнообразия (глобализация, демография, миграция, языковое разнообразие и др.), как смыслов образовательных изменений; рассмотрение специфики межкультурного подхода и формирования межкультурной компетентности учащихся средней школы (эволюция, особенности, функции, перспективы, измерения, приемы), как фактора успеха; разработка референтной технологии обучения межкультурной компетенции студентов (FCIE 10), как базового средства обучения; экспериментальное использование эталонной технологии FCIE (10) и проверка полученных результатов.

Новизна и научная оригинальность. Исследование ограничивается внеурочной средой общеобразовательной школы, путем выявления направлений формирования межкультурной компетенции. Этот процесс включает в себя теоретико-прикладные этапы, необходимые для изменения отношения и поведения, ориентированного на межкультурность. С этой точки зрения: была концептуализирована Модель формирования межкультурной компетентности учащихся (средних классов); разработана и капитализирована эталонная технология FCIE (10), основанная на идее «Удовлетворенного любопытства», разработана Матрица образовательных стратегий для обучения межкультурной компетентности учащихся средних школ; была создана Структура подготовки учителей для обучения межкультурной компетентности; Разработано и апробировано Учебно-методическое пособие «Межкультурное образование - 6 класс» для учителей.

Полученные результаты, способствовавшие решению научной задачи, заключаются в концептуализации Модели формирования межкультурной компетентности учащихся (средних классов), что определило структурирование и валоризацию Справочной технологии ФКИЭ (10) в прямом обучающая деятельность, направленная на формирование межкультурной компетенции на уровне обучающихся в классах вуза.

Теоретическая значимость исследования заключается в определении теоретических ориентиров межкультурного образования и компетентности, реконцептуализации понятий межкультурного образования, межкультурной компетентности, удовлетворенного любопытства, референтной технологии, разграничении и интерпретации аспектов межкультурной компетентности, связанных с направления, породившие культурное разнообразие; теоретическое обоснование Модели формирования межкультурной компетенции студентов.

Прикладное значение работы заключается в установлении и утверждении формообразующих средств, которые находят свою актуальность в практическом использовании, имеют общую ценность и в то же время составляют предпосылку дополнения школьной деятельности, чтобы быть результативной.

Внедрение научных результатов Научные результаты были использованы в румынских школах (Средняя школа И.К. Лазэреску, Цицешти, уезд Арджеш; Средняя школа Мичешть, уезд Арджеш) на уровне 255 учащихся предэкспериментальной и экспериментальной групп и в других школах в округа, на уровне 54 педагогических работников.

ANNOTATION

Dorobanțu-Dina Roxana-Georgeta
Formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils,
Doctoral Thesis in Education Sciences, Chisinau, 2023

The volume and structure of the thesis.. The thesis is structured in the introduction, three chapters, conclusions and recommendations, bibliography 181 sources, 24 annexes, 13 figures, 13 tables. Total 150 pages.

Keywords: interculturality, cultural diversity, intercultural education, competence, intercultural competence, referential technology, globalization, attitude towards another, fulfilled curiosity.

The field of study refers to the general theory of education.

The purpose of the research consists in the theoretical-applicative substantiation, elaboration and validation of the Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils in order to connect it to the current educational requirements.

Research objectives: establishment of the theoretical framework of intercultural education, competence and intercultural competence, through the study and development of basic concepts; studying the generating factors of cultural diversity (globalization, demography, migration, linguistic diversity, etc.), as meanings of educational changes; examination of the specifics of the intercultural approach and the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils (evolution, characteristics, functions, perspectives, dimensions, acceptances), as a success factor; development of the reference technology for the formation of pupils' intercultural competence (FCIE 10), as a basic training tool; experimental exploitation of the FCIE Referential Technology (10) and validation of the obtained results.

Novelty and scientific originality. The research is circumscribed in the extracurricular middle school environment, by identifying the directions for the formation of intercultural competence. This process includes the theoretical-applicative milestones needed to change attitudes and behaviors focused on interculturality. From this perspective there was conceptualized the Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils; there was designed and capitalized the FCIE Referential Technology (10), based on the idea of "Satisfied Curiosity"; there was elaborated the Matrix of educational strategies in order to form the intercultural competence of middle school pupils; there was developed the Teacher Training Construct in order to form the intercultural competence; there was elaborated and tested the Teaching Aid "Intercultural Education - 6th grade" for teachers.

The results obtained that contributed to the solution of the scientific problem consist in the conceptualization of the Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils, a fact that identified the structuring and valorization of the FCIE Referential Technology (10) in direct training activities, with a view to the formation of intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

The theoretical significance of the research lies in the determination of the theoretical benchmarks of intercultural education and competence, the reconceptualization of the notions of intercultural education, intercultural competence, satisfied curiosity, referential technology, the delimitation and interpretation of the aspects of intercultural competence related to the directions that generated cultural diversity; the theoretical foundation of the Model of the formation of the intercultural competence of middle school pupils.

The applicative value of the work is found in the establishment and confirmation of formative tools, which find their relevance in practical utilization, having general value and constituting, at the same time, the premise of supplementing school activities in order to be effective.

Implementation of scientific results. The scientific results were used in the Romanian schools (I.C. Lăzărescu Secondary School, Țițești, Argeș county; Micești Secondary School, Argeș county), with 255 pre-experiment and experiment pupils and in other schools in the county with 54 teaching staff.
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DOROBANȚU-DINA ROXANA-GEORGETA

FORMATION OF THE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PUPILS

531.01. - General theory of education

Summary of Doctoral Thesis in Education Sciences