

THE FORMATION OF PERSON'S HEALTH: EXPERIENCE OF WALDORF SCHOOL

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Annotation. In the article is presented the results of comparative researches of the state of health of Waldorf and traditional schools of students, conducted in different countries (Austria, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Russia, Ukraine, Finland, Switzerland, Sweden). It is set that health saving orientation of Waldorf school brings to the considerable successful results of Waldorf education: Waldorf schoolchildren as compared to the students of traditional schools have the best indexes of physical and psychical health, developed cognitive flairs, personality qualities (individual initiativeness, work, independence of decisions, collaboration with people, social mobility). Due to it among the graduating students of Waldorf schools there almost are not unemployed persons (as well as people with asocial behavior). Among the formers Waldorf students there is a high percent of workers of social, educational and medicine sphere; among them there are many also well-known in the west statesmen, financiers, literati, representatives of art and other.

Key words: formation of health, educative process, health saving direction, Waldorf school, traditional school, comparative researches.

Introduction

One of tasks of priority of modern school is education of healthy generation, personality's reasonable attitude to own health and health of other people. Alongside with it, we have to admit that school education realizes its health-related function incompletely. For example, as per statistic data percentage of pupils with chronic diseases has reached 80%. With it, alongside with unfavorable social-economic, ecological and hereditary reasons, significant part of pupils' risk factors have didactic origin (imperfect organization of educational process, domination of command style in interaction of teacher and disciples, prevailing of reproductive character of teaching and etc.).

In actual world educational practice pupils' health protection is provided mainly with application of medical-hygienic measures, while health-related potential of pedagogic approaches have been remaining unrealized completely.

Scientifically grounded solution of problem of pupils' health formation through education stimulates scientists to deep analysis of theory and practice of schools, pedagogic activity of which is oriented on pupils' health protection.

In world pedagogic Waldorf's school is one of examples of educational process's organization on principles of personality's health protection.

Analysis of scientific-pedagogical literature permits to make conclusion that scientists deal with researches of realization of health-related pedagogical process by Waldorf's school, results of Waldorf education [1, 2, 5-7].

At the same time there is no holistic analysis of Waldorf education results in context of pupils' health protection in scientific sources.

The work has been fulfilled as per plan of scientific & research works of Kharkiv national pedagogic university, named after G.S. Skovoroda.

Purpose, tasks of the work, material and methods

The purpose of the work is generalization of experience of Waldorf's school in formation of pupils' health.

Results of the research

The fulfilled scientific study permits to make conclusion that Waldorf's school solves in practice the task of ensuring of healthy spiritual-mental-physical progressing of a personality. It is proved by results of researches, which have been conducted recent years both in western countries and in Ukraine and Russia.

For example, in frames of research "School and health", which was carried out in 90-s of the last century by universities of Bielefeld and Helsinki (Finland) for determination of school education's influence on somatic children's health, there were examined several thousand of Waldorf and traditional schools. It was stated that percentage of psychic diseases is much lower at Waldorf's schools than in traditional ones, with it in Waldorf's schools it is constantly decreasing, while in traditional schools it is increasing. The same concerns children's physical health, in particular headaches' frequency, distortions of digestion system and etc.

The level of inter-personal communication of Waldorf's school pupils is rather high. Children like to study, are more responsible to what happens in class, level of their discipline and self-organization if higher. Cases of violence are much rarer [4].

Some large-scale comparative researches of pupils' health were conducted in 2006. These researches involved 6630 children of age from 6 to 13 years old (4606 pupils of Waldorf's schools and 2024 pupils of other schools) of five western countries (Austria, Holland, Germany, Switzerland and Sweden). Special interest of the researchers was pointed at revelation of morbidity from different infections, determination of allergies, which are now are rather wide-spread among children.

These researches witnessed that pupils of Waldorf's school have much better indicators of health than pupils of traditional schools. For example pupils from Waldorf's schools suffer from pollinosis and eczema by 20-30% less and from allergy – by 32-39% less [9].

Researchers (A. Bussing, T. Ostermac, F. Yakoby, P. Matissen) found that adult people, who studied in Waldorf's schools, suffer less, than in general in Germany, (be data of Institute of Robert Koch) from allergies, arthrosis, hypertension and other diseases. Former pupils of Waldorf's schools are characterized also by ability to endure significant loads, life stresses and crises [10].

For determination of possible reasons of such results scientists carried out observation of children's life style in families. The obtained data showed that among Waldorf's pupils 40% never took antibiotics, 43% - febrifuges (in particular – paracetamol). For pupils of traditional schools the same data were 15% and 8% accordingly. Only quarter of Waldorf pupils in comparison with three quarters of traditional schools' pupils had inoculations from such infantile diseases as measles, German measles, mumps. One third part of Waldorf pupils endured measles, comparing with one tenth part of pupils from traditional schools. Rather sufficient difference was registered also concerning children's eating: three quarter of Waldorf pupils took organic, ecologically "pure" food (among traditional schools' pupils – only one quarter) [1].

Researcher made conclusion that anthroposophy approach to a person, according to which infection diseases, especially "infantile diseases" in childhood, facilitates formation of strong immune system, is justified. Just owing to this, fact parents of Waldorf schools' are rather restrained in attitude to inoculation, in order not to deprive their children opportunity to strengthen health through enduring of infantile diseases. Parents also rarely give to their children antibiotics and febrifuges. Besides, ecologically "pure" eating also supports child's vital forces and such eating is paid great attention to at Waldorf's school.

Achievements of Waldorf's pedagogic are proved also by independent international comparative researches, which, in different countries of the world, determine quality of pupils' achievements, in particular TIMSS (natural-mathematical education) and PISA (reading and understanding of texts) and by numerous researches, which are conducted by independent experts in countries, where Waldorf's schools exist for many years (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland and, of course, Germany) [2, 4, 7, 8, 12].

For example, V. Hiller (Association of Waldorf's schools of Germany) stresses that such researches in general proved correctness of Waldorf's approaches: a lot of Waldorf's principle turned out to be similar to those, according to which educational system is built in countries with the best results of pupils' achievements. For example, in Scandinavian countries pupils can study in one form for 9 years, in Sweden and Norway – 8 years, in Denmark – up to seventh form children do not receive marks. Rather late differentiation of children by educational achievement – is a secret of Scandinavian pupils' achievements, as well as of all Waldorf's schools – this is idea of V. Hiller [8].

As per the data of statistical researches rather great percentage of Waldorf's schools leavers enter universities. For example, in Germany quantity of applicants- leavers of Waldorf's schools, who successfully passed state entrance exams is by 20-30% higher in average in the country, including gymnasiums (this statistic has not been changing for decades) [7, 8]. That is, among pupils, who studied for 12 years in Waldorf's school on non-selective base, percentage of those, who can enter higher school, is much bigger, than in schools, which, this way or another, carry out selection of pupils (with it, it should be noted that entrance exams at Waldorf's schools are passed as per state requirements and under strict control of governmental educational boards).

Statistical data about professional orientation of Waldorf's schools' leavers, which are registered in different countries by departments of education and science, also witness about certain successfulness of Waldorf education.

As on to day, leavers of Waldorf's schools have been most substantially studied in work by H. Barts and D. Randoll (2007 p.), who, during 2003-2005 carried out research of 1124 of former Waldorf pupils, who had finished schools in period from 1039 to 1974 [10]. The scientists conventionally divided leavers of Waldorf's schools in to following three groups: a) "culturally-oriented" (31%) – people, who have cultural and educational priorities (museums, theatre, reading, etc.) They also are interested in anthroposophy: 22% of them consider themselves to be active followers of anthroposophy (by the way, it should be noted that quantity of oriented on anthroposophy Waldorf's school-leavers do not prove existing in pedagogical circles idea, that "Waldorf's school educates anthroposophy-followers); b) people, "oriented on relations" (33%) – for them the most important is humanistic, emotionally colored communication with other people, "life for the sake of others". Such people do a lot in practical-applied spheres, try to do everything with own hands; c) hedonists (36%) – for them most important are sports, amusements, pleasure for body, delight with life.

It has been cleared up that, independent on determined types, prevailing majority of former Waldorf pupils are able to have critical attitude to environmental phenomena and regard them in all their interconnections. For great majority of Waldorf's school-leavers criterion of social responsibility is of significant priority. H. Barts and D. Randoll explain this fact by social orientation of Waldorf's school, its general festivals, concerts, performances, owing to which pupils can sense strong feeling of community with surrounding people.

Up to 92% of former Waldorf pupils stressed that they liked much their school years. They identify themselves with former educational establishment, positively appraising teaching at school, especially accentuating art-cultural and practical handicraft cycles. Waldorf school-leavers are sure that school gave to them opportunity to receive good basic education, obtain key competences – such as positive attitude to life, trust in own forces, independence and ability to adapt to life conditions [10].

Similar data were obtained in written questioning of 1586 Sweden Waldorf schools, who finished study in period 1990-1996. This questioning was carried out by Sweden independent institute in Kilhberg, in 1999. Results of the questioning permitted to make conclusion that Waldorf's education positively influences on such rather urgent for modern world qualities as independence, ability to interact in collective, creativity, complex (holistic) thinking [6].

The question, how former pupils appraise their chances at labor market in comparison with leavers of traditional schools, 70% of respondents answered "equally good", 16% - "rather better than worse", 8% - "better", 3% appraised their chances as "rather worse than better" and 2.5% - as "worse". (90% of the questioned answered positively the question about their professional and personality's targets for following 3-5 years and clearly described them. Great majority of young people called as their closest target "complete education and progressing in professional sphere" [6].

Different studies of former Waldorf schools state that among them there is rather high percentage of those, who are satisfied with their profession – up to 75-85%. By the results of questioning [6], it can be stated that most of Waldorf school-leavers succeeded in choosing of profession and developing professional prospects. Positive evaluation of chances at labor market is explained by strength of personality, points at high level of self-assertion. Self-estimation of own abilities and professionalism was also high. School-leavers appraised their school also highly, marking among abilities, educated by it, first of all creativity, ability to communicate, to take independently decisions, to analyze.

So it is not surprising that by data of UNESCO, among Waldorf school-leavers there are nearly no unemployed (and this take place in countries, in which unemployment is growing) as well as there are no criminals, drug addicts, alcoholics [3, 13].

Of not less significance is the fact that leavers of Waldorf's schools strive for further education: as per the data of H.Barts and D. Randoll, from former Waldorf pupils of Germany 46.8% received academic education, 68.7% graduated from institutes or higher special schools [10].

Leavers of Waldorf's schools also shows desire to deal with social professions. For example by statistic data, obtained in Germany [7], 28 % of Waldorf's school-leavers work in educational and social spheres (with it, profession of teacher was chosen by 14.6%, that is 5 time more frequent in comparison with other population [10]), 12 % –works in medicine, 12 % – in art and linguistics.

From all variety of profession, just social sphere is the most frequently chosen (education, medicine, social therapy and so on) by Waldorf's school leavers in other countries, in Switzerland in particular [6]. High percentage of those, who choose social sphere, witnesses that social and altruistic motives are very important in professional orientation of former Waldorf pupils. Surely, it is just statistics. In practice former Waldorf pupils can be met in quite different spheres of social life, where they work with initiative and readiness to take responsibility.

The work by L. Hessler "Educational success in the light of educational biographies", published by European Community, became a real sensation in European pedagogic circles [11]. The author analyzes in details Waldorf's educational process and biographies of Waldorf's school-leavers. As per L. Hessler, school-leavers of Waldorf's schools were in different years: Adreas Charlgen (politician and member of Sweden parliament), doctor Olaf Feldman (member of federal parliament if Germany), Charl Otto Piol (presidents of Federal bank of Germany in 1980-1991), Yens Stoltenberg (former prime-minister of Norway, now – leader of labor party), Ken Shenaut (head of "American Express", in 2002 was recognized the second most powerful manager in USA), Michael Ende (world-known writer and author of bestsellers of children German-language literature), Ferdinand Alexander Porsche (Germany), who, in 1963 created automobile "Porsche" (in the world this car is considered to be "cult-car", "dream-car", "designer's miracle", "king of sport cars", and many other.

As far as school is chosen by parents, but not by children, it is necessary to note well-known parents of Waldorf's schools leavers – people, who chose for their children just Waldorf's school.

So, Waldorf education was received by: daughter of Silvio Berlusconi (prime-minister of Italy), daughter of Michail Barushnikov (American dancer and actor), sun of Jean Paul Belmondaut (French actor), daughter of Wolfgang Klement (minister of economic relations, Germany), daughter and grand daughter of Rudolf Leiding (former speaker of directors' board of "Volkswagen" company, Germany), children of Yonas Gar Store (president of Red Cross of Norway, former head of executive board of world health protection organization), children of Harrison Ford (actor, who played roles in such films as "Star wars", "Indiana Johns", "President's aircraft", "Escapee" and other, USA), children of John Paul Jones (musician, bass of group "Led Zeppelin", Great Britain), sun of Helmutt Coll (former chancellor of Germany) and many other.

As H. Barts and D. Randoll note, 20% of parents explain their choosing of exactly Waldorf's school for their children by dissatisfaction with governmental school, 11% - by conscious choosing of education with anthroposophy orientation. At the same time most of parents name as main motive of choosing of Waldorf's school, first of all, its attractive pedagogical conception – individual promotion of personality's progressing, absence of marks in from of points, artistic-practical orientation of education and etc. [10].

Recent years there have appeared researches dealing with Waldorf pedagogic in post USSR countries. For example, in Russia, psychologists of Moscow state university, named after M. Lomonosov (under guidance of N. Yevsikova, 2000) studied dynamic of mental development of children, who studied in Russian Waldorf schools. It was stated that, in spite of absence of special intellectual training and presence of high academic load, there is no intellectual lagging and, by some indicators (specifically memory) progress is better than in control groups. Scientists of

Psychological institute RAO (under guidance of Ye.Smirnova, 2002) carried out comparative researches of moral development of children from Waldorf and traditional kindergartens [5].

From 2000 Russian Waldorf schools started first graduations of pupils. In particular, during 10 years (as on 2002) of Moscow Waldorf school's No.1060 work 53 pupils finished it and became students of prestige Moscow universities: 14 school-leavers entered humanitarian higher educational establishments, 12 – social-economic ones, the same quantity – technical and educational establishments of natural sciences, 10- art and musical. Questioning of former Waldorf's pupils showed that they remember school, which opened life prospects for them, gave abilities and communication skills, trained to think and act independently, with satisfaction and gladness.

In Ukraine first researches, oriented on testing of effectiveness of Waldorf pedagogical principles in organization of pupils' education was carried out by O. Ionova (second half of 90-s) [3].

It was established that Waldorf's approaches ensure successfulness of pedagogic process, facilitating humanization of teaching environment, realization of individuality-oriented teaching in conditions of group and frontal work with class, constant formation of thinking, memory, fantasy, culture of feelings, will power of a child. If level of knowledge of Waldorf's pupils mainly is the same as of traditional schools' pupils, then level of personality's abilities (communicability, love for beautiful, diligence, curiosity, self-discipline) as well as creative abilities (independence in learning-cognitive activity, level of cognitive interests) are much higher.

Recent years, in the frames of experiment "Development of Waldorf pedagogic in Ukraine" (Order of Ministry of education and science, No. 363, dt. 06.05.2001) there have been conducted a number of psychological-pedagogic researches, oriented on comparing of results of Waldorf and traditional schools' pupils. Basic educational establishments were such Waldorf's schools: "Steps" (Odessa), "Sophia" (Kyiv), "School of free child's development (Waldorf) (Dnipropetrovsk), school No.108 (Kryviy Rig), EC No.17 (Zhytomyr), EC "Buzkove gnizdo" (Gorodenko, Ivano-Frankivska region), EC "School of free child's development" (Kharkiv).

In the course of researches there were repeatedly carried out comparative "sections" of knowledge of Waldorf and traditional schools' pupils. Results of state assessments witness that progress of Waldorf pupils is to some extent better, comparing with traditional schools' pupils. In particular, as per data of state assessment of 2002/2003 academic year (Kryviy Rig) progress of 4th form Waldorf pupils in mother tongue (Russian) and mathematics was 100% (in traditional school 81.8 and 96% accordingly); in Ukrainian – 92% (traditional school – 68.2%).

Researches of formation level of knowledge quality of primary classes' leavers, including pupils from other schools, which took part in experiment, also witnesses that pupils of Ukrainian Waldorf's schools mastered system of knowledge at level, not lower than level of traditional schools' peers after primary classes.

Appraising it as undoubtedly positive moment of Waldorf pupils' teaching, we should like to note that Waldorf education permits to form children's bents alongside with solid knowledge. This fact was proved by results of researches, which were fulfilled at EC „School of free development" (Kharkiv). These researches were carried out in frames of International comparative project in mathematical education (IPMA), which had been offered by university at Exeter (Great Britain) and stipulated comparing of not only progress in mathematical education, but also determination of effectiveness of teaching process in mathematics on the base of pre-term monitoring of pupils' thinking abilities, mastering of mathematical faculties by them. Appropriate researches were conducted by group of independent experts by equal (for pupils of certain age) tasks.

In Kharkiv 9 schools took part in this project. On the base of first "section" results (2000/2001 academic year) 1st form pupils of EC "School of free development" were on 5th place, comparing with pupils of other schools, which took part in the project. After three years (2002/2003 academic year) the same children – already pupils of 3rd form – took first place by rating. Children demonstrated developed verbal-logical and space thinking, understanding and creativity in using of mathematical knowledge and skills.

During experiment, there were fulfilled comparative psychological-pedagogical studies of junior pupils of Waldorf and traditional schools. The obtained data permit to say that pupils of Waldorf's schools, in comparison with pupils of traditional schools, are characterized with the following:

- they have higher level of motivational and emotional spheres' development, that is characterized by the fact that children go to school and learn with gladness, have positive informal attitude to school and teacher, steady cognitive interest, they are oriented on independent acquiring of new knowledge;
- they have good memory, creative imagination, concentrated attention. With it, at the end of academic year level of attention increases (in contrast to pupils of traditional schools) and level of aggression and anxiety reduces, that witnesses about good adaptation to school and emotional balance;
- by level of development of graphic skills, fine motor functions of hand and sense-motor functions they differ from traditional schools' pupils insignificantly;
- by level of logical thinking development (in particular ability to classify and determine sequence of phenomena) they practically do not differ from traditional schools' pupils; they have to some extent worse indicators of critical perception, ability for generalization, but better indicators in verbal-logical and space thinking as well as creative thinking (they better fulfill tasks of creative character);
- they feel themselves actively and freely at school, have developed sense of sociality and empathy;
- they have good body control. As per results of medical examinations in period of avitaminosis and colds lessons' missing, owing to diseases, are insignificant.

Thus, Waldorf's school positively influences on intellectual activity, individual initiative, creativity, independence of decisions, mental balance, social competence, coordination of body and movements, as well as facilitates healthy child's development in comparison with traditional school.

Conclusions:

Generalization of the presented above analysis permits to make conclusions that there is no ground under ideas of some researches, who consider Waldorf's school to be just "school of art" or "school of labor" and, thus, suitable for children with health problems; that in Waldorf's school "good atmosphere, but children are not taught to anything", i.e. in other words, that Waldorf pedagogic attaches secondary value to quality of knowledge (V. Valentinova).

Statement that practice of Waldorf's school results in, on the one hand, formation of sense of pupils' exclusiveness and, on the other hand, appearing of certain child's complexes, situational and personality's anxiety (O. Cherkasova) also is far from reality.

At the same time, the fulfilled work proves conclusions of scientists (V. Hebel, L. Hessler, M. Hekler, O. Ionova, O. Lukashenko, T. Marty) about sense of Waldorf's pedagogical process as mean of sound spiritual-mental-physical development of personality.

Considering all above mentioned we think that scientific-methodic foundation of introducing of Waldorf health-creating experience in domestic school to be *perspective direction of further researches*, in order to solve the tasks of healthy generation's education.

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