

Theoretical Foundations for Forming Tolerant Attitudes Among School Pupils Toward Peers with Mobility Impairments

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Abstract: This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of forming tolerant attitudes among school pupils toward peers with mobility impairments. The study analyzes psychological, pedagogical, and social factors influencing inclusive interaction in schools. Special attention is given to empathy, cooperation, teacher support, and inclusive educational practices. The findings show that tolerant attitudes are developed through systematic pedagogical work, inclusive communication, and supportive school environments. The study concludes that inclusive education requires not only physical accessibility but also psychological safety and social acceptance.

Keywords: Tolerance, inclusive education, mobility impairment, empathy, school pupils, inclusion, cooperation.

Introduction: The issue of forming tolerant attitudes toward children with disabilities has been widely studied in pedagogy, psychology, sociology, and inclusive education research. Modern scholars emphasize that inclusive education can be effective only when positive social relationships and supportive peer interaction are established within the school environment [6;7].

Bandura's Social Learning Theory also plays an important role in understanding tolerance formation. According to Bandura, children develop social behavior through observation and imitation. Consequently, pupils' attitudes toward peers with mobility impairments are influenced by teachers, parents, classmates, and the general school atmosphere. Positive teacher behavior and inclusive classroom communication encourage pupils to adopt respectful and supportive attitudes [4, 33-52].

Furthermore, Allport's Contact Hypothesis explains that direct positive interaction between different social groups reduces prejudice and stereotypes. In inclusive education, cooperative activities, group projects, and

peer communication help pupils better understand classmates with disabilities and develop empathy and social acceptance [3].

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory additionally emphasizes that children's social development occurs through communication and collaborative activity. Therefore, inclusive educational environments create opportunities for pupils to develop tolerance, cooperation, and mutual understanding through active social interaction [9].

In Uzbekistan, the scientific and practical importance of inclusive education has significantly increased due to recent educational reforms. In particular, Presidential Decree No. PD-4860 dated October 13, 2020, "On Measures for Further Improvement of the System of Education and Upbringing for Children with Special Educational Needs," approved the Concept for the Development of Inclusive Education for 2020–2025 and identified the expansion of inclusive learning opportunities as a state priority [2]. Furthermore, Presidential Decree No. UP-134 dated May 11, 2022, "On Approval of the National Program for the

Development of School Education in 2022–2026,” emphasized the importance of creating accessible educational environments and integrating children with disabilities into mainstream education [1]. These reforms strengthened scientific interest in the development of tolerance and inclusive culture within schools.

Modern studies conducted by UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization highlight that inclusive education should provide not only academic access but also emotional safety, equality, and social participation for all learners. Researchers additionally note that negative peer attitudes may lead to isolation, anxiety, low self-esteem, and reduced participation among children with mobility impairments. Consequently, schools should systematically implement inclusive pedagogical approaches aimed at developing empathy, respect, cooperation, and positive peer relationships [5;8;10].

Thus, the formation of tolerant attitudes toward peers with mobility impairments is a complex pedagogical and social process influenced by educational practices, social interaction, teacher support, and inclusive school culture.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a qualitative theoretical-methodological research approach aimed at analyzing the foundations of forming tolerant attitudes among school pupils toward peers with mobility impairments. The research focuses on identifying effective pedagogical methods, psychological factors, and inclusive educational strategies that contribute to the development of empathy, respect, cooperation, and positive peer interaction in school environments. The methodological basis of the study includes humanistic pedagogy, inclusive education theory, the social model of disability, Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, and Bandura’s social learning theory. Humanistic pedagogy emphasizes equality, dignity, and respect for every learner, while the social model of disability explains that social barriers and negative attitudes often create greater difficulties for children with mobility impairments than physical limitations themselves. Therefore, tolerance is considered an essential condition for successful inclusion and social participation. Several research methods were applied

during the study. Firstly, the analytical method was used to examine scientific literature, international educational documents, state policies, and previous studies related to inclusive education and tolerance formation. Secondly, the comparative method was employed to compare different theoretical approaches to disability, inclusion, and peer interaction. Thirdly, the descriptive method was used to explain the psychological and pedagogical mechanisms involved in the formation of tolerant attitudes among pupils. In addition, the pedagogical modeling method was applied to identify effective educational practices that support inclusive interaction. These practices include cooperative learning, peer support activities, role-play, ethical discussions, reflective exercises, and empathy-building tasks. Such methods help reduce stereotypes and improve communication between pupils with and without disabilities.

RESULTS

The results of the study demonstrate that the formation of tolerant attitudes among school pupils toward peers with mobility impairments depends on psychological, pedagogical, and social factors within the inclusive educational environment. The analysis revealed that tolerance develops more effectively when schools create supportive conditions based on equality, empathy, cooperation, and active participation.

Firstly, the findings indicate that pupils who possess sufficient knowledge about disability and inclusive education demonstrate more positive attitudes toward peers with mobility impairments. For example, after classroom discussions about equality and disability awareness, pupils became more willing to communicate and cooperate with classmates using wheelchairs or crutches. Lack of awareness, on the contrary, often caused stereotypes, misunderstanding, and social distancing.

Secondly, the study revealed that teacher behavior strongly influences peer relationships in the classroom. Teachers who demonstrate inclusive communication and respectful attitudes encourage pupils to adopt similar behavior. For instance, when teachers equally involve pupils with mobility impairments in classroom discussions, presentations, and group tasks, classmates begin to perceive them as active and capable participants rather than passive observers.

Furthermore, cooperative learning methods were identified as one of the most effective approaches for tolerance formation. Group projects, peer collaboration, and extracurricular activities allow pupils to interact naturally and understand each other's abilities. For example, during collaborative science or art projects, pupils with mobility impairments successfully participated in planning, presenting ideas, and completing tasks together with peers. Such experiences reduced stereotypes and strengthened mutual respect.

The research also showed that empathy-building activities positively influence emotional understanding and social acceptance. Role-play activities, storytelling, and ethical discussions helped pupils better understand the challenges faced by children with mobility impairments. For example, pupils who participated in simulation activities requiring movement with limited mobility reported greater empathy and supportive behavior toward classmates with disabilities.

Table 1. Factors Influencing the Formation of Tolerant Attitudes

Factors	Examples from School Practice	Expected Outcome
Inclusive teacher behavior	Equal participation in discussions and activities	Positive peer interaction
Cooperative learning	Group projects and teamwork	Reduction of stereotypes
Empathy-building activities	Role-play and reflective discussions	Increased social acceptance
Peer support programs	Helping classmates during school activities	Better social integration
Inclusive school environment	Accessible classrooms and supportive atmosphere	Active pupil participation
Awareness and information	Lessons about disability and equality	Development of tolerant attitudes

Additionally, the findings showed that inclusive school culture directly affects pupils' social behavior. Schools that promote equality, cooperation, and accessibility create more favorable conditions for the successful inclusion of children with mobility impairments. Therefore, tolerance formation should be considered a continuous pedagogical process requiring systematic educational work and supportive social interaction.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the formation of tolerant attitudes among school pupils toward peers with mobility impairments is an important condition for successful inclusive education. The findings demonstrate that tolerance develops through the interaction of psychological, pedagogical, and social factors within the school environment. Therefore,

inclusive education should focus not only on academic achievement but also on the development of empathy, cooperation, equality, and respectful communication among pupils. One of the major findings of the study is that pupils' knowledge and awareness about disability significantly influence their attitudes toward peers with mobility impairments. Lack of information often causes stereotypes, misunderstanding, and social distancing. Consequently, educational institutions should organize awareness activities, ethical discussions, and inclusive classroom practices that help pupils understand the principles of equality and diversity. The study also revealed the important role of teachers in shaping peer attitudes. Teachers serve as behavioral models, and their communication style directly affects classroom relationships. If teachers demonstrate respect, empathy, and inclusive behavior, pupils are more likely

to imitate these attitudes. In contrast, negative or indifferent teacher behavior may strengthen exclusion and discrimination within the classroom. Furthermore, the findings confirm that cooperative learning and peer interaction positively influence tolerance formation. Group projects, collaborative tasks, role-play, and extracurricular activities help pupils communicate naturally and recognize the abilities and individuality of classmates with mobility impairments. As a result, social barriers decrease and positive peer relationships improve. Another important finding is that inclusive education should include both physical and psychological accessibility. Although accessible infrastructure is necessary, true inclusion cannot be achieved without emotional safety and social acceptance. Pupils with mobility impairments should feel respected, supported, and actively involved in school life. Overall, the study confirms that tolerance formation is a continuous pedagogical process requiring systematic educational work, inclusive methodology, teacher support, and positive social interaction. Therefore, schools should create inclusive environments that encourage equality, empathy, cooperation, and active participation for all learners.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the formation of tolerant attitudes among school pupils toward peers with mobility impairments is one of the essential conditions for successful inclusive education and social integration. The study demonstrated that tolerance should be understood not simply as passive acceptance, but as active respect, empathy, cooperation, and recognition of equal human dignity regardless of physical condition. The research findings revealed that tolerant attitudes are formed through the interaction of psychological, pedagogical, and social factors. In particular, pupils' awareness about disability, teacher behavior, inclusive classroom practices, and positive peer interaction significantly influence the development of respectful relationships within school communities. The study also confirmed that cooperative learning, role-play activities, ethical discussions, peer support systems, and empathy-building exercises are effective methods for reducing stereotypes and strengthening inclusive communication among pupils. Furthermore, the analysis showed that inclusive education requires not only physical accessibility but also emotional and social

inclusion. Even when schools provide accessible infrastructure, negative peer attitudes may still create barriers to participation. Therefore, educational institutions must establish psychologically safe and supportive environments where pupils with mobility impairments feel accepted, respected, and actively involved in academic and social activities. The study additionally emphasized the important role of teachers as models of inclusive behavior. Teachers who demonstrate empathy, equality, and respectful communication positively influence pupils' attitudes and contribute to the creation of an inclusive school culture. Consequently, tolerance formation should become an integral component of educational policy, teacher training, classroom management, and extracurricular activities. Overall, the research confirms that systematic pedagogical work aimed at developing empathy, cooperation, and inclusive values can significantly improve social interaction among pupils. Therefore, modern schools should prioritize the formation of tolerant attitudes as a fundamental element of inclusive education and democratic social development.

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