

Formation of Democratic Confidence and Self-Awareness of Future Educational Staff of Preschool Education

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Abstract

The development of the democratic foundations of Ukrainian society highlights the problem of formation of democratic confidence and self-awareness of future educators of pre-school establishments who should be prepared not only for the independent professional activity in the conditions of democracy, but also for social protection of the rights of pre-school children in cooperation with other subjects of a democratic society. The article outlines the essence, structural components, criteria and indicators of the formation of democratic confidence and identity of the student youth. The methodology and results of diagnostics of the level of democratic confidence and students' self-awareness are presented. The actual aspects for modernization of the content of social and humanitarian training of future educators in pre-school educational institutions on the principles of human-centered philosophy and the theory of democracy as the power of the people are proposed. The results of the approbation of the author's elective course "Democratic Principles of the Ukrainian State" are highlighted.

Keywords: Human-centrism; Democracy; Democratic confidence; Democratic self-awareness; Institutions of higher education; Social and humanitarian training; Optional course.



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1. Introduction

The introduction of democratic values and principles in the socio-political life of Ukraine highlights the need to increase the role of a citizen in the social, political, economic and cultural life of the country, determines the processes of establishing a democratic consciousness of every citizen capable of effective realization of the functions of the subject of democratic interaction.

The current situation in Ukraine is characterized by an increase in the number of supporters of philosophical and political ideas that the state should not interfere with the public and public affairs; public authorities should serve citizens, and not vice versa; between the state and civil society, instead of antagonism, there must be a parity of solidarity and cooperation. However, democratic norms of socio-political life in Ukraine are only beginning to be actively implemented: citizens are still fighting the right of real influence on state structures and representative bodies through participation in the process of making political decisions, the use of mechanisms for monitoring the activities of government institutions. The authoritarian post-Soviet legacy, in which the state dominated civil society and neglected the rights and freedoms of a citizen, significantly complicates the processes of democratization of public life.

1.1. Formulation of the Problem

This situation particularly affects the consciousness of the student youth, in particular, future educators of pre-school establishments. They should be prepared not only for the independent professional activity in the conditions of democracy, but also for social protection of the rights of preschool children in cooperation with other subjects of a democratic society. Consequently, the vitality of the problem of formation of democratic consciousness and self-awareness of future educators of pre-school establishments is not in doubt.

This issue is enshrined in normative-legal documents as one of the aspects of reforming the system of higher education in Ukraine. In particular, the Laws of Ukraine "On Education" and "On Higher Education" emphasize the necessity of forming democratic values of the student's personality as a bearer of democratic consciousness, who feels and values his freedom and dignity, is able to choose the priorities of his life, protect his own rights and freedoms as well as the progressive democratic development of the state in a democratic way.

1.2. Analyses of the Latest Researches and Publications

In modern scientific studies (Bekh, 2013; Boryshevskii, 2012; Tytarenko, 2013), the phenomena of consciousness and self-consciousness are treated as forms of manifestation of the same phenomenon: the person's attitude to the totality of ideas, images, values, feelings concerning all the spheres of society without exception are reflected in the consciousness, and there is an estimation of the person himself as the bearer and the subject of these attitudes in self-consciousness. In other words, self-consciousness is self-perception, as well as self-attitude and self-assessment of the personality as a carrier of consciousness (Bekh, 2013; Boryshevskii, 2012).

According to Tytarenko (2013) opinion, which we support, self-consciousness is a higher form of consciousness, characterized by the ability to directly reproduce oneself, perceive oneself from the side, and make a reflection of own possibilities. This is a holistic assessment of oneself as a person experiencing, perceiving, thinking, making decisions, acting. In the structure of self-consciousness, the scientist distinguishes self-knowledge, emotional-value attitude towards oneself, which determines the self-regulation of behavior and activity. The researcher points out that due to self-consciousness, a person finds activity for himself, in which he will be able to maximize his own potential opportunities, chooses the circle of the most suitable communication for himself, shapes an individual lifestyle (Tytarenko, 2013).

According to our beliefs, the content component of a democratic consciousness of a person is a set of ideas, representations, feelings, values reflecting different spheres of life of a democratic society. Instead, we regard democratic self-consciousness as an awareness of the personality in our attitude towards the democratic environment and other citizens, our interests, needs, potential opportunities, ideals, values, and motives of behavior in all spheres of social and political life in a democracy. In our opinion, the democratic orientation of consciousness and self-consciousness combines the motives, attitude and quality of the individual as the subject of a democratic society.

Based on the above, we distinguish cognitive and motivational-value components in the structure of democratic consciousness and personality consciousness. Our position is explained by the fact that a person differentiates the phenomena of reality on two levels - the conceptual (the cognitive component: the essence of the phenomenon, its purpose, the system of connections with others) and the value (the motivational-value component: the object or phenomenon is perceived by man as such, relating to it, concerns it, does not leave it indifferent). A person's sense of the value of an object or phenomenon prompts her to take an active action, turning into a motive of activity, and the motive can only be a person recognized value.

We emphasize that cognitive and motivational-value components in their totality determine the peculiarities of personality behavior and are the basis for choosing its goals, means, results and conditions of activity in various spheres of life of a democratic society.

The search for ways to solve the problem of formation of democratic consciousness and identity of the student youth puts the teachers of higher educational institutions in need of updating the content of social and humanitarian training, whose potential can be reinforced by the ideas of the philosophy of human-centeredness and the concept of democracy as the power of the people.

In this context, it should be emphasized that in the Ukrainian scientific thought the philosophy of human-centeredness was developed in the fundamental writings of Academician Kremen (2011). The scholar highlighted the peculiarities of the modernization of the educational field of Ukraine on the system of views, which recognizes the inalienable right of every person to the free development and realization of all his abilities. The Academician considers the degree of disclosure of human capacity as a criterion for assessing the effectiveness of public authorities and public institutions. The problem of the development of human-centeredness as a fundamental principle of educational activity was considered in the study of Artsyshevsky (2010). Features of the introduction of future specialists in the philosophy of human-centeredness as a factor in improving the quality of labor potential are highlighted in the scientific work of Dmytrenko and Riktor (2012).

The analysis of the scientific achievements of these and other scholars gives grounds to assert that nowadays the development of social life is gradually, but steadily gaining a human-centered orientation, when the individual formation of each person is simultaneously the main indicator of progress and the main prerequisite for the establishment of democratic foundations of the Ukrainian society. From the philosophical and political point of view, this involves creating conditions for maximizing the disclosure of each person's potential, realizing all of his intellectual, cultural and creative abilities, achieving the highest levels of individual freedom with his willingness to take responsibility for his own actions and activities.

The adoption of the philosophy of human-centeredness as a priority of the consciousness of the Ukrainian people has intensified the processes of introduction into society the life of democracy as the power of the people, characterized by the sovereignty and self-government of the people.

In our opinion, one can also agree with the assertion by Riabenko (2014), that the application of the provisions of the philosophy of human-centeredness will contribute to the formation of a free and responsible personality, the establishment of democratic ideological settings, views and values, the provision of conditions for the free self-determination of a young person in a democratically oriented world-view, adoption. It has its own values in the form of life goals, leading motives and interests, aspirations and needs.

In the Ukrainian scientific thought of recent years, the theoretical foundations of democracy are actively being developed, in particular, the content of the main sovereign rights of the Ukrainian people, as well as the priority functions, types and forms of democracy as a direct democracy are considered. Thus, the need for the establishment of the sovereignty of the people, nation and state is defended in the monograph of Hapotii (2010). Studies Pashko (2015), Kovalchuk and Panchuk (2016), Makarenko (2017), performed comprehensive analysis of various aspects of cooperation between government and civil society in a modern democracy. Theoretical and applied aspects of the

political culture of civil society were developed in the study of Shchedrova (2009). The philosophy of identity in the conditions of modern civil society is highlighted in the scientific work of Ivchenko (2013). The problem of political participation of the Ukrainian youth in the democratization of social life was investigated by Yatsura (2015), and Kavylin (2016). Technology democratization of educational activities in the context of social and cultural change is represented by Marhulina (2010). Some aspects of civic consciousness in the study of social sciences are considered in the work of Mokhniuk (2010).

Based on the results of the scientific research of these and other home scientists we can conclude that democracy as the power of the people is characterized by the sovereignty of the people, who choose the power, influence the content and the ways of their activities, participate in the adoption of important decisions for the state and society, control the activities of the authorities, structures, individual civil servants and elected officials and have mechanisms for their recall. By highlighting the content of the main sovereign rights of the Ukrainian people, the priority functions, types and forms of direct democracy, the abovementioned scholars agree that the power of the people (the people's power) is a system-forming and essential feature, as well as a defining principle of a democratic state, which Ukraine seeks to become. However, the above promising ideas, unfortunately, have not yet been included in the content of the socio-humanitarian training of students of institutions of higher education, which, in turn, does not ensure the full development of their democratic consciousness and self-awareness.

The objective of the article is to highlight the results of the study on the process of modernization of the content of the social and humanitarian training of students of higher education institutions, which would ensure the formation of democratic consciousness and self-awareness of future educators of pre-school establishments as the necessary condition for effective life in a democracy.

2. Methodology

To participate in the research, which took place during 2016 and 2017, 129 students of Preschool education department in Cherkasy National University named after Bohdan Khmelnytsky and State higher education institution "Donbass State Pedagogical University" (Sloviansk Donetsk region), were attached.

At the stage of theoretical understanding of the problem under study, methods of analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature, systematization and generalization of theoretical data, content analysis of normative legal documents and current educational programs of social and humanitarian preparation of students of higher educational institutions were used.

The study also used methods of pedagogical diagnostics (questionnaires, testing, self-evaluation, expert evaluations, method of evaluating creative works) and methods of mathematical statistics for the quantitative analysis of the obtained results. The main method of study was the pedagogical experiment.

3. Results and Discussion

Experimental work on modernization of the content of social and humanitarian training of future educators of pre-school establishments was carried out in 3 stages: conceptual-diagnostic, formational and control-generalization.

At the *conceptual and diagnostic stage* of the pedagogical experiment on the basis of the theoretical analysis of scientific works of home and foreign scholars in the historical retrospect the chronology of the process of maturation of the democratic features of the people's sovereignty was studied (Arblaster, 2005; Boden, 1999; Dahl, 2010; Grotzii, 1994; Hobbes, 2010; Rousseau, 2001), as well as the contemporary content of the main sovereign rights of the Ukrainian people, the priority functions, types and forms of direct democracy (Hapotii, 2010; Ivchenko, 2013; Makarenko, 2017; Shchedrova, 2009), are defined.

At the same time, according to the results of content analysis of the current educational programs of social and humanitarian training of students of higher educational institutions, it was stated the need for a more complete coverage of the ideas of the priority of people's sovereignty over state sovereignty, the existence of state and political power exclusively in the interests of the people, considering the state as an instrument of serving man, society and their development, and democracy as the main feature of a democratic state. The analysis has also identified the need for a detailed study of ways of realization and protection of constitutional rights and freedoms, on equal partnership and mutual responsibility of the citizen and the state, based on the principles of constitutionalism, rule of law, humanism and democracy.

In addition, at the conceptual and diagnostic stage, the diagnostics of the initial level of the development of democratic consciousness and self-awareness of future educators of pre-school establishments was carried out.

For this purpose, the criteria which correspond to the structural components of democratic consciousness and self-awareness, and their indicators, namely were defined:

- the criterion of "knowledge of democratic foundations of social life" (performance - understanding the essence of democratic values as democracy, knowledge of democratic methods of interaction with civil society bodies and local authorities, knowledge of their potential, abilities and qualities as a subject of democratic interaction) - corresponds to the cognitive component of democratic consciousness and student self-awareness;

- the criterion of "democratic orientation" (parameters - the belief in the need to implement democratic values as democracy in all spheres of public life, the desire of democratic interaction in social life; positive motivation to self-fulfillment and self-development as the subject of democratic interaction) – corresponds to the value-motivational component of democratic consciousness and student self-awareness.

The diagnosis of the initial level of democratic consciousness and identity of future teachers of pre-school education by the criterion "knowledge of the democratic foundations of social life" is delivered in the copyright

questionnaires “My knowledge of the values of democracy”, “My knowledge of the ways of democratic interaction in public life”, the author’s questionnaire “My position as a subject of public life”; has also used the method of “unfinished sentence” (have a knowledge of the essence of the terms “fraud”, “corruption”, “arbitrary”, “manipulation”, “violence”), writing student mini-work “How people can exercise their powers in a democracy?” projective technique “Auto portrait”, rapid response to the question “How can I express myself in the local community?” and “What are the issues I can interact with the authorities and local governments?” and other methods.

The diagnosis of the initial level of democratic consciousness and self-awareness of students on the criterion of “democratic orientation” was carried out by means of copyright author’s questionnaires “I assess the state of implementation of democratic values in Ukraine“, “I assess the democratic Ukrainian society”, “My idea of Ukraine as a legal and social state”, “The main motives of my active participation in social and political life”, “My future role in the political life of the country”; writing mini-essays “Should citizens interact with the authorities and why?” and “How is the parity between citizens and the state possible, between a person and society, between citizens?”. In addition, the “Self-esteem Scale” and the questionnaire “Motivation for Success and Fear of Failure” were used.

The results of the diagnosis showed that only 12.2% of the students in the experimental group and 11.6% of the control group students showed a high level of democratic consciousness and self-awareness. They possessed sufficiently full knowledge of the values of democracy as the power of the people, the foundations of electoral legislation, and the peculiarities of civil society control over the activities of the authorities. These students were aware of the peculiarities of the functioning of power structures, methods and forms of democratic interaction with civil society institutes, authorities and local self-government. They have formed a clear idea of democratic ways of implementing and protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens. They feel their own self-worth, have their own dignity, are confident in the ability of citizens to make changes in public life, have an active interest in the problem of establishing parity relations with democratic government, local self-government bodies and civil society institutions, have a positive motivation to self-determination, self-realization and self-development as the subject of democratic interaction.

According to the results of the diagnosis, 44.2% of the experimental group and 43.1% of the respondents in the control group revealed an average level of democratic consciousness and self-awareness. This student youth have incomplete and unsystematic knowledge of the values of democracy as the people’s power, the fundamentals of electoral legislation, have found insufficiently complete or superficial knowledge of the ways of democratic interaction of subjects of social life, the realization and protection of the rights, freedoms and duties of a citizen, have fragmentary ideas on ways of self-knowledge, self-realization and self-development as a subject of democratic interaction in the local community. They show a situational character in determining their own position in relation to the facts and events of socio-political life. These students have no attitude towards themselves as a subject of their own life, too much expectation for the state, value orientations for active, independent and responsible behavior in a democratic environment are unstable, require constant external stimulation, unstable or unformed need for self-determination, self-realization and self-development as the subject of democratic interaction.

Unfortunately, another 43.6% of students in the experimental group and 45.3% of the control group students found a low level of democratic consciousness and self-awareness. At the time of diagnosis, they had fragmentary knowledge of the essence of the values of democracy as the people’s power, the foundations of electoral legislation, lack of understanding of the peculiarities of the functioning of power structures, shallow and unsystematic knowledge of democratic ways of realizing and protecting the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of a person-citizen, superficial notions of the forms and methods of the adoption and implementation of individual and collective decisions. These students had virtually no knowledge of how to interact democratically with civil society institutions, government bodies and local self-government, and almost complete lack of knowledge about the ways of self-realization and self-development as a democratic subject. They were desperate in their own ability to influence something, transfer responsibility for their own lives to others: power, state, country, unfavorable conditions, etc. They did not feel the need for autonomy and responsibility for the results of their own activities and interaction with other actors in various spheres of public life. They have virtually no desire for self-realization and self-development as a subject of democratic interaction.

Consequently, the results of the diagnosis of the initial level of democratic consciousness and self-awareness of the future educators of preschool education institutions confirmed our assumptions about the need for a more complete coverage of the democratic ideas of the philosophy of human-centrism and the democratic principles of the democratization of socio-political life in Ukraine in the process of social and humanitarian training of students.

At the formative stage of experimental and experimental work in the teaching of social science subjects, the students’ attention was focused on the questions about the contractual theory of the state creation, the state and national sovereignty, as well as on the political rights of the people as a means of realization of democracy in a democratic state, namely:

- firstly, the essence of the state was considered in its social purpose: as an instrument of service to man and society, their development. In particular, the principle became vital about the fact that, since the state is created by the people, the essence of the state is expressed in the expression of the will and interests of the people, as well as in the embodiment of democracy, which becomes possible only under conditions of a democratic state;

- secondly, the students formed the understanding of the state as a public power organization of the people, and therefore postulated that state sovereignty is based on national sovereignty and ensures its implementation. In the case of violation of such a relationship with the realities the state is either non-democratic (when the state does not

respect the sovereign rights of the people) or non-sovereign (the lack of sovereignty of the state entails, as a rule, the loss of sovereignty by its people);

- thirdly, in the minds of student youth cultivates the conviction that the essence of the principle of national sovereignty is reflected in the following constitutional principles: the people are the only source of supreme power in the state; public power exists exclusively in his interests; the people should have the supreme right to resolve the most important issues of state and public life, the formation of public authorities, as well as the right to control their activities;

- fourth, the idea was formed that the principle of national sovereignty is closely connected with the political rights and freedoms that make it from the constitutional declaration to the social reality. The implementation of the principle of national sovereignty is conditioned by the constitutional right of citizens to participate in the management of state affairs, electoral rights, as well as the right of freedom of speech and peaceful assembly.

Considerable attention was paid to the consideration of the essence of the right of citizens to peaceful assembly as the realization of mass expression of will and the disclosure of their civic position on certain socially significant problems, as well as awareness of the order of their conduct by students, forms of responsibility for violations and crimes that may arise during mass gatherings.

While considering the role of a person in a democratic state, special emphasis was placed on the institutional empowering control and state-organizational functions of the people's power, the forms of direct democracy, as well as on the peculiarities of public, parliamentary, presidential and constitutional control over the actions of the delegated authority, overcoming its illegitimate use.

Particular importance in the teaching of social science disciplines was given to the awareness of future educators of the mutual responsibility of the individual and the state, based on the principles of the rule of law, legality, humanism, justice, and civil protection, political, socio-economic and cultural human rights, as well as the development of the state as democratic, social and legal. Important for the formation of democratic consciousness and identity of the student youth was the understanding of the fact that the content of the responsibility of the state to citizens is expressed in the obligations of its bodies and officials to be the subjects of responsibility for the committed offenses (in particular - for corruption) related to their competence, the actions of their official authority. Particular attention was paid to considering the responsibility of the authorities for miscalculations in their actions, for inaction and abuse of power (arbitrariness), for crimes committed and for compensation for damages caused by illegal actions of public authorities or their officials. It was in this context that the necessity of constant control over the activity of power structures and individual officials was highlighted.

The principles were also cultivated that the mutual responsibility of the state and man is manifested as the basic, fundamental idea of a democratic constitutional system, the essence of which is the consolidation and application of negative consequences for improper fulfillment (or even for non-fulfillment) of the mutual obligations of the state established by the Constitution of Ukraine, government and individual officials) and the person.

An important aspect of the socio-educational education of future teachers of pre-school educational institutions was the consideration of the peculiarities of democratic interaction with civil society institutes, local authorities and local self-government bodies to ensure and protect children's rights. Students were aware of the need to establish partnerships between citizens and the government, based on the principles of equality, trust, justice and mutual respect for each other.

In order to develop the students' ability to express their thoughts freely and defend their interests, protect their own rights and rights of children, progressive democratic development of their state in a democratic interaction with civil society institutions, government and local self-government at the formative stage of the experiment, the author's optional course "Fundamentals of democratization of public life" was tested; these are the theoretical foundations based on the system of values of democracy as the power of the people and humanistic-oriented philosophy of human-centeredness.

All the topics of the course are united into four modules ("Political and state power in the modern world", "Democratic principles of the Ukrainian state", "Civil society as an institution of the Ukrainian political state system", "Personality as a subject of social-power relations") and are closely related to the practice of our country's social and political life.

Thus, in the introductory lesson, students considered the features of Ukraine as an independent, sovereign, democratic, legal and social state, as well as aware of the constitutional foundations of the necessary democratic transformations in Ukraine.

In the process of mastering the first module of the course, the students not only updated their knowledge about the state and political power in Ukraine, but also during interactive forms of work ("Brainstorming", "Let's take a position", "Microphone", etc.) tried to substantiate the main characteristics of a democratically oriented government.

During the mastering of the second module of an apprenticeship, students through the active and interactive forms of educational activities (discussions, debates, "Socratic Dialogue", etc.) were aware of such important issues for the development of a democratic consciousness of a person as, for example:

- state and civil society as institutions of the political system; a democratic political system, its distinction from other types of political systems; peculiarities of the establishment of a democratic political system in Ukraine;
- democracy: criteria, principles, mechanisms of implementation, main types and conditions of formation; the difference between democracy and authoritarian and totalitarian political regimes; peculiarities of the establishment and development of democracy in Ukraine;
- ways of democratization of legislative, executive and judicial power in Ukraine; introduction of e-democracy as a form of Internet communication of state authorities and citizens as performers of civil society;

- principles of the rule of law and the state of their implementation in the Ukrainian state; peculiarities of the implementation of the principle of equality of all citizens of Ukraine;
- characteristic features and functions of a social state; the state of realization of social justice for all citizens of Ukraine and the provision of welfare as the ultimate value of democracy;
- the electoral system in Ukraine, its influence on the development of democracy in the state; ways to improve the electoral system in relation to the development of democracy in the country.

The third module of the optional course “Civil Society as an Institute for the Democratic Political System of the Ukrainian State” was also important for the development of students’ democratic understanding and identity, during which the economic, political, social and cultural components of social and political life were considered; the functions of the civil society in Ukraine, the constitutional and legal foundations of the state and civil society interaction. Particular attention during the study of this section was given to the students’ awareness about the problem of local self-government as a form of realization of public authority on the public, direct and representative democracy in the system of local self-government, institutions and subjects of direct democracy at the local level.

In the course of mastering the fourth module of an optional course “Personality as a subject of social-power relations” the students learned the essence of the concepts of “democratic interaction as parity social-power relations”, “democratic consciousness and self-consciousness of the personality”, the peculiarities of recognition and the realization of democracy as a citizen, his constitutional rights and freedoms, as well as the rights of the child and ways of their protection; ways of realizing citizens’ suffrage as the action of direct democracy and the possibility of personal influence on the development of democracy in Ukraine; the political right of Ukrainian citizens to participate in the management of the affairs of society; freedom and responsibility, purposefulness, initiative and independence of the person as the priority qualities of the subject of a democratic society; ways of interaction of citizens and local governments; participation of citizens-subjects in the discussion of draft laws and regulations, in public hearings, meetings with representatives of the authorities, work of expert and working groups, advisory bodies (councils) on various issues of social and political life as a form of realization of democracy in decision-making on the regional level and control over their implementation; ways of appealing actions of executive bodies and local self-government bodies that violate constitutional rights and freedoms of a citizen and rights of children. At the theoretical level, protest forms of protecting the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens as subjects of a democratic society (acts of civil disobedience, rallies, demonstrations, public meeting, strikes, etc.) were also discussed as well as the inadmissibility of violent forms of civil protest in democratic states.

Thus, the mastering the author’s optional course “Fundamentals of the democratization of public life” by the future teachers of preschool institutions contributed to their awareness of the essence of the values of democracy as the power of the people, the peculiarities of the sovereignty of the state and citizen, the principle of constitutionalism in relations between the authorities and the individual, the essence of the concepts of corruption and arbitrariness before a citizen, signs of falsification of elections and manipulation of public opinion, ways of interaction of a citizen and a democratic government opportunities for e-democracy and other important issues. Participation in interactive forms of work ensured the student’s ability to learn dialogue forms of interaction with democratically elected authorities on the issues of the implementation and protection of the rights of adults and young people, democratic decision-making procedures and skills to reasonably persuade partners to interact; ways of control over the actions of the authorities in present and future adult life; ability to use democratic technologies to influence the adoption of power common to all decisions, including the possibility of electronic democracy.

This is confirmed by the quantitative results of the control diagnosis and comparison of the conceptual-diagnostic and control-generalization stages of the experimental work (Table 1).

Table-1. Dynamics of levels of democratic consciousness and self-awareness of future educators of pre-school establishments

Levels of democratic consciousness and self-consciousness	Experimental group			Control group		
	Stating diagnosis	Control diagnosis	Dynamics	Stating diagnosis	Control diagnosis	Dynamics
	%	%	%	%	%	%
High	12,2	63,7	+51,5	11,6	23,2	+11,6
Medium	44,2	23,9	-20,3	43,1	45,0	+1,9
Low	43,6	12,4	-31,2	45,3	31,8	-13,5

The obtained data showed that in the experimental group, the number of students with a high level of democratic consciousness and self-awareness increased by 51.5%. The number of students with average (20.3% less) and low (by 31.2% less) levels of democratic consciousness and self-awareness decreased significantly. Instead, positive changes in the levels of democratic consciousness and self-awareness of the control group students were, to a large extent, negligible.

4. Conclusions

The positive results of the study were the basis for the following conclusions:

1. Formation of democratic consciousness and self-awareness of future educators of pre-school establishments is a topical issue of educational activity of institutions of higher education, since they should be prepared not only for independent professional activity in the conditions of democracy, but also for social protection of the rights of children of preschool age in interaction with other sub-democratic societies.

2. The proposed aspects of modernizing the content of the social and humanitarian training of students of higher education institutions on the basis of the philosophy of human-centeredness and the theory of democracy as the power of the people have ensured the formation of democratic consciousness and self-awareness of future educators of pre-school institutions as a necessary condition for effective life in a democracy.

3. Successful testing of the author's optional course "Fundamentals of the Democratization of Public Life" makes it possible to recommend it for use in higher education institutions in order to develop democratic consciousness and identity of students who feel and value their freedom and dignity, able to choose the priorities of their lives, capable of democratic ways to protect and defend their own rights and children's rights, as well as progressive democratic development of their state.

4.1. Perspectives for Further Research

Prospects for further scientific research we see in the study of ways of forming the competence of future educators of pre-school establishments regarding the use of opportunities of information and communication technologies (e-democracy) for the implementation and protection of the rights of young children.

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