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## **The Problems of Formation of Civil Identity Among Students in the Process of Mastering Educational Programs of Secondary and Higher Schools**

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### **Abstract**

Formation of the civil identity of the population is an important task of each state. The results of many studies have shown that such identity is formed in citizens during their growing up period, which coincides with their education in secondary school, and consolidation occurs during the period of study in higher educational institutions. The basis of civil identity is the totality of knowledge about their state as a unique socio-cultural institution. The purpose of this study is to find out the degree of formation of knowledge of pupils and students on such basic components of the all-Russian civil identity as the Russian language, the history of the Russian state, state symbols and traditions.

The article was prepared within the framework of the project No. FSSW-2023-0002 "Formation of the all-Russian civic identity of youth within the framework of the implementation of the state youth policy of the Russian Federation and improvement of mechanisms for ensuring national security in the context of migration processes among youth", financed by the state assignment of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia.

The results of the study showed that first-year students demonstrated significantly higher scores on questions about knowledge of the Russian language and Russian history compared to 11th-grade students. At the same time, the knowledge demonstrated by first-year students cannot be considered sufficient. The results obtained indicate the need to revise the programs of school and higher education and to build a motivational mechanism for senior secondary school students in order to improve and consolidate the level of knowledge that influences the level of all-Russian civic identity of young people.

Thus, the currently published results of other studies indicate a significant degree of theoretical elaboration of the problem of civic identity. At the same time, according to its individual basic components, there are still unresolved tasks in practice, including those related to the

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introduction of mechanisms for the formation of knowledge and skills acquired by young people during their studies at secondary and higher educational institutions through the system.

**Keywords:** civic identity, secondary school, higher education, youth, educational programs, Russian culture, Russian language, history of Russia, state symbols.

## 1. Introduction

Civic identity has repeatedly been the subject of scientific research and discussions in various scientific fields. First of all, it is necessary to pay attention to the results of studies on the concept, essence and identification of types of personal identity, on the place of civic identity in the aggregate of other types of identity and the relationship with them (Petrova, Odintsova, 2024; Galaktionova, 2010), on the elements of the structure of civic identity. In studies devoted to civic identity in a multinational state, the issue of its relationship with national identity is addressed, it is noted that strengthening civic identity helps to reduce the risk of interethnic conflicts (Razina, 2010). At the same time, measures aimed at forming civic identity can be successful only under the condition of normal interaction between state institutions and civil society institutions in the context of public trust in state institutions (Martynov, Purtova, 2013). At the same time, the process of forming civic identity should be built taking into account the elements of its structure, as well as a set of ideas about the main identifying features. The structure of civic identity consists of cognitive, value and emotional elements (Vodolazhskaya, 2010). Although various authors support this judgment, the issue of the set of identifying features is not resolved so clearly. A review of the diverse positions of researchers allows us to assert that the basis of the composition of such features for the all-Russian civic identity is the Russian language (Ikilikyan, 2017), Russian culture (Kanukova et al., 2017), Russian history (Buranok, 2022; Fadeev, 2021; Bagatova, 2021), official state symbols (Rosenberg, Karpova, 2024). At the same time, the formation of identifying features is especially active during the period of personality formation, therefore, attention should be paid to this process primarily in relation to young people in the process of receiving the necessary education. Thus, educational organizations at all levels of education in their activities have a direct impact on the formation, identity of civilization, and the identity of youth (Ivanova et al., 2024). Many scientists emphasize the need for humanitarian development of the individual and the introduction of the humanitarian component as the goal of the educational function of higher education (Vorobyeva, 2019; Danilkova, 2021; Vodenko et al., 2023).

Researchers emphasize the importance of historical education, the formation of historical memory of young people at the level of secondary and higher educational institutions, since the age of mastering basic educational programs by students is the most significant for them in the formation of ideological guidelines and civic identity (Bogatova et al., 2024). The negative consequences of insufficient attention to the teaching of Russian history in the domestic education system, including fragmentation, lack of historical knowledge, are noted.

The process of studying and demonstrating official state symbols has a significant educational effect on strengthening the degree of formation of civil identity, as well as the perception of regional symbols contributes to the formation of national identity in multinational states (Rosenberg, Karpova, 2024; Petrukhina, 2024).

The methodology for developing civic identity through the school course "Fundamentals of Life Safety" and its educational potential are given attention in the works of M.A. Kartavykh, I.A. Voronina, A.A. Arakelyan. From an organizational standpoint, priority is given to the integration of classroom and extracurricular forms of education in the form of educational events (Kartavykh et al., 2021; Voronina, 2022).

The purpose of this study is to determine the degree of development of pupils' and students' knowledge of such basic components of all-Russian civic identity as the Russian language, the history of the Russian state, state symbols and traditions.

## 2. Materials and methods

The study was conducted based on a questionnaire survey of high school graduates and first-year students of higher education institutions. The total random sample consisted of 261 students, including 63 11th-grade high school students and 198 first-year full-time students in the following areas of study: Law, Legal Support of National Security, Business Informatics, Management, Advertising and Public Relations, Mathematical Support and Administration of Information Systems. The sample was randomly selected from among the participants of Open Days who also

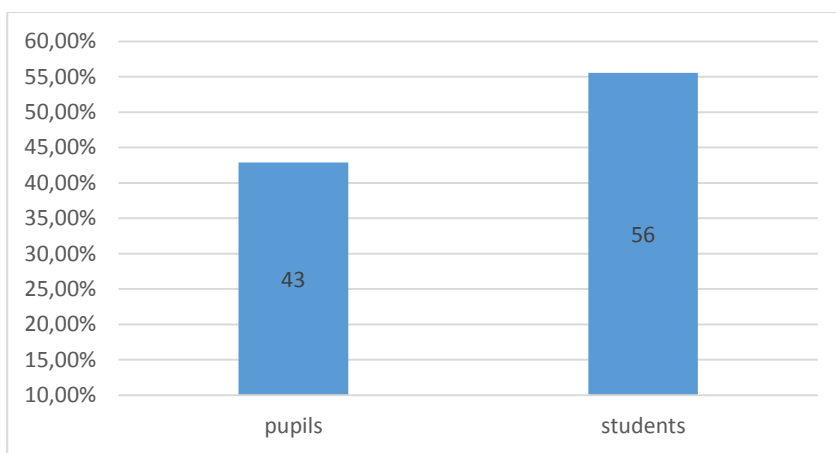
wished to take part in the questionnaire survey as part of this study, as well as participants in all-Russian student scientific conferences. All of these events were held from March to June 2024 at the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics.

The questionnaire included questions on knowledge of the Russian language, history of the Russian state, state symbols and traditions. At the stage of evaluation of the results, analysis and comparative method were used. To test the hypothesis that the number of correct answers of schoolchildren and students is not affected by the level of their educational program, the chi-square criterion was used.

### 3. Results

Based on the questionnaire processing results were obtained, calculated as the number of people who chose one or more correct answer options. These values are presented as a percentage of the number of people who took part in the survey.

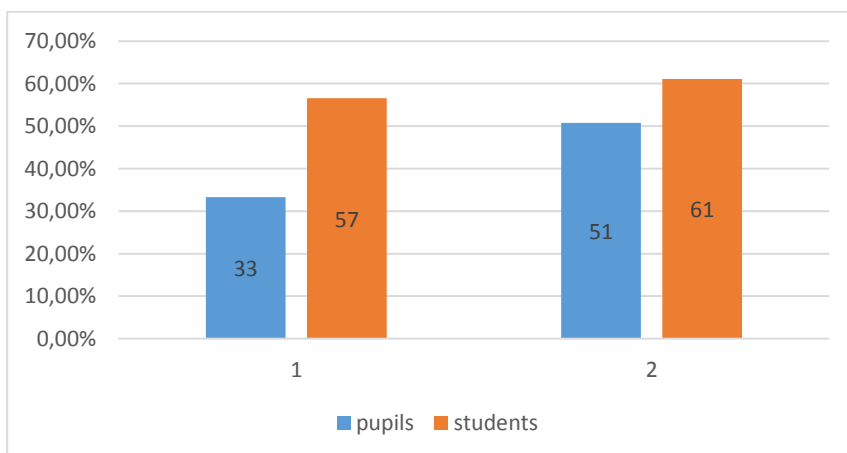
Figure 1 shows the results of the answer to the question about the correct construction of a phrase in Russian, and presents the ratio of the percentage of correct answers given by schoolchildren and students.



**Fig. 1.** Results of the answer to the question about the correct construction of a phrase in Russian

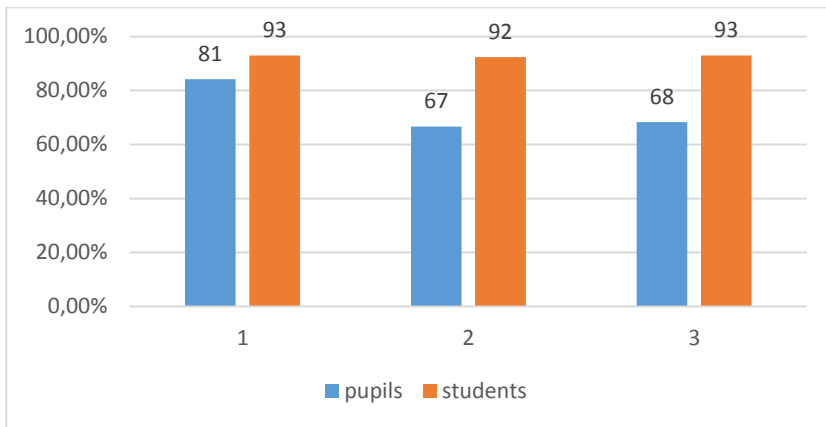
As can be seen from the figure, students gave more correct answers, but their value does not reach 60 %, while schoolchildren gave less than half correct answers.

Figure 2 shows the results indicating how well schoolchildren and students can correctly form the plural of a noun, they had to choose two correct answers from the proposed options concerning the two words "contract" and "keychain", where 1 is the correct plural of the noun "contract", 2 is the correct option the plural of the noun "keychain".



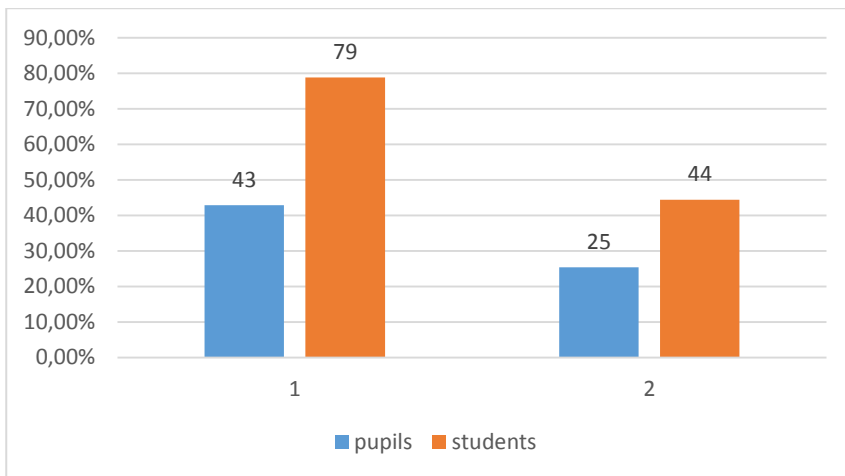
**Fig. 2.** Results of choosing the correct answers to the question about the plural of the nouns "contract" and "keychain"

Figure 3 shows the results of the answer to the question about the correct placement of stress in words, which assumed three correct answers, where 1 is the first correct answer, 2 is the second correct answer, 3 is the third correct answer. The results represent the percentage of schoolchildren and students who chose the correct answer.



**Fig. 3.** Results of the answer to the question about the correct placement of stress in words

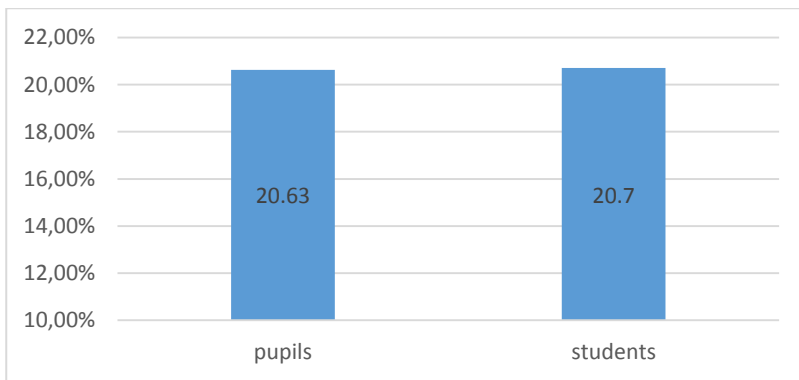
The respondents were asked to choose the correct ending of two proverbs. Figure 4 shows the results of the answer to the question about knowledge of proverbs, where 1 is the correct ending of proverb No. 1, 2 is the correct ending of proverb No. 2. As a result, the number of people who were able to choose the correct ending of each proverb was determined in percentage terms.



**Fig. 4.** Results of the answer to the question about the correct ending of proverbs

Thus, the average percentage of correct answers to questions aimed at testing knowledge of the Russian language among schoolchildren and students was 52 % and 71 %, respectively.

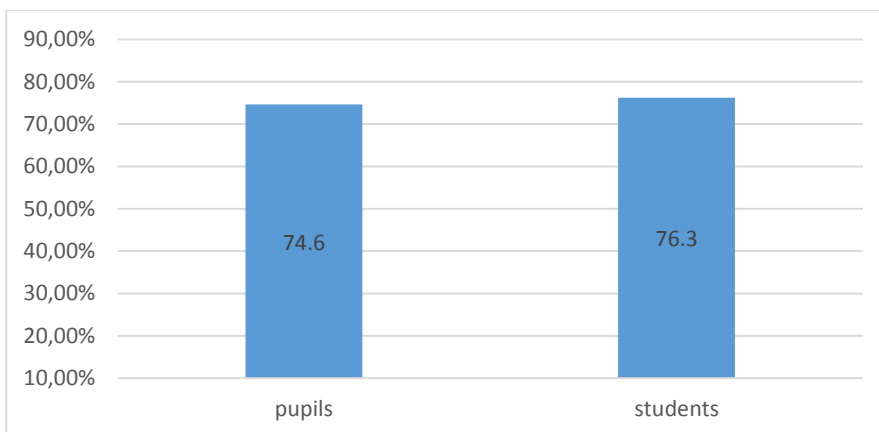
When answering question No. 5, it was necessary to arrange in the correct chronological order such events of Russian history as the abolition of serfdom, the Battle of Kulikovo, the annexation of the Kazan Khanate, the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Empire, the founding of the city of St. Petersburg, and the baptism of Rus. Figure 5 shows the results of the answers to the question about the chronology of events in Russian history. The results represent the percentage of schoolchildren and students who were able to correctly arrange the specified events in chronological order.



**Fig. 5.** The number of students and schoolchildren who have compiled the correct chronological chains of known facts of Russian history

The results of the answer to the question about the chronological sequence of events in Russian history are disappointing and differ among schoolchildren and students by several hundredths of a percent. For correct, error-free answers, it is one fifth of the total number of answers. At the same time, the results do not mean that most students have no idea about the time of a particular historical event, but made one or more mistakes.

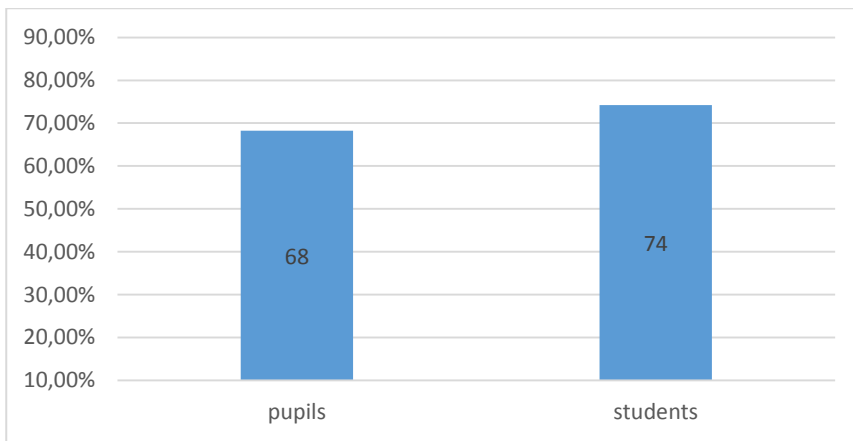
Figure 6 shows the results of the answer to the question about who became the first Russian emperor. The results represent the percentage of schoolchildren and students who were able to answer this question correctly.



**Fig. 6.** Results of the answer to the question about the first Russian emperor

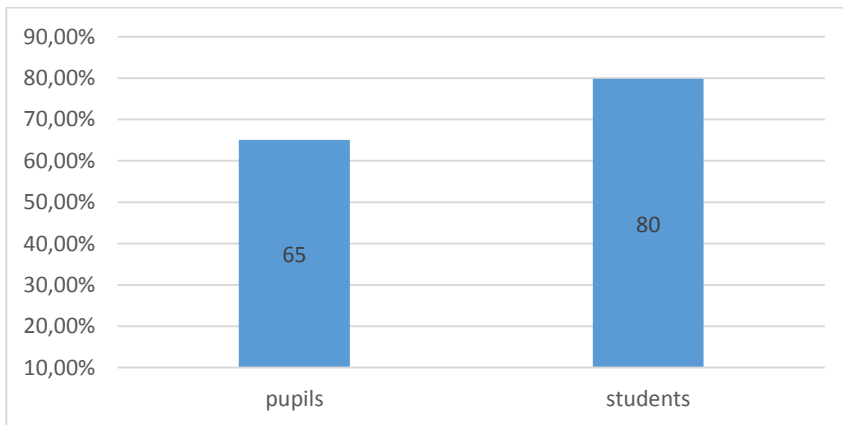
As can be seen from the results of the answer to the question about the first Russian emperor, students gave the correct answer more often, but only by 1.7 % compared to schoolchildren. In general, two thirds of respondents answered the question correctly.

Figure 7 shows the results of the answer to the question about the last year of the USSR. Students and schoolchildren had to choose one correct answer out of four.



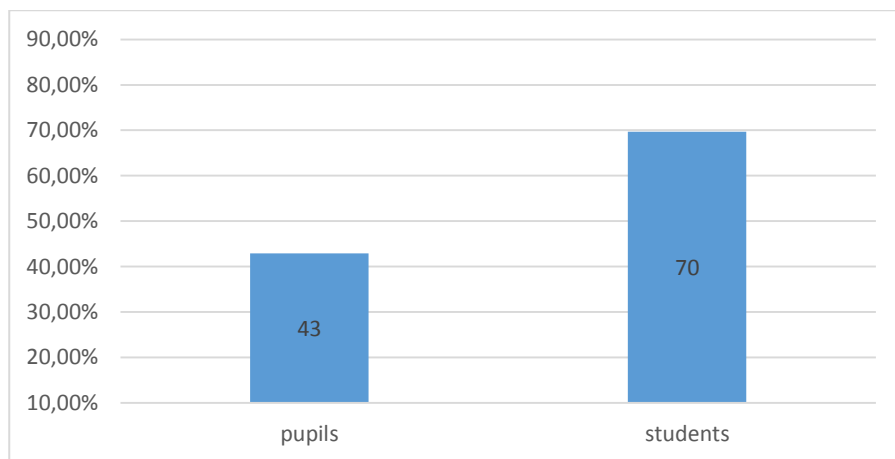
**Fig. 7.** Results of the answer to the question about the last year of the existence of the USSR

Schoolchildren and students were also asked what period of time corresponds to the years of the Second World War. Students had to choose from periods of other military events, including the need to demonstrate knowledge that the period indicated in the question was different from the period of the Great Patriotic War. Figure 8 shows the number of schoolchildren and students who chose the period 1939–1945.



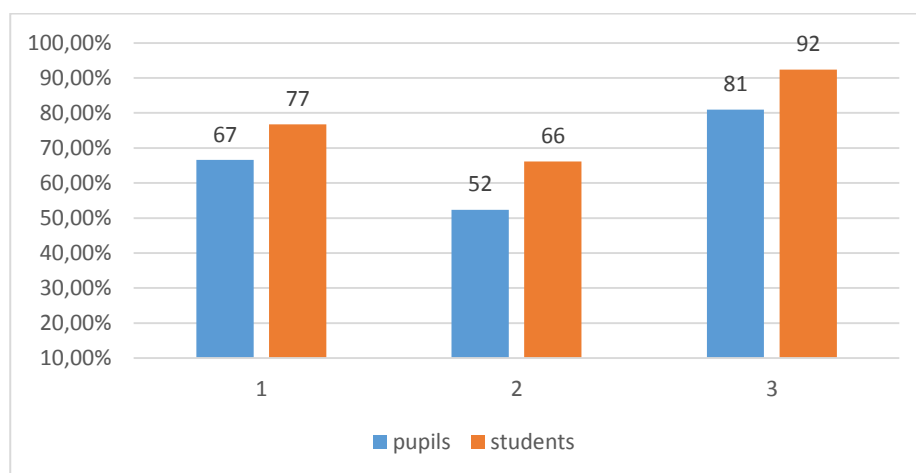
**Fig. 8.** The number of schoolchildren and students who gave the correct answer to the question about the time period corresponding to the years of the Second World War

Figure 9 shows the results of the answer to the question about the correlation of the names of Russian tsars with the nicknames that were attached to them. The question concerned such tsars as Dmitry Donskoy, Alexander Nevsky, Vladimir Monomakh, Vasily the Dark, Andrei Bogolyubsky, Ivan Kalita. As a result, the number of error-free answers was determined, and Figure 9 shows their percentage ratio to the total number of answers among schoolchildren and students.



**Fig. 9.** Results of the answer to the question about the correlation of the names of Russian tsars with the nicknames assigned to them

Figure 10 shows the results of the answer to the question about wars and battles won by Russian (Russian, Soviet) troops. The following answer options were offered: the Battle of the Kalka River, the Battle of Kulikovo, the Patriotic War of 1812, the Crimean War, the First World War, the Great Patriotic War. As a result, the authors determined the number of people from among the survey participants who were able to choose the correct option (where 1 – Battle of Kulikovo, 2 – Patriotic War of 1812, 3 – Great Patriotic War) and calculated their percentage with the total number of survey participants for each correct option answer separately.

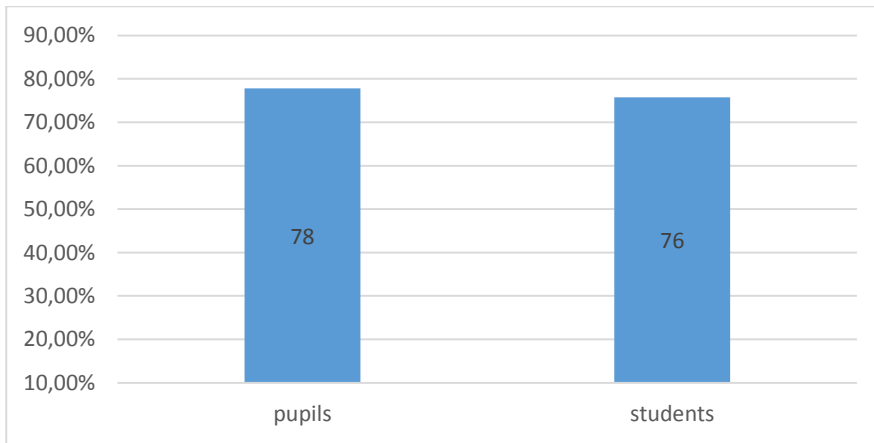


**Fig. 10.** Results of the answer to the question about battles won by Russian (Russian, Soviet) troops

Thus, the average percentage of correct answers to questions aimed at testing knowledge of Russian history among schoolchildren and students was 59 % and 70 %, respectively.

Figure 11 shows the results of the answer to the question about knowledge of the text of the National Anthem of the Russian Federation. When answering the question, it was necessary to indicate a line that is not in the text of the National Anthem. As a result, the number of people who correctly identified this line was determined, and their percentage ratio to the total number of survey participants among schoolchildren and students was calculated.

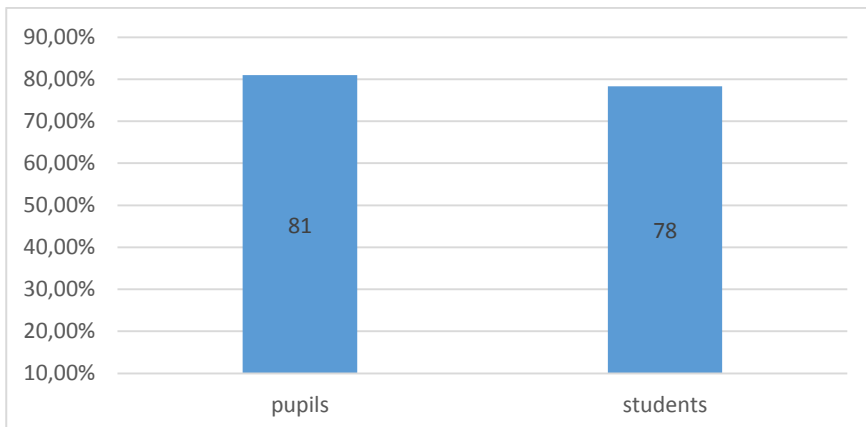




**Fig. 11.** Results of the answer to the question about the text of the National Anthem of the Russian Federation

These results show that schoolchildren made the right choice more often than students. In general, about two thirds of survey participants did not make a mistake when answering this question.

Figure 12 shows the results of the answer to the question about the background color of the State Emblem of the Russian Federation. When answering this question, it was necessary to choose one correct answer out of four. As a result, the number of people who correctly indicated the color of the State Emblem was determined, and their percentage ratio to the total number of survey participants among schoolchildren and students was calculated.



**Fig. 12.** Results of the answer to the question about the color of the State Emblem of the Russian Federation

Thus, the average percentage of correct answers to questions aimed at testing knowledge of official state symbols among schoolchildren and students was 79 % and 77 %, respectively.

The results of the study showed that first-year students showed significantly higher scores on questions about knowledge of the Russian language and Russian history compared to 11th-grade students. The gap in some cases is up to 40 percentage points. At the same time, schoolchildren showed a slightly higher score on questions about official state symbols, although the gap is not too large and is only 2-3 percentage points. Such results are quite natural.

The study also tested the hypothesis that the number of correct answers given by respondents does not change among students and schoolchildren, that is, about the equality of the probability of a correct answer to questions among schoolchildren and students, based on the use of the chi-square criterion at a significance level of  $p = 0.05$  and a degree of freedom of  $C = 1$ . With  $\chi^2_{crit} = 3.84$ , the  $\chi^2_{emp}$  values were calculated for each question of the questionnaire in relation to schoolchildren and students who chose the correct answer and made a mistake.



As a result, the following values of  $\chi^2_{emp}$  were obtained: for questions on knowledge of the Russian language: 2.85; 10.32; 2.1; 4.43; 26.67; 25.68; 29.45; 7.23. Thus, when answering 75 % of questions on knowledge of the Russian language, the null hypothesis was not confirmed, which means that the probability of a correct answer to questions on the Russian language in most cases depends on whether the participant in the survey was a schoolchild or a first-year student.

As a result, the following values of  $\chi^2_{emp}$  were obtained: for questions on knowledge of Russian history: 0.0002; 0.072; 0.87; 5.72; 14.81; 2.56; 3.87; 6.78. Thus, when answering questions on Russian history, the null hypothesis was not confirmed in only 50 % of the questions asked, which means that the probability of a correct answer to questions on Russian history cannot be unambiguously made dependent on whether the survey participant was a schoolchild or a first-year student.

As a result, the following values of  $\chi^2_{emp}$  were obtained: for questions on knowledge of official state symbols: 52.36 and 9.46. Thus, when answering questions about official state symbols, the null hypothesis was not confirmed in 100 % of the questions asked, which means that the probability of a correct answer to questions about official state symbols depends on whether the survey participant was a schoolchild or a first-year student.

#### **4. Discussion**

The limitation of the conducted study and the conclusions obtained is that the sample on the basis of which the study was conducted was not formed in a random (probabilistic) way, but was spontaneous, which limits the possibility of generalizing the results of the study.

At the same time, the obtained results confirm the results of other studies demonstrating that most young people receive information about the state symbols of the Russian Federation primarily from schools – 87.4 % (Rosenberg, Karpova, 2024). On the one hand, it is logical to assume that the tradition of singing the National Anthem and raising the National Flag introduced in secondary schools, aimed at forming and strengthening patriotic and civic feelings even in childhood, should have been consolidated during school education and will not be lost among young people when they study in higher education institutions. On the other hand, the absence of general mandatory requirements for universities to organize the educational space and process in such a way that official state symbols would be an integral part of the space of classrooms, assembly halls and other premises, any official events, leads to a weakening of students' attention to the content of these symbols. The results of this study on the ambiguity of the relationship between the level of the educational program of students and the level of knowledge of Russian history confirm the results of previously obtained studies that Russian history lessons are not the only source of information on the history of Russia in demand among young people, especially when it comes to medium and low levels of involvement (Bogatova et al., 2024). Fiction, films, family members' memoirs and new media have the most significant impact on the formation of young people's ideas about historical events. At the same time, such sources of information cannot claim to be exclusively reliable, and therefore the ideas formed on their basis do not allow students to subsequently achieve high levels of knowledge of Russian history. At the same time, the choice of information sources with an artistic multimedia form indicates that the information presented in them is better remembered due to the fact that its consumption also involves an emotional component.

The results of the study on the insufficient level of knowledge of the Russian language by students, although with a significant difference between the level of schoolchildren and first-year students, confirm the results of other studies on the limited knowledge of students after graduation in first-year disciplines. They have developed the spelling skills, which is a natural requirement for admission to university, other skills, mainly competent speech communication, have not been properly consolidated, since they are usually not among the requirements for academic disciplines of the first year in the absence of the discipline "Russian language" in the curricula. In this connection, the shortcomings that were not eliminated at the previous level of education of young people and the gaps that exist in the educational programs of higher education become obvious (Barakhoeva, 2022).

#### **5. Conclusion**

The obtained results indicate that, firstly, the process of forming civic identity in terms of acquiring fundamental knowledge does not end upon completion of secondary school by students, and therefore requires attention in the process of mastering higher education programs. Secondly,

the existing order of organizing the educational process both at the level of secondary education and at the level of higher education does not allow for the formation and (or) consolidation of a sufficiently high level of knowledge in the most essential areas for the formation of all-Russian civic identity, such as the Russian language, Russian history and state symbols. Considering that the respondents were asked very simple questions, it is not possible to consider the obtained results sufficient. Thirdly, the authors came to the conclusion that the revealed gap in the indicators of correct answers to questions between the group of schoolchildren and students is influenced, first of all, by the existing mechanism of admission to higher education institutions, which motivates young people to a more responsible attitude to learning. Higher education institutions conduct a competitive selection of applicants, as a result of which better prepared graduates are enrolled in higher education programs. Indeed, despite the fact that the discipline "History of Russia" is taught in the first year of all bachelor's degree programs, the success of answering the relevant questions of the questionnaire cannot be made dependent on whether the participant in the questionnaire was a schoolchild or a first-year student, which is confirmed by the results of statistical analysis based on the chi-square criterion. And for groups of questions not directly related to first-year academic disciplines, such as the Russian language and state symbols, a predominant dependence was revealed between the choice of the correct answer and the level of the educational program. This means that the resource for raising the level of knowledge in these areas by universities has not yet been exhausted, which, in the opinion of the authors, will be facilitated by the efforts of higher education institutions to introduce the relevant academic disciplines into educational programs.

As the results of the study showed, pupils and students need to improve their knowledge of such basic components of the all-Russian civil identity as the Russian language, Russian history, state symbols. The authors of this study believe that the solution of such a task should be based on the revision of discipline programs and requirements for results that school graduates and students must meet. Schoolchildren are overloaded with the requirements of educational programs. School education programs need some revision. Some disciplines involve studying such sections in the final grades, the knowledge of which will not help every graduate in his or her life and professional sphere. At the same time, there is often not enough time to obtain and consolidate the knowledge that forms the all-Russian civil identity. On the eve of passing the Unified State Exam, already in middle school, students strive to limit themselves to only the knowledge that will be assessed within the Unified State Exam and will be useful for admission to higher education programs. In conditions of increased motivation, such as the desire to enter higher education institutions, students are able to achieve higher results. At the same time, not all young people who have graduated from school have an objective opportunity to obtain higher education. This means that motivational mechanisms for improving knowledge within the components of the all-Russian civic identity should operate during the period of study in senior classes. At the same time, first-year students who passed the relevant competition for admission to higher educational institutions, also, with rare exceptions, did not achieve the indicator of correct answers to the simplest questions by more than 80 %. In this case, it seems that it is necessary to pay much more attention to the structure of educational programs, to include in it disciplines or elements of disciplines aimed at raising the level of students' knowledge of Russian history, Russian language, state symbols and traditions. It is necessary to form the students' idea that knowledge of the Russian language and Russian history are necessary not only for the successful completion of the session, but are necessary throughout the educational process, applicable in all academic disciplines. Therefore, the strengthening of training in these areas of knowledge should also be ensured by appropriate requirements for other disciplines, for example, on increasing the requirements for the use of professional and colloquial vocabulary, on the ability to analyze the stages of development of events and phenomena in the professional sphere through the prism of events in Russian history.

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