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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AS A PART OF PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES

Tarpkultūrinė kompetencija kaip profesinės kvalifikacijos dalis

SUMMARY

The article gives an overview of approaches to the definition of the concepts of "intercultural competence", "professional competence", and their correlation. Intercultural competence is attributed to a group of key competencies of an individual as a whole and professional competence of a modern specialist. It is proved that it makes the basis for the professional development of specialists. It is considered simultaneously as a: range of issues a person should be aware of; gained experience, information resource, knowledge in a particular subject area; socially requested requirement for the training of a specialist in a particular field. We contributed to the development and characteristics of components of intercultural competence as a part of professional cultural competence (behavioural, personal, motivational, and cognitive), indicators of components and levels of formation. Diagnostics, relevant to the selected components and indicators, to define the level of intercultural competence formed is indicated.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje apžvelgiamos sąvokos „tarpkultūrinė kompetencija" ir „profesinė kompetencija", pateikiami šių sąvokų apibrėžimo variantai, analizuojama jų koreliacija. Tarpkultūrinė kompetencija priskiriama pagrindinių individo kompetencijų grupei ir yra laikoma profesine šiuolaikinio specialisto kompetencija. Be to, teigiama, kad tarpkultūrinė kompetencija sudaro specialistų kvalifikacijos kėlimo pagrindą. Tarpkultūrinė kompetencija apima įvairių sričių žinias, įgytą patirtį, žinias tam tikroje dalykinėje srityje; socialiai būtinus specialisto rengimo tam tikroje srityje reikalavimus. Straipsnyje analizuojamos sudėtinės tarpkultūrinės kompetencijos, kaip profesinės kvalifikacijos, dalys (elgesio, asmeninės, motyvacinės ir pažintinės), rodikliai, formavimosi lygiai ir raida, pateikiami jų nustatymo būdai.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the processes of globalisation and democratisation are marked by the strengthening of integration processes and intensive migration of peoples from different nations, cultures, ethnic groups and religions. These processes can create all kinds of social tensions and conflicts. They put on the agenda the task of development of fundamentally new qualities associated with culturally competent attitude to differences. They set new kinds of requirements, in which intercultural competence should be understood as part of knowledge management, as a source of competitive advantage and added value, as an integral part of professional competence (Korhonen 2002). Nowadays intercultural competence becomes a tool for achieving success in intercultural interaction and qualitative performance of professional duties. Thus a professional is to possess competence to perform duties at professional and interpersonal levels. Consequently, intercultural communication becomes an essential component of professional activity of a specialist.

The article's purpose is to reveal the essence and content of intercultural competence as the basis of effective professional activity in conditions of ethnic-cultural diversity of a modern society.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE
AS A COMPONENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

To enter the discussion of intercultural competence we are first to clarify the definitions of the concept.

A. Fantini and A. Tirmizi define intercultural competence as "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (Fantini & Tirmizi 2006: 12).

Views of E. Rogers and T. Steinfath, K. Knapp rest on assumption that intercultural competence is the level at which an individual is able to effectively and appropriately exchange information during interpersonal interaction with the representatives of other cultures (Knapp 2003; Rogers & Steinfatt 1999).

O. Sadokhin considers intercultural competence in two aspects: a) "as an ability to form in oneself other cultural identity involving knowledge of language, values, norms, standards of behaviour of other communicative community. By this approach the mastering of information and knowledge of other culture is the main goal of communication process; b) as an ability to succeed in contacts with the representatives of other cultural community, even with insufficient knowledge of other culture main elements" (Садохин 2007: 133).

The conducted analysis of views on the concept of intercultural competence demonstrates that intercultural competence is interpreted by scolars in two ways: from a narrow understanding of a competence which is applicable only to a specific culture; to other approaches

with the term including a full range of social and practical competences.

In our study we understand intercultural competence as a part of professional cultural competence as the degree of presentation of knowledge, skills and abilities of a specialist that allow to: (i) correctly assess the specifics and conditions of interaction, relationships and communication with the representatives of foreign cultures displayed in their traditions, habits and psychological qualities; (ii) to find adequate forms of influence in order to maintain an atmosphere of mutual trust and constructive cooperation aimed at achieving jointly defined goals.

Intercultural competence of specialists provides for a high level of professionalism, knowledge, skills and abilities allowing using fluently cultural facilities and objects in the multicultural environment. The content of competence of future professionals reflects philosophical, culturological, psychological, ethnological and other aspects of their training with issues of culture and the inner world of a human in the centre. It should be emphasized that the tolerant attitude towards representatives of other cultures cannot fully ensure the effective intercultural interaction, which is especially relevant for specialists who work directly with people. For this, intercultural competence as an integral part of professional competence is still needed.

Researching the specificity of professional intercultural competence, A. Serykh and A. Yakubovskaya state that it is a complex, integrated concept that involves theoretical and practical readiness for social activity in the multiethnic society (Серых & Якубовская 2009). Further research in this area may include the definition of professional competence as "an ability of a specialist (from the beginning of professional activity at the level of state specified standard) to meet the profession requirements through effective professional activities and to demonstrate appropriate personal qualities by mobilizing appropriate knowledge, skills, emotions, based on inner motivation, attitudes, moral-ethical values, experience, being aware of limitations in personal knowledge and skills, thus accumulating other recourses for their compensation" (Іванова 2008: 107).

Following the dicussion we conclude that intercultural competence, as a part of professional one involves the ability to:
–   acquire knowledge about foreign cultural reality and use this knowledge to penetrate into other culture, establish and maintain communication between native and other culture;
–   critically evaluate culture with understanding the specifics of others, demonstrating openness to other people, readiness to adopt other thoughts and judgments;
–   overcome (neutralise) difficulties, misunderstandings and biased attitudes towards the representatives of other culture arising in the process of interaction (Bartosh & Limbakh 2019).

As for the intercultural competence we note that in the scientific literature (Sinicrope et al. 2007) there are a number of concepts that correlate with the issue of development of knowledge, skills and abilities of intercultural interaction, social-ethnic-cultural aspects of profes-

sional outlook, which are close in their meaning, but are used in different contexts. In particular, we come across the following alternative terms for intercultural competence: transcultural or cross-cultural communication or awareness, global competitive intelligence, global competence, cross-cultural adaptation, international competence, intercultural interaction, cultural or intercultural sensitivity, intercultural cooperation, cultural competence, social competence, social-cultural competence, ethnocultural competence, ethnorelativity, biculturalism, multiculturalism, pluralingualism, effective inter-group communication. The issue of correlation of these concepts remains open in scientific discussions.

Another notion related to intercultural competence is the ethnocultural competence of a professional. Subjective conditions for the formation of ethnocultural competence are the specific parameters: cultural orientation (needs, inter-

ests, value orientations, motives); education (knowledge, skills and abilities); upbringing (ethical, aesthetic, physical, etc.); general culture (of mental labour, communication, behaviour, etc.); professional skills (ability to evaluate experience, acquire knowledge, etc.) (Зинурова 2004). We are in favour of this position and define the following requirements for ethnocultural competence of a professional: understanding of culture phenomenon, its role in the human life; apprehension of how to acquire, store and transfer social experience, basic values of culture, knowledge of forms and types of cultures, the laws of their functioning and development; ability to assess the achievements of culture on the basis of knowledge of historical context; ability to intercultural dialogue; knowledge of the native, state and foreign languages, national features of people, national traditions; ability to use this knowledge in the professional activities.

THE COMPONENT-STRUCTURAL COMPOSITION OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AS A PART OF PROFESSIONAL CULTURAL COMPETENCE

We ascertain a fairly wide range of scholars' views on component-structural composition of intercultural competence:
– "it could be implemented by four components that link an individual to environment: i) initiative, ii) responsibility, iii) participation in an activity as an event, iv) individuality" (Anužienė 2015);
– it consists of the following components: (i) affective – include empathy and tolerance, not limited with trustful attitude to another culture only,

which form the psychological basis for the effective intercultural interaction; (ii) cognitive – include cultural-specific knowledge that becomes the basis for: adequate interpretation of communicative behaviour of another culture representatives; avoiding misunderstandings; changing personal communicative behaviour in the interactive process; (iii) procedural – include strategies that are specifically used in the intercultural contact situations (Knapp & Knapp-Potthoff 1990);

– it is composed of ability to: overcome the misunderstandings that arise in the process of intercultural interaction; establish and maintain the connection between native and foreign culture; acquire knowledge on other cultural reality and use it, penetrate into other culture; demonstrate curiosity and openness towards other individuals; accept other thoughts and overcome ethnocentric attitudes and prejudices (Byram et al. 2001);

– it has a four equal component structure: cognitive-informational (knowledge), educational experience (in the form of skills), experience of emotional-value relations (in the form of value orientations), creativity (creative abilities) (Дахин 2004).

Taken the middle-grounded position we define the following components of intercultural competence as a part of professional cultural competence:

– Behavioural – includes spiritual-value landmark of humanistic outlook, moral and ethical principles of an individual; involves mastering the ability to analyze and evaluate the most important achievements of national and world culture, to develop and implement strategies for activities in conditions of intercultural interaction;

– Personal – is the ability to: orient oneself in the problems of contemporary social-political life and determine personal position; fulfil the civil and constitutional duties actively, responsibly and effectively within the local community, the state and its political institutions;

– Motivational – is the ability to: define personal goals; overcome difficulties in the activity; learn throughout life; succeed in life.

– Cognitive – is the ability to: operate knowledge in learning, professional activity and life in general; adapt to the growing flow of information and use sources of information; understand the need for professional mobility; plan, monitor and evaluate the work performed;

Based on proposed components we developed indicators, which reflect directions on intercultural competence development [Table 1].

Table 1. Indicators which reflect directions on intercultural competence development

Component	Indicators
Behavioural	Attitude towards other nationalities representatives, their mentality, life-style; desire and readiness for intercultural interaction, cultural enrichment.
Personal	Demonstration of moral qualities necessary for intercultural interaction.
Motivational	Ability to: overcome the formed stereotypes; perform intercultural interaction on a tolerant basis; avoid conflict situations; adapt to certain norms of behaviour; take the initiative in the implementation of intercultural interaction.
Cognitive	Knowledge on: essence and content of intercultural tolerance, interethnic conflicts; the quality of a tolerant person; common and different issues in the native and ethnic minority culture.

[Author]

According to the components and indicators chosen, we define high, average, low, and critically low levels of intercultural competence [Table 2].

Table 2. Levels of intercultural tolerance

Characteristics	Level			
	High	Average	Low	Critically low
Knowledge on social-cultural specificity of communication partner	Thorough	Certain aspects	No proper respect	Ignorence
Knowledge on intercultural communication basics	Thorough	Fragmentary	Absence	No desire to acquire it
Interest in studying of social-cultural information	Great	Little	Lack	None
Communication with representatives of other cultures	Aspiration for	Situational	Lack	None
Formed value attitude to a communication partner	Stable	Unstable	Situational negative attitude	Pronounced negative, often aggressive
Adaptability to certain norms of behaviour	Clear	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Emotional perception of others	Positive	Neutral	Stereotypes, prejudice	Disrespect
Demonstration of no stereotypes, no prejudice, etc.	Stable	Unstable	Inability	Inability
Demonstration of empathy, patience, adherence to principles, responsibility, etc. When interacting with other cultures	Clear	Selective	Displays of indifference	Displays of neglect, hostility, aggressiveness
Ability to listen to others, provide intercultural communication on a tolerant basis	Stable	Unstable	Unstable	No desire
Ability to: defend position and views not humiliating the others; resolve conflict situations	Stable	Unstable	Inability	Desire to hurt, humiliate, harm

[Author]

To define the level of intercultural competence formed we are in favour of the following diagnostics, relevant to the selected components and indicators:

- Behavioural: questionnaire "General communicative tolerance" by V. Boyko (Бойко 1996).
- Personal: questionnaire "Index of tolerance" by G. Soldatova et al. (Солдатова & Шайгерова 2008).
- Cognitive: tests on knowledge of intercultural tolerance and competence content by T. Atroschenko (Атрощенко 2019).

– Motivational: questionnaire to define the ability to perform active dialogue with the representatives of other cul-

ture by T. Atroschenko (Атрощенко 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

Intercultural interaction cannot be successfully implemented without intercultural competence, i.e. knowledge, skills and abilities that allow to correctly assess the specifics and conditions of interaction, relationships and communication with representatives of other cultures; to find adequate forms of influence, taking into account peculiarities of customs, traditions of other culture, in order to maintain an atmosphere of mutual trust and constructive cooperation.

Thus, the formed intercultural competence with its integrative character is

a prerequisite for the successful dialogue of cultures and intercultural cooperation, for the effective performance of duties by a professional who acts as an intermediary between representatives of other cultures. From the standpoint of theoretical concept, the organisation of specialists training is to become a special kind of activity, directed on provision of appropriate conditions for the formation in specialists of all components of intercultural competence as an important component of professional competence.

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