

Universities and Cross-Cultural Management: Opportunities and Technologies for Improving the Quality of Services in Education



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Abstract: *The relevance of the research topic is due to modern trends in world development, which indicate the need for the readiness of higher education for intercultural cooperation and cross-cultural interaction, contributing to the emergence of new elements and forms of cultural activity and correcting values, behaviors, and lifestyles (both universal and culture-specific).*

The purpose of this article is based on the justification of the theoretical foundations of the research problem to establish the conditions for the development of cross-cultural interaction and methods of university management associated with the formation of readiness of pedagogical process participants to cross-cultural interaction.

The relevance of the search for new approaches to the organization of university cross-cultural management is noted in the article. The rating of readiness components for cross-cultural interaction, conditions of development of cross-cultural interaction, and methods used for the formation of skills of cross-cultural interaction are defined.

Keywords: *university, cross-cultural management, cross-cultural interaction, educational process, methods of cross-cultural management, cross-cultural integrator.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of international business, which is constantly growing in the modern world, creates a demand for managers qualified to work with representatives of other countries. Cross-cultural management studies the behavior of people in organizations, including educational ones, around the world and teaches them to work in those where staff and customers are from different cultures. Cross-cultural management collects examples and evidence of typical

organizational behavior in different countries, as well as summarizes, describes, and compares them, thus helping to understand and improve the interactions and relationships between all participants in business relationships. Cross-cultural management expands the possibilities of internal management in the field of international and intercultural relations [1, 2, 3].

There is a growing need to understand how other nations organize their types of educational services with the proliferation of international educational services [4]. Understanding the approaches to the provision of educational services in other countries, one can assess the potential benefits and problems of cooperation with them and, thus, make competent decisions on how to work with certain peoples and whether any special conditions or approaches are needed for this.

Education managers have had to change radically in recent years to overcome the challenges and opportunities that arise in today's highly competitive international education market [5, 6]. In the past, they typically interacted within a clearly defined structure and cultural hierarchy. Now, it turns out that the methods that they used effectively in their own country do not necessarily work with contacts at the international level.

The ability to adapt and bring the style of providing educational services in line with the style of other cultures plays an important role in their success or failure. In addition, today one often has to use their intercultural skills at the national level.

Effective professional activity of a manager in the field of education on an international scale is not an easy task, requiring a specific range of competencies, including respect for culture and empathy, interpersonal skills in an international context, ability to work in international teams and to adapt to new situations, as well as foreign language skills, understanding of cultures and susceptibility to cultural differences, flexibility and creativity, attitudes free from prejudice, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism [7].

Today, university management in the implementation of cross-cultural communications has put forward significant requirements:

- ability to function in a complex, uncertain environment characterized by permanent changes;
- ability to receive and integrate information through multicultural filters;
- ability to understand specific cultures of different countries and willingness to adapt to their decision-making [8].

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

V.G. Bunina connects the use of the term "cross-cultural" with the sphere of communication and interprets it as a characteristic of interaction: "cross-cultural communication is the interaction of two or more value systems that influence each other to ensure the effective interaction of their representatives. The result of the communication of these value systems is the creation of unified schemes of interpretation of interacting cultures" [9, pp. 47-48]. In this aspect, the basis of the "cross-cultural" concept is the "unity of interpretation schemes".

Many scholars have paid attention to the problems of cross-cultural management. Thus, L.M. Galchuk believes that cross-cultural management studies how people and organizations in the global environment take into account cultural differences that go beyond the borders of one country [10].

N.J. Holden considers this phenomenon deeper and defines cross-cultural management as cooperation with representatives of another culture, maximum tolerance to disagreements and recognition of the priorities of foreign partners when common priorities are developed [11].

According to E.S. Golousova, cross-cultural management studies the behavior of people in organizations around the world and describes organizational behavior in different countries and cultures, as well as compares different models of this behavior and tries to understand and improve the interaction between employees, customers, suppliers, and partners from different countries and cultures [12].

Cross-cultural management considers cross-cultural interaction in various aspects: as a branch of international management; as a management activity; as a resource of the basic organizational competence; as a new branch of knowledge, including the theory and practice of international management, etc. [13, 14, 15].

Researchers consider cross-cultural interactions to be the basis of cross-cultural management in higher education institutions [16].

N. Adler distinguishes four types of cross-cultural interactions: 1) when the subject of interest is a specific socio-cultural space and a comparison is only an auxiliary tool for identifying the specificity of the selected object; 2) when compared cultures are the context of communication and are focused on identifying, verifying, and justifying the commonality of a cultural characteristic; 3) when the compared cultural characteristics are the unit of analysis of integral social systems; 4) when the interaction has a transnational character, that is, individual cultures are considered as elements of a comprehensive system [17].

Researchers argue that in the process of university cross-cultural interaction, the synthesis and exchange of cultures should be comprehensive without losing elements of their cultural heritage and tearing cultures out of their homogeneous context, in which they developed [18]. Therefore, the ability to see the dialogue of cultural traditions, to identify its motives and goals, to compare and contrast traditions in the case of crossing cultures in the

context of the universal, special, and unique, according to researchers, is an important aspect of cross-cultural interaction. At the same time, the basis of the dialogue of cultures is not just mutual understanding, but tolerance [19].

The concept of diversity management in management practice exists simultaneously with the concept of cross-cultural management. Cross-cultural management concerns more people from different cultures working in an environment that may be new to some of them. Diversity management is necessary for the interaction of people who represent different ethnic groups, cultures, ages, races, religions, etc. in a homogeneous university environment [20, 21].

Thus, cross-cultural management is the ability to manage different opinions, cultures, religions, and habits of people in order to achieve the best results in their field of activity.

Research hypothesis: The main objective of university cross-cultural management is the formation of an effective cross-cultural interaction system that contributes to improving sustainability in the perception of other cultures, revealing to the participants the world of human relations in cross-cultural context with all its complexity and inconsistency with emphasis on examples of interaction that lead to success.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

A. General description

We used the following research methods:

- theoretical: analysis and generalization of theoretical and methodological sources on the problem of the research;
- empirical, which focus on the direct study of phenomena in the real educational process: 1. determination of the rating of readiness components for cross-cultural interaction; 2. expert survey on the establishment of conditions for the development of cross-cultural interaction and methods used in the formation of skills of cross-cultural interaction;
- mathematical processing of the results obtained during the study.

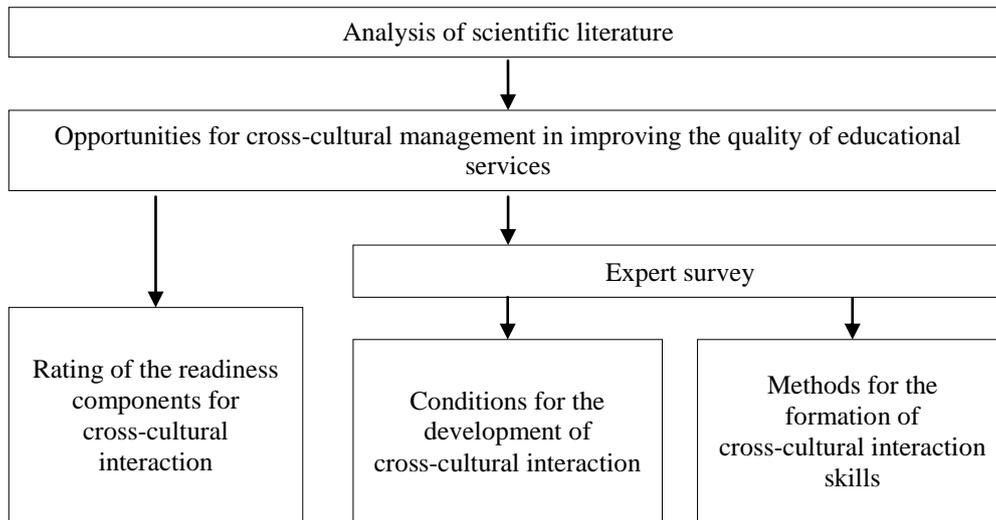
Forty-five university professors took part in the online expert survey.

B. Algorithm

At the first stage of the study, the analysis of scientific literature on the problem of cross-cultural management opportunities in improving the quality of educational services was carried out.

At the second stage of the study, the readiness components for cross-cultural interaction were rated and the expert survey was carried out on the conditions for the development of cross-cultural interaction and methods used in the formation of cross-cultural interaction skills.

C. Flow chart



IV. RESULT ANALYSIS

A. Results

Identification of the readiness of expert-teachers for organizing cross-cultural interaction and the prospects of university cross-cultural management was carried out based on determining the rating of the readiness components for cross-cultural interaction and the subsequent expert survey.

The R. Likert scale was used to evaluate the rating. The respondents expressed a degree of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement. Answer options ranged from maximum to minimum (from 4 to 1): partially agree; it is difficult to say whether I agree or disagree; partially disagree; do not agree at all.

The determination of the rating made it possible to evaluate how university professors present the content of readiness for cross-cultural interaction and what importance they attach to the development of its components.

All respondents agree that readiness for cross-cultural interaction is important. 42% consider it the result of internationalization, 43% recognize its necessity, 15% are undecided about its content and consider it as the prerogative of humanitarian (mainly philological) education. The respondents differed in the use of terminology. About one-third of the definitions (31%) have the following common elements: 1) awareness, understanding, recognition of the value of cultural diversity; 2) knowledge of one's own culture; 3) importance of cultural experience, context of interaction and differences. Almost a quarter of the interpretations (23%) contains the following general characteristics: 1) openness; 2) efficiency; 3) understanding cultural differences and complexity of solving world problems. The following definitions of readiness turned out to be inconsiderable in number: "respect for the rights and dignity of others", "value of learning a foreign language", "knowledge of different lifestyles of people in the world", "understanding the key values of other cultures", "ability to cope with unfamiliar situations".

The choice of definition testifies to the specificity of the concept of readiness for cross-cultural interaction, for example: "in-depth knowledge, skills, and relationships that encompass an understanding of international issues, other cultures, other countries, and one's own culture". Other statements define readiness as "complicity with the global

developing community".

From the proposed list of 17 readiness components for cross-cultural interaction, the expert-teachers put "cross-cultural awareness" in the first place and "respect for other cultures" in the second one. The low place in the ranking was given to "technical skills". 62% of the respondents noted the importance of knowledge of a foreign language, although the importance of this aspect was identified with cross-cultural understanding. General data are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Rating of components that make up cross-cultural readiness

Rating	Component of readiness for cross-cultural interaction
3.8	Cultural awareness
3.7	Respect for other cultures
3.5	Self-identification
3.5	Cross-cultural knowledge
3.4	Cross-cultural skills
3.3	Appropriate behavior
3.3	Cross-cultural communication skills
3.2	Cultural empathy
3.2	Interpersonal skills
3.1	Cultural cooperation
3.1	Corresponding attitude
3.0	Foreign language knowledge
2.9	Adaptivity
2.8	Flexibility
2.8	Understanding the context of the interaction situation
2.7	Motivation for interaction
2.4	Technical skills

The interrelation of the perspective of cross-cultural management and readiness for interaction is reflected in the responses of the teacher-experts mainly associated with the number of students studying abroad, accepted by foreign teachers and trainees, including the introduction of new courses in the training program. These data do not directly reflect the result, as the presence of foreign students does not direct a university to cross-cultural interaction.

The only significant result is the formation of certain personality traits necessary for its successful functioning in a foreign cultural environment.

According to the respondents, the prospect of cross-cultural management consists of the following elements: mobility of students and teachers, presence of a cross-cultural component in the training program, international cooperation of higher education institutions, internationalization of knowledge and ideas "without borders", which automatically raises the question of the need for the formation of students' readiness for cross-cultural interaction.

The introduction of a cross-cultural component in the training programs of students is considered important by the respondents, but controversial, since it requires radical changes in curricula in accordance with the goals of cross-cultural management.

The study of the existing practice on the formation of students' readiness for cross-cultural interaction and the establishment of the role of the teacher in this process was conducted based on the survey aimed at establishing the conditions for the development of cross-cultural interaction among students.

For this study, it was important to establish what conditions (factors) the experts determine as those that affect the successful formation of students' readiness for intercultural interaction. The following are named among these conditions: the purposefulness of developing the student's interest to acquire the experience of cross-cultural interaction, cross-cultural integration skills, and self-regulation of behavior (62%); the professionalism of the teacher (56%); understanding of the content of cross-cultural interaction and the ability to its organization in cross-cultural context by teachers (72%); the personal potential of the teacher, their subjectivity in the interaction (49%); the frequency of using interactive forms of organizing the educational process (81%); involving student in the process of dynamic subjective development of sociocultural knowledge (60%); using the student's personal potential in classroom and extracurricular activities (49%); self-education of students (43%); moral and psychological climate in the study group (35%); the use of foreign language knowledge in the perception of other cultures (75%); practical orientation of the educational process (35%), etc.

The opinion of the experts on this issue is important for our study, since it makes it possible to determine that the organization of interaction of participants to the pedagogical process in a cross-cultural context should not only provide an understanding of the specifics of the formation of cultural differences between peoples and comprehension of the diversity of national and individual styles of their life activity, but also strengthen students' interest in using the provisions of cross-cultural management in this context and ensure the conditions for gaining experience in international engagement.

The results of the survey showed discrepancies between the forms that teachers consider effective and those they use in practice. Almost half of the surveyed teachers are focused on traditional forms of organization in universities, which determines the process of interaction.

This state, as shown by the expert survey, is explained by

the fact that most of them have not yet had the chance to test interactive forms of organization of activities in cross-cultural interaction (Table 2).

Table 2: Methods used in the formation of skills of cross-cultural interaction

Methods	Frequently, %	Rarely, %	Never, %
Information and cognitive	52.3	17.4	30.3
Analytical	14.6	45.7	39.7
Interactive	12.4	52.6	35

At the same time, half of the respondents consider the problem of readiness formation for cross-cultural cooperation as an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary problem, which requires joint efforts not only of teachers of different specialties and, above all, social and humanitarian profile, but also special management. Although, the prevailing idea is that it is a professional teacher who can imagine the depth and scale of cross-cultural interaction and determine the possible ways and means of forming students' interest in the development of the experience of this interaction.

The experts say that only a specialist who creatively assesses the prospects for the development of cross-cultural interaction in the modern world, considering integration processes as important for science and practice, is able to arouse students' interest in the development of such experience, providing this process with the necessary scientific knowledge.

B. Discussion

According to the teacher-experts, the success of university cross-cultural management depends on the forms of organization of this process and the choice of appropriate methods.

Based on the expert survey, the classification of optimal methods of university cross-cultural management for the readiness formation of participants to the pedagogical process for cross-cultural interaction was carried out (Table 3).

Table 3: Classification of methods of university cross-cultural management associated with the formation of readiness of participants to the educational process to cross-cultural interaction

Methods	Characteristic	Rating
Information and cognitive methods		
orientation method	geografic knowledge, familiarity with the basic norms, values, and rules of behavior in another culture	10
briefing	describes possible problems or focuses on individual aspects of adaptation to a new cultural environment	11
cultural capsule method	preparation of "cultural programs" and "infograms" by students allows describing and comparing cultural realities and value differences of certain cultures	9
Analytical method		
method of solving significant problem situations (case method)	is based on group reflection; behavior, as well as speech, of participants in real situations is analyzed; explains the meaning of the actions suggested concerning the motives, causes, and meaning of actions of participants	7
method of cross-cultural analysis and commenting on interaction contexts	is carried out based on the analysis and comparison of cultural differences in norms of behavior of other culture carriers, their outlook, and significant personal qualities in cross-cultural situations	6
contextual observation method	consists of the analysis and identification of the specifics of the behavior of representatives of other cultures and the features of its manifestation	8
self-assessment method	is characterized by the analysis of the participants to their type of behavior in cross-cultural interaction	12
cross-cultural integrator method	consists of descriptions of situations, in which characters from two cultures interact, four interpretations of their behavior – the contexts of observed behavior and "feedback" – establishing the "correct", from the point of view of representatives of another culture, interpretation, and analysis of its features	1
Interactive method		
web quest method	project activity (using Internet resources) brings students to the real world of cross-cultural interaction	2
interactive simulation	obtaining cultural knowledge based on models reflecting the frequency situations of cross-cultural interaction	4
role-playing method	provides for the performance of roles that reflect the typological situations of communication between representatives of different cultures	5
simulation method	consists in artificially creating specific situations of cross-cultural interaction. Situations of a "meeting of two cultures" are constructed, each of which has its own rules of behavior. The goal is to gain experience of belonging to an imaginary culture, the norms, values, and patterns of behavior of which, as a rule, differ from the native culture of the participants	3

According to the results of the expert discussion, the cross-cultural integrator method was chosen as a leading method of forming the readiness of the participants to the pedagogical process for cross-cultural interaction.

The cultural integrator consists of descriptions of situations, in which characters from two cultures interact, four interpretations of their behavior – the contexts of observed behavior and "feedback" – establishing the "correct", from the point of view of representatives of another culture, interpretation, and analysis of its features.

According to the experts, this method characterizes not only the detailed content of the cross-cultural context and ways of its interpretation but also focuses on the process of self-determination of the individual in the cross-cultural context of the development of their culture. The use of integrators allows participants to learn to understand the context of interaction, to comprehend the motives of their behavior, to predict the results of their actions and other people, and to coordinate the goals of their behavior with the ways to achieve them.

According to the experts, in the process of deploying activities based on the application of the cross-cultural integrator, there is an awareness and internal justification of the context by building a chain of relevant judgments and forming appropriate general conclusions. The assessment by the individual of their judgments is important here. Do they conform to accepted norms in a particular culture? Do they take into account the position of other people in relation to a specific situation?

At the same time, as the experts specify, the decision is preceded by the study of the situation, weighing of alternatives and ways of action based on a purposeful appeal

to the analysis of cultural values reflected in the integrator. Deepening into the cross-cultural context creates the basis for the interaction of internal personal and external socio-cultural contexts. The situation built on the cross-cultural context motivates to the appropriate action.

According to the experts, understanding of the behavior of members of another culture and hidden cultural values, leads participants to the need for their correct interpretation to construct a certain line of conduct. Cultural values and norms are demonstrated in the integrator not as concepts, but in the form of a specific action, act, visual models, which contributes to a deep understanding of the situation by the participants of an interaction.

The experts emphasize that the reality of the integrators' characters and their emotional evaluation project the self-assessments of the interaction participants in each specific situation. The emotional experience of knowledge of cultural values motivates to the corresponding act. At the same time, according to one of the experts (Nikolay I.), "the personal context of each participant of interaction is included; there is constant personal self-determination in the cross-cultural context, finding one's place in it, the development of this image, its approval in it". As one of the respondents (Grigory K.) noted, "the development of understanding and skills of interpreting the context of interaction logically lead to the formulation of self-determination relative to other cultures, which is based on the balance of tolerance of cultural values (the combination of a positive image of one's ethnic group with a value attitude to other cultures).

Self-adjustments perform the functions of self-regulation of the personality of its future behavior in cross-cultural interaction. The result is a change in the attitude in the internal context of the individual, increasing the level of cultural sensitivity. That is, learning to interpret the context of the interaction is based on a certain set of values that distinguish one culture from another".

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the study confirmed the hypothesis that the main objective of university cross-cultural management is the formation of an effective cross-cultural interaction system that contributes to improving sustainability in the perception of other cultures, revealing to the participants the world of human relations in cross-cultural context with all its complexity and inconsistency with emphasis on examples of interaction that lead to success. Thus, cross-cultural management in the educational environment of the university is designed to promote the following: development of cultural consciousness of participants to the educational process, ability to learn, estimate and accurately formulate one's cultural origin, including those beliefs and practice in the field of management, on which their national culture has defining influence; cross-cultural awareness, the development of the ability to recognize how other cultures are similar or different from their own, as well as ability to see and explain the behavior of people and organizations from the point of view of representatives of another culture;

development of cross-cultural communication skills, ability to confidently and effectively communicate with those whose goals, relationships, behaviors, and cultural background are significantly different from one's own; development of practical skills to sensitively, tolerantly, and openly respond to cultural characteristics, ability to recognize and analyze the cultural components of organizational problems; understanding the complexities of cross-cultural adaptation, developing skills to identify sources of stress in the transition from culture to culture.

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