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DOI: 10.35765/pk.2020.2902.12

## Intercultural Management in Educational Organizations

### ABSTRACT

Human capital is an outstanding factor in any country's competitiveness. This fact affirms the decisive role of education in the raise of a country's economic and social prosperity in the international space. Reforming of domestic higher education system is carried out in the direction of new educational management support, universities management, scientific activity financing and intercultural interaction of universities with personalities, cultures and business. In that context most of the educational organizations become multicultural and multinational ones. That is why universities as intercultural spaces are the focus of this paper. Contemporary universities face many challenges including the tasks of remaining intellectually and culturally viable in a fast changing world, preparing students to compete in the global labor market and interact with people from other ethnic, religious, cultural, national and geographic groups. Different approaches to the concept of "intercultural management in educational organizations" have been defined and its improvement resources in the higher education system have been identified. Taking into consideration that intercultural management is comprised of intercultural competences, the notion "intercultural competence" has been thoroughly analyzed. It was concluded that intercultural management, based on different dimensions of knowledge, attitudes, abilities and skills, is generally defined as the capability of successful communication and high performance of an organization in collaboration with other cultures.

**KEYWORDS:** intercultural management, higher education, universities, intercultural competence, culture, skills, knowledge, attitude, awareness, development

**Suggested citation:** Boyko, O., Mylenkova, R., Otroschenko, L. (2020). Intercultural Management in Educational Organizations. *Perspektywy Kultury*, 2(29), s. 163–172. DOI: 10.35765/pk.2020.2902.12.

Submitted: 30.11.2019

Accepted: 29.05.2020

## STRESZCZENIE

### Zarządzanie międzykulturowe w organizacjach edukacyjnych

Kapitał ludzki jest wyróżniającym się czynnikiem dla konkurencyjności dowolnego kraju. Potwierdza to decydującą rolę edukacji w podnoszeniu narodowego dobrobytu gospodarczego i społecznego w przestrzeni międzynarodowej. Reformowanie krajowego systemu szkolnictwa wyższego prowadzone jest w kierunku nowego wsparcia zarządzania edukacją, zarządzania uczelniami, finansowania działalności naukowej i międzykulturowych interakcji uczelni z osobowościami, kulturami i biznesem. W tym kontekście większość organizacji edukacyjnych staje się organizacjami wielokulturowymi i wielonarodowymi. Dlatego właśnie uniwersytety jako przestrzenie międzykulturowe są przedmiotem niniejszego opracowania. Współczesne uniwersytety stoją przed wieloma wyzwaniem, w tym przed zadaniem pozostania intelektualnie i kulturowo wiarygodnymi w szybko zmieniającym się świecie, kwestią przygotowania studentów do konkurowania na globalnym rynku pracy i interakcji z ludźmi z innych grup etnicznych, religijnych, kulturowych, narodowych i geograficznych. Zdefiniowano różne podejścia do pojęcia „zarządzania międzykulturowego w organizacjach edukacyjnych” i zidentyfikowano zasoby do jego doskonalenia w systemie szkolnictwa wyższego. Biorąc pod uwagę, że na zarządzanie międzykulturowe składają się kompetencje międzykulturowe, dokładnie przeanalizowano pojęcie kompetencji międzykulturowych. Stwierdzono, że zarządzanie międzykulturowe, oparte na różnych wymiarach wiedzy, postaw, zdolności i umiejętności, jest zasadniczo definiowane jako zdolność do skutecznej komunikacji i wysokiej efektywności organizacji we współpracy z innymi kulturami.

**SŁOWA KLUCZE:** zarządzanie międzykulturowe, kształcenie wyższe, uniwersytety, kompetencje międzykulturowe, kultura, umiejętności, wiedza, postawy, świadomość, rozwój

In the modern world, educational organizations are gaining new strengths and functions, whereas traditional ones—educational, scientific and research—are complemented by completely new ones that must be linked to the development of the regional community and international space. Today, as the most prominent representative of higher education, the university is an integral part of society. No doubt, it must adequately respond to the needs of society, independently developing the scientific and cultural potential of the regional, national and world elites. That is why universities strive to train competent specialists for different fields of industry, taking into consideration intercultural environment demands and needs.

Simultaneously, most of the educational organizations become multicultural and multinational. Our purpose is to analyze universities as

a intercultural space, which, due to management issues, is becoming the catalyst for regions' and countries' development. In our opinion, research on universities which are oriented on modern demands concerning professionals' training, requires the use of multidisciplinary sociocultural, structural and functional approaches on top of historical, analytical, comparative methods. Thus, universities prepare specialists for contemporary intercultural space.

Educational institutions (universities) in the modern knowledge economy are at the epicenter of events. Thus, they should become a highly managed place of reproduction of three important components that are necessary for the further development of cities and regions: highly qualified staff, expertise and scientific development that contribute to the emergence of new products (including intellectual ones), technologies, services, etc. And it is highly performed management which makes universities' intercultural environment to be a driver for socio-economic development.

Obviously, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, world institutions of higher education are facing many challenges including the tasks of remaining intellectually and culturally viable in a fast changing world, preparing students to compete in the global labor market and interact with people from other ethnic, religious, cultural, national and geographic groups. No doubt, the internationalization and globalization of higher education have become a possibility in responding to such challenges. In this context, learning foreign languages and having intercultural competence are of great importance.

Any modern university lives and functions in a certain socio-cultural space, where its formation is influenced by both the historical development of the region and country, and the various cultural, social, labor, economic, ethical orientations and traditions. Undoubtedly, the development of the intercultural space of a university is under the influence of its geographical location, the level of socio-economic development of the region, the degree of migration activity of the population, the possibility of active interaction with other regions and countries.

The aim of this paper is to define different approaches to the concept "intercultural management in educational organizations" and identify its improvement resources in the higher education system.

The first issue that needs to be clarified is that intercultural management helps to lead global organizations with a diversity of profiles and cultures, supporting and respecting people from different countries, thus achieving ambitious goals. As far as intercultural management in educational organizations is concerned, we understand it as managing any educational institution, understanding how cultural factors impact the studying process, contributing to better collaboration between its participants.

Theoretical and practical aspects of intercultural management have been studied by many scientists and practitioners, such as J. Bennet (2011), J. Beneke, J. Blohm, M. Byram, G. Chen & W. Starosta (1999), D. Dearsdorff (2004), A. Fantini (2017), A. Fenner (2007), S. Fowler, E. Hall, M. Hammer, G. Hofstede, D. Jameson, Lundgren, J. Koester, U. Meyer, J. Neuliep, R. Paige, J. Schuch (2003), A. Thomas, R. Wiseman, I. Zaleskienė (2007) and others.

P. Sorokin (2017), American sociologist and philosopher, became interested in the concept of “socio-cultural space” and introduced it as a set of three elements—senses, values and norms; conductors; and human agents. The concept of socio-cultural space as the unity of culture and society, which is the basic understanding of this definition in view of the problem we have outlined, was studied by A. Akhiezer, S. Kirdina, M. Lapin, S. Makeev, and V. Stiopin.

This multidimensional concept is considered in connection with the spirituality of personality in the theories of E. Husserl, S. Frank, M. Foucault, Y. Habermas, A. Schweitzer, M. Scheler, and K. Jaspers. E. Durkheim emphasized the decisive sociocultural significance of the phenomena of social life in the spiritual development of the individual (Durkheim, 1995).

Admittedly, intercultural management is comprised of intercultural competences. One should note here that the concept of “intercultural competence” has become an academic field of study since the 1950s. Edward T. Hall, a social anthropologist, is considered the father of intercultural competence. We should point out that, at that time, the notions were distinguished as cross-cultural competence and cross-cultural management. Moreover, these two terms are still widely used as synonyms. It should be pointed out that intercultural competence was included in the general competences of the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001).

Janet Bennett (2011), a famous researcher of this subject, defines this notion as a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts. In her opinion, *cultural skills* refer to cultural self-awareness, culture as general knowledge, culture as specific knowledge and interaction analysis. As for *affective skills*, they are: curiosity, cognitive flexibility, motivation and open-mindedness. Janet Bennett relates to the *behavioral skills* as relation building skills, listening, problem solving, empathy and information gathering skills. J. Neuliep (2006) broadens this integrated notion to four dimensions: *knowledge component* (how much one knows about the culture of others), *affective* (one’s motivation to interact with others from different cultures), *psychomotor* (the actual enactment of the knowledge

and affective components), and including a fourth *contextual* component (situational settings in which intercultural communication takes place). In addition, K. Jokikokko (2005) presents four dimensions as building blocks of intercultural competence. These are *attitudes*, *knowledge* and *awareness*, *action* and *skills*. Thus, the four above-mentioned categories are components of a complex phenomenon of “intercultural competence.”

L. Parmenter (2016), associate professor of Waseda University defines knowledge required for intercultural competence. The first is knowledge about social groups and cultures in one’s own country and in the countries of one’s interlocutors. Not all of this knowledge needs to come from foreign language classes. Such knowledge is also gained from social studies classes, the media, friends and family, and so on. However, the material studied in foreign language classes should help to develop this knowledge, and students should be encouraged to relate it to the knowledge of their own culture. The second type of knowledge is the knowledge of the processes of interaction at societal and individual levels. This knowledge is essential for intercultural competence; if students speak perfect grammatically correct English but have no knowledge of the processes of interaction, then communication will be a failure.

In turn, I. Zaleskienė (2012) views intercultural competence as the ability of successful communication with other cultures. A. Fantini (2007) adds that it involves the ability to establish and maintain relationships, communicate with minimal loss or distortion, and collaborate in order to accomplish something of mutual interest or need.

Intercultural management is based on the competences of the organization staff. Here we agree with the German scientist Joachim Schuch (2003) that “intercultural competence” includes:

- readiness and ability to imagine oneself in the thinking and feeling of other people (empathy);
- ability to be able to look at circumstances from several perspectives from the point of view of the majority as well as from the point of view of a minority (multiperspectivity);
- readiness to deal with own perception critically (self-reflection);
- courage to withstand uncertainty (ambiguity tolerance);
- ability to adapt oneself to the situation and surroundings (flexibility);
- openness for new knowledge and perceptions (open-mindedness);
- communication and conflict-solving ability.

G. Chen & W. Starosta (1999) define intercultural communication competence as the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors that negotiate each other’s cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment. They outline three key components of intercultural competence: *intercultural sensitivity* (affective process),

*intercultural awareness* (cognitive process), and *intercultural adroitness* (behavioral process), defined as verbal and nonverbal skills needed to act effectively in intercultural interactions. In their opinion, the confusion and ambiguity that exist in the literature regarding the distinctions between the three components and note that two other concepts commonly applied to communication competence are those of effectiveness and appropriateness.

Coordinator of the Duke-UNC Rotary Center for International Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution Darla K. Deardorff (2004) points out that the most applicable definition of intercultural competence involves the knowledge of others; the knowledge of self; the skills to interpret and relate; the skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and finally, relativizing one's self.

We completely agree with A. Fenner (2006), who points out that intercultural competence is not an automatic result of learning and gaining knowledge about a foreign language culture but it requires making an effort to direct the foreign language teaching/learning process accordingly. Experts believe that intercultural competence can exist already at a young age or can be developed or improved later with no end point. Moreover, it needs purposeful efforts towards its lifelong development.

Thus, a thorough analysis of scientific works devoted to this subject allowed us to define possible ways of making intercultural management successful when an organization's team is multicultural and multinational. The process should be divided into students' management and staff management. Without a doubt, for students, the organizational methods are:

- participating in student exchange programs;
- study and practice abroad;
- purposefully aimed foreign language learning process (integrating culture into language learning);
- usage of CLIL (Content and language integrated learning) technology;
- cultivating curiosity and cognitive flexibility;
- critical thinking development;
- students' cultural awareness growth through teaching methods (ice-breakers, case studies, class quizzes, role plays, pair and group work, interactive games, intercultural games, simulations, training exercises etc.) and materials (culture-based tasks) adaptation;
- intercultural cooperative learning approach usage;
- educational use of media and the Internet for intercultural projects.

Obviously, these factors can greatly enhance students' intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness. They can be valuable and motivating tools for promoting intercultural competence in the system of higher education.

The staff of educational organizations and teachers as the main actors and drivers for changes should be also engaged in:

- work on international scientific and practical projects;
- developing linguistic competence;
- intercultural experience;
- intercultural competence training courses;
- antidiscrimination campaigns in organizations;
- political and cultural tolerance development practice, etc.

Having professional relations with representatives of a culture which is more diffuse than your own can sometimes take a lot of time. In specific cultures, professional relationships are built only within the mental unit of “commerce” or “just work” that is kept away from other life spheres. In diffuse cultures, all the components are interdependent. We refer educational institutions to organizations of diffusive cultures.

Such organizations usually have special ethics or corporate codes where intercultural issues are regulated. These intercultural issues concern three internal groups of actors in higher educational institutions, and namely: governors/managers, academic staff and students. Among principles listed in the ethics/corporate code we should mention the following ones:

- academic integrity;
- honesty;
- truth;
- transparency;
- respect for others;
- trust;
- accountability;
- fairness;
- responsibility;
- equity, justice and social justice;
- democratic and ethical governance;
- legality;
- quality education;
- personal and systems improvement;
- institutional autonomy;
- international cooperation.

In the frames of our research we should point out that to ensure effective implementation of the ethics code all its actors must be equally treated irrespective their political, religious, cultural, racial, or ethnical affiliation. In our opinion, universities must guarantee a favorable academic intercultural environment to teach, to study, to conduct research, to present findings, and to publish data and conclusions. In other words, academic

freedom and high standards of academic integrity must become core values of any educational organization.

As a conclusion we can say that intercultural management, as based on different dimensions of knowledge, attitudes, abilities and skills, is generally defined as the capability of successful communication and high performance of an organization in collaboration with other cultures.

Exceptional importance of intercultural management is seen in that in educational organizations, universities are beginning to change their paradigm moving from the traditional scientific-educational model to “University 3.0” or “third mission” in terms of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)—an international economic organization of developed countries that recognizes the principles of representative democracy and free market economy).

What is a “third mission” for a modern university? It lies in the impact that higher education institutions have on the economy, the level of human capital and the innovation potential of the region. If earlier educational institutions could afford to remain on the periphery of processes that take place in society, in the modern knowledge economy, they find themselves at the epicenter of events. That is why the third function of the university is to serve the regional community, precisely because of the innovative issues that have increasingly shifted towards educational institutions.

So, one can say that the “third role” is the intercultural interaction of universities with personalities, cultures and business. Foreign universities have not only instilled knowledge in their students but also have an intercultural management, as they have faced the problem of effective cooperation in the conditions of high migration. Undoubtedly, to achieve such results, large-scale work of managers, generation of innovations inside the university, formation of innovative systems, and an advancement of intercultural developments outside are required.

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