

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION ON CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE FORMATION

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Abstract. This article is dedicated to the significance and effectiveness of internationalizing the higher education system and its impact on students' cross-cultural competence. The process of internationalization plays an important role in increasing the competitiveness of the higher education system and its students. Internationalization, through modern innovative methods, contributes to increasing students' worldview, strengthening multilingualism, and developing their intercultural, cross-cultural, communicative, and linguistic competencies. The increasing demand for students to study abroad has also increased the significance of cross-cultural competence. Cross-cultural competence refers to the ability of students to understand cultural differences, learn and effectively use communication tools, and achieve communication goals in a multicultural environment.

The purpose of this article is to determine the effectiveness of internationalization in developing the cross-cultural competence of university students. 147 students from Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University participated in the research. Students' cross-cultural competence levels were measured using a questionnaire and a cultural intelligence scale. Additionally, 17 students who had studied abroad through academic mobility were interviewed. Developing cross-cultural competence in students is closely linked to increasing the cultural and cross-cultural competencies of future teachers, and all students must be aware of these elements. The data obtained showed the effectiveness of internationalization in higher education in developing students' cross-cultural competence.

Keywords: cross-cultural competence, intercultural competence, academic mobility, competence, internationalization, cross-culture, education, cross-cultural sensitivity

Basic provisions

The role of internationalization in higher education on the development of cross-cultural competence among students is significant. Internationalization provides students with opportunities to engage with different cultures, learn new languages, and broaden their worldviews. This process also helps to strengthen their intercultural, cross-cultural, communicative, and linguistic competencies, which are essential skills for success in today's globalized world.

Studying abroad is one of the most effective ways to develop cross-cultural competence among university students. By studying in a different country, students are exposed to new cultural norms, values, and beliefs, which helps them to gain a

better understanding and appreciation of other cultures. They also learn to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and develop skills to navigate cultural differences.

Moreover, the internationalization of higher education promotes the exchange of knowledge and ideas across borders, leading to a more diverse and inclusive learning environment. By learning from professors and peers from different cultural backgrounds, students gain a deeper understanding of global issues and develop a more nuanced perspective on global challenges.

The role of internationalization in higher education for developing cross-cultural competence among students cannot be overstated. It provides students with valuable opportunities to broaden their horizons, develop new skills, and become better equipped to navigate a globalized world.

Introduction

Based on the updated education system, universities are demanded to be competitive and offer a wide range of education in addition to a high quality of education. In the development of the updated educational system, it is relevant to form the professional motivation of teachers in non-studied, new pedagogical theory. In recent years, there has been an increase in students' interest in studying abroad, and they want to study in educational institutions with international education programs, cultural diversity and opportunities to go abroad.

A number of higher education institutions, aiming to increase their competitiveness in the international market, pay a lot of attention to internationalization and domestic internationalization. Internationalization is the space in the language available to the world [1]. Another group of scientists, determined internationalization as common practice at many universities around the world [2].

The internationalization system in universities takes place due to social, political, academic and economic purpose [3]. In our opinion, the main goal of internationalization is to prepare cross-culturally competent students who are adapted to the cultural environment, who know how to face global challenges. It is often observed that in the last years some of Kazakhstan's higher educational institutions actively conduct the process of internationalization and invite foreign professors to lecture in large numbers [4].

Nowadays, almost all universities offer an exchange programs. Through academic mobility programs, students have the opportunity to study at a partner university and also to increase their cross-cultural competence. Therefore, academic mobility is the only source of development of internationalization in universities. However, due to various reasons (financial, personal, health or lack of language skills), almost all students do not have the opportunity to go abroad for academic mobility [5]. According to the European Commission report, in 2020 even in Europe, only 10% of master's students studied abroad to improve their qualifications during their studies [6]. Although this approach to study abroad is beneficial for improving students' cross-cultural competence , it is not suitable for all students.

Nowadays, with the rapid development of various technologies, people are fluent in various programs. One of them helps us to find the information we need, another allows us to study foreign languages independently in an online system, and others allow you to find foreign friends on social media or other platforms to communicate with them every day. Thus, it can be seen that people are increasingly interested in learning different technologies and foreign languages. However, in teaching or learning foreign languages, it is important to focus not only on communicative development, but also on the development of cross-cultural competence. The increasing level of the intermingling of cultures and peoples in the world, Mitchell points to the importance of people developing their cross-cultural competence [7].

Cross-cultural competence is one of the crucial components of multicultural education. Multicultural education is significant component of attribute education [8]. Cross-cultural competence is a set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that enable smooth and effective interactions with people of other nationalities [9]. That is, being able to respect and accept the culture, traditions, history, and habits of other nations.

According to some scholars, cross-cultural competence is the skills necessary to work effectively in a new cultural context and interact effectively with representatives of different cultures. As S.A.Kuznetsova defined the term "cross-culture" is a direct English translation of the word "cross-culture" [10], which can be translated as "combination of culture". Hence, in our opinion, cross-cultural competence is the full preservation and respect of the culture of the country, in dealing with people of other nationalities. We would like to define cross-cultural competence as the interaction and cooperation of different cultures.

In the studies of various scientists, cross-cultural competence is associated with effective intercultural communication and behavioral skills. Specifically, when communicating with any nationality, it is necessary to emphasize the feeling of love and respect for that country. In a multinational country like Kazakhstan, the importance of teaching, developing and forming cross-cultural competence among students is very high. Being a multinational country, even if students do not go abroad, the opportunity to communicate with representatives of other nationalities is much higher. The importance of internationalization is to internationalize curricula through the strengthening of multilingualism and value, to support students in the development of intercultural and cross-cultural relations, and to develop worldview programs. It shows the need to develop internationalization strategies aimed at the direct integration of linguistic policy in our country. We suggest determining the necessary knowledge, skills, and qualification factors to determine students' cross-cultural competence level.

This study aims to examine the impact of the internationalization of higher education on the development of students' cross-cultural competence. Cross-cultural competence skills refer to the ability of students to understand cultural differences and achieve communication goals expected in a multicultural environment [11]. As the novelty of this article, we examine the relationship between cross-cultural competence development and academic performance in the context of internationalization in higher education, such as investigating whether improved

cross-cultural competence leads to better grades or other academic outcomes. We believe that the study's results will help identify and develop ways of cross-cultural competence for students.

Materials and methods

In our research we applied methods: theoretical analysis, description, systematization, observation of different points of views on the research topic. In the practical part we applied empirical analysis like: a survey for students' attitudes about the impact of the internationalization process on the development of cross-cultural competence.

The research focuses on the development of cross-cultural competence of students through the process of internationalization in higher educational institutions. In this research, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed to examine the process and outcomes of the methodology, which were analyzed separately. Firstly, in order to determine the cross-cultural competence of students, we collected data from students and master students studying in the pedagogical faculty of Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University.

We formulate the research questions as follows:

1. How do you percept the meaning of term cross-cultural competence?
2. What is the level of cross-cultural competence of students?
3. What is the impact of the internationalization process on the development of cross-cultural competence?

In order to find answers to the above questions, the study was divided into three stages.

The first stage of our study consisted of collecting domestic and international literature related to the development of cross-cultural competence, internationalization of higher education. An initial search for materials for further analysis was performed using ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar digital search engines. Normative documents setting requirements for educational institutions and students under the updated education system in Kazakhstan were also used as a basis. The following words and phrases were the main search terms: "cross-cultural", "internationalization", "knowledge", "competence", "cross-cultural competence". Publications of different levels and different subject areas related to the development of domestic and foreign cross-culture and internationalization in the field of education were selected.

For the second stage of the study we used online survey Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) designed by Ang et al in 2007 to measure the level of students' cross-cultural competence. The Cultural Intelligence Scale designed by Ang is a valuable tool for measuring cross-cultural competency among students, and has several key advantages over other measures of cross-cultural intelligence. Its comprehensive assessment, strong psychometric properties, and specific focus on students make it an ideal instrument for researchers and practitioners seeking to assess and develop cross-cultural competency in this population.

Cross-cultural competence should be measured using a mixed method according to its difficulty [12]. That is why we conducted interviews with students.

When combining qualitative and quantitative methods, they eliminate each other's weaknesses and ensure higher results [13].

118 bachelor's and 29 master's students of the Foreign Languages and Translation Department of Korkyt Ata University participated in data collection. Since among the students, there were 17 students of other nationalities and students of the Russian group, research questions and interview questions were made in Kazakh\Russian and English languages. Details on students' courses and nationalities can be found in Table 1.

Table 1 – Students' information

	Males	Females	Kazakhs	Other nationalities
Undergraduates	20	98	101	17
Graduate students	9	20	29	0

The third stage consisted of interviewing. According to the results of survey we determined that we have 17 students who had academic mobility studies. These students invited to participate in interview. Interview questions were obtained from semi-structured, open-ended questions and were focused on the effectiveness of internationalization on the development of cross-cultural competence of students. It is important in order to fully achieve the results of the answers required for the study. All potential participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were asked to consent to their participation. Students were informed that they could refuse to answer any of the questions if they did not have answers. They were further informed about the procedures in place to ascertain their anonymity. Data from interviews will be used only for the study aims and will be destroyed after.

The material was collected and analyzed based on the results of the survey and the analysis of the answers from the interview.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test the effectiveness of internationalization on development of students' cross-cultural competence. We employed three primary inquiries and discovered the following responses to them during our research.

According to the meaning of the term cross-cultural competence – it can be perceived in different ways, but generally, it refers to the ability of individuals to work and communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This includes having an understanding and appreciation of different cultural values, norms, and practices, as well as the ability to adapt one's behavior and communication style to different cultural contexts.

Based on the data collected from students and master students studying in the pedagogical faculty of Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University, the level of cross-cultural competence of students varies. Some students have a high level of cross-cultural competence, while others have a lower level. Factors such as previous exposure to

different cultures, language skills, and personal attitudes towards cultural diversity can influence the level of cross-cultural competence among students.

The internationalization process can have a positive impact on the development of cross-cultural competence among students. By providing opportunities for students to study abroad, interact with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, and engage in cross-cultural learning activities, the internationalization process can help to increase students' awareness and understanding of different cultures. Additionally, the internationalization process can help to promote intercultural communication skills and foster a global mindset among students. However, the impact of the internationalization process on the development of cross-cultural competence may vary depending on the specific programs and activities offered, as well as the level of student engagement and participation.

Results

As a result of the *first stage*, 45 literary sources were collected. The main sources of publications were articles in various academic journals, dissertations, methodological developments in the field of internationalization, cross-cultural competence and other sources, including normative legal acts, books, and publications of international conferences.

The conclusion of the *second stage* is a survey of students to determine their cross-cultural competence and the role of internationalization in it. 147 undergraduate and graduate students participated in the study. All students completed the survey online using a Google form. The Culture Intelligence Scale (CQS), designed by Ang et al. contained 20 questions and was scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1 being strongly disagree; 7 being strongly agreed) (Ang et al., 2007). The questionnaire has 4 CQ dimension subscales: meta-cognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral. We divided the results of the survey by each academic year to show how the cross-cultural competence of students changed year by year. After analyzing the results of survey we realized that 15 of all 147 students who participated left some questions unanswered. That is why we excluded the answers of these students from the analysis. We converted the obtained results into numerical values of 1-5 on a 5-point Likert scale. The obtained results are shown in Table 2

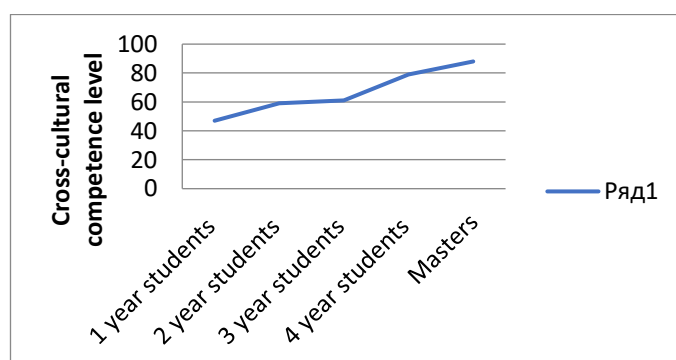


Figure 2 – Students' cross-cultural competence

As shown in Table 2, the cross-cultural competence of first-year students is 47%, and the cross-cultural competence of 4th-year students is 79%, and master students have 88%. However, according to the results of the survey, among the students in the 1st year, there were also students who highly valued their cross-cultural competence. In addition, there were those who could not give a full definition of the meaning of this term, but had high results. Also, as we can see from the table, it can be seen that the indicator of the cross-cultural competence level of students has increased every year. When examining the results of the survey, we made assumptions that it can be the result of new disciplines taught every year.

As mentioned above, during the research, 17 students studied at the University of Lodz in Poland for 1 semester under the academic mobility program. Of all 17 students who studied abroad, 5 were graduate students and 12 were 2nd and 3rd year students. Then we compared the cross-cultural competence of these students with their group mates. Table 3 shows the level of cross-cultural competence of students who studied abroad, that is, students who participated in internationalization, and students who studied at a domestic university.

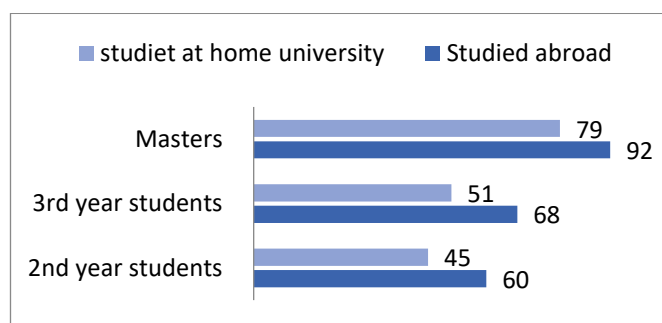


Figure 3 – Effect of internationalization on cross-cultural competence of students

As shown in Table 3, cross-cultural level 2nd year students 45%, while the students from the same group but who studied abroad gives a result of 60%. Also, there are shown results of 3rd year students, 51% for those who studied at domestic university and 68% for those who go abroad. Master students also differentiate with results 79% and 92%. These results may be because of their attitude has changed. When students go abroad to study they have another conditions of life, other people around, and language, food, history, culture – everything is changing. The way of thinking also makes a lot of changes, as they communicate with students from other countries and other nationalities.

According to the survey results we allowed to compare level of students' cross-cultural competence who had the internationalization experience and who did not. The results showed that internationalization had a direct impact on the development of students' cross-cultural competence. In addition, it was seen that the cross-cultural level of students who studied abroad was much higher than their group mates.

Results of the *third stage* we realized that internationalization has a direct impact on students' cross-cultural competence. This is because the results of the

students who studied abroad for 1 semester under the academic mobility program of the university showed a high indicator. The interview recordings were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo 12 software. Coding was done bilaterally to avoid coding errors and repetitions. The analysis was implemented with preliminary codes matched and settled on for triangulation purposes and was guided by the general critical internationalization perspective. This was necessary for us to determine which course students had the best results of internationalization.

Among the students, 17 students studied abroad for 1 semester under the academic mobility program. Some students said that there was a "culture shock" in the beginning. For example, 3rd year student Assel says:

There were students from 16 countries in our course. Because of the large number of foreign students, the normal conditions in their culture seemed strange to us or vice versa. Their clothes, food, and activities were sometimes interesting and sometimes incomprehensible. At first, it was difficult to get along and create communication after not being used to it. However, due to the results and impact of the "Cultural features" course conducted at the university, we were able to quickly find a solution to the above-mentioned problems.

As we can see from the answer, the impact of internationalization on raising the cross-cultural competence of the students is very high. Our students got acquainted with the culture, history and traditions of other nations by going abroad and studying abroad. In addition, they understood the importance of showing respect to other nations. In other words, students understood that it was not right to disrespect or make fun of others because of cultural differences.

Another 3rd year student Asan's answers:

I am very happy to study abroad. I can definitely say that the visit to Poland had a direct impact on the expansion of my worldview. I made a lot of friends from other nationalities, and gained a lot of new knowledge. Not only my knowledge increase, but my thinking way and attitude toward life changed as well.

From the answers of the students who studied abroad, it can be seen that they are eager to compare cultures, feel the differences and peculiarities with other cultures, and also to learn about other cultures.

Here is the answer of master student Saule:

I met students from different countries. We talked to each other about our traditions, food and habits. My current dream is to travel as much as possible and get to know the history of many countries. I learned how many differences there are even in countries that are neighboring or considered relatives.

After the interviews, when we reanalyzed the quantitative data of the students who had studied with academic mobility and those who had not, we found that the cross-cultural competence of the students who had attended was significantly higher. Therefore, these results confirm that cross-cultural competence can be formed and developed through internationalization.

Conclusion

Many Higher Education Institutions over the world practices internationalization to develop communicative, multilingual, cross-cultural

competencies [14]. There are many benefits of internationalization: the development of intercultural and cross-cultural competences, the development of communication skills is one of them. However, we should also take into account that not all students can afford to go for study abroad. Someone's financial situation does not support it, someone is unable to find an opportunity to go abroad due to health reasons, and others due to various other issues. A reasonable question arises as to what to do with such students. How to improve their cross-cultural competence? To this question, we would like to make the following recommendations: increase academic mobility programs, develop "internationalization at home", and create an environment of expatriates as much as possible.

As a result of the study, it was found that the process of internationalization has a positive effect on the development of cross-cultural competence, because when going abroad or visiting a teacher / student from abroad, through communication with him, students can see various differences. We would also like to emphasize the benefits of internationalization at home, if properly designed, it helps to exchange information and develop cross-cultural competence by working with representatives of other nationalities without leaving home.

The results of the study showed that students who studied abroad have high cross-cultural competence comparing to those who did not go abroad. Taking into account that students are future teachers, we should make training competitive professionals our main task. At the same time, since we live in a multi-ethnic country like Kazakhstan, it is important to form a cross-culturally competent specialist and person. This is because a cross-culturally competent person, first of all, loves and respects his homeland and history, and can show the same respect to other countries.

Foreign language teachers can be considered as integrators of two cultures, and the development of their cross-cultural competence is one of the most relevant topics. We think that the main goal of an English teacher is to increase the student's interest in that country, as he is teaching the younger generation about another culture and country. Increasing students' cross-cultural competence - teaches them to adapt to living in different societies and to treat any country with respect. An interculturally literate student is a cultured person who is able to confront racism in different societies. We believe that one of the best ways to teach students about cross-cultural competence is to incorporate the experiences of others.

If this research work is carried out in other cities in Kazakhstan, other results may be achieved, that is, the level of cross-cultural competence of students may change. For example, due to the large number of foreign citizens coming to work in big cities and the diversity of students' thinking. however, we are confident that internationalization has a positive effect on cross-cultural competence.

This article identifies several important implications for future educational practice and research. It was also found that internationalization helps to develop cross-cultural competence of students.

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ЖОҒАРЫ БІЛІМ БЕРУДІ ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛАНДЫРУДЫҢ КРОСС-МӘДЕНИ ҚҰЗЫРЕТТІЛІКТІ ҚАЛЫПТАСТЫРУДАҒЫ ТИІМДІЛІГІ

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада жоғары білім беру жүйесін интернационалдандырудың маңыздылығы мен тиімділігі және оның студенттердің кросс-мәдени құзыреттілігін дамытудағы әсері қарастырылған. Бұл процес жоғары білім беру жүйесі мен студенттердің бәсекеге қабілеттілігін арттыруда маңызды рөл атқарады. Интернационалдандыру – заманауи инновациялық әдістер арқылы студенттердің дүниетанымын арттыруға, көптілділікті нығайтуға және студенттердің мәдениетаралық, кросс-мәдени, коммуникативтік және лингвистикалық құзыреттіліктерін дамытуға ықпал етеді. Заман талабына байланысты студенттердің шетелде оқуға деген қызығушылығының артуы кросс-мәдени құзыреттіліктің де маңызын арттыра түсті. Кросс-мәдени құзыреттілік дағдылары студенттердің мәдени айырмашылықтарды түсіну, коммуникациялық құралдарды тиімді меңгеру және пайдалану және көпмәдениетті ортада күтілетін коммуникациялық мақсаттарға жету қабілетін білдіреді.

Мақаланың мақсаты – университет студенттерінің кросс-мәдени құзыреттілігін дамытудағы интернационалдандырудың тиімділігін анықтау болып табылады. Зерттеуге Қорқыт ата атындағы Қызылорда университетінің 147 студенті қатысты. Студенттердің кросс-мәдени құзыреттілік деңгейі сауалнама және мәдени интеллект шкаласы арқылы өлшенді. Сондай-ақ академиялық ұтқырлық бойынша білім алған 17 студентпен сұхбат жүргізілді. Студенттердің кросс-мәдени құзыреттілігін дамыту болашақ мұғалімдердің мәдени, кросс-мәдени құзыреттіліктерін арттырумен тығыз байланысты және барлық студенттер осы элементтерді білуі керек. Алынған мәліметтер студенттердің кросс-мәдени құзыреттілігін дамыту бойынша жоғары оқу орындарында интернационалдандырудың тиімділігін көрсетті.

Тірек сөздер: кросс-мәдени құзыреттілік, мәдениетаралық құзыреттілік, академиялық ұтқырлық, құзыреттілік, интернационалдандыру, кросс-мәдениет, білім беру, кросс-мәдени сезімталдық

ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТЬ ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛИЗАЦИИ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ КРОСС-КУЛЬТУРОНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена значению и эффективности интернационализации системы высшего образования и ее влиянию на кросс-культурную компетентность

студентов. Процесс интернационализации играет важную роль в повышении конкурентоспособности системы образования студентов. Современные инновационные методы интернационализации способствует повышению мировоззрения; укреплению полиязычия и развитию межкультурных, кросс-культурных, коммуникативных и языковых компетенций обучающихся. Приоритетность и растущий интерес к обучению за границей повысил значение кросс-культурной компетентности. Данные навыки относятся к способности учащихся понимать культурные различия; эффективность изучения и использования средств коммуникации; достигать коммуникативных целей, ожидаемых в поликультурной среде.

Цель статьи - определить эффективность интернационализации в развитии кросс-культурной компетентности студентов вузов. В исследовании приняли участие 147 обучающиеся Кызылординского университета имени Коркыт ата. Уровень кросс-культурной компетентности студентов измерялся с помощью анкеты и шкалы культурного интеллекта. Дополнительно было опрошено 17 студентов, обучавшихся по академической мобильности. Развитие кросс-культурной компетентности учащихся тесно связано с повышением культурной, межкультурной образованности будущих учителей, что подчеркивает их осведомленность данными знаниями. Полученные в результате данные показали эффективность интернационализации в высшем образовании на развитие кросс-культурных компетенций студентов.

Ключевые слова: кросс-культурная компетентность, межкультурная компетентность, академическая мобильность, компетентность, интернационализация, кросс-культура, образование, кросс-культурная чувствительность

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