

PEDAGOGY

Rakisheva G.M., Abibulayeva A.B.

INDIVIDUAL'S TRANSCULTURAL COMPETENCE AS A BALANCING MECHANISM BETWEEN THE “GLOBAL” AND THE “LOCAL”

Rakisheva Gulmira Madiевна, Kazakhstan, PhD
student of social pedagogy and self-cognition department, L.N.
Gumilyov Eurasian National University

Abibulayeva Aizhana Budanovna, Kazakhstan,
Professor of social pedagogy and self-cognition department, L.N.
Gumilyov Eurasian National University

Abstract

The new generation of Kazakhstan people is shaping in the present multidimensional dynamic environment with developments in political landscape, cultural diversity, transformation of the value system and educational paradigm. The new generation will have to live in an emerging post-industrial society, but currently their outlook and view of life are already changing. The philosophical comprehension of the problem of the nowadays ambivalence resulted in understanding that the society needs to develop a new integral world outlook that may go on to become a foundation for development of poly-ethnic and poly-confessional states that is Kazakhstan. The authors of this paper consider formation of transcultural competence of an individual as one of the means able to expand personal world outlook up to the integral level. The survey data, theoretical findings, and the practice of the process for development of transcultural competence can be used in such areas as psychology, pedagogy, sociology, and social work.

Keywords: transcultural competence, outlook, cultural dialogue.

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

Introduction. Kazakhstan's ethnic, lingual, and cultural diversity is a product of historical developments. Having gone through the Soviet totalitarian rule and mono-ideology, the period of repressions and attainment of independence, this Central Asian country has become a second homeland for more than 60 ethnicities of the former USSR (Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Greeks, Uigurs, Chechens, Koreans, etc.). These both tragic and crucial developments have shaped a unique environment where the architectonics of the socio-cultural landscape were being developed under the influence of, and in interaction between, the representatives of more than 130 ethnic groups (this is the number of ethnicities and ethnic groups inhabiting the country). This distinctive feature of the Kazakhstan's cultural diversity is of true value. New opportunities unfold here to obtain social experience and interact with people from other ethnic groups. Moreover, from the pragmatic point of view, the ethnic diversity, perception of different cultures and, consequently, their complementarity help to find unconventional custom-tailored solutions to professional challenges.

Today's efforts of Kazakhstan shaping it as a nation are focused on development of the democracy, the concept of stronger unity within the country, and integration into the global community. The government plays a key role, but not a decisive one in choosing the direction for social development. The choice is up to the people, and depends on their spiritual and moral principles manifesting in their values, attitudes, stereotypes, narrations, and behavioral patterns. The modern philosophers believe that the era of post-industrial society requires transformation of one's outlook that would enable to preserve the unity through diversity (E. Said, V. Welsh, D. Unterholzner, A. Nyssanbayev, Z. Shaukenova, S. Yedilbayeva, N. Rozov, and others). Today's reasoning of a person is of a language-based nature. Huge data arrays are constantly constructed and transformed into a language thus shaping the everyday reality (N. Luman, P.L. Berger, K. Gergen) and producing an active influence on the person's subconsciousness. The information-energy environment of planet Earth - no sphere - produces great influence on the person's spiritual order [1]. It turned out that the young generation's way of thinking is dependent on other people's opinions, and can be easily manipulated [2]. Even in the situation where one's own thoughts should be awakened, it doesn't work because the mind has already been infected through the language. This is the opportunity to manipulate other people's minds. The person's transcultural competence may prove to become a tool to ease the social and ethnic cultural tensions, and develop immunity against negative effects of the information environment (for

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

example, resistance to radical extremist slogans in an oversaturated information field, tolerance in a polycultural society). The transculture develops sensitivity to individual, age-specific, ethnic, national, and cultural traits of a personality in today's multi-dimensional world.

The term "transculture" was introduced into scientific use in 1940 by anthropologist F.Ortiz. He opposed the theory of transculturation to the acculturation theory that was being fostered at that time. While, according to this scholar, the acculturation was of a one-sided nature as regards acquisition of culture, the transculture implied unity of two processes – loss of some part of the personal culture (de-culturation), and creation of a new culture (neo-culturation). In the 90s of XX century the Ortiz's concept of "transculture" was subject to in-depth reconsideration. It was the globalization process that gave a boost to such developments. The unification threat, large-scale distribution of mass culture, its westernization, speculations concerning "national origins and patriotism" that could lead to both mankurtism and tribalism, require a balance between these processes. In this setting the transculture looks most humane, evolutionary and predictable tool for individual and social development for it does not only rest on the ethnic, national culture, but largely on the culture of each specific individual. At the back of the trans-culture are such dynamic processes as shaping and development of an active consciousness. The active consciousness mechanism can be triggered by one's will, while critical understanding will be the product of the cognitive process. This, in its turn, will help to develop integral self-consciousness in the context of an actual dialog between equal cultures.

With the signing of the Bologna Declaration and the transfer to polylingual education, Kazakhstan's students received even greater opportunities for sharing their values by academic mobility, educational tourism, and Split PhD that is focused on learning the English language as a generally accepted language of international communications. On the other hand, the increasingly expanding area of English language applications went beyond the academic field and is able to supersede the moral and social values of the native culture. From this perspective, the experience of Singapore may come in handy and instructive. Teaching at Singaporean schools was in English, while their native Chinese was used as a second academic language. This resulted in the "erosion of traditional moral values among Singaporean students" [3]. The young man's world outlook shaped in increasingly strong globalization environment, and should include both the ideas of other

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

countries and culture [4], as well as the understanding of one's own place within this framework. One of the ways to create a young person's conscious outlook is to develop a transcultural competence.

Materials and Methods. Following our study of the psychological state of students going abroad under academic mobility programs before, during and after their studies at foreign universities and colleges, and given their readiness to study in a foreign culture environment, we initiated a research work dedicated to the readiness to face "the alien". The primary author's inputs were prepared following the questionnaire entitled "My experience of studying abroad" followed by the related analysis. For the questionnaire purpose we developed and used a questionnaire form with questions concerning the objective and expectations of the respondents prior to their studies abroad, the mental states they experienced over the first days of their stay in a foreign country, and the students' preferences with regard to the choice of partner for a teamwork. The sampling included 117 respondents represented by students of teaching departments from two Kazakh institutions of higher education – L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, and Sh. Ualikhanov Kokshetau State University. The questionnaire addressed the students studying in Kazakh and Russian language groups, as well as in polylingual groups where some subjects are taught in the Kazakh, Russian, and English languages.

A puzzle test was elaborated and utilized in the second survey to measure the initial transcultural competence and its development prospects. It's based on the critical analysis of one's own transcultural knowledge, views, relations, and abilities. It is a modified Your Objectives, Guidelines and Assessment (YOGA – Test) test by A. Fantini, USA. YOGA test was first presented in 2000 as part of a research project entitled "Exploring Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Multinational Perspective [5]. The scope of the test includes cognitive and affective activity of a personality and measures the level of awareness/unawareness, acceptance/non-acceptance of values and mindsets of own/foreign culture, as well as the attitude and readiness to communication with "a foreign person".

The diversity and inter-disciplinary nature of the challenges behind development of a multicultural personality require significant adjustments to the student's preparation process. To make this process effective and practice-oriented we made use of the competency-based technique. This technique can satisfy the following:

- needs of the personality receiving occupational training;

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

- expectations of the society that is in need of competent teaching staff;
- needs of the state that may use this process to facilitate a competitive education in line with global standards.

Relying on the positive results of our previous research work that demonstrated high performance of the competence approach [6], and following its design logics, we determined five levels of transcultural competence for future teachers: very low, low, medium, advanced, and high level that are described according to the competence criteria (refer to Table 1).

Table 1

Criteria for assessment of future teachers' transcultural competence

Item No.	Level of trans-cultural competence	Criteria for assessment of transcultural competence		
		Motivation criterion	Cognitive criterion	Activity-related criterion
1.	Very low	No idea of, or interest in, cultural-perception of the world	No idea of the personal and social culture learning and development mechanisms. No understanding of the essence of transculture	No abilities or skills for development of the personal culture, no flexibility in communications with representatives of other cultures
2.	Low	Occasional interest to learning personal and universal human culture	Only general understanding of the transculture concept. Poor knowledge of personal and universal human culture, techniques, and mechanisms that facilitate learning and development of personal and other culture	Some but poor abilities and skills in perceiving own cultural identity, difficulty in showing flexibility in communication with a representative of another culture, no aspiration for self-education
3.	Medium	Understanding of the motivation and goals; occasional interest to own and other cultures	Partial knowledge of transcultural processes in a post-modernistic setting, the person improves his/her knowledge of culture as the moment arises	Knows some theory but has difficulty in putting it into practice
4.	Advanced	Interested in learning the current social development trends that produce an impact on the culture of an individual and the entire humankind	Has sufficient knowledge of transculture, and techniques for learning own and other cultures, active in self-education as regards learning the cultures in a globalization environment	Has good command of the techniques for supporting several standpoints in communication, selectively flexible in conversation
5.	High	Very interested in learning the cultures, develops transcultural knowledge and abilities in a purposeful manner	Has good command of the system-based knowledge in the field of transformational socio-cultural processes, and transcultural models in the modern world	Fully developed abilities and skills in adequate interaction with representatives of another culture, very good command of the techniques for critical perception of personal and other culture

Findings. The questionnaire entitled “My experience of studying abroad” involved the total of 117 respondents. The results demonstrated that in theory 100% of students are ready to study in a foreign culture environment. However, 68% of the respondents stated they were feeling uneasy, lonely and unwell over the first weeks of their stay abroad, 11% of students experienced fluctuations in their mood ranging from euphoria and joy to anger and disappointment. The reasons for such states the students mentioned included lack of local language skills, culture-specific information about the country of stay and cultural differences. Following the completion of their study course the students were of the opinion that their adaptation took too long of which they were disappointed upon their arrival back to the home country (85% of respondents).

The findings of the summative stage experiment based on the puzzle test that measured the level of transcultural competence suggest that 74% of respondents were ready and eager to “plunge” into the foreign culture. The students demonstrate high preparedness to adopt new values (82%), and uncoordinated knowledge with

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

regard to the factors and mechanics for mutual cultural influence (68%). In their response students admit lack of skills in critical assessment of their own and other people's stereotypes (61%). The most obvious conclusion here is that despite the balanced language policy that helped to preserve and develop the Kazakhstan's poly-ethnicity and poly-confessionality, the development of critical self-consciousness upon facing "other things", its mechanics and development conditions remain poorly studied and underestimated. In today's world huge data arrays on various topics that are produced, distributed, and transformed in a systematic manner affecting one's behavior and way of thinking. Not to "get lost" in the crowd, to advance to a higher cultural level when facing the "other things", one should have a maximum developed higher psychological functions (perception, attention, will, thinking, etc.) that will help the person to critically perceive themselves, reach to the limits of their development, and go beyond the comfort zone to advance to the upper development level.

The hypothesis raised at the beginning of the research work was that the person's developed transcultural competence is capable of driving qualitative change in the personality and expanding the limits of one's mindset to the integral level. Such development of a person is based on the leveled development of one's mindset wherein a further level comprises the previous one – from the world outlook to view of life and further on to life philosophy. In view of this, a study entitled "Transcultural Competence of a Future Professional" was proposed as part of vocational training in addition to the positive learning by the students. The goal behind this course is to teach the students to the skills of critical perception of "own", "other", and "new own", critical understanding and adequate self-expression in the environment of communications with people of different categories (age, sex, ethnic group, etc.). During the development of the desired competence we made use of the teaching technique entitled "Dialog of Cultures" (V.S. Bibler and S.Yu. Kurganov). We tested the rhizome method developed by the authors on the basis on the rhizomatic logics of post-modernists G.Deleuze and F. Guattari. The idea behind the rhizome is that it "multiplies the sides, aspects, and facets of the reality under study and turns a circle into a polygon or a sphere into a polyhedron" [7]. In the course of the conclusive stage we measured the initial transcultural competency of students learning of teaching departments. The conclusive stage revealed the low level of competence under analysis. Forty five percent of students demonstrated low or very low competence and only as few as 15% were at a high level.

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

The intermediate survey stage results suggest a positive dynamics and a moderate growth of the students' transcultural competence. Below are the results of the intermediate survey stage (table 2).

Table 2

Results of analysis of the students' transcultural competence

Level of transcultural competence	Conclusive stage survey results (%)	Intermediate stage survey results (%)
Very low level	31%	24%
Low level	14%	11%
Medium level	21%	26%
Advanced level	19%	24%
High level	15%	15%

The above data helped to adjust the substantive and methodical components of the study course. Apart from the aforementioned teaching technique entitled "Dialog of Cultures" and the rhizome method, the following are being tested: psychonetic volitional technique [8], adapted methodology "Narrative Essay", adapted methodology "Six Viewpoints" [9], etc.

The observation technique that was used in the survey helped to identify the students' interests and passions during the practical tasks and training exercises. The conclusion here is that the aforementioned techniques help to activate the students' cognitive activity, develop independent thinking and critical perception, as well as higher psychological functions among all the subjects of the academic process.

Also note that the survey aimed at development of the transcultural competence among the future teachers is still ongoing. However, positive outcomes of the intermediate control activities enable to confirm the hypothesis as previously raised, and to make a conclusion that the study course "Transcultural Competence of a Future Professional" facilitates transformation of the students' mindsets towards an integral world outlook and a multidimensional world view.

Discussion. Current education models develop in the background of a dialog of cultures and civilizations. Many of those are being implemented in the countries where the education is expected to develop a multicultural personality (Canada, Australia, USA), inter-cultural personality (Ecuador, Bolivia), or a poly-cultural personality (Singapore, Kazakhstan). The models correlate with the nation, national culture, and national identity. Opinions of the scientists regarding such education models vary greatly. For

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

example, early works of American researchers about the establishment and development of a multicultural education system in the USA, mostly represented by Afro-American scholars of the 20-40s of the XX century, were focused on harmonizing the inter-ethnic relations, and including the ethnic component into education. Scientists like D.U. Williams, K.D. Woodson, and K.G. Wesley clearly stated of a threat of extinction of the native culture through assimilation under the dominant one, and of the need for survival of national minorities in the “white men’s” world and the related action to be taken. The second half of the XX century saw increased interest to this topic which resulted in the inclusion of the history and culture of ethnic groups inhabiting the USA (Mexicans, Puerto-Ricans, Spaniards, American Indians, Asian, etc.) into the curriculum [10].

Other scholars are of the opinion that the multi-culturalism is fundamentally inconsistent for it lacks any basic philosophy and moreover no attempts were taken to study its values at this level [11]. “The other” continues to act as an acculturation object, i.e. fails to “fit” into a mono-cultural environment.

The inter-cultural educational model is based on the ideas of Cuban philosopher R. Fornet-Betancourt. According to this scholar, the essence of the inter-cultural philosophy is represented by refreshing the ideal of universality as a practice of solidarity between the cultures [12]. A major role in establishment of the inter-cultural education model was played by anthropological, sociological, linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical studies (A. Maslow, M. Mead, E.T. Hall, C. Levi-Strauss, G.Triandis, E.Kiel, W.Nieke and others). The inter-cultural education is based on the “dialog space” as an area of a collective way of thinking about oneself, transforming one’s settings through active cognition of one’s own peculiarities – political, economic, social and cultural [13]. In other words, the inter-cultural education model pursues two goals – students learning their own national culture and taught to respect of other culture’s values.

The Kazakhstan’s multi-national and polylingual environment has served as a breeding ground for development of polycultural education. With a view to development of a personality capable of understanding and showing respect to other cultures, living in peace and harmony with the people of other ethnicities, races, views and beliefs, the country is now implementing a trilingual education system (in the Kazakh, Russian, and English languages). In such an environment students find themselves at the border between two or more cultures, identify and understand both

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

their own and the other culture, perceive the dissimilarity of the other culture.

However, over the centuries of being a polyethnic country at the very heart of Eurasia, Kazakhstan was mostly developing in a transcultural direction. The transcultural world outlook here is based on the Turanian (Turkic) psychological type of Eurasian nations [14], whose characteristic features include clarity, composure, openness and complementarity. It is a priori typical of the Eurasians to show respect to “the other”. It would be reckless to lose this basis right now when the globalization processes in the Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) are demonstrating the highest dynamics in Kazakhstan [15].

The “hybridity” of today’s world, migrations and trans-boundary tourism, active cultural exchange, and openness of educational boundaries are the avalanche-like trends in the development of modern Kazakhstan that penetrate the porous texture of the society and distribute all across it. Such a close interaction of civilizations, and interlacing of socio-cultural environments require a person to have a special integral outlook capable of balancing between the “global” and the “local” and vice versa. The person’s transcultural competence may serve as a tool to achieve this goal. Its key feature is that one can see the culture from “up above”. To do this people will have to free themselves from domination of their own culture, overcome the bias of evaluating an alien culture, and take an independent stand in the cultural dialog (M.Meyer, L.Kohlberg).

Conclusion. The transformational processes driven by globalization result in a change in the understanding of the surrounding world and one’s place therein. No stable principles, rapidly updated information, knowledge getting outdated, current provocative discourses on ethnic-racial, religious, gender, and sexual issues, as well as other features of the new reality urge the person to constantly seek new social identities. Knowledge and ability to find one’s place in this diverse world is not only a basic integrative quality of a modern person, but also is a vital need. The findings of our survey prove that the students are in an urgent need of transcultural competence. By using this term we refer to such a way of thinking that would enable an individual who found him/herself in a supercultural space to simultaneously take several standpoints while understanding the differences between them, and support each of them while being able to make a critical assessment of the situation. The makings of transcultural world outlook are limited and natural for Kazakhstan people for they result from the interaction of environmental-climatic, historical, civilization-related, and

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

psychological factors that are difficult to analyze for cause-effect relationship. Such factors develop due to the specifics of the human habitats (Eurasia), socio-political living conditions (modern polyethnic Kazakhstan with the priority focus on openness in development), and culture (pre-image of all the Eurasian nations - the nomadic culture) [16]. However, such makings need to be developed to become the abilities, for the findings of this survey suggest that although the transcultural component is typical of the Kazakhstan people, but the diverse “native” cultural environment cannot serve as a basic premise for success in adaptation to foreign cultural environments. The culture-related educational paradigm based on the dialog of cultures and consisting of the ethnic cultural, inter-cultural, and poly-cultural components, still lacks a well-developed transcultural component. The multidimensional and comprehensive globalization requires a personality to simultaneously estimate the situation from all the above viewpoints. Looking to potentially face “the other”, it takes quite a lot of time for the students to adapt. There are different reasons for such long adaptation, from lack of language skills and culture-specific information (34%) to stereotypical cliché-based thinking (31%) which is an evidence of the students’ mono-cultural level. Nervous states of the students (11%) also suggest that they lack practical self-control skills. Contacting the representatives of the other culture while being in a foreign culture environment, young men find themselves seeking for new identities which becomes even harder due to the lack of knowledge as regards the mechanics of developing the same, and the inability to discriminate between the cultures. To build a solid base for the new understanding of the world we need a practical tool capable of optimizing the factors driving transformation of the value system and personal mindsets. We are of the opinion that the transcultural competence that represents a product of synthesis of the ethnic, intercultural, and polycultural components may go on to become such a tool and develop such student’s vital qualities as humanism and global morality.

References:

- [1] Vernadskiy V.I. Biosphere and Noosphere. Moscow: Iris Press. 2007. p.576
- [2] Ortega y Gasset J. The Revolt of the Masses, M., Entire World, 1997, p. 46.
- [3] Lee Kuan Y. The Singapore Story: From Third World to First (1965-2000).library.fa.ru/files/LeeKuanY.
- [4] Douglass J.A. Educational challenges, 2015.-No.2.-p.76-108. vo.hse.ru/by_authors/26563853

4th the International Conference on Recent Trends in Science and Technology Management 2016

- [5] Fantini A. Exploring Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Multinational Perspective. Federation EIL, Brattleboro, Vermont, USA, 2006, 2015.
- [6] Stukalenko N. Implementation of Competence Approach in the Professional Education of Prospective Teachers in the Higher Education Conditions. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 2016, 6(S3).- P.175-181.
- [7] Sharkov V. Rhizomatic logics (optimal tool for selection of the development path for the planet's civilizations). delphis.ru/journal/article/rizomaticheskaya-logika
- [8] Bakhtiyarov O.G. *Active Mind*. M.: Postum, 2010.-272 p.
- [9] Crossly M.L. *Narrative Psychology. Selfhood, Psychological Trauma, and Engineering the Senses*. - H: Humanitarian Center, 2013. -284 p.
- [10] Banks, J.A. *The intergroup education movement / J.A. Banks // Multicultural education, transformative knowledge, and action : Historical and contemporary perspectives.*— New York : TeachersCollegePress, 2005. — P. 251-277.
- [11] Kirabayev N., Tlostanova M. Ways to overcome the modern university crisis. runivers.ru/philosophy/logosphere/199391
- [12] Fonet-Betancour R. An alternative to globalization: theses for the development of an intercultural philosophy// *Latin American Perspectives on Globalization: Ethics, Politics and Alternative Visions.*-Lantham, Oxford, N.Y.:Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002. p. 230-236.
- [13] Beregovaya O.A. Philosophy of education and inter-cultural dialog. *Materials of scientific forum: "Language education in the terms of sociocultural transformation of modern society"*, Karagandy, Kazakhstan, 2016, p. 32-35.
- [14] Trubetskoy N.S. About the Turanian element in the Russian culture / www.hrono.ru/statii/turan_ru
- [15] Abashin S. Cultural processes and transcultural effects intoday'sCentralAsia. opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/russian_20090515_0.
- [16] Rakisheva G. Prospects of developing the transcultural approach in education in view of revival of the Great Silk Way traditions. *Materials of the international scientific and methodological conference entitled "Dialog of Cultures of the Great Silk Way States"*, Erzurum, Turkey, 2016. -p.492