THE INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION ON MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The process of globalization has started since 1970s and still going on. Business and economics have become more influenced by globalization than any other sphere. [1] The cornerstone of globalization is the closer interaction of countries all over the world, which requires people, who can work in such environment. [2] Nowadays it is relevant for graduates, who are planning to work in the sphere of business, to possess certain knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience to work and manage situations effectively and efficiently. That is why business schools have to provide sufficient study of cross-cultural disciplines and maintain international academic flow.

WHAT IS MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE?

Multicultural competence is the ability of individual to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate in multicultural environment and interactions. [4, p. 2] This competence is connected with appreciation of each other’s values, norms, believes and behavioral patterns, understanding peculiarities and trying to minimize ethnocentricity among professionals in particular community. [3] It helps to analyze needs of certain markets, special features of managing strategies and advertising campaigns in different countries. Multicultural competence plays essential role in recruiting process and improving inefficiency and ineffectiveness while managing.

Multicultural competence includes three main components and practical part, which result in behavior. [4, p. 2] The components are the following:

1. Knowledge: understanding, how cultures affect behavior and worldview of individuals; knowing basic information (history, economics, and politics) about other cultures; knowing foreign languages at a level allowing communicating; being aware of global trends.

2. Skills: ability to minimize ethnocentrism; ability to interpret differences in a right way and compare peculiarities, ability to communicate efficiently
and effectively; ability to overcome misunderstandings and assess outcomes critically.

3. Attitude: aiming to collaborate with representatives, who belong to other cultures; awareness of personal prejudice in communication with people of different cultures; intension to predict and overcome possible misunderstandings in the framework of communication and mutual work.

4. Behavior: using social networks and other virtual resources to maintain international contacts; participating in international events and projects in frames of professional/educational activities; maintain constructive interactions in frames of educational/professional conferences and other scientific international events.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study was to see how business education influences multicultural competence of the students. The study was conducted among first and third year Business Administration students of SBMT.

A special self-assessment questionnaire was designed to rate multicultural competence of the students. The questionnaire consisted of 23 statements and 2 open questions. Statements and questions were divided into four groups corresponding to different parts of multicultural competence.

Participants assessed their competence on a 4-point Likert scale in which high scores are associated with high degree of having and expressing the described competency components; low scores relate to low and moderate level of competence components. [5, p. 19]

The questionnaire was available in Russian and English languages. All students filled the online version. The questionnaire was spread through Vk messages and the link to the questionnaire was placed at Vk SBMT student group.

The questionnaire was filled by 70 students: 30 first year and 40 third year (47 of them are women, 23 – men). All data were analyzed in Microsoft Excel 2010. The results were calculated in percent. It was used to calculate Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient.

FINDINGS

The most widely spoken foreign language among students is English. It means that students are potentially ready to be involved into multicultural communication. At the same time, the average number of friends, who belong to other culture on social media is 15, so it can be considered, that students aren’t involved into multicultural communication sufficiently.
Table 1 presents the summary of self-assessment results by items that showed the largest difference in competence level between the sample of first year and second year students. The results reflect the percentage of students, who assessed themselves by the highest score for each item. The correlation between year of study and level of competence is 0.88 (very strong). The correlation shows linear interdependence between year of study and level of competence. According to the results of our research, multicultural competence is getting lower during the process of studying.

Third year students assess themselves higher in statements concerning awareness of peculiarities of their own culture and how it may affect their attitude towards other people. The biggest gap between first and third year students refers to the ability to speak foreign language fluently (53 % first and 18 % third year).

First year students assess their skills much higher than the third year in interpreting and comparing the peculiarities in perception of their own and other cultures (40 % first and 5 % third year).

The biggest differences are shown at the component «Attitudes». First year students are much more tolerant to multicultural society and aimed to get acquainted with people from other countries more as well.

Assessing the component «Practice», both groups of students showed the same small result in the statement, concerning their comfort working with people from other cultures. Third year students participate more in international events, while first year students are tend to use social network for establishing international contacts more.

### Results of self-assessment by items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence’s component</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>First year</th>
<th>Third year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>I am aware of peculiarities in culture I belong to</td>
<td>23 %</td>
<td>28 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of peculiarities in my culture affects my attitude towards people and the world</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am aware of how the culture I belong to, affects my own perception and behavior</td>
<td>23 %</td>
<td>25 %</td>
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Our results showed that multicultural competence is not only prevented from growing, but even getting lower while studying. It identifies the problem, that our business school does not pay enough attention to the following knowledge, skills and attitudes. This tendency can be considered as a threat to professionalism of future graduates, because being involved in international environment and being able to work in multicultural team is essential in the
world of present business. The study emphasizes the importance of paying more attention to disciplines, which facilitate the development of multicultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. The improvement of knowledge can be obtained by more effective and intensive studying of English, because the gap between two groups of students (53 % of first and 18 % of third year), which was identified during the study, is threatening. It results in the problem, why third year students are alienated from communication with representatives of other cultures. The school should promote more tolerance, because third year students appeared to be less acceptable to multicultural society. In addition, school should encourage usage of social networks, especially LinkedIn, for establishing international contacts among students.

**Literature**


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**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INFOGRAPHICS AS MEANS OF PROMOTING BUSINESSES**

**I. V. Zakrevskaya, A. D. Krivko**

We live in the Information Age, which has totally changed the way we think and communicate. Every day an average person consumes about 34 Gb (gigabytes) of information [2] through the Internet, social media, TV, newspapers, radio, books, etc. Trying to make sense out of the enormous amount of information is a challenge we face on a daily basis. Infographics are an excellent tool to understand the essence of the information flow not only for private users, but also for businesses. Therefore, the goal of this work is to find out how effective infographics are for businesses in order to communicate their values and promote their activities.

Infographics, or information graphics, are a laconic mix of design, text and analysis, which is perfect for representing big amount of data in an attractive way. This approach, called infographics, was first used in publishing in the USA more than 30 years ago [3, p. 26], but charts, maps, diagrams and expla-