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FORMATION OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY IN PERSONNEL TRAINING FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

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Abstract: *The study is devoted to the formation of intercultural competency in personnel training for international tourism. Intercultural competency must be constantly verified, maintained, and updated, since the identities of the communicants, the cultural contexts, and the communication strategies themselves are constantly developing and changing in international tourism. The level of success in the formation of the intercultural competency of a specialist in tourism activities depends on the type of their native culture and the cultural-specific features of their cultural archetype, as well as how developed the tourism sector in their culture is, what are the traditions of receiving guests in their cultural community, and, accordingly, how difficult in this sense can be the intercultural transformation of the communicant's personality in the process of learning, practice, and various types of obtaining and accumulating experience of intercultural communication.*

Keywords: *intercultural competency; international tourism; tourism; culture; multicultural education; breeding; personality; communication.*

INTRODUCTION

The growing interdependence of states, their political systems, economies, social spheres, cultures, and education systems leads to the fact that intercultural communication plays an increasing role in all spheres of activity. In this case, globalization processes and development trends in the modern world are reflected in the nature and goals of intercultural communication, the implementation of which requires a deep understanding of the complex processes of cultural interaction. The multicultural

environment of a modern person, on the one hand, challenges it by setting the requirements for the conditions of survival, coexistence, and interaction with carriers of different cultures in a single space. On the other hand, it creates the preconditions for multicultural education and upbringing. Therefore, various spheres of intercultural interaction in the modern world require from an individual and a specialist not only an understanding of the processes of communication of cultures to develop a positive dialogue between cultures and civilizations, but also a purposeful formation of knowledge, skills, and ability and readiness for effective intercultural contacts, i.e. intercultural competency.

The development of intercultural competency serves to educate an intercultural personality that meets the conditions of existence in the global world and the needs of an individual themselves. In other words, society has both a global humanitarian imperative and a purely pragmatic requirement of the time, a practical need for possessing intercultural competency as a professionally significant quality of a specialist and a quality of an individual socially adapted to the intercultural conditions of modern life. The problems of intercultural communication are considered in the works of V.A. Bagiryan (2017), A.D. Nikanorova (2017), O. P. Romashkina (2018), M. Saidmurodova (2017), T.V. Samosenkova (2018), A.V. Titov (2018), and others. At the same time, scientific publications do not fully disclose the processes of forming intercultural competency in personnel training for international tourism and the essence of structural and functional changes taking place in international tourism.

METHODS

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was: an abstract-logical method, methods of induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis, and systematization – to substantiate approaches to improving the technology of personnel training in international tourism; a graphic method – to study the level and trends of changes in the parameters of the formation of intercultural competency. The information base of the study was the data of state bodies, legislative and normative documents regulating the technology of personnel training in the field of international tourism, and results of scientific research (Agamirova et al., 2017; Lebedev et al., 2018; Levchenko et al., 2018). During the study, it was planned to improve approaches to the formation of intercultural competency in personnel training for international tourism, develop measures to coordinate activities between the main participants in international tourism, and substantiate the directions for the development of international tourism in modern conditions.

RESULTS

Practice has shown that the global tourist space is the most representative sphere of cross-cultural discourse in terms of genres, styles, and forms of interaction: sociocultural, everyday, professional, business, and institutional. Ontologically, epistemologically, and procedurally, international tourism is a multicultural phenomenon that creates the most natural and harmonious conditions for the formation of an intercultural or multicultural personality because of the transformation of the cultural identity of an individual in the age of globalization. In this case, intercultural competency is the basic competency of future society. Therefore, intercultural competency is the key

to developing the ability to be tolerant and respectful of cultural differences, which characterizes enlightened global citizenship at various levels of the future society. Intercultural competency in international tourism can be viewed in the context of the affective, cognitive, and strategic components (Figure 1).

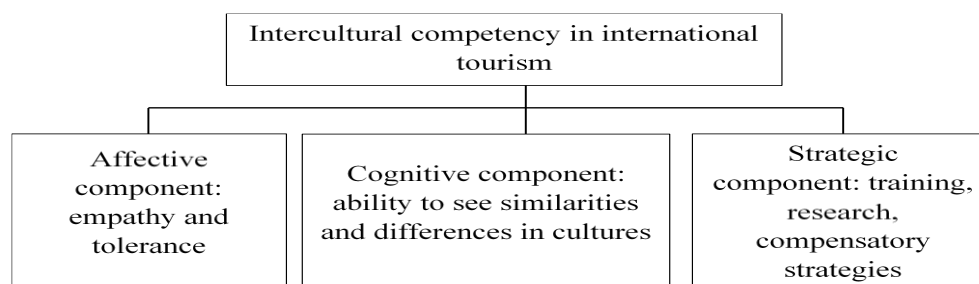


Figure 1. Intercultural competency in international tourism

Only through intercultural competency, people from different cultures can interact effectively and productively in a globalizing society. In addition, the formation of competency requires the communicant to evaluate their communicative behavior and the desire to make changes that improve the way they interact with people from other cultures. The definition of intercultural competency is associated with the assessment of the behavioral characteristics of the communicant since they are a part of the behavioral exchange and must be prepared to adapt their communicative behavior to the specifics of interaction by entering communication. The intercultural competency of a modern specialist (including a specialist in tourism activities) can be understood as the mastered and developed abilities for correct and effective professional communication with representatives of various, including foreign-language cultures, based on knowledge and understanding, skills and experience, cultural sensitivity, respect, and tolerance, in all the variety of situations of a dynamically changing professional environment in a multipolar multicultural globalizing world.

The competency-based approach to the training of modern specialists is reflected in the new Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Education of the Russian Federation. The concept of competency is defined as the desire and readiness to apply knowledge, skills, and personal qualities for successful activities in a particular area. The standard of higher education provides for the formation of general scientific, instrumental, sociopersonal, and general cultural competencies. However, the omission is the lack of intercultural competency in the standard in the complex of competencies since the modern globalizing world lives in the conditions of multiculturalism and multilingualism. Specialists of almost any activity are involved in the sphere of international and interethnic relations, and globalization will constantly expand the professional areas of intercultural contacts. Thus, intercultural competency acts as a professionally significant quality of a specialist, the most important component of the effectiveness of their professional activity, career success, mobility, and demand in the labor market in the tourism industry.

Therefore, intercultural competency is not an innate quality and does not arise by itself because of accumulated life experience. It cannot be realized by the communicant intuitively with an orientation towards the subjective perception of communication. Certain conditions are necessary for intercultural competency to become a systemic

stable personality trait and a professionally significant quality of an international tourism specialist.

The first step in building intercultural competency in international tourism involves developing a global mentality. This is a prerequisite for openness to other cultures to ensure intercultural communication. The global mentality allows individuals to anticipate the onset of a global society, predict changes in global trends, participate in the process of regulating these changes, move towards a social context in which diversity and cultural differences are valued and balanced, and, finally, implement intercultural skills correctly and effectively. The intercultural competency of a person in international tourism, based on a global mentality, consists of three components: knowledge of foreign language culture, personality traits, and the ability to apply knowledge (Figure 2).

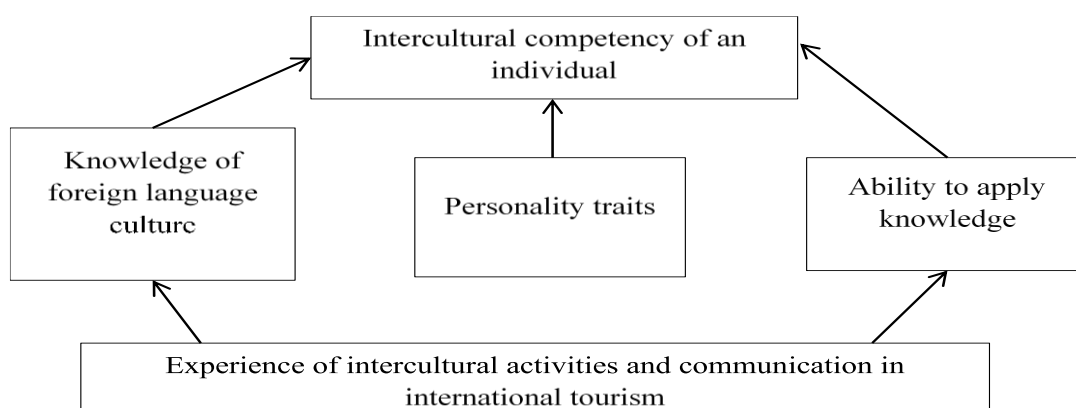


Figure 2. Formation of experience of intercultural activities and communication in international tourism

Knowledge in a complex of intercultural competency presupposes awareness or understanding of the relevant information and actions. A knowledgeable tourist needs information about people, communication rules, context, and normative expectations that govern interaction with a representative of another culture. Without such information, a tourist will inevitably make attribution errors, choose the wrong communication strategies, violate the rules of etiquette, or incorrectly determine the reasons for their mistakes. To obtain the required knowledge, in addition to purposeful intercultural training, it is necessary to develop sensitivity to feedback signals in communication and be cognitively flexible in accepting and processing feedback. Knowledge as a construct of competency is conceptualized in the form of information necessary for correct and effective interaction, and cognitive orientation to facilitate the receipt of such information. This construct covers knowledge of another culture, oneself, and fluency in the language of the host culture. These types of knowledge broaden the tourist's understanding of others and themselves to facilitate the formulation of accurate predictions and attributions.

Cognitive orientations include impartiality, the ability to self-monitor, the ability to solve problems, and cognitive complexity. A tourism activity specialist, in addition to knowledge of their own and contacting cultures, needs knowledge of the features of the tourist industry culture of the partner country in the tourist business. In this case, motivations determine the complex of feelings, intentions, needs, and aspirations associated with the expectation or real participation in intercultural communication. Factors such as anxiety, social distance, attraction, ethnocentrism, and prejudice can

influence an individual's decision to enter communication. If a tourist's fears, antipathies, and anxieties dominate, then their motivation will be negative. They will try to avoid interaction, even if they have the necessary knowledge and skills. If confidence, interest, sympathy, and good intentions prevail, then the motivation will be positive, and the communicant will strive for interaction. In this case, motivations as a construct of competency include several variables that affect other participants in communication and intercultural communication itself.

Studies show that there are direct positive links between intercultural competency and intercultural sensitivity, positive impact on another culture, social relaxation, and empathy towards others. At the same time, we found a negative association in relation to ethnocentrism. For a specialist in international tourism activities, motivation to enter intercultural communication is determined not only by general cultural and social discursive needs and intentions, but also by the need to carry out effective professional joint activities with foreign partners in the tourism business both in their own country and abroad, in the system and structure of multinational and transnational companies. Skills can be classified as real behavioral actions that are perceived as effective and appropriate for the communicative context. Skills must meet the requirements of reproducibility and feasibility. If an individual exhibits competent behavior on occasion, then this cannot be considered a formed competency since they are not ready to consistently reproduce the same contextually consistent behavior with the same predicted result. A competent person or a competent specialist should be able to reproduce the scenario fluently, meaningfully, and appropriately, focusing on specific conditions, goal, and result. Skills should always be shown taking into account the specific goal of communication, the goal may be personal, mutual, social, or contextual.

In addition, skills as a construct of competency reflect the necessary types of behavior in correct and effective interaction with representatives of different cultures. These types of behavior that positively affect intercultural competency include: attentiveness, intercultural resourcefulness, inclusion in interaction, recognition of nonverbal messages-signals, appropriate self-disclosure, behavioral flexibility, as well as interaction management, maintaining identity, strategies for reducing insecurity, demonstration respect, immediacy, ability to establish interpersonal relationships, and clarity of expression. These behaviors reflect the ability to interact in an adaptive, flexible, and supportive manner. Skills in the complex of intercultural competency of a specialist in tourism activities imply a correct choice of communication participants and models of behavior that reflect the specifics of discourse in the professional tourism field of activity based on a specific area of interaction (international management, travel rating, marketing, hospitality, animation) and also based on the type of relationship between participants in the tourist space: "guest - host", "guest - guest", "host - supplier", "consumer - supplier", "supplier - supplier".

Knowledge and skills in the formation of intercultural competency in a globalizing society not only help transform individuals into multicultural personalities through the education of multiple cultural identities, but also function to nourish awareness of these multiple identities to develop a global civic culture. Considering the tasks of forming intercultural competency in international tourism, we propose: 1) to develop such personal characteristics as flexibility, receptivity, openness, and motivation, 2) to know the characteristics of one's own culture and acquire knowledge of other cultures, 3) to learn to adapt to new patterns of behavior as one encounters people from cultures other than their own. In addition, these tasks can be presented in the form of complexes of

specific behavioral skills. The first complex can be called “the ability to send message-signals” – these are verbal and nonverbal communication skills. The second, interaction management, is the ability to initiate, complete, and participate in a correct reversal of roles or priorities in communication. The third is the ability to effectively exercise behavioral flexibility, choosing from a list of appropriate strategies. The fourth is the management of one’s own identity and the identity of the communication partner in the process of interaction, i.e., the ability to maintain one’s own identity, while maintaining the identity of another. The fifth is the development of relationships, i.e., maintaining the balance of independence of interaction processes in international tourism.

Based on the recognition of the triune role of a complex of knowledge, motivations, and skills in the formation of intercultural competency in international tourism, we can consider an integrative model of intercultural competency, which includes empirical aspects and provides specific predictions of competent behavior. This model demonstrates the interaction of two individuals (actor and co-actor), which involves their motivation to communicate, knowledge of the communication process based on a certain context, and the ability to realize their motivation and knowledge. During the interaction, in each episode and between episodes, the behavior is consistent with the expectations of each of the individuals in relation to the other and the entire process of interaction. If expectations are realized with benefit, then tourists perceive themselves and others as communicatively competent and feel satisfaction that the goals have been achieved. Tourists can be assessed as noncompetent if they are not sufficiently motivated to act competently, lack knowledge of competent actions in accordance with the context of communication, or lack communication skills to carry out skillful interaction.

Tourists can also be considered incompetent if one of the partners has unrealistic expectations about their interlocutor or a particular episode. Intercultural communication, in this case, can be understood as a system consisting of three interdependent subsystems: individual, occasional, and relational. The individual subsystem includes such characteristics as inclinations, skills, and predisposition. The occasional subsystem includes those features of a particular actor that facilitate competent interaction on the part of a particular co-actor in a particular episode of interaction. The relational subsystem includes those components that contribute to the competency of the tourist during the entire period of the relationship and not only during this episode of interaction.

DISCUSSION

The reliability of the presented approaches is confirmed by the fact that the formation of knowledge is only the first step towards achieving an understanding of how intercultural communication works. Compulsory joint and mutual practical participation of tourists in interaction is required. This means that the development of intercultural competency should become an organized activity in which participants must make simultaneous inferences and conclusions not only about their role, but also the role of other participants in communication (Demkina et al., 2019; Drobysheva et al., 2018; Nikolskaya et al., 2020). This act of mutual exchange of roles must take place even before tourists reach a level of communication that will result in mutual understanding, i.e., a broad practical active basis is needed to master the ability and readiness for intercultural interaction. In this case, the formation of intercultural competency assumes that the communication participants must come to an understanding of their own culture and the

culture of other communicants through a system of practical actions and accumulation of cultural communication experience.

Traditionally isolated, the most important components of intercultural competency are linguistic, communicative, and cultural competencies. There is a stereotypical idea that the basic component, without which it is impossible to implement the whole complex of intercultural competency, is linguistic competency, and it is in this hierarchical sequence that it is customary to build this triune complex: linguistic – communicative – cultural. Even though simultaneous mastering of these competencies is assumed in the process of learning, accumulation of experience, and practice, the emphasis is always placed on the linguistic component in international tourism. Mastering cultural competency seems to be a much more difficult task from the point of view of motivation, content, or methodology, as well as determining the criteria and parameters of its formation. For many reasons, cultural competency is more difficult to develop, because many systems of tourism education lack traditions of studying cultures in the context of their intercultural differences and cross-cultural discourse. If one decides on the question of which of the competencies is the basic component, then proceeding from the understanding that language is a part of culture, its product, and one of the means of its reflection in the mind of a tourist, it should be recognized that cultural competency is the basic one.

CONCLUSION

Summing up, intercultural competency is a matter of the successful implementation of mutually accepted identities in the process of interaction in international tourism. Competent intercultural communicators should be able to settle three dialectical moments of tension: 1) support of their own and others' faces; 2) support of a person's competency (showing favor, granting authority) or person's autonomy (respect for confidentiality, privacy, independence); 3) confirmation of the cultural identity of another or the realization of a jointly determined cultural identity (minimization of cultural differences. Intercultural competency must be constantly verified, maintained, and updated, as the identities of the communicants, cultural contexts, and the communication strategies themselves are constantly developing and changing in international tourism. Therefore, the level of success in the formation of intercultural competency of a tourism activity specialist depends on the type of their native culture and the culturally specific characteristics of their cultural archetype (national character, mentality, spirit, historical memory), i.e., how much readiness, abilities and skills to enter into a dialogue, being tolerant, flexible, culturally receptive, etc. are characteristic of the bearers of their culture in general, as well as how developed the tourism sphere is in their culture, what the traditions of receiving guests in their cultural community are, and, accordingly, how difficult in this sense can be the intercultural transformation of the communicant's personality in the process of learning, practice, and various types of obtaining and accumulating experience of intercultural communication.

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