
CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT IN THE SYSTEM OF HARMONIZATION OF INTERESTS IN THE MULTI-CONFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

**Mihail Nikolaevich Dudin^{1,2*},
Ekaterina Alexandrovna Pogrebinskaya³,
Valentina Nikolaevna Sidorenko⁴, Elena Ivanovna Sukhova⁴,
Natalya Yuryevna Zubenko⁴ and Julia Sergeevna Shishalova⁵**

¹*Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University), 76 Vernadskogo Avenue, Moscow, 119454, Russian Federation*

²*Market Economy Institute of RAS (MEI RAS), Nakhimovsky Avenue 47, Moscow, 117418, Russian Federation*

³*I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (Sechenov University), 2/4 Bolshaya Pirogovskaya Street, Moscow, 119991, Russian Federation*

⁴*Moscow City Teacher Training University (MGPU), 2nd Selskokhozyaystvenny Driveway 4, Moscow, 129226, Russian Federation*

⁵*Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Vernadsky Avenue 82, Moscow, 119571, Russian Federation*

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Abstract

Despite the existence of numerous studies devoted to cross-cultural management in the area of public administration, nowadays, the formation of polycultural competence related to adaptive functions of cross-cultural management in the multi-confessional environment remains an unsettled problem. In the article, the essence of cross-cultural management as a factor of harmonization of interests in the multi-confessional environment is specified. Its content, character, as well as primary goal and objectives, are revealed. Since it is necessary to use cross-cultural management in educational institutions, the authors have determined and systematized the main indicators, which characterize personal cross-cultural features of a manager in the education sector. The characteristics of polycultural competence components, which education managers need to solve problems related to cross-cultural management have been presented as well. The authors note that it is reasonable to consider cross-cultural aspects in the field of education and the importance of including cross-cultural content into the preparation of future education managers.

Keywords: cross-cultural, cooperation, institutions, education, managers

*E-mail: dudin.n.mihail@mail.ru

1. Introduction

Of great importance are cross-cultural communication (cooperation between representatives of different business cultures), which prevents cross-cultural shocks [1], and cross-cultural cooperation, which is conducive for the emergence of new elements and forms of cultural activity, adjusting value orientations, models of behaviour and lifestyle (universal and cultural-specific components) [2].

Ethno-psychological cross-cultural research was first conducted by the American scientist W. Rivers (1864-1922) in 1901. Rivers noted that Murray Island inhabitants were less vulnerable to illusions than Europeans. The mutual penetration of cultural values was studied by the American anthropologist R. Benedict (1887-1948), which was reflected in her works 'Patterns of Culture' and 'Psychological Types in the Cultures of the Southwest' [3].

In the 1960-70s, scientists took an interest in inter-cultural education in the polyethnic environment, which is evidenced by the articles written by American psychologists and pedagogues. E. Hall considered cross-cultural communication as a type of communication, success or failure of which is determined by cultural differences among communicants [4]. Studies by C. Sleeter and C. Grand were focused on inter-cultural education that aims to prepare students for living in a globally dependent and culturally pluralistic world [5].

The main goal of cross-cultural management is to assist in the coordination of actions in work and education during contacts, in which national cultures as historically established knowledge, values and experience become part of joint multi-cultural activity [6].

Communication among representatives of various confessions is a complicated and contradictory process, the multifaceted nature of which is stipulated by the fact that communicants belong to different confessions. In the course of communication, communicants assess their interlocutors based on the indicators, which are typical for representatives of their own confession. The lack of similarity of some indicators often results in communication conflicts [7, 8].

Communication among representatives of different nationalities is complicated and controversial as well, and the multifaceted nature of this process is primarily caused by the fact that communicants belong to various linguistic cultures. In the course of communication, a partner is assessed based on the indicators, which are typical for representatives of the related culture, and the absence of coincidences of certain indicators with partners' self-assessment often leads to communication conflicts.

Cross-cultural communication becomes the basis for the harmonization of interests in the multi-confessional environment of any society or organization due to the efficient combination of everyone's advantages in terms of knowledge, education and experience in the system of common values [9]. Cross-cultural management in the regulation of inter-confessional relations is the

basis for the formation of cross-cultural values that can provide cooperation and experience exchange of confessional and ethnic groups.

According to M.A. Ascalon, D.J. Schleicher and P.B. Marise, cross-cultural cooperation implies the influence of two or more cultures on an individual. In their article, the researchers emphasize the fact that prerequisites for the cooperation of this kind appear in youth when a person is active in adopting values of one's own culture and spiritually enriches oneself with values of a culture that is new to them. In this connection, it becomes necessary to promote the development of inter-cultural cooperation skills in youth when the picture of the world, standards and values are in the process of formation [10]. When a person tries to learn cross-cultural values in mature age, conflict is possible between new cultural values and already established internal personal culture, one's own values, settings and stereotypes, which causes barriers, rejection, aggression and open confrontation.

Currently, the education of young people based on cross-cultural values faces certain difficulties. Among them is the re-assessment of religious heritage in the content of the educational process. In modern conditions, schoolchildren experience transformations of its understanding and vision. Inter-confessional conflicts are also part of the difficulties faced in the course of education related to cross-cultural values. Undoubtedly, modern pedagogics can overcome all these difficulties.

Analysing mutual relations among ethnic groups in the context of inter-cultural dialogue, M.S. Mironova highlighted four important directions in the education of this kind: availability of education, equal opportunities for all ethnic groups and confessions, knowledge about various cultures, polycultural nature of training programs, and social equality of representatives of various confessions and cultures. The researcher also formulated conditions for effective education, which suggest that schoolchildren who represent confessional and ethnic minorities adapt to the dominating culture, while values of confessional and ethnic minorities become one of the bases of general education [11].

According to the above-mentioned, the way of education realization is determined through the general cultural component of education, which is supplemented by values held by confessional and ethnic minorities and balanced values of cultures pursued by various confessional and ethnic groups. However, advocates of such a polycultural approach to education warn about the risk associated with its transformation into ethnocentrism. The authors note that an unnecessary focus on polyethnic and multi-confessional issues in the course of education can widen the gap among various groups. However, the correctly set focus is conducive for the formation of cross-cultural values of youth.

2. Methods

The research aims to analyse the conditions and factors, under which cross-cultural management is carried out, to introduce cross-cultural

management in educational institutions and to include cross-cultural content in the preparation of future education managers.

In the research, the following theoretical methods were used: analysis, generalization and systemization of scientific literature aimed to specify the essence of cross-cultural management, its goals, main factors and indicators that characterize cross-cultural peculiarities of a manager's personality. Moreover, the methods of empiric research were used in the work: the method of expert review aimed to define objectives of cross-cultural management, knowledge and skills of future education managers necessary for the implementation of objectives of cross-cultural management for the harmonization of interests in the multi-confessional environment of an educational institution, as well as mathematical statistical methods.

Twelve specialists (educational institutions' executives, heads/directors of a pedagogical university's departments, professors and associate professors with 20-30 years of professional experience) took part in the expert review. When applying the method of expert review, we mainly focused on the determination of key objectives of cross-cultural management in the multi-confessional environment of an educational institution and on the characteristics of polycultural competence components of future education managers, which are required for the implementation of cross-cultural management objectives. The experts were asked to indicate the most significant, in their opinion, tasks of cross-cultural management in a multi-confessional environment of an educational institution and components of the polycultural competence of future heads of educational institutions in the field of cross-cultural management.

The processing of the survey results was aimed at determining the ranks of the tasks of cross-cultural management in a multi-confessional environment of an educational institution and the components of polycultural competence of future heads of educational institutions in the field of cross-cultural management, depending on the number of expert references. When processing the survey results, the tasks of cross-cultural management and components of polycultural competence in the field of cross-cultural management, mentioned by more than half of the experts, were considered.

3. Results

Expert review results allowed us to determine key objectives of cross-cultural management that a manager needs to pursue when managing a modern educational institution for harmonizing interests of its multi-confessional environment. The experts highlighted the following objectives (Table 1) among the most important ones (mentioned by over 50% of the respondents).

The survey also allowed us to define the main indicators of polycultural competence (mentioned by over 50% of the respondents) characterizing cross-cultural features of a manager's personality that act as prerequisites of a person's readiness to solve problems related to cross-cultural management (Table 2).

Table 1. Objectives of cross-cultural management in the multi-confessional environment of an educational institution (expert review).

Objective	Experts which mentioned the objective (%)	Rank
To form and develop cross-cultural competence of educational institutions' managers, pedagogues and students	91.7	1
To forecast the possible effect of various religions on the activity of educational institutions and to reduce risks faced by managers of educational institutions when different confessions interact	83.3	2
To create tolerant cooperation, form and develop successful 'inter-cultural communication' among managers and workers in order to improve the efficiency of the organization in the conditions of globalization	75	3-5
To develop the organizational culture taking into account poly-confessional environment in the educational institution	75	3-5
To foresee and regulate inter-confessional conflicts between participants of the educational process	75	3-5
To form among members of multi-cultural/multi-confessional groups the need for teamwork and inter-cultural/inter-confessional cooperation (for example, participation in the execution of educational projects)	66.7	6
To create and support partnership and open environment that contributes to the cooperation of confessions and cultures, as well as free unification of knowledge	58.3	7

Table 2. Features of the polycultural competence components of future education managers in the field of cross-cultural management.

Feature	Experts which mentioned the feature (%)	Rank
Familiarity with basic provisions of cross-cultural management and their implementation within the system of modern educational institution management	83.3	1
Ability to show tolerance	75	2
Understanding of the need to prevent conflicts in the education environment	66.7	3-4
Ability to consider the ethnic socio-cultural traditions of a region when planning educational events	66.7	3-4
Ability to overcome cultural and communication barriers by means of dialogue	58.3	5

4. Discussion

The experts considered the formation and development of cross-cultural competence of all participants in the educational process, as well as forecasting the possible effects of various religions on the activities of educational institutions and reducing the risk of inter-confessional interaction, to be the most significant tasks of cross-cultural management in the multi-confessional environment of an educational institution.

Among the tasks of cross-cultural management in an educational institution, the experts also mentioned (in equal measure) the creation of tolerant interaction and the formation of successful intercultural communication of participants in the educational process, the development of an organizational culture that considers the multi-confessional nature of the institution and the prediction and regulation of interfaith conflicts.

Since, according to the experts, the most important task is the formation and development of cross-cultural competence, a modern education manager should be familiar with the system of cross-cultural knowledge. In particular, they are necessary for them for managing multi-religious and polycultural personnel.

The most important characteristic of the components of the polycultural competence of future heads of educational institutions in the field of cross-cultural management is familiarity with the basic provisions of cross-cultural management and its implementation in the management system of modern educational institutions.

For education managers, it is important to master the conceptual framework of cross-cultural management, as well as knowledge about the patterns, principles and features of its implementation, in order to create a favorable environment and increase the efficiency of the functioning of education. The harmonization of interests of a multi-confessional environment can also be promoted by the following: the ability of education managers to show tolerance, their awareness of the need to prevent religious conflicts, consideration of the region's ethno-cultural traditions and readiness to overcome cultural and communication barriers through dialogue.

According to K. Nikolay (one of the surveyed experts - an university lecturer) "the focus on absolute values and the right of every nation to respect and individuality is one of the main principles of education of the younger generation. The spiritual heritage of a nation constitutes its wealth and determines its originality. The new generation should use and expand this spiritual potential."

The analysis of publications related to the problem of polycultural competence [12-16] allowed us to define theoretical approaches to its formation. This includes five aspects reflecting the problems that need to be solved when forming education managers' polycultural competences. These approaches:

1. form professional competences that allow one to communicate freely with representatives of various confessions (competence-based approach);

2. require the knowledge of cultural peculiarities of various confessions and the ability to use it in professional activity (culturological approach);
3. check the coincidence of values and beliefs between students and an educational institution (axiological approach);
4. contribute to the formation of a unique style of communication and the creative approach in a polycultural and polyconfessional environment (personality-oriented approach);
5. develop skills of self-analysis and self-control in the polycultural environment (reflexive approach).

M.I. Lukianova and L.P. Shustova [17] believe that culture as a combination of unique historically established knowledge should be considered as a resource, and cross-cultural management should focus attention on the use of this resource. Therefore, as opposed to the essentialist point of view, which implies the contemplation of cultural and confessional differences, we propose the cognitive approach, which suggests using the differences.

For the efficient use of culturally stipulated knowledge, it is necessary to introduce a relevant mechanism of cross-cultural management [18]. This mechanism is based on the implementation of such objectives as the formation of professional competence, efficient cross-cultural technologies, and effective interactive transmission [19]. The use of the cross-cultural management mechanism will result in a synergetic effect in the form of fast adaptation to the modern conditions of the multi-confessional environment [20].

Thus, the use of cross-cultural management as a factor of harmonization of interests in the multi-confessional environment of an educational institution requires the implementation of several objectives. Among them, one can name the following:

1. to create a system of polycultural competence management of an educational institution's employees as an HR management tool;
2. to use the cross-cultural component when hiring and assessing staff of an educational institution;
3. to develop a system aimed to teach the personnel with polycultural competence on the basis of interactive and remote forms of training;
4. to improve knowledge, competence and skills related to the theory and practice of intercultural and inter-confessional communication;
5. to develop a system of assessment and motivation and to promote the development of personnel's polycultural competence.

5. Conclusions

The factors that define the content and the character of cross-cultural management are the basis of the society's cultural orientation (values, attitude and behaviour) and its key aspects (acceptance of a person, attitude to the environment, relations among people, activity, perception of space and time). We have determined the following features as the main indicators characterizing

cross-cultural peculiarities of a manager's personality and contributing to the implementation of cross-cultural management objectives:

1. familiarity with basic provisions of cross-cultural management and their implementation within the system of modern educational institution management;
2. ability to show tolerance;
3. understanding of the need to prevent conflicts in the education environment;
4. ability to consider the ethnic socio-cultural traditions of the region when planning educational events;
5. ability to overcome cultural and communication barriers by means of dialogue.

Currently, the preparation of future education managers requires a system of measures aimed at the development of their professional readiness based on cross-cultural management as a factor of harmonization of interests in the multi-confessional environment of an educational institution. Russian society's polyconfessional structure makes it necessary to take into consideration cross-cultural aspects in the field of education. It is reasonable for directors of educational institutions to develop themselves in the areas related to cross-cultural management and the formation of polycultural competence. For organizations, it is recommended to train personnel in this direction, which would lay the groundwork for efficient communication and promote confidence and the positive image of the educational institution.

As the survey showed, the modern process of preparing future education managers requires the inclusion of cross-cultural content in the educational program for the formation of polycultural competence, which allows for effective cooperation with representatives of various ethnic groups and religions.

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