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CULTURAL FRAMEWORK OF GERMAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Abstract. *The present article deals with the cultural framework of German education. It contains the review of German Qualifications Framework and the values that determine modern education in Germany. Its prior objective is to argue the need of using diversity and authentic cultural features as resource for quality education. The outputs of this investigation provide users of understanding the intercultural importance for education process. Cultural competence has been suggested as an instrument to deal with diversity issues.*

Анотація. У статті розглянуто культурну основу німецької освіти. Вона містить огляд публікації «German Qualifications Framework» та цінностей, які визначають сучасну освіту у Німеччині. Її основна мета — аргументувати необхідність використання різноманітності та автентичних культурних особливостей як ресурсу для якісної освіти. Результати цього дослідження дають користувачам розуміння міжкультурного значення освітнього процесу. Культурна компетентність була запропонована як інструмент для вирішення питань різноманітності.

Key words: *German culture, German cultural framework, German Qualifications Framework, Inclusive education in Germany, diversity as a resource, intercultural and interreligious competence, social and economic backgrounds.*

Ключові слова: *німецька культура, німецька культурна основа, German Qualifications Framework, інклюзивна освіта у Німеччині, різноманітність як ресурс, міжкультурна та міжрелігійна компетентність, соціальні та економічні передумови.*

Statement of the problem. The growing multicultural nature of professional education makes it critical to develop skills of providing culturally sensitive and culturally adaptive knowledge. Due to numerous factors, the process of learning in cross-cultural and multicultural contexts is becoming more commonplace.

The expansion of world trade and globalization are building the world in which cross-cultural interactions and national differences occur more frequently than at any time in the past. When people demonstrate differences or similarities, it is easy to

confuse these levels because their influences combine, making them difficult to distinguish. The resulting uncertainty can lead to false assumptions and difficulties in interactions with others [6].

Analysis of recent research and publications. Edgar Schein, Shalom Schwartz, Geert Hofstede, Kim Cameron, Robert Quinn, and Robert Ernest, Cheong, Cheng Yin and many others have tried to define cultural framework of different spheres of human life and education as well. R.J. Wlodkowski and M.B. Ginsberg wrote the publication *A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching*; B. Aronson, J. Laughter created *The Theory and Practice of Culturally Relevant Education: A Synthesis of Research Across Content Areas* that both targeted education based on cultural features of the nation. International institutions make efforts to establish conventional norms for education system by edition of *The OECD Learning Framework 2030* and *The German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning* by The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training.

Purpose of the research. The aim of the research is to indicate cultural framework that determines the system of German education. Its objective is to highlight the significance of intercultural competence as a tool to deal with cultural diversity issues.

The key findings. Nowadays Germany is becoming a more open and fragmented country that will mean rethinking many ingrained habits. Since culture relates close to the history of nation it is worth mentioning some details from German history. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the communist East Germany escaped dictatorial roots and joined the democratic world. Chancellor Angela Merkel's «open door» policy towards refugees brought in 1.2 million migrants in 2015–2016. It is the policy of coming together into a homogeneous society of heterogeneous elements but this policy leads rather to breaking apart, as «the country is struggling with the rise of a more pluralistic society» [10].

Is it good or bad — we leave this question for sociology and economics to analyse and make decisions, however, it also affects German education — and we will raise this topic in this article.

It is important to emphasize that the term «culture» has inexhaustible definitions and meanings. In accordance with Cambridge Dictionary of English, the term «culture» is «the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time» [3].

G. Hofstede defines culture as «collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another» [9].

D. Matsumoto describes culture as «a dynamic system of rules-explicit and implicit-established by groups in order to ensure their survival, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours, shared by a group but harboured differently by each specific unit within the group, communicated across generations, relatively stable but with the potential to change across time» [8].

Today the cultural framework of German education is based on traditions, value systems, myths and symbols of nation. Germany takes its opportunity to implement the European Qualifications Framework on national level due consideration to the specific characteristics of the German educational system. The German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (known by abbreviation of DQR) provides for the

first time a framework, which encompasses all qualifications within German educational system across every field of education. The main aspect of this framework is to achieve transparency, promotion of mobility of learners and access to lifelong learning [12].

It should be underlined that besides some basic skills as reliability, tolerance and attentiveness, intercultural and interreligious competence, democratic patterns and ethical reflectiveness are called to be constitutive elements for development. It gets thinking that country understands the importance of cultural framework in modern education that can play the crucial role in formation of young generation.

Furthermore, the DQR differ two categories such as «Professional competence» that is, in its turn, divided into «Knowledge» and «Skills» and «Personal competence» that consist of «Social competence» and «Autonomy» [12].

Autonomy shows the way people are ready to reflect on and assess their own learning objectives, structure learning and work process autonomously and sustainably. The main aim here is to accept and be responsible for possible societal, economic and cultural implications, select appropriate means and develop new ideas and process. It highlights German high score of Individualism that encourages self-actualisation and loyalty to different minds and thoughts [4].

Le Dao Nguyen Thuy Vi conducted the research on culture shock of Vietnamese students in Germany to examine various angles of Vietnamese students' experience with culture shock in Germany. The research contains both theoretical and empirical parts. According to it, German students are highly demanding and competitive. They are serious about studying and strive for the best grades. In projects, they are well organized, meticulous and concerned about time management. Moreover, German students do not like small talk when working and focus on the tasks until they are done the way they want [5].

The students keep in mind the possibility of cultural differences and culture shock. Moreover, students are recommended to have an open attitude and willingness to adapt to the host culture. Though German researchers believe that the mutual trust between educational systems and areas needs to grow, they admit that the level of this trust could not be the object of regulation, via either European instruments or national initiatives [2].

The German Commission for UNESCO promotes a humanistic understanding of education, which envisions an education that enables learners to develop their personalities and lead a fulfilled life. Inclusion entails the right of all learners to quality education and the development of their full potential, regardless of special educational needs, disability, and sex, social or economic backgrounds. Inclusive education requires fundamental changes in the German educational system. In particular, the practice of learning and teaching must be adapted to the needs of all, and diversity must be used as a resource. Inclusive education is integrated into German law based on international law [7].

«What we need is diversity in teaching and research, people from all over the world, with different ethnic roots, religions, gender and cultural identities», says Dr. Peter-Andre Alt, President of Freie Universität Berlin [10].

A prime example of innovative and international teaching and research at German higher education institutions is the project of International Research Training Group (IRTG) «Diversity: Mediating Difference in Transcultural Spaces».

German universities have been very successful in extending their international profile, boosting innovative research and offering attractive study programmes.

«Internationalisation brings together the strengths of different cultures», says Dr. H.C. Mult. Wolfgang A. Hermann, the longest serving university rector in Germany (Technical University of Munich (TUM) [10].

Modern educational process affects the working environment in German companies. One of the characteristic features to be mentioned here is so-called compartmentalization. Neulien writes, «Germans have a tendency to isolate and divide many aspects of their lives into discrete, independent units». Within an office setting, this can lead to floor plans being adjusted so that different business units (such as Finance, Engineering, Sales, Human Resources) would be compartmentalized into their own spaces. This concept also affects task compartmentalization by causing more defined roles and a more structured and layered working environment [11].

Privacy and formality are significant components of the German working environment. The belief that one can place different functions of life into different identities is one that lends itself to having a strong preference for privacy. In the above mentioned series of interviews, it was also reported that, «People in Germany have a tendency to keep to themselves a lot more.» The scholars also believe that «in Germany, subordinates are expected to be consulted. The ideal boss is a resourceful democrat, privileges and status symbols are frowned upon, and inequalities should be minimized.» This means that although Germans value hierarchy, the distance between different the levels of society is quite low. German managers will ask subordinates for feedback on a project, as well as subordinates will be readily available to give criticism at multiple levels of power [1].

Conclusion. What lessons can Ukrainian youth learn from German interpretation of cultural framework?

Lesson 1 is as follows: we cannot change our past but we have the power to determine our future. We have to be the ones who drive our own future. However, history of nation is one of the points that can become the foundation of national identity and originality.

Lesson 2 teaches us that people have to understand the importance of cultural framework in modern education as it takes part in the formation of young generation. Ukrainian youth has to change their attitude to learning as a process — it should not finish at the very moment as you leave a university and get your diploma. Study relies on lifelong learning based on country's own cultural framework, which is at the epicentre of national authenticity.

Lesson 3: students have to enjoy more autonomy and learn to make decisions concerning flexible schedules, choose the disciplines that generate the knowledge and skills, which could play a crucial role in students' future life.

Education has a vital role to play in developing knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable people to contribute to and benefit from an inclusive and sustainable future. Learning to form clear and purposeful goals, work with others with different

perspectives, find untapped opportunities and identify multiple solutions to big problems will be essential in the coming years. Education needs to aim to do more than prepare young people for the world of work; it needs to equip students with the skills they need to become active, responsible and engaged members of this world nation.

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OF AUSTRALIAN YOUTH

Abstract. *This article explores the level, forms and manifestations of youth participation in Australian civic life in the context of modern definition of citizenship.*

Анотація. *У даній статті досліджується рівень, форми та прояви участі молоді в громадському житті Австралії у розрізі сучасного поняття громадянства.*