

ФІЗКУЛЬТУРНА ОСВІТА

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE: A FRAMEWORK OF INTERCULTURAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN SPORT AND TOURISM HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Purpose. The research aims at multi-faceted study of global communication competence, which is a vital soft skill for professional development of students, acquiring their degrees in sport and tourism.

Materials and methods. Qualitative research methods applied in the research include theoretical analysis of relevant scientific findings, synthesis and modelling, pedagogical observation and evaluation. Quantitative analysis relates to questioning and data processing, in particular, 50-question Intercultural Quiz, conducted among 352 students of NUUPES and NUFT.

Results. The conducted research of global communication competence of the first and fifth year university sport and tourism students shows clear correlation between the level of education and gained global communication expertise, presented by the communicative skills of critical thinking and cooperation. The analysis of statistic data has proved that along with improved self-awareness, disciplines more than doubled students' global communication competence within five academic years. In addition to quantitative improvement, the quality of the intercultural communication is enhanced, as essential professional skills are gained in the sphere of students' future occupation. Professional orientation of global communication competence outlines sportive and medical inclination of NUUPES students' higher education, and tourism and hospitality focus of NUFT students' training.

Conclusions. The results of the study have proven that contemporary university students who get degrees in the fields of sport and tourism perceive culturally-bound information when attending their on-line and off-line academic courses and participating in various multicultural events in and outside university setting. In this way they acquire attitudes and values of self-awareness and recognition of ethnical diversity. Established values transform into production and result in implementation of culturally aware behaviour, represented by a high level of self-evaluation and persuasion abilities directed to effective, yet tolerant way of problem solving and shared responsibility.

Keywords: global communication competence, intercultural attitudes and values, perception, production.

Introduction

Global communication competence is a set of interpersonal skills essentially required for contemporary sport and tourism students, living in the era of globalization, when the world they live in is no more than a global village and social contacts with representatives of other countries are commonplace. Identifying themselves as individual cultural representatives, seeing others as belonging to their culturally diverse groups promotes shared respect and tolerance in the world of sport and tourism and assists in achieving academic and professional goals.

Educational establishments are directed at preparing their students to interact in culturally diverse environment both in Ukraine and outside, establishing connections with people from various cultural backgrounds, thus fulfilling multiple models of global communication in academic and professional domains (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012; Lázár, 2012). High communication competence, especially skills of cross-cultural understanding and cooperation, guarantees both sport and tourism students better employability and varied job opportunities.

The aim of research is to define global communication competence as an integral element of professional development among students that gain their degrees in sport and tourism. It involves completion of the following tasks: 1) de-

fining communication-based attitudes and values, which affect ethical behaviour and skills; 2) outlining multi-faceted and behaviourally determined nature of global communication competence; 3) establishing effective ways of gaining this competence via perception and production.

Material & methods

The research is the authors' vision on how global communication competence is developed among students of National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sport (NUUPES), Kyiv, Ukraine, and National Food Technologies University (NUFT), Kyiv, Ukraine, based on 10-year teaching experience in these educational establishments. To achieve the objectives of this study the following qualitative research methods were used, i.e. theoretical analysis of relevant scientific findings, synthesis and modelling, as well as pedagogical observation and evaluation. Quantitative analysis included questioning and data processing.

Participants and organization of the research

In order to assess level of self-awareness and knowledge about other countries, as well as evaluate changes in the level of global communicative values among sport and tourism students within their university time (Doscher, 2012), we have conducted 50-question Intercultural Quiz, which contained questions both about Ukrainian and other world cultures. Questions examined knowledge about history, ethical behaviour, appropriate greeting, cultural norms and taboos in various societies. The total number of participants was 352 students, including the first (140, 77) and fifth (103, 32) year students of NUUPES and NUFT respectively.

Statistical analysis

The obtained results of the questionnaire were further processed using the methods of mathematical and descriptive statistics (Morais, & Ogden, 2011; Mahon, & Cushner, 2014). We used MS Excel (Microsoft USA), Statistica 8.0 (StatSoft, USA). For this the total scope of 50 questions were split into 2 major categories of self-awareness and cultural diversity recognition. Then the obtained empirical data were systemised in accordance to outlined components of global communication competence (i.e. attitudes/values, behaviour and skills) and analysed to form conclusions (Fantini, 2009); the results are shown further in Fig. 1.

Results

The result of the quiz has revealed that the first year students of both Universities have quite high level of self-awareness, corresponding to 70%; however, they are rather badly-informed about cultural diversities of other countries, as they gave only around 40% of correct answers regarding world cultures. Moreover, knowledge that the first year students possess is general and theoretical, as more specific questions answering which required special research or intentional study were mostly incorrect.

Nevertheless, the fifth year students revealed higher global communication values, showing growth of both self-

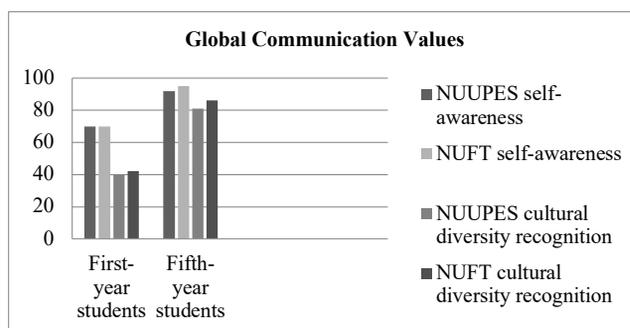


Fig. 1. Correlation of global communication values between the first and the fifth year NUUPES and NUFT students

awareness and recognition of cultural diversity. They are more than 20% better informed about own country, and their global competence has more than doubled, reaching 81% and 87% for NUUPES and NUFT respectively. Significant quantitative and qualitative increase of global communication attitude and values appeared as a result of acquisition of professional knowledge through various academic activities, including attending lectures connected with International policies, theoretical study of countries geopolitics, economics, culture, traditions and customs, sports, writing reports and preparing projects about different nations, thus establishing clear correlation between gaining global attitudes and getting higher education in the fields of sport and tourism.

Global communication competence of students is based on three fundamental interconnected attributes, namely attitudes and values, behaviour and skills, which were first introduced as part of Byram's ethno-relativism theory (Hoff, et al., 2014) of Multidimensional Model of Intercultural Competence.

However, over the last few decades, constant growth of online and offline flow of international communication has significantly affected dichotomy of human-world interrelation, proving great influence of individuals on society and vice versa (Bender, Wright, & Lopatto, D., 2009). Thus, in our research global communication competence is manifested both on the level of *internal perception* and *external production*, i.e. are seen as self-understanding of a human and their acting in / as a group (Fig. 2).

It has been established that global communication competence as a triad of corresponding attitudes/values, behaviour and skills is achievable by students as a dichotomy of *perception* and *production*. According to psychological Activity Theory, developed by Vyhostkyi, Lieontiev, Rubinstein and further studies by Bartelsen and colleagues (Bartelsen, et al., 2003), these are so-called consciousness and activity, united in such a way that the latter determines the former. Thus, it is true to say that global communication competence is formed within person's actions and is revealed there as well. To be precise, the above-mentioned competence as a whole constitutes of two equally important parts, i.e. perception of culturally bound information and production of culturally aware behaviour. However, despite being joint and interdependent, they tend to be mutually exclusive. It means that perception does not equal production, but is rather its outcome and vice versa. We believe that students, gaining their degrees in sport and tourism, take professionally related actions in national

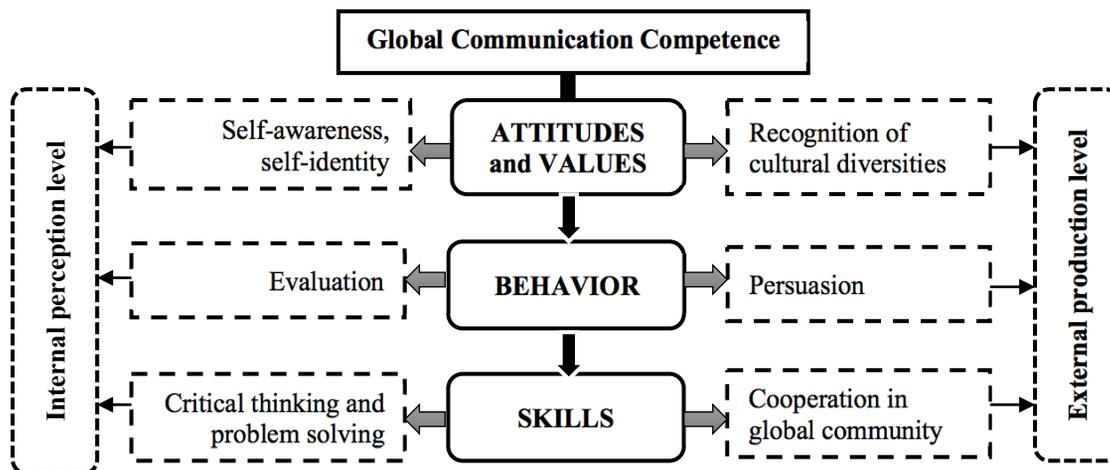


Fig. 2. Global communication competence structure

and international context that allows them to become inter-culturally aware specialists.

Attitudes and values denote the significance of cultural things and actions for a sport and tourism student and are mostly based on family and cultural background, social upbringing, academic competence and mass media. In other words, values are often inherited from family and then intensified by and shared within social groups (Deardorff, 2006). For instance, positive attitude to active lifestyle and doing sports, e.g. riding bicycle starting from the earliest possible age, or spending time hiking in the forest, is encouraged by positive image in children books, cartoons and family movies in Ukraine. Positive attitude to active and healthy lifestyle brought up in the family and social environment is then enhanced by values of respect and tolerance to other cultures, the latter appears as a result of perceiving positive intercultural relation in mass media (Fry, 2012; Whitehead, 2007). For example, the young learn to respect sport achievements and understand national identities when they watch broadcasts of Olympic Games or World Championships, where people of different nationalities compete on equal terms, thus developing values of global cultural competence.

According to 2013 UNESCO and 2018 OECD programs key values that are fostered through school and university education system worldwide are empathy and sympathy, solidarity, self-respect, sense of social responsibility and belonging, commitment to learning, sustainability. In addition to developing all above-mentioned values, we believe that special attention is to be paid to enhancing fundamental key internal value for each sport and tourism student, namely *self-awareness*, i.e. self-identification, knowledge about own culture, understanding national mentality strengths and weaknesses, traditions, socially acceptable behaviour, moral norms, family values (Baeva, 2005). Knowing cultural background not only lets a student identify themselves as a member of ethnic group, but also provides ground for comparison with other nations and leading to external attitudes.

Key external value for a sport and tourism student is *recognition of cultural diversity* of other ethnic groups. Acquisition of this value by universities students is usually fulfilled by identifying own cultural similarities and differences with other nations. Having got first on hand experience talk-

ing to foreigners on professional topics (for instance, during conferences, workshops, guided tours, excursions, competitions), students become aware of common and shared values in international academic environment, namely diligence, attention and devotion to learning, politeness, dignity and self-respect. At the same time some evident cultural discrepancies (i.e. greeting traditions, manner of speech, attitude to other generations) may not come unnoticed, raising questions which require further research.

Behaviour. Positive global attitudes and values of sport and tourism students develop into constant socially-acceptable behaviour, which later transforms from amateur level games or hobbies to professional activities, such as doing sports in specialized educational establishments, participation in competitions and Olympiads, hiking and camping using professional tools and equipment, organizing international cultural fairs, etc. (Dennis, 2010). Thus, global communication behaviour, being determined by attitudes and values, on internal perception level develops into self-evaluation, and on external production level transforms in persuasion.

Internal behaviour of sport and tourism students develops from cultural self-awareness to *self-evaluation* (Boix Mansilla, 2016). The top priority now is personal achievements and assessment of student's own actions. As students spend more time studying and practicing in academic environment, enlarging amount of intercultural communication, they start noticing correlation between time spent on self-development and level of professional achievements. The higher scores they get, the more medals they win, the more cities/countries they visit, the more confident their behaviour becomes. Consequently, quantity of knowledge changes into quality of communication, moving to the level of external behaviour, understood as persuasion, i.e. expressing own thoughts and beliefs in the process of communication in intercultural environment (Fig. 3).

Global external behaviour of *persuasion* is realized by the students' wish to share knowledge and encourage discourse within and outside international academic circle. The young learn not only to clearly express and openly share their ideas, but also to prove and promote own points of view in a friendly academic manner. Such academic behaviour is known to be *emotion-oriented*, as the purpose is to share responsibil-

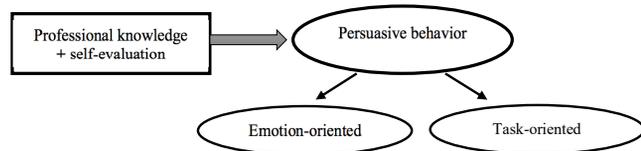


Fig. 3. Transformation of students' professional knowledge into persuasive behaviour

ity and run project to the successful outcome by mean of global communication. With this aim, sport and tourism students take part in online and offline conferences, discussions, meetings, tours, festivals, fairs, where they have opportunity to communicate with representatives from other countries. Their task is to persuade others and create positive communication environment as they learn to work in the teams.

However, some academic activities directed to global communication may require *task-oriented* behaviour, when the priority is to reach the target, e.g. win a competition at individual sports, or complete an individual research, e.g. defend own scientific project about particular recreation area. Persuasion in this case is a bit devalued, being substituted by determination and accuracy, leading to the process of continuous learning (Laal, et al., 2014), which goes further and beyond formal educational environment (Willingham, 2007). The valuable skill of an experienced teacher in enhancing high-quality global communication competence through emotion and task-oriented behaviour is to educate sport and tourism students to form their opinions and build conclusions on exploration and sufficient evidence, and communicate them clearly and tolerantly.

Skills. Acquired attitudes and well worked out communication behaviour create solid background for students' global communication skills, which are represented by critical thinking on internal level and cooperation on the external one.

Critical thinking and *problem solving* are the essential internal skills of providing complex intellectual reasoning, which include a bunch of students' mental abilities namely, deduction, induction, analysis, evaluation and inference (Garrett, et al., 2017), gained both as a result of doing academic research tasks and strengthening body, willpower and endurance. By thinking critically, the young generation gets understanding of deeper aspects of tourism and sport industry (Hakman, Medved, Moseychuk, & Muzhychok, 2017), demonstrates awareness of ethical and ecological issues. In addition, they are taught to construct and articulate fair moral judgements regarding ethnic, race, gender, age, disability, culture minorities issues, as they participate in relating debates and discussions, contact with representatives of various countries in and outside academic setting.

Skills of communicative *cooperation*, which represent external production level of global communication competence, are directed to creating social and effective outcomes (Siedenton, et al., 2000) and embodied in students' abilities of active listening and effective oral and written presentation. Not only students are able to self-express and perceive ideas of others, but they can also exercise empathy and solidarity. Consequently, contemporary students are well-equipped with employable skills, suitable for junior and senior management positions in the fields of sport and tourism.

In terms of our research, the dichotomy of *perception* and *production* has been split further. Firstly, perception is regarded as the process of acquiring high-level knowledge or expertise and developing professional skills by students within years of their study. Taking into account the way of gaining information, on-line and off-line modes are distinguished (Fig. 4).

In Ukrainian educational tradition the main activity domain for university students is class-room learning, which presupposes attending lectures, participating in seminars and practical classes. Here perception prevails over production regarding development of global communication competence, as far as cultural information is exposed for them to be analyzed and discussed in academic setting. Curricula of both universities' disciplines include intercultural competence as an integral part of professional education. For example, at NUUPES syllabuses of History of Physical Culture, Biomechanics, Statistics, Hygiene, Sport Medicine, Treatment of Sport Injuries and Massage etc. disciplines all require covering findings of foreign scientists in relevant fields, thus, letting undergraduates familiarize with international sport science achievements of past and present. The same is relevant for NUFT, where tourism and hospitality development is studied not only in chronological, but also economic and geographical perspectives in the courses of World and National Cultural Heritage, Tourism Geography, Recreation and Resort Business. Therefore, students' perception of culturally bound information in the sphere of their expertise makes their knowledge applicable in any cultural background. Moreover, having a dual diploma of a local university and a foreign partner one gives them legal opportunity to apply their professional skills worldwide.

Current shift from face-to-face learning to self-study aims at encouraging students to gain knowledge independently, but turn it into hard skills in cooperation with others through collaborative project work. It proves that global communication competence is also likely to emerge in the process of student's self-education as kind of additional soft skills in understanding cultural diversity (Gay, 2015). Take for instance, completion of Bachelor's scientific research works and writing diploma papers. This task requires reading and/or watching scientific, yet culture specific information, its deep analysis and further usage to offer their vision of changing the phenomenon under research. It should be added that a problem-solving task that students face here makes them activate comparative and creative thinking, the former – to study how different cultures deal with analysed phenomenon and the latter – to come up with a new effective solution (Edwards, 2017). Even though perception still prevails over production here, as far as students have quite little social influence to insist on immediate implementation of their own findings, this type of works develops their professional intercultural competence via critical thinking, applied during research. Actually, any topic of students' scientific papers illustrates intercultural aspect of their research, as they are almost all built by the same principle, i.e. analysed phenomenon in Ukraine + the one in (an)other country(s) + new strategy/vision for its improvement. For instance, "Leadership at the World Games and factors behind it (on the example of Italy and Ukraine)" or "Improvement of common business practices of running a boutique hotel in Ukraine

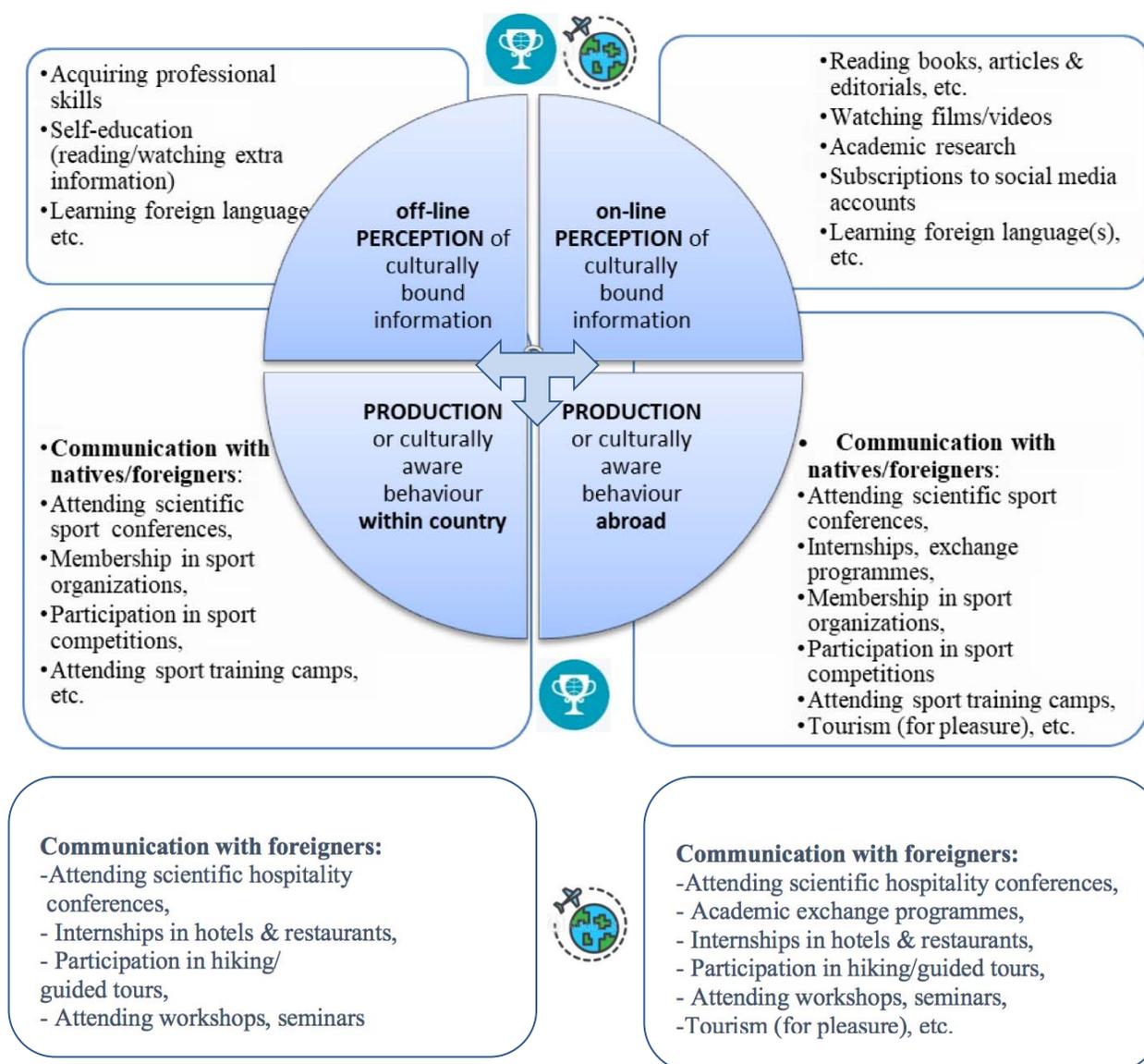


Fig. 4. Global communication competence acquisition in dichotomy of perception and production

and France”. We believe that such an approach to scientific projects is the most efficient for students to generalize their own national experience in the field of study and get involved in global professional sphere.

Off-line perception of culturally-bound information would be quite limited not to say distorted if it was only possible via Ukrainian and/Russian-speaking sources. True global communication competence is formed in the process of foreign language(s) acquisition. In this respect the triad of language – culture – identity should be mentioned, as speech is regarded as a social culturally-determined behaviour of a person. According to classical hypothesis of linguistic relativity (See the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis) as well as W. Humboldt’s philosophy of language, human culture is embodied in language (Hadis, 2005). Thus, while learning foreign language students automatically gain both linguistic and cultural skills of self-expression. They enrich own inter/cultural awareness comparing cultural specifics of native and non-native speech,

derived from different historical and social economic parameters of language development.

Contemporary lifestyle is determined by overwhelming globalization trend, driven by rapid advance in IT. So, university students as an integral group of modern society are greatly influenced by global networking opportunities. On-line perception of information becomes predominant for them; continuous Internet surfing is actually becoming their daily routine (Zuckerman, 2013). All the studying activities that used to be performed off-line are now available on-line, including reading articles, editorials, books, watching films/videos, following social media posts, conducting on-line academic research, etc. Audio-visual mode of information perception is similar to that of off-line mode of knowledge acquisition; however, the significant difference here lies in the scope of information available. Great variety of Internet resources provides students of both specialisations with informational choice which they could probably lack before.

Moreover, it gives them more freedom of action, encourages working independently of tutors, and thinking critically (Ritchhart, 2011). No doubt that in such a way they develop global communication competence naturally as a result of analytical work.

Learning foreign language(s) with the help of IT turns to be beneficial as well. Despite numerous contemporary claims of languages becoming global lingua franca with the same set of basic concepts and additional connotations, our English language teaching experience shows that cultural aspects here matter greatly. In professional sphere leaning a foreign language means that students should not only distinguish key concepts, notions and terms in the language they acquire, but also compare them to the ones in their mother tongue. Undergraduates of both NUUPES and NUFT perceive a lot of professionally-related information in non-native language(s) first during their language classes and then in other disciplines (Karaman, & Tochon, 2007). However, surfing the Internet they develop their perceptive communicative skills in reading and listening along with productive skills of speaking and writing, which together comprise global communication competence.

Taking into consideration the above-described combination of professional and linguistic skills that students develop when they do their university studies and perform their individual work either on-line or off-line, it should be stated that they become inter-culturally aware in the sphere of their future occupation. While NUUPES students mainly concentrate on sportive and medical achievements of humanity, NUFT students are obviously more focused on tourism and hospitality principles and trends. Anyway, this professional specialisation does not mean that their global communication competence is restricted to their university major. On the contrary, their primary professional orientation gives them deeper insight into other spheres of human activity through their ability of meaningful international communication in the field of their expertise.

Production or students' culturally aware behaviour is based on their ability to implement professional and communicative skills into practice via cooperation with others. In this paper we do not distinguish communicative styles and culturally-specific behaviour of undergraduates during interaction with natives and foreigners; however, we differentiate their chances to show their global communication competence in Ukraine and abroad. In the context of discourse analysis, that analyses speech and behaviour in relation to real life situations (Fritz, et al., 2002), it is established that not only pragmatic aim of interlocutors in each individual interaction determines their professional style of communication, but also various social and cultural settings may influence their professional behaviour.

Students of both NUUPES and NUFT can introduce their scientific findings during international conferences, held annually. Even though their focus is either sport or tourism oriented (compare "Sport and Modern Society", "Sustainable Development and Heredity in Sport", etc. and "Quality and Safety of Food Products", "Innovative Technologies in Hospitality Business", etc.), the general idea is to highlight achievements of Ukrainian scholars in both spheres. On the contrary, similar meetings, held abroad, are likely to shift their perspective to global cooperative principles of profes-

sional interaction. Thus, participation in such events gives students a chance to broaden their general cultural and professional vision on current trends and phenomena. The same is true to mention about practical kinds of activity, i.e. attending sport training camps or conducting hiking/guided tours, attending seminars and workshops, which can further lead to making first steps in their career development (Blynova, 2018). For example, participation in sport competitions and/or internships in hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, etc. is the real action students can take to use their professional knowledge and skills of international cooperative behaviour. Consequently, it is evident that the latter is the ultimate goal for students to achieve during the years of their studies.

Discussion

Regarding high speed of globalisation processes in the world and increased number of intercultural contacts in both academic and professional areas, the necessity of acquiring global communication competence is obvious to sport and tourism students. The role of universities is significant here, as they should strive to primarily provide students with practical ways of international interaction. Both NUUPES and NUFT have a wide network of international partners among other specialised educational institutions, organisations and enterprises abroad. For more detail check the web-sites of both universities. The only thing that should be underlined is that a great number of current international programs, reasonable academic requirements and sufficient practical conditions make it possible for all those who will to participate in them. No doubt, real life professional communication both in Ukraine and abroad positively affects their values and attitudes within global communication competence. Moreover, if it is accompanied by individually organised trips abroad either for pleasure or for educational/professional purposes, the effect of cultural awareness will be much bigger.

Nevertheless, development of global communication competence is conducted not only via Universities initiative and academic teachers-designed tasks at universities, but also through students' self-development, personal trips and intercultural experience acquired outside scholastic setting, thus should be highly encouraged.

Conclusions

Overall, during this research the issue of global communication competence has been studied regarding its acquisition and/or development by students of sport and tourism specialities. It has been established that this competence constitutes of three interdependent components, i.e. attitudes/values, behaviour and skills. The first is a cultural background of students, enhanced by their inner personal qualities and outer vision on contemporary lifestyle. According to conducted quantitative analysis it shows the proportion of 70%/40% of the first-year students' self-awareness and cultural diversity recognition respectively. Therefore, it serves as a fundamental basis of broadening their intercultural worldview during university studies.

The triad of global communication competence elements let us differentiate the level of internal perception and external production, or in other words, perception of cultur-

ally-related information and production of culturally-aware behaviour. While perceptual level is all about gaining expertise and developing professional skills either in the sphere of sport or tourism, the production presupposes students' persuasive behaviour aimed at reaching cooperative goals of professional communication. Both levels of behaviour and skills development are culturally-determined, as can take place in intercultural setting and/or with reference to internationally acknowledged academic achievements. They serve to improve students' communicative skills of critical thinking and cooperation on the global arena.

While gaining a degree in sport or tourist students of NUUPES and NUFT have a chance of meaningful international communication in the field of their expertise, which gives them deeper insight into other areas of human life. During the years of studies, they develop their global communication competence to the level of 80-90%, regarding their self-awareness and cultural diversity recognition. This is a great change of their worldview that gives them many chances of career development and professional recognition worldwide.

Although various factors may contribute to global communication competence development, the role of university education is significant, as during these formative years, students of both NUUPES and NUFT get opportunity to acquire professional knowledge and apply it in intercultural context. Production of culturally aware behaviour and global communication skills, thus, becomes one of integral components of students' professionalism regardless of their specialisation, which lets them develop career in global perspective.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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ГЛОБАЛЬНА КОМУНІКАТИВНА КОМПЕТЕНТНІСТЬ: ОСНОВА РОЗВИТКУ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНИХ НАВИЧОК У СТУДЕНТІВ ГАЛУЗІ СПОРТУ І ТУРИЗМУ

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Авторський вклад: А – дизайн дослідження; В – збір даних; С – статаналіз; D – підготовка рукопису; Е – збір коштів

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Мета дослідження – вивчення глобальної комунікативної компетентності як важливої навички у професійному розвитку студентів, які здобувають вищу освіту в галузі спорту та туризму.

Матеріали та методи. Якісні методи, що застосовуються в дослідженні, включають теоретичний аналіз наукових джерел, синтез та моделювання, педагогічне спостереження та оцінку навчальних дій студентів. Кількісний аналіз передбачає опитування та обробку даних, зокрема тесту на з'ясування міжкультурної компетентності студентів, проведеного серед 352 студентів НУФВСУ та НУХТ, Київ.

Результати. Проведене дослідження глобальної комунікативної компетентності студентів першого та п'ятого курсу університетів спортивного та туристичного профілів

показує чіткий взаємозв'язок між рівнем освіти студентів та набутою глобальною комунікативною обізнаністю, представленою комунікативними навичками критичного мислення та співпраці. Аналіз статистичних даних довів, що поряд з покращенням самосвідомості вивчення професійно-орієнтованих дисциплін більш ніж удвічі збільшує глобальну комунікативну компетентність студентів протягом п'яти навчальних років. Окрім кількісного вдосконалення, покращується якість міжкультурної комунікації, оскільки набуваються основні професійні навички у сфері майбутнього працевлаштування студентів. Професійна спрямованість глобальної комунікативної компетенції охоплює спортивну та медичну направленість вищої освіти серед студентів НУФВСУ та фокусується на міжкультурних за-

садах туризму та готельно-ресторанного бізнесу для студентів НУХТ.

Висновки. Результати дослідження довели, що сучасні студенти університетів, які здобувають вищу освіту у галузі спорту та туризму, сприймають культурно пов'язану інформацію під час відвідування он-лайн та офлайн-академічних курсів та участі у різних мультикультурних заходах в університетах та поза ними. Таким чином, вони розвивають свою самосвідомість, визнаючи цінність етнічної різ-

номанітності. Встановлені цінності переходять на рівень продукування та призводять до реалізації культурно усвідомленої професійної поведінки, представленої високим рівнем здатності до самооцінки та переконання, спрямованих на ефективний, але толерантний спосіб вирішення проблем та спільну відповідальність.

Ключові слова: глобальна комунікативна компетентність, міжкультурна позиція та цінності, сприйняття, продукування.

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