
Globalization of Culture and Higher Education By Means of Academic Mobility

Ramil R. Khayrutdinov¹, Alina A. Shakirova², Lilya I. Ayupova³, Landysh
A. Gizyatova⁴

Abstract:

The relevance of the research problem is caused by the worldwide process of globalization that affected different aspects of the human life including culture and education.

The aim of this article is to confirm the hypothesis that academic mobility may serve as a means of globalization of culture and higher education and carry in itself a certain social demand.

The main approach of the research is the comparative approach, which allowed us to compare different approaches to the definitions of the concepts “culture”, “globalization”, “internationalization” and “academic mobility”.

This research reveals the interconnection between culture and education. It proves that academic mobility of students may serve as a means of globalization of culture and education.

The content of the article may be useful for the teachers of the Cultural Studies, Anthropology, and Education in the institutions of higher education.

Keywords: Student, Education, Globalization, Internationalization, Culture, Academic Mobility.

¹ *Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies, Kazan Federal University, Russia, ramilh64@mail.ru*

² *Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies, Kazan Federal University, Russia, alina-sharafeeva@inbox.ru*

³ *Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies, Kazan Federal University, Russia, lilia-2591@mail.ru*

⁴ *Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies, Kazan Federal University, Russia, Klandish@rambler.ru*

1. Introduction

The XXI century is often called a century of globalization, internationalization, integration of cultures, integration in educational systems, the time of shortening the distances between countries, rapid movements, and quick decisions. Modern man has become mobile as he makes decisions quickly, he is flexible and is able to adapt immediately to the conditions of the surrounding world that change so fast.

Most researchers relate the beginning of the globalization process with the scientific and technological revolution of the second half of the XX century (Bushkov, 2010). Automation and computerization of the industry changed the level of life completely. Undoubtedly, globalization affected all the aspects of human lives including the culture as the latter is an open system and it is also influenced by the other cultures.

Globalization and internationalization mean convergence of cultures, disappearance of the boundaries between countries and peoples. Some scientists define these notions as unification, sameness of some aspects of culture. Initially globalization was identified as “westernization” to emphasize the enormous influence of the American culture (Los, 2011).

The key issue of the globalization of the culture is the ratio between the cultural diversity and unification. Researchers suppose that globalization may lead to a single common culture depriving us of a huge number of unique traits of different cultures. Waters (1992) thinks that the globalizing world forms a new common society without boundaries with a common culture. A similar opinion has Ledesma (2002) who says that globalization unifies the rules and norms of our life.

The process of globalization affected the system of higher education as well. Firstly, modern institutions of higher education are in fierce competition with each other. There are certain criteria evaluating the work of the universities and that is why they must do their best to increase their rating. Some scientists claim the loss of the cultural values in modern society; they are worried about the education becoming a services market with its goods and consumers (Leslie & Fretwell, 1996). On the other hand, students are choosing their future universities more properly as this choice affects their future jobs. Employers also pose a number of requirements to the graduates and that is why the students have to be mobile in every sense of the word. Everything that has been stated above makes academic mobility a topical issue as, on the one hand, it contributes and on the other hand, it is the result of the world integration processes. Mobility is considered as one of the means of globalization.

2. Methodology

The theoretical basis of the research is the conceptual ideas of the scientific researches in the study of the globalization, internationalization and academic

mobility. We used the comparative method to compare the main notions under research. Systematic approach allowed us to study various approaches to the definition of the basic concepts and to identify their common features. The dialectical method helped us to trace the interconnections between culture and higher education and their influence on each other. We used the analytical method to study the scientific literature, government regulations and national reports on the subject under study. We analyzed the statistic data and got the qualitative indicators for the research. We synthesized the results of the research to make the conclusions and recommendations for the colleagues.

3. Results

3.1 Globalization of culture

Having studied various approaches to the definition of the word “culture” in anthropology and sociology, we found the following definition rather interesting and full: “culture is a special form of being where material and spiritual actions of a person embodying his attitude towards the nature, society and himself are realized” (Gafiatullina, 2011; Guskova *et al.*, 2016; Sazhin and Saraikin, 2016).

As an open system, culture could not stand aside from the integration processes happening in the world. We witness the expansion of the foreign contacts, increase of interaction of different countries, formation of the universal cultural values. Therefore, these worldwide integration processes named globalization, internationalization or integration influence culture. The notions “globalization of the culture” and “cultural globalization” are rather frequently called synonyms. However, “the globalization of the culture” means the process of unification of the culture, whereas “the cultural globalization” identifies one of the main directions of global development trends, such as globalization of the economy and informatization (Mosolova *et al.*, 2013; Meskhi *et al.*, 2016).

During the past few decades we often hear such expressions as “the dialogue of the cultures” and “tolerance” which imply peaceful coexistence of a huge variety of cultures. Nevertheless, many researchers think that globalization may unify the culture and other aspects of our life. In addition, these integration processes may threaten nationalization and even extremism. This is the reason why the possibilities to preserve national traits and cultural diversity is so topical in modern Cultural Studies.

3.2 Globalization of higher education

Education and culture are closely connected since education is a part of culture. Educator and psychologist Amonashvili (1998) believed that "education is the process of feeding the heart and soul of the child all the best, highest, spiritualized fruits of human culture and civilization".

The primary aim of education has always been the acquaintance of a person with the richest cultural experience of the mankind and adaptation of a person to the socio-cultural realities of the society (Ponarina, 2012). Today the aim of the higher education is to prepare the student for the life in the globalizing world, which comprises high level of competition, quick actions and mobility. One of the important purposes of higher education is creating a model of a graduate who can recognize himself as a representative of his culture and, on the other hand, as a global citizen, as a subject of an intercultural dialogue (Gizyatova, 2016).

Having reviewed the scientific literature we have concluded that the notions “globalization” and “internationalization” are interpreted differently by different researchers. Knight’s definition (Knight, 2003) is said to be the classical one – she defined internationalization as a process of international aspect integration into the research, educational and serving functions of the higher education. According to Scott (2005) internationalization of higher education is the response to the labor market globalization and it leads to collaboration, convergence of different cultures retaining their unique traits.

Undoubtedly, the blurring of boundaries between the countries, the ability to move freely around the world, cooperation among universities opens new opportunities for both students and teachers. Internationalization of higher education is expressed primarily in the development of international partnerships, mobility of teachers and students, the development and implementation of joint educational programs. One of the key indicators of the work of the university is its international activity. The main directions of a positive university image formation in the international educational area are establishing long-term mutually beneficial direct contacts with foreign educational institutions and international organizations, foundations, non-profit organizations and development of academic mobility of the teaching staff, students and the administrative staff of the university (Prokhorov, 2010).

The reduction in funding of most of high schools from the state budget made them seek new sources of funding. It is also an incentive to find foreign partners for joint programs, as they can bring big profits. In this sense, there is an opinion about academic capitalism, where the University and its employees are represented as market participants (Rhoades and Slaughter, 2004). Altbach and Knight (2006) have a similar opinion, believing that academic mobility is also a means of bringing profit for the university. However, they clarify that the exchange of students and faculty staff enhances their research capacity, increases the level of teaching in high school, lets you share your valuable experience, make useful contacts, stimulates and encourages personal and professional development.

3.3 Academic mobility

Initially, the concepts of “academic mobility” and “internationalization” were considered synonymous. Mobility of students was considered as the primary means of international cooperation as taking part in the mobility programs; students share

professional and cultural experience, make new acquaintances, and get the idea of the life and culture of another country (Shakirova and Valeeva, 2016). Thus, academic mobility contributes to the inter-cultural dialogue, cultural integration, international cooperation; it can be considered a means of globalization and internationalization of culture and higher education.

By the term "academic mobility", most researchers mean the movement of students in foreign universities for a certain period of time with the purpose of getting education with the obligatory return to his native country and university. The most common interpretation of this concept is the following: "The term "academic mobility" implies a period of study, teaching and/or research in a country other than a student's or academic staff member's country of residence (henceforth referred to as the "home country"). This period is of limited duration, and it is envisaged that the student or staff member return to his or her home country upon completion of the designated period. The term "academic mobility" is not intended to cover migration from one country to another". It is presented in the Recommendation No. R (95) 8 of the committee of ministers to member states on academic mobility (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 March 1995 at the 531st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) (Recommendation, 1995).

The growth rate of academic mobility of students is rather quick. According to the UNESCO statistics, in 1994-1995 about 1.5 million students were studying in 50 host countries (A Statistical Overview, 2014). We are giving the figures of the Erasmus program, which started in 1987, and is the most popular mobility program in the world (Table 1). The last statistics report of this program published on October 7, 2014 by the European Commission show that nearly 270 thousand students have received EU grants for study abroad in 2012-2013. Among the countries that have sent the largest number of students are Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Finland, Latvia and Spain.

Table 1: *The number of the "Erasmus" program participants*

Year	Number of students
1987-1988	3 244
1990-1991	27 906
2000-2001	111 092
2007-2008	182 697
2010-2011	231 408
2012-2013	267 547

Mobility has become particularly relevant with the beginning of the Bologna process, in which the mobility of students and teachers is one of the major means of creating European Higher Education Area (The Bologna Declaration, 1999). The Bologna process is a process of integration of the educational systems of the participating countries. The Bologna Declaration of 1999 emphasizes that the main purpose of this agreement is to increase the international competitiveness of European higher education. In this regard, the main aims are to introduce a two-staged higher education, the introduction of the Diploma Supplement and the credit system (ECTS), as well as promoting the mobility of both students and teaching staff.

One of the main objectives of “Europe 2020” (Europe 2020, 2010) is to improve the quality of education and increase the international attractiveness of European higher education through the creation of conditions for free mobility of students and teachers. Academic mobility is extremely important for the students as it does not only give them an opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with foreign students, but also develops the following personal qualities: tolerance, the ability to cross-cultural communication, the ability to view their country in the cross-cultural aspect (Chistokhvalov and Philipov, 2008; Vovchenko *et al.*, 2017; Gorina, 2016).

Thus, we can consider the academic mobility as a way of preserving and increasing the national diversity in the time of globalization because this kind of opportunity to learn and become involved in the other people’s cultures contributes to the desire to preserve and increase the wealth of our native culture, and to be proud of it. Most scientists believe that globalization is aimed to combine cultures, economic, political, and educational systems of different countries. However, it is still important to find ways of preserving national peculiarities of the peoples. In our opinion, one of these ways may be academic mobility of students. Obviously, it cannot be the only way to achieve this goal. However, mobility can also implement the so-called “social order” of any country. That is, by means of mobility certain goals of cultural promotion can be achieved which is especially important due to the growing interest in mobility and the number of students taking part in mobility programs.

4. Discussion

Such scientists as Scott (2005) and Baydenko (2004) dedicated their research to the globalization issues. Baydenko (2004) presents the basic concepts of "globalization", "internationalization" and "integration", views the Bologna papers in detail, assumes the negative effects of globalization. Scott (2005) differentiates the concepts of "globalization" and "internationalization". Knight’s works (Knight, 2003, 2006) are devoted to the internationalization of higher education; she gives her own definition of this concept.

Ponarina (2012) explores the issue of globalization of culture, in particular the unification, the creation of a single culture, which can lead to the loss of national diversity of the world. A similar opinion has the ideologist of globalization Waters (1992). Los (2011) reveals the historical context of the processes of westernization and orientalization in the dynamics of world civilization and takes globalization as a process which having a tendency to preserve the national identity expands the dialogic form of interaction between cultures of Western and Eastern styles.

Altbach and Knight (2006) consider academic mobility of students in the context of the higher education internationalization as one of the goods on the educational market. The aspect under study - academic mobility as a means of globalization of culture and higher education - has not been considered in the scientific researches mentioned above.

5. Conclusions

In this study, we hypothesized the use of academic mobility as a means of globalization of culture and higher education. The main notions of “globalization”, “culture”, “education”, “academic mobility” are given. The relationships between the concepts of "culture" and "education" are revealed. The basic manifestations of globalization in higher education are enumerated. Criteria determining the status of a university at the international level are provided. The main Bologna agreements and the statistics of the international program “Erasmus” were studied and presented in the form of a table. The originality of this study is that academic mobility is a mean of popularization of the national diversity of peoples and cultures.

6. Recommendations

This article may be of interest to the specialists of Cultural Studies, Anthropology and Pedagogy/Education in higher education institutions, as well as to those who are doing research on academic mobility of students and the implementation of the Bologna agreements on the territory of the countries participating in the Bologna process.

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