

MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL CO-PARTICIPATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS. SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Purpose: The expansion of internationalization processes in the world and in Poland has increased the need for research and reflection on the structure, form and needs related to the phenomenon of internationalization. The aim of the article is to undertake a scientific discourse in order to reflect more deeply on the model of social competence management among foreign students in Poland.

Design/methodology/approach: The increasing influx of foreign students from many countries of the world is visible in both urban and university spaces. Quantitative changes in the geographical space (universities, cities) generate a question about a coherent management model at the qualitative level, especially in the areas of social competences among foreign students. In this context, it is worth asking a question about the Polish model of social competence management among foreign students. The model supporting the development of competences will allow for the promotion and further development of internationalization in Poland. In addition, it may encourage graduates from other countries to continue their career plans in the country of study. Incoming migration of young people from other countries, will also translate into economic growth in Poland.

Findings: In the era of technological development, artificial intelligence and mobility, there is also a growing need for research on social competences, among others, among foreign students. It is in this group of young people that various types of attitudes, pressures, expectations and patterns intersect in their biographies. There is no comprehensive research in this area that would enable the development and application of a model of social competence management in the academic environment. Such a model could be implemented in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and effectively contribute to the increase in the internationalization of universities in the formal and social dimension (improvement of social and psychological relations (improvement of quality of life)).

Research limitations/implications: In Poland, there is a lack of comprehensive and interdisciplinary research in the field of social competences among foreign students.

Practical implications: Implementation of real and practical activities in the field of university strategy at the national and local level and support for foreign students in their individual biographies and professional trajectories.

Originality/value: Undertaking scientific reflection on the need to develop a coherent and practical model of managing social competences among foreign students in Poland.

Keywords: foreign students, internationalization, universities, social competences, management, diagnosis.

Category of the paper: Literature review. Viewpoint.

1. Introduction

The expansion of internationalization processes in the world has increased the need for research and reflection on the structure, form and needs related to the phenomenon of internationalization. In 2016 alone, the number of foreign students studying at higher level in the OECD increased by 7%, from 3.3 million to over 3.5 million (SOPEMI, 2018).

Foreign students are a specific group of temporary migrants. They belong to the so-called newcomers, i.e. people staying abroad for a certain period of time (on average from 6 months to 5 years). Due to the diverse offer of the higher education system, there is no rule regarding the length of stay, but it should be assumed that the overriding goal of their mobility is education (Bochner, 2006). Research shows that for students deciding to study abroad in the EU, the most important advantage is the opportunity to study in an EU country, international recognition of the diploma and good career prospects after graduation (Stasik, 2017). Students use existing material, institutional, social and pre-arrival competences to build a living space in which they implement biographical patterns of action, understood as the pursuit of their own goals and values.

The phenomenon of student mobility is often associated with the migration of skilled workers (Castles, Miller, 2012), which is why their study is particularly important. Learning mobility becomes an element and an opportunity to support social competences, especially those expected by future employers. Students can become an important resource for well-educated workers, essential for the development of an ageing European economy, especially when their employment is perceived as socially beneficial. Research conducted by the Center for Public Opinion Research in Poland indicates the growing acceptance of both the presence and undertaking employment by foreigners. The research shows that some groups of students (Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, African countries) plan to stay in Poland after graduation. It is relatively likely that people from different regions of Asia will also remain in Poland (Stasik, 2017).

Since 2005 the Study in Poland program has been operating in Poland, providing statistics on the level of internationalization of Polish universities. According to the program data, the internationalization rate in Poland increased from 0.71% in the 2007/2008 academic year to 5.63% in 2017/2018. 72 743 foreign students from 170 countries study in Poland, it is 6950 more than a year ago (an increase by over 10% comparing to 2017/2018 academic year) (Siwińska, 2019). ... Eurostat data indicate slightly lower values (resulting from a different methodological approach in defining concepts, such as student mobility, foreign student or studies abroad (Teichler, 2017), but the growth dynamics are equally intense. The data translate into the institutional level and are manifested using the internationalization rate, which in Poland increased from 0.71% in the academic year 2007/2008 to 5.63% ten years later (Siwińska, 2019). In recent years, there has been a steady increase in foreign students in Poland.

On the other hand, more and more foreigners study and graduate in Poland. In the academic year 2021-22 nearly 89.5 thousand foreign students from 180 countries studied in Poland, which is over 4.7 thousand more than a year earlier (Eurostat, educ_uoe_mobs02, 2022).

The increasing process of mobility, especially of young people for educational purposes in the world and in Poland, has been visible in recent years. Therefore, the question arises about the dilemmas and how to manage both at the level of university administration (host institution) is implemented to improve the process of mobility of foreign students to Polish scientific and research institutions. In the era of competitiveness, the element of foreign cooperation is an integral part of the strategy of all universities. Can we talk about a coherent structure of social competence management among foreign students at universities? Is internationalization carried out only at the level of university structures or does it go out in cooperation with public-private entities (e.g. international corporations, city offices, local companies, business environment institutions). Is there a model of social competence management among foreign students at the level of internal structures in Poland? Are these competences strengthened, and if so, how? What areas of competence require strengthening and support from the host institution.

A review of the literature on foreign students clearly indicates that most research focuses on the issues of acculturation or adaptation and the barriers associated with it. Although the life situation of foreign students has been studied in several smaller studies (master's theses), there has not yet been a broader national study focusing on a broader set of competences (including civic competences). There are few broad, interdisciplinary studies of foreign students analyzing the social determinants of the development of these competences and their relationships with the development of professional competences (e.g. Ye, 2017; Zorofi, Sahranavard, 2011).

The article poses preliminary research questions, which are only an element to undertake further interdisciplinary discussion using research methods and tools within various scientific disciplines:

1. The country of origin of students and their economic situation determine the strength motivating students to develop their own social, academic and communication competences.
2. Features preceding the start of studying (e.g. previous studying experience, family background affect the student's skills and abilities).
3. The smaller the cultural distance between the migrants' place of origin and destination, the fewer opportunities to acquire new skills.
4. The more positive the image of the country studying before leaving, the greater the sense of disappointment and discouragement to develop one's own academic, social and communication competences in the event of a discrepancy between expectations and reality.

5. The country of origin of foreign students differentiates the type of difficulties experienced in the implementation of biographical schemes of action and the use of institutionalized forms of assistance to foreigners.
6. The lower the level of social competences, the higher the level of social alienation of foreign students.
7. Strong social networks with foreigners and other foreign students positively correlate with the increase in social and communication competences.
8. Good material and institutional infrastructure has a positive impact on the development of academic, social and communication competences.
9. The higher the social competences, the higher the communication competences.
10. The higher the academic competences, the higher the social competences.
11. The experience of students with acts of discrimination negatively affects the development of their social competences.

The article is of an illustrative and analytical nature based on the available literature in the field of social sciences and migration and is based on available statistical data.

Structure of the article: the article contains a preliminary analysis and a proposal to undertake further research in the models (areas): – institutional and – biographical and a reflection on the need to develop an interdisciplinary model of managing the social competences of foreign students.

1. Institutional model. External level – (legal) (university development strategies) attitude towards strengthening and proposed solutions to improve the flow of educational migration streams, including the university environment. Examination of current needs and support in the field of improving and developing social competences among foreign students. E.g. involvement of university staff. Is there a model for researching social needs and competences among foreign students before and after the start of a cycle of education in a selected institution at a given university?
2. Biographical model. Internal level – (building relationships and communication networks) student level, e.g. in interaction with colleagues from the host country, city residents, with colleagues from other countries during their stay at university. What is the development of competences during the stay at studies in the host country. Is there a progress or regression and what factors affect the dynamics of changes in the area of various social competences.
3. Summary and conclusions.

2. Review of definitions

In the literature on the subject, many competences can be found (e.g. Grabowska, 2019): linguistic (Chomsky, 1967), communication (Hymes, 1980), cognitive (Piaget, 1972), social and professional (Raven, 1984), self-creating (Dudzikowa, 1993), temporary (e.g. Lens, 2004). In Poland, research is conducted on the intercultural competences of economic migrants in the context of their functioning in various cultural contexts (Grabowska, 2018), didactic and communication competences of teachers (e.g. Strykowski et al., 2007), competences of managers and unemployed people (e.g. Strykowski et al., 2007). e.g. Czechowska-Bieluga et al., 2009) and Polish students and pupils (Hajduk, 2003). So far, however, no research has been carried out on the development of foreign students' competences.

This issue has its source in management disciplines, but for many years research has also been conducted on a sociological basis and in this sense it is associated with considerations of, among others, human capital (Becker, 1994), human capabilities (Sen, 1997), or ability and reflexivity (Archer, 2018). Today, the practice of assessing employees of all industries in terms of their competences is becoming quite common. The hard ones, related to the profession, but also the soft ones – personal (resistance to stress, communicativeness, composure, etc.). Research on employers' expectations shows that the most valued social competences on the labour market (Jagodziński, 2013) are: self-organisation, punctuality and strong motivation to work (Kocór, Strzebońska, 2011), communication competences, including knowledge of foreign languages (Varga, Szira et al., 2016), creativity and self-improvement (Varga, Szira et al., 2016). In turn, studies of students in 11 European countries show that they value competences related to self-organization (time, pace of work), self-improvement, creativity and analytical thinking, i.e. individual competences related to individual characteristics, and other than social competences, such as teamwork and language competences (Little, Braun, Tang, 2008). This means that students underestimate those competences that are so highly valued among employers. These studies did not include foreign students, so it is not known how to assess the competences of this particular group of students.

We define competences as "a set of behaviours that some people master better than others, which makes them act more effectively in a given situation" (Levy-Leboyer, 1997, p. 32 after: Jagodziński, 2013). There is a diversity of approaches and definitions of social competences, but it can be summarized in one proposed by DASCHE (2020): "One and one-dimensional definition for all is neither possible nor desirable. Despite this diversity of social competence characteristics conditioned by the tradition of higher education and its legal context, an important feature of all the above approaches can be seen. It is about recognizing social competences as a meta-competence built on knowledge and skills, enriched with axiological reflection allowing for their independent and responsible application leading to social benefits" (Chmielecka, 2020). It follows from this definition that it is not possible to talk about one

general social competence, but about many of their types. We can mention, among others, competences such as: skills related to social perception (accurate perception of others, e.g. their intentions, and correct assessment of social situations), social sensitivity, empathy interpersonal decentralization:

- Knowledge of social rules and the ability to behave appropriately in social situations.
- Ability to solve specific interpersonal problems and control social situations.
- Skills for coping in conflict and assertive situations.
- Effective self-presentation and the ability to influence others.
- Communication skills.
- Cooperative skills (Knopp, 2013, p. 2).

In interactive terms, the components of social competences are:

- Competences determining the effectiveness of behavior in intimate situations.
- Competences determining the effectiveness of behavior in a social exposure situation.
- Competences determining the effectiveness of behavior in situations requiring assertiveness (Tomorowicz, 2011, p. 92).

In turn, the integrated model of social competences proposed by M. Grzesiak (2021) includes five areas covering different clusters of social competences: marketing, relationships, self-realization, management and spirituality (Grzesiak, 2021, p. 129).

Social competences play a key role in the development of academic and communication competences. Empirical research shows that competences correlate positively with, among others, mental well-being, general life satisfaction, quality of interpersonal relationships, readiness to help others, but also the use of social support, effective strategies for coping with stress, as well as broadly understood adaptation and proper social functioning (Knopp, 2013, p. 2).

3. Institutional model (external level) of social competence research

Current status: data verification attempt

Thinking about the university's strategy in the context of internationalization is a completely new challenge for many Polish public universities. It is rather a standard for Anglo-Saxon universities and the European Union (Domański, 2016, p. 64). In 2011 the Study in Poland project showed that such strategies are very rare (1 in 20 universities), and most of them have an overall university development strategy. Therefore, the university's internationalization strategy is an important indicator of the university's great interest in attracting foreign students.

The practical dimension of further research

A comparative analysis of the content of the strategies obtained in the national dimension will allow for a comparison of their priorities, and will also be the basis for the creation of a scenario of in-depth individual interviews, which will be carried out during the study visit at the employees of career offices dealing with foreign students. These interviews are aimed at deepening the information contained in the strategy, and if it is not developed by the university, obtaining information on the support offered to foreign students and recognizing the problems that universities have in the field of internationalization and issues related to the admission of students from abroad. The following areas of support will be discussed in the interviews: legal, psychological, material (scholarships, access to libraries, sports infrastructure), social (intergenerational activity of foreign students, cooperation with the institutional environment of the university (R&D), building a partner network of 10 in-depth interviews with career office employees responsible for contacts with foreign students: in addition, structured observation will be carried out during studies.

Diagnosis of competences achieved in the education process is the beginning of actions correcting the implemented educational strategies so that they can achieve the desired characteristics (directing them to other paths, strengthening, making them more flexible, etc.). The proposed research will allow to determine the competence attractiveness of higher education and identify sensitive points where expectations deviate from reality, will help to define the factors responsible for strengthening or weakening the competences selected for analysis. Therefore, it is possible to indicate those areas in which academic organizations could support foreign students in their development to a greater extent than before. This applies especially to Polish universities, as research has shown that the quality of administrative services received the most negative ratings (Stasik, 2017). In addition, students from Western Europe, in particular students from Scandinavian countries undertaking medical studies in Poland, misjudged the quality of classes and their development opportunities (Stasik, 2017).

The development of competences depends largely on the material and organizational resources of the university. Therefore, the starting point of the analysis will be to examine these resources and analyze the support system offered to foreign students. The image of students about the country to which they wanted to study is also important, as well as the image of the city in which the university of their choice is located, which consists of such elements as: security, a positive assessment of the situation of the country adopting a lifestyle and culture, openness of residents, scholarship support, the possibility of a further professional career (e.g. Cubillo et al., 2006; Ghazarian, 2016). It can be assumed that these attracting factors can stimulate students to develop their own competences, if this image is confirmed in reality. Otherwise, these factors can lead to a decrease in motivation, frustration and even abandonment of studies and return to the country of origin.

4. Biographical model (internal level) of the study of social competences

Current status: data verification attempt

The process of shaping social competences in academic didactics is passive and apparent. Meanwhile, the deficit of these competences, both on the part of students and lecturers, hinders the process of acquiring knowledge and shaping skills. There is a lack of systemic solutions in this regard. At universities, there is no will and time to talk about social competences (Bojanowicz, 2022, p. 179 for: Chmielecka, Matuszczak, 2020).

The basic function of acquiring and developing competences by individuals is not only to adapt to the social environment, but also to transform it. Meanwhile, in research on social mobility, the greatest attention is paid to the analysis of adaptation strategies that ignore the ability of students to create and transform the material, social and institutional environment to achieve their own development goals. Therefore, the proposed model is not aimed at studying the processes of assimilation or integration, because foreign students are a very mobile group, which often does not associate their lives with the country where they graduated (due to the diversity of this group, we can consider different mobility trajectories: people planning to settle permanently in the country of study to people who are open to further mobility, transforming, for example, into educational hypermobility (Czerska-Shaw, 2017), labor migration, specialized migration, as well as multiple migrations (Salamońska, 2017).

For foreign students from outside the EU and EFTA countries, communication competences are even more important because they have to pay for studying in Poland. Due to the almost non-existent scholarship system in Poland, these are high costs for the family, which is why some students are interested in taking up a job, but the key barrier is the lack of knowledge of the Polish language (Fazlagić, 2018).

Practical dimension of further research

This part of the analysis aims to learn how foreign students perform their roles in the sense of cultural, social and spatial (urban) space, what strategies they choose to build social contacts and social activity, with whom they establish contacts and how they shape their social support networks in the mobility process. In this area, it is interesting what conscious actions students take to build their academic, social and linguistic competences (biographical patterns of action according to F. Schütze, 1984), how they use existing opportunities and resources (material, institutional and social) for this purpose, and how they build resources that increase their intellectual, cultural and social capital. We will also look at the problems they face when entering the roles of students (Znaniński, 1994), but also at biographical changes and turning points in which they discover their own potential and possibilities.

Analysis of trajectories or external processes and conditions over which the individual has no influence, and which deprive them of the possibility of directing their own undertakings and limit the development of competences, block the possibility of fulfilling the expectations and desires of foreign students. In this model, it is worth reflecting on the cultural conditions (patterns of action) that socialize students in their countries of origin and bring them to Poland. To what extent are these cultural patterns a stimulating factor, and to what extent inhibiting the development of the competences we study?

The purpose of collecting and analyzing data is to gain an emic understanding – in other words, the understanding of the importance of career development from the participants' perspective (Agar, 1996). Research also shows that communication competences significantly affect building social relationships with other students, as well as overall satisfaction with studies (Heikinheimo, Shute, 1986). For most foreign students, language is the main obstacle to adaptation and a factor of acculturation stress (Wilton, Constantine, 2003). Studying in a new, unfamiliar environment and adapting to new language and academic challenges is the main process causing stress and cultural shock of varying intensity for foreign students (Ruddock, Turner, 2007). Lack of knowledge of the local language limits the possibility of participating in cultural events, as well as functioning in everyday life, especially in Poland, where knowledge of English is still insufficient in the society (Popow, 2015). This is important because research shows that students' participation in the cultural and social life of a community (local, urban) strengthens their social, professional and cultural competences, which enable them to participate more fully in group life (Kim, 2001). Institutional model (external level). In this model, the main areas of analysis would be focused around the following issues and questions.

How foreign students perform their roles in the sense of cultural, social and spatial (urban) environment, what strategies they choose to build social contacts and social activity, with whom they establish contacts and how they shape their social support networks in the mobility process. What conscious actions do students take to build their academic, social and linguistic competences (biographical patterns of action according to F. Schütze, 1984), how do they use existing opportunities and resources (material, institutional and social) for this purpose, and how they build resources that increase their intellectual, cultural and social capital. In addition, it is also important to diagnose the problems they face when entering the roles of students (Znanięcki, 1994), but also the biographical changes and turning points in which they discover their own potential and possibilities.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Studies of foreign students usually focus on the analysis of their social and cultural situation in a particular country, usually from a narrow problem perspective. Analyses on the motives for studying at a foreign university (e.g. Ghazarian, 2016), cultural shock related to studying in a foreign country (e.g. Gebhard, 2012), adaptation strategies and implemented support programs (e.g. Hayes, Lin, 1994; Collin, 2012; Santillan, Martin, 2018), stereotypes related to the ethnic origin of foreigners (e.g. Wong, 2004), difficulties and facilitations during studies, future employment plans are undertaken (e.g. Gebhard, 2010).

It should be noted that the subject of research conducted among foreign students was dependent on the specificity of the problems associated with their stay in a given country, and thus – the specificity of a given country in the educational, legal, economic, etc.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of comprehensive models of managing social competences in constructing a specific model of managing these competences for the purposes of both:

1. Development and support for foreign students.
2. Supporting the process of internationalization of the university.
3. Building a positive image in urban space.

For example, it is estimated that if the current policy is maintained, the number of Polish students in 2025 may have fallen by 42% compared to 2005 (Domański, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that European universities are competitive and attract an increasing number of foreign students, and this can only happen if the students of these universities are able to develop the competences desired in the international labor market. Therefore, the study of students' competences, factors stimulating or hindering their development, has many convincing pragmatic justifications. It allows to direct the personal development of students, improve the recruitment and selection of people for specific social and professional roles, increase the effectiveness of the tasks undertaken, change the organizational culture of the university, increase the competitiveness of the university using its social potential. Diagnosis of competences achieved in the education process is the beginning of actions correcting the implemented educational strategies so that they can achieve the desired characteristics (directing them to other paths, strengthening, making them more flexible, etc.).

Finally, R. Thomson and R. Taylor (2005) also emphasized the value of mobility in a non-figurative sense, imagining such ideas as cosmopolitanism as a resource in the process of transformation of young people. An important role in building an open Europe based on dialogue and democracy can be played by its future elites studying at European universities, including foreign students.

1. Assessment of the functioning of the institutional and material infrastructure of the university for the development of competences of foreign students.
2. Diagnosis of competences of foreign students and their determinants.
3. Diagnosis of barriers in the development of competences of foreign students.

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