

the program for engineering students does not yet exist. This raises the question of the need to expand the list of provided programs, taking into account the specific characteristics of all kinds of specialties taught at TPU. There is no doubt that the development of mobility programs with the technical universities in the eastern region will be irrelevant, as in connection with the recent political course of Russia's interest in this area is extremely high.

In general, the level of academic mobility programs' organization in TPU is quite high: from pre-preparation for life in a foreign country to assistance in obtaining visas. TPU teachers are happy to assist students preparing to study in another country, always help with words of support, and help out if you need a letter of recommendation. It could be said that academic mobility is encouraged by all the TPU teaching staff. Unfortunately, a lot of students are quite skeptical about the possibilities of studying abroad, considering it as prohibitively expensive and an extremely rugged luxury, which is, of course, not true. As mentioned above, due to the support programs operating in TPU, any student can go to study in another country, even from low-income families. In this case, for the promotion of academic mobility, TPU management should develop a plan to inform students about the possibilities offered in the field of foreign studies.

The ability to live and study in another country gives people a new cultural, social and academic experience, and creates opportunities for personal development. This increases the competitiveness in the international labor market and employment opportunities. Mobility plays an important role in developing and maintaining a democratic culture. Mobile students also contribute to the education internationalization. With the help of mobile students, a university gains new perspectives that call for consideration of established traditions and practices. Thus, mobility provides opportunities for academic excellence through the development of new contacts and views, as well as the comparison and development of education systems. In this open environment, it will strengthen international cooperation and linkages, as well as improve the quality of higher education and scientific research.

The experience of mobile people is embedded into society and contributes to its development. People with experience of living in other countries contribute to the reducing of prejudice, cultural and language barriers between people, countries and cultures. Transnational exchange provides mutual and competitive benefits for society, as well as changes and improves it.

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АКАДЕМИЧЕСКАЯ МОБИЛЬНОСТЬ КАК СПОСОБ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОГО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЯ

В статье рассмотрены проблемы академической мобильности, как касающиеся каждого студента лично, так и те, что существуют в глобальном международном плане. Исследованы современные тенденции и перспективы развития процесса, экономическая сторона вопроса. На основе личного опыта студентов – участников программ академической мобильности проанализировано состояние академической мобильности в Томском политехническом университете.

Ключевые слова: академическая мобильность, ТПУ, студенты, университет, образование, глобализация.

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CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AROUND THE WORLD

The paper is devoted to cultural diversity around the world. The author investigates traditions, behavior patterns and communication styles that vary between different cultural communities. The article highlights the importance of respectful dealing with rules of conduct in various cultures to improve the effectiveness of intercultural communication.

Keywords: culture, traditions, cultural diversity, international communication.

There are a lot of different countries with their own cultures, traditions and folkways on our planet. Relationships between these cultures and between people sometimes are strained because of national peculiarities and patterns of behavior that are unique to every nation. Cultural factors act as invisible barriers in international communication. The reasons for cultural differences are often connected with the geographic location, religion or history of a country or nation [1].

Nowadays, as travelling is becoming more and more accessible and popular, people realize that they should respect other cultures. This not only helps effective communication, but also develops understanding of the world. For business communication, being aware of cultural differences is even more crucial. When visitors arrive in a foreign country they are bound to face many unusual things while making contact with local people and without knowing some traditions, they might seem impolite and uneducated. To avoid possible misunderstandings caused by cultural differences, it is necessary to:

- recognize – investigate the ways in which communication patterns vary between different cultural communities;
- understand – be aware what factors influence these types of behaviors;
- respect – take into account different behavior styles.

Now it is necessary to examine some particular qualities of culture and conduct in some countries. When people arrive in another country, nearly everyone wants to try the national food. Of course, there are some rules of etiquette to consider. For example, one should not stick his or her chopsticks upright into rice in Japan, as this is done at funerals and this action may offend the local people. In the Philippines, Cambodia, Korea and Egypt finishing all the food on your plate signifies to the host that they did not feed you enough. Some of these traditions can seem particularly strange to Russians, for instance, in some Asian countries slurping while eating is considered polite, and in France bread is typically placed directly on the table rather than on a plate [2].

Attitudes towards punctuality vary from country to country. In Middle Eastern countries it is obligatory for guests to be on time, but this is not the case for the host party. In the modern, fast-developing world, being on time for meetings is a rule for the majority of cultures, but Spanish people are infamous for being late. Midday is siesta time in Spain, but in fact it can last for any period of time. This habit can be attributed to Spain's hot climate making it difficult to work effectively in the daytime.

Gestures vary greatly between cultures, and can cause some of the greatest misunderstandings. For example, it would be a rude and indecent offence for an Iranian if a person were to show him a clenched fist with turned up thumb finger, whereas for Americans and Europeans this is sign of well-being.

Have you ever asked yourself about to touch or not to touch your interlocutor? Is it embarrassing or not? Whether or not someone will be offended by being touched during conversation also depends on his or her culture. For example, the French and Italians love to continually touch as they talk, while the British prefer not to touch at any time. However, intimate embracing is typical for British, Australian and New Zealand sportsmen who hug and kiss each other after a goal is scored [3].

In Buddhist countries the head is believed to be sacred, as the soul lives in it. Therefore, one should not touch even a little child's head so as not to insult him or her. In Malaysia pointing a finger at something is considered very impolite, and locals in the Philippines will only point to objects and people with their eyes [4].

In the Middle East, South Asia and some parts of Africa, the left hand serves to perform hygiene procedures. In no case does the left hand touch food, goods at a market, or strangers. In India, this tradition is also backed by religious practice. During Hindu prayers, «Prasad» – that is «offering» – can be made only with the right hand. For Muslims as well, the habit of eating using the right hand is not just a matter of cleanliness. According to the Koran, the Devil eats and drinks with his left hand.

It may seem incredible, but kissing is banned at railway stations in one of the most romantic countries in the world, France. The end of the romantic farewells and meetings came in 1910, when this unusual law was adopted. Originally it was intended to prevent train delays. Despite the fact that times have changed, the law remains in effect to the present day. The worst that will happen to any lovers violating this rule, however, is that they will be simply asked to leave the platform.

Since Thai people are extremely proud and respectful of their royal family, defacing an image of the monarch or treating it with disrespect, for example, stepping on a coin with the face of the king on it is against the law in Thailand.

If you do not want to have problems in Singapore, it will be better to leave a chewing gum at home. You can have a special anti-smoking nicotine gum, but then you must also have a doctor's prescription. The ban is connected exclusively with aesthetics. For the same reason it is also strictly forbidden to spit on the streets and feed the birds in this country.

One should realize clearly that there are no right or wrong signals, but cultural diversity which makes our world an interesting place to live in. There are more similarities than differences between us, for example, people of any nation will appreciate if you learn some words to greet them in their language thus demonstrate your interest, respect and friendly attitude.

In this paper we have provided few examples of curious traditions from various cultures. Everyone who travels abroad should study the culture of his or her destination as being educated about differences in clothing, food, or body language helps improve intercultural communication. Firstly, it is necessary to find common ground with a person of another nation so as not to seem impolite and uneducated. Secondly, knowledge of the rules of conduct sometimes helps you not to get into trouble and may save your money or reputation. Finally, through the process of learning about another culture, you become closer to another nation, its people, and their values, and thus overcome cross-cultural barriers. Developing cultural competence enables a person to understand communication styles and effectively interact with people across cultures.

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КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ РАЗЛИЧИЯ В РАЗНЫХ СТРАНАХ МИРА

Статья посвящена культурным различиям в разных странах мира. Автор исследует традиции, особенности поведения и стили общения, являющиеся отличительными чертами культурных сообществ. В работе демонстрируется важность уважительного отношения к правилам поведения, характерным для различных культур, с целью развития эффективности межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: культура, традиции, культурные различия, межкультурная коммуникация.

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COMMUNICATION WITH ASIAN-PACIFIC COUNTRIES: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

The article shows nowadays status and near-future perspectives of international relations between Russia and Asian-Pacific countries through cooperation between universities within the background of historical aspects and nowadays political situation. Also performance of Russian national high education brand is viewed as a mean of attraction of foreign students to the country.

Keywords: Higher education, Asian-Pacific region, Russia, cooperation, brand.

Introduction

In spring of 2014, after annexation of Crimea, the Russian Federation stepped into the brand new period of its modern history. This event paved the way to diplomatic confrontation between Russia and the Western World, headed by the United States [1]. This opposition facilitates, to some extent, the development of multi-polar world that ensures political and economic equilibrium in the world. In spite of increasing economic pressures Russia has the position of one of the most influential countries, which allows it to be one of the multipolar network centers. Being a political center implies creating a network of countries involved in mutual economic, social, political, cultural, scientific and educational activities.

Russia's geographical specific feature is large area occupying both Europe (the eastern part) and Asia (North-west). This position makes it possible for Russians to absorb and adopt both western and eastern cultures, thus creating something new and sustainable for the whole world. Hence, the Russian federation should keep on developing relations both with the «West» and the «East», as well as with more remote and unfamiliar cultures of Latin America and Africa.

However, today's tension between Russia and the USA with European countries in political sphere changed the focus of Russia's interest to Asia. Nowadays Russia considers Asian countries to be prospective in terms of developing multi-polar network and mutual benefits, and takes closer look at ways of collaboration with the countries of Asia-Pacific region in particular.

Practicability and realization

Talking about different aspects of collaboration with other countries it is necessary to note that these aspects are interrelated. Thus, collaboration in educational field may result in strengthening the cultural, economic and political relations countries. Educational services for foreign students, student exchange, international scientific confer-