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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-

ences and other academic and research activities will definitely contribute to Russia's image as a friendly country. Having had the opportunity to know Russia «inside and out» during their academic period, graduates from abroad can spread the positive image of Russia among their compatriots, which will contribute to development of economic, scientific and other relations between Russia and Asian countries.

Moreover, these relations may be even closer in 10-15 years with former graduates of Russian Universities taking key positions in economic and political spheres in their countries since they belong to the most powerful and intelligent part of the society.

#### **Main objectives**

Thus, it is necessary to make Russian education environment more attractive for students from the countries of Asia-Pacific region. To achieve the goal there are some objectives to be met:

- to increase the number of Russian universities cooperating with universities from abroad;
- to increase the number of universities of Asia-Pacific countries to collaborate with;
- to create a recognizable brand of «Russian education»;
- to create a psychological image of Russia as a friend.

To meet the objectives it is necessary to involve all levels of the country's education structure: from universities' departments up to national decisions.

#### **History of the process**

In 1946 Chinese Civil War ended, which allowed the USSR to have an ally in the East. But that time China was an entirely different from modern one which we all know. War-battered, this backward country had, though, inexhaustible manpower and hardworking people. At that time China needed qualified specialists, especially for industry. The USSR could offer modern higher education. So, one of the greatest overseas education for China began. Hundreds of young Chinese people went to Leningrad, Moscow, Novosibirsk and other large education and scientific centers to study brand new know-how of agriculture, heavy and light industry.

But after Stalin's death in 1953 Soviet-Chinese relations became strained. The combination of events such as border conflicts resulted in decreasing number of Chinese students in Russian Universities.

Another soviet ally on the East is Viet Nam. Division after the First Indochina War into two countries, Communist North and Capitalist South, led to growing strain between them and in the whole region. The culmination was a war known as Viet Nam War that last for eight years and ended by the victory of the communist regime. Re-united country had to be strong enough to resist outer threats like new USA intervention. Ho Chi Min government accepted help from Beijing and Moscow. One of the agreements concerned higher education for Vietnamese students. Thus, the number of them in the USSR Universities was quite high from the first years after the War up to the end of period of Gorbachev's Perestroika.

In 1990-s, after the USSR collapse, the number of foreign students not only from Asia, but also from South and Latin America, and Africa, decreased significantly. Political instability, economical crisis in the country had a negative impact on the whole education system, destroying long-termed relations between most parties involved.

In 2000-s, both political and economic conditions in Russia improved and became more sustainable, which promoted development of Universities in new economic environment. Being more independent in terms of investments, Russian Universities had the possibilities to attract not only Russian students but also students from abroad offering them high-quality and cheap (if compared with Europe and the USA) education service.

#### **Present day challenges**

Nowadays, leading Russian Universities have succeeded in encouraging foreign students to study in Russia. For example, the number of foreign students in Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU) has increased significantly since 2000. Students from 40 countries are studying there. This university takes a particular position in education environment of the country. Firstly, being located in the Asian part of the country, this Siberian University is more available for Asian partners and students as well. Secondly, being one of the best and the biggest Universities of Russia, it has a big number of associations with foreign higher education institutions [2].

According to the information available on the TPU academic mobility site, the University has relations with 5 countries in Asian-Pacific region, such as: China, Taiwan, Japan, Republic of Korea and Thailand [3].

Let us take a closer look at each country to define the nowadays level of international integration, potential prospects and benefits for Russia, challenges to be met in the nearest future in area of students' communication.

The first country to study is China. As it was written above, it has large manpower with increasing per cent of young and middle-aged people. The second economy of the world, it still depends on energy supplies. Thus China can consider Russia to be an ally that is rich in such resources. Being one of the key players on the global political stage, China establishes itself rather aggressively, which can be a positive feature in terms of the country's development and protection of interests. However, it is necessary to note that all disputable issues can be solved only on the base of constructive dialogue and mutual respect. At the same time, it has been proved that successful economic development of previous decades led to nationalism growing among Chinese elites. Several books and articles have been recently published in China. The idea of these issues is that China should aggressively pursue its economic interests all over the world, even by means of army if necessary. To control world resources and their distribution is announced to be aim of China to achieve [4]. Although the official Beijing government declares that it does not express Party's point of view and comes as private demands and suggestions, it is obvious, that influential and authoritative elites adhere to this rather expansionist point of view. Hence, it is important to prevent these ideas from

spreading among Chinese society. Providing education services for Chinese students Russia may contribute to mutually beneficial relations not only between Russia and China but also between all the countries of the region.

Nowadays TPU has the academic relations only with three universities. They are:

- Jilin University, situated in the North-East China, Manchuria, Jilin city; The university provides 8 places and offers to study mainly humanities;
- Harbin University of Science and Technology, also situated in the North-East China, Manchuria, city of Heilongjiang; The university provides 5 places and also offers to study mainly humanity sciences;
- Zhejiang International Studies University, situated in the eastern part of Chinese coast, Hangzhou city; It provides only 2 places and to study both humanities and business.

Therefore, it is obvious that further development of student exchange activities between Russia and China is of great importance for both countries. These activities should be definitely intensified or mutual benefits. For Russia, it may mean closer study and better understanding of Chinese people, especially young, who will form near-future society of the Republic, their set of mind and very complicated culture, which is now become mix of, thousands years-old traditional, formed by many dynasties, communistic, which has grown both under influence of Marxism and soviet ideology and distinctive Maoism on the other hand and modern one, brought from the Western countries in 1980-s at the time of Den Xiao Ping.

Partnership with only three Universities of China is not enough for TPU, taking into account that the country has more than two thousands universities, some of which are in the Top-200 or, even, Top-100 in world ratings. Progressive increasing of interconnected universities would gain a great effect in the near future, multiplying the number of students having positive images of the neighboring country in geometrical progression. The most perspective vector of development of such «expansion» seems to be like: the line across Chinese eastern shore, from the North down to the South. Particularly such provinces as: Liaoning, where Shenyang city is situated with its old University (Shenyang Daxue) and also the city of Dalian (Dalian Polytechnic University). The province of Shandong also appeals significantly because of its Qingdao city, which is one of the biggest Chinese industry centre and harbor, or the city of Jinan with Shandong University situated there.

The next country to study is Republic of Korea. It is a very important part of Asian-Pacific region. With its highly-developed electronic and machinery industry it is one of the biggest economic centers of the region [5]. Regarding the USA, Japan and China as the main partners South Korea is not interested in Russia so much, in spite of its close geographic position. Nevertheless, the relations between South Korea and Russia are more neutral rather than strained. South Korean media doesn't pay much attention to the Ukrainian conflict considering it as some ethnic conflict somewhere overseas. Though after the crush of Malaysian «Boeing» the tone of Korean media became more critical towards Russia, the Korean mass media still does not take one particular position [6]. Thus, reluctance to join the American sanctions and neutral position are characteristics of Korean attitude to Russia.

Under these conditions Korean student are allowed to enter and study in Russia Universities. TPU keeps contacts with two Korean universities:

- Ajou University provides 5 places for students of both technical and humanity sciences;
- Kyung Hee University provides 3 places primarily for students studying humanities;

Both universities are situated near the capital, Seoul.

Considering the possibilities of further development of education relations between Russia and Republic of Korea, it is necessary to note that nowadays they are not as promising as with China, mainly due to the reasons mentioned above. However, these academic contacts should be maintained and enlarged to increase the number of associated universities. Another point is scientific contacts in the electronic and IT areas.

The contacts with Universities of three other countries - Taiwan (Chinese Republic), Thailand and Japan- are not very productive nowadays.

Taiwan is still in confrontation with the continental part. Thus, Russia should be very careful in developing academic relations with both parties. However, there is one university has partnership with TPU:

- National Chung Hsing University provides 2 places for different scientific and engineering courses in English and Chinese.

Thailand is not so interesting in this case because it does not have large reserves of energy resources. Also it is not situated in the intercrossing of sea trade ways and the situation gets worse with external bond debt increasing. This give rise to decrease investments into educational sphere by government and business. Nowadays TPU has one partner in this country:

- King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi provides 3 places and offers full-time or evening programs of technical courses and humanities for bachelors and masters.

As for Japan, it is one of the allies of the USA bonded significantly. The influence of Washington grew measurable after World War II and got stronger during Cold War. So-called «unsinkable» US carrier is ready to maintain American interests because they are quiet the same. That is why it would be much harder to carry on a dialog on all levels, especially in educational sphere. Although, despite of political misunderstandings, big business such us international companies might be interested in specialists, having experience of education in two or more countries. For now TPU has one partner-university:

Hiroshima University provides only 1 place for course of Science, Business, Language and Culture

**Russian education as a new brand**

With globalization, higher education system faces new challenges – it is necessary to «produce» highly qualified competitive engineering personnel who are able to work efficiently in global market environments. It implies internationalization of education. Internationalization persuades such objectives as:

- Diversification and financial income increased by attracting foreign students;
- Diversity of education programs;
- Student exchange programs;
- Education quality improvement by means of international professional accreditation and mutual experience exchange of Universities from different countries;

It is obvious that countries` preferences have an impact on educational services export and this, in its turn, depends on:

- Attraction of a country, its educational system and availability of getting higher education;
- University`s prestige value;
- Marketing policy both of a country and university;

This is the reason to form brand of higher education in Russia.

Thus, education brand includes the following:

- it is a unique and recognizable system of symbols, sounds, etc. that is associated with a particular thing (in this case it is education);
- education service with all peculiar characteristics (education quality, staff, conditions for education) should meet international standards;
- the image of a university and education system is a set of characteristics, expectations appreciated and attributed to a product by a consumer;
- Consumers consider recognizable brand of university as an opportunity to obtain benefits to be applied in the competitive world.

It should be noticed that the main target of brand formation is to be differentiated from other products, offered by competitors. It means that potential clients can see the advantages they obtain by using this particular brand.

Thus, the same principles can be applied to an education brand. The particular feature of the education brand is the leading role of communication. It is the main mean of spreading the brand all over the world, the way to form positive reputation of the University.

The main objective of a brand is to present advantages, hence, the communication should fulfill the same function but by other means. Talking about brand promotion, advertisement is said to take a leading role. However, typical advertisement cannot be more trustworthy for potential consumers than communication with students, teaching and administrative staff, graduates and employers` representatives. Thus, the basic form of university communication is public relations (PR) which include:

- regular reports publication about university activities;
- agitation and propaganda;
- organization and taking part in exhibitions, conferences, public and social events;
- performing presentations;
- organizing specified periodic literature;
- establishing partnership with schools, scientific organizations and corporations;
- sponsorship.

Each of the activities is a newsbreak for a university to introduce it in a favorable light, which contributes to its image and internal culture. The same means can be applied to attract students from abroad, on condition that general politics of countries facilitate international education development. Thus, Russia`s foreign politics referring particular country will definitely have positive or negative impact on the number of foreign students studying in Russia. Comfortable educational conditions and accommodation, strong support of «new comers», friendly environment and willingness to involve foreign students into University social life promote positive image of Russia and Russian Universities throughout different countries.

Surrounding foreign students with extensive support in a university, making good impression as a nation taken as a whole are parts of simple plan performing: «win their hearts and minds».

That involve:

- intensive involvement of foreign students into Russian;
- negotiation of language and culture barrier;
- help with acclimatization to the Russian mentality;
- intensive propaganda.

Therefore, a program of «sleeping agents» can be implemented. Of course, such politics may seem to be not very fair and reliable. It takes quite a long period as well. But such way of collaboration is the most efficient for all nations and reflects passion of Russians for peace and mutual respect. It is one of the most effective ways (though time consuming) to break the aggressive image of Russia created nowadays.

### **Conclusion**

1. Nowadays one of the most prospective directions for Russian in terms of international academic collaboration is the countries of Asia-Pacific region.

2. TPU has a great potential in developing international education and scientific collaboration with Asian countries due to its leading place and geographical position.

3. Keeping academic contacts with different countries, TPU should pay special attention to more intensive relation with China Universities, regarding this country as a strategic partner.

4. To create a world-wide positive image (brand), it is necessary to take quite a number of measures at all levels of education system. The University should be intensively involved in PR creating its brand step by step.

5. To be in high demand among foreign students, the University should ensure a wide variety of high quality education programs that meet international standards, comfortable social and communication environment.

6. Positive image of Russian education may further contribute to positive image of the country as a whole. Personal attitude of foreigners graduated from Russian Universities may positively change the attitude to Russia in other countries. Though, it may take plenty of time and the consequences can hardly be predicted one hundred per cent.

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### **ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЕ СО СТРАНАМИ АЗИАТСКО-ТИХООКЕАНСКОГО РЕГИОНА: ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ**

Рассматривается современное состояние и перспективы ближайшего будущего в международных отношениях со странами Азиатско-Тихоокеанского региона посредством взаимодействия между собой университетов на фоне исторических аспектов и сложившейся на сегодняшний день политической ситуации в мире. Также рассматривается создание российского национального бренда высшего образования как средства привлечения иностранных студентов в страну.

*Ключевые слова:* высшее образование, Азиатско-Тихоокеанский регион, Россия, взаимодействие, бренд.

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### **TOLERANCE AND CHALLENGES OF INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION AMONG STUDENTS**

The paper presents the research results on correlation between the parameters of communicative tolerance and intercultural adaptation of international students in a multinational university (Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU)). 42 respondents took part in the research from different parts of the world: Asia (China), Africa, the countries of Central Asian region. The level of communicative tolerance was measured with the following techniques: «General communicative tolerance» by V. V. Boyko, the questionnaire of human adaptation to new socio-cultural environment by L. V. Yankovsky, Kruskal-Wallis one way analysis of variance was used for statistics. The study reveals that high rate of communicative tolerance, as a whole, has positive impact on intercultural adaptation of international students in Russia.

*Keywords:* Intercultural adaptation, tolerance, communicative tolerance, international students, multinational University.