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The concept of student ethnocultural competence

Abstract. *The article presents the results of the study on the definition of the concept of "ethno-cultural competence". To define and analyze this complex definition, derivative definitions of "ethnoculture", "culture", "competence", "ethnocultural competence" in the philosophical, pedagogical, psychological aspects have been analyzed. Analyzing and summarizing the above concepts, it is noted that ethnocultural competence manifests itself in a certain manner of behaviour in relation to the native culture or culture in the habitats of any ethnic group, helps individuals to be adequate, adapted and harmonious both for themselves and for representatives of a particular society. The results of the study showed that the concept of "ethno-cultural competence" and its derivative concepts have different definitions and are focused on determining the place of a person in the system of social coordinates and are aimed at accepting the main pattern of interethnic interaction in various aspects of human interaction. The main components accumulating the determination of ethnocultural competence of students include: adaptability to intercultural interaction, tolerance, awareness of the peculiarities of ethnocultural relations in a particular territory or social group, openness to new cultural features, etc. Based on the analysis of the research by scientists in the field of ethno-cultural interaction, our own definition of this concept has been formulated. Ethnocultural competence is defined as a multi-level construct of knowledge, skills and abilities in the field of ethnic and cultural diversity, aimed at developing intercultural understanding and acceptance of this ethnocultural diversity in oneself and others.*

Keywords: *ethnoculture, culture, competence, ethnocultural competence, education.*

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Introduction. Modern conditions for the functioning of public relations put forward new requirements for the training of highly qualified specialists in the field of education and pedagogy (Guo et al., 2016). The issues of developing competencies are particularly significant in this context that will be relevant under the new conditions of social relations. Culture occupies a special place in this field, because a modern professional is not only an individual with knowledge and skills, but also a competent person who has an understanding of the world around and the people that this professional encounters in their work and other activities (Zhou, 2021). Therefore, the development of cultural competencies is an important component of the professional training of a modern specialist, especially in the field of education and pedagogy. However, only culture will not be enough if this professional has developed competencies in the cultural field, they will also need competencies in ethnic interaction, for example, for such a country as the People's Republic of China (PRC), it will be important to take into account the ethnicity of both the teacher and applicants (Zhang, 2007), because over the millennium-long history of China, unique relationships have been developed there both in the public field of activity and in personal interaction.

Therefore, a modern teacher must clearly understand the ethnocultural characteristics of their students and colleagues in order to reach the peak of their skills. In order to analyze the essence, content and features of ethnocultural training of students, it is advisable to consider a set of basic research concepts, such as: "ethnoculture", "culture", "competence", "ethnocultural competence" in philosophical, pedagogical, and psychological aspects.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the definitions of ethnocultural competence of students and to provide our own definition of this concept based on the processing and synergy of existing definitions.

Research results. The concept of "culture" has repeatedly been the subject of study in numerous pedagogical and historical sciences, as well as philosophy, psychology, art history, theory and methodology of musical education and upbringing, which in turn has provided versatility in the relevant aspects of defining this concept. The analysis of the

concept of culture includes multifacetedness and requires the broadest representation of various designations, for the synergy of the necessary meaning.

The term "culture" is derived from the past participle of the Latin verb *colere*, meaning "to cultivate," and derives its meaning in part from its association with tillage, indicating a process of progressive development and improvement, selection in the domestication of certain crops, or even the result of the improvement of such process (Wagner, 2016).

There are many definitions of culture, and it still seems impossible to reduce the concept of culture to a single definition. Culture can mean a system, pattern or structure related to each other (Baldwin et al., 2014) or a system of meanings – values, norms and beliefs (Keesing, 1981).

Sociologically, understandings of culture are shifting to a more complex structure, depicting culture as fragmented in groups and inconsistent in its manifestations, complex structural rules that are resources that can be used for strategic purposes. This means that some sociologists have come to abandon the latent variant view of culture as coherent, holistic and ambiguous in favour of ideas about culture as a "tool", "means" or a set of things that are heterogeneous in content and function (Marti, 1992; Tomlinson, 1999).

With the rapidly developing and ever-growing web of interrelationships and interdependencies that characterize modern social life and the various "flows" (such as the flow of capital, goods, people, knowledge, information and ideas, crime, pollution, disease, beliefs, images) across international borders, culture is no longer tied to the constraints of local circumstances. Globalization does not destroy localities: cultural experience somehow "breaks out" of its traditional "attachment" to specific localities (Snow, 1963).

In summary, Blumenthal, A. (1940) points out that culture is a cultural complex (necessarily complex) in which a group (usually large) of people expresses its basic cultural activity, which is usually very different from any other aggregate. functionally interconnected cultural features in which a group of people expresses most of its cultural activities, which usually has a geographical area in which it predominates, and which is usually largely functionally independent of other similar complexes.

Sewell (2004) cites the meaning of culture as a category or aspect of social life that must be abstracted from the complex reality of existence. Culture in this sense is always opposed to some other such abstract aspect or category of social life that is not culture, such as economics, politics or biology. To designate something as culture or cultural is to attribute it to a particular academic discipline or sub-discipline, such as anthropology or cultural sociology, or to a particular style or styles of analysis, such as structuralism, ethnoscience, component analysis, deconstruction, or hermeneutics.

Culture in this sense, as an abstract analytical category, accepts only one. Every time we talk about "cultures" we move on to the second fundamental meaning. In this second sense, culture means a concrete and limited world of beliefs and practices. Culture in this sense is usually thought of as a "society" belonging either to an isomorphic or to some clearly identified sub-society group. Sewell (2004) points out that one can speak of "American culture" or "Samoan culture" or "middle class culture" or "ghetto culture". The contrast in this usage is not between culture and non-culture, but between one culture and another, between the cultures of America, Samoa, France, or between the cultures of the middle and upper classes, or between ghetto cultures and mainstream cultures (Sewell, 2004). This designation shows the ambiguity of cultural manifestations, but at the same time directs the definition of the concept to specific manifestations and ethno-national property.

Culture can also be defined as the totality of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, conceptions of time, roles, spatial relationships, conceptions of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people over generations through individual and group aspirations (Samovar & Porter, 2003).

After analyzing the designations of culture, representation in Western scientific thought, we propose to consider the ideas about culture and its concept in the Chinese system of primary knowledge.

Chinese culture (中国文 化 Zhongguo wenhua) can be considered one of the oldest world cultures, dating back thousands of years. The Chinese language, architecture, literature, martial arts, cuisine, fine arts, calligraphy, philosophy, religion, politics, history, as well as its traditions and festivals are distinctive elements that make Chinese culture world-famous and arouse the curiosity of a number of scholars.

Some of them (Zhang, 2007) argued that nowadays we should use the term "modern Chinese culture" formed during the time of Chairman Mao. Zhang (2007) and his colleagues identified three elements, the so-called "triangular formation", which contribute to the foundation of the modern society and the starting point for the evolution of modern Chinese culture. This is the mainstream culture of the authorities, the culture of intellectuals (formed during the May Fourth movement) and, finally, the mass culture of consumption.

More specifically, the concept of Chinese culture here refers to several basic elements that can be considered typical for Chinese culture: "guanxi 关系" which can be translated as "relationships", but also as "contacts", and in its negative meaning – as "corruption"; "mianzi 面子", which literally means "face" as part of the body, here means "reputation" (Ruvolo, 2018).

Yingxin (2017) makes the concept of culture mysterious in the Chinese sense. It contains both concrete and abstract components. There are some visible parts: art, music, language, just to name a few. But the powerful foundations of culture are harder to detect: the history of a group of people, culture bearers, their norms, values, and so on. (Yingxin, 2018).

The analysis of studies on the development of the concept of culture (Sewell, 2004; Baldwin et al., 2014) confirms that its production, functioning, translation and distribution depend on ethnicity, which affects the pace and features of its cultural development both in the short term and in the long-term plan.

The process of development of any culture is related to acculturation, which is continuous, but a universal culture, one for all peoples, is impossible, because all ethnic groups have different capacious landscapes and different background that shape the present in time and space. The culture of each ethnic group is unique, and it is this mosaic of humanity as a species that gives it plasticity and opportunities for further development.

The diversity of personalities and understanding of their specific ethnic characteristics open the way to mutual understanding of peoples and a dialogue of cultures, which involves not just acquaintance with ethnic culture, but the formation of a personality at the intersection of cultures, able to see someone differently through their own and vice versa. This, in turn, is associated with the formation of the ability to compare what is necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of ethnocultural education. The dialogue of cultures is updated in the communication of individuals. Without a dialogue of cultures, there is no development of the individual, both professionally and personally.

Zhou, S. (2021) provides a dual approach to understanding ethnocultural interaction:

- on the one hand, the interaction of the individual with objects of another culture, the relations between the bearers of different cultural orientations allow people to better understand the uniqueness of the spiritual and cultural achievements of one's ethnic group;
- on the other hand, conditions are created for recognition and understanding of cultural values of other ethnic groups, formation of respectful attitude towards other ethnic groups and their representatives.

The essence of this or that ethnic culture is known within cultures. Understanding a foreign culture helps to better understand oneself, to better understand someone else through one's own, and oneself through one's own. Culture in such a dialogue acts as one of the decisive factors in bringing people together and in their development. This quality

is the cornerstone of the professional skills of a teacher, especially a future music teacher (Zhou, 2021).

Thus, we can say that ethnic culture is manifested in the language, in the upbringing and education of the younger, in clothing, in housing, in the way of housekeeping, in folklore, in music, in the concepts of decency, in the understanding of justice, tact, etc. practically in all spheres of life of the ethnic group.

The main features of ethnic culture are:

- integrity, which is a set of different, but functionally interdependent elements: national language, literature, music, art;
- interrelationship of national cultures;
- creative orientation, which is carried out in the process of perceiving and assimilating the values, attitudes, norms, orientations of people, which endow them with characteristic national features;
- identity, which is reflected in such phenomena as national feeling, consciousness, character, thinking;
- integral character based on the interrelationship of common elements from various scientific fields (literature, history, ethnography, etc.).

Developing the logical sequence of revealing the basic concepts of research, we will consider the definition of the concept of competence and its derivatives.

The terminology associated with competencies is fluid, and its "productive plasticity" makes the term available for strategic use. In a comprehensive review of research on the topic of defining competence (Tahirsylaj and Sundberg 2020), the authors pointed to a lack of agreement on terms and their meanings. As for the term itself, some English-language texts use the word "competence", some use "competency", and some use both. For some, competence refers to a broad concept, while competencies refer to specific abilities (Rychen 2001); for others, competence is a more specific word, and competency is a broader concept (Salas-Pilco 2013). Moreover, both "competency" and "competence" are reduced to one word in Roman languages (for example, *compétence* in French, *competence* in Spanish).

Given the lack of agreement on terminology, we treat "competency" and "competence" as equivalent, and the author uses the term that best fits the literature he cites. In the study, we use the term competence to refer to skills (knowing how to do something) and dispositions (willingness), noting that this meaning encompasses any knowledge needed to apply one's skills in a particular situation or context. However, we will try to give a precise definition of competences. As researchers, we recognize the different meanings and recommend to pay close attention to how authors use terms such as competence, competency, competencies, skills and related terms in other languages in

different regions (Halász and Michel 2011). For example, Nordin and Sundberg (2020) point out that the Swedish term *förmågor*, which translates to “abilities”, is also used as competence. Rather than assuming a single or consistent meaning, we should explore the meaning, use and contextualization of competences within our comparative research.

Recently, competence-based approaches (competency-based approach, CBA) have been increasingly used in higher education, and for some practitioners this is due to changes in existing provisions. Sturgis (2016) in his case study describes the design, implementation and evaluation of a transnational curriculum designed for Chinese university teachers who plan to introduce CBA into their teaching activities. This 25-hour training program was designed to be experiential in nature so that practitioners both learned and felt competent in their activities.

Sturgis (2016) states that although the participants positively evaluated the program, two main problems were identified with the curriculum and the introduction of a competency-based approach: concerns about the implementation of a competency-based approach and the need to be aware of the cultural climate of the students. It is important to note that based on the experience gained, recommendations were developed for other teachers developing similar training programs that model the use of a competency-based approach in teaching different specialties.

In the context of the stated problem, Sturgis (2016) identified five key elements of the competency-based approach in education:

- (a) student advance based on demonstrated mastery;
- (b) clear and transparent learning objectives empower students and improve learning;
- (c) students receive timely and differentiated support;
- (d) agreed assessments are rooted in learning cycles;
- (e) students develop and apply a wide range of skills and dispositions in a variety of settings.

Therefore, a competency-based approach allows students to take responsibility for their own learning, shifting the emphasis from grades to learning by having courses with specific competencies that align with learning outcomes so that their mastery can be assessed (Educause, 2014).

As noted by Ding (2016), Chinese educators tend to use teacher-centered learning methods and knowledge-based assessment methods in the delivery of school teacher training courses, which contrasts with the core principles of the competency-based approach. However, emerging evidence suggests that implementing competency-based approaches to education improves student learning and outcomes (Rainwater, 2016).

The process of transferring knowledge between generations is a human mechanism

that allows us to reach new heights in human development, especially culturally, and teachers have a special place in this cycle. Because it is the teachers in their professional activities who carry out the process of broadcasting culture in society, therefore the formation of cultural and, in particular, ethno-cultural competence is of particular importance in their education.

Ethnocultural problems are complex and multifaceted, many of its concepts are not sufficiently developed. Separate branches of ethnoculture are the subject of research in many sciences: various branches of ethnology, folkloristics, art history, ethnopedagogy, ethnopsychology, etc. The metaconcept "ethnoculture" (like culture) produces metascientific and systemic approaches in its study. The complexity of its structure and internal connections leads to the emergence of a field of interdisciplinary research and discussions in the modern understanding of ethnoculture.

Work in the field of ethnocultural education and the formation of ethnocultural competence of students revealed the characteristic problems of the pedagogical process. One of them is the lack of a common understanding of common terms by dynamically developing scientists of related sciences, especially in the field of the competence-based approach. When lecturing, it often becomes necessary to clarify the terminological apparatus even for the most commonly used and root concepts.

Thus, the term "ethnoculture" arose as a speech variant of the term "ethnic culture". It became widespread at the end of the 20th century. It is actively used instead of the terms folklore, folk culture, traditional culture, ethnos culture. These concepts are close, but not identical. Subtle differences in terms are determined by the point of view when considering common objects. Folklore is a part of ethnic culture. Even its broad understanding as a complex of types of traditional folk art, including spiritual and material forms, defines it as a subsystem of ethnic culture. In the term "ethnoculture" attention is focused on the ethnic component, in the concept of "folk culture" the focus is on the social component. In modern folklore and cultural studies, folk culture is more accurately interpreted as the culture of the working masses, whose structure has changed in the historical process, which is especially important for the PRC as a country striving for social justice for the majority of its citizens (Liu, Liu & King, 2022).

The definition of the concept of "ethnocultural competence" requires a large amount of comparative material and the structure of presentation of this complex scientific construct.

According to the structural complexity, three types of ethnocultural competence can be distinguished: particular (specific, associated with knowledge and experience in mastering one of the areas of ethnoculture), complex (aimed at several areas) and holistic (covering all or almost all of the breaking boundaries of ethnoculture) of one culture,

freely comparing different ethnic cultures). A person can have competencies at different levels (low, medium, high, etc.).

Despite a number of works (Wu, 2017; Wang, 2017), in which various researchers define the concept of "student ethno-cultural competence", this term is not yet sufficiently studied. It should be noted that the concept of "ethnocultural competence" is not widely used in the works of Western authors who use the terms "intercultural (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, 2001; Griffith R.L. et al., 2016; Liu, Liu, King, 2022) Young, Sachdev, 2011; Nadeem et al., 2017), multicultural (Hladík, Hrbácková, Vávrová, 2012) cross-cultural (Hladik J. et al., 2016), competence", also in foreign scientific literature there is no widespread use of the term "multicultural educational space", and there is a definition of a multicultural space (environment).

The concept of "ethnocultural competence" is considered by Xin (2019) as:

- A special integrative property of the individual that determines the ability and readiness of future graduates to carry out ethnocultural communication in a multicultural space (knowledge of national, state languages and languages of international communication, the ability to implement such qualities of communication to create a positive mood among communicators, such as tolerance, empathy, benevolence), patriotism, respect for different national cultures, personal responsibility);
- The necessary structural and substantive component of the professional training of the future graduate of higher education to carry out ethno-cultural interaction with specialists of different countries at a professional level in the conditions of international integration and mobility;
- Indicator of personal, individual-personal readiness for adaptation in a multicultural environment (knowledge of regulatory and legal documents, cultural features, customs and traditions of other peoples).

Ethnocultural competence is an integral property of an individual, which is expressed in a set of ideas, knowledge about native and non-native ethnoculture, their place in world culture, the experience of mastering ethnocultural values, which is manifested in abilities, skills, models of behaviour in a monoethnic and polyethnic environment (Yingxin, 2018).

Ethnocultural competence should also be considered as a system of internal resources (interest in understanding different cultures; awareness of belonging to a certain ethnic group, acceptance of the rules and norms of behaviour of one's ethnic group – ethnic identity; attitudes towards contacts with representatives of other ethnic communities in order to implement various forms of cooperation achieving mutual understanding, maintaining mutual trust, reducing one's own ethnocentrism (Wang, 2017).

Ethnocultural competence is understood as a personal property expressed in the presence of:

- aggregates of ideas, knowledge about different ethnic cultures, cultural needs, interests, rituals, traditions, holidays, folklore;
- knowledge of the peculiarities of national self-awareness, international attitudes, problems of language interactions;
- knowledge of techniques and methods of personally-oriented positive interaction with peers and adults, methods of self-regulation and self-management of emotional state, behaviour in difficult life situations (Zhang, 2007).

The ethnocultural competence of the applicant is manifested in their ability and willingness to choose a model of behaviour based on value orientations, psychological characteristics of representatives of different ethnic cultures. The choice is made on the basis of value orientations, stable stereotypes of behaviour (Zhou, 2021).

It is important to note that the understanding of the different levels of development of ethnocultural competence, as well as the definition of its concept (in the most appropriate form) can be considered as a methodological basis for building an educational program in order to develop and test a series of learning tasks aimed at developing the ethnocultural competence of future teachers during the training period (Yingxin, 2018).

Based on the considered definitions of the concept of "this cultural competence", we have developed our own understanding of this complex phenomenon. We understand ethnocultural competence as a multi-level construct of knowledge, skills and abilities in the field of ethnic and cultural diversity aimed at developing intercultural understanding and acceptance of this ethnocultural diversity in oneself and others.

Conclusions. The consideration of various concepts related to the definition of ethnocultural competence and related concepts that form this complex scientific construct led to the conclusion that the very concept of "ethnocultural competence" and related concepts such as "culture", "ethnos", "competence" have a number of related and various factors of their construction, depending on the vector of scientific thought and the history of the formation of ethnocultural realities in a certain territory.

It is important to note that in Western scientific thought such a concept as ethnocultural competence, especially in its pedagogical direction is not so common and focuses on multiculturalism and a cross-cultural approach. In addition, it is important to note that the originality of Chinese culture is due to millennia of development and identity. The ethnic diversity of the PRC determines the extreme relevance of ethnocultural education and the formation of ethnocultural competence of future teachers as conductors of the harmonization of social relations both within the Chinese society

and in the context of the all-encompassing globalization processes that are inherent in modern China.

Analyzing and summarizing the above concepts, we can conclude that ethnocultural competence is manifested in a certain manner of behaviour in relation to the native culture or to the culture in the places of residence of any ethnic group, which helps the individual to be more adequate, adapted and harmonious in the eyes of representatives of this society.

In future studies, it is planned to study the process of forming the ethnocultural competence of Chinese students on the basis of their educational programs.

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Поняття етнокультурної компетентності здобувача освіти

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Анотація. У статті представлені результати дослідження, присвячені визначенню поняття «етнокультурна компетентність». Для визначення та аналізу цього складного терміну були проанлізовані похідні визначення «етнокультура», «культура», «компетентність», «етнокультурна компетентність» у філософському, педагогічному, психологічному аспектах. Аналізуючи і узагальнюючи зазначені вище поняття, можна сказати, що етнокультурна компетентність проявляється у певній манері поведінки стосовно рідної культури чи культури у місцях проживання будь-якої етнічної групи, допомагає особистості бути адекватним, адаптованим і гармонійним як для себе, так і для представників конкретного соціуму. Результати дослідження показали, що саме поняття «етнокультурна компетентність» та його похідні поняття мають різноаспектні визначення і сконцентровані на визначенні місця людини у системі суспільних координат та направлені на прийняття основних патерн міжетнічної взаємодії у різних аспектах людської взаємодії. До основних складових, які акумулюють у собі визначення етнокультурної компетентності здобувачів можна віднести: адаптивність до міжкультурної взаємодії, толерантність, обізнаність в особливостях етнокультурних відносин на конкретній території або соціальній групі, відкритість до нових культурних особливостей тощо. На основі проведеного аналізу досліджень учених у галузі етнокультурної взаємодії було сформульовано власне визначення цього поняття. Ми розуміємо етнокультурну компетентність як багаторівневий конструкт знань, умінь та навичок у галузі етнічного та культурного розмаїття, спрямований на розвиток міжкультурного розуміння та прийняття цього етнокультурного розмаїття в собі та оточуючих.

Ключові слова: етнокультура, культура, компетентність, етнокультурна компетентність, освіта.

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