








Formation of Cross-Cultural Communication Skills of Future Service Specialists

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to determine the content and organizational and pedagogical conditions for the formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future specialists in the field of service and involves the development and experimental verification of the relevant structural and functional model. Cross-cultural communication is a process of information exchange among representatives of different cultures, which aims to establish mutual understanding through the achievement of conformity of different culturally determined value systems. The main components of a holistic set of cross-cultural communication skills of service specialists are considered to be cross-cultural communication skills, cross-cultural behavior skills and socio-perceptual skills, which correlate with certain components of the structure of the communication process. Construction of a structural and functional model of cross-cultural communication skills formation of future service specialists is determined by the target, organizational, information and technological and diagnostic and effective blocks, and the effectiveness of this pedagogical process is achieved by implementing such organizational and pedagogical conditions as: providing a cross-cultural component of the content of professional training of future service specialists; realization of quasi-professional cross-cultural activity of future specialists in the field of service with the use of innovative pedagogical technologies; introduction of foreign language training on the basis of subject-language integrated learning; organization of communicative educational and professional activities in an intercultural environment with the help of case methods and portfolios.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Communication, Skills, Service Sphere, Future Specialists, Model.

1. Introduction

In the modern world, in which borders are becoming more and more a conditional phenomenon, and population migration is becoming more commonplace, the relevance and significance of the issue of cross-cultural communication is growing. The removal of certain restrictions on free movement around the world puts the service sector in a leading position, and therefore it becomes one of the key sectors of the world economy, a necessary condition for the comfortable existence of a human of modern civilization. Accordingly, the requirements for the quality of training of service specialists, who must be able to respond professionally and adequately to today's challenges, are increasing.

Despite the globalization of its activities, the service sector is based on national, cultural, geographical and natural differences of countries and continents, which allows it to act as a reliable means of establishing intercultural communication.

Both This requires future service specialists to have the appropriate cross-cultural communication skills as a mandatory component of their training. These skills determine the ability to establish and implement effective interaction among members of different cultural, religious and ideological communities, and mastering them becomes as necessary as having a general education, computer literacy, knowledge of a foreign language.

The importance of intercultural mutual understanding is also emphasized by world international organizations. In the UN Charter (UN Charter, 1945), the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO (Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO, 1978), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (International Convention, 1969) and other legal documents laid down the conceptual foundations of multicultural interaction. In fact, one of the priorities of the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 is "promoting active intercultural dialogue" through education, science, culture, communication and information (UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021, 2014), and in the report of this international organization "Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue" emphasizes the need for education and awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the article are to present the results of experimental work related to the formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future specialists in the field of service. In our study, we sought to find answers to the following questions:

- I. What is the essence of cross-cultural communication of service specialists?
- II. What components determine the set of cross-cultural communication skills of specialists in this field?
- III. What organizational and pedagogical conditions ensure the effectiveness of the process of forming cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists?

At the same time, the article presents a structural and functional model of the formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists.

3. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted on the basis of two higher educational institutions of Ukraine. A total of 283 students were involved in the experimental study, of which 106 participated in the formative experiment: 55 people were in the experimental group and 51 people in the control group, as well as 28 university professors and 16 service specialists. The theoretical foundations of the formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists were studied through analysis, generalization, systematization and comparison of scientific information on the research problem. Construction of the structural and functional model of the specified pedagogical process was carried out on the basis of a modeling method, and development of its educational and methodical maintenance provided use of the content analysis of normative documents, educational and methodical materials.

To develop the skills of cross-cultural communication of future specialists in the field of service and testing the effectiveness of organizational and pedagogical conditions that ensure the effectiveness of this purposeful process, a pedagogical experiment was used, supplemented by the necessary observations.

The level of formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists was determined using the developed set of diagnostic techniques in accordance with the established criteria and indicators (Table 1).

Table 1. Criteria, indicators and tools for diagnosing the level of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists

Criterion	Indicators	Diagnostic tools
Cognitive	Understanding the features and characteristics of world cultural communities	1. Comprehensive test for diagnosing the level of cross-cultural awareness using the tasks of N. Todorova and M. Soter
	Understanding of the basic techniques of verbal, nonverbal and paraverbal communication	
	Knowledge of a foreign language at a level sufficient for intercultural communication	
	Understanding of behavioral and psychological characteristics due to belonging to a particular culture	
Activity	Ability to identify and analyze the facts of cultural differences	1. Modernized scale of intercultural efficiency of P. Tamra and H. Chen. 2. Diagnostic tasks on cross-cultural interaction
	Ability to adequately interpret verbal, nonverbal and paraverbal information	
	Ability to use a foreign language for effective cross-cultural communication	

	Ability to distinguish behavioral and psychological features due to belonging to a certain culture	
	Ability to apply appropriate situations of intercultural communication techniques, styles and behavioral strategies for establishing contact, resolving conflicts, reaching consensus	
Personal	Ability to be tolerant of representatives of other cultural communities	1. Modernized scale of intercultural sensitivity of H. Chen and V. Starosta. 2. Test of communicative tolerance of V. Boyko. 3. Questionnaire of V. Boyko on empathic abilities. 4. A. Karpov's reflexivity test
	Ability to apply decentration in the process of cross-cultural communication	
	Ability to understand the feelings, emotions, emotional experience of a person representing another culture, and empathize with it	
	Ability to use reflexive skills to correct one's own communicative behavior in a cross-cultural context	

To generalize and compare the indicators of the formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists we used the coefficient of the level of formation of the studied skills (C), which was calculated for each criterion by formula (1):

$$C = \frac{m \cdot x_m + p \cdot x_p + n \cdot x_n}{Q} \quad (1),$$

where C is the coefficient of the level of formation of skills; m - the number of students whose results correspond to a high level of the sign; x_m - specific weight of the indicator m; p - the number of students whose results correspond to the average level of the criterion; x_p - specific weight of the indicator p; n - the number of students whose results correspond to a low level of the criterion; x_n - specific weight of the indicator n; Q is the total number of students, which is equal to the sum of m, p and n. The use of the specific weight of indicators 1 - for m, 0.5 - for p, 0 - for n allowed to obtain the final formula (2), which was used to calculate the coefficient of formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists:

$$C = \frac{m + 0.5p}{Q} \quad (2).$$

Mathematical and statistical analysis of the obtained data was performed using the program for statistical data processing SPSS Statistics 23.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The essence of cross-cultural communication of service specialists

The concept of cross-cultural communication was first introduced by E. Hall (1959) and was associated with a special area of human relations, where culture and communication are combined. According to the researcher, culture is essentially communication, and vice versa - communication is culture, because it is through communication in culture that the individual self-identifies, interacts with society, coordinates their activities with other individuals, socializes and feels part of a single cultural community, exchanges achievements with other representatives of their own and other cultural groups (Hall, 1959).

In the modern scientific world, there is a number of definitions of "cross-cultural communication", which is considered by researchers as:

- the ideal goal that a person should strive for in their desire to best and most effectively adapt to the world around them (Trager & Hall, 1954);
- a set of different forms, styles, types and kinds of interaction among representatives of different cultural groups (Hrushevitska, Popkov, & Sadokhin, 2003; Frick, 2013);
- adequate mutual understanding of the participants of the communicative act belonging to different cultures (Vereshchagin & Kostomarov, 2005; Stepina, 2001);
- communication among people who have different cultural perceptions of symbolic systems (Samovar, Poter, & McDaniel, 2010);
- the process of direct interaction of cultures, which takes place within the mismatched national stereotypes of thinking and behavior, which significantly affects the mutual understanding of the parties in communication (Krasnykh, 1997).

In a general sense, this concept is interpreted as a process of communication in a multicultural space (Borysko, 2018), i.e. cross-cultural communication is when the subjects of this process are representatives of different linguistic and cultural communities. In this case, the difference in the perception of cultural meanings and

symbolic systems should be significant enough to change the communicative event and expand the cultural picture of the world of participants in the interaction (Tanhalycheva, 2012). Cross-cultural communication also appears as the interaction of two or more value systems that influence one another. The result of the communication of these value systems is the creation of unified schemes of interpretation of interacting cultures (Rohacheva, 2003).

Cross-cultural communication involves a stable mutual understanding of participants in the communication process belonging to different ethnic groups, their interaction, patience and the desire to establish interethnic understanding in various spheres of public life. It is identified with a special type of culture, the characteristic features of which are the interaction of ethnocultures, ectocultural competence of the individual, tolerance, efforts to reach agreement in all areas of interethnic communication (Samoilenko, 2013). Therefore, the language of interethnic communication, ethnic identity and interethnic consent are integral components of cross-cultural communication (Andreeva & Andreeva, 2013).

In the various activities of service specialists, cross-cultural communication is a mandatory component, as it is implemented in the context of different cultures and for success requires adequate understanding and consideration of the specific features of a particular cultural environment. Accordingly, the professional training of future specialists in this field should be aimed at forming in them an understanding of the diversity and differences of existing cultures, respect and tolerance for their manifestations, desire and willingness to resolve possible contradictions and conflicts in cross-cultural communication. After all, successful and effective communication with representatives of other cultures is impossible without knowledge and understanding of the specific features and differences of their cultures, as well as practical skills of intercultural communication.

Professional activity of service specialists takes place in constant interaction with service consumers, so one of the main criteria of their professionalism is the ability to communicate, establish mutual understanding with clients and colleagues, prevent conflicts and have strategies and tactics to overcome them. The process of providing a service is similar to the process of communication, as it involves those who offer the service and those who need and order it (Rudenko, 2015). At the same time, the service specialist should find out what the client needs, if necessary, understand the essence of the problem, identify and suggest ways to solve it. A specific feature of communication in the field of service is that in the process of communication, interaction, coordination or dialogue, the specialist should facilitate and accelerate the provision of relevant services through the impact on the consumer and their behavior. The service worker acts as an assistant, a kind of facilitator (Lychak, 2009), the purpose of whom is the maximum satisfaction of consumer needs.

RQ1 The essence of cross-cultural communication of service specialists is the process of exchanging a variety of information aimed at meeting the needs of the consumer by achieving mutual understanding and effective interaction among representatives of different cultural groups.

4.2. Characteristics of cross-cultural communication skills of service specialists

Cross-cultural communication is based on a system of knowledge, skills and abilities (both linguistic and extralinguistic), thanks to which the future service specialist must be ready for successful communication with representatives of foreign culture and able to implement it on the basis of tolerance, mutual respect and mutual empathy. We consider the actual ability of cross-cultural communication as mastering certain ways of implementing mental and practical actions in a situation of intercultural interaction, which are formed in the process of cross-cultural activity on the basis of acquired knowledge and characterized by awareness, focus and emotional attitude.

Given the understanding of the communication process as a complex structure containing informative, interactive and perceptual components (Andreeva, 1994; Kolominsky, 2010; Persikova, 2011), we consider it appropriate to explore the skills of cross-cultural communication of service specialists as a holistic complex consisting of three components, each of which correlates with a certain component of the structure of the communication process.

The first component includes cross-cultural communication skills that perform an information and communication function in the process of cross-cultural communication. It corresponds to the informative component of the communication process and provides such skills as: to identify and analyze the facts of cultural differences; adequately interpret verbal, nonverbal and paraverbal information; use a foreign language for effective cross-cultural communication. The second component is the skills of cross-cultural behavior, which perform a regulatory function. This component correlates with the interactive component of communication, including in particular the ability to: distinguish between behavioral and psychological characteristics due to belonging to a particular culture; apply appropriate intercultural communication situations, techniques, styles and behavioral strategies to establish contact, resolve conflicts and reach consensus. The third component contains socio-perceptual skills that ensure the establishment of effective interpersonal contact in cross-cultural communication. It corresponds to the perceptual component of the communication process and combines the following skills: to be tolerant of representatives of other cultural communities; to apply decentration in the process of cross-cultural

communication; to understand and empathize with the feelings, emotions, personal experience of a person representing another culture; apply reflexive abilities to correct their own communicative behavior in a cross-cultural context (Fig. 1).

RQ2 The complex of cross-cultural communication skills of service specialists is defined by such components as: cross-cultural communication skills, cross-cultural behavior skills and socio-perceptual skills.

The problem of forming cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists is extremely important, because in their professional activities they will be constantly involved in diverse and dissimilar national cultures.

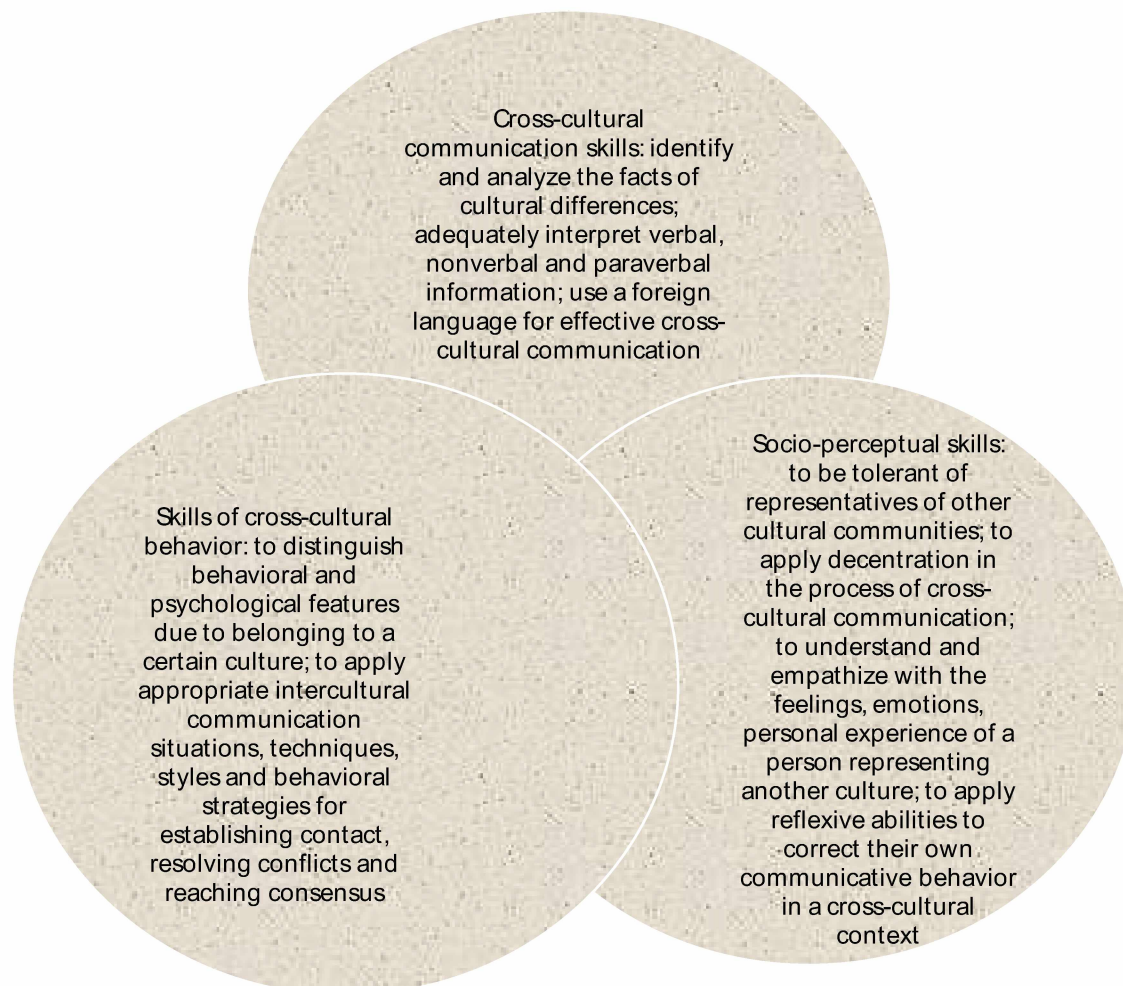


Figure 1. A set of cross-cultural communication skills of service specialists

4.3. Structural and functional model of formation of cross-cultural communication skills of service specialists

The formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists was carried out on the basis of the developed structural and functional model, which is represented by a set of components and relationships among them that determine the content structure of this pedagogical process. The experimental model consists of target, organizational, information and technological and diagnostic-effective blocks (Fig. 2).

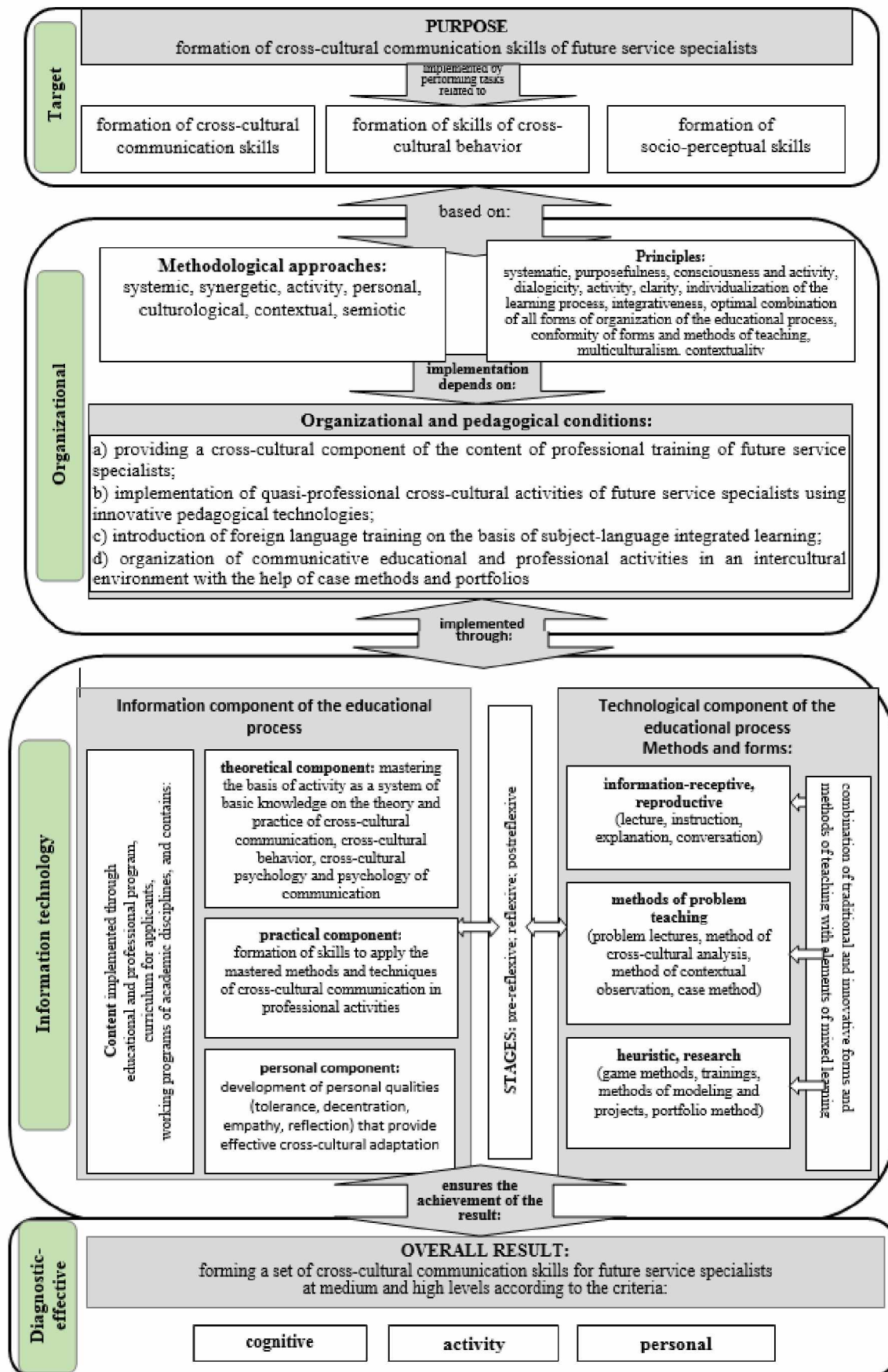


Figure 2. Structural and functional model of cross-cultural communication skills formation of future service specialists

The target unit defines the purpose of the study and the tasks through which it is implemented. The tasks of professional training correspond to the components of cross-cultural communication skills of service specialists.

The organizational unit reflects the methodological approaches, principles and organizational and pedagogical conditions. The methodological approaches on the basis of which the formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists was carried out are systemic, synergetic, activity, personal, culturological, contextual and semiotic. According to them, the main requirements for the organization of this pedagogical process were the principles of systematization, purposefulness, consciousness and activity, dialogue, functioning, clarity, individualization of the learning process, integrativeness, optimal combination of all forms of educational process, conformity of forms and methods of teaching, multiculturalism, contextuality. Determining organizational and pedagogical conditions that ensure the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists was based on the analysis of the nature and structure of the communication process, understanding the relationship and interaction of all components of the studied skills, and previous experience. In this case, organizational and pedagogical conditions are considered as a result of joint actions of participants in the educational process to achieve the goals and objectives of training and factors influencing its effectiveness (Bykov, 2008; Naumchuk, 2019; Naumchuk, Sydoruk, & Makovetska, 2020).

RQ3 The effectiveness of the process of forming cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists provide the following organizational and pedagogical conditions:

- a) providing a cross-cultural component of the content of professional training of future service specialists;
- b) implementation of quasi-professional cross-cultural activities of future service specialists using innovative pedagogical technologies;
- c) introduction of foreign language training on the basis of subject-language integrated learning;
- d) organization of communicative educational and professional activities in an intercultural environment with the help of case methods and portfolios.

The information and technological block covers the content of the process of formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists, its stages, as well as the established forms and methods of teaching. The content of this process was implemented through an educational and professional program, curriculum for applicants and work programs of academic disciplines and includes theoretical, practical and personal components. The implementation of each organizational and pedagogical conditions was carried out in accordance with the components of the content of education and provided for the introduction of various forms (lectures, seminars and practical classes, internship and production training, independent work of students) and teaching methods (cross-cultural analysis, contextual observation, case studies, modeling and projects, game methods, trainings, portfolios, etc.) in its phased (pre-reflexive, reflexive, post-reflexive) deployment.

The diagnostic-effective block of the model contains criteria (cognitive, activity, personal), indicators and levels (high, medium, low) of the formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists.

4.4. Experimental verification of the effectiveness of the formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists

The results of the initial diagnosis at the ascertaining stage of the experiment showed that the formation of cross-cultural communication skills in general and separately for each of the criteria (cognitive, activity, personal) of students of experimental and control groups was almost the same and was mostly at medium and low levels.

The formative stage of the experiment involved the implementation in the experimental group of the proposed organizational and pedagogical conditions for the formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists by implementing appropriate pedagogical measures, forms and methods, which are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Measures, forms and methods of formation of cross-cultural communication skills in future service specialists

Organizational and pedagogical conditions	Formative measures	Forms and methods
Providing a cross-cultural component of the content of professional training of future service specialists	Special course "Cross-cultural communication in the field of service"	Briefing, explanation, problem lectures, lectures-dialogues, visualization lectures, method of cross-cultural analysis, method of contextual observation (cultural capsule of the country, mental maps of the country),
	Topic "National mentality" in the discipline "Tourist local lore"	
	Topic "Mentality of the population of the regions of Ukraine" in the discipline "Tourist Resources of Ukraine";	
	Topics "Psychology of communication",	

	"Theory of communicative adaptation" in the discipline "Fundamentals of communication in the field of service"	method of analysis of specific situations (for example, cultural assimilator), project method (for example, "Precedent phenomena of the selected country")
Implementation of quasi-professional cross-cultural activities of future service specialists using innovative pedagogical technologies	Business game "Preparation for the opening of an international hotel"	Method of analysis of problem and assessment situations
	Training in the development of cross-cultural receptivity; training in the formation of nonverbal communication skills	Game methods, training
Introduction of foreign language training on the basis of subject-language integrated learning	Increase in the curriculum of the total amount of credits allocated for the study of a foreign language;	Methods of schematization (intelligence maps, schemes, diagrams)
	Introduction of elements of subject-language integrated education during teaching of separate modules of disciplines "Tourist country studies", "Resort resources of the world", "Foreign language of professional and communicative orientation" and special course "Cross-cultural communication in the field of service"	Scaffolding method
		Application of information and communication technologies (use of podcasts and video podcasts on various topics related to future professional activity)
Organization of communicative educational and professional activities in an intercultural environment with the help of case methods and portfolio	Increase in the curriculum of the total amount of credits allocated for various types of internships	Case method, method of incident detection and analysis
	Development of an individual task for foreign production training, which is performed according to a certain structure and presented during the report	Portfolio method

At the control stage of the experiment, a re-diagnosis of the level of formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists in the experimental and control groups was performed. Having analysed the dynamics of indicators of coefficients of formation of cross-cultural communication skills according to each of the criteria of students of experimental and control groups, we can state that indicators of coefficients of formation of researched skills of students of experimental group significantly increased by all criteria: from 0.16 on activity (from 0.3 to 0.46) and personal (from 0.36 to 0.52) to 0.19 on cognitive (from 0.25 to 0.44). In the control group, the indicators of the coefficients of cross-cultural communication skills also increased. However, these changes were not significant (see Table 3).

Table 3. Dynamics of coefficients of formation of skills of cross-cultural communication of future specialists in the field of service

Level	Experimental group				Контрольна група			
	Ascertainment stage		Control stage		Ascertainment stage		Control stage	
	people	C	people	C	people	C	people	C
Cognitive criterion								
high	3	0,25	7	0,44	3	0,25	4	0,28
medium	22		34		20		21	
low	30		14		28		26	
total	55		55		51		51	
Activity criterion								
high	8	0,30	15	0,46	8	0,32	9	0,34
medium	51		71		49		52	
low	51		24		45		41	
total	110		110		102		102	

Personal criterion								
high	26	0,36	48	0,52	25	0,38	27	0,39
medium	108		134		100		104	
low	86		38		79		73	
total	220		220		204		204	
General coefficient								
		0,30		0,47		0,32		0,34

To assess the general level of formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists, the general coefficient of formation of the studied skills is determined, which is the arithmetic mean of the coefficients according to cognitive, activity and personal criteria. The correspondence of the coefficient indicator to the level of cross-cultural communication skills formation was determined on the following scale: low - $0 \leq C \leq 0.34$, medium - $0.35 \leq C \leq 0.67$, high $0.68 \leq C \leq 1.0$.

The general coefficient of formation of cross-cultural communication skills of students of the experimental group due to the introduction of organizational and pedagogical conditions of formation of these skills in the educational process changed from low at the ascertaining stage of the study to the medium level at the control stage (from 0.30 to 0.47). Instead, the overall level of formation of the studied skills in the control group according to the coefficient remained low, increasing only by 0.02 (from 0.32 to 0.34) (see Fig. 3).

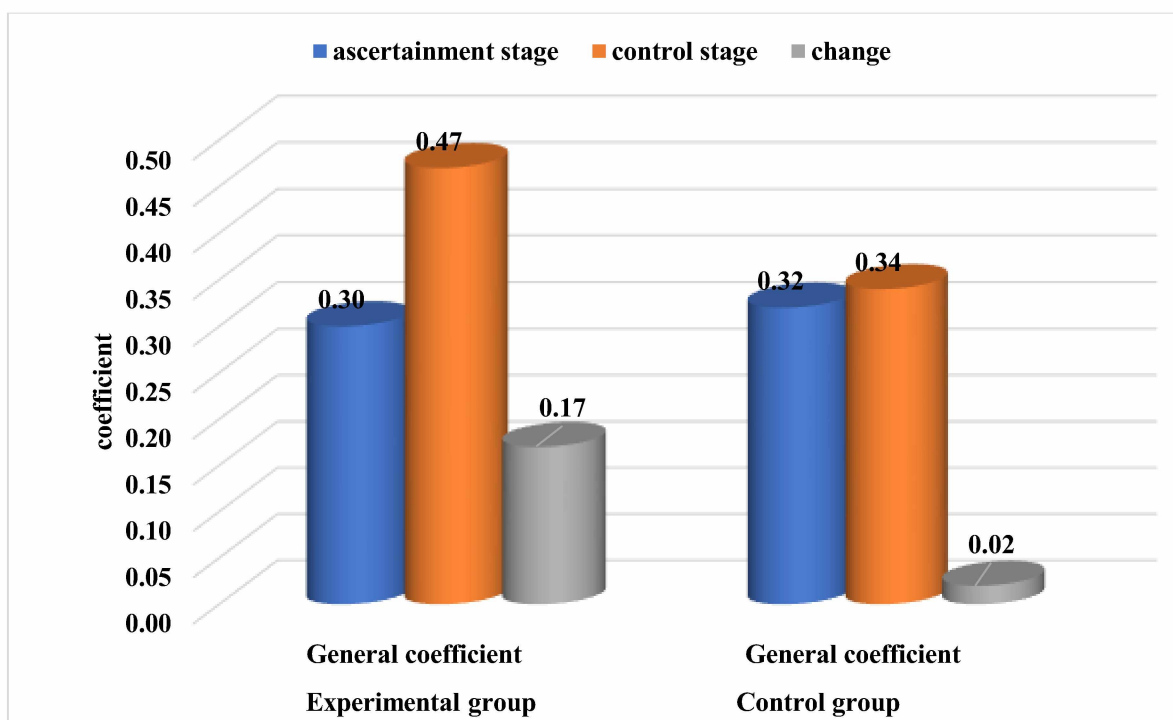


Figure 3. Dynamics of the general coefficients of formation of skills of cross-cultural communication of future specialists in the field of service

Thus, the experimental test confirmed the effectiveness of certain organizational and pedagogical conditions, the implementation of which in the training of higher education was ensured by the introduction of the proposed structural and functional model of cross-cultural communication skills of future service specialists.

6. Conclusions

Cross-cultural communication of service specialists is a socially and professionally conditioned process of exchanging information of various contents and nature, provided by numerous means and aimed at maximum satisfaction of consumer needs by achieving mutual understanding and effective interaction among representatives of different cultural groups.

Components of the complex of cross-cultural communication skills of service specialists, which is determined by the structure of the communication process, are: 1) cross-cultural communication skills: to identify and analyze the facts of cultural differences; adequately interpret verbal, nonverbal and paraverbal information; use a foreign language for effective cross-cultural communication; 2) the ability of cross-cultural behavior: to distinguish between

behavioral and psychological characteristics due to belonging to a particular culture; to apply appropriate situations of intercultural communication techniques, styles and behavioral strategies for establishing contact, resolving conflicts, reaching consensus; 3) socio-perceptual skills: to be tolerant of representatives of other cultural communities; to apply decentration in the process of cross-cultural communication; to understand and empathize with the feelings, emotions, personal experience of a person representing another culture; to apply reflexive abilities to correct their own communicative behavior in a cross-cultural context.

Proper formation of cross-cultural communication skills of future specialists in the field of service involves compliance with a number of organizational and pedagogical conditions, namely: providing cross-cultural component of the content of professional training of future service specialists; realization of quasi-professional cross-cultural activity of future specialists in the field of service with the use of innovative pedagogical technologies; introduction of foreign language training on the basis of subject-language integrated learning; organization of communicative educational and professional activities in an intercultural environment with the help of case methods and portfolios.

The implementation of these organizational and pedagogical conditions is based on the introduction in the process of training future specialists in the field of service structural and functional model of formation of higher education skills of cross-cultural communication, including target, organizational, information technology and diagnostic-performance blocks.

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