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THE SELECTION OF KEY COMPETENCES FOR STUDENTS OF ECONOMICS

Abstract. The article considers the key competences that the future economists should possess in order to compete successfully in today's so volatile business environment, be able to work in cross-cultural contexts, be adaptable to changes brought about by the wide use of information technology in the contemporary economy and life as a whole.

Key words: key competences, communicative competence, information competence, cross-cultural competence, emotional competence.

Introduction. The further development of the information and communication society radically changes approaches to education in general and methods of training economists in particular. A modern economist should be able to work in a new socio-economic environment, interact effectively with business partners from different business cultures. S. Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics aims at "the formation of a competent specialist who has not only mastered a certain amount of knowledge, but is also able to use it effectively in his/her own professional activity. "Competence" of a specialist is understood as his/her ability to show a creative approach to solving production tasks and, ultimately, to create new knowledge that serves as the basis for making innovations." [2, p. 39].

Today, the concept of a student's competence, which is determined by many factors, is gaining relevance, since, according to many international experts, competences are the indicators that allow determining a graduate's readiness for life, their further personal development and ability to actively participate in society. From the point of view of education, which is oriented towards the modern labour market, one of the most important priorities today is the ability to operate technologies and knowledge that will satisfy the needs of the information society and prepare young people for new roles in this society. That is why it is important nowadays not only to

be able to operate with one's own knowledge, but also to be ready to change and adapt to the new needs of the labour market, to operate and manage information, to act actively, to make quick decisions, to learn throughout life. The progressive educational community today sets before itself a new task – to form the student's ability to learn.

Presentation of the main material. As the analysis of experience of the educational systems in many countries shows, one of the ways to update the content of education and educational technologies, align them with modern needs, and integrate them into the global educational space is to focus educational programmes on the competency-based approach and create effective mechanisms for its introduction.

According to modern teachers, the acquisition of vital competences can give a person the opportunity to navigate in modern society, the information space, the rapid development of the labor market, and further education. Competency-based approach to the formation of the content of education has become a new conceptual guideline for schools and universities abroad and generates many discussions both at the international and national levels of different countries.

The introduction of key competences into the content of education and the introduction of their indicators into the system of monitoring the quality of education in European countries is taking place gradually, accompanied by a wide discussion and a thorough scientific and didactic toolkit. Since the concept of key competences is quite multifaceted, its definition and interpretation are constantly the subject of discussions.

International experts in education consider the concept of competence as general or key skills, basic skills, fundamental learning paths, key qualifications, cross-curricular skills or abilities, key concepts, supporting knowledge.

In their opinion, competences include:

- the ability of the individual to perceive and respond to individual and social needs;
- a complex of attitudes, values, knowledge and skills.

Thus, a modern person who has graduated from high school or a higher education institution should not only master a wide range of knowledge and skills, but also have the ability to apply this knowledge and skills in new situations.

Experts define the concept of competence as the ability to successfully satisfy individual and social needs, to act and fulfill assigned tasks. Each competence is built on a combination of mutually relevant cognitive attitudes and practical skills, values, emotions, behavioral components, knowledge and skills, all that can be mobilized for active action.

According to experts, competence is manifested in the activity of an individual in various contexts (for example, in socio-economic and political environments). At the same time, not only the school or higher educational institution are responsible for the acquisition of the necessary competences by the individual; their formation is also influenced by family, work, mass media, religious and cultural organizations, etc.

Therefore, the concept of key competences is used to define those that enable an individual to effectively participate in many social spheres and that contribute to improving the quality of society and contribute to personal success, which can be applied to many spheres of life. Key competences constitute a basic set of the most general concepts, which should be detailed into a complex of knowledge, abilities, skills, values, and attitudes by academic fields and life spheres of students.

As international experts note, the context of their application plays a significant role in determining key competences. Regardless of countries and societies, citizens perform the same functions throughout their lives. Since the majority of adults are at the same time workers and students, parents and caregivers, participants in various types of leisure, political, cultural and other types of activities, the main function of society is to enable all citizens to become full members of these various communities; cross-cutting and universal nature of all categories of key competences, beneficial for all.

Having outlined the main approaches to defining the concept of key competences, foreign experts highlight their main feature: key competences should be favorable for all members of society, that is, suitable for everyone regardless of gender, class, race, culture, marital status and language. In addition, the key competences must be consistent not only with the ethnic, economic and cultural values and conventions of

the respective society, but also correspond to the priorities and goals of education and have a person-oriented character.

The structure of key competences for lifelong learning is also proposed, i.e., it actually defines the main guidelines for forming the necessary professional qualities of a university graduate and their further improvement throughout life. The proposed eight key competences can be conditionally divided into two main groups: the first group includes two competences of language communication in the native language and one of the foreign languages, as well as two essential competences – in mathematics and fundamentals of sciences (Mathematical) and digital competence or information and communication competence (ICC); the second group includes four competences that are more in line with the personal and social qualities of the graduate (preserving the ability to learn throughout life, social and civic competence, active life position, preservation of cultural traditions and tolerance for representatives of other ethnic groups). As you can see, in this recommendation structure, a special place is given to competence in the field of native language and at least one of the foreign languages, i.e. languages of international communication. Naturally, for representatives of these sciences and teachers of non-language universities, this fact is of particular importance. As well as the actualization of competence in the field of a foreign language (English) as the language of international communication. In some non-linguistic universities (S. Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics) for many years, in-depth English language study programmes have been practiced for students of many specialties (International Economics, International Management, International Business, International Relations, Tourism, Business Administration, Innovation Management, Logistics, Media-communications, Computer Sciences, etc). Students of these specialties are highly motivated to study a foreign language in depth, since the university has many student exchange programmes, summer student practice programmes in Europe and the USA, and "double degree" programmes. Knowledge of a foreign language also gives them a competitive advantage in employment and obtaining interesting and fulfilling work.

The concept of modernization of Ukrainian education states that higher education should form an integral system of universal knowledge and skills: the ability to work with information and with the text, highlight the main idea, conduct a search for the necessary information in a foreign language text; analyze the material, make generalizations, conclusions, based on one's life educational experience, erudition and creativity; the ability to work with a variety of reference material; the ability to generate ideas, the ability to find not one, but many options for solving a problem, which are significant in their importance, informative, interesting for others, relevant; the ability to predict the consequences of a decision; the ability to conduct a discussion, listen and hear the interlocutor, advocate his/her point of view, supported by arguments; the ability to find a compromise with the interlocutor; the ability to concisely express their opinions by means of a foreign language, to express one's attitude to the subject of research, to the researched problems. These competences make up the information, research and language aspects of the project activity and contribute to the formation of key competences that determine the quality of modern education.

It has been proven that competences are formed in the process of learning not only at the university, but also under the influence of family, friends, work, politics, religion, and culture. In this regard, the implementation of the competency-based approach depends on the entire educational and cultural situation in which the student lives and develops. Practice shows that one of the educational technologies supporting a competency-based approach in education is the project method. Thanks to this method, students will gain foreign language communicative competence. [4] Foreign language communicative competence means the ability to establish and maintain the necessary contacts with other people, a certain set of knowledge, abilities and skills that ensure effective communication in a foreign language.

The acquisition of foreign language professionally-oriented competence will allow the future specialist to perform various types of work with original literature in the specialty, namely: understand the content, be able to obtain the necessary information, translate or abstract the necessary material; have the skills of dialogic speech, as well as possess coherent monologic speech at the level of both

independently-prepared and unprepared speech, understand dialogic and monologic speech within the limits of the studied material; have basic two-way translation skills; use dictionaries and reference material when translating; know the basics of keeping business documentation in a foreign language, conduct business correspondence, negotiations, etc; be able to express thoughts concisely and precisely in both languages; be able to use the means of modern information technologies during communication and transmission of information.

Foreign language communicative competence includes three main components: 1) linguistic competence - grammatical, lexical and semantic; 2) socio-cultural competence and 3) cross-cultural competence.

Linguistic competence implies knowledge and the ability to use the grammatical resources of the language, the use of lexical tools on various topics and disciplines, the students' ability to understand and control the organization of the content of the text, answer and ask questions on the text, the ability to participate in the discussion of the main ideas of the text, and participate in general discussions on the topic, the ability to independently express their thoughts, defend their point of view, and make presentations on the studied topics, etc. A special mention should be made of the ability to perform in public. This competence is gaining more popularity in modern life. Modern specialists should master the skills of public speaking, since business presentation in the workplace has become the norm, and students have to be able to independently prepare and present any material in front of the audience, be able to give answers to possible questions.

Socio-cultural competence presupposes students familiarity with the national and cultural specificity of speech behavior and the ability to use elements of the socio-cultural context relevant to the generation and perception of speech from the point of view of native speakers. These elements are customs, rules, norms, social conventions, rituals, social stereotypes, country knowledge, etc. For example, the formation of socio-cultural competence requires not only the knowledge of country studies as a complex of scientific disciplines, but also the so-called background knowledge, i.e., knowledge about the country and its culture known to all residents of a given country

(as opposed to universal or regional knowledge). Features of the reflection of real reality in specific languages create language pictures of the world, the inconsistency of which is the main obstacle to achieving full mutual understanding of the participants of the discourse. A good command of background knowledge of foreign languages involves a foreigner in a foreign-speaking community, gives him/her "cultural literacy", and vice versa – the lack of cultural literacy makes him/her an outsider who cannot understand what native speakers are about in a spoken or written language communication. When considering socio-cultural competence, one should talk not just about background knowledge of country studies, but about cultural and country studies competence as a component of socio-cultural competence.

Cross-cultural competence refers to effective and responsible behavior in relationships between representatives of different cultures. Sometimes, this concept is equated with cross-cultural communicative competence, which refers to personal qualities. In particular, the ability to empathize and listen attentively, to perceive positively and show the desire to communicate with representatives of other cultures, to be accommodating in relationships, to feel the desire to learn new experiences characteristic of other cultures. [1]

Cross-cultural competence is interconnected with the concept of cross-cultural dialogue, the success of which depends directly on the level of competence of the parties involved. However, regardless of the effectiveness of the dialogue, competent cross-cultural communicators certainly get satisfaction from the process itself, because they acquire new knowledge from the experience of communication and the ability to understand the views of other people.

It should be noted that besides the above-mentioned competences there is also a very important competence that is gaining popularity today, namely – emotional competence. Emotional competence, like emotional intelligence and leadership, are concepts that are now actively used in the HR environment. But they should be distinguished, although they are interconnected.

Emotional intelligence is a set of human qualities that form an emotional response to external situations and contribute to the analysis of revealed emotions for decision-making.

There are four qualities that comprise emotional intelligence:

- self-awareness;
- awareness of relationships;
- self-control;
- empathy.

In turn, emotional competence is the ability to demonstrate all the above-described qualities in a team to evaluate one's work, self-development and healthy competition with colleagues.

This type of competence is a kind of reflection that can only manifest itself in society. This distinguishes competence from intelligence. Emotional leadership is a type of leadership that is developed on the basis of high emotional competence in the team, the ability to motivate oneself and others to achieve better results, taking into account the emotions, state and opinion of colleagues.

Conclusion. Therefore, the formation of a high level of competences of future economists will ensure their internal motivation as a source of self-development; their self-organization as a condition for mastering a holistic activity; their self-differentiation, which will allow each student to determine his or her own level of competence development in order to achieve personally meaningful results. A competency-based approach to professional training of future economists will contribute to the effectiveness of the educational process and high productivity of their future professional activities.

So, a modern specialist must master a greater number of various competences in order to be competitive in the new conditions of modern life and a competitive environment on the labour market.

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