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FORMATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS' SOCIAL COMPETENCE SWOT-ANALYSIS

The paper presents the results of SWOT-analysis of social competence of foreign students to define strengths and weaknesses of students, opportunities and threats to environment which influence the process of social competence formation.

Vocational education aims at professional development and personal formation; the student acquires certain knowledge, skills, and competences that allow to participate in activities of social and working life. Higher educational establishments face the task of helping foreign students to become socially competent, i.e. to master a high level of social competence. Formation of social competence of students was studied by many Ukrainian and foreign scientists, but the social competence of foreign students has not been researched and there have been no attempts to analyse the initial data (internal and external) that influence its formation. Before choosing the means for the formation and development of social competence, it is necessary to assess its initial level, the potential of foreign students, also external environmental factors that affect this process. For this purpose, SWOT-analysis can be conducted. The SWOT-analysis method was primarily used in political and corporate management for strategic planning; for pedagogical purpose it helps to get the general knowledge about the current state, development of the situation, and then for creation of a model of behavioural strategies in the educational process. At the first stage of the analysis, information is collected about the internal factors (advantages and disadvantages) of the investigated object and about the external factors (favourable and threatening) that affect its activities. The collected data are analysed according to the following vectors: strengthening of internal advantages by external opportunities; elimination of external threats due to internal advantages; overcoming internal disadvantages due to external opportunities; promoting the elimination of internal weaknesses. To reveal the strengths and weaknesses and to identify environmental factors that influence the formation of social competence of foreign students, a survey was conducted in Dnipro State Agrarian and Economic University and Alfred Nobel University (Dnipro) among foreign students and teachers who work with them. From the SWOT-analysis it is seen that the motivation of foreign students, the willingness to be engaged in extracurricular activities are the drivers of the process of forming social competence; foreign students are tolerant to other cultures, they are ready to improve their communication with others. The maximum attention teachers should pay to the issues of social and emotional intelligence, communication skills; and also the students should be acquainted with the social roles of the new environment. Regarding external factors of influence, the issues of pedagogical support of foreign students and lack of their involvement in extracurricular activities need to be corrected. Also, mixed groups can be the opportunity to improve the situation with involving foreign students into extracurricular activities. Highly qualified teachers and general humanization of the educational process are the factors to be relied upon in forming social competence of foreign students.

On the basis of the given research the pedagogical conditions for the formation of social competence of foreign students can be formulated and the methods for successful educational process are chosen.

Key words: individual social competence, vocational education, higher educational establishment.

У статті наведено результати SWOT-аналізу соціальної компетентності іноземних студентів. Соціальна компетентність – це інтегрована здатність особистості, вона містить різноманітні ключові компетентності; соціальні чинники відіграють значну роль у навчально-виховному процесі вищої школи, оскільки заклади вищої освіти готують фахівців, які мають будувати взаємодію із суспільством та змінювати його. Перед вибором засобів формування соціальної компетентності необхідно оцінити її вихідний рівень, потенціал іноземних студентів, а також фактори зовнішнього середовища, які впливають на цей процес. Для цього можна провести SWOT-аналіз. SWOT-аналіз спрямований на виявлення та аналіз потенціалу іноземних студентів і оцінку особливостей освітнього середовища, виявлення впливів на процес формування компетенцій під час здобуття професійної освіти. Дослідження проводили в Дніпровському державному аграрно-економічному університеті та Університеті імені Альфреда Нобеля (м. Дніпро). Для виявлення сильних і слабких сторін іноземних студентів та факторів зовнішнього середовища, які впливають на їхній навчальний процес, було проведено анкетування іноземних студентів та викладачів вищезазначених закладів. Проведене дослідження дозволило оцінити та з'ясувати внутрішні та зовнішні фактори, що впливають на успішний та ефективний процес формування соціальної компетентності. Аналіз показав, що в процесі формування соціальної компетентності викладачі мають спиратися на мотивацію студентів-іноземців, їхнє бажання займатися позааудиторною діяльністю, а також толерантність до інших культур і, як наслідок, готовність працювати в полікультурних групах; крім цього, слід приділяти увагу розвитку соціального та емоційного інтелекту, комунікативних навичок. Серед зовнішніх факторів впливу заслуговують на увагу питання педагогічного супроводу іноземних студентів, також виявлено, що важливе значення має максимально можливе залучення іноземних студентів до позакласної роботи за допомогою змішаних груп; висококваліфіковані викладачі та загальна гуманізація навчального процесу є чинниками, що сприяють успішному формуванню соціальної компетентності іноземних студентів. На підставі проведеного дослідження може бути сформульовано педагогічні умови формування соціальної компетентності іноземних студентів.

Ключові слова: SWOT-аналіз, соціальна компетентність, іноземний студент, професійна освіта.

Introduction. Vocational education aims at professional development and personal formation; the student acquires certain knowledge, skills, abilities in a particular specialty, but becoming a specialist is not possible without acquiring a number of competences that allow to participate effectively in various activities of social and working life. One of the leading tasks of modern higher education is to build such a system of educational space that takes into account not only the professional development of the specialist, but also pays attention to personal development, the formation of socially significant competencies of the student [5, p. 24]. The success of foreign students, their studying results and the level of future professionalism depend significantly on the level of development of their social competence. We agree with Hing Keung Ma who distinguished three important aspects of social competence, they are embodied in building positive and healthy interpersonal relationships and resolving interpersonal conflicts, in the developing of a self-identity in general, and a group as well as national identity in particular, and in the orientation to become a responsible citizen in the society and in the world as a whole [1]. Thus, higher education establishments face the task of helping foreign students to become socially competent, i.e. to master a high level of social competence, different from the already formed in their native cultural environment.

Review of literature. Formation of social competence of students was studied by many Ukrainian and foreign scientists. V. Slot, A. Fuller developed general model of social competence; T. Parsons, M. Argyle (who separated the following components of social competence), N. Hliebova researched structure and content of social maturity; M. Doktorovych, I. Shpychko, H. Khlypavka, O. Subina analysed social competence as key competence for lifelong learning; G. Gedviliene, W. Shahrai, G. Ladd, H.S. Han, K. Kemple studied social competence in the system of vocational education.

Social competence is an integrated ability of person, which contains a variety of other key competencies, namely: spiritual, civic, professional, communicative, language. Social competence includes personal, interpersonal, intercultural competences, it covers all forms of behaviour which help individuals to participate successfully in social and working life; it means physical and mental health, understanding the codes of conduct and manners accepted in particularly society and environment; it is based on collaboration, assertiveness and integrity [2, p. 7–8].

Thus, social factors play a significant role in the educational process of higher education, because professionals are trained who interact with society, change it. That is why the concept of social competence is closely related to professional competence, i.e. without mastering the first it is impossible to master professional competence in full.

Selection of previously unsolved parts of the overall problem. Thus, despite the fact that the issue of social competence has been studied in the works of scholars, the social competence of foreign students has not been researched sufficiently and there have been no attempts to analyse the initial data (internal and external) that influence its formation. Before choosing the means for the formation and development of social competence, it is necessary to assess its initial level, the potential of foreign students, as well as external environmental factors that affect this process. As the methods, pedagogical conditions and criteria for the formation of social competence depend on the potential that students have when starting their education in another country and the conditions of the learning environment that affect this process, it is extremely important to assess correctly the initial data of students and the conditions in which they will study. For this purpose, SWOT analysis can be made to identify and analyse the potential of foreign students and estimate the peculiarities of the environment, in which foreign students are studying in Ukraine, and which influences the formation of competences in the process of obtaining vocational education.

Aim of the article is to conduct SWOT-analysis of social competence of foreign students to define strengths and weaknesses of students, opportunities and threats of environment which influence the process of social competence formation.

Methods of research: analysis and synthesis, diagnostic (questionnaires) to study information about internal and external factors influencing the formation of social competence of foreign students, generalization to form conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of foreign students and external environmental factors.

Presentation of the main material. The SWOT-analysis method was developed by Harvard professor Kenneth Andrews in 1963; he introduced the acronym SWOT and presented a matrix of strategic planning, which is based on the analysis of external and internal factors.

This analysis was primarily used in political and corporate management for operational assessment, for strategic planning, for generalization of knowledge about the current situation, development trends, and then for creation of a model of behavioural strategies in the organization. Evaluation and verification of the responses with the help of SWOT-analysis provides an opportunity to analyse the correctness of the proposed solutions, to support their implementation, to assess possible insufficiencies [4, p. 81].

Acronym SWOT means the following:

S – strength – internal advantages that should be used to the maximum;

W – weaknesses – internal disadvantages that need to be corrected;

O – opportunities – external factors that determine potential chances;

T – threats – external factors that could have potentially negative impact.

The SWOT analysis matrix represents a quality tool for structural description of strategic characteristics of the organization and external environment in which she is and works. Highlighting weaknesses and strengths is a component of the audit of the internal environment of the organization [7, p. 94].

According to I. Oliinyk, adopting SWOT-analysis for pedagogical characteristics, the strengths are considered as a set of personal traits, a synthesis of knowledge, skills and abilities of the student, which contribute to the possibility of research activities. Weaknesses is considered as a reason for slowing down the implementation of research activities. Opportunities are treated as internal resources, personal potential, which contributes to the goals of educational process. The opposite phenomenon is threats – tendencies or events that, in the absence of an appropriate reaction of the individual create obstacles to achieving the goals. The main goal of the technology of SWOT-analysis is to model the spiral of development of competence, namely a trajectory formed as a result of the synthesis of personality strengths and favourable opportunities of external factors [6, p. 163].

At the first stage of the analysis, information is collected about the internal factors (advantages and disadvantages) of the investigated object and about the external factors

(favourable and threatening) that affect its activities. The collected data are entered into the matrix (table 1) and analysed according to the following vectors: strengthening of internal advantages by force of external opportunities; elimination of external threats due to internal advantages; overcoming internal disadvantages due to external opportunities; promoting the elimination of internal weaknesses caused by external threats. Based on the SWOT-analysis results, tasks are formulated, goals are set and methods for achieving these goals are planned [3].

Table 1

Matrix for SWOT-analysis

	strengths	weaknesses
external factors that determine potential chances	assessment of internal advantages under the influence of external opportunities	assessment of internal disadvantages overcome by external opportunities
external factors that could have potentially negative impact	assessment of external threats overcome by advantages	assessment of internal disadvantages under the influence of external threats

To reveal the strengths and weaknesses for the formation of social competence of foreign students, a survey was conducted among foreign students of Dnipro State Agrarian and Economic University and Alfred Nobel University (Dnipro). 112 foreign students were tested. They answered 10 questions: in particular, about understanding of the concept of «social competence», comprehension the importance of obtaining this competence for living and studying abroad, evaluating themselves in social and emotional intelligence, motivation for obtaining social competence, social roles, communicative skills, ability to reflation, skills for team work, involving in extracurricular activities at the university. Strengths and weaknesses for the formation of social competence of foreign students were identified based on their answers.

To identify environmental factors that influence the formation of social competence of foreign students, a survey was created for teachers who work with foreign students. They were asked to evaluate the positive and negative external influences that are significant for the educational process of foreign students; among them humanization of the educational process, sufficient material and technical base of universities, highly qualified teachers, competence approach in conducting educational process, tolerant or intolerant student environment, intensive educational work in universities, distance education, language barrier, lack of pedagogical support for foreign students, diverse social status of students, lack of time were mentioned; and surveyed teachers were able to offer their own ideas about internal and external factors, as they can observe all the problems which students should cope with every day.

19 teachers from Dnipro State Agrarian and Economic University and Alfred Nobel University (Dnipro) were interviewed; with the help of the abovementioned questionnaire, a number of environmental factors which affect positively or negatively the process of forming the social competence of foreign students were formulated.

The data obtained from the processing of students' and teachers' questionnaires became the basis for the formulation of strengths and weaknesses, which reflect the personality of foreign students, as well as the identification of the opportunities and threats, which surround them in the higher educational establishment, to the process of formation of social competence, which is shown in table 2.

After analysing the internal and external positive and negative factors, the matrix for SWOT-analysis of the formation of social competence of foreign students is filled.

The influence of the factors mentioned in the matrix is assessed on a scale from 2 to -2, where 2 – gives the most positive result, 1 – moderately positive influence, 0 – has no special significance, -1 – moderately negative influence and -2 – the most negative result for the formation of social competence of foreign students; and by adding numbers in each of the obtained graphs we get the result in the form of points, which are further compared in order to determine the key factors for evaluating all the aspects and formulating the pedagogical conditions for formation of social competence of foreign students (table 3).

Table 2

SWOT of formation of foreign students' social competence

<p>S strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – motivation of foreign students to form social competence – understanding the need to adapt to a new environment – tolerance for other cultures – willingness to be involved in extracurricular activities – ability to work in a team 	<p>W weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – low level of reflection – underdeveloped emotional intelligence – insufficiently developed social intelligence – insufficient level of communication skills – ignorance of the social roles of the new environment
<p>O opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – mixed groups – highly qualified teachers – sufficient material and technical base of universities – humanization of the educational process 	<p>T threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – significant cultural and religious differences – insufficient involvement in extracurricular activities – lack of pedagogical support for foreign students – intolerant student environment

Table 3

Results of SWOT-analysis of the formation of foreign students' social competence

		Opportunities				Threats				Results
		mixed groups	highly qualified teachers	sufficient material and technical base of universities	humanization of the educational process	significant cultural and religious differences	insufficient involvement in extracurricular activities	lack of pedagogical support for foreign students	intolerant student environment	
Strengths	motivation of foreign students to form social competence	2	1	1	2	1	0	-1	-1	5
	understanding the need to adapt to a new environment	2	1	1	1	1	0	-2	-1	3
	tolerance for other cultures	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
	willingness to be involved in extracurricular activities	2	2	2	2	1	-1	-1	-1	6
	ability to work in a team	2	0	0	1	0	-1	-1	1	2
Weaknesses	low level of reflection	0	1	0	2	-2	0	-1	0	0
	underdeveloped emotional intelligence	0	1	0	1	-2	-1	-2	-1	-4
	insufficiently developed social intelligence	0	1	0	2	-2	-2	-2	-1	-4
	insufficient level of communication skills	1	1	0	1	-1	-2	-2	-1	-3
	lack of knowledge of the social roles of the new environment	1	1	1	1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-4
Results	12	11	5	13	-5	-9	-14	-7	-	

Thus, from the SWOT-analysis it is seen that the motivation of foreign students, the willingness to be engaged in extracurricular activities are the drivers of the process of forming social competence; foreign students are tolerant to other cultures, they are ready to improve their communication with others. The maximum attention teachers should pay to issues of social and emotional intelligence, development of communication skills; as well as students should be acquainted with the social roles of the new environment. The level of their ability to reflection is not satisfied too.

Regarding external factors of influence, the issues of pedagogical support of foreign students and lack of their involvement in extracurricular activities need to be corrected; also teachers need to pay attention to relationships in student groups, because of cultural differences between students cause intolerant conditions. At the same time, mixed groups, where foreign students study with Ukrainian ones, can be the opportunity to improve the situation in case of involving foreign students into extracurricular activities. Highly qualified teachers and general humanization of the educational process are also the factors to be relied upon in forming social competence of foreign students.

Conclusion and discussion. Thus, the SWOT-analysis allowed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of foreign students and external factors that determine the opportunities and threats of the successful process of forming social competence. A survey of foreign students and teachers who work with them was conducted and a matrix of SWOT-analysis was created on the basis of these examination. The analysis showed that teachers for the successful formation of social competence should rely on the motivation of foreign students, their willingness to be engaged in extracurricular activities; and the development of social and emotional intelligence, communication skills should be under the maximum attention.

Among the external factors of influence, the issues of pedagogical support of foreign students need to be taken into account, as well as their possible involvement in extracurricular activities, mixed groups will help this process; highly qualified teachers and the general humanization of the educational process are factors that contribute to the successful process of forming the social competence of foreign students. On the basis of the given research the pedagogical conditions for the formation of social competence of foreign students can be formulated; and the methods for successful educational process are chosen.

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