

Edukacja dorosłych w Polsce i na świecie

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VET – Diverse Facets of Globalisation

Kształcenie i szkolenie zawodowe – oblicza globalizacji

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Słowa kluczowe: kształcenie zawodowe, modernizacja, internacjonalizacja, globalizacja, glocalizacja, umiejętności, kompetencje, rynek pracy.

Abstract

The article examines diverse perspectives of internationalisation in education regarded as a derivative of the globalisation, with a focus on vocational education and training. The issue is viewed through the lens of the culturalist model that involves a discourse of experts that is being formed to implement the various aspects of internationalisation in VET, namely on the policy level, both national and international, as well as on the level of the national and international skills demand and supply, axiology and curricula development. Internationalisation is interpreted as a inherent part of the modern paradigm of VET development and an aim as well as a instrument of ensuring effectiveness and quality of vocational education and training.

Introduction

Currently the discourse about VET internationalization is acquiring a growing prominence in the context of the modern development paradigm. In Russia, like elsewhere in the world, further VET modernization is inseparably linked with internationalization, which is explicitly stated in the Strategy of Workforce Development adopted by the RF Ministry of Education and Science in 2013. However to successfully proceed along the

internationalization path it is essential to provide it with a sound theoretical and research foundation. To this end, special attention is given to the exploration of the theories and practices of internationalization that have been elaborated in this area internationally. The given article carries an analysis of key theoretical aspects underpinning the internationalization discourse as it has been evolving internationally.

As a rule, two on-going processes, namely globalisation and internationalisation are viewed in their interrelationship. It is common knowledge that globalisation as an attribute of post-modernity has brought about emergence of the knowledge-based economy characterised by a number of parametres, one of which is internationalisation of all societal processes, vocational education and training among them.

The globalisation of economic life is increasing the mobility and competition for a skilled labour force. In this context vocational institutions are becoming more multicultural, which requires new expertise from teachers. Hence, the meaning of language and communication skills as well as knowledge about different cultures is becoming more important [15]. Given the above, internationalisation aims to address the global challenges one of which is internal and international migration and a need to incorporate cultural diversity and multilingualism.

The above challenges require recognition of the plurality of cultures within a nation-state and a need to accommodate the differences in how people construct shared meanings around the issues of education. Focus on system learning used to this end is thus not an end in itself but rather a means to achieve several ends.

Despite internationalisation and globalisation being linked terms, there are diverse interpretations of their relations and differences. According to J. Knight, the difference between the terms globalisation and internationalisation is that globalisation is often connected with such concepts as commercialism and competitiveness [7]. Globalisation includes the worldwide flow of ideas, services, resources, economic values and technology. Internationalisation differs from globalisation as it highlights the relationship between different countries, cultures, people, systems and institutions. However the connotations of 'competitiveness' and 'commercialism' which were earlier closely connected with globalisation have since been strongly connected to internationalisation of education as the cross-border education development is increasing in all educational fields.

Contrary to J. Knight, Bradenburg and de Witt [1] see a broader rift between the two terms and consider globalisation as a rival term for internationalisation. Globalisation is considered to have a negative flavour and it is regarded to be more predominant than internationalisation. According to Bradenburg and de Witt, internationalisation has become a synonym of „doing good” and represents the humanistic values against the world of economics, which the term globalisation represents. Bradenburg and de Witt also define the nature of internationalisation to be an essential improvement instrument for the quality of education and research.

Van der Wende [17] who studied internationalisation in relation to the globalisation theory, asserts that the term internationalisation is simply a precursor of globalisation. There are also points of view according to which the term internationalisation is claimed to be insufficient today, as it only takes account of that

which takes place between two or more nations, e.g. the European process of integration [11]. For proponents of this view the term globalisation is better, since it can also include all the transnational processes that take place completely or partially outside the single nations' control, e.g. the development of transnational companies. In this context, internationalisation is then a subconcept of globalisation.

As seen from the above examples, the differences in the perspectives taken by researchers are largely hermeneutical, and may be argued about, though they do not affect the essence of the phenomenon of internationalization as a fact and reality of contemporary societal development.

The above diversity of interpretations is only a small fraction of the on-going debate, to which the differentiation between the terms *globalisation*, *globalisations* and *glocalisation* can be added. However, this is not the purpose of the current article as the above introduction serves the only purpose to underline the realities of the on-going discourse.

It should be stressed that in the educational world the term internationalisation is used rather not as a special instance of globalization, but more as a pragmatically oriented term that involves the existence of an agent, a purpose, a strategy and an implementation. Hence the internationalisation strategy on the national level would have to adopt a conscious and differentiated attitude towards the various dimensions of globalization.

In the above context internationalization can be distinguished as [13]:

- internationalisation of society,
- internationalisation of curricula and of educational institutions,
- internationalisation of teaching, training and learning.

In the given article internationalization is regarded as a consequence, or derivative, of globalization. Internationalisation of vocational education is a topic that currently the majority of countries in the world are strongly focused on given the internationalisation of economy. Many companies nowadays have international networks or are multinational companies that demand experts and employees from different nations and cultures possessing international competencies.

Hence practically all countries have adopted or are in the process of adopting internationalization strategies for their systems of vocational education and training. The overall aim to which internationalisation is to contribute is – and must be – the achievement of the general aims for education and training [5, 6]. These aims are largely common to the majority of countries which is demonstrated by the fact that in the global world the national education systems are increasingly sharing similar features. In our view this similarity is due to the operation of the culturalist model characterized by the formation of the discourse of experts that results in the emerging international model of education [14].

The culturalist model convincingly offsets the concerns that globalisation with its inherent internationalisation carries a threat of conversion and worldwide coercion towards homogenisation ('McDonaldisation', etc.) in a situation of an increasing global competition for markets, workplaces and competences and reckless currency speculation that undermines the economy and prosperity of individual states [10].

Under the culturalist model internationalisation is perceived as a special instance of globalization and hence as a development strategy which is vital for the survival of individual companies or educational institutions in the face of global competition. In short: internationalisation is a form of defence against the threats that globalisation is fraught with.

Internationalisation is thus as a task that involves giving a higher priority to international activities, to the international dimension in teaching, to international experience and intercultural competence – all of them concepts which have positive connotations.

Despite the national specificities, the internationalization discourse in VET has already acquired a definite shape and embraces a number of aspects, including the competences addressing the global developments and labour markets, common models and principles in VET, values that should underpin the competences, models and principles, and mobility issues. The list is by no means complete and contains only main reference points for the VET internationalization discourse that shape its identity and support its development.

Internationalisation processes in higher education have been well described by Knight, and the perspective he offered in relation to higher education can well be applied to VET, as the internationalisation in both sectors of the education systems is a change process from national education institutions into international institutions leading to the inclusion of an international dimension in all aspects of the holistic management of these systems in order to enhance the quality of teaching and research and to achieve the desired competencies [7].

VET Internationalisation Processes and Tools

On the national level the starting point for internationalisation in vocational education and training lies in developing education and training to enhance the competitiveness of the national economy and education and training in an international environment. Through international cooperation, the quality and attractiveness of VET can be improved and mobility among vocational students and qualification-holders can be promoted.

Internationalisation thus means a new quality of international cooperation, this new quality lying in the development of a common discourse aiming to produce common principles and models. In Europe internationalisation is taking place under two major processes, namely the Copenhagen and Torino processes. Both the Copenhagen and the Torino processes are informed by a strong theoretical foundation, namely action-based and evidence-based research and peer learning.

The Copenhagen Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training (2002) declared ‘the need for a European dimension to education and training’. The Declaration sets four priorities: European dimension; transparency, information and guidance; recognition of competences and qualifications’ and quality assurance. While the three last priorities focus on the need for transparency and

transferability of qualifications within Europe, the first priority focuses especially on the international dimension within existing programmes:

Strengthening the European dimension in vocational education and training with the aim of improving closer cooperation in order to facilitate and promote mobility and the development of inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other transnational initiatives, aim to raise the profile of the European education and training area in an international context [3]. The underlying priority of the Copenhagen process is to strengthen the development of the European labour market and increase the mobility of VET students and people who have completed their degree in VET.

The goals of the Copenhagen Declaration were acknowledged and further developed in subsequent declarations of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training (e.g. Maastricht Communiqué 2004, Helsinki Communiqué 2006, Bordeaux Communiqué 2006).

The common tools developed during the Copenhagen process, namely the European Credit Transfer System for VET/ECVET, the European Qualifications Framework/EQF, the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework/EQARF, have been implemented to improve the quality of the qualifications and to make the qualifications more comparable at the European level to enhance mobility and quality of labour markets.

As has been indicated earlier, the other internationalization process in Europe is the Torino Process that focuses on stock-taking of VET developments on the national level in the countries partners of the European Training Foundation, to compare them for the benefit of quality enhancement and relevance of the VET systems. The Torino Process has been inspired by policy assessment processes at EU level, notably the Copenhagen Process in VET and the 2010 Bruges Communiqué. The Torino Process is perceived as a useful tool for policy analysis and for the identification of priorities and challenges in the sector, and as an important step on the road towards evidence-based policy making in the participating countries.

The added value of the Torino Process lies in the fact that it embeds VET within the socioeconomic context.

The interaction under the Copenhagen and Torino processes effectively addresses the earlier voiced concerns of national governments to enhance the performance of their own education and training systems, including by increased reference to the performance of other nations' systems. The increase in routine national testing (for example, USA, UK, New Zealand) has enhanced the data available for transnational comparisons, alongside more regular survey-based international comparisons (for example, ILES (International Literacy Survey), TIMS (Third International Maths Survey)).

While the methodological problems associated with such comparisons are legion, the increasing tendency to use transnational comparisons to legitimate national innovation and revision is a significant one.

Policy Level of VET Internationalisation

On the policy level, increasing attention is paid by bodies designing qualifications and by government agencies to the alignment – in terms of content, form and level – of national qualifications with those of other nations.

Policy instruments are specifically designed to enhance development and policy work in this area, with priority given to underlying trends towards modularisation (unitisation), competence-based standards, inclusivity, etc which are promoting increasing intra- and international convergence in the form, content and aims of qualifications.

On the policy level national internationalization strategies are developed as well as their supporting instruments, such as the National Qualification Framework and Quality assurance mechanisms.

Mobility as Inherent Part of VET Internationalisation

As was indicated earlier internationalization in VET pursues a number of goals, mobility being one of them. In the EU the purposes for mobility address strengthening national competitiveness within a knowledge-based society and deepening the sense of European identity and citizenship among young people. In 2009 the European Commission published the Green Paper *Promoting the learning mobility of young people*. This paper stresses mobility as a possible means of strengthening the future employability of young people. It underlines the value that employers give to the international experience of young people.

Mobility for learning purposes has become a regular feature in Europe as a long-term goal. By 2012, at least 15 per cent of young people (around 900,000 young people each year) in Europe have been involved in mobility for learning purposes, by 2015 the figure is estimated at the level of at least 30 per cent (around 1,800,000 young people each year) and by 2020 – at least at the level of 50 per cent (around 2,900,000 young people each year) [5].

For example, in Finland – the recognized world leader in VET – every year, some 5,300 Finnish vocational students go abroad, accounting for about 11 percent of the total number of students, and Finland receives approximately 2,500 vocational students each year [16].

A further need for strengthening internationalisation and mobility could be seen in diverse company initiatives on the national level. For example, within the dual system in Germany several companies are offering their own internal programmes for developing international occupational competencies [12].

The analyse mobility the MoVE-iT- a comparative study on mobility in IVET in 33 European Countries – has been performed that makes clear that most of the countries have at least slightly increasing participation rates in IVET transnational mobility [2]. For example, the German numbers are increasing rapidly and almost doubled between 2002 (4,129) and 2005 (8,319). This can be partly explained by the growing demand for mobility among IVET students as a result of wide promotion of

the topic, but also by changes in legislation through the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz), which was amended with paragraphs concerning mobility in 2005 [ibid]. A recently published German study carried out by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training revealed that German VET students are much more involved in mobility programmes than previously estimated. It was stated that in the years 2007 to 2009 about 23,500 students from IVET took part in an internship or a comparable mobility abroad, which is 50 per cent more than estimated [8].

The benefits of transnational mobility can be summed up as:

- Improved language competences;
- Improved self-confidence;
- Personal development;
- Enhancing/improving professional skills (in relation to the area of study);
- Cross-cultural skills;
- Improved practical knowledge;
- Improved ability to work autonomously;
- Key skills;
- Improved opportunities on both the domestic and the international labour market;
- International experience. [Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 46].

However despite the obvious benefits, there are some obstacles to transnational mobility in VET in most of European countries, such as insufficient financing, lack of organizational skills at the placement organizations, lack of relevant communication skills and lack of clear procedures for the recognition of the study period abroad.

Pedagogic Implications of VET Internationalisation

Pedagogic aspects of internationalization are numerous. They deal with the new competences of students and teachers, as well as with ways to foster them (teaching and learning, assessment), and with the value systems (axiological aspects).

To ensure success of internationalization in VET, a number of directions have to be pursued, namely internationalization of curricula to achieve fostering in students of competences relating to multiculturalism (personality competences, intercultural competencies, language competences), to working in international settings as well as development of competences of teachers.

However, research shows that education in terms of intercultural communication competence has not kept pace with the need as generated by globalisation. Whether employees travel internationally or communicate across cultures without leaving home, intercultural communication competence is critical to ensure communication that is not distorted by misinterpretation, misperception, or misevaluation. Employees lacking this competence often fail to adjust to other cultures, experience psychological and physical distress, create misunderstandings, and alienate members of other cultures, costing their companies untold sums of money, and loss of goodwill and future opportunities.

Intercultural communication training should attempt to improve cognitive, affective, and behavioral performance. Cultural preparation and adjustment are key issues of human resource development, business outcomes, and ethical consideration. However, what organizations may currently offer under the guise of intercultural communication training may provide little more than the do's and don'ts of the target culture. Rarely, does it deliver underlying theories that allow the principles of intercultural communication to be applied to the variety of personalities and behaviors that are in any culture and to be transferred to other cultures.

It must be stressed that as each culture represents a different system in which the individual must learn to communicate, the theoretical framework for fostering intercultural communication competences should be built on Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions [4].

It has also to be born in mind that intercultural competence is tending to open up the individual to all cultural conditions, anywhere and in any contexts, which is fraught with certain risks. Namely, a person who has an optimal intercultural competence is expected to be able to move freely and uncritically everywhere, without making any particular blunders. However if mobility and relativism are given too high a priority in the curriculum without due regard to an ability to reflect ethically and critically on that which the person experiences and takes part in, there is a risk of training students to become radical relativists. Hence it is essential to stress that faced with a lack of a common moral codex in the postmodern era, special attention must be given to developing the students' morals and ethics.

In terms of the internationalization of curricula and hence of international qualifications, the latter may be systematically divided into three 'original' dimensions that have to be addressed. Namely:

- excellent professional competence as a pre-requisite for international professional activity
- foreign language skills
- intercultural competence.

Internationalisation affects not only curricula and competence formation, but the overall performance of VET institutions. According to the degree of internationalization they may be categorized as VET institutions with:

- 'home-based internationalisation', which includes international subjects and language studies in the curriculum;
- internationalisation at the rate of the local working life partners, which means that international subjects and international students (e.g. migrants) form a central part in the curriculum;
- a strong involvement in international networking processes', which means broad international networks and work in different international projects; and
- international educational institutes', in which international activities follow international strategies.

Another pedagogic aspect underpinning internationalisation is the application of common or shared methodological approaches, the central of which is the use of learning outcomes as a foundation for building modular curricula and for recognizing

competences for the sake of their international comparison. Learning outcomes can best be defined as statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do after completion of learning. The term *learning outcomes* can be used in clearer and less ambiguous ways than concepts such as competence, which has different meanings in different cultural contexts. Yet, learning outcomes apply in somewhat different ways across a range of functions.

Investigating the data at the system level, the use of learning outcomes in designing qualifications and the means for their recognition, as well as in curriculum and assessment, brings to mind the image of Russian dolls – where each successive doll is larger rather than smaller compared to the one in which it is nestling. For each aspect of the learning process (whether formal, non-formal or informal) there is a range of issues specific to curriculum design and implementation, assessment, teacher training, etc. Integrating those implications into policy for the whole VET system presents a substantial challenge for education systems, and learning outcomes provide a helpful set of tools.

As it is, learning outcomes/competency-based VET and training packages are mandatory in most countries across the globe. Hence it can be assumed that an international vocational education pedagogy is currently emerging that enables learners to develop necessary skills, knowledge, and attributes in response to the new demands of the changing workplace context, global skills and knowledge mobility. This international pedagogy is interwoven with the learner-centered education, notions of productive and inclusive pedagogies, transnational skills mobility, and cultural diversity.

It should be stressed that to get away from a one-sided and misleading cognitive orientation, VET schools world-wide are currently turning to action-based teaching and self-managed learning which go beyond imparting knowledge and enable pupils to practise many different skills, including skills relating to working methods, social, personal and intercultural skills. Action-based teaching and self-managed learning are significantly boosted if taking place not in the school but in real-life situations. VET schools are changing their traditional face and cease to be institutions existing ‘alongside’ life, becoming instead institutions that turn real life into the real learning venue by deliberately opening it up for learning through appropriate advance preparation and subsequent evaluation and through a process of accompanying pupils as they learn in reality in and from life [9]. This is confirmed by the expansion of the workplace learning across the world and by the upsurge of interest in this issue on the part of international agencies, such as OECD, CEDEFOP, ETF, and others.

Conclusion

Together with developments in information technology, internationalisation is one of the predominant trends in present-day global society, having an impact on all citizens.

On the whole, internationalisation of education, be it higher education or VET, is a process where international, global and intercultural dimensions are integrated into policy goals and functions and goals of educational institution.

There is not a specific model of internationalisation that would be best for all countries and educational institutions but every country and educational institution have to form the internationalisation model according to their goals, rationales and expected outcomes. The suffix –"isation" refers to the internationalisation as a process of achieving or enhancing goals. Developed teaching and curricula consisting of international, intercultural and comparative elements, and internationalisation helps to build up intercultural and international knowledge, values and skills in students.

Understanding internationalisation means that the international dimensions are combined in a sustainable way in all important functions of educational institutions; teaching and learning, knowledge production and research as well as integrated in the service to the community and society.

In the field of vocational training, international influences have been evident for many years. For internationalisation in VET to be addressed effectively application of a polydimensional tactic that embraces political, sociological, axiological and pedagogic facets is needed.

Hence extensive international comparative research is required to analyse the diverse factors impacting internationalisation in VET. Comparative studies are needed to provide a vehicle for investigating the international connectivity and performance dimensions of national VET systems. Specifically this research should focus on factors shaping the European Education Area, on monitoring and conducting analyses of the vocational education and training systems of other countries, on recognitions of competences and skills acquired internationally.

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