

Mamanova Sayyora Faxriddinovna

Independent Researcher, Jizzakh Branch of the National University of

Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, Jizzakh, Uzbekistan

**IMPROVING DIDACTIC SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
GENERAL CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION: AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR TOURISM TRAINING**

ABSTRACT. *This study aims to improve didactic support for developing general cultural competence among vocational tourism students. Using theoretical analysis and pedagogical modeling, an integrated model comprising five interconnected blocks and four competence components was developed. The model combines simulation-based learning, intercultural training, experiential learning, and the TourCulture.uz digital platform. The proposed framework integrates cultural knowledge, values, professional communication, and practical skills to support the systematic development of general cultural competence in vocational tourism education.*

Keywords: *general cultural competence, vocational education, tourism education, didactic support, intercultural communication, pedagogical modeling, digital learning.*

INTRODUCTION. The modernization of vocational education requires the preparation of specialists who possess not only professional knowledge and practical skills but also the cultural awareness and communication abilities necessary for effective professional activity. This requirement is particularly relevant to tourism, where specialists interact with representatives of different cultures, interpret historical and cultural heritage, and provide services in diverse social environments.

General cultural competence encompasses cultural knowledge, respect for national and universal values, professional communication, and the ability to apply culturally appropriate behavior in occupational situations. Its development requires an integrated educational system that connects theoretical knowledge

with practical activities and professional experience. UNESCO (2013) emphasizes the importance of intercultural competencies for mutual understanding and effective communication across cultural differences. In vocational tourism education, these competencies should be connected with cultural heritage interpretation, tourism ethics, service culture, and professional communication [5]. The research focuses on identifying competence components, determining their didactic implications, and integrating interactive teaching methods and digital educational resources into a unified pedagogical framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW. The theoretical foundations of general cultural competence development are closely related to competency-based education, intercultural communication, value-oriented learning, and experiential education. Byram (1997) conceptualized intercultural communicative competence through attitudes, knowledge, interpretation skills, interaction, and critical cultural awareness [1]. Deardorff (2006) emphasized the multidimensional nature of intercultural competence, including attitudes, knowledge, skills, and the outcomes of intercultural interaction [2].

These perspectives provide a foundation for understanding cultural competence as an integrated educational outcome. However, general cultural competence in vocational tourism education also incorporates historical and cultural heritage knowledge, professional ethics, service culture, and the practical application of cultural knowledge in occupational situations. The competency-based approach emphasizes the development of learning outcomes that combine theoretical knowledge with practical abilities. The axiological approach focuses on conscious attitudes toward cultural values, tolerance, and social responsibility, while the activity-oriented approach connects acquired knowledge with practical professional performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS. The study employs theoretical analysis, curriculum analysis, pedagogical modeling, and systematization to develop an

integrated didactic framework for general cultural competence in vocational tourism education. The research is contextualized within the Cultural Heritage in Tourism course of the 51010304 – Tourism specialization in Uzbekistan's vocational education system. The course provides opportunities to develop cultural knowledge, value orientations, communication skills, and practical abilities through the study of historical monuments, national traditions, tourism ethics, cultural tourism routes, and intercultural communication [1].

The theoretical analysis method is used to identify the structural components of general cultural competence and determine the pedagogical approaches necessary for their development. Curriculum analysis establishes the relationship between tourism-related educational content and expected competence outcomes.

Pedagogical modeling is employed to integrate educational objectives, instructional content, teaching methods, digital resources, organizational forms, and assessment procedures into a unified system. Systematization is used to establish the stages of implementing the proposed model. The methodological framework combines competency-based, axiological, cultural, activity-oriented, situational, integrative, learner-centered, and systems approaches. These approaches provide the theoretical foundation for connecting cultural knowledge with professional communication, practical activities, and competence-based assessment.

RESULTS. The principal result of the study is the development of an integrated didactic model aimed at enhancing general cultural competence among vocational tourism students. The model is based on the interrelationship between four competence components: cognitive, axiological, personal-communicative, and activity-based.

The cognitive component encompasses knowledge of historical and cultural heritage, national traditions, tourism ethics, and intercultural

communication. The axiological component reflects students' respect for cultural values, tolerance, and social responsibility.

Consequently, didactic support should be organized as a unified system connecting educational objectives, instructional content, teaching methods, learning resources, and assessment.

An important methodological feature of the model is the integration of simulation-based learning, intercultural training, and experiential learning. Simulation-based learning involves the reproduction of professional situations characteristic of tourism services. Students participate in simulated interactions involving tourist guides, visitors, museum employees, and local community representatives. For example, a simulated excursion to the Itchan Kala complex in Khiva enables students to apply historical knowledge, communicate with tourists, and respond appropriately to culturally sensitive situations. These instructional methods are supplemented by WebQuest, storytelling, case-based learning, project-based learning, and portfolio activities. Their coordinated application provides opportunities to develop cultural knowledge, independent learning, professional communication, and practical performance. The proposed assessment framework incorporates cognitive, axiological, personal-communicative, and activity-based criteria. These criteria are intended to determine the extent to which students demonstrate cultural knowledge, respect for cultural values, professional communication, and practical performance in tourism-related situations.

DISCUSSION. The developed model approaches general cultural competence as an integrated educational outcome requiring the coordinated development of cultural knowledge, value orientations, professional communication, and practical abilities. The proposed framework is conceptually consistent with multidimensional approaches to intercultural competence described by Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006) [1; 2]. However, it extends the educational focus toward the occupational requirements of tourism by

incorporating cultural heritage interpretation, professional ethics, service culture, and practical performance.

Simulation-based learning and intercultural training provide opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in professionally contextualized situations, while experiential learning connects educational content with cultural environments. The integration of TourCulture.uz supports the organization of classroom instruction, independent learning, practical assignments, and reflective assessment within a unified digital learning environment.

The model provides a methodological basis for developing professionally oriented educational materials, selecting appropriate teaching methods, and establishing competence-based assessment procedures. Nevertheless, its effectiveness requires further empirical investigation, including the assessment of students' competence development and the examination of the reliability and validity of the proposed assessment instruments.

CONCLUSION. The study developed and theoretically substantiated an integrated didactic model for enhancing general cultural competence among vocational education students specializing in tourism. The methodological approach combines simulation-based learning, intercultural training, experiential learning, and supplementary interactive methods with the digital didactic resources of TourCulture.uz. The staged implementation framework connects initial diagnosis, motivational orientation, content development, practical application, and reflective assessment. It provides a systematic basis for organizing cultural competence development within the Cultural Heritage in Tourism course. The proposed framework provides a methodological foundation for improving vocational tourism education and serves as a basis for further empirical research.

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