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**Pedagogical system of managing a private innovative university in a culturally diverse educational environment**

**Sistema pedagógico de gestión de una universidad privada innovadora en un entorno educativo culturalmente diverso**

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The educational system, like other spheres of life (cultural, social, economic), is currently facing serious changes. Education managers should take into account modern challenges occurring in society in order to build effective education process in rapidly changing conditions.

**Objective:** To describe the pedagogical system of managing a private innovative university in a culturally diverse educational environment. A culturally diverse environment is considered by the authors in a broad sense - as the inclusion into the educational process of people with different cultures (different national, linguistic, religious characteristics, worldviews, traditions, family education, values), as well as people with different intellectual and physical abilities.

**Method:** A mixed-method approach was used: literature review to study theoretical background of managing a private innovative university in a culturally diverse educational environment; and empirical study with the participation of 1,676 students from Kazan Innovative University. Respondents answered an eight-question survey using Google Forms.

**Results:** The pedagogical system of managing a private innovative university described in this paper is a complex organizational structure that has three missions: educational, research and socially oriented. This system is built on the principles of multiculturalism, accessibility, cultural conformity and dialogue of cultures.

**Conclusions:** The results of this research can be used by managers and teachers of educational organizations of higher education in Russia and other countries when designing a pedagogical system of university management for a culturally diverse environment.

**Keywords:** culturally diverse environment; design; management; pedagogical system; private educational institution.

## RESUMEN

**Introducción:** En la actualidad, el sistema educativo, al igual que otras esferas de la vida (cultural, social, económica), enfrenta grandes cambios. Los directivos del sistema deben tener en cuenta los retos modernos que se plantean en la sociedad

para construir un proceso educativo eficaz entre condiciones que cambian rápidamente.

**Objetivo:** Describir el sistema pedagógico de gestión de una universidad privada innovadora en un entorno educativo culturalmente diverso. El concepto de entorno culturalmente diverso se aborda en un sentido amplio: como inclusión en el proceso educativo de personas con diferentes culturas (características nacionales, lingüísticas, religiosas, visiones del mundo, tradiciones, educación familiar, valores), así como personas con diferentes capacidades intelectuales y físicas.

**Método:** Se utilizó un enfoque mixto de investigación: revisión bibliográfica para estudiar los antecedentes teóricos de la gestión de una universidad privada innovadora en un entorno educativo culturalmente diverso; y estudio empírico con la participación de 1 676 estudiantes de la Universidad Innovadora de Kazán. Los encuestados respondieron un cuestionario de ocho preguntas utilizando Google Forms.

**Resultados:** El sistema pedagógico de gestión de una universidad innovadora privada aquí descrito es una estructura organizativa compleja que tiene tres misiones: educativa, investigadora y de orientación social. Este sistema se basa en los principios de multiculturalidad, accesibilidad, conformidad cultural y diálogo de culturas.

**Conclusiones:** Los resultados de esta investigación pueden ser utilizados por directivos y profesores de organizaciones educativas de educación superior en Rusia y otros países a la hora de diseñar un sistema pedagógico de gestión universitaria para un entorno culturalmente diverso.

**Palabras clave:** diseño; entorno culturalmente diverso; gestión; institución educativa privada; sistema pedagógico.

## INTRODUCTION

Important changes happen in various areas of nowadays life: social, cultural, economic, scientific, and educational. Russia faces many challenges in modern geopolitical situation, which requires choosing the right direction in education development (Mukhametzyanova et al., 2020).

One of the important aspects is the development of higher education in the context of culture diversity, which means the co-existence of different views, cultures,

values of each person, their family environment, religious views and beliefs, past and present, «baggage of experience», their prejudices, intentions. From the ethnic diversity perspective, Russia is a very diverse country. More than 160 ethnic groups live in its regions; each of them has its own cultural specificity and historical heritage. In this study, the pedagogical system of managing a private innovative university in a culturally diverse educational environment is described.

## **MAIN BODY**

The term “pedagogical system” has many interpretations; one of them is “a set of interconnected elements”. The pedagogical systems of preschool organizations, primary and secondary schools, vocational education organizations and universities have two key subjects: the student and the educator. The relationships between them are built on interaction and pedagogical cooperation (Akhmetova, 2021). The main elements of the pedagogical system are:

- educational goal;
- educational content;
- educational process; and
- information and educational environment of the educational organization.

The pedagogical system of a university accumulates three missions: educational, research and socially oriented.

The main goal of higher education is to train specialists for different fields of social and economic life and to ensure the high quality of the «human capital». The entire educational process of a university is built on the interaction of many subjects: students, professors, university administration (rector, vice-rectors, deans of faculties, departments and laboratories, research institutes, departments, methodological services, etc.). Therefore, the quality and the effectiveness of communications between all the subjects mentioned above plays an essential role.

The content of education in the pedagogical system of the university is determined by educational standards which are constantly updated and modernized. Universities have the opportunity to include their own variable components, which determine the specifics of the pedagogical system of the educational organization.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

To achieve the objective of this research, a mixed-method approach was used; thus, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed. On the one hand, a literature review enabled to study the theoretical background of managing a private innovative university in a culturally diverse educational environment. On the other hand, it was carried out an empirical study with the participation of 1,676 students from Kazan Innovative University. They responded an eight-question survey to reveal the level of education development in a culturally diverse environment at Kazan Innovative University named after V. G. Timiryasov. The survey was designed and applied using Google Forms (<https://docs.google.com/forms/>).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Kazan Innovation University named after V. G. Timiryasov (KIU) was founded in 1994 and now is the largest private higher educational institution in the Republic of Tatarstan and the entire Volga region. It is the leading higher educational institution in the Scientific and Educational Cluster in Trade, Hospitality Industry, and Services in the Republic of Tatarstan.

Its curriculum includes courses such as Inclusive Pedagogy, Adaptation Programs for Supporting People with Disabilities and Social Design. Due to the relevance of these topics, the university teaching staff permanently passes through advanced training courses on current issues of modern education. Among them are digitalization of education, technologies of inclusive education, and pedagogical skills of vocational education teachers.

These aspects are essential for professor training, especially in culturally diverse environments. Why? What are the specifics of the pedagogical system of managing a private innovative university in a culturally diverse educational environment?

First, the term “culturally diverse environment” should be defined. Gurevich (2011, p. 18) notes in his research that culture is a set of values shared by society; value is the idea of what is sacred for a group, society, or individual.

For the authors of this paper, culture is what people create in the process interaction. Such interaction takes place not only in the specific place, but also

over time. This concept refers not only to material cultural goods (objects of material creativity, works of art), but also to spiritual culture (beliefs that have been transmitted from generation to generation, family values and traditions, worldview, ethno-cultural characteristics, ethnic stereotypes).

Cultural diversity is the coexistence of different cultures, beliefs, customs, religions, languages, nationalities and races in a particular environment. Cultural diversity unites individuals with different ethnic and cultural background, enabling them to share their experience and cultural heritage. In the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, this term is characterized in a broader sense. For UNESCO (2001), “diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind” (UNESCO, 2001). Cultural diversity can be considered then as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity; it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations (UNESCO, 2001).

Thus, the authors of this paper approaches culturally diverse environment in education in a broad sense - as the inclusion into the educational process of people with different cultures (different national, linguistic, religious characteristics, worldviews, traditions, family education, values), as well as people with different intellectual and physical abilities.

As emphasized by Voevoda (2020), the Russian Federation is a culturally diverse country and the Republic of Tatarstan is no exception. According to official data, Tatarstan is one of the most multinational territories of Russia. It is the place where people with different historical backgrounds and cultural traditions meet. The combination of three types of cultural interaction (Turkic, Russian-Slavic and Finno-Ugric) defines the uniqueness of this area. The Republic maintains a balance of interests of two major faiths - Islam and Orthodoxy - and the equality of all religions before the law.

Educational environment of Kazan Innovative University named after V. G. Timiryasov has also a culturally diverse environment. The students who study at this University are from the following countries: Latin America (Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), Africa (Tunis), Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia), Eastern Europe (Belarus, Croatia).

Teaching students in a culturally diverse environment is a modern trend in inclusive education development, because inclusion in international UNESCO documents is considered as a process of taking into account the diversity of needs of all students through their participation in educational and cultural life (UNESCO-UNEVOC, n.d.). According to the terminology of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, “excluded” are “children and adolescents at risk”: these are children with disabilities, marginalized and belonging to particularly vulnerable groups (migrants; ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious minorities; refugees; orphans; victims of violence; etc.) (Evans et al., n.d.). Consequently, the problem of sociocultural inclusion is especially relevant (Akhmetova, 2021).

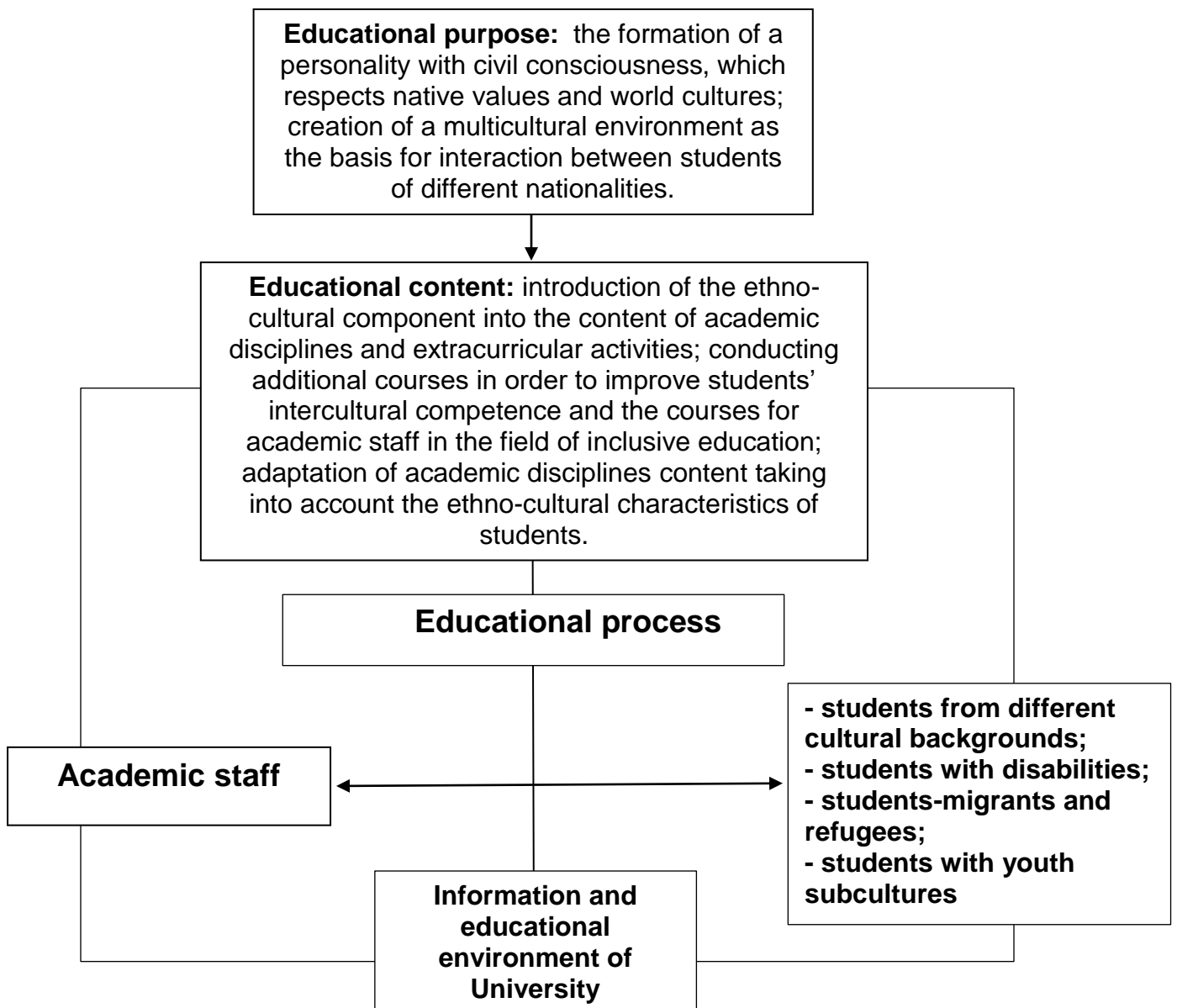
Due to the relevance of the problem of training and educating in a multicultural environment, a pedagogical system in the conditions of a culturally diverse educational environment was designed in Kazan Innovative University named after V. G. Timiryasov (Figure 1).

This pedagogical system is built on the principles of multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity, accessibility of education, humanization, and dialogue of cultures. The criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the designed pedagogical system are: accessibility of education for students from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds and students with disabilities, intercultural communicative competence of all educational process participants (academic staff, university administration, students), involvement of students from different cultural backgrounds in educational, research and extracurricular activities, formation of students’ civic identity and patriotism.

Managing a private innovative university in a culturally diverse educational environment is based on the following principles:

1. The educational process is built taking into account the ethno-cultural background of students and the cultural specifics of the Republic of Tatarstan.
2. The university administration and academic staff aim to strengthen interethnic ties based on respect to humane values and world culture.

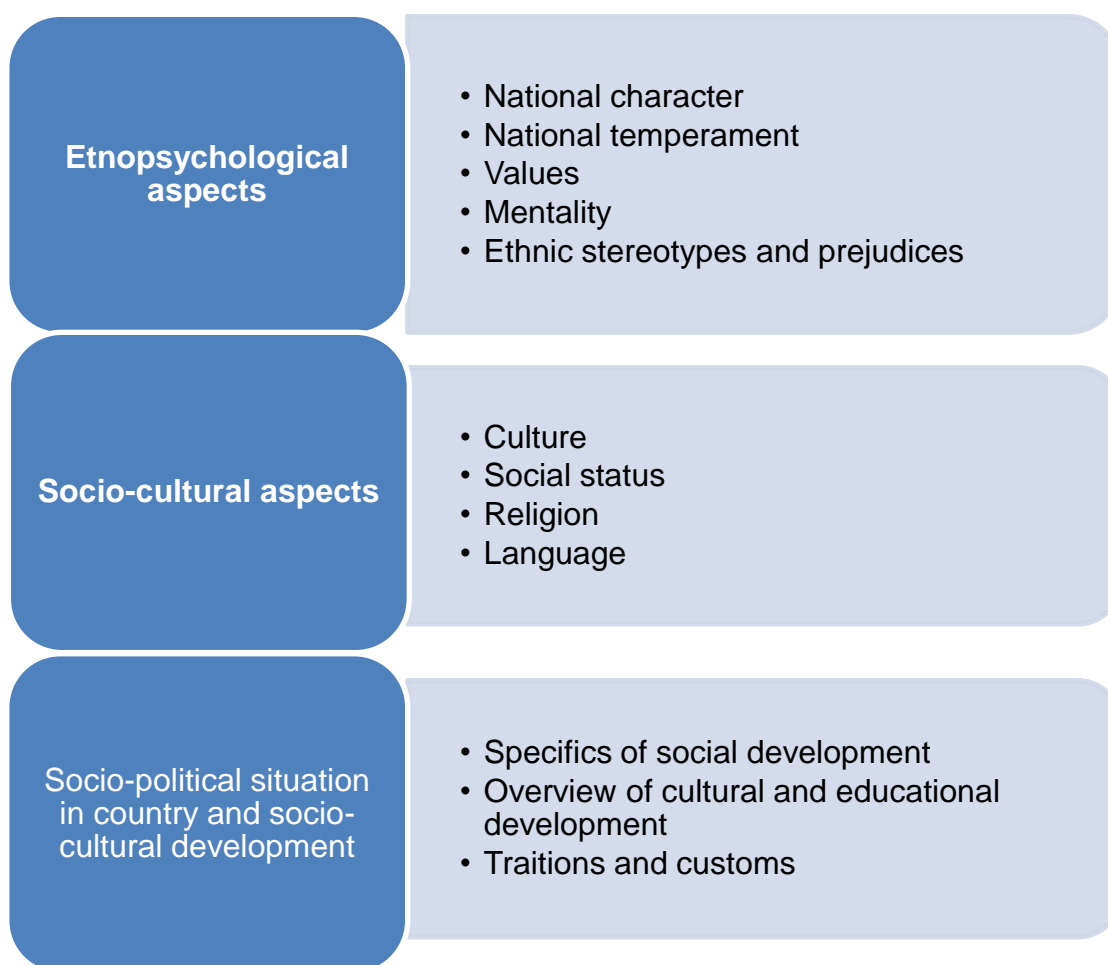
3. Teachers use ethno-pedagogical principles in the educational process, which ensure the formation of the civic identity in young people.
4. The university administration carries out the educational, scientific and extracurricular work for students, which enrich their worldview, critical thinking skills, spiritual, ethical, and moral values (creative events, round tables, conferences, workshops, discussions).



**Figure 1.** Pedagogical system of managing a private innovative university in a culturally diverse educational environment



Socio-cultural and ethno-psychological peculiarities of foreign students shown in Figure 2 should be taken into consideration while building the learning environment. For example, when choosing the educational content, it is necessary to include cultural components in it, carry out a comparative analysis of the social, economic, political situation in different countries, including the country of foreign students' residence (Morozova, 2022). The courses can include information about traditions and customs of foreign students, their values and worldview. It leads to intercultural dialogue, interpersonal interaction, adequate perception and understanding of cultural differences.



**Figure 2.** Socio-cultural and ethno-psychological peculiarities of foreign students. In order to reveal the level of education development in a culturally diverse environment at Kazan Innovative University named after V. G. Timiryasov, a

survey was carried out using Google Forms. A total of 1,676 students participated in this study.

Three of the questions included in the survey have been selected for this paper. The results in percentages are presented below.

1. Are there special opportunities for scientific work and creative self-realization for students of different cultural background at your University?

Yes - 71 %

No - 5 %

It's hard to answer - 23 %

2. What difficulties do you experience when communicating with students of different nationalities?

different interests and worldview - 12 %

another mentality - 14 %

no difficulties - 22 %

language barriers - 12 %

3. Are there activities at your University aimed at uniting students of different cultures?

Yes - 64 %

No - 12 %

Yes, but they are rarely carried out – 24 %

Although most students perceived opportunities for development in terms of scientific work, creative self-realization and togetherness regardless of their cultural background, some difficulties for intercultural communication exist. Analyzing the results of the survey allowed improve and correct the educational process in a culturally diverse environment Kazan Innovative University named after V. G. Timiryasov. As a result, positive dynamics in different aspects of multicultural education was observed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The pedagogical system designed for managing a private innovative university in a culturally diverse educational environment enable to harmonize relationships between students of different cultural backgrounds in the educational process, and between them and the academic staff. This contributes to the establishment of

humane, friendly relationships in the educational environment and to develop a sense of students' patriotism and civic identity.

Managing a university in a culturally diverse environment is aimed at solving the problems of preparing a future certified specialist - a culturally educated person capable of successful professional activity in a multicultural society, with a civic identity and a sense of respect for people of other cultures and nationalities.

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**Authors' contribution:**

**T.A.V.:** Substantiation, research and writing.

**M. I. G.:** Research, conceptualization and writing.

**A.D.Z.:** Foundation, research and writing.

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