

DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. *The relevance of the research topic* is that modern societies are diverse and face several challenges that appear to threaten sustainable community development. Many of them are related to diversity and intercultural communication issues. *The purpose of the article* is to determine the main aspects and practical applications of diversity and intercultural competence in the focus of community sustainable development. *The objectives are* to look through recent publications dedicated to the various aspects of intercultural competence and diversity competence; to analyze and summarize the models of intercultural communication and competence described in recent publications, as well as diversity competences; to formulate the basic principles of diversity management for sustainable development of educational and business communities. *Study results.* The article outlines the main features of different models of intercultural and diversity competence. The main approaches to intercultural and diversity competence in the educational and business spheres are investigated. A set of key values and key diversity competencies is presented. Part of the study of social cohesion was the change in the parameters of intercultural and diversity competence in a crisis society. *Methodology of the research.* The theoretical foundations of diversity management are based on a comparative analysis of recent publications on this issue and the results of modern social practice of organizations in the field of diversity management. The methodological and practical foundations of the above research are based on the previous intercultural and social cohesion studies at the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University (now Ukrainian State Dragomanov University). The Social Cohesion Radar Model has been adopted for practical research in the educational community. This made it possible to present some indicators of social cohesion – "acceptance of diversity" and "trust" as key factors for successful communication, social relations, and, consequently, community development. This model provides an understanding of "acceptance of diversity" and "trust" as key components of social cohesion and monitoring their status in different situations of social challenges, including the challenges of the war in Ukraine and the pandemic. A working analogy of the Diversity Radar model for monitoring and assessing diversity intelligence in a community is presented. *Practical significance of the research.* The study identified the level of acceptance of multicultural diversity in the community and outlined weaknesses for further strengthening with appropriate social and educational tools. The article collects and analyzes various diversity competencies and practical steps to develop diverse and sustainable communities, especially educational ones.

Key words: community, diversity competence, education, intercultural competence, sustainable community development.

JEL Classification: B41, B49, I20, I21, I23, I29

1. Introduction

Despite geopolitical crises and regional military conflicts, the modern world is based on the knowledge economy and the needs of the global labor market.

Growing migration flows require the management of intercultural conflicts in host communities, as well as addressing education and healthcare issues. Therefore, intercultural communication is a daily practice

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request (Nesterova et. al, 2019), and it actualizes the research of the different levels of intercultural competence as a complex social phenomenon. The above-mentioned approach argues that misunderstandings and lack of tolerance can be the result of ethnocentric behavior. This behavior is typical in dealing with people of different cultural backgrounds. This situation is quite common in the modern educational environment (in particular, in higher education) around the world due to globalization processes, migration, and military conflicts (Andrushchenko et. al., 2022, p. 18). The same situation can be observed in the business sphere: the impact of the pandemic with its sudden transition of the whole world to quarantine and a virtual global environment, the requirement of globalization for organizations to internalize the needs of many societies. "This business goal can be achieved by establishing clear institutional and business values. In this way, environmental responsibility, talent retention and purposeful operations provide strategic direction and motivation for business diversity across many cultures. In the context of globalization and the expansion of international trade, it is hardly possible to find an organization operating in a single business and cultural environment." (Alexandrova, 2016, p. 10) The current crisis conditions in which countries (not only the European Union or Ukraine) are experiencing mean that they need to reconsider their real (not declared) set of values. According to this revised set of values, priorities in social and educational policy should be determined (Nesterova et al., 2020). Values determine the level of social cohesion in a society and its characteristics as a social phenomenon. Social cohesion is based on a set of individual and collective values. Therefore, it is able to integrate modern divided societies and different types of communities. The turbulent and changing social reality requires us to be not only adaptive but also proactive in an unpredictable and rapidly changing world (Nesterova et. al., 2021). This proactivity should be correlated with the principles of sustainable development. Although the goals and objectives of sustainable development are common to the entire global community, there are certain problems with their practical implementation. For example, it can be seen that individual states and their regional communities are concerned only with their own current (mainly socio-economic) problems, which leads to disunity. This is often combined with the low moral and intellectual level of many contemporary civic leaders, top managers of international and regional organizations, local or national communities. "Dissatisfied employees with no prospects for development lead to inefficiency and low productivity of the company, so systematic

problem solving can save it from gradual decline. The model of human democracy in an organization is a humanistic view of people, relationships, empowerment, competence development, "people first"; look at anthropocratic management 3.0 as biblical leaders." (Cherep et. al., 2022, p. 218) But leaders must be able to change themselves and their organizations in the right way. This means being able to ensure not only effective change management, but also diversity management.

The concept of diversity management has changed since the early 1960s. Diversity management used to focus on historically disadvantaged groups such as women and minorities, but the concept of diversity management has expanded as awareness of differences has grown and become more visible (i.e., sexual and gender diversity, age and other grounds of discrimination). "The grounds for potential discrimination recognized by EU law, in particular the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, are sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic characteristics, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation. It is important to keep track of these grounds in order to promote EDI in academic circles." (Siri et. al., 2022, p. 2 of 16)

2. Intercultural communication and intercultural competence

The concept of intercultural competence and intercultural communication has always been in the scope of international researchers – D. Deardorff, G. Hofstede, E. Holl, F. Klakhone, P. Levice, F. Strodeback, and F. Trompenarce. Also, the understanding of intercultural competence has been enhanced by Ukrainian researchers – N. Almazova, G. Antipova, N. Demianenko, T. Kolosovska, and others (Alexandrova, 2016).

One of the most relevant focuses of intercultural studies is the concept of "tolerance". In the sphere of dialogue and other communicative interactions, it is seen as the so-called "passive tolerance" or indifference to the Other (a partner in dialogue or communication). In modern scientific discourse, this concept is replaced by the term "intercultural diversity". Thus, it is a kind of transition of meanings – from primary tolerance (in fact, isolation and alienation) to the belief that there are many cultural traditions and practices, as well as the need for such diversity. Cultural diversity argues that unification and leveling to a similar form of cultural traditions is a radical mistake. To implement these principles, it is necessary to organize a social life where differences do not lead to a common norm, but to a belief in the dynamics of the content of normativity. The effectiveness of

integrity lies in affirming the value of each culture and its specificity. "This is due to the current state of civilization, which requires maximum diversity in the use of various resources, including social, cultural and intellectual capital. According to this belief, different cultural identities must necessarily have certain social advantages, the draw of which has formed the unity of the world community." (Andrushchenko et al., 2022, p. 16)

This approach in intercultural studies discovers the cognitive mechanisms of intercultural communication and intercultural competence accordingly. There was some practical research in the educational community of National Pedagogical Dragomanov University, Kyiv, Ukraine (which now it has been transformed into the Ukrainian State Dragomanov University). One of them (based on this model of intercultural communication) has analyzed the level of tolerance, readiness, and perspective of action among students of the university community of National Pedagogical Dragomanov University (NPDU). The research identified the level of acceptance of multicultural diversity in the community and marked the weak points for further strengthening by appropriate social and educational tools (Andrushchenko et al., 2022).

One of the well-known models of intercultural competence is the Darla Deardorff Model of Intercultural Competence (2006). This model is based on five elements: attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes, and external outcomes. This model is similar to the intercultural communication model described above with its cognitive and pragmatic aspects, as it promotes the development of intercultural competence and the assessment of learning outcomes.

1. Attitudes: respect, openness, and curiosity are foundational for the development of knowledge and skills needed for intercultural competence.

2. Knowledge: cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, deep cultural knowledge (understanding of other world views), and sociolinguistic awareness are fundamental to intercultural competence as understanding the world from others' perspectives.

3. Skills: observing, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating are necessary for processing knowledge and understanding of information.

4. Internal Outcomes: the abilities, which allow individuals to achieve intercultural competence to some degree – the attitudes, knowledge, and skills lead to an internal outcome that consists of flexibility, adaptability, and empathy.

5. External Outcomes: the behavior and communication skills demonstrated by an individual based on their attitudes, knowledge, skills, and internal outcomes are the external outcomes experienced by others. Effective and appropriate behavior and communication are the visible external outcomes of intercultural competence.

This model includes the internal and external outcomes and consists of 5 dimensions. There are some more simple intercultural models, for instance, model with 3 dimensions – attitudes, knowledge, skills (Portera, 2017). Also, there are models and theories more complex, including communication aspects. One of them is Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC): "The literature and theories related to Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) were reviewed and twelve axioms were identified: (1) ICC requires Identity, socialization, and safety; (2) ICC is boosted when learners are provided opportunities to learn and reflect; (3) Learners need the right attitude and cultural skills to develop ICC; (4) Cross-cultural awareness helps immerse students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC); (5) ICC needs accommodating

Table 1

Conceptualization of cognitive focuses of intercultural communication

Levels of analytics / Category	Differentiation	Conceptualization
knowledge/ opinion	value of culture (CV) knowledge of the value of the content of each culture	understanding the value of culture in worldview principles and beliefs, knowledge of the values of one's own culture and other cultures
	value of collaboration (CoIV) knowledge of the value of interaction in a diverse field of cultures	
practice / activity	motivation of activity (AM) attitude to interaction in a multicultural environment	willingness to interact with representatives of other cultures, activity in the context of intercultural communication
	realization of activity (AR) real participation in intercultural communication	
promotion / perspectives	plurality of cultures (PC) belief in the uniqueness of each culture	assessment of understanding and readiness to participate in intercultural dialogue in the context of education and self-realization
	unity of cultural practices (CP) belief in the possibility of integration into a single semantic field of different cultural practices	

Source: (Andrushchenko et al., 2021)

linguistic and non-linguistic aspects in ELT; (6) ICC is language learning (to learn and not to do is really not to learn); (7) There are various Teaching models for ICC development; (8) Curriculum updating is needed for the successful acquisition of ICC; (9) Utilizing technology enhances ICC; (10) Teachers need to be proactive and flexible to enhance learners' ICC; (11) Teachers face challenges towards ICC, and (12) Teacher training will boost their confidence in refining learners' ICC." (Samifrati, Gumanit, 2021; p. 147)

3. Diversity competence/intelligence and diversity management

Diversity Intelligence (DI) or Diversity Competence (DC) is derived from the idea that there is very little knowledge (and much ignorance) about what diversity is: "Diversity competence is the ability to navigate the broad social, cultural, racial and other human diversity and to understand and appropriately use the broad knowledge of diversity among employees with protected characteristics in the workplace. Diversity competence is a combination of cultural, emotional and diversity intelligence. It is the ability to understand the set of values, behaviors, attitudes and practices in an organization or system that allows to work effectively with employees and groups from different backgrounds." (Gnagniko, 2021) It is closely related to other types of intelligence. Thus, integrating diversity intelligence along with emotional, cultural and intellectual intelligence can enhance the effectiveness of a diversity strategy. Intelligent action can increase the effectiveness of diversity efforts and eliminate ineffective diversity initiatives. Without a clear understanding of diversity, leaders do not have the full toolkit to realize organizational goals (Hughes, 2016).

For community development, it is necessary to develop diversity competence and implement a sustainable and integrated strategy that recognizes the value of diversity. "Diversity competence is not just an additional competence, it can be seen as a "specialty qualification" that allows professionals to fulfill the general requirements of their profession in complex situations and when interacting with highly diverse patients." (Ziegler, 2022)

There are many organizations around the world that promote the values of diversity management for sustainable communities. Some of them focus on education as a way to promote. Some of them focus on education as a way to promote: for example, the Canadian charity Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF) has been working for over 30 years to integrate sustainability education into Canada's school system. The main task is empowering children to change the world in partnership with educators, youth,

authorities, business organizations, and community members (www.lsf-ist.ca). Another Canadian organization focused on diversity issues – The Supplier Diversity Alliance Canada (SDAC) – supports and informs governments, businesses, and key stakeholders on the importance of inclusive procurement policies and practices through supplier diversity, leading to value with economic growth and social impact. Supplier diversity is defined as the inclusion of underrepresented groups (such as gender, ethnic or sexual minorities, veterans, people with disabilities, etc.) in the supply chain or in the procurement process of public authorities or large corporations that are traditionally excluded. This is a very important aspect of sustainable community development, as organizations and governments create value in historically disadvantaged communities by creating jobs, expanding economic opportunities, and increasing purchasing power among these communities. By procuring goods and services from these diverse suppliers, there are other benefits, such as innovation, flexibility, cost savings, etc. This social inclusion program – Supplier Diversity – came to Canada from the USA, where it is supported at federal, state, and municipal levels for more than 40 years. Since 2015 many local authorities and corporations support Supplier Diversity in Canada to help businesses and governments connect with their communities, drive innovation, build social cohesion and prosperity in diverse communities, etc. (www.supplierdiversityalliance.ca) Another international organization, Diversity in Sustainable Development, based in Canada, aims to change the broader sustainability ecosystem to create an inclusive sector for underrepresented groups. The organization's vision is a sustainable and prosperous world built on the principles of equity and inclusion. And its practitioners of managing diversity for sustainable communities embrace these values:

1. Championing Diversity – honoring individual identities and drawing on the differences can greatly enrich the sustainability sector.

2. Ensuring Equity – ensure everyone has access to the same opportunities.

3. Cultivating Continuous Learning – when addressing complex issues have the curiosity and interest to keep learning and unlearning with humility.

4. Activating Systemic Thinking – systemic lens to diagnose and solve complex challenges.

5. Driving Collaboration – the most important issues cannot be solved alone and they must be co-created with the people affected.

6. Embedding Transparency – transparent internal and external communications with honesty, integrity, consistency, and respect.

7. Creating Impact – prioritizing constructive actions that create a lasting, meaningful, and positive impact (www.diversityinsustainability.com).

Ideas to improve diversity and inclusion in the UK are supported and implemented by many organizations. One of them is Diversity UK, a charity founded in 2012 that researches, advocates and promotes these ideas. This evidence-based initiative aims to increase civic engagement and improve social cohesion and community development through the perception of ethnic minorities in the UK (www.diversityuk.org).

The Institute of Equality and Diversity Professionals is also registered in the UK. It was officially launched in Birmingham on January 26, 2009, when the Learning and Skills Council conducted a study that identified the need for such an organization to promote excellence in professional practice in the field of equality, diversity and human rights. For this research, it is important that this organization provides a definition of equality and diversity professionals (it includes, but is not limited to): "Practitioners working in the sector, for example, as employees, consultants, trainers and academics. Board members with an equality portfolio. Managers who must deliver equality and human rights outcomes as part of their main tasks. Unpaid volunteers who advise public, private and third sector businesses on delivering equality and human rights outcomes." (www.iedp.org.uk)

Diversity competence is a specific (professional) set of skills in the healthcare sector due to modern globalization and migration processes. This field is at the forefront of the challenges of a rapidly changing world with clear signs of geopolitical crisis. Therefore, there are some actual questions, such as: "What competencies should health professionals possess to take good care of all their patients in evermore diverse, modern, differentiated, plural and democratic societies that include migrants and (ethnic) minorities? Additionally, since there are different concepts and potentially extensive lists of skills to be fostered: What are the most important skills to ensure everyone is being taken care of equally?" (Ziegler, 2022) This context calls for a change in terminology – from "intercultural" to "diversity" – as well as more research to clarify which competencies are most important and thus the goals of teaching. In addition, it is important to define what diversity competence is, especially in relation to caring for migrants and patients from (ethnic) minorities, and which competencies are prioritized for them. In the field of health, a modified two-round Delphi study was conducted and 31 clinical and academic migrant health experts from 13 European countries were asked this question. The expert group reached consensus on many competencies, especially on attitudes and

practical skills (Ziegler, 2022). This allows to create a constructive model of diversity competence, which is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Key diversity competences in health care

Affective Dimension	Cognitive Dimension	Pragmatic Dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Respectfulness – Empathy – Diversity awareness – Reflection of own biases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Knowledge about social determinants of health – Ethical and human rights-based approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Attentive listening and observation – Understandable communication – Professional work with interpreters – Individual, need-based care – Finding solutions with the patient

Source: (Ziegler et. al., 2022)

Although this model of diversity core competencies was developed for the social care sector, it can be successfully researched and applied in other areas of the social dimension (specialized, such as social work, or generalized to the whole society). There are some similarities with the intercultural competence model approach: "Affective Dimension" is similar to "Attitudes", "Cognitive Dimension" is similar to "Knowledge", and "Pragmatic Dimension" is similar to "Skills" from Deardorff's (2006) and Portera's (2013) Intercultural Competence Models.

4. Diversity management and intercultural competences in business field

In today's global economy, the combination of business internationalization and workforce diversity (the presence of more women, as well as ethnic groups, people with disabilities and minorities in the workplace) poses new challenges for companies, especially in terms of how to integrate and manage such a heterogeneous environment (Portera, 2022; Bauman and Portera, 2021; Van Knippenberg et al., 2010).

The main obstacles to implementing inclusive policies in the workplace include prejudice (biased views), discrimination (biased behavior), and inadequate consideration of age, gender, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics. In fact, while it is true that culture is communication, that it symbolically represents the world and provides the ability to ascribe meaning to reality, it is also true that culture is primarily an implicit and non-verbal phenomenon, as most of its aspects are learned through observation and imitation rather than through education and explicit verbal expression. The basic level of culture is communicated implicitly, without awareness, mainly through non-verbal means (Li, 2022; Hall, 1959).

Interaction between people from different cultures is marked by moments of asynchrony, manifested in silences, overlaps, unexpected reactions, and interruptions, which demonstrate the difficulty of establishing and maintaining conversational cooperation through multiple communication conventions. The protagonists of the interaction, usually unaware of both socio-cultural categories and their own and other people's communication conventions that affect the quality of the relationship, have only a sense of a failed encounter, the true reasons for which are rarely identified. Often, the explanation for this failure is psychological rather than sociological or cultural: the interlocutor is perceived (and classified) as uncooperative, aggressive, slow, rude, incompetent, or uncooperative. Repeated meetings of this kind with people belonging to the same group (ethnic, cultural, national, gender, age cohort, social status, labor specialization, etc.) can lead to the confirmation or formation of stereotypes and prejudices that can profoundly affect interpersonal relationships and professional cooperation.

Cox (2001) also identified further reasons for the failures to leverage and manage diversity: to begin with, organizations tend to hire people who are perceived as fitting the existing culture of their company and exert strong pressure on new employees to assimilate to existing organizational norms (assimilation), with the result that members who have high cultural distance from prevailing norms of the work culture tend to leave the organization or feel compelled to embrace them in order to be accepted. In addition, the so-called "new resources approach" was not accompanied by appropriate changes in other elements of the system. This approach implies changing the composition of human resources (e.g., introducing more foreign nationals to the board and/or recruiting more women, etc.) without taking into account that the systems are highly interdependent and that any change in one element requires adjustments in all others. In addition, the third main reason for failure is a lack of understanding of the shape of the learning curve for leveraging diversity: the term "learning curve" is used to reflect the development of an organization and its members towards competence and the perception of diversity as an important resource. According to the author, leaders often believe and see steepness rather than flatness, achieving a high level of competence occurs in a short period of time, while its acquisition and development is long, complex, dynamic and covers the whole life of a person (Portera, 2017; Milani, 2017).

This is why, as Carnevale and Stone (1995) point out, meaningful diversity management, as opposed to mere training aimed at promoting respect for

diversity but not stopping to evaluate dialogic and transformative practices for full inclusion, requires a radical change in basic assumptions, models and structures, as well as the acquisition of appropriate intercultural competence.

When analyzing scientific literature, various definitions of intercultural competence are encountered (Deardorff, 2011). In fact, over the past two decades, scholars have been actively studying this concept and its development, defining and interpreting the concept in different ways.

It can be defined as a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through actions that enable one, individually or with others, to understand and respect culturally and linguistically diverse people and to respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting with them. As well as understanding oneself and one's multiple cultural identities through encounters with different cultures (Barrett et al., 2013). Thus, intercultural competence is multi-layered, and it basically consists of three interrelated dimensions (Portera & Grant, 2017; Lakerveld & Gussen, 2011):

- 1) Knowledge, which is the codified knowledge that a person should have about their own and other cultures or social groups, their customs, values, and norms of behavior, and be able to compare them with their own culture (Byram, 1997).
- 2) Attitude includes openness, curiosity, reciprocal and quality interaction between different groups, social classes, gender, or ethnicity, as well as willingness to communicate with and to learn from them.
- 3) Skills refers to the ability to apply knowledge by means physical and/or mental abilities for the execution of a task, but also the ability to interpret and relate as well as skills of discovery and interaction.

Many models have been developed – within different disciplines and fields (e.g., education, psychology, management, sociology, etc.) – to explain the main components of intercultural competence and how they interact with each other. This article will offer some of the most significant examples, especially for the field of intercultural leadership. Balloi (2021) conducted a study involving 3 organizations, 1 large company and 2 multinationals with 34 managers and HR partners to identify and develop a heuristic model of intercultural competence from managers' practices and understand how such a model can be used to promote effective diversity management (DM) practices. The Intercultural Competence Model is intended as a reference for an assessment system related to inclusive leadership and management learning and consists of five domains: 1) personality (attitudes and self-awareness); 2) skills; 3) knowledge; 4) values, brand culture and identity; and 5) the landscape of international rights related to diversity in the workplace. In particular, the elements that

make up the sphere of self are: understanding the person; listening; respect; empathy; openness; irony; sensitivity; decentralization; withdrawal from judgment; patience; humility; flexibility; acceptance; curiosity. In particular, two categories are quite interesting: understanding people, as managers in the companies surveyed appear to have this attitude rather than focusing solely on the cultural aspects of diversity; and irony, which is a positive lever (but should be used carefully and judiciously) for managing diversity. On the other hand, self-awareness refers to the extent to which a person is aware of his or her weaknesses, interpersonal skills, philosophy, and values, as well as how past experiences affect one's personality.

Within the skills dimension, the following categories were then identified: giving value and attention to the person; including people; managing conflict; valuing diversity; recognizing the strengths of workers; recognizing and managing the critical elements of the context and of the person; promoting reflection in workers; integrating the point of view of others; observation; mediation; confrontation and dialogue; managing diversity by overcoming the problematic issue; involving people; setting a positive example; searching for shared horizons and meanings; transparency and clarity; stimulating workers to put themselves in the other person's shoes; managing discrimination; increasing other people's motivation; reducing and managing prejudice or stereotyping; changing one's own vision; managing one's own and others' emotional dimension; valuing the group in diversity management and inclusion practices. As for the knowledge, there are aspects relating to intercultural communication, knowledge of at least one foreign language or understanding of the cultural references of the Other. The latter category seems to refer to a deep knowledge of culture, which goes beyond its surface aspects (Deardorff, 2009).

Both values and corporate identity appear as dimensions that emphasize knowledge, awareness and practical application in management. This means that they are present both in the realm of knowledge and in the realm of knowledge of how to act, in terms of the ability to know how to use them in everyday practice. Finally, the inclusion of a reference to the value-based mechanisms derived from the recognition of international rights recalls the realization that a common value base on diversity is needed today more than ever in a complex and multicultural society.

Portera's (2013) Interactive Model of Intercultural Competencies also originates from empirical research; specifically, it was tested within the context of a master's degree program in intercultural competencies for the fields of business, law,

healthcare, and education. And, as in Ballo's model, the Self dimension is considered the basic element to access the other dimensions comprise the competence. In fact, the center contains the Self Zone, which includes the Fundamental Human Needs (Portera, 1995), the theory of Quality of Life (Albertini, 2000), Pascal's Tetragram, and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1993). This area also includes attitudes such as openness, sensitivity, decentralization, curiosity, humility, flexibility, respect, responsibility, critical thinking, acceptance, empathy, and congruence. Around the Self Zone are the Knowledge categories: cultural self-awareness, knowledge of one's own culture and the culture of others, verbal-linguistic, non-verbal and paraverbal knowledge, disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge. The category of skills includes linguistic and communication skills. Also important are the ability to observe, analyze, and interpret subjective and empirical reality, establish positive relationships, collaborate, and participate in an open and inclusive group.

On the contrary, the Chinese Model of Intercultural Leadership Competence by Chen and Ran (2009) is not the outcome of empirical research but is based on the theoretical assumptions of the Chinese philosophical approach that promotes the Leadership Competence paradigm, whose characterizing features are: the holistic approach; the collectivist approach to the person; the subjective, intuitive, and non-linear methodological approach. There are several components: 1) self-cultivation, which represents the "unceasing process of educating, liberating and purifying personality characteristics" (pp. 200–201). These characteristics are mainly identified in empathy, which, according to the authors, allows unity to be integrated with diversity and specificity to be identified with universality; it allows the leader to share the symbols of communication and project himself into the thinking of another person, using the same emotions and feelings. This component, in turn, consists of sensitivity and creativity. The former is the merging of diversity into unity, the latter is the expansion from unity to diversity; 2) depth of context, which requires leaders to broaden their perspective and reduce prejudices and stereotypes. In turn, this part consists of multicultural thinking, which is an approach to reducing ethnocentrism, and ecological mapping, as well as the ability to recognize the existence of different contexts in which ambiguous situations can be reduced; 3) action agility – the ability to effectively initiate and complete verbal and non-verbal interactions. This area consists of coordinating *shi*, *wei*, *ji* and interaction adroitness. *Shi* represents the ability of leaders to manage temporal contingency in relationships and at various stages

of communication. *Wei* is the temporal contingency required for leaders to determine the appropriate communication space. *Ji* promotes the ability to make explicit and hidden aspects understood in communication. Interaction adroitness is the ability to align with other people.

Although it is not possible to get a prescriptive set of characteristics that would guarantee with certainty competence in any multicultural relationship and situation (Milani, 2015; Fantini, 2000), it is nevertheless possible to indicate the fundamental elements that are likely to constitute the premises for a positive encounter, in which the risk of misunderstanding is not denied but sought to be overcome by opening up avenues of mutual understanding. For this reason, well-managed diversity – through the development of intercultural competence – can lead to better results/effects on a variety of dimensions (Cox, 2001; Mor Barak, 2000): improving problem solving and decision making, creativity and innovation; increasing of organizational flexibility; maintenance of better relationships with clients and employees (through positive conflicts management); occupation of new segments; overall enhancement of job satisfaction.

5. Intercultural and diversity studies in educational community

There are many benefits to enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusion in educational communities. It helps to focus on the well-being of students and faculty at universities and other educational institutions. "Improving equality, diversity, and inclusion will contribute to community building by enhancing the sense of belonging of everyone who comes to work or study there, which in turn can increase their commitment and performance. In addition, by fully embracing and valuing diversity, universities can ensure their long-term relevance in a rapidly changing world and increase their already significant global impact." (Butendijk et. al., 2019, p. 3) Theoretical aspects of intercultural competence in education are widely discussed by many researchers (Portera, 2017, Milani, 2016). Some initiatives to ensure the sustainability of educational communities based on the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion have not been integrated. Thus, there are three important gaps that need to be filled:

1. Existing efforts to address the common barriers faced by all underrepresented groups, including women, sexual, ethnic and cultural minorities, people with disabilities, and other members of the university community, are not sufficiently synergistic.

2. Many efforts have been focused either on student or staff problems rather than on meeting the needs of the university community as a whole.

3. The value of building inclusivity into the teaching curriculum or the design of research and innovation programs (which reflects, how considerations of sex/gender and/or minority perspectives could impact the research and teaching issues) often is not sufficiently central to address institutional issues of diversity and inclusion. Also, the increasing "classical" indicator of the diversity of students in educational communities cannot be considered an indicator of greater "equality" and "diversity" within the higher educational system (Siri et. al., 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to monitor and evaluate diversity in communities and, accordingly, develop an appropriate methodology.

This study of intercultural diversity was conducted according to the methodology developed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung Social Cohesion Radar and adopted for research on community development and social cohesion (Nesterova et. al., 2019, 2020, Dielini et. al., 2022, Svyridenko et. al., 2022).

A feature of the Social Cohesion Radar model is the hierarchical structure of these indicators, which describes different aspects and components of the complex concept of social cohesion. This model is a structure of generalized domains, each of which is described by three dimensions, and each of these three dimensions is described by indicators that can be measured separately.

The first area is very important for intercultural and diversity studies with a focus on community development. This is the domain "Social Relations", which includes the following dimensions:

- social networks;
- trust in people;
- acceptance of diversity.

The domain "Connectedness" involves the following dimensions:

- identification;
- trust in institutions;
- perception of fairness.

The third domain, "Focus on Common Good", covers the following dimensions:

- solidarity and helpfulness;
- respect for social rules;
- civic participation.

This Social Cohesion Radar methodology with the analysis of social cohesion indicators is based on behavioral characteristics that are very important for social cohesion and sustainable community development (Dragolov et. al., 2014). The author's adaptation to identify the above behavioral characteristics for different types of communities is presented: first of all, educational communities. This helps to conduct practical research on an important social phenomenon related to social cohesion – trust, acceptance of diversity, social ties, etc.

In the practical research the analysis of diversity level has been conducted and presented by comparing the results of 2022 with the results of 2019 and 2020 in the studies of social cohesion in the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University (NPDU) – now Ukrainian Dragomanov State University (Dielini et. al., 2022; Svyridenko et. al., 2022). As can be seen from Figure 1 below, it shows that the most represented dimension among the respondents is "Acceptance of diversity", which is significantly higher than other dimensions of this model of social cohesion. This indicates that both university staff and students perceive people with different views, values and lifestyles as absolutely normal.

In 2020, during the pandemic and quarantine activities, the dimensions of "Acceptance of Diversity" and "Social Networks" were more important for employees, and for students – "Acceptance of Diversity" and "Trust in People". This situation differs from the situation a year earlier, when trust in others in the university environment was more important to employees than social ties. The findings compare the level of social cohesion of the university community in 2020, which took place in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the indicators of 2019 and 2022, before and after the war. The data obtained and analyzed showed that the level of cohesion varies moderately across domains and their sizes. Some tend to increase, while others tend to decrease. People's acceptance of diversity increased in 2020 and decreased in 2022. Trust in people is growing, but the importance of social ties is slightly decreasing. Generally, the level of acceptance of diversity is relatively high for all years and groups even during crisis conditions in society (Svyridenko et. al., 2022). These parameters of social relations reflect the sustainability of the educational community, and their changes in different social conditions help to better understand the basic principles of social cohesion, trust development,

and, consequently, community sustainability. This confirmed the assertion that sustainable community development is based on all three dimensions, and that trust (in this study, the parameter "trust in people") is a key factor in social cohesion and sustainable community development (Nesterova et. al., 2020).

The above study, based on the Social Cohesion Radar model, demonstrates the role of acceptance of diversity and trust in social cohesion. It also shows the role of diversity as a key factor in successful communication, social relations and, consequently, community development. The Social Cohesion Radar model provides a better understanding of diversity and tools for monitoring its state in different situations of social challenges, including the war in Ukraine and the pandemic. It is a working analogy for the further development of the Diversity Radar model for monitoring and assessing diversity intelligence in communities.

Also, according to the informal answers to the questionnaire, it is possible to summarize the general opinion about the importance of leadership in the community for its sustainable development: "One of the most powerful ways to achieve sustainable change throughout an organization is through clear and visible leadership from the top." (Buitendijk et. al., 2019, p. 11).

Therefore, it is possible to agree on the following important steps on the value-based path to an equal, diverse educational environment:

1. Provide the importance of trust. Leaders have to send powerful messages to the entire community that they are empathic to issues facing underprivileged groups and willing to prioritize solutions. This will build trust in their leadership and change management.

2. Monitor and measure the impact of present programs of change, using the power of empathy, being open, and listening to shared experiences in a safe and respectful environment.

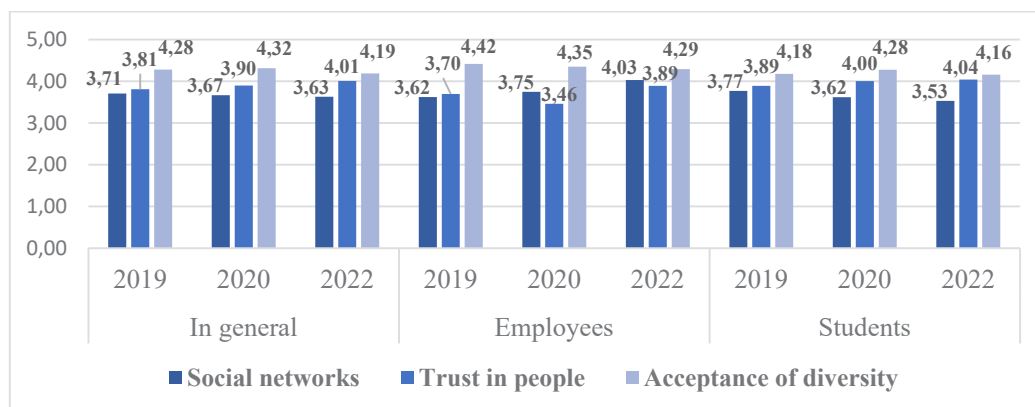


Figure 1. Changes of dimensions by domain "Social relations"

Source: (Dielini et. al., 2022)

3. Develop a holistic, synergistic, and sustainable approach (and appreciate formal strategy) to inequality and lack of inclusion.

4. Lead by example and communicate from the highest levels of leadership the need for change and the potential benefits of increased equality, diversity, and inclusion (Buitendijk et. al., 2019, p. 3).

These steps can be applied to other types of communities (social, local/territorial, ethnic, etc.) to understand and improve their sustainable development. In this case (as in the case study described above), the educational community plays the role of a dynamic, complex social structure that is governed by typical social parameters and may be characterized by features of diversity.

6. Conclusions

Modern society is facing a number of challenges that threaten sustainable development: globalization and digital transformation of business and education, radical changes in social relations, declining tolerance, rising levels of hatred, social inequality, rapidly growing flows of migrants and refugees leading to cultural, religious and ethnic diversity and conflicts, the global economic crisis, etc. The war in Ukraine has exacerbated these issues, but the upcoming recovery period will also emphasize social resilience, particularly in the context of intercultural communication and diversity. Modern communities are diverse, and their development should be guided by the principles of diversity management. Sustainable community development leads to a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable community (society) with engaged community members (citizens) who think and act responsibly, especially for future generations. This vision requires promoting the ideas of intercultural and diversity competence in communities. To do this, it is necessary to start with a self-assessment of the current level of diversity and intercultural intelligence in the community. All mutual interactions should be based on a solid foundation and a clear sense of identity (ethnic, cultural, religious, etc.). Strong and positive self-awareness and self-esteem are the basis for effective social interaction and personal development. Awareness of intercultural and/or diversity means recognizing the discomfort associated with differences in race, religion, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc. It is therefore important that diversity competence values differences without trying to make everyone the same. This is a realization of the principle of sustainability of complex systems –

unity in diversity. The next key point is to integrate diversity competence into leadership and community development plans.

The study of diversity in educational communities based on the Social Cohesion Radar model gives us a better understanding of diversity and tools to monitor its status in different situations of social challenges, including the challenges of the war in Ukraine and the pandemic. In addition, this approach provides a working analogy for the further development of the Diversity Radar model for monitoring and assessing diversity competence in educational and other communities. Thus, it is possible to define some tasks for the modern educational system: the first task for educational communities is to become the guardians of the best practices of sustainable development and successful diversity management; the second is to provide education (formal or informal) in the field of intercultural and diversity competence. Community leaders working in the field of equality, diversity and human rights (these areas are integrated into the whole society) need intercultural and diversity competencies. To develop these competencies, practitioners need access to quality training, professional development, assessment, networking opportunities, etc. A broad understanding of diversity will allow for the successful implementation of its principles in various spheres of public life.

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8. Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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