ACADEMIC MOBILITY AS THE SOURCE OF SCIENTIFIC-EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION

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The given article states out the essence of international exchange programs, benefits and drawbacks, solutions to be taken to make the exchange programs more effective and acceptable for everybody on the experiences of Kazakh Ablai khan University of International Relations and World Languages' students, academic staff. There were 55 participants who took part in questionnaire, 20 students on the specialties of bachelor's degree, 10 former students who gained master's degree in other countries, 10 PhD doctoral degree students, and 15 academic staff members. In the form of questionnaire, we collected and analyzed the participants' answers to clarify the importance of the academic mobility and suggested the ways to improve the international programs. The study results showed that there are many pros of the international exchange programs than cons; otherwise there are things to be ameliorated. We concluded that the role of the international exchange programs is great, they do not only satisfy the needs of one country or nation, but the other needs. It is a two-way and complex process in scientific-educational system.

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Introduction

The role of students' exchange, in general, the international exchange programs have been and will probably remain an important precondition of human and cultural communication on earth. The issue is very topical nowadays and has been discussing by the representatives of culture study, psychology, intercultural communication, and other scholars. One of the key reasons of international exchange, or academic mobility as we call today is the development of Intercultural Communication among nations and governments.

In the 21st century, culture, cultural and educational differences, and Intercultural Communication are among the central ingredients of our life. As inhabitants of this post-millennium world, you no longer have a choice about whether to live and communicate with people from many cultures. Your only choice is whether you learn to do it well.

Intercultural communications now occur within neighborhoods, across national borders, in face-to-face interactions, through mediated channels, in business, in personal relationships, in tourist travel, and in politics. In virtually every facet of life – in work, play, entertainment, school, family, community, and even in the media that you encounter daily- your experiences necessarily involve Intercultural Communication (Myron & Koester, 2010).

As Paaanen (2003) points out: The study of intercultural and exchange issues is by no means a new area. People have interacted with others from different cultures throughout our history in wars, religious journeys, and exchange of goods. They have also been well aware of the difficulties these encounters may cause. Even though the history of intercultural communication or contact with other countries is long, it has never before reached the magnitude of today's world. Earlier it was only people in certain professions or status that had the contact to the foreign cultures and countries. Nowadays even the most isolated and marginal groups of people have the opportunity to interact with people all over the world. Intercultural interaction and exchange of people has become a reality of everyday life for almost everyone. The growth of interdependence of people and cultures in the global society of the twenty-first century has forced us to pay more attention to intercultural and exchange issues (Paaanen, 2003).

Cultural diversity is a fact of life, and we now want to know and learn how the diversity is reflected when people come together. The reason for this new study is pragmatic.

Literature review

As Svetkova (2007) wrote the terms "international exchange", "exchange programs" have been used widely, but no any accurate or linguistic definitions for the notions at all. Nowadays, the term "international academic mobility" is used synonymously on the issues of international cooperation of higher educational establishments. International academic mobility is to send the individuals from one country to another for the educational, research, internship, and scientific exchange or definite academic purposes. International academic mobility for educational purposes is to send students, instructors and employees for the definite period of time to other educational or scientific organizations to study, to teach or to make research works, then the individuals who were sent would come back to their working organizations with a greater sense of the world. But the content of the exchange programs do not correspond to the academic sphere of education. There are different programs that finance is allocated from the budget of the government which covers the essential part of international programs. At the same time, there are cultural exchange programs; youth seasonal working programs; volunteer movements; business travels; technical educational programs for the specialists of various spheres. So, the terms or notions as the exchange programs are not only used in the spheres of education and science, but the meaning of the given notion is very wide.

The important point or the core of exchange programs is being short- term; the given feature differentiates it from other international programs. Usually, the term of such programs runs from several weeks to a year, sometimes if it is the Master's Course Degree it runs to two years.

Formally the international exchange programs are divided into two types: 1) Academic and Government Programs; 2) Private Sector Programs.

International exchange programs are implemented according to the Concept of Academic Mobility of the Educators of Higher Educational Establishments of the Republic of Kazakhstan according to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Education", Regulations of Academic Mobility Center of Kazakh Ablai khan University of International Relations and World Languages, Memorandums of Understanding between Universities, Statements of Cooperation, Academic Agreements or Agreements of Cooperation of the Universities (Mergenbaeva, 2012).

Nurbek (2012) explained that the most important international programs which are aimed for the given issue is the International Scholarship of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Bolashak”. The program aims to give a chance to students and youth of the country to study and to exchange experiences abroad, to prepare more qualified and narrowly focused specialists in foreign countries and to use their knowledge for the country’s sake. International Scholarship of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Bolashak” was formed in 1993 by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev. Since then, the number of Scholarship winners has risen significantly and geography of the Program has been expanded, from 800 scholarships (1994-2004) to 8,131 scholarships (1994-2012). Thus, to date the scholars may study in more than 100 best universities of 17 countries of the world. The majority of the scholars prefer studying in Great Britain (42%), 24% of the students choose the USA and 7% choose Russia. The Bolashak Program has been reoriented towards training the scholars under master’s degree, PhD/doctoral, residency programs and internships (p. 21).

Kazakh Ablai khan University of International Relations and World Languages has cooperation agreements with many universities in the world and aims to learn languages, to enhance cultural understanding, to have mutual respect, and to appreciate of the exchange partner, to contribute his/her experiments and knowledge for the sake of the university and personal growth.

In order to encourage closer academic ties, the university enters into an agreement of cooperation to establish programs of exchange and collaboration in areas of interest and benefit with many universities, institutions and schools of the Republic of Korea, Russia, Germany, the USA, Poland, Spain, India, China, Turkey, Switzerland, New Zealand on the International Programs of PhD Doctoral Course, Master’s Course, Bachelor’s Course on the specialties: “Foreign Philology”, “Foreign Language: two foreign languages”, “Translation Studies”, “International Relations”.

The number of students of the given university who studied abroad for the last four years: 2007-2008 (163 students), 2008-2009 (72 students), 2009-2010 (70 students), 2010-2011 (114 students).

As Chen (2001) pointed out “A nation’s purpose in educating its children is to prepare them to become productive members of society. Each country in the world has developed a system of education based on its needs, economic resources, and traditions.” As the Rector of Ablai khan University of International Relations and World Languages, Doctor of Philology, Professor, Academician of the Higher School International Academy of Sciences Kunanbaeva S.S. says: “The new millennium has brought complex problems for training highly professionally-qualified personnel meeting the requirements of the challenging technology epoch. Alongside this, in my view, uppermost remains the issue of humanization and internationalization of education. The formation of harmoniously brought up and morally rich citizen who is responsible for and to everything taking place on the planet Earth complies with the spirit of the XXI century” (Amirzhanova et al., 2005).

Data and methodology

The International Exchange Programs have the benefits on educational, international relations, personal, intercultural, cultural, business and economic spheres. The bachelor’s and master’s course students, teachers and PhD doctorate course students participating in the present study had been at the foreign universities which cooperate with Kazakh Ablai khan University of International Relations and World Languages. The following advantages of the International Exchange Programs have been stated out after the survey or results of the students, academic staff that have already been to abroad and

experienced them. The number of the students who took part in questionnaire is 55 (the students on the specialties of bachelor's degree (20), former students who gained master's degree in other countries (10), PhD doctoral degree (10), academic staff members (15), total number of the people who participated and answered the questions, shared ideas. The purpose of the questionnaire was to study the given area accurately in order to collect data, to find out the effectiveness and specifics of the issue giving the participants of the international exchange programs 50 questions.

Results and discussion

To add some weight to the research, we observed the most important pros and cons of the academic mobility.

The benefits of International Exchange Programs:

- form international cooperation for the development of education, science and culture;
- take necessary measures for the development of cooperation in the field of education by such programs as exchange of students, faculty members, academic staff, joint research projects, joint conferences, exchange of research materials and academic, scientific publications;
- develop joint education, social, scientific, technological research projects;
- give internship opportunities for graduate students;
- explore the possibilities for developing joint research programs and collaborations;
- have opportunities to enjoy all the usual rights and privileges of students of the host university (without limitation, students may join the host universities library, computing facilities);
- establish dual bachelor, master and doctoral degree programs;
- develop curricula and modules. Several studies (Memorandums, 2004-2013);
- involve in joint research, consultancy activities, in social short-term academic programs and projects, seminars, symposia, study tours, conducting lectures;
- acknowledge the certificates, educational qualification, and diplomas acquired by the students, trainers;
- advertise the countries values, culture, customs and traditions; to aim forming peace and friendship between nations;
- have skills to influence and support own country's content of relations, features;
- develop professional, personal and business skills, citizenship activity, and experience in social activity;
- form and organize communities, research centers, and educational organizations using their knowledge which acquired abroad for the purposes of their country, nation and motherland;
- work effectively in multinational business organizations and global economic position gaining some special and professional skills (being flexible, problem - solver);
- value own nations' attitudes, behaviors, the mother tongue, to return home with a greater sense of the world and a deeper understanding of themselves and their culture;
- avoid national and cultural conflicts and misunderstandings;
- get introduced with historical names and places, sightseeing, to enjoy the time in outdoors on the sphere of organized joint entertainment programs;
- form volunteer groups or student helplines to overcome the problems or situations they might face in foreign countries;

- supply with part-time or full-time jobs in order to earn extra money;
- organize adaptation lessons or master classes, trainings to share ideas, get acquainted with each other (especially there are representatives of different nationalities);
- give an opportunity to have classes from the world-known professors, doctors, be introduced with world popular theories and methodology, practices and accomplishments of people in other countries;
- compare and contrast with own countries' experience, theory and methods, support for the development of the world theories in his/her home country;
- give a possibility to disabled students who do not study or get proper knowledge in their own country;
- develop and form interpersonal skills and work-related and language, transferable skills using for their own purposes, raise self-esteem and self-assessment;
- build links between departments and staff at participating institutions;
- offer students a valuable experience of another culture, education system (Smolinski, 1993);
- make lifelong friends, not only within the host country but also with other students from around the world;
- have skills to fill in different forms, documents, written essay (Bond, 2005).

However, the international exchange programs reveal great number of benefits but several drawbacks.

The drawbacks of International Exchange Programs:

- face a culture shock (loneliness, pains, insomnia, identifying with the old culture or idealizing the old country, unable to solve simple problems, lack of confidence, developing stereotypes about the new culture, feeling of being lost, unable to use new technologies) (Kral, 1993);
- have misunderstandings with host families, dormitory matters, be financed partly;
- be the victims of crime, violence, accidents;
- face with curricula difference (assessment system, syllabus, rules and regulations, academic punishments, written assignments);
- have cultural and national conflicts and danger in intercultural communication;
- misunderstand the cultural values, stereotypes, behaviors (the relationship between teachers and students, food manners, personal tolerance, timing);
- lack in proficiency of a language of the host country;
- work under pressure and do hard works that the student have not done in his/her home country (decorating houses, serving in restaurants, distribution of papers, selling things);
- do not have enough time to make researches, to get proper or specialized knowledge;
- fill or write many papers (a reference letters, essay, transcript, agreements);
- do not return to home countries, work for the sake of foreign country;
- limit the age of the participants (till 35 years), do not take part for the second time in the programs;
- face religious problems.

Conclusion

The experiences of the participants for the international academic mobility programs help them and the organizers, managers of the university to organize specific training courses, master classes for the future participants to avoid the problems they might face abroad. At the same time the former participants have a chance to meet together and exchange ideas, answer the questions.

Considering the answers for the questionnaire, we suggest to assess the participants' tolerance through computer-based validity testing by questioning, to give simulation tests, simulation games by interacting in groups, and specific situations. Testing students with the help of specialized tests, questions, interviews, dialogues will also be very helpful for them to get used to the new environment, new culture.

It will be beneficial if the universities compile textbooks and brochures to explain the aims, objectives, and the essence of the International Exchange Programs for the participants, to give proper information to the students about academic mobility and to prepare them for the possible problems they might face abroad. As the survey showed the participants have no opportunity to understand clearly the essence of such international exchange programs.

The crucial importance of the academic mobility in modern society gives a special role to provide each faculty with availability of at least one dual degree option for students by certain time. Further, the study points out allocation of some money from the government's budget to cover accommodation, life expense or to give partly help. As we stated before, some international programs do not cover all expenses, the participants have to pay partly.

One of the problems the participants might face is language barrier. It will be good opportunity especially for those who do not know the target language to give language classes free of charge according to the countries they are going to study. Therefore, in the international academic mobility, the participants may consider the value of forming volunteer groups who have been to foreign countries to exchange ideas and experience. One of the aims of making a voluntary work is to increase the participants knowledge about the intercultural dialog, conflict and problem prevention.

Conduction of special elective courses and subjects forms components of Intercultural Communicative Competence, linguo-cultural, business and cross-cultural competences (Kunanbaeva, 2010). Our task is to include special courses to the curriculum of Kazakh Ablai khan UIR&WL.

Finally, the outcomes of this study identify the systematic rules, regulations of the international academic mobility. What documents to fill, how to behave accurately, what skills to form, what to avoid are the issues to be introduced to the participants in advance.

It is dear that the experience of participants for the International Exchange Programs varies from country to country. Even though analyzing the benefits and drawbacks they seem very acceptable and we can easily find the ways to solve. If a person thinks or have another idea about the foreign country, its culture, nations or policy, they have a chance to correct or change attitudes towards them totally. The benefits and drawbacks we have stated are not one-sided, one-way process, but they are multi-sided or two-way process.

The results we have found out characterize that the academic mobility is needed and must be developed further and improved. It has more practical value which is very helpful for effective communication.

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