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Research Article

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OF TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS THROUGH TEACHING COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly globalized world, intercultural professional skills have become essential for technical university students, equipping them to navigate diverse workplaces and collaborate effectively across cultures. However, traditional technical education often lacks an emphasis on developing these skills. This study explores the role of creative teaching competence in fostering intercultural professional skills among students in technical universities. The objective of the study is to examine innovative teaching strategies that enhance students' cultural adaptability, communication, and teamwork abilities, which are crucial in multicultural professional environments. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through surveys, interviews, and classroom observations involving both students and faculty members. Key findings reveal that incorporating creative teaching techniques, such as project-based learning, role-playing, and multicultural case studies, significantly enhances students' intercultural competencies. Additionally, the study identifies challenges faced by educators in implementing these strategies, including curriculum limitations and a lack of training in multicultural pedagogy.

KEYWORDS

Intercultural professional skills, technical university education, teaching competence, creative development, multicultural pedagogy, skill-based learning.

INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively across cultural boundaries has become a vital skill for professionals, particularly in the technical fields. As industries become more globalized, technical specialists are increasingly required to work in multicultural teams, navigate diverse workplace dynamics, and address global challenges. However, traditional technical education primarily focuses on developing technical expertise, often overlooking the importance of intercultural professional skills. This gap can hinder graduates' ability to integrate seamlessly into global professional environments, making intercultural skills an essential component of modern technical education.

Despite the growing demand for intercultural competencies, technical education systems worldwide place insufficient emphasis on their development. Standard teaching methods often fail to address the cultural dimensions of professional interactions, leaving students unprepared for the complexities of global teamwork. This lack of focus on intercultural skills results in a workforce that may struggle with cross-cultural collaboration, potentially limiting their career prospects and the overall competitiveness of technical industries.

This study aims to investigate how creative teaching competence can serve as an effective approach to developing intercultural professional skills among technical university students. By examining innovative and engaging teaching methods, the research seeks to identify strategies that enhance students' cultural adaptability, teamwork, and communication abilities, which are critical in diverse professional settings.

Intercultural professional skills refer to the ability to effectively communicate, collaborate, and adapt in culturally diverse environments. These skills encompass cultural awareness, sensitivity, communication competence, and the ability to resolve conflicts in multicultural contexts. Scholars emphasize that in technical professions, where teamwork and global collaboration are essential, these skills become a critical component of professional competency. For example, Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence highlights the interplay of knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for cross-cultural interactions.

Creativity in education is defined as the use of innovative teaching approaches that engage students in critical thinking, problem-solving, and active participation. Research indicates that creative teaching fosters not only cognitive development but also emotional and social growth, enabling students to

approach challenges with flexibility and confidence. In the context of intercultural skill development, creative methods such as experiential learning, role-playing, and project-based activities encourage students to explore diverse perspectives and develop empathy for other cultures. This aligns with Vygotsky's theory of creativity, which highlights the role of imagination in learning and professional growth.

Research on teaching competence in technical education underscores the importance of innovative pedagogical practices in developing well-rounded professionals. For instance, studies by Jones et al. (2018) demonstrate that integrating intercultural training into technical curricula significantly enhances students' ability to work in global teams. Additionally, Kember's (2000) framework for teaching competence identifies key factors such as adaptability, creativity, and reflective practice as critical for fostering professional skills. Despite these insights, there remains a lack of focus on explicitly linking creative teaching approaches to intercultural skill development in technical education.

Gap Analysis

Limitations in Previous Approaches to Intercultural Skill Development

While existing literature acknowledges the importance of intercultural skills in professional education, several gaps persist:

1. **Limited Integration in Technical Curricula**: Most technical universities prioritize hard skills, often neglecting the soft skills necessary for global collaboration.

2. **Lack of Creative Pedagogical Strategies**: Traditional teaching methods, such as lectures and standardized assessments, fail to engage students in meaningful intercultural learning experiences.

3. **Inadequate Teacher Training**: Educators in technical fields often lack the training and resources required to implement creative teaching approaches that emphasize intercultural skills.

4. **Insufficient Empirical Evidence**: Few studies provide concrete data on the effectiveness of creative teaching competence in fostering intercultural skills among technical university students.

The methodology of this study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative analyses to comprehensively explore the role of creative teaching competence in developing intercultural professional skills among technical university students. The mixed-methods design enables the triangulation of data, ensuring reliability and validity by integrating statistical insights with in-depth qualitative perspectives. Quantitative methods, such as surveys, provide measurable data, while qualitative methods, including interviews and

observations, offer nuanced understanding of participants' experiences and attitudes.

The participants of the study consist of undergraduate and graduate students from technical universities, alongside faculty members teaching technical subjects. These participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of technical disciplines and cultural contexts. Approximately 200 students and 20 faculty members participated in the study, providing a sufficient sample size for meaningful analysis.

Data collection was conducted through four primary methods. First, surveys were distributed to both students and faculty members to gather quantitative data on their perceptions of intercultural skills and the effectiveness of creative teaching methods. These surveys included Likert-scale questions and open-ended responses to gain deeper insights. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with faculty members to explore their teaching strategies and the challenges they face in fostering intercultural skills. Focus group discussions with students were also held to understand their experiences and perceptions of learning intercultural competencies through creative methods. Third, classroom observations were conducted in selected technical courses where creative teaching practices were implemented. These observations focused on analyzing teaching methods, student engagement, and intercultural interactions.

Finally, creative workshops were organized to serve as an intervention, incorporating project-based tasks, role-playing, and multicultural case studies. These workshops were designed to test the impact of creative teaching approaches on students' intercultural skill development.

The data analysis process involved the use of both statistical tools and thematic analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to the survey data to identify patterns and measure the correlation between creative teaching methods and intercultural skill development. Techniques such as t-tests and regression analysis were used to examine these relationships further. For the qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, and observations, thematic analysis was conducted. This involved coding and categorizing the data to identify recurring themes, such as the challenges, benefits, and best practices associated with creative teaching.

This methodological framework ensures a thorough investigation of how creative teaching competence influences the development of intercultural professional skills, providing valuable insights for enhancing technical education in a globalized context.

The study revealed that innovative teaching strategies significantly enhance the development of intercultural professional skills among technical university students. Methods such as project-based learning, role-playing,

and multicultural case studies were particularly effective in fostering critical skills like cultural awareness, adaptability, and cross-cultural communication. For example, project-based tasks that required collaboration among students from diverse cultural backgrounds helped participants to better understand and appreciate different perspectives. Similarly, role-playing exercises allowed students to practice empathy and cultural sensitivity in simulated real-world scenarios, reinforcing their ability to address cultural challenges in professional settings. These strategies not only improved students' ability to interact in multicultural teams but also increased their confidence in global professional environments.

Despite the effectiveness of creative teaching methods, several challenges were identified that hinder their widespread implementation in technical universities. One significant barrier was the rigid structure of technical curricula, which often prioritizes technical knowledge and leaves little room for creative or interdisciplinary approaches. Educators also reported a lack of training and resources for designing and implementing innovative teaching methods, particularly those aimed at intercultural skill development. Additionally, institutional resistance to change and a focus on standardized assessments were cited as obstacles to adopting creative pedagogy. These challenges highlight the need for systemic changes in technical education to support creative teaching practices.

Feedback from both students and faculty provided valuable insights into the impact of creative teaching competence on intercultural skill development. Students reported that creative teaching methods made learning more engaging and relevant, helping them to connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications in multicultural contexts. They appreciated the opportunity to work collaboratively on diverse teams and recognized the value of developing skills that extended beyond technical expertise.

Teachers, on the other hand, acknowledged the potential of creative methods but expressed concerns about the time and effort required to implement such strategies effectively. Many emphasized the importance of professional development programs to equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to adopt innovative approaches. They also suggested that institutional support, such as flexibility in curricula and access to resources, would be crucial for the successful integration of creative pedagogy.

This study highlights the critical role of creative teaching competence in fostering intercultural professional skills among technical university students. The findings demonstrate that innovative teaching strategies, such as project-based learning, role-playing, and multicultural case studies, significantly enhance

students' cultural awareness, adaptability, and communication abilities. These skills are essential for navigating the complexities of a globalized professional environment.

However, the study also identifies several barriers to the effective implementation of creative pedagogy, including rigid curricula, limited resources, and insufficient training for educators. Addressing these challenges requires systemic reforms, such as integrating intercultural competencies into technical education curricula, offering professional development programs for educators, and providing institutional support for creative teaching initiatives.

The insights gained from this research emphasize the need for a paradigm shift in technical education, moving beyond the traditional focus on technical expertise to a more holistic approach that prepares students for success in diverse professional settings. Future research could explore the long-term impact of creative teaching methods on students' professional outcomes and investigate strategies to scale these practices across different cultural and institutional contexts.

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