INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: APPLICATIONS IN MILITARY DOMAIN

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates gender differences, differences by years of study, in terms of intercultural competence of military students, before an internship in international mobility. On the other hand, we have also shown that there is a causal relationship between intercultural attitudes and knowledge. The results of our study can be used in the realization of an intercultural competence training program.

KEYWORDS: attitudes, knowledge, intercultural competence, skills, students

1. Introduction

Intercultural competence is a topic of interest among those participating in international mobility, but it is not sufficiently explored or promoted in courses or training programs.

According to those mentioned by us in another study that also included military students, this competence can be the key to integration in various cultures (Matei, 2019; Matei & Lincă, 2019).

Deardorff (2006) argued that this competence consists of three main elements: knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

If in other studies on the intercultural competence of military students (Matei & Lincă, 2019), we presented the correlations between the elements of intercultural competence and the training students' needs regarding this competence, in this study, we will present gender differences, differences by years study of students before international mobility.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Objective of Research

O1. Investigating gender differences in the skills, knowledge and attitudes of military students who will go on an international mobility internship;

O2. Investigating the differences in the skills, knowledge and attitudes of military students who will go on an international mobility internship depending on their years of study;

O3. Investigating the effects of skills and knowledge on the attitude of military students who will go on an internship in international mobility.

I1. It is assumed that there are gender differences in the skills, knowledge and attitudes of military students who will go on an international mobility internship.

I2. It is assumed that there are differences in the skills, knowledge and attitudes of military students who will go on an international mobility internship depending on the nation of study.

13. It is assumed that the skills and knowledge of military students who will go on an internship in international mobility influence their attitudes.

2.2. Sample of Research

The study was attended by 45 students from the “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy in Sibiu, 23 male and 22 female, aged between 19 and 23 years ($m = 20.1$, $SD = 1.5$) (Table no. 2).

2.3. Research Tool

The tool used was the Intercultural Competence Assessment Questionnaire,

it has three dimensions (Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills).

For this instrument the consistency index Apha Cronbach was calculated, obtaining the following values:

0.80 for the Knowledge Subscale (Table no. 1),

0.95 for the Attitudes Subscale (Table no. 1),

0.92 for the Skills Subscale (Table no. 1), which means that the items strongly correlate with the scale for the sample of this research.

Table no. 1

Cronbach Alphas for the Intercultural Competence Assessment Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha for the Knowledge Subscale	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,800	6
Cronbach's Alpha for the Attitudes Subscale	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,954	12
Cronbach's Alpha for the Skills Subscale	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,929	10

Table no. 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the values of the research variables. Thus, for the knowledge variable, the mean is 24.4, the minimum value is 17 and the maximum is 31. The attitude variable has a mean of

41 values, a minimum of 29, and a maximum of 55, while the mean of the skills variable values is 30, the minimum value is 20, and the maximum value for the latter variable is 37.

Table no. 2

Descriptive statistics

	age	gender	year.of.study	knowledge	attitudes	Abilities
N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	20.1		2.49	24.4	41.0	30.0
Standard deviation	1.55		0.506	3.30	5.39	3.69
Minimum	19.0		2	17.0	29.0	20.0
Maximum	23.0		3	31.0	55.0	37.0

To achieve the objectives, hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were tested.

As can be seen in the table below, all variables have a normal distribution of values, $p > 0.05$.

Table no. 3
Shapiro-Wilk Test

	knowledge	attitudes	abilities
N	45	45	45
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	24.4	41.0	30.0
Shapiro-Wilk p	0.437	0.686	0.417

In Table no. 4 it can be seen that Hypothesis 1 which assumes that there are gender differences in the skills, knowledge and attitudes of military students who will go on an international mobility internship is partially confirmed because for the

variable skills the hypothesis is not confirmed, $p > 0.05$, and for the variables knowledge and attitudes the hypothesis is confirmed, $t = 2.46$ and respectively $t = 4.41$, $p < 0.05$.

Table no. 4
Independent Samples T-Test – gender

		statistic	df	p
knowledge	Student's t	2.46	43.0	0.018
attitudes	Student's t	4.41	43.0	< .001
abilities	Student's t	1.14	43.0	0.262

Although gender differences in terms of intercultural competence in military students are not statistically significant, however, in the table below we can see

that boys have a higher mean of scores than the mean of girls' scores in our sample, $m = 30$, 6 and $m = 29.4$, respectively.

Table no. 5
Group Descriptives – gender

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
knowledge	masculin	23	25.5	26.0	2.68	0.558
	feminin	22	23.2	23.0	3.54	0.755
attitudes	masculin	23	44.0	43.0	4.22	0.879
	feminin	22	38.0	38.0	4.83	1.030
abilities	masculin	23	30.6	31.0	2.87	0.599
	feminin	22	29.4	29.5	4.36	0.929

Hypothesis I2 it is assumed that there are differences in the skills, knowledge and attitudes of military students who will go on an internship of international mobility depending on the level of study is partially confirmed, because for the variable

attitudes and skills the hypothesis is confirmed, $t = 2.25$ and $t = 2.58$, respectively, $p < 0.05$, and for the knowledge variable the hypothesis is not confirmed, $p > 0.05$ (Table no. 6).

Table no. 6
Independent Samples T-Test – years of study

							95% Confidence Interval		
							Lower	Upper	Cohen's d
		statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference			
knowledge	Student's t	1.45	43.0	0.156	1.41	0.973	-0.556	3.37	0.431
attitudes	Student's t	2.25	43.0	0.029	3.47	1.539	0.363	6.57	0.672
abilities	Student's t	2.58	43.0	0.013	2.67	1.035	0.581	4.76	0.769

Although the differences in terms of intercultural competence in military students by year of study are not statistically significant, however, in the

table below we can see that second-year students have a higher mean of scores than the mean of third-year students, $m = 31.3$ and $m = 28.6$, respectively.

Table no. 7
Group Descriptives – years of study

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
knowledge	2	23	25.0	25.0	2.46	0.513
	3	22	23.6	23.0	3.93	0.839
attitudes	2	23	42.7	44.0	5.48	1.142
	3	22	39.3	39.0	4.80	1.024
abilities	2	23	31.3	32.0	2.58	0.539
	3	22	28.6	28.0	4.20	0.896

I3 It is assumed that the skills and knowledge of military students who will go on an internship in international

mobility influence their attitudes is confirmed, $R = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$.

Table no. 8
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R ²	Overall Model Test			
			F	df1	df2	p
1	0.421	0.178	4.53	2	42	0.016

In the table below, we can see that only knowledge influences attitudes, not skills. A student may have a positive attitude and a lot of knowledge, but this

does not mean that skills are developed at the same level as the other components of intercultural competence.

Table no. 9
Model Coefficients – attitudes

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	20.269	7.126	2.84	0.007
knowledge	0.507	0.246	2.06	0.046
abilities	0.281	0.220	1.28	0.209

Our results are in line with the results of other research.

Deardoff (2006) argues that skills, attitudes, and knowledge reflect observable behaviors of the individual learning to be interculturally competent. However, intercultural competence could only be limited to the ability to interact in multicultural contexts without discrimination or prejudice.

Last but not least, Günçavdı and Polat (2016), in a study in which 650 students had participated, found that there are statistically significant differences between female students and male students in terms of intercultural knowledge and attitudes.

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, all objectives have been achieved. Intercultural competence is the ability to interact in multicultural contexts without discrimination or prejudice. As we could see in this article, its components are not developed at the same level in the case of a person, as evidenced by the relationships between them, but also the existence of statistically insignificant differences in terms of the 3 components of intercultural competence. Although we did not have a large number of respondents, we can be drawn relevant and interesting conclusions for the area based on the results.

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