INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE: A STUDY ABOUT THE INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BASED ON THEIR EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

Today nations are not only transferring goods and services but also people, knowledge, technology, business and even cultures among each other. These triggers of globalization add new concepts to the literature of various disciplines one of which is intercultural communication competence (ICC). Universities develop international programs to support these outcomes and it is required to evaluate the success of these efforts. This study aims to analyze the intercultural sensitivity levels of university students and the contribution of education and intercultural experience on the formation of ICC. Students from two different universities and disciplines have constructed the sample of the study and a survey was conducted to identify the effects of demographics, education, personal traits and intercultural experience comparatively on the level of intercultural sensitivity. The study has revealed that students' respect for different cultures improve with the level of engagement in international interactions.

Key Words: Intercultural Communication Competence, Intercultural Sensitivity, Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Today in the world of globalization the importance of university education and opportunities of international experience provided to the students are getting vital. This is mostly because the companies are targeting the foreign markets rather than domestic markets as a result of saturation of home markets and effects of globalization. This trend of going global change the employee selection procedures as today majority of firms are looking for co-workers who can speak at least two languages, has a university diploma and freedom of traveling both in and out of the country. In short we can say that today the businesses are conducted across the borders of one nation which makes the world an economic and political marketplace as a whole (Hugenberg et al, 1996).

Disappearance of the national borders in business bring a brand new concept to the literature which is known as "intercultural communication competence" (ICC). Aristotle's Rhetoric is an ancient Greek treatise on the art of persuasion, dating from the fourth century and probably the first indirect written document of ICC. According to Aristotle, rhetoric is "the faculty of observing in a given case the available means of persuasion" in contemporary terms, "rhetoric" is the social science that focuses on how to use language to create understanding and to change attitudes or behaviors (Chen, 1988).

However, today ICC is more than just being able to speak the native language of the receiver in the communication process. It is rather to know as much as possible about the receiver in order to increase the efficiency of international communication. This requires knowing the background of the people, where they are grown up, what they care for, how they react and so on in brief to cope with people from different cultures requires more than a language.

This study aims to analyze the impact of "university education" and "intercultural experience" on the level and strength of ICC. A research is designed to measure and compare the levels of intercultural sensitivity (understanding of cultural differences for effective ICC) of university students of two different universities in Izmir, Turkey.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Intercultural Communication Competence

In today's world of global village, living with differences both at home and abroad is becoming more important. Differences such as values, attitudes, culture, ethnicity, social practices, political beliefs, sexuality and religion clearly direct people all around the world who embarked various meanings to their surroundings according to their individual attitudes that must be fully respected and integrated into life (Tesoriero, 2006). In recent years many scholars has completed various studies to deal with these differences and as a result of these studies one particular and important aspect of working with difference is conceptualized as 'intercultural communication competence' (ICC).

Before continuing a discussion of ICC , it is helpful first to highlight key issues arising in ICC in two parts as "intercultural competence" which is often considered to be a subfield of "communication competence" (Deardorff, 2004). Intercultural competence, which is the capacity to change one's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors so as to be open and flexible to other cultures, has become a critical issue for individuals to survive in the globalized society of the 21st century (Alred and Byram, 2002). Taylor (1994) defines intercultural competency as a transformative process whereby the stranger develops adaptive capacity, altering his/her perspective to effectively understand and accommodate the demands of the host culture. A person who has the ability of intercultural competence can develop relational competence with people from different cultures, manage to solve complicated conflicts by moving around alternatives that arise as a result of cultural differences and improve the ability of doing business with counterparts from different cultures (Huang et al, 2003). Learning to deal with different cultures effectively requires cultural awareness, communicative competence, personal attitudes like empathy and flexibility, self awareness and understanding others values, norms and beliefs.

Communication is interaction of individuals, organizations, markets and countries with each other for sharing information to reach a common understanding. Communication competence on the other hand is defined by Chen (1990) as "the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behavior to elicit a desired response in a specific environment" and the definition shows that communication is two sided for a competent individual which is both transferring ones ideas and fulfilling his/her own communication goals. The sender and receiver in an intercultural communication process hold various cultural background differing their values, beliefs and attitudes which affect their selection, categorization, organization and perception of messages (Asuncion-Lande, 1977).

The combination of intercultural competence and communication competence; hence ICC is defined by Chen and Starosta (1998) as "the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors that negotiate each other's cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment". Their work has highlighted three basic components for ICC as intercultural

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sensitivity (effective process), intercultural awareness (cognitive process), and intercultural adroitness (behavioral process), which very basically refers to our verbal and non verbal factors of communication mentioned in the above paragraph as a part of intercultural competence. ICC is also defined by Wiseman (2001) as the comprised form of knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to interact effectively and appropriately with individuals from different cultures where motivation is made an element of ICC. The summary of the literature survey regarding the components of ICC is summarized in the model given in Figure 1.
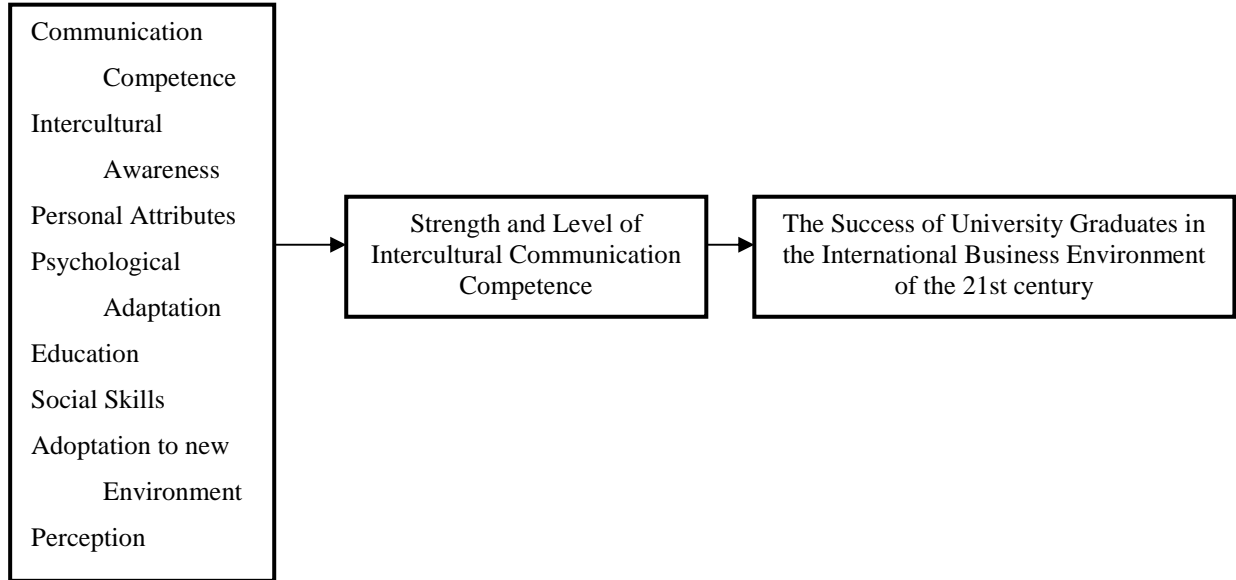

Figure 1.   The components of ICC

Factors affecting the ability of individuals to be "intercultural competent communicators" have been studied by various scholars among whom there are lots of similarities. For example Ruben (1976) underlined seven elements regarding behavior of an individual that will support effectiveness of intercultural communication as; display of respect, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, role behaviors, interaction management and tolerance of ambiguity. Chen (1988) has also stated four main dimensions for ICC as; personal attributes, communication skills, psychological adaptation and cultural awareness. These four basic dimensions is divided into various sub-components to ease the evaluation of competent levels of communicators such as; knowing one selves, being capable of demonstrating both verbal and non-verbal behaviors such as message skills, flexibility, interaction management and social skills, being able to deal with the stress of a climate to a new environment and understanding values, customs, norms and social systems of different culture Chen, 1988). In another study Vuckovic (2008) has listed the factors affecting the ICC ability of individuals as culture, perceptions, roles and identities, communication styles and personality.

Majority of people consider learning native language of counterparts', as the first step of successful communication among culturally different people. However knowing a foreign language is not enough for individuals or groups to communicate with different cultures, they should also know the silent language of communication such as colors, distance, perception, mimics, gestures and even kinetics (Daniels et al, 2004). When cultures are communicating it is not expected that receiver is subject to the same social values and cultural variables with the sender (Beamer, 1992) and beside the verbal and nonverbal factors of communication, the cultural awareness become vital for a mutual understanding.

ICC via face to face or not is a very critical point of the socializing process in international businesses. Gerritsen and Verckens (2006) completed a study to evaluate the socialization process

among culturally different students who speak the same language. They chose the e-mail as means of communication and matched the students in two and let them fill questionnaire that analysis the rituals, symbols and values in their own culture. Each student pair then send their answer to each other, finds out differences and write a report about these differences. The study was aiming to develop the intercultural awareness and let them learn to talk about the differences and to cooperate with someone from another culture among students toward different cultures. The feedback from the students clearly identify that these kinds of studies can be a part of any education system to prepare students for the real intercultural business environment.

As can be seen in **Figure 1**, all the independent variables has both individual and cumulative direct effect on the ICC of a person and an indirect affect on the success within the international business environment. Without a question, each component of ICC which is listed in **Figure 1** has various effects on the "strength and level of ICC" hence the success of new graduates in international business environment which requires further studies.

2.2 Educating for International Business Environment

The border lines are no longer discriminating business of different countries from each other rather the ease of transportation in short make the world a global village. So for businesses to be successful in this international competition race it is very important to hire people with high levels of ICC. Can an effective ICC be learned (Hugenberg, et al, 1996) or born so? The components of ICC highlighted both learned such as" language for communication and cultural knowledge" and inherited "such as personal traits" factors for better ICC. In his study Auncion-Lande (1977) listed various textbooks, journals, courses and simulation games which can be used to raise the acceptance among different cultures.

As world is getting smaller each day, the movement of technology, information and people within professional and social world that surrounds us is becoming a matter to be dealt with (Tesoriero, 2006). This integration of economic, political and social relations among nations affects the future role of today's students as citizens of countries where they will have to cope with global problems (Scott, 1999). The people of different civilizations have different views on the relations between God and man, the individual and the group, the citizen and the state, parents and children, husband and wife, as well as differing views of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy (Huntington, 1993). At that point, education become critical to understand, work, live and deal with those differences and should prepare students to deal with these cultural differences in today's global work environment where multinationals eagerly seek for new graduates with intercultural competence to work either at home or abroad.

Today majority of universities and social entities are applying different programs for students to give opportunities of studying and working abroad. Among these programs most popular ones are Erasmus in the EU area, Study Abroad, Work and Travel and language courses. The logic behind sending students for overseas experience is providing them with a short term international experience during which they can develop required skills that will probably guide them in the global business world of today's economies (Roy, 2006). These attempts are mostly viewed by ICC supporters in the literature and like Deardorff (2004) most studies argued that these experiences provided students with required knowledge, behaviors and skills for better ICCs. Global Graduate Model of Roy (2006) focused on the idea that the study abroad experience leads to intercultural competence and as a result produces global graduates.

2.3 Ability to Discriminate and Experience Relevant Cultural Differences: Intercultural Sensitivity

Chen and Starosta (1996) listed the following five triggers of our world which make it a global society where ICC becomes a critical ability for the individual to survive in today's global world as:

1. the development of communication and transportation
2. the globalization of world economy and multinationals
3. migration of population among nations
4. diversification of workforce
5. regional alliances

All these require a greater understanding, sensitivity and competency among people from different cultures. Chen (1997) has defined the one of the most important abilities that helps the individuals to survive successfully in the culturally diverse society and enjoy these differences as "intercultural sensitivity". In his study Chen (1997) also identified the basic components of intercultural sensitivity as self esteem (sense of self-value), self-monitoring, open-minded, empathy, interaction involvement and finally nonjudgmental. The quality of accommodating, understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, and to enhance one's self-awareness that leads to appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication is named "intercultural sensitivity" (IS) (Bennet, 1993, Chen and Starasto, 1998). Intercultural effectiveness and cross-cultural adaptation defines intercultural sensitivity as a key capability for living and working together effectively with people from different cultures (Zhao, 2002).

The set of distinctions that is appropriate to a particular culture is referred to as a *cultural worldview*. Individuals who have received largely monoculture socialization normally have access only to their own cultural worldview, so they are unable to construe (and thus are unable to experience) the difference between their own perception and that of people who are culturally different. The crux of the development of intercultural sensitivity is attaining the ability to construe (and thus to experience) cultural difference in more complex ways.

Chen and Starosta (1998) identify four personal attributes of intercultural sensitivity as *self concept* which is an optimistic outlook that inspires confidence in intercultural interactions, *open-mindedness;* one's willingness to express themselves openly when it is appropriate and to accept others' explanations, ***n***onjudgmental holding no prejudices that will prevent one from listening sincerely to others during intercultural interactions and *social relaxation* the ability to overcome uncertain emotions during intercultural communication (Chen and Starasto 1998). The literature review indicated that majority of the scholars who studied ICC and IS have noted that the more intercultural sensitivity a person has, the more intercultural competent he/she can be.

Barnlund and Namura (1985) defined intercultural sensitivity in terms of the concept of "empathy". They indicated that to maintain communication in a cross cultural context, one must face the challenge arising from the necessity of understanding someone from another world or culture with a sufficient margin of empathy. Bennett (1993) defines empathy as "the imaginative, intellectual and emotional participation in another person's experience. In empathy, we participate rather than place, and we are concerned with experience and perspective rather than position.

2.4 Effects of Intercultural Sensitivity on Intercultural Communication Competence

The effect of intercultural sensitivity on ICC has been studied among university students. In one of the previous studies; the scholars have examined the effect of participating in cultural programs and the effects of these programs on students' attitudes toward cultural difference and the results show that intercultural sensitivity can be increased with participation in university-wide cultural program. (Klak and Martin 2003).The study conducted by Goby (2007) found out that the multicultural interaction of university campus increases students' sensitivity to the need for ethno relativism in international communication. One of the researches conducted found out that gender and multicultural experiences can influence the level of intercultural sensitivity (Altshuler et al 2003).

Straffon's (2003) study among high school students found a positive relationship between the length of time spent at the school and the level of intercultural sensitivity. The longer students spent time at school, the lower their scores on Denial and Defense subcategories, and the higher their scores on Acceptance and Adaptation subcategories. Olson and Kroeger (2001), in their study using Bennett's developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, found that foreign language proficiency and overseas experience can increase intercultural sensitivity.

3. OBJECTIVE

The internationalization brings new aspects to the education of university students. Today most universities have connection with foreign colleagues for student exchange programs with which they believe they can improve the ICC of their students. Whereas the students learn to communicate with different cultures, exchange knowledge and see the world behind the national borders.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the ICC levels of students from different classes and departments. To search intercultural sensitivity levels of students, two different groups are considered one of which consists of the ones with previous international experience and the other with no previous experience. The analysis is accomplished in two different samples of students: Izmir University of Economics, Faculty of Social and Administrative Sciences students and Dokuz Eylul University, School of Maritime Business and Management students. Furthermore both of these samples are split in themselves according to sophomore, junior and senior classes, departments and previous international experience (see **Figure 2**).

The objectives of the study are included in the following statements:

1. To test each sample to interpret the ICC using the intercultural sensitivity scale and personality traits of different classes and departments
2. To test the whole sample to interpret the ICC using the intercultural sensitivity scale and personality traits of different classes and departments
3. To test the effects of international experience on the intercultural sensitivities of students in each and whole sample
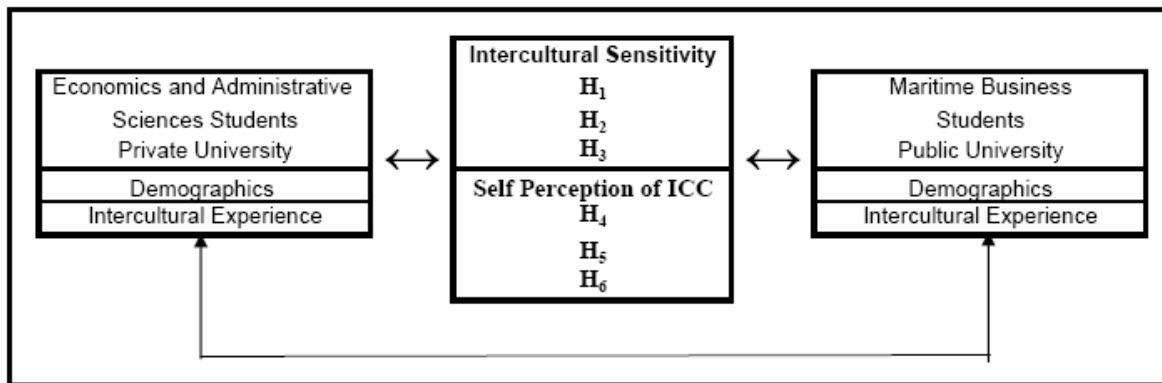

Figure 2.   Research Model

4. HYPOTHESES

Three main hypotheses are developed to test the objectives built on the comparative analysis of the populations:

H₁: ICC level of students from different classes is different from each other.

H₂: ICC level of students from different departments is different from each other.

H₃: ICC level of students who had a previous international experience is different from the students who do not have any international experience before.

For each of the hypothesis stated above (**H₁, H₂, H₃**), 24 sub-hypotheses are formulated and analyzed according to the 24 items of the intercultural sensitivity scale (see **Table 2**).

H₄: Self-perception of ICC for students from different classes is different from each other.

H₅: Self-perception of ICC for students from different departments is different from each other.

H₆: Self-perception of ICC for students who had a previous international experience is different from the students who do not have any international experience before.

For each of the hypothesis stated above (**H₄, H₅, H₆**), 15 sub-hypotheses are formulated and analyzed according to the 15 items of self perception of ICC scale (see **Table 3**).

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Questionnaire Development

A questionnaire has been developed in order to measure the ICC level of the university students regarding their intercultural sensitivity. The questionnaire has 3 different parts composed in English since knowing a foreign language is among the key factors of an effective intercultural communication. The first part covers 15 questions about the respondent. First 9 questions are developed to collect demographic information and 6 questions are asked to collect data regarding the previous intercultural experience of the respondents .The second part covers 15 statements on self perception on a 5-point scale (1=definitely not, 5=definitely). One blank statement has been added to collect the comments in an open-ended way. The scale was taken from the international research project "Exploring and Assessing Intercultural Competence" (Fantini,2006), which was designed and directed by the federation of The Experiment in International Living, to explore and assess the impact of intercultural experiences provided through service projects carried out as part of the Federation's Volunteers in International Partnerships program. The last part of the questionnaire covers 24 statements about intercultural sensitivity of respondents on a 5-point scale where 1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree.The intercultural sensitivity scale developed by Chen and Starosta (2000) is used in the questionnaire which measure the intercultural sensitivity level of respondents with 24 question grouped under 5 major factors as follows ;

1. *Interaction Engagement* of respondents are measured with 7 questions like " I am open-minded to people from different culture"

2. *Respect for Cultural Differences* of respondents are measured with 6 questions like " I think my culture is better than the other culture"

3. *Interaction Confidence* of respondents are measured with 5 questions like "I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures"

4. *Interaction Enjoyment* of respondents are measured with 3 questions like " I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures"

5. *Interaction Attentiveness* of respondents are measured with 3 questions like " I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures"

5.2. Sample

For the research aimed in this study, two sets of samples are chosen from one state "Dokuz Eylul University" (DEU) and one private "Izmir University of Economics"(IEU) university located in the province of Izmir Turkey.

Dokuz Eylul University (DEU) School of Maritime Business and Management (SMBM) was founded in 1988 and provides undergraduate education in three departments; Maritime Business Administration, Nautical Science and Marine Engineering. Izmir University of Economics (IEU) who is the first private university of Izmir was founded in 2001 and provides undergraduate education within five faculties, two graduate schools, two schools and one vocational school. Participants of DEU are the sophomore, junior and senior students of School of Maritime Business and Management, department of Maritime Business Administration. Participants of IEU consist of sophomore, junior and senior students of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, department of Business Administration. The medium of instruction of both of these departments is English.

As the aim of this study is to analyze comparatively the level of intercultural sensitivity of the students in both universities and their intercultural experience in regard of their educational background, the sample does not include freshman students. All students in the sophomore, junior and senior classes of the two universities, a total of 226 students have constituted the sample of the study. The research was carried out in January 2009. A total of 200 questionnaires were received (with a 89% response rate), 107 questionnaires from DEU and 93 questionnaires from IEU. A Total of 200 students, 67 females and 133 males responded. These 200 students ranged in ages from 18 to 26 years with a mean age of 22. The demographic, class based and departmental distribution of the sample between two universities is summarized in **Table 1** below.

	Dokuz Eylul University, n	Izmir University of Economics, n	Total, n
Department			
Maritime Business	107	0	107
Economics	0	5	5
Business Management	0	75	75
International Finance	0	3	3
Logistics Management	0	9	9
International Business	0	1	1
Total	107	93	200
Class			
Sophomore	33	28	61
Junior	39	35	74
Senior	35	30	65
Total	107	93	200
Gender			
Male	74	59	133
Female	33	34	67
Total	107	93	200

Table 1.   Profile of the Respondents

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5.3 Data Analysis Procedures

Data processing is maintained by the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Program. Means for the sample sizes and the standard deviations are also calculated and these are used as a basis for the comparative analysis. Hypotheses based on Likert-Scale questions, ending in interval data, are comparatively analyzed using t-tests.

6.   FINDINGS AND RESULTS OF THE HYPOTHESES TESTS

The two main group of hypotheses (H_1, H_2, H_3 and H_4, H_5 and H_6) of the study aimed to search the differences among (1) the students regarding the ICC between the classes, departments and international experiences based on (2)their level of intercultural sensitivity and personality.

The first group of hypotheses of the study (H_1) was based on the idea that the level of ICC of the students are mostly supported by the university education and improved each year as they completed classes related to their knowledge of international world and communication competence.

The second group of hypotheses of the study (H_2) is developed to reflect the opinion that there will be some differences among the means of the maritime business students of DEU and business students of IEU according to the sensitivity scale as they got both different and similar lectures and these differences may affect the level of their intercultural sensitivity.

The third group of hypothesis (H_3) was developed to cover the belief any previous international experience such as ERASMUS, Study Abroad, Language Training and even the touristic visits may change the intercultural sensitivity of the individuals hence improve their ICC.

The fourth group of hypotheses of the study (H_4) was developed on the idea that the self-perception of students in their own culture becomes different as they completed classes and improved their ICC level by the progress in their education.

The fifth group of hypotheses of the study (H_5) was based on the idea that the self-perception of the students in different departments may vary according to their different education programs and lectures.

The sixth group of hypotheses of the study (H_6) is developed with the idea that the self-perception of students who had a previous intercultural experience will be different from students who did not have any intercultural experience as these experiences will contribute in an improvement in individuals perspective and perceptions regarding both themselves and their counter partners

6.1.Tests for H_1 H_2 and H_3:

The results for the first group of hypotheses are summarized in. As can be seen from **Table 2**, among the hypothesized variables, H_{16} is supported with $p < 0,05$ and the difference is mostly recognized between junior and senior classes. Thus it can be discussed that as the students learn more about international business, they become more sociable and ready to interact with people from different cultures.

H_{116} and H_{119} are supported with $p < 0, 05$ and the difference is mostly recognize between sophomore and junior classes. So it can be argued that at the end of third year at the university the cumulative knowledge they taught let them become more respectful and sensitive to the people from different cultures as they learnt that there are lots of people living on this world with different norms, values and beliefs and they should be interacting with majority of them in the international business environment. For H_{216} the results show that with $p < 0, 05$ business students from IEU respect

(mean=4,044) the way people from different cultures behave more than students of DEU (mean=3,648). **H$_{313}$, H$_{316}$, H$_{317}$** are supported with p<0,05 interpreting that students who had a previous international experience are more open minded and respectful to behaviors of different cultures. Furthermore due to direct interaction with different cultures as a result of previous international experience they learn and even want to get information from culturally different people.

Regardless of the class, department and international experience; for the first group of hypotheses the research results indicated that the sample is mostly disagree with the statements which shows lower level of intercultural sensitivity (referring **Table 2**. Comparative Analysis of Intercultural Sensitivity). Although it was expected to reach a negative relation for these hypotheses, it is also better that students do not have many prejudices against different cultures.

6.2.Tests for H$_4$, H$_5$ and H$_6$

The results for the second group of hypotheses are summarized in the **Table 3**. As indicated in **Table 3** following statements were supported with p<0,05.

The differences between "the perception of students from different classes" regarding their being "self reliant" was supported with significant difference between means of junior and senior students. Senior students perceive themselves to be more self-reliant with a mean of 3,7969 comparing to junior students with a mean of 3,3378. In other words, with the progress in their education, students become more self-reliant which is an expected improvement in regard of the objectives of education.

The differences between "the perception of students from different classes" regarding their being "perceptive" was supported with p<0, 05 and with mean differences of 0,008 between sophomore and junior students and 0,026 between sophomore and senior students. This means that students perceive themselves to be more perceptive by the progress in their education. In regard of the effectiveness of intercultural communication competence, being perceptive is an important requirement for the acceptance of different cultural patterns and behaviors. Therefore, this perception of "improvement in being perceptive" in the period of education is a good indicator of the contribution of their education.

The differences between "the perception of students from different departments" regarding their "lacking of sense of humor" was supported with p<0,05 and a mean of 2,602 which means that there is a difference between the perceptions of students from different departments in regard of their sense of humor.

The differences between the perception of students with international experience and the ones without any experience regarding their clear sense of self and being perceptive was also supported with p<0,05. Students who had intercultural experience previously perceive themselves to have a clear sense of self with a mean of 3,531 while students who had not participated in any intercultural experience have a mean of 3,585. Similarly, students who had no intercultural experience perceive themselves to be perceptive with a mean of 3,700 while the mean for students who had intercultural experience is 3,480. This finding does not support researchers' expectations since intercultural experience is expected to result in a clear sense of self and an improvement in being perceptive. However, the mean differences are not significant enough to deny the effect of intercultural experience on the perceptions of students regarding their clear sense of self and being perceptive.

Supported statements indicate that there are significant differences between students regarding their level of education, departments and intercultural experiences. Due to the partially supported hypothesis, however, it can be said that the effect of self perception on ICC needs further research.

Statements/Hypothesis	DEU[1]			IUE[2]			Total			Comparative Analysis (Method of Analysis: t-test) Supports		
	n	mean	SD[3]	N	mean	S,D[3]	n	mean	SD[3]	Class	Departments	International Experience
1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	105	4,467	,810	92	4,283	,906	197	4,381	,858	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.	105	2,391	1,079	92	2,543	1,162	197	2,462	1,118	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.	105	3,991	,915	92	3,902	,984	197	3,450	9,462	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.	105	2,352	1,143	92	2,500	1,191	197	2,421	1,165	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.	104	3,500	1,080	92	3,478	,989	196	3,490	1,035	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.	103	3,718	1,061	91	3,780	1,093	194	3,747	1,074	**Supported P<0,05**	Not Supported	Not Supported
7. I don't like to be with people from different cultures.	105	1,952	1,228	92	1,957	1,194	197	1,954	1,209	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
8. I respect the values of people from different cultures.	105	4,019	1,143	92	4,185	,948	197	4,096	1,057	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.	105	2,324	1,244	92	2,435	1,161	197	2,376	1,204	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.	104	3,673	1,010	92	3,587	1,050	196	3,633	1,027	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.	104	3,144	1,037	88	3,398	1,045	192	3,260	1,046	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.	105	2,562	1,117	92	2,500	1,209	197	2,533	1,158	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.	105	4,171	1,105	92	4,000	1,059	197	4,091	1,084	Not Supported	Not Supported	**Supported P<0,05**
14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.	103	3,476	1,101	92	3,674	1,149	195	3,569	1,126	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.	104	2,346	1,268	91	2,286	1,232	195	2,318	1,248	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	105	3,645	1,151	92	4,054	,987	197	3,838	1,094	**Supported P<0,05**	**Supported P<0,05**	**Supported P<0,05**
17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.	105	3,752	1,223	92	3,902	1,120	197	3,822	1,175	Not Supported	Not Supported	**Supported P<0,05**
18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.	105	2,267	1,203	92	2,120	1,067	197	2,193	1,141	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's unclear meanings during our interaction.	103	3,408	1,052	91	3,374	1,151	194	3,392	1,097	**Supported P<0,05**	Not Supported	Not Supported
20. I think my culture is better than other cultures.	104	3,039	1,246	92	3,304	1,202	196	3,163	1,230	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
21. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.	104	3,683	1,082	91	3,835	,792	195	3,754	,958	Not Supported	**Supported P<0,05**	Not Supported
22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.	103	3,097	1,107	91	3,176	1,226	194	3,134	1,161	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.	103	3,272	1,068	90	3,333	1,142	193	3,301	1,101	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.	104	3,511	1,040	92	3,870	1,040	196	3,679	1,069	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported

[1] Dokuz Eylul University School of Maritime Business and Management [2] Izmir University of Economics Faculty of Business Department of Business Administration [3] Standard Deviation

Table 2.   Comparative Analysis of Intercultural Sensitivity

Statements/Hypothesis	DEU[1]			IUE[2]			Total			Comparative Analysis (Method of Analysis: t-test) Supports		
										Class	Departments	International Experience
	n	Mean	SD[3]	n	mean	S,D[3]	n	mean	SD[3]			
1. intolerant	104	2,712	1,236	91	2,681	1,114	195	2,697	1,178	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
2. flexible	107	3,626	,9667	92	3,696	,946	199	3,658	,955	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
3. patient	105	3,371	1,129	93	3,559	1,108	198	3,460	1,120	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
4. lacks sense of humor	103	2,592	1,403	93	2,613	1,180	196	2,602	1,299	Not Supported	**Supported P<0,05**	Not Supported
5. tolerates differences	104	3,500	,903	93	3,677	,967	197	3,584	,936	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
6. waits for further information before a judgment	103	3,621	1,001	88	3,307	1,118	191	3,475	1,065	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
7.adaptable	106	3,783	,956	89	3,854	,936	195	3,815	,945	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
8. curious	102	3,304	1,070	91	3,659	,934	193	3,472	1,021	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
9. open-minded	105	3,971	1,070	93	3,979	1,083	198	3,974	1,073	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
10. motivated	106	3,764	1,056	92	3,761	1,063	198	3,460	1,120	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
11. self-reliant	104	3,461	1,054	92	3717	,953	196	3,582	,944	**Supported P<0,05**	Not Supported	Not Supported
12. empathetic	104	3,625	,925	93	3,742	,998	197	3,680	1,027	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
13. clear sense of self	106	3,660	,925	92	3,424	1,030	198	3,550	,979	Not Supported	Not Supported	**Supported P<0,05**
14. perceptive	106	3,585	,904	91	3,528	1,058	197	3,558	,976	**Supported P<0,05**	Not Supported	**Supported P<0,05**
15. tolerates uncertainty	106	3,047	1,027	92	3,120	1,123	198	3,081	1,073	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported

[1]Dokuz Eylul University School of Maritime Business and Management [2]Izmir University of Economics Faculty of Business Department of Business Administration [3]Standard Deviation

Table 3.   Comparative Analysis of Self Perception of ICC

7. CONCLUSION

With the increasing tendency of globalization, it is getting more important to provide students a university education with intercultural aspects and international experiences. In order to achieve this objective, education provided by the universities should be able to give students a background on intercultural communication and how to compete the challenges that will be faced in intercultural environment.

The present study was conducted to interpret whether the students from different business departments of two leading universities of Izmir have developed a required level of intercultural sensitivity and self-perceptions to develop better intercultural communication across nations. Both of these universities aim to graduate students who can compete both in home and foreign business environment and these universities support their students with international business courses and other opportunities such as student exchange programs and the outcomes of the study have reflected these missions.

The studies have proved our initial point for the present study that the university education supported by international materials such as simulations and exchange programs and other non-academic programs such as internship experience, language courses and even via internet will help to educate graduates who respect people from other cultures. Thus acquiring knowledge and understanding of cultural factors is the key to successful communication across cultures (Beamer, 1992). The success of any international education program highly depends on how well the developers understand the aspects of the ICC such as intercultural sensitivity and the way they arrange the process through better ICC. It is highly believed that when both sides in the education system are willing to get and accept the required knowledge about different cultures, ask the proper questions and enjoy these differences, the success in international environment is inevitable and easily supported by the necessary programs.

Finally to conclude about the present study it can be said that hypotheses are partially supported. Furthermore, "respect for different cultures" is improving as the students passed to upper classes and experience an international interaction with different cultures. In addition the results regarding the self perception of "perceptive" is negatively correlated with the international experience which is contrary to our expectations as we believe that international experience will increase the level of being "perceptive". Whether they are fully supported or not our study is the first comparative study among maritime business and business administration students regarding their ICC. The results did not interpret significant differences between universities therefore we interpret the result of whole sample. The only difference between two universities was seen among departments. This is probably due to the different interests of DEU and IEU thus while DEU sample focus on "maritime business" heavily which requires micro level courses; IEU sample focus on "business" generally which requires macro level courses.

Limitations and Further Research

The analysis of the intercultural sensitivity scale and personal perception scales has ended in relatively lower alpha values in the reliability analysis. It would be necessary to test the scale in separate populations to reach higher internal consistency. Another cause of the lower alpha values may be the language of the survey instrument. The survey was conducted in English however the students' native language was Turkish and this might have increased the misunderstanding levels of some statements ending in a decrease in the alpha values. On the other hand, although the scales that were used in this study were tested among various cultures by various scholars, the statements listed in the scales may not fit the cultural orientations of the sample in this study.

The results required further analysis like including different departments, different universities from different cities and countries for the purpose of generalization, making better judgments and recommendations about actual intercultural education supplied by the universities.

Testing the results of this study among more university students by using Turkish translated version of the questionnaire may contribute to the field of international education for developing ICC. Furthermore new statements can be added to the questionnaire or a new questionnaire may be developed that can better fit to Turkish university students in a new study. Finally the samples may be selected from two different faculties and or universities where one encourage international education for global future and the other hold tight to traditional class courses.

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