

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: A KEY COMPETENCE OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

M. BAZGAN¹ R.-M. NICULESCU²

Abstract: *For the professionals of education, in general, and for those that form teachers, particularly, appears the explicit concern about what interculturalism should represent within the personality profile of graduates of nowadays. We enrolled ourselves in this context because we are trainers of trainers; we conduct the initial training of teachers. The research presented in this paperwork is part of a more complex strategy; it has well defined stages, carried out over several years and succeeds to dovetail quantitative and qualitative dimensions. In the context of this paper we present the summary of the results emerged from an ascertaining research that aimed to establish the determinants of intercultural competence.*

Key words: *intercultural competence, intercultural education.*

1. A new Millennium – a new and more Profound Phenomena

The new millennium came with a multitude of changes in human's life. A significant number of common issues changed their actions or defined concepts and have received different meanings.

Processes of enculturation, acculturation, and transculturation, analysed within the complex context of the new millennium, are interesting examples of this changing of meaning. This new era emphasizes the role and the profound significations of another process: cultural adaptation. There are some other connected concepts to the already mentioned ones that aroused serious debates and controversies: multiculturalism, interculturalism or interculturality, and cross-culturality.

A brief comment about the dynamic of these concepts seems to be necessary for the reasons of the following presentation. A correct understanding of them is the basis of any educational act, research or behavior within a multicultural space as the World of this new millennium tends to be.

Multiculturalism refers to the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity. While multiculturalism has been used as an umbrella term to characterize the moral and political claims of a wide range of disadvantaged groups, including African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, and the disabled, most theorists of multiculturalism tend to focus their arguments on immigrants who are ethnic and religious minorities (e.g. Latinos

¹ Transilvania University of Braşov, bazgan_marius@unitbv.ro

² Transilvania University of Braşov, rodicanic@unitbv.ro

in the U.S., Muslims in Western Europe), minority nations (e.g. Catalans, Basque, Welsh, Québécois), and indigenous peoples (e.g. Native peoples in North America, Maori in New Zealand)" (Song, 2010). Multiculturalism values tolerance, and celebrates one another's culturally distinctive cuisine, dress, music, dance, and related outward expressions of culture. It usually requires only superficial and polite social interaction. Equal status is respected for distinct cultural groups. Multiculturalism is a reality, a state with a growing and increasing dynamic with consequences difficult to predict, and hopefully without side effects. Its roots, the direction of its dynamic, should be seriously scrutinized and an adaptation of interculturality should be considered.

Cross-cultural situations mean a little bit more, a reality where bridges of relationships are built by people belonging to different cultures who consider themselves as open-minded. The "community building" becomes a target intentionally followed through different types of programs, including educational ones. But still, power differentials are "forgotten", only limited learning or exchange between cultural groups being allowed. A notable plus is that the cultural differences may be understood and acknowledged but a more efficient management of them may be realized for a genuine individual or collective transformation (The United Church of Canada, 2015). When speaking about the intercultural community one speaks about reciprocity, equality and mutuality. The social structures are in an everyday interaction based on respect, understanding, acceptance, freedom within diversity, the wish to grow together, to learn from each other.

An in depth analysis of descriptions or definitions as above, often found in literature, a progression from a given reality (multiculturalism) towards different degrees of elaborated attitudes can be distinguished (cross-cultural community and further, intercultural community). Thus, the starting point can be a multicultural reality involving a number of cultures without distinctive attitudes according to the specificity of multiculturalism; the second level is represented by a middle path situation where a tentative for building bridges means a beginning of developing a positive attitude (cross-cultural communities). The higher level shows an intercultural community which involves a new type of attitude where the multicultural groups are put together and overcome the step of building bridges; they are already capable to cross these bridges. Thus, interculturalism means more a superior level of attitude. It results after a progress from multiculturalism as reality of life, to cross-culturalism as a middle stage, and finally reaches to a progressive attitude, an intercultural one.

Bennett (2004) uses the term "ethnocentrism" to refer to the experience of one's own culture as "central to reality", and the term "ethnorelativism" is used meaning the opposite of ethnocentrism: the experience of one's own beliefs and behaviors as just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities.

Transculturation refers to a set of elements present in all cultures or the ethnocentric and unidirectional transfer of some elements from one culture to another (Follo, 2010). In this definition two types of perspectives are obvious: a synchronic, structural perspective, in the first part, emphasizing the existence of common elements in different cultures, and a diachronic, dynamic perspective focused on the way of determining the existence of these common elements through an ethnocentric and unidirectional transfer of elements from one culture to another. The transfer could be a positive aspect, if the recognition of the sources' values exist and is respected.

Considering the nuanced changes of these concepts' signification, an effective action appears as necessary, aiming to develop the positive consequences of the involved socio-

cultural phenomena avoiding or diminishing their possible negative influences.

An essential condition should be highlighted when one discusses about all these transactions specific for the contemporary world. The man's dignity, the human being's wisdom reached through education, people's creativity and their genuine power of aware decisions must remain fundamental values even within multicultural contexts with effective intercultural attitudes. Otherwise, the risk of humans of being dominated and manipulated becomes a real one. It is essentially necessary for humans to be aware that a coin or the Moon always has two sides. The positive side must be brought in light for the benefit of all the human beings. This involves a necessary effort everywhere in the world but this paper is focused on the specific case of Romania.

2. Romanian and European Space Challenged for a new Approach of Intercultural Education

The new millennium proposes a higher level of multiculturalism and another face of it. A good example is Romania itself of yesterday and today that necessarily must look towards tomorrow. Romania is an island of Latinity surrounded by predominantly Slavic linguistic waves in Eastern Europe. Developed as a country over a tumultuous history marked by dramatic defense moments of its own existence, today's Romania is the product of this history with everything it has, positive and negative.

Romanian people have both Roman and Dacian roots. It is difficult to say which side of heredity is most valuable: the Geto-Dacians or the Roman one. I think that a genuine importance has this mixture that put together a lot of strengths which were weak – points in our history. An interesting and specific way of "living together" of Romanians with people belonging to other nationalities has marked the history of the land. Greeks, Turks, Tatars, Hebrews, Russians, Hungarians, Germans, Bulgarians, Armenians and others were brought in different moments of history on these lands and remained in peaceful coexistence with the locals. Not even the communism years have destroyed the peaceful nature of coexistence. They have only motivated those who had a chance to leave for a democratic world. A very specific kind of multiculturalism has determined interculturality with distinct features.

The present and the future seem to highlight a new challenge that appears, within the already described world of immigration phenomenon. A part of Romanians try to find their luck over their country borders in Europe or on other continents. But a lot of other people come in Romania following their dreams. These are enough reasons for a more focused concern of Romanian formal and non-formal intercultural education. It must develop a genuine intercultural attitude, as future emigrants or as hosts for immigrants. This concern seems to exist but the manner of implementing the strategy of an effective intercultural education should be improved in our opinion. It is both a philosophy and methodology issue. The philosophy must be an open one, with a deep understanding of human rights and human power, of a decent and effective social behavior (Niculescu, Usaci, & Beldianu, 2015). The educational methodology should be a more active and interactive, genuinely understood in favor of learners' competences development. The developed competences have to be explicitly focused on the effective adaptation of humans in a multicultural world. The curricular reform, as a core issue of the educational reform, has to take into consideration this component of education: interculturality. And a competences centred approach of the curriculum reform should focus, in the case of

intercultural education, on the effective development of the so called "intercultural competence".

3. The Concept of Intercultural Competence

The concept of "culture" is for centuries discussed. Anthropologists, sociologists, historians and philosophers put this concept into the core of their attention. Culture is a powerful concept marked by controversy whose reasons are rooted into the choice of explanatory paradigms sometimes radically different. There is no universally accepted definition. On the other side, the concept "competence" is quite controversial as well.

The last decades have taken into discussion the issue of competence as a central one in education. Nobody denies that this concept is an appropriate one and the focus on the development of competences is a proper approach in education. The confusion appears at the moment when the concept of competence is to be defined.

A significant number of professionals, especially those anchored within vocational fields consider competence as a mirror of the verb "to do". Thus, according to them, a competent person knows how to do something in a proper manner. But it is difficult to think that something can be properly done if the person doesn't have at least the basic knowledge about what it is supposed to be done. Thus the verb "to know" is involved explicitly or implicitly. But it is not enough to do, emerging from "to know" without having a proper attitude: being able to be as a positive person. The new millennium reality asks the humans to be able to be more than this, to face in an effective way the challenges of a dynamic world, so that the verb "to be able to become/to adapt" completes the structure of what should be a competence. Only when a human being is able to connect into a functional synergy the four verbs: to know, to do/make, to be and to become/adapt one can say that it is about a genuine competence. A simple explanation of a composite as intercultural competence appears as being difficult in these conditions.

From a historical perspective, the concept of intercultural competence arose from studies focused on the experiences of those who have worked abroad (e.g. Peace Corps volunteers) in the 50s, 60s and early 70s (Spitzberg, & Changnon, 2009). These studies were driven by a hampered cross-cultural communication and collaboration between individuals with different backgrounds, perceived as an important issue. In the late 80s, the research focus on intercultural competence has been expanded to including other new aspects of the movement across national borders. Thus a new focus was put on: study abroad, international affairs, intercultural training, expatriates living outside the country and acculturation of immigrants (Bibby, 2008). But the term intercultural competence is originated in Geertz's semiotic vision and has been imposed in the late 80s as an attempt to define new targets for language learning (Nedelcu, 2008).

The concept of intercultural competence, as previously stated, is also characterized by a certain ambiguity. In the literature, researchers and theorists still use a number of terms more or less close to the concept of intercultural competence: cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural awareness, global competitive intelligence, global competence, cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural interaction, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural cooperation, cultural sensitivity, cultural competence, ethno relativity, effective inter-group communication (Fantini, 2007).

A brief analysis of these concepts shows that most of the terms used refer to subsumed aspects of intercultural competence, being only components of this competence (cross-

cultural communication, cross-cultural awareness, cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural interaction, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural cooperation, cultural sensitivity), or somewhat synonymous (global competitive intelligence, global competence, cultural competence).

A wide spectrum of position may be found in the literature. The most radical position belongs to Simensen (2003) which supports the view that intercultural competence is actually "a fashion", "a cliché", used in the education system, although "no one seems to know exactly what it means" (as cited in Ragnhild, 2008, p. 1).

Fantini has defined the intercultural competence, in the broadest sense, as "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately in interactions with others in linguistically and culturally are different from themselves" (Fantini, 2007, p. 9).

In light of its function, intercultural competence shows the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to adequately perform effective communication behaviors that recognize the different identities of interactions in a specific environment. It involves the capacity to mobilize knowledge, methods of action but also emotional experiences, and positive attitude in solving situations of intercultural interaction (Cozma, Popa, & Butnaru, 2007).

4. Research Methodology

The central concept of this work is intercultural competence as a multidimensional construct. The existence and the action of the intercultural competence is determined by a number of internal factors of the human (personal beliefs and values, traits and personality factors), and factors with external roots, but with an internal engine, which are determined by the subject's experience directly lived or indirectly assumed by cultural means.

Structure of the research

Table 1

Objectives	Hypothesis	Research Methods	Research Tools
O.1. Identifying psycho - individual factors that mediate the training and development of the intercultural competence	I.1. Psycho- individual factors are supposed to have a mediation role for the training and development of intercultural competence.	Questionnaire-based survey	The questionnaire for assessing intercultural competence (ICAQ)
			The questionnaire of the 16 personality factors (16PF)
O.2. Comparing extreme groups from the perspective of the degree of intercultural competence aiming to highlight the personality factors with a determinant role for training and developing the intercultural competence.	I.2. Psycho- individual differences statistically significant are supposed to appear between the subjects belonging to the two groups of subjects: the weak group and the strong group from the point of view of intercultural competence degree	Questionnaire-based survey	The questionnaire of the 16 personality factors (16PF)
		Test method	Implicit association test for intercultural competence (IAT-IC)

4.1. Research Methods and Tools

The research method used to identify the significant psycho-individual factors that mediate training and development of intercultural competence (Objective 1) is a questionnaire-based survey. The questionnaires used are: The questionnaire of the 16 personality factors (16PF), the questionnaire for assessing intercultural competence (ICAQ), translated and adapted after Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2003). A questionnaire-based survey method and test method have used for tracking the second objective of the inquiry (comparing extreme groups from the perspective of the degree of intercultural competence aiming to highlight the personality factors with a determinant role for training and developing intercultural competence). A test of an implicit evaluation has been applied. This test was specifically built to support the investigative approach outlined in this research.

4.2. The Participants' Description

The target population of our investigation is selected from the students of Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania, students who were being enrolled in one of the study programs of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences (programs focused on: Psychology, Pedagogy, Special Education, and Early Education). It is important to specify that at this stage the total number of participants (all the 94 students) has realized paperless implicit association test (IAT-IC), and have given an online answer to the questionnaire for assessing intercultural competence (ICAQ).

5. Results

According to the first objective, the study intended to identify personality factors (with an intellectual and a non-intellectual nature) that contribute or, conversely, hinder the training and development of intercultural competence. This approach seems to be an essential step in order to support the design of an intended ameliorative or optimizing training program, with a declared purpose of personal development. The accomplishment of the second objective had an important role for the training program design; it had helped the establishment of the main directions of intervention. This objective has been focused on comparing extreme groups from the perspective of the degree of development of the intercultural competence aiming to highlight the personality factors with a determinant role.

5.1. The Psycho-Individual Factors that Mediate the Development of Intercultural Competence

The accomplishment of the first objective has been determined as a consequence of an analysis and interpretation of obtained data from the subjects' answers to the questionnaire of the 16 personality factors (16PF) and the questionnaire for assessing intercultural competence (ICAQ). Determining the relationship between the level of intercultural competence and the factors of personality has been done by calculating the Bravais-Pearson correlation coefficient (r). Our interpretive discourse will be ordered according to the categories of personality factors measured by the questionnaire 16 PF:

intellectual factors, temperamental factors, factors of character and factors related to what Ego appears.

5.1.1. Intellectual Factors

The results reveal that there is no significant correlation between "intelligence, abstract thinking" and "intercultural competence" level ($r = -.109; p = .446$). In other words, intercultural competence is not associated with the results of factor B (intelligence) obtained from the questionnaire 16 PF. Another analysed correlation has been done between "factor B – intelligence" of 16 PF questionnaire and the dimension "intellectual interaction – Scale I" of the ICAQ. A statistically significant result has not been obtained in this case ($r = -.125; p = .382$). But, the correlation of results of "scale I" with other personality factors shows that "intellectual interaction" refers to aspects of: "emotional stability and degree of maturity" (factor C; $r = .474; p < .01$), "courage and sociability" (factor H; $r = .355, p < .05$), and the "degree of self-doubt, and culpability" (factor O; $r = -.584; p < .01$).

5.1.2. Temperamental Factors

It is surprising that there isn't a significant correlation between "schizotypy-cyclothymia, cooperation, and openness" (factor A) and "intercultural competence" ($r = .179; p = .210$). Nor, "enthusiasm and spontaneity" (factor F) does correlate significantly with the "intercultural competence" ($r = .108; p = .451$); the same situation is found when referring to the secondary factor FS2 - level of introversion and extraversion ($r = .196; p = .169$). The literature mentions a number of semantic constructs similar to what we mean by "openness to others" such as: openness to people and new situations (Cozma, Butnaru, & Popa, 2007), trust and respect for others (Risager, 2000), respect for others (Ruben, & Kealey, 1979), openness (Kelley, & Meyers, 1995 as cited in Williams, 2005), attitude towards others (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2003). Based on these obtained results we conclude that the "opening" referred to by the mentioned authors involves more an attitudinal aspect, and less the dynamic-energy side of the personality

5.1.3. Character Factors

Some factors of 16 PF questionnaire correlate with the level of intercultural competence; they are: "emotional stability and maturity" (factor C), where $r = .599, p < .01$ highly significant; "courage and sociability" (factor H), where $r = -.355, p < .05$ is statistically significant.

Correlation of personality factors C, H and L and the values of ICAQ scales Table 2

	Factor C	Factor H	Factor L
Cultural integration	$r = .414^{**}; p < .01$	$r = .424^{**} p < .01$	$r = -.194$; insignificant
Behavioral scale	$r = .290^{*}; p < .05$	$r = .120$; insignificant	$r = -.265$; insignificant
Intellectual interaction	$r = .474^{**}; p < .01$	$r = .355^{*}; p < .05$	$r = .162$ insignificant
Attitude towards others	$r = .500^{**}; p < .01$	$r = .499^{**}; p < .01$	$r = -.337^{*}; p < .05$
Empathy scale	$r = .355^{*}; p < .05$	$r = .384^{**}; p < .01$	$r = -.269$; insignificant

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients of the mentioned three factors of personality with the scales of the questionnaire of assessment of the intercultural competence. The most significant statistically correlations have been included in the table in order to underline a possible causal mutual determination.

The table shows that the emotional stability and the degree of maturity have a decisive share for the existence of a high level of intercultural competence. Factor C correlates statistically significantly, and strongly significantly with all the five dimensions of intercultural competence. It is followed as importance by factor H, "courage and sociability"; the latter correlates significantly and strongly significantly with the dimensions as: "cultural integration", "intellectual interaction", "attitude towards others" and "empathy scale." Finally, the factor F correlates significantly with the dimension "attitude toward others."

The analyzed correlations with the presented values can be translated into the following interpretive statements: 1) emotional stability and the degree of maturity (as factors of personality) influence the level of cultural integration, capacity of intellectual interaction, attitude towards others, and the capacity of empathy; 2) the level of sociability is associated with cultural integration capacity, with availability for intellectual interaction, attitude toward others and the degree of empathy; 3) the degree of suspicion, trust or distrust is associated with the person's attitude towards others.

5.1.4. Factors Related to Ego's Manifestations

The overall score of intercultural competence positively correlates with the level of self-control (factor Q3), where $r = .392$; $p < .01$; a negative correlation appears with self-distrust and culpability (factor O), where $r = -.677$; $p < .01$, and with factor Q4 (degree of tension, frustration, irritation, anxiety)

5.1.5. Second Order Personality Factors

Acting as surface features, the second-order factors are likely to be easily surprised at the behavioral level. "Intercultural competence" correlates statistically with: (1) the level of "anxiety"; it is a negative correlation and highly significant ($r = -.821$; $p < .01$); (2) with the "degree of dynamism", but this is a positive and statistically significant correlation ($r = .277$; $p < .05$).

The correlation between the variable "intercultural competence" and the "level of anxiety" (second-order factor FS1) is the highest of what is analyzed so far. The explanation lies in the fact that people with a high degree of anxiety are less likely to be engaged in intercultural interactions, and if they do this, it will probably be less successful.

Explaining intercultural competence (in terms of a low degree of this competence's development) connected to anxiety is supported, particularly, by the integrative model of intercultural competence AUM (Gudykunst, 2005). In this model, anxiety is the emotional equivalent of the uncertainty; it seems to be generated by the unusual trait of a situation and it is experienced as discomfort, restlessness, tension. A person needs to develop the ability to manage anxiety through understanding, in order to ensure a proper adaptation. For Gudykunst (2005), understanding involves identifying and focusing on the source of anxiety; this source may be self-image, the response to the host culture, circumstances and connections with the host culture.

The obtained correlations outline the idea of the existence of personality factors with a predictive value in terms of training and development of intercultural competence. The factors involved are: *emotional stability and maturity* (factor C), *courage and sociability* (factor H), *the degree of suspicion and distrust* (factor L), *self-distrust and predisposition to blame* (factor A), *the level of self-control* (factor Q3) and, not least, *ergic tension* (factor Q4).

The implicit association test (IAT-IC) has been further applied in order to avoid the possible sources of error generated by the use of the questionnaire for assessing intercultural competence (ICAQ). Data coming from the application of both these research tools register a strong significant statistic correlation ($r = -.793$; $p < .01$). The coefficient of determination is $R^2 = 0.63$; it shows that 63% of the IAT-IC variance is explained by the ICAQ.

Some factors with strong-significant correlations among the already mentioned ones have been selected. These factors have been introduced in a statistical calculation aiming to obtain the regression equation. This has allowed us to identify the personality factors (here as independent variable) with the highest predictive value in estimating the level of intercultural competence (dependent variable).

Table 3
Correlations between personality factors and IAT-IC

	C	H	O	Q3	Q4
IAT-IC	r = .362	r = .399	r = -.478	r = .384	r = -.458
	p < .01	p < .01	p < .01	p < .01	p < .01

Initially, a calculation of correlations between the independent variables (factors C, H, O, Q3 and Q4) has been realized. Further, the factors C and H have been removed from the step of the regression calculation, aiming to avoid the effect of multicollinearity (Labăr, 2008). Only factors O, Q3 and Q4 remained as elements of regression calculation.

The used method was that of "the best possible set" to determine the regression models. Following the calculation two prediction valid models have resulted. Two of the three variables have proven their predictive value. The two variables are factor O - *self-doubt, culpability*, and factor Q4 - *ergic tension*.

Resulted regression models Table 4

Model	R	R ²	ΔR ²	Estimated standard deviation	Statistics of change				
					R ² changed	F changed	df1	df2	Level of significance
I	.478 ^a	.229	.213	.26979	.229	14.520	1	49	p < .01
II	.558 ^b	.11	.283	.25756	.083	5.764	1	48	p < .05

a. Predictor variable (constant) O; b. Predictor variable (constant) O, Q4.

The first model of regression explains 21.3% of the variance of the IAT-IC variable, while the second model explains 28.3% of the variance of the IAT-IC variable. These data show that a percentage of 28.3% of the variance of intercultural competence is due to the two factors of personality that have been introduced simultaneously in the regression analysis.

5.2. Comparing Extreme Groups

The subjects of the lot have been divided into three groups based on the resulted score after applying the test IAT-IC: (1) the "weak group" from the point of view of the intercultural competence (WC); (2) the "medium group" as level of intercultural competence (MC); (3) the strongly intercultural competent subjects of the further called "strong competent group" (SC). This action was aimed to create the basis for a comparison of the extreme groups in terms of their intercultural competence (objective 2). The average of variable IAT-IC is .7524: the minimum value is .1357, and the maximum value is 1.2796.

The hypothesis I.2 says that Psycho-individual differences statistically significant are supposed to appear between the subjects belonging to the two groups of subjects: the weak group and the strong group from the point of view of intercultural competence degree. It was verified by means of the test t, the test of significance of the difference between the two averages. The considered variables are those that significantly have correlated with the value of intercultural competence or personality factors C, H, O, Q3, Q4 and FS1.

Statistically significant differences are found when comparing the weak competent group (WC) and the strong competent (SC) for three of the five primary factors of personality (factors C, O and Q4). We infer that the experimental intervention approach should be designed by stressing the elements that potentiate the emotional stability and maturity, state of calm, trust and confidence in their own forces, relaxation and lack of sense of frustration. The statistical difference with the highest value and significance has resulted from comparing the three groups according to the secondary factor FS1.

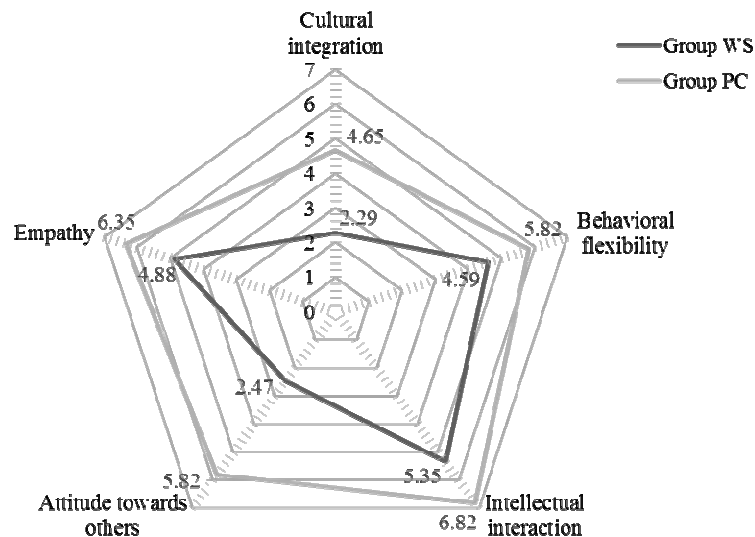


Fig. 1. Average difference between extreme groups on the answers given for typical items

This result emphasizes the need to design and conduct the intervention program in a manner that contributes to reducing anxiety of participants, both in terms of the training

process (the designed sets of learning situations) and in terms of the expected outcomes (intercultural knowledge, appropriate capacities, and adequate attitudes).

The figure 1 illustrates the results of a comparative analysis between WC and PC groups.

The biggest differences are highlighted by item 1 (cultural integration) and item 27 (attitude towards others). However, there also are differences in other typical items case: item 19 (behavioral flexibility), item 31 (intellectual interaction) and item 22 (empathy).

In summary, the research results revealed the existence of a positive association of the intercultural competence with a range of primary personality factors. Emotional stability and maturity, sociability and self-control may enhance intercultural competence training. Among the secondary factors, the degree of dynamism appears to be important in the same explanatory approach. A number of factors of personality appear as having an inhibitor potential. We note here suspicion and mistrust, guilt and tension level, and ergic tension. But, perhaps, the greatest enemy of intercultural competence is the anxiety level, aspect highlighted by the highest index negative correlation existing between variable intercultural competence and the corresponding personality factor.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

As a synthetic conclusion some statements may be formulated. The research results show the existence of a positive association of intercultural competence with a range of primary personality factors. Emotional stability and maturity, sociability and self-control apparently enhance the intercultural competence training. The degree of dynamism, as a secondary factor seems to have a similar role. But also, there are personality factors with an inhibitor potential. Suspicion and distrust, the guilt and ergic tension may be mentioned in this context. But perhaps the greatest enemy of intercultural competence development seems to be the level of anxiety, aspect highlighted by the highest value of a negative correlation existing between variable intercultural competence and this personality factor.

The study of intercultural competence and its determinants is not conceived without a practical purpose. A real issue of the contemporary education consists in a certain tendency to overlook the genuine attempt for developing this dimension in teacher's competence profile. The degree of manifestation of concerns in this regard is diverse in different places of the world, but apparently nowhere a sufficient and adequate involvement is manifested for teachers' intercultural competence development. Our research has included a dimension focused on this issue, as well. It represents the topic of another paper.

Other information may be obtained from the address: marius.bazgan@unitbv.ro

References

- Bennett, M. J. (2004). Becoming Interculturally Competent. In J. Wurzel (Ed.), *Toward multiculturalism: A reader in multicultural education* (pp. 62-77). Newton, MA: Intercultural Resource Corporation.
- Bibby, F. (2008). *Cultural intelligence/intercultural competence*. Retrieved from <http://www.verlegjegrenzen.eu/CMS/uitnodig/UsersFBLINK7DocumentsINTENTOver>

- view_knowledge_cultural_intelligence_(module_4).pdf
- Cozma, T., Butnaru, S., & Popa, N. (2006). Resursele și dezvoltarea competenței interculturale la profesorii români. In L. Șoitu (Ed.), *Legislație și context în educația adulților* (pp. 108-119). Iași: Editura Universității „Al. I. Cuza”.
- Cushner, K., McClelland, A., & Safford, P. (2003). *Activity 2: Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity*. Retrieved from http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/education/cushner/activity_2.html
- Fantini, A. E. (2007). *Exploring and assessing intercultural competence, Center for Social Development, Global Service Institute*. Retrieved from <http://csd.wustl.edu/Publications/Documents/RP07-01.pdf>
- Follo, F. (2010). *Theme: Interreligious dialog: Inculturation and interculturality in John Paul II and Benedict XVI*. Retrieved from <http://www.oasiscenter.eu/ar/node/5610>
- Gudykunst, W. B. (2005). An anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory of effective communication: Making the mesh of the net finer. In W. R. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 281-322). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Labăr, A. V. (2008). *SPSS pentru științele educației*. Iași: Polirom.
- Nedelcu, A. (2008). *Fundamentele educației interculturale. Diversitate, minorități, echitate*. Iași: Polirom.
- Niculescu, R. M., Usaci, D., & Beldianu, I. (2015). *The dyad learning situation – learning experience within specific multicultural contexts. A tridimensional philosophy of curriculum*. International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies: The 5th Triennial Conference Call for Presentations, May 26-29, University of Ottawa.
- Ragnhild, E. L. (2008). Intercultural competence - an aim for the teaching of English in Norway? *Acta Didactica Norge*, 2, 1-16. Retrieved from <https://www.journals.uio.no/index.php/adno/article/view/1025>
- Risager, K. (2000). *The teacher's intercultural competence*. Sprogforum, Danmarks Pedagogiske Bibliotek. Retrieved from <http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr18/risager.html>
- Ruben, B. D., & Kealey, D. (1979). Behavioral assessment of communication competency and the prediction of cross-cultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 3, 15-48, doi: 10.1016/0147-1767(79)90045-2
- Song, S. (2010). Multiculturalism. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition). In E. N. Zalta (Ed.). Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/multiculturalism>
- Spitzberg, B. H., & Changnon, G. (2009). Conceptualizing intercultural competence. In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.). *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence* (pp. 2-52). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- The United Church of Canada (2015). *Defining Multicultural, Cross-cultural, and Intercultural* (w.a). Retrieved from <http://www.united-church.ca/files/intercultural/multicultural-crosscultural-intercultural.pdf>
- Williams, T. R. (2005). Exploring the impact of study abroad on students' intercultural communication skills: Adaptability and sensitivity. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9, 356-371, doi: 10.1177/1028315305277681.