

Impact of Stays Abroad on Intercultural Competence of Students

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Aims: Intercultural competence has become a key-competence, since the world has become more and more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Therefore, insights in the development of intercultural competence and its' links to individual traits are crucial for companies and researchers to face the requirements in a VUCA world. This study examines the relationship between the time, students spent abroad, personality traits and circumstances during this time with the student's intercultural competence and integration performance in the target culture. The study had a correlative cross-sectional design. *Design and sample:* A total of 202 academic subjects were surveyed. The average age was 22 years. There was one measuring time, to which 58 % of the participants stated that they have had a stay abroad. *Measurements:* Metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural intercultural competence were measured with the Cultural Intelligence Scale. The personality traits involvement, discipline, social competence, cooperation, dominance and stability were captured with the "Bochum inventory for job-related personality description-6F". Work-related attitudes as patterns of behaviour and experience were measured using the "Work-related Behaviour and Experiencing Pattern 44" (German: Arbeitsbezogene Verhaltens- und Erlebensmuster, AVEM). This scale captures the way participants relate to work in general based on the measurement of personality traits and their fit to specific clusters, which describe, whether individuals have healthy or risky patterns. In addition, the demographic factors and characteristics of stays abroad as well as the integration into the target culture based on the Sociocultural Adaption Scale were examined. The data was tested for relationships and differences by tests for mean differences, variance and regression analyses. *Results:* There was a positive correlation between duration and cognitive, motivational and behavioural intercultural competence. The motivational competence is higher in subjects who have no risk pattern in the AVEM. The different types of competence influence each other at diverse times. Moreover, the suggested structural equation model could be confirmed. This showed the effect of the AVEM pattern on intercultural competence, moderated by the stay abroad and the social competence. Thus, the study contributes to the understanding of both the measurement of intercultural competence and the development process of intercultural competence in a globalized world.