



A Comparison of the Cultural Intelligence of Hungarian and International Business Students

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In today's globalised marketplace the difference between the concepts of local and global is disappearing, because of the interdependence of nations. Higher education has to take notice of these realities since the employability of graduates rests on the extent to which business education can focus on the development of the skills necessary to manage across cultures. Education needs to take it upon itself to design courses that will help students acquire intercultural competence. Cultural intelligence comprises similar competences as intercultural competence so, by measuring its level, we can formulate assumptions regarding the intercultural competence of individuals, pinpointing the gaps where development is necessary. In our study, we used the Earley and Mosakowski (2004) questionnaire to measure the cultural intelligence of Hungarian and international business students at the Budapest Business School. The results showed higher scores for Hungarian students in cognitive and physical intelligence, while international students scored higher in emotional/motivational intelligence. The survey also looks at the impact of the Erasmus experience on students' cultural intelligence.

Keywords: intercultural competence, cultural intelligence, globalisation, internationalisation, business students, higher education

Introduction

Our 21st century can be called the 'global' century, bringing with it a certain homogenisation of cultures. At the same time, however, the importance of recognising and dealing with cultural diversity is increasing. Even though business practices and organisational cultures across the world show similarities, they need to be adapted, in varying degrees, to local conditions. Consequently, business people can never be completely certain that their skills can be transferred to various business environments without any change. 'When cultures come into contact, they may converge on some aspects, but their idiosyncrasies will likely amplify' (Javidan & House, 2002, p. 1). As a former CEO of Coca Cola Corporation pointed out, 'the fact that the business world is becoming increasingly global does not mean that cultural

differences are disappearing or diminishing. On the contrary, as economic borders come down, cultural barriers go up, presenting new challenges and opportunities in business' (Javidan & House, 2001, p. 291). This statement is especially valid for Europe. There is no other part of the world with so many diverse cultures as in Europe, which is also reflected in the fact that, out of the GLOBE study regarding ten culture clusters for the whole world, four are European (Eastern Europe, Germanic Europe, Latin Europe, Nordic Europe) while one, the Anglo Cluster, is partly European (Falk Bano, 2014).

In view of the above, it is obvious that in our age there is an urgent need to increase the awareness of how to overcome those hidden cultural assumptions that interfere with effective intercultural cooperation in international organisations. We need to understand how cultural factors impact job performance and how our repertoire of culturally appropriate behaviours can be expanded. When people in general demonstrate respect for and knowledge of their foreign counterparts' social behaviour, they can gain a distinctive competitive advantage, whether in business or education or any other field. The sooner such training starts the better. However, for genuinely good results, a multicultural environment is necessary. In Hungary today, higher education is one of the contexts where students can engage in multicultural teams, so here there is a need to rely on cultural intelligence. Indeed, as these students are one step closer to the world of work, the development of cultural intelligence will assist them as leaders or members of multicultural teams (French, 2010).

In this study, our aim is to measure the cultural competence of students at the Budapest Business School in order to make use of the results in the design of materials for training purposes. Our objective is to help our students become successful global managers. In the first part of the study, we will discuss the importance of intercultural competence, and we will then briefly introduce the survey and discuss its results.

Why (Intercultural) Competence?

There are several definitions of the concept of cultural or intercultural competence. Some specify the most important parts of the concept focusing on cultural competence as a developmental process that evolves over an extended period. Nguyen (2009) summarizes the most important elements of intercultural competence on the basis of an 80–100 per cent agreement of the leading international experts in the field as follows: Ability to

- communicate effectively and in an appropriate way in intercultural situations on the basis of the individual's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes;

- identify culture-guided behaviour,
- initiate a new form of behaviour even when such behaviour is not familiar based on one's own socialisation;
- appropriately switch among the frames of reference and adjust to the cultural context;
- exercise adjustment skills and flexibility;
- extend the cultural frame of reference.

In other words, intercultural competence can be defined as the ability to understand each other's viewpoints; to look at ourselves from the outside, to exercise self-assessment; to adapt to a new cultural environment through listening and observation; to demonstrate a general openness to intercultural learning and to learn from other cultures, as well as to adjust to changing intercultural communication and learning styles (Nguyen, 2009; Falk Bano, 2012).

The importance of intercultural competence has been emphasized by companies looking to implement global strategies. Gregersen, Morrison, and Black (1998) conducted a survey of companies in the US and they found that there was a serious shortage of globally competent executives. More than three quarters of the Fortune 500 companies participating in the survey complained of not having the adequate number of global leaders, while more than half were of the opinion that their existing executives should undergo further training to acquire the needed competences.

Falk Bano (1999; 2008), in a study spanning 20 years, interviewed some 500 Hungarian and foreign top and middle managers in international (mostly American-Hungarian and British-Hungarian) organisations in Hungary. The focus of the study was intercultural miscommunication and its ensuing problems. The findings show that misunderstandings between Hungarian employees and foreign managers abound.

In one part of the interview, the participants were asked to give examples of problems caused by intercultural miscommunication. Hungarians, in several cases, reported feeling like second rate employees, since the foreign managers rarely listened to what they had to say, or would ever admit that they were right in conflicts with other foreign employees; their pay was also still significantly lower than that of expatriates. Language skills were also mentioned as an important source of intercultural conflict. Hungarian managers felt they were disadvantaged by their poorer language skills, especially when they had to communicate with native speakers (Falk Bano & Kollath, 2014).

Many foreign managers think Hungarians are slow, inefficient, fail to keep deadlines and are averse to taking responsibility for their work. They fail to plan their work, they are formal, insist on using academic titles and, in

several cases, rely on their network of personal relationships to get things done. The complaints of the Western managers typically reflected a low context, with monochronic and small power-distance attitudes, as opposed to a higher context, with more polychronic and higher power-distance attitudes of the Hungarians. As often commented by participants at the Society of Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR) Europa congresses, this is not only true for the Hungarians but also for the Mediterranean (e.g. the French or the Spanish) employees. With more focus on intercultural coaching, these problems to some extent diminish with time, but they do not seem to disappear altogether (Falk Bano, 2008; Falk Bano & Kollath, 2014).

The roots of these problems in Hungary go back to higher, or even as far as secondary education, where intercultural training has for so long been neglected. Nowadays, however, we find a growing concern with intercultural education mainly at higher educational level. For instance, it is a positive development that by now intercultural studies have been introduced into the curriculum in higher educational institutions practically all over the world, with Hungary following suit. This provides excellent opportunities for the present and future generations in terms of learning more about their own culture, becoming aware of the similarities they share with other cultures, and the differences that need to be overcome for a successful collaboration with members of different cultures (Falk Bano & Kollath, 2014). A sound theoretical grounding in intercultural communication is necessary. Nonetheless, it is important to learn how to put theoretical knowledge into practice, as it is from these experiences that students can come to understand the role of culture in business. Simulation and role-plays, as well as working in mixed culture groups, can be used to induce changes in students' thinking, instilling in them a willingness to entertain more complex points of view, to reject stereotypes and, in problematic encounters, learn to put themselves in the place of individuals from other cultures. These changes in their attitudes can bring about a decrease in the anxiety and uncertainty brought on by intercultural encounters (Sandor Kriszt & Kollath, 2009).

Gatenby and McLaren (1993, cited in Verckens, De Rycker, & Davis, 1998, p. 249) give the outline of what the elements of a course in intercultural communication for business people should be:

- *Language and translation pitfalls.* Not knowing the appropriate terminology used in business transactions and organisational management can lead to costly misunderstandings. In order to learn to communicate expertly in another language, speakers must change and expand their identity as they learn the cultural, social and even political factors that are present in language choices, and the knowledge

of which is necessary for speakers if they want to speak appropriately with a new 'voice.'

- *Cultural variables.* Familiarity with these variables is particularly important in terms of global leadership characteristics, competencies, and developmental strategies. Global managers need to understand how to act in different surroundings, but they should also be aware of the fact that being open-minded or putting oneself in somebody else's shoes will mean different behaviours in different countries (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Kuque, & House, 2006). The underlying force of this knowledge is inquisitiveness, i.e. constant attention to their surroundings and the ability to learn (Gregersen et al., 1998).
- *Negotiation in international settings.* Social and economic changes focus on the need to master the skills of negotiation. The workforce has become more mobile not only within a given country, but also across borders. Employees change jobs more frequently; these new models of employment require employees to be able to actively negotiate, often with people from a different culture and regarding their position within an organisation. Since the rules of negotiation tend to vary from culture to culture, negotiators have to pay attention to this as well, as this may cost them their job. Globalisation means a diversified workforce where people with very different goals, motivations and cultural backgrounds have to work together (Bazerman & Neale, 1992);
- *Training for overseas assignments.* Javidan et al. (2006, p. 84) propose a two-step process to facilitate cultural understanding and adaptability. Global managers need to 'share information about [their] own as well as the host country's culture,' i.e. they need to talk about the culturally similar or different organisational practices and about how they view each other's culture. The second step is deciding 'how to bridge the gap between the two cultures.' This does not imply automatic adaptation, rather a process of finding which approach suits both the leader and the employees best;
- Other, e.g. international trade practices, organisational management, social psychology of intercultural relations.

Most of these elements can be incorporated into materials for business students with a view to develop their intercultural competence/cultural intelligence.

Methodology

The body of international students studying in Hungarian institutions of higher education in general and in the Budapest Business School, Univer-

sity of Applied Sciences in particular, is increasing year by year and the range of countries involved is significantly widening. In order to provide a beneficial learning experience for both the Hungarian and the international students, it is important to develop their intercultural competence, cultural intelligence. This is especially important in cases where cultures are significantly different from each other, such as Northern and Southern European ones. Learning the roots of the various behaviours and mastering the skill of handling communication with members of disparate cultures will allow international students to acknowledge their stay as useful and rewarding, while Hungarian students will be able to learn from the experience of working in mixed-culture groups (Falk Bano & Kollath, 2016).

The concept of cultural intelligence is relatively new but, as it was earlier pointed out, the definition comprises similar competences as the definitions of cultural/intercultural competence. Cultural intelligence (CQ) can be defined as ‘an outsider’s seemingly natural ability to interpret someone’s unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures the way that person’s compatriots would’ (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004, p. 139).

According to Earley and Mosakowski (2004), although some aspects of CQ are innate, anyone reasonably alert and motivated can attain an acceptable level of cultural intelligence. The three sources of CQ or its three components are:

- the cognitive, i.e. the head, or rather our mind, with which we consciously observe behaviour;
- the physical, i.e. the body, which refers to the copying of behaviour;
- the emotional/motivational, i.e. the heart, which refers to the ability to step inside a foreign culture.

An individual with high cognitive CQ devises learning strategies to notice clues to a culture’s shared understandings. High physical CQ indicates the ability to mirror the customs and gestures of the people around you. This is the evidence of your esteem for them and shows your wish to be liked by them. By adopting people’s habits and mannerisms, you eventually come to understand in the most elemental way what it is like to be a member of the other culture. Your actions and demeanour must prove that you have already, to some extent, entered their world. (E.g. How you shake hands, how you order coffee, etc.) The level of people’s emotional/motivational CQ indicates to what extent they wish to adapt to a new culture. This involves overcoming obstacles; people need to believe in their own ability to handle in the face of challenging situations, as this gives them confidence to deal with any task or resolve problematic situations. People who do not believe themselves capable of understanding others from unfamiliar cultures will often give up after their efforts meet with incomprehension.

By contrast, people with high motivation will, upon confronting obstacles, setbacks, or even failure, reengage with even greater energy and vigour (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Cultural intelligence links the emotional, cognitive and practical dimensions of intercultural interactions and enables people to engage in more effective intercultural cooperation (Borgulya Vető, 2010).

The participants of the investigation were 59 students. 30 Hungarian students, 18 of whom had just returned from spending an Erasmus semester abroad at one of our partner institutions, and 12 students who were planning to apply for an Erasmus scholarship to study abroad. Also taking part were 29 students from our partner institutions in Western Europe who were studying at BBS. To measure the cultural intelligence of the students, we used the Earley and Mosakowski (2004) questionnaire with some additions of our own. The original questionnaire sets out to measure cognitive (CCQ), physical (PCQ) and emotional/motivational (ECQ) cultural intelligence. There are four statements in each part, which reflect different parts of cultural intelligence.

The participants are asked to rate each statement along a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. The mean of each set of statements is calculated. When analysing the data, it is most useful to think about the three scores in comparison to one another since CQ is a combination of the three (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004, p. 143).

Besides the original questions, we asked students to give us information on their age, nationality, gender and whether or not they had had any previous intercultural training. The age of the students can be used to see whether or not age influences the CQ results, and if it does, to what extent.

As we think the CQ scores may be influenced by intercultural training, we also asked our respondents if they had undergone such instruction. We assume the students who have had some kind of intercultural training may have higher scores than the ones who have not. Balogh and Gaál (2010) tested the cultural intelligence of students studying at Hungarian provincial universities and their results proved that the cognitive component can clearly be developed through learning. In two multinational longitudinal studies, scholars assessed the effects of Cross-Cultural Management courses on students' CQ. They found that, after the courses, students' overall CQ was significantly higher and that the courses had stronger effects on cognitive CQ than on motivational and behavioural CQ (Eisenberg et al., 2013). To be able to measure to what extent previous intercultural training influences the CQ scores, it is necessary to investigate the kind of training students had. This is not easy to do via the questionnaire but needs to be explored by conducting in-depth interviews with the participants. This will be our next

step in fine-tuning the results. The questionnaires were administered in classes taken by the participants.

Discussion of the Findings

The first set of questions are on CCQ, namely, the extent to which participants think consciously about the aim of the interaction before they interact with a person from a different culture (Q1) and whether they plan how they will relate to this person, i.e. what kind of attitude they adopt during the interaction (Q3). The other two statements in this set aim to collect data on how observant the participants are in the interaction with people from a different culture. Are they able to sense if the communication is wrong or going well (Q4), are they able to pick up on behaviour that is unfamiliar to them, and then transfer this to other situations (Q2).

The second set of questions are on PCQ focussing on the physical aspects of communication. More specifically, how participants are able to notice these aspects and apply them in cross-cultural encounters. The participants have to evaluate their own ability to change their body language to suit people from a different culture (Q1), to alter their expression (Q2), to modify their speech style, i.e. accent or tone (Q3), and to change the way they act if necessary (Q4).

The third set of questions are on ECQ. Here the participants are asked to assess how confident they are when dealing with people from a different culture (Q1), and how well can they handle unfamiliar cultural situations (Q4). They also have to assess how easy it is for them to befriend people whose cultural background is different from theirs (Q2) and whether or not they can adapt to the lifestyle of a different culture with ease (Q3).

We compared the average scores of the Hungarian (HU) and the Western European (WE) students. The responses given to the 12 questions on the cultural intelligence questionnaire show that the Hungarian students have higher scores on the cognitive and physical cultural intelligence part of the questionnaire, while the Western European students have slightly higher scores on the emotional intelligence questions (Figure 1).

The higher scores on the cognitive cultural intelligence questions show that the Hungarian students are more likely to plan consciously how they interact with people from different cultures, as well as the attitude they will adopt. They are better at observing behaviour and transferring it to situations involving members of another culture and when in contact with members of a different culture, they are better able to recognise which way the communication is going.

The difference between the Hungarian and the Western European students regarding the physical cultural intelligence scores is not too big: the slightly higher scores of the Hungarian students show they are more able

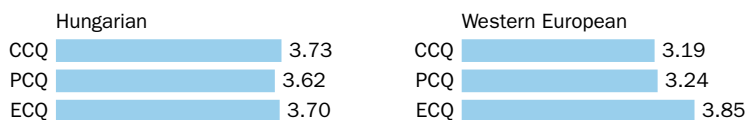


Figure 1 Average of the Scores of Hungarian and Western European students

to adapt to the customs and to mirror the gestures of the people around them. They are also better able to pick up the tone and style of the person they are communicating with. By adopting the behaviour of other people, it is possible to understand in the most elemental way what these people are like. Furthermore, it is a good practice to establish rapport because people feel more favourably disposed towards those who act and behave in the same manner. These actions and gestures prove that people who strive to mirror behaviour that is initially foreign to them have already embarked on the road to entering the world of the foreign culture.

An explanation for the high scores of the Hungarian students on the CCQ and the PCQ questions may be that Hungarian is often termed a ‘survival’ culture, because (despite ill-sought friends, treacherous allies, the vicissitudes of centuries, a long occupation during which some two-thirds of the population was killed off and many towns destroyed) it is a culture that still exists. Since Hungary lies at the crossroads of East and West, it presents an ideal ground for occupation by troops moving mostly from the East towards the West. Often these troops would station in the country for a longer or shorter period of time, living alongside the population in a friendly or aggressive manner. In order to survive, out of self-defence and self-preservation, Hungarians had to master the skill of living together with these people from various unknown cultures. They did this to protect themselves and their interests; the motivation of the majority was simply to survive, though there were some who used this situation to achieve personal ambitions and to move up in the social hierarchy (Terey, 2014). As a result, it has become an ingrained feature of the Hungarian national character to consciously observe how people in a new culture behave and then to transfer this knowledge to various other situations. In view of this cultural heritage, it is not surprising that the majority of Hungarian participants said they consciously took note of the behaviour of members of a new culture and used this knowledge to attune themselves to a new cultural situation.

We will look at the emotional/motivational CQ responses in more detail, because we are of the opinion that it is one of the elements of cultural intelligence that can be best developed in the educational process. Several authors point out the vital importance of this component of CQ. E.g. according to Earley and Ang (2003) motivational CQ is a critical CQ compo-

ment and a key element in adjusting to new cultural environments. Brancu, Munteanu, and Golet (2016) find motivational CQ one of the most important factors when examining intercultural intelligence among business students in Romania. Templer, Tay, and Chandrasekar (2006, cited in Brancu et al., 2016) also believe that motivational CQ is a vital element that is strongly linked to cross-cultural adjustment.

The emotional/motivational CQ is a strong indicator of the extent to which people wish to adapt to a different culture. In order to overcome the obstacles, people need to believe themselves capable of meeting the challenges they face when encountering an unfamiliar culture. On these questions, Hungarian students score lower than the Western European students. The difference is slight, but it indicates that Hungarians are less willing to fully integrate into a foreign culture. The Hungarian ECQ scores are slightly higher than the PCQ scores, which can be an indication of how the perceptions of young people are changing. Today they are more open to various cultural influences and it is not such a problem for them to identify with these. This is the generation born in Hungary after the political changes that opened up the borders and enabled a freer movement of people, goods and services. As a result, people could experience a host of different cultures. Hungary's joining the European Union in 2004 further facilitated this process.

If we look at the answers of the Hungarian students in more detail (Figure 2), we can see that 60% of the students said they could deal with people from a different culture and 73% felt certain they could befriend people from a culture that was unfamiliar to them. Although they were willing to establish relationships with people from different cultures, a little less than 50% felt able to deal with unfamiliar cultural situations. Nevertheless, they felt capable of adapting to the lifestyle of a foreign culture; some 63% of the respondents said it would not present difficulties for them.

Compared to the Hungarian (HU) scores on the individual ECQ questions (Figure 3), those of the Western European (WE) students were consistently higher. Their lowest score (67%) was on the fourth question where a little over one third of the students said they were not sure whether they would be able to deal with an unfamiliar cultural situation. The responses to the other questions showed students felt sure they could deal with people from a different culture (85%), they could easily befriend people from an unfamiliar culture (95%), and adapting to the lifestyle would not be a problem for 76% of the participants.

The fact that the WE students when filling in the questionnaire were in a foreign country, some of them for the duration of two semesters, may indicate that they are faced with various cultural challenges that have to be solved in order for their lives to run smoothly. Thus, these students are

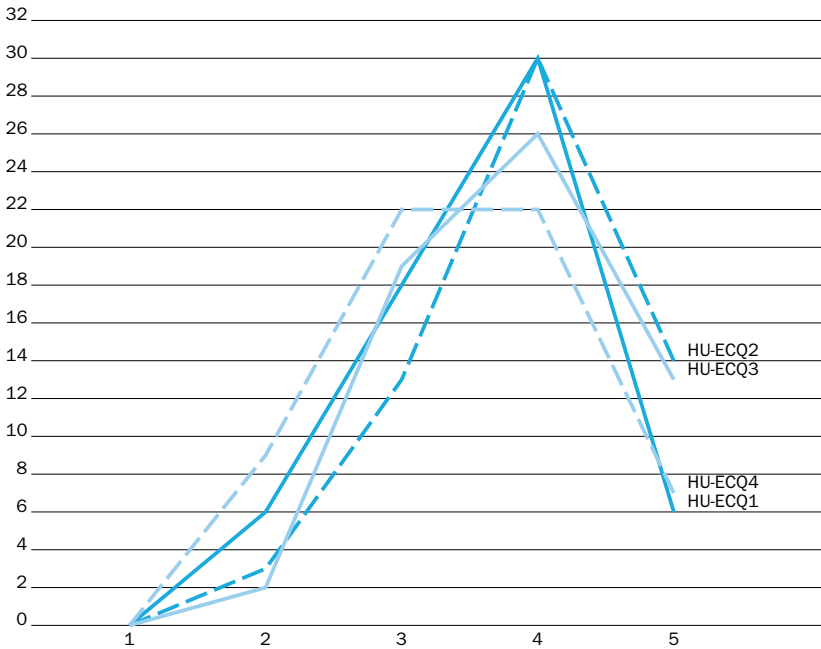


Figure 2 Frequency of the Values in Responses on ECQ (Hungarian Students)

more motivated to understand the Hungarian culture. Indeed, in an attempt to facilitate this process, we, at BBS, have introduced a special session focussing on Hungarian culture for foreign students. The purpose is to show these students how the history of the nation has contributed to the values and beliefs of Hungarians today. Through the historical lens, it is possible to understand better the processes that can be observed currently in the Hungarian society.

It is to be noted that both groups of students felt they would have difficulties in dealing with unfamiliar cultural situations. This is a problem that can be specifically addressed in the cross-cultural communication and intercultural management sessions by giving students case studies to analyse. Additionally, we can ask students to give us examples of experiences they have had in the foreign culture, and we could collectively analyse these situations. It would be a good idea to involve students from the local culture to help interpret the experiences and offer solutions as to how it is best to act, especially in conflict situations.

We ask foreign students about their experiences in Hungary and then at various points in their studies we return to these and discuss them, giving the necessary background information to understand the roots of the particular behaviour. For instance, we explore why Hungarian people are strict and disciplined; why it is difficult to do errands in Hungary; why people

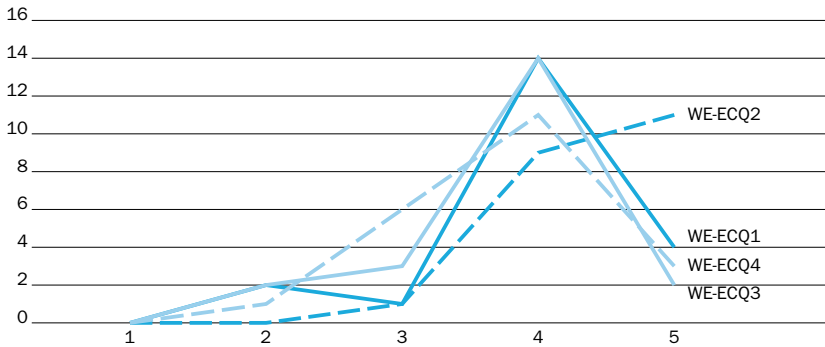


Figure 3 Frequency of the Values in Responses on ECQ (Western European Students)

seem indifferent to each other; and why, as many students have mentioned to us, some Hungarian people do not like foreigners.

In the questionnaire, we asked students whether they had undergone intercultural training or had attended a course to this end. Since spending time abroad can be construed as a form of intercultural training, we included in our investigation Hungarian students who had been studying abroad under the Erasmus scholarship scheme. Their responses were contrasted with those of the Hungarian students in the original survey who were students from Year 1 and from the first semester of year 2, and have not yet had the opportunity to study abroad, but most of whom were planning to do so in their fourth, fifth and/or sixth semester. We put these students in the group called 'students without Erasmus experience,' while the first group of students were 'students with Erasmus experience.'

We can see that the scores of the students with Erasmus experience are higher in all three components of cultural intelligence (Figure 4). The results in the bar chart show how much higher the values are for the students who had spent at least five months in a foreign country. The results show that the most significant advantage for students with Erasmus experience is in CCQ, with an average score of 4.16, second is PCQ, with an average score of 4.06 and finally ECQ where the average score is 4.00. As regards CCQ and PCQ, the result is understandable because living in a different culture requires people to consciously plan their interactions and the attitude they will adopt. Furthermore, they have to be more attentive to the way the interaction is developing so as to be able to react appropriately.

The knowledge acquired can be used later in other interactions with people from different cultures, enabling communication to be more efficient. The copying of behaviour (PCQ scores) is an important step in establishing rapport with members of the unfamiliar culture. Success in the first two elements enhances motivation to step inside the other culture.

The consistently higher scores of the group with Erasmus experience in-

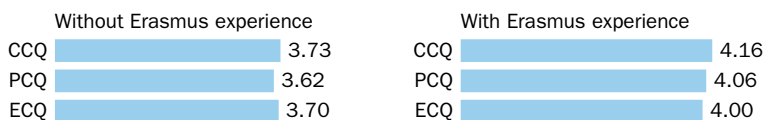


Figure 4 Average of the Scores of Students without/with Erasmus Experience

indicates that these students feel more confident, they have tried themselves out in an unfamiliar culture and have been successful in facing the challenges. The higher scores show optimism and satisfaction with the achievement. The lower scores of the group without Erasmus experience show their uncertainty regarding what to expect in a different, unknown culture and, to a certain extent, unfamiliarity with their own abilities as to how they would be able to manage.

Learning the roots of the various behaviours and mastering the skill of handling communication with members of disparate cultures will allow students to perceive their stay in the host culture as useful and rewarding (Falk Bano & Kollath, 2016). It is possible to prepare students in advance to face and cope with such challenges but, for a better understanding of various cultures, it is of utmost importance for them to spend some time in countries whose cultures, values and behaviour may be quite different from theirs. The Erasmus programme helps a great deal in making this possible for European countries. Since its launch in Hungary in 1997, it has enabled more than 45,000 students and 11,500 academic staff to widen their professional knowledge (Falk Bano & Kollath, 2014).

Comparing the frequency of the values of the responses given to the ECQ questions by the students with Erasmus experience with those of the students without Erasmus experience, we can see a difference in the results. The students with Erasmus experience gave the highest values in the ability to deal with unfamiliar cultural situations. More than two thirds of the students (88%) felt confident about coping in culturally new situations. Another interesting result was the lower value given to ease of adapting to the lifestyle of a different culture. The reality and the mental picture do not always correspond. People may have illusions about what life in a different culture may be like and, when faced with reality, resistance to the different culture may come forth.

Conclusion, Contributions, Limitations

Intercultural competence/cultural intelligence is an important asset in our 21st century globalised world, so developing students' and academic staff's intercultural competence is of special importance. Measuring the cultural intelligence of students can help identify areas of cultural intelligence that need to be developed in study programmes. Using the slightly amended Ear-

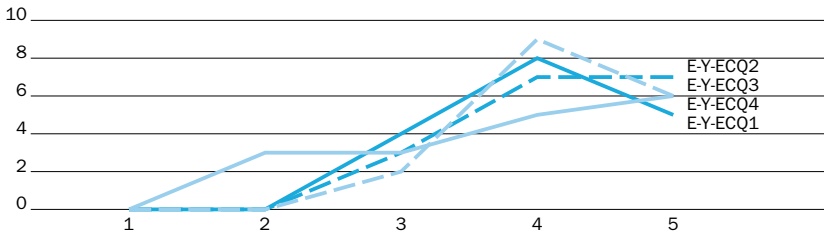


Figure 5 Frequency of the Values in Responses on ECQ (with Erasmus Experience)

ley and Mosakowski self-assessment questionnaire, we measured and compared the cognitive, physical and emotional/motivational CQ of Hungarian and Western European students. Included in the survey were 59 students, a small group of Hungarian students who had just returned from a period of study abroad and a group of students who were planning to embark on a period of study in a European country. In the case of the Hungarian and Western European students, we looked at emotional/motivational cultural competence more closely, since many authors emphasize the importance of this CQ component, and we felt this was the area that could be developed easily in a classroom setting. What we found was that both groups of students felt they would have difficulties in handling unfamiliar cultural situations. So it is this area of emotional cultural intelligence that the classroom should focus on. In the case of the students with and without Erasmus experience, we found that the trend of the scores for both groups were the same, but those of the students without Erasmus experience were consistently lower than those of the other group. Both groups had high scores in CCQ, lower scores in PCQ and still lower scores in ECQ. The explanation of the high CCQ scores can be sought in Hungarian history, during the course of which Hungarians found that adaptation to given circumstances is key to survival, hence the term ‘survival culture.’ On the other hand, the low ECQ scores indicate that the period spent in the host culture is too short for them to feel any motivation to get inside the culture.

The study aims to contrast and compare the cultural intelligence of Hungarian and Western European students. As such, it is a novel attempt to measure attitudes and behaviours of students working in multicultural groups in Hungarian business higher education. Further research still needs to be undertaken to extend and complement the quantitative findings with qualitative data in order to fine-tune these preliminary results. The present low number of participants needs to be increased because, as yet, the sample is small and does not permit generalisation of the results. The higher number of participants would increase the possibility of introducing statistical analysis into the investigation enabling us to see more marked trends in the behaviours and attitudes of the students.

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