

A COMPARISON OF THE CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE OF HUNGARIAN AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Our world today is a multicultural marketplace as a result of the globalisation of economies, labour markets, knowledge, and communication. The difference between the concepts of local and global is disappearing, because of the interdependence of nations. Higher education cannot shut out these realities since there is increasing pressure from all stakeholders to become more engaged internationally in these processes as the employability of graduates rests on the extent to which they are able to cope in an international work environment. The responsibility of business education in developing the skills necessary to manage across cultures is paramount. It is a mistake to think that such skills can be acquired on the job once graduates start working in an international environment. Exposure to other cultures is important, but to become a really efficient manager, it is necessary to be interculturally competent. Education can help students acquire this competence. All the more so, since on the job executives are under pressure to perform, they have little or no time to reflect on their experiences and it may be impossible or they may be reluctant to seek advice from peers and local colleagues. However, if they are prepared beforehand, they will be able to understand each other's viewpoints, be aware of the problems presented by their own culture, and can adapt to new cultural environments and demonstrate a general openness to intercultural learning. Since cultural and emotional intelligence comprise similar competences as intercultural competence, by measuring these competences, we can formulate assumptions regarding the intercultural competence of individuals, pinpointing the gaps where development is necessary. When measuring cultural intelligence we are looking at the extent to which individuals use learning strategies in the target culture, their ability to mirror the gestures used and adopt the mannerisms through which they develop a deeper understanding of the target culture. Finally, the emotional/motivational competence shows the degree of willingness to adapt to the new culture. In our study we measured and compared the cultural intelligence of Hungarian and international business students at Budapest Business School in an attempt to determine their intercultural competence. The results of the survey will be used to develop teaching and training materials in order to help students become efficient international managers.

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