

INFLUENCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE ON AN ORGANISATION'S SUCCESS AND PERSONAL CAREER: THE CASE STUDY OF LITHUANIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to identify the influence of intercultural competence on an organisation's success and personal career in Lithuania. The study described in this paper is a part of international research on intercultural competence. An online questionnaire survey was conducted in Lithuania with non-probability convenience sampling to find out the views of employees working in different sector organisations. The survey was filled out by 1193 respondents from Lithuania. Employees' intercultural competence (knowledge/cognitive dimension, skills/behavioural dimension, and attitudes/emotional dimension) was evaluated using 5-point Likert items and is elaborated elsewhere. The multivariate analysis was used to analyse the survey data and test three hypotheses stating that (1) employees support the notion that higher intercultural competence can foster an organisation's success and personal career, (2) organisations tend to leave the development of intercultural competence to employees, and (3) current intercultural knowledge and skills are inadequate to operate in a multicultural work environment. The analysis showed that half of the respondents agreed with the statement that the development of intercultural competence (ICC) helped the personal career and an organisation's success. The statement regarding organisations tending to leave the intercultural competence development to their employees was only supported by less than one-third of the respondents. Besides, the data did not fully support the statement that employees' current intercultural knowledge and skills were inadequate to operate in a multicultural work environment, as no more than one-third of the respondents had frequent or very frequent issues when communicating with foreigners due to inadequate intercultural knowledge and skills in various sub-areas. The paper elaborates on detailed results.

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural labour force differences lead to changes in an organisation's functioning. They are as important as economic competition and technological changes. In many countries, the population of work-

ing people is becoming increasingly diverse culturally and ethnically. Such diversity determines new requirements for employees, including a good command of foreign languages and an ability to handle different cultures and understand their attitudes, val-

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ues, and perceptions. People failing to meet these requirements have limited career opportunities (Waheed, 2015).

The growing numbers of working women, immigrants, and racial and ethnic minorities are intensifying the labour force pressure on organisations required to accommodate gender, racial and ethnic differences effectively. This also poses challenges to employees as they need to understand diverse cultures and work with people possibly having significantly different values and perceptions or perspectives. In many organisations, career success may depend on the employee's ability to adapt to a multicultural environment (Statnicke, 2019).

Labour market transformations caused by the global shift are stimulating organisational changes. One of such changes resulting in more efficient work and response to modern-environment requirements is restructuring into project teams responsible for specific tasks. For an individual employee, this means, first, working with new people, often of diverse nationalities, second, a wide variety of assigned tasks requiring new competence and skills and, third, the opportunity to find a new future path (idea, international relations, experience etc.). An employee's suitability for a job is determined by their competence, diversity and versatility of skills in a multicultural environment and their readiness to undertake more varied tasks. Therefore, the assumptions are highlighted for continuous organisational renewal. Another crucial outcome of organisational change is a decline in organisational career development structures. An employee's career is a personal matter, influenced by organisational changes focused on the employee's individual career development and organisational success.

A significantly greater focus of the scientific literature on such topics as the multicultural environment, intercultural competence etc., has been noted recently. These topics have been addressed by scholars such as Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens and Oddou (2010), Deardorff (2006) and others. According to Gražulis (2016), the current society's perception of intercultural differences in countries and various ethnic groups has been formed by countless efforts of scientists.

The study results presented in this paper are a part of international research by scientists from Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Lithuania. It began in 2019 and was implemented in stages. This research involved 1193 respondents from different sector organisations (private, public, and non-gov-

ernmental) in Lithuania. The research focused on the problem that despite the importance of intercultural competence for organisational success and personal careers, it may be somewhat underdeveloped to operate in a multicultural work environment successfully, and its development may be unsystematic. Therefore, the paper aims to identify the influence of intercultural competence on an organisation's success and personal career in Lithuania. Three hypotheses were formulated in the above-mentioned international study and verified during this research: H1. Employees support the notion that higher intercultural competence can foster an organisation's success and personal career; H2. Organisations tend to leave the development of intercultural competence to employees; and H3. Current intercultural knowledge and skills are inadequate to operate in a multicultural work environment.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the work environment, a person's competence can be assessed by their ability to perform assigned tasks efficiently and effectively. Scientists (Boyatzis, 1982; etc.) describe competence as a key personal characteristic having a causal relationship with effective or improved work performance. As noted by Matveev (2017, p. 34), competence can be viewed as an integrated mix of knowledge, personal characteristics, and skills that can lead to effective performance. Elaborating on the topic of competence, Sudnickas & Kratavičiūtė-Ališauskienė (2011) emphasised that it cannot be universal in all cultures, professions, and service types. Summing up the majority of literature sources on competences, a consensus can be found that competence consists of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff & Jones, 2012).

Intercultural competence is defined as an ability acquired based on specific knowledge and attitudes enabling individuals to work effectively in the context of different cultures (Mažeikienė & Virgailaitė-Mečkauskaitė, 2007; Szydło & Grześ-Bukłaho, 2020) or as an ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes leading to effective and appropriate behaviour and communication in intercultural interactions (Deardorff, 2006; Szydło et al., 2020). According to Spitzberg and Changon (2009), intercultural competence is appropriate and effective management of interaction between people representing different or divergent, affective, cognitive, and behavioural orientations to the world.

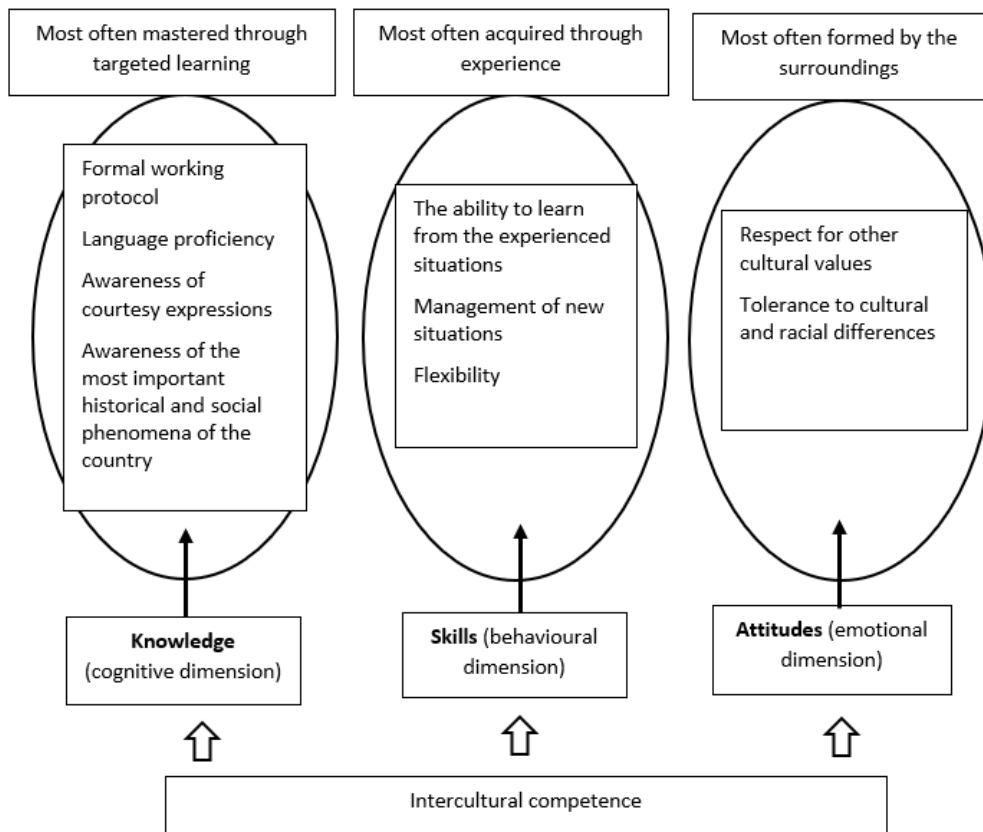


Fig. 1. Intercultural competence research model

Source: elaborated by an international group of scientists, 2017, based on Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Chen & Naquin, 2006; Campion et al., 2011; Deardorff & Jones, 2012.

Intercultural competence can be divided into three main categories: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. Cognitive competence relates to a person's ability to process information, affective competence refers to emotional responses, and behavioural competence concerns behaviour (Lloyd & Härtel, 2010).

Scientists (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Chen & Naquin, 2006; Campion et al., 2011; Deardorff & Jones, 2012) concur that defining the concept of intercultural competence requires considering such dimensions as knowledge and abilities (skills) and attitudes. Based on these dimensions, Fig. 1 presents a theoretical model for research on intercultural competence. This theoretical construct has been empirically validated.

Next, as the article aims to identify the influence of intercultural competence on an organisation's success and personal career, it is essential to analyse the concept of career. Scientists define this concept differ-

ently; however, several key highlights can be identified (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006):

- the term "career" usually refers to a "person's movement in time and social space". Most often, it is a movement in a professional or organisational space or spaces by consistently performing specific work duties or taking on other work roles directly unrelated to formal duties (a narrow concept of career);
- movement in a social space is "compared to a pre-known reference point" in a social structure or a network of relationships (an objective career). Thus, understanding of an individual's career is acquired by indicating their relationship with social structures, other individuals or groups and people of other cultures, guided by such norms as duties, status, values, responsibility areas, change in competences, and direction and speed of progress. These norms give a different value to various roles assumed by the indi-

vidual, and among these roles, this movement takes place in a defined social system and a multicultural environment;

- a career can also be understood as “a movement from one person’s identity to another” (a subjective career). Usually, these identities and their changes are related to work, professional and organisational roles but may include social roles in developing competences and leisure (a broad career concept). Therefore, in this sense, a career is a kind of an individual’s identity change, the quality of which is assessed by the individual’s criteria.

An in-depth analysis of the career definition revealed it as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon, the essence of which could be understood using the systems theory. Such an analysis has been done by several scholars.

No individual pursues a career in isolation as it requires maintaining various connections in a sufficiently broad context. Patton & McMahon (2006) proposed using the systems theory as a meta-theoretical structure with high potential and capable of helping to understand the career development processes. They distinguished the individual’s system and the context system, to which the social subsystem and the environmental–social subsystem belong (the context system also includes the organisation). The most important factors acting in the individual’s system are age, health, gender, physical characteristics, ethnicity, culture, personality traits, values, beliefs, inclinations, interests, and abilities. Depending on the situation, these factors have a greater or lesser impact on an individual’s career decisions. Particular importance is attached to factors operating in the individual’s system, their interaction and the result of such interactions. However, it must be recognised that interaction between individual factors can also have negative or neutral effects on the individual’s career. Thus, no single factor of the individual’s system functions in isolation. In this regard, even the individual’s ethnicity or a culture that is associated with the individual’s development has no unambiguous independent influence on the individual’s career decision (Patton & McMahon, 2006; Czerniawska & Szydło, 2021).

Family, friends, the cultural environment and the workplace, community groups, educational institutions and media are attributed to the social subsystem. Every social structure and institution is a source of certain values, beliefs, and attitudes, having a possible effect on an individual’s career decisions. The compo-

sition of the social system and the intensity of its elements affect an individual’s development when the context of career decisions changes. Therefore, all processes occurring in the systems, their interaction and their individual elements can potentially affect an individual’s career.

In today’s rapidly and constantly changing work environment, career management requires an employee to be engaged, extremely active and responsible, meeting the needs and understanding the values of their colleagues and their own, and occupying a place in the professional community and society. The modern scientific literature on career establishes that the process of an individual’s career management is influenced by three factors (sometimes referred to as the “Big Three”) — values, interests, and competencies (including intercultural competence) — that are considered the most important (Swanson & D’Archiardi, 2005). Values are fundamental principles that we follow or must follow in our lives. They are constantly forming and changing in the process of personal development and socialisation and reflect the beliefs acquired in the process about what should be considered important and pursued in life and what could be the result of consciously chosen actions. Measuring work values provides potentially valuable information in the career management process (Rounds & Armstrong, 2005).

Currently, general competence development in terms of career management has become essential due to rapid changes in the work environment. Professional competence quickly becomes obsolete if unused or fails to upgrade continuously. It is impossible to become a competent specialist once and forever. Successful performance of constantly changing complex modern tasks requires new professional competence. Therefore, it is meaningful to establish a solid framework of general competence that adapts effectively to a constantly changing environment and, if necessary, acquires the professional competence required at a given time and place (Osiceanu, 2016). The development of competence usually requires time and financial resources, and these are always limited. Therefore, career attainment requires forecasting the need for competence to develop only what would be most likely needed, considering that it is practically impossible to know exactly. Thus, career success is greatly influenced by a person’s managed competence portfolio and their ability to develop it in the right direction.

A person must constantly shape their career identity and direction in a complex world of multi-

cultural organisations, which no longer has strictly defined models, standards, norms or rules for dealing with different cases. They must solve career issues that often present several solutions, choosing between different career opportunities and finding the most suitable option for them (Valickas et al., 2012). Career management strategies need to be explored next. They are focused on the expression of intercultural competence in an organisation (Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2010):

- Acquiring competence in a current position or job is a key career strategy. Essentially, it means that employees holding a specific position in an organisation seek ways to improve the performance of their duties or functions. It can be achieved by formal and non-formal learning, the acquisition of improvement-enabling information, international contacts, and job assignments leading to the increased value of an employee in an organisation and labour market in general in the long run.
- Creating new opportunities by working and interacting with employees from different cultures. This strategy consists of two sub-strategies to expand career opportunities, including self-nomination and the development of intercultural contacts. The self-nomination strategy is about informing employees or managers of senior positions in an organisation regarding their latest achievements, career aspirations, and desired tasks. The strategy of developing international contacts is similar to self-nomination but aimed at meeting new people holding various positions in an organisation or having a status in a professional community rather than to people already known.
- Participation in an organisation's politics includes various positive and negative actions, such as consensus with co-workers and managers, praise, promotion of the established order, withholding complaints about rules and regulations during meetings with significant persons, forming informal unions and coalitions with other employees in the organisation. This also includes harming the interests of others or spreading rumours about colleagues. It must be acknowledged that in many cases, involvement in politics at the organisational level is necessary for career advancement, even though some actions in this context may seem unethical and reprehensible.

An individual's career competence consists of many skills necessary in the modern work environ-

ment, which can be successfully applied in practice. Therefore, many foreign authors (Arnold, Davey, Jacobs, and so on) use the term "individual's career competence" to describe a person's readiness for a particular activity and career development. The emphasis is on the practical application of relevant skills rather than knowing how to do it or having a formal qualification. Thus, career competence is a collection of skills necessary for employees in the modern work environment, which they can successfully apply in practice, integrating them into the organisation's development and coordinating individual and organisational goals.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

So far, there has been no international research on intercultural competence conducted jointly by researchers from several countries (Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Ukraine). Research performed in individual countries is usually of local cognitive nature and focuses more on general multiculturalism tendencies. This study stands out for its complexity; it seeks to reveal the respondents' intercultural competence and the reserves available for the development of competence and aims among subordinates and their managers to define the directions of systemic changes.

The survey questionnaire on intercultural competence was composed of seven question blocks. This paper presents only a part of the survey results. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculated with SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 21) was used to assess the scale of internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for individual question blocks of the questionnaire was not lower than 0.8, indicating a good design of the questionnaire.

To find out employee views representing different sector organisations, an online questionnaire survey was conducted in Lithuania with non-probability convenience sampling. Employees' intercultural competence (knowledge/cognitive dimension, skills/behavioural dimension, and attitudes/emotional dimension) was evaluated using 5-point Likert items (Adamoniene et al., 2019).

The respondents partook in the survey voluntarily; they were informed about the object and the aim of the research, its practical value, research methods and procedures, data anonymity and the use for scientific and publication purposes. Informed consent

was received in the form of agreeing to proceed with the survey following the introduction of the research.

Two methods were used to select respondent groups:

1) probability-based, with known chances for each study population's element to get into the sample. This selection was performed by dividing the general population into groups similar by important research characteristics (e.g., state or local institutions). The random sampling method was then applied to select several groups for the study. The survey was conducted using an online resource.

2) non-probability-based, with the unknown distribution of the respondents in the population. The essence of this research method is that the required number of the research group members was randomly selected from the population list. Using this method, a freely available online survey was published.

In total, 1193 respondents participated in this research in Lithuania. The majority of participants (72.8 %) were women. 20.5 % were younger than 25, 32.5 % — 25–35, 25.8 % — 35–50 years old and 20.8 % were over 50. 84.5 % of respondents had a university education. 27.6 % represented private sector organisations, 68.2 % — public sector organisations, and 1.8 % — non-governmental organisations.

This paper deals with the following sections of the questionnaire:

- Demographic characteristics of the respondents;
- Statements intended to evaluate the influence of intercultural competence on an organisation's success and personal career;
- Statements intended to evaluate the situation of intercultural competence development in organisations;
- Statements intended to measure the level of intercultural competence while operating in a multicultural work environment.

The following hypotheses were already justified in the previous part of the paper:

- H1. Employees support the notion that higher intercultural competence can foster an organisation's success and personal career;
- H2. Organisations tend to leave the development of intercultural competence to employees;
- H3. Current intercultural knowledge and skills are inadequate to operate in a multicultural work environment.

The hypotheses were tested using binary logistic regression, general linear modelling and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in IBM SPSS 25.0 statistics

software. Due to a relatively high non-response rate, some ordinal variables were recoded into categorical with an explicit "no answer" (NA) category.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

This section presents the research results for testing the hypotheses against the survey data.

H1. Employees support the notion that higher intercultural competence can foster an organisation's success and personal career.

Respondents were asked two questions: do they believe that the intercultural competence (ICC) development would foster their personal success (career) and the development of intercultural competence would foster an organisation's success. The univariate analysis of answers revealed that respondents tended to agree with both statements (Table 1).

Tab. 1. Respondents' opinions on the link between the ICC development and personal career or an organisation's success

	DEVELOPMENT OF ICC WOULD HELP PERSONAL CAREER	DEVELOPMENT OF ICC WOULD HELP THE ORGANISATION
Yes (1)*	659 (55 %)	808 (68 %)
No (0)**	534 (45 %)	385 (32 %)
Total	1193 (100 %)	1193 (100 %)

* Multiple responses indicating positive answers are aggregated into the "yes" category

** Aggregated responses: "It does not depend on my intercultural competence", "Not interested, do not know", "No answer"

To explore the profiles of those agreeing and disagreeing with these statements, the binary logistic analysis for both dependent variables was conducted.

The first group of predictors included variables of interest to the authors: gender, age groups, education, occupation (student, blue collar, white collar, manager, businessperson, other), the organisation's size, seniority, and sector. The second group of variables related to contacts with foreigners: frequency of contacts and business and personal trips abroad. The third group of variables included a measure (ICC score) and other aspects of intercultural competence (Table 2).

Binary logistic regression analysis of the main effects (Table 3) revealed that the model correctly classified 73.5 per cent of cases (61.2 per cent of zeros and 82.4 per cent of ones). Nagelkerke R Square was 0.374, and Hosmer–Lemeshow test was insignificant.

Tab. 2. Variables in the third group of predictors

VARIABLE	NUMBER OF ITEMS
ICC score based on multiple items (based on EFA and CFA results) *	20 items
Importance of knowing the languages (based on EFA results)	1 item
Importance of flexibility (based on EFA results)	Average of 3 items
Importance of tolerance (based on EFA results)	Average of 3 items
Importance of knowing international and national norms (based on EFA results)	Average of 2 items
Methods of fostering intercultural competence at work	1 item
Perceived need for international communication in the future	1 item
Most frequent problems with foreigners at work	Average of 9 items
Opinion about the frequency of leaders' intercultural competence assessments	1 item

* see Adamoniene et al., 2019

In the first group of variables, the youngest (< 25) age group was more likely to acknowledge the influence of intercultural competence benefits on personal career compared to older age groups (35 and above); less educated (those with higher education) respondents also had a different perception of the influence that intercultural competence had on personal career compared to bachelor's and master's degree holders; however, gender, sector, size of an organisation and seniority had no effect. Age appeared to be the strongest predictor of all variables in terms of odds ratios (not presented).

The second group of variables had no statistically significant effect on the perceived influence of intercultural competence on a personal career.

In the third group of variables, the perceived importance of knowing international and national norms is a statistically significant predictor (the higher the perceived importance of these norms, the higher the perceived influence of intercultural competence on personal career). Employees who get training and business trips to foster their intercultural competence (compared to those who are not provided with any) are much more likely to acknowledge the importance of intercultural competence on a personal career. Similarly, those who believe that international communication will intensify in the future (as compared to those who foresee no change) are more likely to perceive the positive influence of intercultural competence on their personal career. Those who think that a leader's intercultural competence assessments should be held more than once a year (compared to the "once a year" category) are more likely to perceive the positive influence of intercultural competence on personal career, but those who see no need of such assessments are much less likely to do so. Other variables in this group are not statistically significant predictors.

Next, the same binary logistic regression analysis with the second variable was conducted to measure whether the development of intercultural competence would lead to an organisation's success.

This binary logistic regression analysis revealed that the model correctly classified 79.5 % of cases (45.3 % of zeros and 93.1 % of ones). Nagelkerke R Square was 0.353; and Hosmer-Lemeshow test was insignificant. There were no statistically significant predictors in the first two groups (the last column in Table 3).

In the third group of variables, a higher ICC score, training, and business trips to foster intercultural competence as compared to no training, believing that international communication would intensify in the future (as compared to the "no change" category), assessing a leader's intercultural competence once a year (compared to no need to assess at all) predicted a positive outcome. This means that intercultural competence impacts an organisation's success. An opinion about the frequency of a leader's intercultural competence assessments is the strongest predictor in terms of the odds ratio coefficient.

The other variables had no statistically significant influence on the outcome variable.

The results for both dependent variables were similar in that both were statistically significantly predicted by the methods of fostering intercultural competence at work, assessments of future international communication development and opinions about the frequency of a leader's intercultural competence assessments. Looking at the differences, the perceived influence of intercultural competence on an organisation's success is influenced by the ICC score; in contrast, the perceived influence of intercultural competence on a personal career is affected by age, education, and the perceived importance of knowing international and national norms.

Tab. 3. Binary logistic regression B coefficients and bootstrapped p-values for the perceived influence of intercultural competence on personal career and on organisation success, n=998

PREDICTOR	CATEGORIES	ICC INFLUENCE ON PERSONAL CAREER (1) VS. NO INFLUENCE (0)	ICC INFLUENCE ON ORGANISATION SUCCESS (1) VS. NO INFLUENCE (0)
		B (P-VALUE)	B (P-VALUE)
Constant		-1.199 (0.126)	-1.129 (0.196)
Female	Female (1) vs. male (0)	-0.043 (0.832)	-0.009 (0.972)
Age groups	[25–35] vs. less than 25	-0.376 (0.202)	-0.045 (0.859)
	[35–50] vs. less than 25	-1.439 (0.001)	-0.538 (0.108)
	Above 50 vs. less than 25	-1.675 (0.001)	-0.535 (0.182)
Education	Bachelor vs. high school	-0.613 (0.018)	-0.294 (0.268)
	Master vs. high school	-0.57 (0.045)	0.099 (0.774)
	PhD vs. high school	0.137 (0.791)	-0.428 (0.455)
Sector	Public vs. private sector	0.015 (0.938)	-0.104 (0.63)
	NGO vs. private sector	-0.495 (0.199)	0.052 (0.904)
Organisation's size	Medium vs. small	0.198 (0.364)	0.099 (0.684)
	Large vs. small	-0.204 (0.301)	-0.196 (0.358)
	NA vs. small	0.484 (0.566)	-1.428 (0.062)
Seniority	<1 vs. >5 yrs.	0.337 (0.263)	-0.092 (0.774)
	[2; 5] vs. >5 yrs.	0.231 (0.291)	0.16 (0.514)
Frequency of contacting foreigners		-0.047 (0.543)	0.006 (0.953)
Frequency of business trips abroad		0.058 (0.611)	0.104 (0.369)
Frequency of personal trips abroad		-0.08 (0.516)	-0.189 (0.127)
ICC score		0.23 (0.087)	0.441 (0.001)
Importance of knowing the language		0.069 (0.535)	-0.007 (0.941)
Importance of flexibility		0.074 (0.533)	0.133 (0.287)
Importance of tolerance		0.04 (0.783)	0.016 (0.919)
Importance of knowing international and national norms		0.217 (0.016)	0.149 (0.121)
Methods of fostering intercultural competence at work	Not interested vs. no development	-1.354 (0.001)	-1.067 (0.013)
	Don't know vs. no development	-0.137 (0.635)	-0.507 (0.066)
	Spread of good practices vs. no development	0.384 (0.059)	0.323 (0.17)
	Training and business trips vs. no development	0.972 (0.001)	0.848 (0.002)
International communication	Don't know vs. will not change	-0.903 (0.001)	-0.885 (0.002)
	Will decrease vs. will not change	-0.209 (0.671)	-0.578 (0.229)
	Will increase vs. will not change	0.684 (0.001)	0.894 (0.001)
	NA vs. will not change	0.738 (0.079)	-0.36 (0.217)
Communication problems with foreigners at work		0.157 (0.081)	0.033 (0.751)
Opinion about the frequency of a leader's intercultural competence assessments	More than once a year vs. once a year	0.611 (0.034)	-0.085 (0.776)
	Less than once a year vs. once a year	-0.336 (0.085)	-0.43 (0.051)
	No need at all vs. once a year	-0.941 (0.001)	-1.511 (0.001)
	Other vs. once a year	-0.371 (0.412)	-0.482 (0.388)
	NA vs. once a year	-0.695 (0.262)	-1.158 (0.032)

H2. Organisations tend to leave the development of intercultural competence to employees.

Less than one-third of the respondents answered that intercultural competence development was their responsibility (Table 4). A binary variable was constructed, where 1 indicated that the intercultural competence development was not undertaken by the organisation (27.1 %) and 0 indicated all other answers except for the missing values excluded from the analysis.

The following paragraphs explore the determinants of intercultural competence development as employees' responsibility via binary logistic regression analysis.

The binary logistic regression model of the main effects correctly classified 73.8 % of cases (94.2 % of zeros and 22.5 % of ones); Nagelkerke R Square was 0.170, and Hosmer–Lemeshow test was insignificant.

Representatives of NGOs, employees emphasising the importance of knowing international and national norms, and respondents believing that international communication would intensify were less likely to be left to their own devices to develop their intercultural competence (Table 5). On the contrary, employees of medium and large organisations as compared to small ones, employees with higher ICC scores, and respondents acknowledging the importance of knowing foreign languages, thinking that intercultural competence could expand partnerships with foreign organisations and thinking that an organisation's success does not depend on intercultural competence tended to be left to their own devices in terms of the intercultural competence development.

H3. Current intercultural knowledge and skills are inadequate to operate in a multicultural work environment.

The respondents were asked to evaluate the extent to which each aspect posed issues when communicating with foreigners on a scale from 1 (“does

not pose any issues”) to 5 (“poses issues very frequently”). It appeared that the greatest challenge was the language barrier: 34 % of respondents perceived it as a frequent (4) or very frequent (5) issue (Table 6). However, all other potential difficulties were not perceived as especially important as only approx. from 10 % to 20 % of respondents rated them as a frequent or very frequent issue. Averages also indicate that evaluations were at about the middle point of 5 anchors scale or lower. Therefore, the univariate analysis suggests that a significant proportion of respondents have difficulties operating in a multicultural work environment; however, the extent of the issues was less than expected.

As in previous sections, the best predictors explaining the variability of the extent of intercultural issues were identified via OLS multiple linear regression with robust standard errors.

Based on the results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with the single factor explaining 59 % of the total variance and all except one (0.512) factor loadings being above the threshold of 0.6, the scale of frequency of intercultural issues was constructed by calculating the unweighted average of the above-described items (Table 6). The frequency distribution of the resulting scale was not Gaussian, with the average of 2.53, median 2.56 and the standard deviation of 0.969 (Fig. 2).

The regression residuals by visual inspection and by the results of the formal tests were heteroscedastic; therefore, the robust calculation of standard errors (HC4) was used. Variance inflation factors were less than 2; therefore, the collinearity among covariates was not an issue. Potential issues with the normality of residuals were mitigated by using the bootstrapping procedure.

Education, assessment of future international communication, suggested frequency of a leader's assessments, gender, the importance of knowing languages, the importance of tolerance and context were

Tab. 4. Frequency table for methods of intercultural competence development at organisations

METHODS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT	GROUP SIZE	PERCENTAGE
Training, seminars, simulations	143	12
Business trips and internships abroad	167	14
Sharing of good practice, learning from each other	297	24.9
No development, employee's responsibility	323	27.1
I don't care about that	51	4.3
Don't know	172	14.4
Missing	40	3.4
Total	1193	100

Tab. 5. Binary logistic regression predictors of no support for the intercultural competence development situation, n=983

PREDICTOR	CATEGORY	B (P-VALUE)
Constant		-1.958 (.033)
Female	Female (1) vs. male (0)	-0.024 (.895)
Age groups	[25,35] vs. <25	0.283 (.301)
	[35–50] vs. <25	0.342 (.285)
	>50 vs. <25	0.162 (.652)
Education	Bachelor vs. high school	0.247 (.369)
	Master vs. high school	0.524 (.087)
	PhD vs. high school	0.432 (.415)
Sector	Public vs. private sector	-0.297 (.121)
	NGO vs. private sector	-1.524 (.005)
Organisation's size	Medium vs. small organisation	0.459 (.033)
	Large vs. small organisation	0.407 (.033)
	NA vs. small organisation	2.657 (.001)
Seniority	<1 year vs. >5 yrs.	0.363 (.173)
	2–5 years vs. >5 yrs.	0.006 (.973)
Frequency of contacting foreigners		0.007 (.922)
Frequency of business trips abroad		-0.108 (.309)
Frequency of personal trips abroad		-0.038 (.768)
ICC score		0.357 (.013)
Importance of knowing languages		0.203 (.045)
Importance of flexibility		-0.129 (.266)
Importance of tolerance		0.001 (.994)
Importance of knowing international and national norms		-0.378 (.001)
Organisation's success and ICC	Increased partnerships vs. higher trust in an organisation	0.578 (.026)
	Higher performance vs. Higher trust in an organisation	-0.358 (.234)
	Doesn't depend on ICC vs. higher trust in an organisation	0.541 (.016)
	Don't know vs. higher trust in an organisation	-0.548 (.408)
Career dependency on ICC	Opportunities to change a job vs. better international career opportunities	0.1 (.676)
	Opportunities inside the organisation vs. better international career opportunities	0.118 (.611)
	Does not depend on ICC vs. better international career opportunities	0.048 (.865)
	Do not know vs. better international career opportunities	-0.254 (.651)
Perceived need for international communication in the future	Do not know vs. will not change	-0.156 (.555)
	Will decrease vs. will not change	0.584 (.162)
	Will increase vs. will not change	-0.461 (.007)
	NA vs. will not change	0.784 (.114)
Most frequent issues with foreigners at work		-0.022 (.819)
Opinion about the frequency of a leader's intercultural competence assessments	More than once a year vs. once a year	0.063 (.774)
	Less than once a year vs. once a year	-0.135 (.526)
	No need at all vs. once a year	-0.028 (.919)
	Other vs. once a year	0.328 (.469)
	NA vs. once a year	-0.524 (.441)

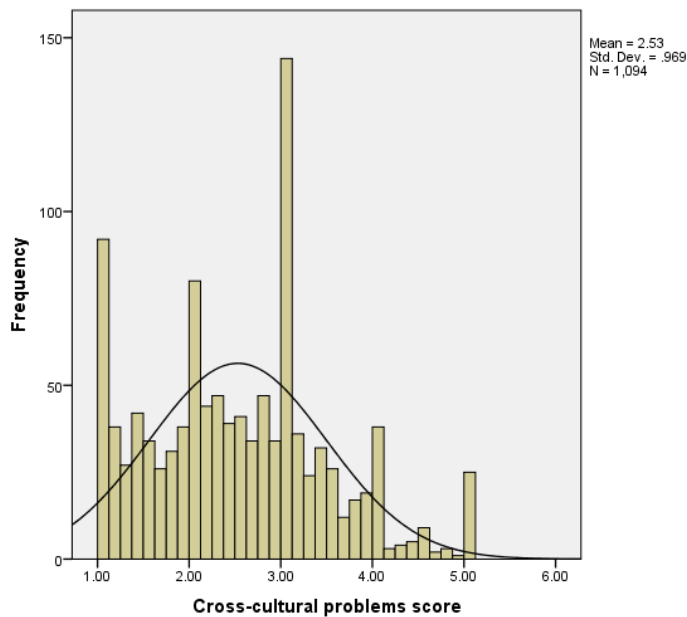


Fig. 2. Frequency distribution of intercultural issue scores

Tab. 6. Univariate description of items expressing the extent of intercultural issues

ISSUES	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	FREQUENT DIFFICULTIES [%]	N
language	3.15	1.32	34.0	1080
different decision-making	2.63	1.19	17.4	1062
different temperament	2.58	1.29	20.3	1062
different perceptions of managerial and subordinate relationships	2.56	1.22	16.9	1064
different styles of informal communication	2.55	1.18	17.1	1061
lack of interest in foreigners among employees	2.48	1.28	17.6	1058
ignorance of foreign culture	2.37	1.19	13.7	1061
unacceptable topics of conversation (taboos)	2.19	1.19	11.3	1060
different religion	1.99	1.19	9.6	1059

statistically significant predictors of communication issue score, while age, sector, the organisation’s size, seniority, the frequency of contacts with foreigners, the frequency of business or personal trips abroad, the ICC score, the importance of flexibility, the perceived influence of intercultural competence on career opportunities or an organisation’s success had no significant impact.

Persons with bachelor’s or master’s degree diplomas were more successful in comparison to people with higher education; respondents thinking that the importance of future international communication would decrease were less successful in intercultural communication compared to those who thought it would increase; compared to participants thinking

that the frequency of a leader’s assessments should be conducted more frequently than once a year, almost everyone else had fewer communication problems; males had a lower score of communication issues; the perceived importance of knowing languages and the context predicted more extensive intercultural communication issues; the perceived importance of tolerance led to a lower level of intercultural communication issues (Table 7).

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The staff of the 21st century is becoming extremely diverse, representing different ages, gen-

Tab. 7. Regression coefficients and p-values for predictors of communication issues, a general linear model with robust standard errors (N=1006, adjusted R-squared = 0.12)

PREDICTOR	CATEGORY	B (P-VALUE)
	Intercept	2.246 (0.000)
Age	25, <35 yrs. vs. < 25 yrs. (ref.cat.)	-0.031 (0.764)
	35–50 yrs. vs. < 25 yrs. (ref.cat.)	-0.054 (0.656)
	>50 yrs. vs. < 25 yrs. (ref.cat.)	0.063 (0.630)
Education	Bachelor vs. high school (ref. cat.)	-0.273 (0.004)
	Master vs. high school (ref. cat.)	-0.366 (0.001)
	PhD vs. high school (ref. cat.)	-0.243 (0.198)
Sector	Public sector vs. private sector (ref. cat.)	0.107 (0.131)
	NGO, other vs. private sector (ref. cat.)	0.115 (0.429)
Organisation's size	Small (<49) vs. large organisation (>250, ref. cat.)	-0.03 (0.675)
	Medium (50–250) vs. large organisation (>250, ref. cat.)	-0.016 (0.810)
Seniority	<1 year vs. >5 years (ref. cat.)	0.084 (0.449)
	2–5 years vs. >5 years (ref. cat.)	0.05 (0.522)
Frequency of contacts with foreigners	NA vs. several times per quarter (ref. cat.)	0.596 (0.044)
	Never vs. several times per quarter (ref. cat.)	0.01 (0.919)
	Once per half year vs. several times per quarter (ref. cat.)	0.124 (0.109)
	Once per quarter vs. several times per quarter (ref. cat.)	0.11 (0.253)
Frequency of business trips abroad	NA vs. every month (ref. cat.)	0.437 (0.187)
	Never vs. every month (ref. cat.)	0.095 (0.553)
	Once per several years vs. every month (ref. cat.)	0.072 (0.653)
	Several times per year vs. every month (ref. cat.)	0.149 (0.360)
Frequency of personal trips abroad	Never vs. several times per year (ref. cat.)	0.197 (0.104)
	Once per several years vs. several times per year (ref. cat.)	0.102 (0.096)
	Every month vs. several times per year (ref. cat.)	0.346 (0.065)
	Every week vs. several times per year (ref. cat.)	1.051 (0.100)
Assessment of future international communication	Does not know vs. will increase (ref. cat.)	-0.101 (0.391)
	Will decrease vs. will increase (ref. cat.)	0.454 (0.028)
	Will not change vs. will increase (ref. cat.)	-0.088 (0.159)
	NA vs. will increase (ref. cat.)	-0.101 (0.391)
Suggested frequency of a leader's assessments	Once a year vs. more than once a year (ref. cat.)	-0.258 (0.005)
	Less than once a year vs. more than once a year (ref. cat.)	-0.248 (0.018)
	No need at all vs. more than once a year (ref. cat.)	-0.457 (0.000)
	Other vs. more than once a year (ref. cat.)	-0.424 (0.061)
	NA vs. more than once a year (ref. cat.)	-0.908 (0.001)

Female		-0.135 (0.039)
ICC score		0.019 (0.716)
Importance of knowing languages		0.114 (0.002)
Importance of flexibility		0.012 (0.782)
Importance of tolerance		-0.121 (0.008)
Importance of context		0.151 (0.000)
Influence of intercultural competence on career opportunities		0.105 (0.141)
Influence of intercultural competence on an organisation's success		-0.061 (0.451)

ders, cultures, religions, abilities, beliefs etc. Many jobs nowadays require working with different people, so it is essential to constantly develop intercultural competences. Scientists tend to concur that intercultural competence has cognitive, behavioural, and emotional dimensions. The research instrument was prepared based on these dimensions, and the research was carried out in different Lithuanian organisations. The results helped to verify the hypotheses.

The hypothesis H1 suggesting that employees supported the notion of higher intercultural competence fostering organisational success and personal career, was supported by the data: the descriptive statistics showed that more than half of the respondents agreed with the statements that the development of ICC would help their personal career (55 % agreed) and an organisation's success (68 % agree). The variables that statistically significantly predicted such support were the existing methods of fostering intercultural competence at work (training and business trips compared to no development), assessments of the international communication development in the future (intensified compared to no change) and opinions about the frequency of a leader's intercultural competence assessments (e.g., once a year compared to no need at all or less than once a year). The major differences were identified in the perceived influence of intercultural competence on an organisation's success being positively influenced by the higher ICC score; on the other hand, the perceived influence of intercultural competence on a personal career was affected by younger age (below 25 compared to 35 and above), lower education (higher compared to university, except for PhD) and higher perceived importance of knowing international and national norms.

The H2 hypothesis that organisations tended to leave the development of intercultural competence to

employees was not supported by the data, as less than one-third of the respondents agreed that the intercultural competence development was left to their own devices. Employees were less likely developing their intercultural competence if they were representatives of NGOs, emphasised the importance of knowing international and national norms and believed that international communication would intensify. And vice versa, employees of medium and large organisations, as compared to small, employees with higher ICC scores and respondents emphasising the importance of knowing foreign languages, thinking that intercultural competence could expand partnerships with foreign organisations and thinking that an organisation's success did not depend on intercultural competence tended to be left to their own devices to develop their intercultural competence.

The data does not fully support the H3 hypothesis that employees' current intercultural knowledge and skills were inadequate to operate in a multicultural work environment. Only one-third and less of the respondents did have frequent or very frequent issues when communicating with foreigners due to inadequate intercultural knowledge and skills in various sub-areas.

More successful in intercultural communication (having less frequent intercultural communication issues) were employees with bachelor's or master's degree diplomas in comparison to higher education; also, respondents thinking that the importance of future international communication would increase compared to those who thought otherwise; participants who thought that the frequency of a leader's assessments should be conducted more frequently than once per year compared to almost every other response category; males compared to females; respondents putting less emphasis on the perceived importance of knowing languages and the context;

and employees who emphasised the importance of tolerance.

The results of this research proved that organisations should pay as much attention as possible to the development of intercultural competence since most respondents noted that it could positively contribute to the personal career of employees and an organisation's success. Organisations in the public, private and non-governmental sectors would particularly benefit from a greater understanding of intercultural competence and methods for identifying, developing and promoting it. The development of intercultural competence should be included in organisational strategies to ensure continuous and consistent development. Finally, it should not be left solely to the own devices of employees.

As regards the research limitations, the authors did not succeed in reaching similar numbers of respondents from all three sectors. Therefore, future research should focus primarily on an equal number of respondents from all three sectors (i.e., private, public, and non-governmental) to achieve broader results and more accurate comparisons.

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