

IS INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE A DETERMINING FACTOR OF WORK PERFORMANCE?

ELENA CIZMAȘ

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PH.D., WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMIȘOARA, FACULTY OF
ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
e-mail: elena.cizmas@e-uvt.ro

ALINA ELENA BLEHUIU

MASTER'S DEGREE, WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMIȘOARA, FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
e-mail: alina.blehuiu98@e-uvt.ro

MĂDĂLINA DUMITRIȚA MATICIUC

RESEARCH ASSISTANT PH.D., WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMIȘOARA, FACULTY OF
ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
e-mail: madalina.maticiuc@e-uvt.ro

Abstract

The present paper begins with the literature review of intercultural competence (IC), referring to the definition of the concept and its components, the corresponding assessment methods, as well as the impact of the said competence in organizational contexts. Based on these theoretical fundamentals, we have conducted a case study in which the main objective concerned identifying the extent to which possessing appropriate attitudes, proper knowledge and behavior adaptation capabilities in multicultural settings can influence the individual performance of the employees of the Romanian and French work points of a multinational company, as well as the overall organizational performance. As a secondary objective, we aimed at making a comparison between the employees of the two work points from the above-mentioned perspective. The data has been collected using an online survey. The results show employees having good intercultural competence scores, these being higher for the attitudinal component and lower for the cognitive and behavioral ones. Consequently, respondents seem to perceive a positive influence of possessing intercultural competence on individual and organizational performance. Other results show that even though the level of IC is comparable for the two work points, the French respondents are better perceiving the positive impact of holding IC on performance, be it individual or organizational.

Keywords: Intercultural competence, cultural intelligence, assessment methods, performance.

Clasificare JEL: M16, D22, M14.

1. Introduction and context of the study

As a result of the globalization process, the cultural diversity of human resources has become a key characteristic of organizations from all fields. Because task achieving frequently implies interactions with colleagues or representatives of other companies from other cultures, the importance of the intercultural competence has grown, making it an essential component of professional capabilities in any industry.

The concept of intercultural competence has been debated in specialized literature since its beginnings in the 1970's. Based on the review of more than 600 articles published from 2000 to 2018 in the Web of Science database, Ren-Zhong Peng et al. (2020) identified three key periods in the development of this concept in line with the topics approached by the researchers. During the first period, which crossed the 70's, scholars focused their attention on subjects which became the theoretical fundamentals of the concept of intercultural competence, such as: intercultural communication competence, intercultural communication effectiveness, intercultural sensitivity or intercultural adaptation. The second period took place between the 1980's and the 2000's, comprising

research regarding definitions, the concept and components of IC. The third period crossed the 2000's, during which research focused on IC evaluation models and tools.

2. Literature review

2.1. The concept of intercultural competence

Intercultural competence inspired various definitions, but according to Deardorff (2006) “there has not been an agreement on how intercultural competence should be defined” (p. 242). However, in order to identify some key elements of IC, we have selected several definitions from the specialized literature. Thus, Hofstede refers to the IC as to the “ability of participating in the social lives of those living according to other unwritten rules compared to us” (Hofstede, 2009, p.85), which translates to “being a good member” of another community (ibid.). Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) indicate that IC refers to the “efficient management of the interaction between people who, to some extent, present different, or even divergent perspectives of the world, from an affective, cognitive and behavioral point of view” (p. 7). According to Deardorff (2006), IC refers to “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes” (p. 247). Barmeyer (Waxin&Barmeyer, 2008) states that intercultural competence corresponds to “a set of analytic and strategic capabilities which widen the set of interpretations and action variants of an individual during interpersonal interactions with members of other cultures” (p. 212). We notice that these definitions seem to focus on the capacity of the individual to mobilize his cognitive and affective resources, together with his abilities, in order to communicate and behave appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations.

Some authors state that the nature of the IC can be general or specific. Whilst the first category refers to a general capacity of behavior adaptation in culturally diverse situations, the second indicates one’s ability to adapt his behavior to a specific culture (Waxin&Barmeyer, 2008). In line with this differentiation, Ang et al. (2007) considers that the general intercultural competence reflects intercultural intelligence, whilst detaining country specific knowledge or adaptation capacities rather shows cultural competence.

2.2. Intercultural competence models and components

In the IC literature, scholars (Spitzberg&Chagnon, 2009; Baret, 2012; Bartel-Radic, 2014) have divided the models used in describing the mentioned concept into various categories: compositional models (proposing lists of significant attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviors which together form the IC), causality models (comprising causality relations between the different components of IC), developmental models (describing different levels of the development process of IC), co-orientational models (focusing on communication and on developing intercultural understandings during intercultural interactions), adaptational models (centered on the manner in which individuals adapt their attitudes, understandings and behaviors during intercultural interactions).

The various elements that have been proposed as components of intercultural competence can be grouped into several categories: knowledge, skills and behaviors.

In some approaches, the attitudinal component of IC includes a set of attitudes and personality traits which foster the development of the said competence. The lists of these individual characteristics vary, even if some traits are common in the existing typologies. To exemplify this idea, we propose three approaches which sustain this remark. Thus, Spitzberg&Chagnon (2009) indicate the following elements of the attitudinal component of IC: curiosity about gaining knowledge with reference to other cultures, motivation to understand a certain culture, respect, patience, tolerance (general tolerance and ambiguity tolerance), openness to new experiences, self-confidence and cultural empathy. Baret’s approach (2012) proposes the following elements as components of IC: respect for other cultures, openness to people from other cultures, curiosity about other cultures, willingness to learn about other cultures, willingness to tolerate ambiguity, willingness

to suspend judgement and to value cultural diversity. Finally, Barmeyer's (Waxin&Barmeyer, 2008) typology of the attitudinal component of IC comprises empathy, flexibility / willingness to learn new things, tolerance, polycentrism / the capacity of avoiding judging others' attitudes, ambiguity tolerance, distancing (self-observing capacity during intercultural interactions) and patience. We also need to point out the fact that in the process of categorizing the IC's components, there are authors who are separating the attitudinal component from personality traits. Thus, after reviewing the IC literature, Van de Vijver&Leung (2009) are setting apart attitudes towards other cultures and personality traits (such as cultural empathy or emotional stability).

The IC's cognitive component is a construct formed by several elements. Therefore, in order to develop a certain level of intercultural competence, the individual must acquire general knowledge about the targeted culture regarding its geography and history, arts, gastronomy etc. - parts of the so-called objective culture (Bennett, 2016). However, the individual should especially focus on elements of the subjective culture, those deep cultural characteristics which give insights to a culture's values, such as reflection models, communication styles, time and space perception etc. (ibid.). Barrett (2012) associates the cognitive component of IC with cultural self-awareness, culture specific as well as general cultural knowledge, especially regarding the processes of cultural, societal and individual interaction. Barmeyer (2008) includes foreign language knowledge in this category.

The behavioral component of IC, also called operational competence, is reflected in the individual action. It refers to the ability of the individual to adapt his behavior according to the specificity of the intercultural situation. This last component of IC is based on certain skills, out of which Barrett (2012) mentions skills of listening to people from other cultures, skills of interacting with people from other cultures, linguistic abilities, skills of interpreting cultures and relating cultures to one another, skills in critically evaluating cultural perspectives, practices and products, including those of one's own culture. In terms of behaviors indicating the existence of IC, the approaches of different specialists are complementary. Thus, Mateev and Merz (2014) are identifying in the IC literature the following behaviors: people's experience, social initiative, leadership and communication, whilst Barrett (2012) mentions behaving and communicating effectively and properly during intercultural encounters, flexibility in communicative behavior, flexibility in cultural behavior and having an action orientation. If we refer to the behavioral aspects when presenting IC, Mol et al.(2005) indicate that these have not been sufficiently discussed in empirical research.

A relatively new approach in predicting intercultural success is cultural intelligence (CQ), a concept introduced by Earley and Ang (2003). It is defined as "an individual's capacity to effectively function in culturally diverse settings" (Ang et al., 2007, p.336). It includes metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral dimensions. Metacognitive CQ reflects the mental capability used to acquire and understand cultural knowledge in the sense of "planning, monitoring and revising mental models of cultural norms for countries or groups of people and for knowledge structures about culture" (Ang et al, 2007, p. 338). Cognitive CQ refers to the general knowledge and knowledge structures about culture. Individuals with high levels of cognitive CQ will easily understand similarities and differences across cultures. Next, motivational CQ refers to the capability of an individual to direct energy towards learning about and functioning in intercultural situations. The last component of CQ is behavioral CQ, which reflects the capability of an individual to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions in culturally diverse settings.

2.3. Intercultural Competence Assessment

There are multiple ways of measuring intercultural competence. According to Brancu et al. (2022), research led by Leung, Ang and Tan (2014) revealed more than 30 models and over 300 related constructs with the help of which IC can be evaluated. Whilst some of them are pertinent for better self-knowledge, others are useful in the recruitment processes or in collecting data for research purposes (Bartel-Radic, 2009). It should be noted that Barmeyer (Waxin&Barmeyer, 2008) stresses the importance of adapting these general assessment tools to the different target cultures because

countries differ in the level of importance they give to different cultural capabilities (for instance, empathy and patience are much more important in Asian cultures, in contrast to western cultures).

According to Bartel-Radic (2009), four approaches can be used in assessing intercultural competence. Firstly, one can evaluate the level of IC of an employee by looking at his past performance levels in foreign cultural contexts. Secondly, by verbally expressing his own level of IC, the individual will end up expressing his own perception of intercultural interactions and foreign cultures, eventually revealing a certain stage in his IC development. A third way of assessing IC implies culture assimilators, which suppose using from 20 to 100 intercultural critical incidents, the individual having to choose one out of four available responses, which are situated on a continuum from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Using culture assimilators, we can assess culture-specific or general IC. A disadvantage of this evaluation method refers to the fact that it evaluates the declared behaviors, rather than the actual ones. Finally, evaluation scales may also be used in the IC assessment - they measure the presence or the absence of personal characteristics which drive the development of IC.

Some scholars (Mateev&Merz, 2014; Bartel-Radic, 2009) present different assessment tools based on measuring scales that were developed in order to evaluate IC or some related constructs. Among them, we mention the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) created by Hammer, Bennett and Wisemen. This tool aims to place the individual in one of the 6 stages of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1986; Bennett, 2004; Bennett, 2017). Another relevant tool is the MPC (Multicultural Personality Questionnaire) created by Van des Zee and Van Oudenhoven, which evaluates cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability and flexibility. The ICCI (Intercultural Communication Competence Instrument), created by Arasaratnam is another tool worth mentioning – it is focused on attitudes towards other cultures, ethnocentrism, motivation, interaction involvement and intercultural communication competence. Next, the ICAPS (Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale), developed by Matsumoto et al., measures emotion regulation, openness, flexibility and critical thinking. Kelly&Meyer's CCAI (Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory) evaluates emotional resilience, flexibility and openness, perceptual acuity and personal autonomy. The ISS (Intercultural Sensitivity Scale), proposed by Chen and Starosta, measures the affective dimension of IC, expressed by engagement, respect of cultural differences, self-confidence, pleasure and attention.

2.4. Aspects regarding the impact of intercultural competence in companies

The intercultural competence literature consulted revealed opinions and results of empirical studies which showed either a direct impact of IC on performance, or an indirect influence exerted through some mediating factors.

Thus, according to Trompenaars&Hampden-Turner (2012), in multicultural work settings, the lack of intercultural competence of the employees and their leaders can generate organizational conflicts, bottlenecks during decision making, ineffective negotiations, tensed relations between employees and superiors, all of those negatively impacting organizational performance.

Bennett (2016) states that accepting and respecting cultural diversity are the most effective means for avoiding intercultural conflicts, and for creating “intercultural advantage”. The author claims that creating a diversity respectful climate will attract valuable recruitment candidates and will eventually contribute to keeping the employees and assuring productivity in a multinational company.

An interculturally highly skilled leader will have a strong orientation towards consensual decision making and delegating authority (Pusch, 2009). Thus, intercultural competence will help him to treat his colleagues and subordinates in an ethically appropriate manner and to get rid of

authoritarian or dismissive tendencies towards personnel originating from other countries. Other research showed that multicultural teams having an intercultural competent leader and receiving creative tasks were more productive than monocultural teams (Nancy Adler apud Bennett, 2016).

Cizmaş et al. (2020) empirical study carried out in the context of multicultural teams's work demonstrated a direct, positive and significant link between the members' skills development and the sustainable performance of the company. Among the six analyzed skills, four of them concerned language skills, communication skills, empathy for the team members, as well as tolerance and openness to other cultures, all these being elements of the IC.

Another empirical study demonstrated the positive effects of behavioral flexibility, which is another element of IC, on cross-cultural performance (Shaffer et al., 2006).

Bartel-Radic (2009) emphasizes that the various problems regarding cultural inadaptation are caused by multiple factors, among which the selection of the inadequate candidate based almost exclusively on technical criteria linked to the profession, with not much stress on intercultural capabilities. Yet, the empirical research led by Ang et al. (2007) demonstrated that cultural intelligence (CQ) improves predictions of effectiveness. Thus, motivational CQ and behavioral CQ are predictors of cultural adaptation, metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ predict cultural judgement and decision making, whilst metacognitive CQ and behavioral CQ are related to task performance. Other studies showed that managers with high levels of metacognitive CQ revealed higher levels of idea sharing and showed creative performances in intercultural collaborations, results mediated by affect-based trust (Chua et al., 2012).

3. Research methodology

The present study aims at achieving two objectives. Firstly, we have set the goal of evaluating the level of intercultural competence of the employees from the Romanian and French work points of a multinational company, as well as detecting the influence of the said competence on the individual and organizational performance. The second objective concerned the realization of a comparison between the employees of the two mentioned work points in order to identify the sample in which the positive impact of IC on performance was more clearly perceived.

For achieving the research objectives, we have considered necessary the use of quantitative data, as well as a quantitative research method with the aim of investigating the relation between the two constructs - intercultural competence and performance. In order to obtain the primary data needed, we have created a survey. Along with the measuring scales, it has been projected based on the revised intercultural competence literature.

The sample company has been contacted in order to be given information about the research and to verify the availability of its employees to participate in the study. After sending information regarding the nature and the objectives of the research, we received a positive answer which allowed us to begin the data collection process.

In order to assure the comparability of the answers, the survey has been conceived in Romanian and translated into French. It has been disseminated in the parent company located in France and in the Romanian branch. The dissemination has been realized through Google Forms.

We have used the snowball sampling method which enabled us to effectively collect answers from the targeted respondents (Locke, 2000). Furthermore, we have sent completing demands to 81 respondents. We have collected 30 exhaustive answers, which represents a 37.03% response rate. The data has been verified and filtered with the use of listwise deletion (Allison, 2003) and identifying outliers (Hair et al., 2019).

With the aim of obtaining a detailed understanding of the intercultural competence construct, in this empirical research we have evaluated each component of the IC through multiple items.

Therefore, in the survey, the attitudinal component has been analyzed through 9 items, the cognitive component has been measured with the aid of 3 items and the behavioral component was estimated based on the responses to 4 items. Each item has been evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale.

In order to identify to what degree being intercultural competent has influenced individual and organizational work performance, we have created 3 items which were formulated based on the following sentence: “Considering that work in this company demands interactions with members of other cultures, on a 0 (at all) to 4 (completely) scale, estimate the level at which the following have occurred”. Each item has been evaluated on a 5-points Likert scale. Because individual efforts are essential in building organizational effectiveness (Bucăța, 2021), we have used two items when referring to individual performance. The first one concerned the perception of the employees regarding the contribution of IC to individual performance improvement. The second item was meant to estimate the degree to which being culturally incompetent negatively influenced individual performance. On the other hand, with the aid of a single item we aimed to evaluate the degree to which intercultural adaptive capacities positively influenced the organizational performance of the company.

Following the dissemination of the survey in the two work points of the company, we received 21 responses from the Romanian branch and 9 responses from the French parent-company. The Romanian sample included 13 executives and 8 managers, whilst the French sample comprised 1 executive and 8 managers. All the 21 Romanian respondents were born and lived their whole lives in the mentioned country. In the French sample, 8 respondents had French origins, whilst one was originating from Senegal. By looking at the indicated number of years passed in their home country, we can conclude that most French respondents have lived in France for the most part of their lives. Consequently, it is worth mentioning that, at the level of each work point, respondents are not characterized by cultural diversity.

Additionally, 40% of the respondents are speaking two foreign languages (8 Romanians and 4 French people), whilst 30% of them are having linguistic capacities in only one foreign language. In the Romanian sample, there are 2 persons who do not have linguistic capacities in any foreign language. Even though at the level of the entire sample, the respondents holding executive positions are predominant, on the one hand, and an important part of the respondents (mostly Romanians) do not have rich international experiences, on the other hand, most of the respondents are speaking at least one, if not multiple foreign languages.

4. Results and discussions

4.1. The components of intercultural competence

The results obtained after processing the data collected with the aid of the questionnaire are synthesized in Table 1.

Component	Item	Whole sample	Romanian sample	French sample
Attitudinal component	Empathy	3.10	3.14	3.00
	Openness	3.26	3.09	3.66
	Self-criticism	2.66	2.47	3.11
	Patience	2.73	2.71	2.77
	Respect towards members of other cultures	3.46	3.42	3.66
	Tolerance towards culturally different individuals	3.46	3.38	3.66

	Ambiguity tolerance	3.06	3.09	3.00
	Polycentrism (avoiding judging others' attitudes)	2.73	2.71	2.77
	Motivation to learn about other cultures	2.90	2.95	2.77
	Total average score - attitudinal component	3.05	3.00	3.16
Cognitive component	Deep knowledge about one's own culture	2.66	2.90	2.10
	Knowledge about the cultures of origin of culturally different colleagues	2.56	2.61	2.44
	Linguistic knowledge in the working language	2.86	2.90	2.77
	Total average score - cognitive component	2.70	2.81	2.44
Behavioral component	Listening skills	3.36	3.28	2.88
	Fluency in the working language	2.70	2.57	2.33
	Adequate non-verbal communication skills with culturally diverse colleagues	2.43	2.52	2.22
	Behavior adaptative capacity in intercultural interactions	2.73	2.85	2.44
	Total average score - behavioral component	2.71	2.81	2.47
	IC - total average score	2.90	2.92	2.85

Table 1: Average scores of the intercultural competence's componenets and their corresponding items

In the case of the attitudinal component of IC, the results for the whole sample show an average score of 3.05, which indicates a good level of IC. If we look more in detail, we notice that the highest average scores (3.46) corresponded to the items referring to respect and tolerance towards culturally different individuals. On the other hand, the lowest average score corresponded to self-criticism (2.66). Relatively high average scores were recorded for openness, ambiguity tolerance and empathy, meanwhile patience and polycentrism had rather low average scores. Thus, the data shows that even though the personnel have good levels of positive attitudes towards culturally different individuals, accepting and respecting them, they are not yet fully capable of questioning their own beliefs and their utility in intercultural settings.

The data from the Romanian sample shows a similar situation. Thus, the distribution of the highest and the lowest average scores concerns the same items. Even though they are tolerant and respectful to other cultures, the respondents have only a slightly above average level of self-criticism needed to recalibrate their own ways of perceiving the world in cultural diversity contexts. Between the average and good levels of the measurement scale, we also find the score of patience (2.71), which shows the need of a better understanding of individual cultural differences.

Looking at the French sample, together with respect and tolerance, we also find openness as attitudes holding the highest average scores (3.66). On the other hand, the lowest average scores are to be found on patience, polycentrism and the motivation to find out more about other cultures (2.77). So, although they are open and tolerant, the members of the French sample have some difficulties in not judging others according to their own cultural norms.

Thus, as for the attitudinal component, the French sample had the highest average score (3.16), followed by the whole sample one (3.05) and the Romanian one (3.00). By comparing these scores with the ones of the other two of the intercultural competence's components (2.70 for the cognitive one and 2.71 for the behavioral one), we observe that respondents had their best results at the attitudinal level. Still, positive attitudes are not enough for building intercultural competence.

In the case of the cognitive component, for the whole sample, as for the Romanian and French sample, the working language knowledge had the highest average scores (2.86 - full sample, 2.90 - Romanian sample, 2.77 - French sample). Hence, we remark on the importance of foreign languages in the company, which is a logical consequence of its openness to international settings. We must also mention that the highest averages on the cognitive component are lower than those of the

attitudinal component, the present score being rather median. At the entire sample level, the lowest average concerned the item referring to the knowledge about the cultures of origin of the colleagues (2.56). This is symptomatic for a rather low level of IC: not knowing sufficient information about the targeted culture makes adaptation to it almost impossible. If we look at the general averages of the cognitive component, the highest corresponds to the Romanian sample (2.8), followed by the whole sample (2.70) and the French one (2.44).

A similar situation is to be found in the Romanian sample, with the difference that both knowledge about one own's culture and linguistic knowledge about the working language obtained the highest average scores, 2.90. Although not that far from the scores of the other items, the lowest average score of the knowledge regarding the culture of the colleagues (2.61) announces intercultural interaction struggles. In order to be capable of effectively adapting his behavior to the culturally different interlocutor, the individual must know and understand the particularities to which he intends to adapt his behavior.

In the French sample, data shows an interesting situation: respondents seem to better know the cultural particularities of their foreign originating colleagues, than their own. In fact, knowledge about their own culture has had the lowest average score not just of the cognitive component, but of all items, from all the three IC's components, on every analysis level – 2.10. Despite good linguistic knowledge and good understanding of foreign cultural traits, not knowing your own cultural specificities may hinder behavior adaptation. In order to be able to calibrate his behavior, one must know and understand what it is that he needs to change about himself. These difficulties are somehow anticipated by the slightly above average level of the polycentrism item from the attitudinal component.

If we look at the behavioral component, the average score for the whole sample is 3.36. The highest average scores were obtained for the listening skills, for both the Romanian sample (3.28) and the French one (2.88). Fluency in the work language and behavior adaptative capacity in intercultural settings received medium scores in the Romanian sample (2.33) and good level scores in the French one (2.85). On the other hand, the lowest average scores for the behavioral component, corresponded to the non-verbal communication capacity with other cultures – 2.43 for the whole sample, 2.52 for the Romanian sample and 2.22 for the French one. The mentioned scores show, on the one hand, good listening skills, also anticipated by good averages on the openness item from the attitudinal component), which foster the acceptance of divergent ideas. On the other hand, we observe non-verbal communication problems in intercultural settings, difficulties which can be justified by an average IC level. Overall, for the behavioral component of IC, average scores are almost good for the whole sample (2.71) and for the Romanian one (2.81), and slightly lower for the French sample (2.47).

Based on the 0 to 4 scale used, and taking into consideration the average scores that we have calculated for the intercultural competence (2.90 for the entire sample, 2.92 for the Romanian sample and 2.85 for the French sample), we can affirm that in the analyzed company, for both samples, we estimate a relatively good level of intercultural competence, the best score being for the attitudinal dimension.

4.2. The impact of intercultural competence on performance

The benefits of intercultural competence on work performance must be discussed. Almost half of the respondents seem to be aware of the individual professional benefits brought on by having high levels of IC whilst working in a multinational company. It is worth mentioning that the other half of the respondents of each sample do not clearly perceive the advantages of being interculturally competent in culturally diverse settings on individual performance. Therefore, the data presented in Table 2 reveals that almost 50% of the Romanian respondents used the qualificatives 3 and 4 to

evaluate the above-mentioned idea. The situation of the French sample is similar, with the exception that none of the sample members used the 0 qualificative, as opposed to 9.5% of the Romanian respondents who did choose this variant.

Table 2: Items corresponding to the influence of intercultural competence on individual and organizational performance

Item	Sample	Qualificatives (from 0 – at all, to 4 – completely)				
		0	1	2	3	4
Intercultural competence improved individual work performance	Whole sample	6.66%	13,34%	30%	30%	20%
	Romanian sample	9.50%	14.30%	28.60%	23.80%	23.80%
	French sample	0%	11.11%	33.33%	44.45%	11.11%
Intercultural incompetence negatively impacted individual work performance	Whole sample	63.34%	16.67%	6.66%	6.66%	6.66%
	Romanian sample	57.11%	14.30%	9.53%	9.53%	9.53%
	French sample	77.78%	22.22%	0%	0%	0%
Intercultural adapting capacities of the employees positively influenced organizational performance	Whole sample	10%	6.67%	30%	26.66%	26.66%
	Romanian sample	14.29%	4.76%	38.10%	14.29%	28.56%
	French sample	0%	11.11%	11.11%	55.56%	22.22%

In the case of the item revealing the effects of the intercultural incapacity on performance, results reveal a much clearer picture. Inappropriate intercultural behavior did not occur for 57.11% of the Romanian respondents and 77.78% of the French respondents, who used the 0 qualificative to evaluate the given supposition. It is worth mentioning that in the case of the Romanian sample, as opposed to the French one, responses are much more diverse, which signals that at some point, the lack of intercultural capacities has been resented.

The item which measured the perception of the personnel regarding the influence of IC on organizational performance revealed an interesting situation. The data in Table 2 shows us that only approximatively 35% of the Romanian respondents gave the 3 or 4 qualificatives to the mentioned item, as opposed to almost 78% of the French respondents. This situation shows that the members of the French sample perceive better than the Romanians the advantages of being interculturally competent on the overall performance of the company.

Therefore, we can conclude that 50% of the whole sample respondents resent the advantages of holding a good level of intercultural competence on individual performance, whilst 57.11%, respectively 77.78% of the respondents of the Romanian and French samples consider that the lack of IC did not negatively affect their work. However, the French respondents are more aware than the Romanians of the usefulness of IC in the organizational performance.

5. Conclusions

The present study revealed that the employees of the analyzed company have a relatively good level of intercultural competence, regardless of the work point from which they perform their activity. In comparison to the cognitive and the behavioral components, both samples have higher average scores for the attitudinal component. The best developed attitudes correspond to respect and tolerance towards culturally different individuals, whilst the lowest averages concern self-criticism and polycentrism. The French have slightly higher results than the Romanians on this particular component. At the cognitive component level, results show two different situations. If in Romanians' case, knowledge about their own culture is more developed than the knowledge about the culture of their colleagues, the responses of the French show the reverse situation – they seem to know better

the culture of others than their own's. Yet, both samples are similar in the high levels of linguistic knowledge regarding the working language. In the case of the behavioral component of IC, both the Romanian and the French respondents present high listening skills and problems in non-verbal communication in intercultural contexts.

Regarding the influence of IC on performance, we looked at the employee's perception of the advantages in detaining this competence on individual and organizational levels of performance. The results showed that almost 50% of the overall sample respondents perceived the benefits of being interculturally competent on individual performance. The French group seemed to be more aware of these benefits, with 55% of sample members using the 3 and 4 qualificatives, compared to only 48% of the Romanians. Even though both groups agreed on the lack of intercultural incompetence and its negative impact on work performances, the percentage of the French who did so was higher than the Romanian's ($77.77 > 57.10$). In the same line, only about 40% of the Romanians perceived the advantages of IC on organizational performance, as opposed to almost 78% of the French. Therefore, we can conclude that the French sample is more aware of the utility of intercultural abilities in individual and organizational work performance. This could be linked to the composition of the French sample, formed almost exclusively of managers, who may feel more responsible for organizational and individual work performance.

6. Bibliography

- [1]. **Adler, N.**, International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, 4th Edition. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Press. 2001;
- [2]. **Allison, P.D.**, Missing data techniques for structural equation modeling. Journal of abnormal psychology, 112(4), 545, 2003;
- [3]. **Ang, S., Van Dyne, L., Koh, C., Ng, K. Y., Templer, K. J., Tay, C., & Chandrasekar, N. A.**, Cultural Intelligence: Its Measurement and Effects on Cultural Judgment and Decision Making, Cultural Adaptation and Task Performance. Management and Organization Review, 3(03), 335–371, 2007, doi:10.1111/j.1740-8784.2007.00082.x;
- [4]. **Barrett, M.**, Intercultural competence. EWC Statement Series, 2nd issue Oslo, Norway: European Wergeland Centre, 23-27, 2012;
- [5]. **Bartel-Radic, A.**, La compétence interculturelle: état de l'art et perspectives. Revue Management International, 13(4), 11-26, 2009, <https://doi.org/10.7202/038582ar>;
- [6]. **Bartel-Radic, A.**, La compétence interculturelle est-elle acquise grâce à l'expérience internationale? Management International, 18, 194-211, 2014, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1027873ar>;
- [7]. **Bennett, M.J.**, A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 10(2), 179–196, 1986;
- [8]. **Bennett, M.J.**, Becoming interculturally competent. In J.S. Wurzel (Ed.), Toward Multiculturalism: A Reader in Multicultural Education. Newton, MA: Intercultural Resource Corporation, 2004;
- [9]. **Bennett, M.J.**, Intercultural Competence for Global Leadership (compilation of two articles). Intercultural Development Research Institute, Americas & Europa, 2016;
- [10]. **Bennett, M.J.**, Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In Kim, Y. (Ed.), International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017;
- [11]. **Brancu, L., Şahin, F., Guðmundsdóttir, S., Çetin F.**, Measurement invariance of the Cultural Intelligence Scale across three countries, International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 86, 145–157, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.12.002>;
- [12]. **Bucăţa, G.**, Considerations regarding the efficiency of human resources management at the organizational level, Annals of the "Constantin Brâncuși" University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series, Issue 6/2021;

- [13]. **Chua, R.Y.J., Morris, M.W., Mor, S.**, Collaborating across cultures: Cultural metacognition and affect-based trust in creative collaboration. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 118(2), 116–131, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2012.03.009>;
- [14]. **Cizmaș E., Feder E.S., Maticiuc M.D., Vlad-Anghel S.**, Team Management, Diversity, and Performance as Key Influencing Factors of Organizational Sustainable Performance. *Sustainability*. 12(18):7414, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187414>;
- [15]. **Deardorff, D. K.**, Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 10 No. 3, Fall, 241-266, 2006, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002>;
- [16]. **Earley, P.C., Ang, S.**, *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003;
- [17]. **Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B., Anderson, R.**, *Multivariate data analysis*. Andover, Hampshire(UK): Cengage Learning, 2019;
- [18]. **Leung, K., Ang, S., Tan, M.L.**, Intercultural competence. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology*, 1, 489–519, 2014;
- [19]. **Locke, K.**, Grounded theory in management research. *Grounded Theory in Management Research*, 1-160, 2000;
- [20]. **Matveev, A.V., Merz, M.Y.**, Intercultural competence assessment: What are its key dimensions across assessment tools? In L. T. B. Jackson, D. Meiring, F. J. R. Van de Vijver, E. S. Idemoudia, & W. K. Gabrenya Jr. (Eds.), *Toward sustainable development through nurturing diversity: Proceedings from the 21st International Congress of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 2014, https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/iaccp_papers/128/;
- [21]. **Mol, S. T., Born, M.Ph., Van der Molen, H.T.**, Developing criteria for expatriate effectiveness: Time to jump off the adjustment bandwagon. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29, 339–353, 2005;
- [22]. **Hofstede, G.J.**, The Moral Circle in Intercultural Competence. *Trust Across Cultures*. In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (1st ed., pp. 85–99). SAGE Publications, 2009;
- [23]. **Peng, R.-Z., Zhu, C., Wu, W.P.**, Visualizing the knowledge domain of intercultural competence research: A bibliometric analysis. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 74, 58–68, 2020, doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2019.10.008;
- [24]. **Pusch, M.D.**, The Interculturally Competent Global Leader. In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (1st ed., pp. 66–84). SAGE Publications, 2009;
- [25]. **Shaffer, M.A., Harrison, D.A., Gregersen, H., Black, J.S., & Ferzandi, L.A.**, You can take it with you: Individual differences and expatriate effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(1), 109–125, 2006, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.1.109>;
- [26]. **Spitzberg, B.H., & Chagnon, G.**, Conceptualizing Intercultural Competence. In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (1st ed., pp. 2–52). SAGE Publications, 2009;
- [27]. **Trompenaars, F., Hampden-Turner, C.**, *Riding the Waves of Culture. Understanding Diversity in Global Business*; Third Edition, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, London-Boston (e-book), 2012;
- [28]. **Van de Vijver, F.J.R., & Leung, K.**, Methodological issues in researching intercultural competence. In D. Deardorff (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of intercultural competence*, 404-418, 2009;
- [29]. **Waxin, M.-F.; Barmeyer, C.**, *Gestion des Ressources Humaines Internationales*; Les Editions de Liaisons: Paris, France, 2008.