

AN EXPLORATION OF GREEK BUSINESS EXECUTIVES' INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

IOANNIS KARRAS, PhD*

ABSTRACT

Managers' ability to build global organizations and synergies is imperative, which in turn necessitates effective and appropriate intercultural communication skills. Literature to date primarily focuses on countries whose financial/corporate interdependence is of utmost importance. Not surprisingly then, the body of literature indicates that existing research addressing ICC within a Greek business context is inexistent. Consequently, this study is a preliminary attempt to start redressing this balance and hence, this proposed research aims to contribute to a poorly existing knowledge base by reporting on an enquiry undertaken to quantitatively determine middle managers' ICC in Greece by measuring intercultural sensitivity - a determining factor of ICC. Quantitative data was obtained using the ISS from a body of fifty-five Greek middle-level managers. The results indicated that overall these managers have a high level of ICC; however no significant statistical correlations were found between the demographic variables explored and intercultural sensitivity. This paper concludes with some practical implications and recommendations for further research.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication Competence, Intercultural Sensitivity, Greek Business Executives

INTRODUCTION

The prominence of communication skills in a world where nations and markets have become interdependent is unquestionable. Likewise, managers' ability to build global organizations and synergies within the unique political, economic and social arena currently unfolding –a phenomenon known as globalization- is imperative. Globalization and the global integration of organizations have caused a tremendous amount of mobility of multinational company personnel, which has brought about the need to assess and develop one's intercultural communication competence (ICC). This includes the ability to negotiate effectively in the setting of a culturally diverse working milieu within a corporation or during an international business transaction. In essence, the spectrum of organization contexts and disciplinary breadth is wide. The success of communication in these contexts depends immensely on the ability of executives and

* New York College of Athens, Greece, karrasid@gmail.com

managers to act appropriately and successfully in the aforementioned culturally diverse environments. To this effect, Graf (2004) identifies effective intercultural communication skills as a significant determinant for success in intercultural contexts in that it facilitates expatriate adjustment.

This increased need to be able to deal effectively and constructively with cultural diversity within the framework of globalization has become a reality. Likewise, the ability to develop adaptability to culturally diverse environments is becoming a *sine qua nom* "qualification" for business executives who may potentially work in international settings (sojourner) or work within their own setting, but with a diverse staff or clientele. In both scenarios, being culturally adaptable and possessing effective intercultural communication skills are equally important.

It could be said, however, that the majority of literature on ICC primarily focuses on Western countries or groups of countries whose financial/corporate interdependence is of utmost importance, thus disregarding countries which have traditionally been -until recently- monocultural or which have not played a pivotal role in the international economic arena. A country that falls under this purview is Greece. Not surprisingly then, the body of literature indicates that research conducted addressing ICC within a Greek business context is scarce if it exists at all. Since no specific studies to present have been found in the literature to be addressing ICC or cultural adaptation among Greek executives, this paper is a preliminary attempt to start redressing this balance and hence, this proposed research aims to contribute to a poorly existing knowledge base by reporting on an enquiry undertaken to quantitatively determine the extent to which company managers within a Greek business context have intercultural communication competence.

In essence, this paper first puts forward the research question and the key hypothesis that will be addressed herein followed by a brief literature review, which aspires to position this work within an existing knowledge base. Moreover, the methodology and research design proposed for investigation in this research is presented followed by a presentation, an analysis, and discussion of the results.

The hypothesis made in this paper is that Greek managers do not possess high levels of intercultural sensitivity (IS) and thus may lack essential intercultural communication skills. It should be noted that this hypothesis has stemmed from the assumption that since Greece's economy and industry are driven by less intercultural interactions, as the figures of the OECD, ICC, and TWO clearly show, managers' levels of IS and overall ICC would be low as a result. Moreover, this assumption was further strengthened by the fact that Greece was compared to the Arab culture -for which studies have been conducted- in that they share some common cultural elements -mainly that both are high context and polychronic according to Hall's (1976) dimensions. Hammoud's (2011) account of Arab managers found that being part of a historically strong patriarchal, collectivist Arab-Islamic cultural framework, they often tend to lack sufficient ICC skills. By implication it was assumed that this may have been the case for Greek managers. The descriptive research question hence put forward is as follow:

To what extent are Greek managers in a Greek business context interculturally sensitive and possess intercultural communication competence?

The research question aims to measure the Greek middle-managers' intercultural sensitivity and competence and to draw general conclusions from multifaceted experiences which in turn can help managers become more aware of issues of ICC and to encourage its application in contexts where it necessitates it.

1. BACKGROUND TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

To begin with, today's globalized world is characterized by the importance of living with differences at various levels including culture, ethnicity, attitudes, and value systems, which obviously influence the way we communicate and thus these differences should be respected (Alred & Byram, 2002; Tesoriero, 2006). Naturally, this integration is not an automatic process but a rather transformative one (Taylor, 1994). The reality of a globalized society has triggered the need to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately in different cultural contexts.

With regards to ICC, one must bear in mind that it is important to underscore its two-fold properties: communication competence and intercultural competence. Communication competence itself is not clearly defined, as there have been two distinct views on this type of competence. First, according to Chen and Starosta (1996), scholars' views vary on whether competence is an inherent ability (trait) or an acquired ability (state). Another controversial issue is whether competence is associated with performance –a behaviorally-oriented view (cf. Spitzberg, 2000), or whether it is based on knowledge –a cognitive orientation (cf. Chomsky, 1965). The former view places importance on the behaviors that lead to appropriate ICC while the latter sees knowledge of various aspects of intercultural communication as essential. More recent literature (cf. Chen & Starosta, 2008) argues in favor of the integration of both views -knowledge and performance- as both are fundamental elements of ICC. Many other scholars (Byram, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 2008; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Ting-Toomey, 1999) have referred to another component necessary in developing ICC –attitudinal, which refers to one's overall attitude towards the host culture and the members belonging to it. This attitudinal component is also referred to as the affect (Chen & Starosta, 2000), which forms the basis of intercultural sensitivity (see Section 2.1). In essence, one could claim that all these components are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they complement each other. These differing perspectives on ICC have shaped the formation of various models concerning ICC.

In essence, the overall superordinate term Communication Competence refers to one's ability "to effectively and appropriately execute communication behavior to elicit a desired response in a specific environment," as defined by Chen (1990: 12). Defining communication competence in such a way has a dual purpose. The first is to convey one's communicative intent or message and the second one is to generate a desired reply. Though these purposes may seem easily achievable, one should bear in mind that during an intercultural communication process the two parties (the sender and receiver) are by definition of distinct cultural backgrounds and thus their beliefs, attitudes and value systems influence the way they perceive and respond to messages.

On the other hand, intercultural competence, as defined by Deardorff (2004), can be considered a subfield of communication competence. Fantini's (2006: 12) definition of ICC "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself". Another definition is that of Alredand and Byram (2002) who see ICC as one's capacity to change or adapt his/her attitudes, behaviors and knowledge in order to be open and flexible to other cultures different from his/her own and finally, Hammer's et al. (2003: 422) conceptualization of ICC refers to the "ability to think and act in intercultural appropriate ways".

It is this marriage of intercultural and communication competences that has brought about the field of intercultural communication competence. To this end, Chen and Starosta (1998) provide the following definition of ICC: "the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors that negotiate each other's cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment".

Intercultural Sensitivity

As previously noted, a line of literature has connected intercultural communication competence with intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural sensitivity represents the affective side of ICC in the subjects' desire to motivate themselves so as to understand, appreciate, and accept differences among the various cultures (Chen & Starosta, 1998). Chen (1997) has highlighted the crucial role intercultural sensitivity plays in one's ability to effectively manage in a culturally diverse environment, but also to appreciate and enjoy this diversity. Intercultural sensitivity is a requisite for ICC and cross-cultural adaptation when living and working together with people from different cultures (Landis & Bhagat, 1996; Zhao, 2002). IS is also a valid predictive and determinant factor for intercultural effectiveness (Cui and Van den Berg, 1991). In addition, Landis & Bhagat (ibid) predict that one's sensitivity to cultural differences as well as the ability to adapt his/her behavior to these differences will become more and more important. This prediction is very reasonable on the basis of the widespread globalization and market merging.

At this point it would be beneficial to put forward a definitions of intercultural sensitivity. The quality of accommodating, understanding and appreciating cultural differences, and the ability to enhance one's self-awareness that leads to appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication are what is termed "intercultural sensitivity" (Bennet, 1993; Chen and Starosta, 1998, as cited in Penbek et al., 2009: 5). Chen (1997) sees the basic components of intercultural sensitivity as empathy, self-esteem (sense of self-value), self-monitoring, interaction involvement, open-mindedness, and non-judgment. These affective elements are considered prerequisites for an individual to be intercultural sensitive (Chen and Starosta, 2000).

2. THE STUDY

This study was an attempt to investigate the extent to which Greek managers are intercultural sensitive and thus potentially intercultural competent, based on the responses they provided to a questionnaire; mainly The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) created by Chen and Starosta (2000).

2.1. Participants and Setting

The participants were Greek middle managers (N=55) within a Greek business context. More specifically, the sample used was nonprobability (convenience sample), where participants were chosen based on availability and convenience (Babbie, 1990, as cited in Cresswell, 2009). It ought to be noted that this study did not involve stratification of the population before selecting the sample. Different companies (construction, electronics-informatics, computer, pharmaceutical, bottling, dairy, machinery and retail) were chosen (mainly from Athens and Patras, Greece).

The fifty-five participants of the study were contacted either in person or via email and were provided with some basic information regarding the study without, of course, revealing the true intent of the research so as to avoid socially-desirable responses. They consented to participating in the study and were assured that the data provided would be used anonymously and confidentially.

Finally, respondents were asked to provide some demographic data so as to have some background knowledge to factor into the research (age, gender, level of education, the number of foreign languages spoken working experience, and traveling experience) and also to measure differences between groups and the factors possibly affecting the participants' intercultural sensitivity. Since factoring in these demographic variables did not produce any statistically significant correlates, they were excluded from the scope of this study.

2.2. Instruments

The quantitative data gathered for this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The ISS devised by Chen and Starosta (2000), which was designed to "integrate features of both cross-cultural attitude and behavioral skills models" (Fritz et al., 2001: 54) was used.

The ISS is a questionnaire where respondents use a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" to respond to twenty-four items comprising of five factors/constructs. More specifically, items 1, 11, 13, 21, 22, 23, and 24 have been grouped and labeled Interaction Engagement items; Respect for Cultural Differences items are 2, 7, 8, 16, 18, and 20; Interaction Confidence items are 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10; The items that comprise Interaction Enjoyment items are 9, 12, and 15; and finally Interaction Attentiveness items are 14, 17, and 19. Some examples of the statements the ISS include: "I am quite sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures" and "I respect the values of people from different cultures".

It should also be noted that items 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, and 22 are reverse-coded before summing the 24 items. Finally, the use of the personal pronoun "I" was substituted with "He/She" preceded by the following statement: "To what extent do you consider yourself as being like the following person". This change was made in accordance with an approach Schwartz (2006: 299) takes so as to avoid responses that are in compliance with social desirability as "problems of self-presentation arise in response to direct questions about importance to self".

Chen and Starosta (2000: 10) state that "higher scores of this measure are suggestive of being more interculturally sensitive". These researchers first developed an instrument to investigate the concept of intercultural sensitivity. To this effect, the empirical construction and validation of the ISS were conducted in three distinct stages. During the first stage, a pre-study was conducted to produce items corresponding to the conceptual meaning of intercultural sensitivity. Following this conceptualization, the model was tested by using exploratory factor analysis. Finally, the ISS was evaluated for concurrent validity.

This scale was selected because it takes into account all of the dimensions of intercultural communication competence, and measures intercultural sensitivity of any given group of people. Moreover, the literature supports that this scale has been found to be valid and reliable. Chen and Starosta (2000), for example, purport that their scale has demonstrated strong reliability and appropriate concurrent and predictive validity. Moreover, Fritz et al. (2002) used the ISS and tested the validity on a group of German students and found it to be reliable and valid. Likewise, Peng, et al. (2005) measured the intercultural sensitivity levels of Chinese and Thai nationals and again showed the results were valid and reliable.

2.3. Procedure

Before administering the questionnaire to the fifty-five respondents, it was piloted in its English version with five managers (whose responses were later excluded from the research) so as to tackle any language or conceptual problems. All respondents reported that both the level of English used in the questionnaire as well as the wording of the statements did not pose any particular difficulties. Therefore, the need to translate the ISS into Greek or provide any clarifications regarding the content of the statements was deemed unnecessary and the survey was subsequently administered in its original language (English) to all research participants.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section summarizes the statistical results of the questionnaire (see Table I) and provides a discussion of these results. To begin with, the reliability coefficients Cronbach's alpha were calculated for all the ISS factors and found that in Interaction Engagement (0.485), Respect for Cultural Differences (0.496), and Interaction Attentiveness (0.445) the alphas were lower than 0.6. Thus, it was decided to use different variables (statements –henceforth "e") to construct new factors using the same variables. The new factors were 'Appreciation of cultural differences' (e17 e18-reversed e24), 'Cultural-orientation' (e8 e11 e13 e16 e20 reversed), and Cultural sensitivity (e14 e19). All the Cronbach's alphas of the factors with their descriptive measures are presented in Table 1 followed by a bar graph (see Figure I) that gives a better visual representation of the mean scores of the six factors (five of the ISS factors plus the 'ICC' factor).

Table I. Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach's alphas of ISS factors

	Cronbach's alpha	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Appreciation of cultural differences	0,712	55	1,33	5,00	4,1455	,65346
Cultural-orientation	0,648	55	2,80	5,00	4,1964	,50551
Interaction Confidence	0,623	55	2,60	5,00	3,8764	,53678
Interaction Enjoyment	0,628	55	2,33	5,00	4,3515	,60661
Cultural sensitivity	0,719	55	1,50	5,00	3,7909	,77990
ICC	0,740	55	2,67	5,00	4,3152	,66177
overall_mean		55	3,25	4,68	4,0874	,36547
Valid N (listwise)		55				

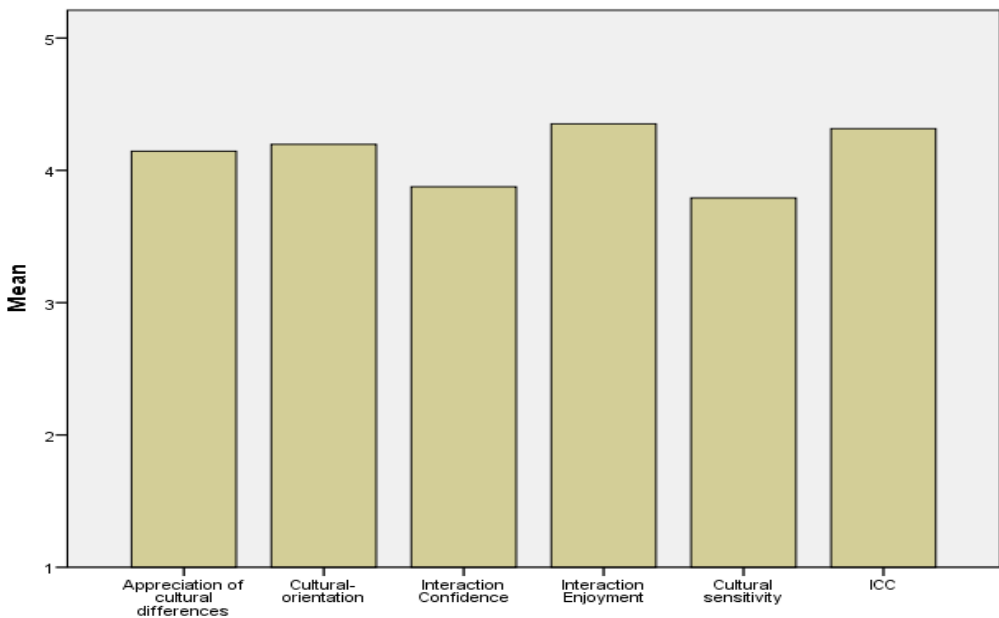


Figure I. Mean scores of ISS factors

With regards to the research question, the findings reveal that these managers are likely to be quite competent with regards to intercultural communication as one of the major indices of ICC is IS. Scoring high on all the factors of the ISS ranging from $M=3,79$ to $M=4,35$ and a score of $M=4,06$ overall indicates that the managers of this sample group are quite interculturally sensitive, and by implication –one could claim– quite interculturally competent as there is a positive correlation between IS and ICC (cf. Bennet, 1993; Chen, 1997; Chen and Starosta, 1998). In other words, IS is a predictive and determinant factor of ICC or, put differently, the higher one's IS is the more likely he/she is to have ICC.

These findings were quite surprising to the researcher since, as stated earlier, Greek corporations do not have a long tradition in expatriate personnel nor has there been a long history of culturally diverse working environments for the personnel. In support of these claims one only has to look at various indexes. For example, the

OECD's International Trade Indicators database, which combines separate databases providing cross-disciplinary background information with a focus on trade aspects, shows that Greece is quite low on the indexes regarding inward and outward activity.

The paradox lies in the fact that although all the indexes show Greece as scoring low on international trade and overall international commercial activity, the managers that participated in this study were found to be highly interculturally sensitive. The results, however, may be partially attributed to a few reasons. One reason could be the fact that all the participants speak foreign languages and many are multilingual. Language is the vehicle of culture as Mukalel (1998) asserts, or a crucial channel of cultural information (Steers, et al. 2010), as cultural coding is carried with it, so having had an extensive language learning experience may have made the participants more aware of cultural differences and sensitive towards intercultural issues. Moreover, the positive role of knowing the host language has also been emphasized by Fish (2005: 228) who argued that "not having an ability with the host language may lead to serious problems associated with failure to appropriately adapt to a host culture". Fish's (ibid) study is consistent with other existing conceptual and empirical research (e.g. Cui & Van Den Berg's, 1991; Kim & Slocum's, 2008). The findings then of this study may extend to those of other studies in that foreign language skills do significantly influence the intercultural communication competence one exhibits.

A closer look at a study conducted by EASE (the Greek association of CEOs) and the French Institute of Economic Research and Development reveals the high multilingual level of Greek managers. The above-mentioned study states that all of the managers speak at least one foreign language (mostly English), and at least another fifty per cent those speak a second or third foreign language (mainly German, French, and Italian). As the abovementioned study was conducted a decade ago, it may be safe to assume that the numbers are higher now. In the case of this sample group, the level of foreign languages reported is much higher than the ones reported in the above study. All 55 managers speak at least English and another 29 respondents speak at least two or more foreign languages. Thus the multilingual skills of the managers and their impact on IS may further explain the high levels of IS reported in this study.

Another reason that may partially explain the high levels of IS noted in this study is the extensive travelling experience of the participants. All the participants reported to have travelled either for work (68,8%) or leisure (87,3%) or both. International exposure or experience in foreign countries is considered a contributing factor to ICC (cf. Gage, 2001; Jurgens & McAuliffe, 2004; Langley & Breese, 2005; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Parker & McEvoy, 1993; Williams, 2005) as travellers or sojourners become more tolerant of and open-minded toward differences that arise in culturally distinct settings. International awareness increases, appropriate and effective skills are gained, and knowledge of other cultures is also obtained.

Finally, apart from the international activity of Greek companies, one needs to consider the foreigners working in businesses in Greece or the extent to which these companies have culturally diverse environments, which may in turn offer a plausible interpretation as to why the participants of this study scored high on the ISS.

Unfortunately, not enough statistical data was available regarding this factor. Nonetheless, IKA (the Social Security Agency of Greece) reports a total of 13,86% of workers in factories as being foreign and most of which are unskilled laborers. It is unlikely that this number of foreigners is significant enough to necessitate the development of managers' ICC skills especially since these employees are unskilled laborers and thus managers would probably not frequently come into direct contact with them.

In essence, it becomes apparent that the results of this study did not support the hypothesis made at the onset, that is, that Greek middle-managers in a Greek business context would display low levels of IS and thus ICC. On the contrary, the hypothesis was refuted as the data obtained from the ISS clearly indicated an overall high mean score ($M=4,06$) without any significant low scores on any of the subscales (range from $M=3,79$ to $M=4,35$). Once again, the findings imply that the participants are interculturally sensitive and by implication interculturally competent since there is a strong association between ICC and IS (as seen, the latter being a predictive and determinant factor of the former).

The research findings may lead to the assumption that Greek companies are putting in the effort to accommodate the culturally diverse workforce and cultural differences, however, investigating actions that reflect this approach were not entirely clear and hence could form the basis for another research enquiry. In summation, the research indicates that Greek managers possess adequate levels of IS which appears to render them suitable to work in intercultural settings as managers have developed a knowledge base that will afford them the flexibility and adaptability to culturally-new professional environments.

Directions for Further Research

Multiple issues stemming from this study can be explored in future research and therefore some suggestions for directions for further study are made. First of all, more empirical studies using qualitative instruments such as personal observation and interviews may be carried out. In addition to the quantitative data from the ISS, collecting qualitative data so as to culminate a deeper understanding of participants' feelings, attitudes and beliefs about issues pertaining to intercultural communication competence may prove quite beneficial as more insight will be provided to companies in preparing to send their managers on foreign assignments or to better equip their staff to cooperate with foreign personnel within the company.

Another suggestion is to carry out a study comparing the ICC of managers working for national and multinational/international companies. Such a study may yield pertinent data in that it may possibly produce results that show an increased level of ICC among personnel of the multinational/international companies due to the amount of interaction with culturally diverse people. Along the same lines, one could examine the level of IS among Greek expatriate managers and/or compare it to that of managers that have only worked within a Greek context. This comparison may further shed light on how international work experience affects one's levels of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication ability.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study contribute to the poor body of knowledge on ICC within the Greek corporate context. While the results cannot be generalized across all managers outside the participants of this study (as the study used a nonprobability sample), the findings presented here have provided an indication of a small sample of a population and have highlighted some issues pertaining to ICC. Because of the focus of this study on a Greek context, it is quite unique as a survey of the literature shows no other studies to date have investigated ICC within a Greek corporate context. This study has provided a preliminary map of this extensive and diverse terrain of ICC in the abovementioned context. Therefore, scholars and corporate executives alike may wish to use the data presented herein as a springboard to further investigate ICC in the Greek corporate world.

From a practical point of view and given the results, this study provides fertile ground for some implications. First of all, the results reported by the ISS can be used as part of a screening procedure or the selection criteria to select personnel as the ISS is capable of giving an indication of someone's potential of being interculturally sensitive when managing, for instance, a multinational workforce. The word 'indication' should be underscored, as the test by no means provides *de facto* evidence of this trait in someone. In essence, the normative data obtained can be used for training purposes and overall raising of awareness as it can provide an empirical basis. Of course, one should bear in mind that the ISS should be intended as an assessment device to assist in intercultural training and if administered at the beginning and end of a training session, it could, for example, be employed to track a person's skill development over time as well as an indicator of areas that require further improvement or as a means of performance appraisal. If it is used as a sole diagnostic tool to identify a respondent's intercultural sensitivity, then it will not suffice to fully depict one's ICC.

Another point to consider is that it would be beneficial to encourage corporations to offer ICC training schemes to their staff (management and subordinate staff alike). This suggestion is of great value since as Sanchez, et al. (2000) report many businesses do not offer cross-cultural training to expatriates because companies often believe that one's technical skills is a more important prerequisite for working abroad. This stance, however, does not hold much validity as the various studies referred to throughout this thesis have shown quite the contrary –that ICC training is vital for foreign assignment success.

Taking this issue one step further, it may also be advantageous if tertiary-level Business Schools in Greece offer their students, and potentially future managers, a course(s) in ICC. A survey of the various programs of these business schools demonstrated that they do not thus far offer a course or module designed for ICC. If one considers Melander's (2001) statement that business graduates have more opportunities to work with diverse populations as compared to other graduates and IS is a vital ingredient for successful work in their future, then the role of business schools becomes even more prominent in preparing students to acquire the skills necessary to tackle the demands of a local, national, and international level (Kubow &

Fossum, 2007) of corporate work. Thus it is up to these schools to meet the needs of the current and future working reality of their students.

As a final note, one must remember that living in a culturally diverse society is now the norm. What is more, the growth of international business agreements and shrinking international boundaries, have increased the need for intercultural sensitivity and competence in business (Varner, 2000). The current economic climate in Greece, Europe and other parts of the world is in a degree of flux never before encountered by this generation of employees at every level. In addition, corporations and national economies are far more intertwined and thus extremely dependent on the cultural sensitivity and intercultural communication skills of its employees to navigate the murky waters and both survive and thrive financially. In essence, globalization and this inevitable change in the international business scene have rendered ICC a crucial skill in communicating effectively and appropriately. Specific to Greece, its participation in the EU, though tenuous at the time of this project, the influx of foreign workers to Greece, and the expansion of transnational companies according to global trends all speak to the increased importance of intercultural competence for employees and the urgent need for companies to support and encourage these skills among members of their staff at all levels.

Although ICC is multidimensional and multifaceted, and has a complex contextual nature, it is hoped that this study has added to the scarce body of literature pertaining to ICC in a Greek business context and has laid the foundation for further exploration of its complex dynamics to the benefit of both the discipline of intercultural communication and the Greek business climate.

REFERENCES

- Alred, G., & Byram, M. (2002). Becoming an intercultural mediator: A longitudinal study of residence abroad. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 23(5), 339-352.
- Babbie, E. R. (1990). *Survey research methods*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Towards ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience*, pp. 21-71. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters
- Chen, G. M. (1990): Intercultural communication Competence: Some perspectives of research. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 2, 243-261.
- Chen, G. M. (1997). A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. Paper presented at the Biennial Convention of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1996). Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis. In Brant R. B. (ed.) *Communication Yearbook 19*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, pp. 353-383.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1998). A review of the concept of inter-cultural sensitivity. *Human Communication* 1, 1-16.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (2000). The development and validation of the intercultural sensitivity scale. *Human Communication* 3, 1-15.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (2008). Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis. In Asante, M. K., Miike, Y. and Yin, J. (eds.) *The global intercultural communication reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 215-237.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 3rd Edition, Los Angeles: Sage.
- Cui, G., & Van Den Berg, S. (1991). Testing the construct validity of intercultural effectiveness. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 15, 227-241.
- Derdorff, D. K. (2004). *Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of International Education at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States*. Unpublished dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

Fantini, A. E. (2006). Exploring and assessing intercultural competence. Available at http://www.sit.edu/publications/docs/feil_research_report.pdf [Accessed 2 June 2014].

Fish, A. (2005). Assisting cross-border manager adjustment: Psycho-cultural and sociocultural interventions. *Personnel Review* 34(2): 225–245.

Fritz, W., Möllenberg, A., & Chen, G. M. (2002). Measuring intercultural sensitivity in different cultural contexts. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 11(2): 165-176.

Gage, M. (2001). International study for outstanding students: A case study. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 85, 43-48.

Graf, A. (2004). Screening and training intercultural competencies: Evaluating the impact of national culture on intercultural competencies. *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 15 (6), 1124-1148.

Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, Y. Y. (1984). *Communicating with Strangers, An Approach to Intercultural Communication*. Random House, New York.

Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. New York: Doubleday.

Hammer, M. R., Bennett, M. J., & Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensitivity: The intercultural development inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27, 421-443.

Hammoud, J. (2011). Consultative Authority Decision Making: On the Development and Characterization of Arab Corporate Culture. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*. 2(9): 141-148.

Jurgens, J. C., & McAuliffe, G. (2004). Short-term study-abroad experience in Ireland: An exercise in cross-cultural counseling. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* 26(2), 147-161.

Kim, K., Slocum, J. W. (2008). Individual differences and expatriate assignment effectiveness: The case of U.S. – based Korean expatriates. *Journal of World Business* 43, 109-126.

Kubow, P. K., & Fossum, P. R. (2007). *Comparative Education: Exploring issues in international context*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Landis, D., & Bhagat, R. S. (1996). A model of intercultural behavior and training. In Landis, D. and Bhagat, R. S. (eds.) *Handbook of intercultural training*. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage, pp. 1-16.

Langley, C. S., & Breese, J. R. (2005). Interacting sojourners: A study of students studying abroad. *Social Science Journal* 42(2), 313-321.

Medina-Lopez-Portillo, A. (2004). Intercultural Learning Assessment: The Link between Program Duration and the Development of Intercultural Sensitivity. *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* X, 179-199.

Melander, E. R. (2001). Educating the practitioner: Strategies for focusing on the Student in the undergraduate business curriculum. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 85, 85–94.

Mukalel, C. J. (1998). *Psychology of Learning*. Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.

Parker, B., & McEvoy, G. M. (1993). Initial examination of a model of intercultural adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 17 (3), 355-379.

Penbek, S, Yurdakul, D., & Cerit, A. G. (2009). Intercultural Communication Competence: A Study About the Intercultural Sensitivity of University Students Based on Their Education and International Experiences. *European And Mediterranean Conference On Information Systems*.

Peng, S. Y., Rangsipah, S., & Thaipakee, S. (2005). Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: A Comparative Study of Ethnic Chinese and Thai Nationals. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* 34(2), 119-137.

Sanchez, J. I., Spector, P. E., & Cooper, C. L. (2000). Adapting to a boundary less world: A developmental expatriate model. *Academy of Management Executive* 14(2), 96–106.

Spitzberg, B. H. (2000). A model of intercultural communication competence. In Samovar, L. A. and Porter, R. E. (eds.) *Intercultural communication: A reader*. 2nd Edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, pp. 7-24.

Schwartz, S. H. (2006). Value orientations: Measurement, antecedents and consequences across nations. In Jowell, R. Roberts, C. Fitzgerald, R. and Eva, G. (eds.) *Measuring attitudes cross-nationally - lessons from the European Social Survey*. London: Sage.

Steers, M. R., Sanchez-Runde, J. C., & Nardon, L. (2010). *Management Across Cultures Challenges and Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, E. (1994). Intercultural Competency: A Transformative Learning Process. *Adult Education Quarterly* 44, 154-174.

Tesoriero, F. (2006). Personal Growth Towards Intercultural Competence Through an International Field Education Programme. *Australian Social Work* 59(2), 126-140.

Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating Across Cultures*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Varner, I. I. (2000). The theoretical foundation for intercultural business communication: A conceptual model. *Journal of Business Communication* 37(1), 39-57.

Zhao, C. M. (2002). *Intercultural Competence: A Quantitative Study of Significance of Intercultural Competence and the Influence of College Experiences on Students' Intercultural Competence Development*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Available at <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-05152002-135459/unrestricted/01ZhaoCover.pdf> [Accessed 14 May 2014]