ASSESSING ORIENTATIONS TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCE OF THE FACULTY OF A UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION PROGRAMME IN THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL: A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH INFORMED BY THE INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM AND USING THE INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY

Submitted by
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to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education

May 2013

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the orientations to cultural difference of sojourner educators in the Foundation Program at Qatar University to determine if orientations were correlated with select demographic and experiential variables, including gender, age, time overseas, education level, formative region, ethnic minority status, job position, length of time in Qatar, intercultural marriage, default language, formal teacher training, and overseas development organization experience.

This study used a sequential mixed-method design. Perceived and Developmental Orientations were measured using the Intercultural Development Inventory© (V.3), which produced a measure of each respondent’s orientation to cultural difference. Focus group interviews were conducted to engage participants in explaining and interpreting the findings. Five focus groups of three to six participants each were conducted.

Most of the teachers were found to operate from within the transitional orientation of Minimization, although individual scores ranged from Denial to Adaptation. On average, the educators were found to overestimate their orientations by 31 points. A positive correlation between orientation and formative region was found, with participants from North America showing the highest orientation. Statistically significant differences emerged for orientations when comparing Middle East and North African (MENA) and North American formative regions.

Formative region was found to account for 4.8% of the variance in orientation and is a significant fit of the data. Focus groups participants speculated that (a) core differences regarding multiculturalism in MENA and North American cultures help explain the results, (b) aspects of the workplace culture and both the broader MENA and local Qatari culture encourage a sense of exclusion, and (c) external events further complicate cross-cultural relations. The study findings add to the literature by providing
baseline orientation data on sojourner educators in post-secondary education in the GCC region, and by confirming some of the findings of similar studies.

The study provides practitioners with suggestions for staffing and professional development. Future research should focus on the measurement of orientations in broader samples of educators, changes in orientation over time in Qatar and other cultural contexts, differences in orientation among short-term vs. long-term expatriates, the impact of employment systems and societal structures on orientations in sojourner educators, the impact of educator orientation to cultural difference on student achievement, and the design of effective cross-cultural professional development for educators.

**Key Words:**

Intercultural Development Inventory, intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, Qatar, sojourner, orientation to cultural difference
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would never have been finished without the support of family and friends who offered advice and guidance during this long and bumpy journey. It is not possible to complete an undertaking such as this without the support, guidance, encouragement, and assistance of many.

I am particularly grateful to my colleagues at Qatar University for their willingness to participate in this study. Response to the survey tool was strong, and many interesting conversations resulted from my colleagues’ interest in this topic. I am in their debt for setting aside time from their hectic schedules to participate in my study. Thank you.

A special thank you is due to David Moran for sharing his ability with graphics software. Without him, I’d probably still be trying to rotate arrowheads. Equally, this work would not be what it is now without the feedback and support of Dr. Angela Stokes.

I thank my supervisors, Dr. Andrew Richards and Dr. Fran Martin, for pushing me to consider my unexamined assumptions and for forcing me out of my intellectual comfort zone. I am sure that they had more enjoyable ways to spend afternoons than talking to me on Skype.

I also thank Dr. Mitchell Hammer, Debra Freathy, and IDI, LLC, through whom a portion of this thesis was supported. Your support and guidance were invaluable.

Finally, to my wife, Mecil Café-McKay, I owe you indescribable gratitude for your support and forbearance during my evenings and weekends in front of the computer, and especially for your tolerance of my “grumpiness” when my writing wasn’t going smoothly. Mahalkita, bei.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all sojourner educators in Qatar. I hope that this work highlights your experience in Qatar, and that it and provides suggestions for meaningful change.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.................................................................................................................. II
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................ IV
Dedication............................................................................................................. V
List of Tables ....................................................................................................... IX
List of Figures ...................................................................................................... X
Definitions........................................................................................................... XI

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.............................................................................. 1
Purpose and Research Questions........................................................................ 5
Hypotheses............................................................................................................ 6
Study Setting......................................................................................................... 7
Significance........................................................................................................... 7
Organization of the Study..................................................................................... 11

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW................................................................. 12
Concept of Culture............................................................................................... 12
Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Sensitivity....................................... 17
  Definitions of intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity ............. 19
  Developing intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence ............... 26
Models of Intercultural Sensitivity and Intercultural Competence..................... 31
  Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity ........................................ 31
    Stages of the DMIS....................................................................................... 34
    Ethnocentric stages.................................................................................... 36
    Ethnorelativist stages............................................................................... 39
  Intercultural development continuum........................................................ 41
    Monocultural and intercultural mindsets............................................... 44
    Monocultural IDC orientations............................................................... 45
    Transitional IDC orientations................................................................. 46
    Intercultural IDC orientations................................................................. 47
  Practical applications of the Intercultural Development Inventory................ 50
  Critique of the theoretical models and tool............................................... 52
Intercultural Competence within Higher Education........................................... 62
  Impact of culture on higher education....................................................... 62
  Need for intercultural sensitivity among educators..................................... 67
  Impacts of culturally sensitive teaching..................................................... 69
  Impacts of cross-cultural exchange......................................................... 70
Demographic Variables Associated with Intercultural Sensitivity....................... 73
  Age and intercultural sensitivity............................................................... 75
  Gender and intercultural sensitivity.......................................................... 76
  Area of residence during formative years................................................... 76
  Cross-cultural experience......................................................................... 77
Chapter Summary............................................................................................... 79

CHAPTER 3: METHODS.................................................................................... 80
Theoretical Framework....................................................................................... 80
  Phase 1: Measurement of Intercultural Sensitivity using the Intercultural
    Development Inventory.............................................................................. 84
  Participants................................................................................................... 85
  Measurement................................................................................................. 86
  Administration............................................................................................... 91
Chapter 4: Findings

Research Question 1 and Hypotheses

Research Question 2 and Hypotheses

Research Question 3 and Focus Group Results

General reactions

Participant explanations

Developmental Orientation and Perceived Orientation results

Impact of formative region

Impact of length of time in Qatar

Recommendations

Conclusion

Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

Perceived vis-à-vis measured intercultural sensitivity

Relationships between demographic variables and intercultural sensitivity

Variables between a significant association

Variables exhibiting a striking association

Discussion

Contribution to theory

Contribution to practice

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Strengths

Weaknesses

Recommendations

Implement professional development practices to develop educator intercultural sensitivity

Improve appreciation of the importance of intercultural sensitivity among administrators

Suggestions for Future Research

Conclusion
APPENDICES

A. Permissions to Reproduce or Adapt Images .................................................. 164
B. Sample of the Intercultural Development Inventory ..................................... 167
C. E-Mail Invitation to Participants ...................................................................... 168
D. Focus Group Invitation .................................................................................... 170
E. Focus Group Agenda and Interview Questions ................................................. 171
F. Focus Group Transcript Example ...................................................................... 173
G. Coding Example ............................................................................................... 176
H. Ethical Approval .............................................................................................. 179
I. Foundation Program Letters of Approval ......................................................... 184

REFERENCES ........................................................................................................ 186
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Definitions of Culture................................................................. 15
Table 2. Traits that Affect Intercultural Competence................................. 22
Table 3. Models of Intercultural Competence ............................................. 31
Table 4. Intercultural Development: Pre and Post Intercultural Development
Inventory Gains ............................................................................. 71
Table 5. Impact of Program Type on Student Learning Abroad .................... 72
Table 6. Ronen’s Five Categories of Cross-Cultural Success ......................... 74
Table 7. Survey Participant Demographics ................................................. 86
Table 8. Focus Group Participant Demographics ........................................ 99
Table 9. Educator Population Demographics ............................................ 100
Table 10. Descriptive Statistics .................................................................. 110
Table 11. Comparison of Perceived and Developmental Orientation ............. 110
Table 12. Comparison of Means for Development Orientation within Formative
Region by Default Language ............................................................... 113
Table 13. Descriptive Statistics for Developmental Orientation by Formative
Region .......................................................................................... 113
Table 14. Analysis of Variance for Developmental Orientation by Formative
Region.......................................................................................... 113
Table 15. Bonferroni Post-hoc Analysis Developmental Orientation Based on
Formative Region ........................................................................ 114
Table 16. Descriptive Statistics for Developmental Orientation by Time in Qatar .... 115
Table 17. Analysis of Variance for Developmental Orientation by Time in Qatar .... 116
Table 18. Bonferroni Post-hoc Analysis Developmental Orientation Based on
Time in Qatar ............................................................................... 116
Table 19. Spearman Correlations between Developmental Orientation and
Selected Demographic Characteristics .................................................... 117
Table 20. Test for Normal Distribution of Developmental Orientation Scores ........ 117
Table 21. Test for Normal Distribution of Developmental Orientation Scores
Based on Formative Region ................................................................ 118
Table 22. Stepwise Regression Results for Developmental Orientation ............ 118
Table 23. Focus Group Dates and Demographics ........................................ 119
**LIST OF FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Iceberg Concept of Culture</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Single, Double, and Triple-Loop Learning</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interacting Cultures in an Educational Setting</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Trailing Orientations</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Comparison of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and the Intercultural Development Continuum</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Intercultural Development Continuum</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Experiential-Constructivism Approaches to Study Abroad</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Perceived and Developmental Orientations</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Orientation Gap</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Focus Group Themes</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>