

Human Communication. A Publication of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association.
Vol. 13, No. 3, pp.197 – 215.

How Savvy Are We? : Towards Predicting Intercultural Sensitivity

Carmencita P. Del Villar, PhD
Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts
University of the Philippines, Diliman

Email address: cpdelvillar@gmail.com

Abstract

The study determined Filipinos' level of intercultural sensitivity. Corollary to this, three communication traits and 11 demographic variables were also tested for their possible association to intercultural sensitivity. Finally, all the variables were combined to find out which among them could be included in a model to predict intercultural sensitivity. Results showed that: a) Filipinos have a high level of intercultural sensitivity; b) Their sensitivity was positively correlated to willingness to communicate and communication competence; c) Their sensitivity was negatively correlated to intercultural apprehension; d) Ten of the 11 demographic variables were associated to sensitivity; and e) Their sensitivity could be predicted by a model with the following coefficients: communication competence, intercultural apprehension, length of stay in another country, number of foreign friends, sex, and college course.

Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2008) cited that “three international developments have made intercultural contact more axiomatic and pervasive: new technology and information system, changes in the world’s population, and rapid movement toward a global economy” (4). They further explained that new technology and information systems have tremendously increased people’s opportunities to be elsewhere in a matter of hours or in cyberspace in a matter of seconds. World populations not only increased rapidly but moved around at an alarming rate. It has been estimated that 200,000 people are added to the world population every day; that is approximately 80 million people every year. It is projected that by year 2050 the world population would balloon to 9.3 billion. And people are constantly on the move such that an estimated 100 million people would be somewhere else other than their countries of birth. In December 2007, the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency or POEA (2009) estimated that a total of 8,726,520 or 10% of Filipinos were overseas working in different capacities (permanent, temporary, irregular) in different categories (professional and technical workers, managerial workers, clerical workers, sales workers, service workers, agricultural, or production workers) in virtually all the continents of the world. The POEA claimed Filipinos were in demand worldwide because they were “resilient... adaptable... English-proficient... loyal.”

Whether we realize it or not, Filipinos have indeed arrived on the global scene. Changes are happening and would continue to happen at an increasingly startling rate. It is in this light that we ask how ready Filipinos are to face the challenges of those changes? Or have they been ready all along? Do Filipinos realize that they are now global citizens and must harmoniously co-exist with other citizens from other parts of the globe? Or have they been harmoniously co-existing all these years? Harmoniously co-existing is what intercultural sensitivity is all about. It is about managing and coping with cultural differences.

The present study ascertained how ready Filipinos are by surveying a heterogeneous group of Filipino college students from the University of the Philippines (UP). UP is the country’s state university and its student population comes from all over the country spanning different regional backgrounds and socio-economic classes. The study looked into the students’ abilities in important communication proficiencies and how these proficiencies correlated with their intercultural sensitivity. Further, this study determined if their demographic characteristics were associated with their intercultural sensitivity. And finally, an attempt was made to develop a model that could predict the students’ level of sensitivity given their communication proficiencies and demographic profiles.

Study Frameworks

The following review of relevant researches provided the basis for examining the questions raised in the study.

Intercultural Sensitivity

Chen and Starosta (1997) identified Intercultural Sensitivity as “one of the most important abilities that helps us live successfully in the culturally diverse society” (5). They cited Bronfenbrenner, Harding, and Gallwey’s study in 1958 as one of the earliest to deal with the concept of sensitivity. Two types of ability in social perception were mentioned: Sensitivity to the generalized other and sensitivity to the individual differences. The first one was described as “a kind of sensitivity to the social norms of one’s own group” while “interpersonal sensitivity is the ability to distinguish how others differ in their behavior, perceptions or feelings” (5). Chen and Starosta (1997) further clarified that:

although intercultural sensitivity is related to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of interactional situation, it mainly deals with affect. It is concerned with emotion. Second, intercultural awareness (cognition) is the foundation of intercultural sensitivity (affect) which in turn leads to intercultural competence (behavior). In other words, the three are closely related but separate concepts. Thus, intercultural sensitivity can be conceptualized as an individual's ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication (7).

The definition stated above clearly says that intercultural sensitivity is a “dynamic concept” (7). It explains that someone who is interculturally sensitive possesses the desire to “understand, appreciate, and accept” others’ culture and seeks encouraging results from interactions with them.

The interculturally sensitive individual sends and receives encouraging and assuring responses in situations that call for intercultural communication. There is a noticeable attitude of respect between him and the people he interacts with. Gudykunst and Kim (1992) argued an understanding not only of one's own but also of others' feelings is important to realize “a successful integration of affective and cognitive processes” (9). And so to make possible the development of “a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences and eventually promote the ability of intercultural competence, interculturally sensitive persons must possess the following elements: self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and suspending judgment” (9).

Communication Proficiencies:

In the present study, the term *communication proficiencies* is used to embrace different variables related to one's skill or ability to communicate. These proficiencies are communication competence, willingness to communicate, and intercultural communication apprehension. Previous empirical findings have associated these communication proficiencies to intercultural sensitivity.

Willingness to Communicate

Wrench, McCroskey, and Richmond (2008) defined Willingness to Communicate or WTC as “a predisposition toward communication behavior, not a behavior itself.” It is an individual's inclination to engage in communication with others. They explained that people's tendencies to engage in communication are dependent on 6 factors. These are: genetic factors, childhood reinforcement, skill deficiencies, social introversion, social alienation, and ethnic or cultural divergence.

Communication Competence

McCroskey defined communication competence as “... an individual's perception of her or his own competence in communication across a variety of contexts” (McCroskey, 1984, 1997). It is to be noted that this is a person's perception and not behavior as others might observe in him. But by and large McCroskey stated that people who see themselves as competent communicators are also more willing to engage in interaction with others and experience less apprehension. One's perception of her or his competence may also be noticeable when communicating with strangers, acquaintances, and friends.

Intercultural Communication Apprehension

Wrench, et al. (2008) explained that although people have spent time learning to be effective communicators they still realize how difficult it is when the persons they are communicating with are from another culture. With the difficulty comes the feeling of apprehension because “they are afraid of saying something offensive or because of the novelty of the situation itself” (239). With the realization that this was an area that needed more study, Neuliep and

McCroskey (1997 in Wrench, et al. 2008) developed an instrument called the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension. They stated that during the initial stages of intercultural situations, people with high levels of intercultural apprehension have more difficulty reducing their uncertainty.

Associations between intercultural sensitivity and other variables within the intercultural communication context

Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) explained that, since intercultural communication is accompanied by “higher levels of novelty, uncertainty, unfamiliarity, and dissimilarity,” it would also be accompanied by higher levels of apprehension.

Some studies correlated intercultural sensitivity to communication competence in English. One such study by Peng, Rangsipaht & Thaipakdee (2005) discovered that ethnic Chinese and Thais differed in their levels of intercultural sensitivity and that this was associated with their levels of English proficiency and intercultural experience. Those who were more proficient in English and had more experience interacting with other cultures were also more interculturally sensitive.

A study by Witteborn, S. (2003) also looked into communicative competence and its interrelationship with selected variables like social interaction and socio-cultural norms.

Keith, D., McCroskey, J., Richmond, V., & McCroskey, L. (2009) examined communication competence in the Thai culture. Results suggested that Thai students reported feeling the least competent when communicating with strangers.

In a paper presented at the Pacific and Asian Communication Association conference in Malaysia, Yamamoto, E. Abdullah N., Sheriff, R. & Tamam, E. (2009) explored how Malaysians understood the concept of intercultural sensitivity. Their conclusion was that if intercultural sensitivity were to be studied in the Malaysian context it should consider ethnic interactions first before considering other nationalities since Malaysia is known to have major ethnic groups.

Another study compared ethnocentrism to willingness to communicate. Romanian and American students were compared by Yang Lin, Rancer, A. & Trimbitas, O. (2005). They found that individuals’ “communication traits and predispositions” can have an effect on their behavior when communicating with other cultures. Results showed that Romanians had significantly higher levels of ethnocentrism and lower willingness to communicate compared to their American counterparts.

Yang Lin, Rancer, A. and Lim, S. (2003) did a cross-cultural comparison of ethnocentrism and willingness to communicate between Korean students and American college students. Their findings revealed that Koreans had significantly lower scores on both ethnocentrism and intercultural willingness to communicate than their American counterparts. Similarly, Neuliep, J., Chadoir, M., & McCroskey, J. (2001) also found that males significantly scored higher than females in ethnocentrism in both the Japanese and American cultures.

A recent study by Dong, Q., Day, K., & Collaco, C., (2008) explored how ethnocentrism could be conquered through intercultural sensitivity and multiculturalism. The study further proved that the two variables were significant predictors of ethnocentrism.

Another study looked into the effect of perception of whiteness with interracial communication apprehension Bahk, M. & Jandt, F. (2003) compared Koreans and Americans and discovered that Koreans had higher levels of whiteness perception than Americans. This perception of whiteness also correlated to levels of interracial communication apprehension. The

same researchers in another study examined how the perceptions of people of color are related to their interracial interaction in the US (Bahk, M. & Jandt, F., 2008). Their findings showed that “implicit, automatic preferences for Blacks among African Americans were positively associated with their reluctance to interact with Whites” (314). Earlier researches have been done along this line. Jackson, Shin, & Whilson (2000) argued that individuals who identified themselves as non-white have the tendency to also believe themselves to be somewhat inferior by admitting the dominance of their white counterparts. These same people see themselves in the minor position causing them to feel apprehensive.

In a study conducted by the College of Mass Communication in the University of the Philippines (2006) results revealed that males were more comfortable than females when speaking with foreigners. Females, on the other hand, were found to be more comfortable when communicating with those from the same socio-economic status and when talking to gays and lesbians.

The above relevant researches sustain the reality that an individual’s communication traits and demographic characteristics influence her or his communication success when in an intercultural context. Taking into account the insights from the abovementioned researches, the present study endeavored to look into the Filipinos’ intercultural sensitivity. Four Hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Filipinos have a moderate to high levels intercultural sensitivity.

H2: There is a significant correlation between intercultural sensitivity and the three communication traits (communication competence, willingness to communicate, and intercultural apprehension).

H3: All the 11 variables have a significant effect on intercultural sensitivity.

H4: All the communication and demographic variables together can be included in a model to predict intercultural sensitivity.

Methodology

The main method used in the present study was a survey of students from all the 24 colleges, institutes, and schools of the University of the Philippines’ main campus in Diliman. Cluster sampling was employed to get a fair representation of the population. A total of 941 students participated in the study.

The following instruments were used:

Intercultural Sensitivity Scale or ISS (Chen & Starosta)

The Self-Perceived Communication Competence or CC (McCroskey)

Willingness to Communicate or WTC (McCroskey)

Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension or PRICA (McCroskey)

To address the first specific question (What is the Filipinos’ level of sensitivity to other cultures?), ISS scores were computed. For purposes of this study, an arbitrary classification of scores was done to distinguish among high (89 to 120), moderate (57 to 88) and low (24 to 56) levels of sensitivity. To answer the second specific question (What is the correlation between Filipinos’ level of sensitivity and their three communication traits?), ISS scores were correlated with the scores in the WTC, CC, and PRICA using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation at $\alpha=.05$. To answer the third specific question (What is the correlation between Filipinos’ level of sensitivity and selected demographic variables?), ISS scores were computed for each of the 11 demographic variables using ANOVA, T-test and Jonckheere-Terpstra tests at $\alpha=.05$. To

address the fourth specific question (What variables could adequately predict Filipinos' level of sensitivity?), Multiple Regression Analysis at $\alpha=.05$ was used.

Results and Discussions

Demographic Profile

The study's 941 respondents came from the 24 colleges, institutes, and schools of the University of the Philippines in Diliman. Seven of the colleges offer graduate level courses and the rest have both undergraduate and graduate programs. The bigger colleges had as much as 75 respondents while the smaller colleges had a minimum of five.

Majority or 32% of the respondents were juniors, 20% were sophomores, 17% were seniors, 11% were freshmen, 4% were those in their fifth year. At the graduate level, 7% were in their first year, 5% were in their second year, 3% were in their third year while 0.05% were in their fourth year.

Among the 941 respondents, 47% were 18-19 years old, 23% were 20-21 years old, 16% were 22-30 years old, and 11% were 16-17 years old. There were a sprinkling of 31-40 year olds, 41- 50 year olds, and 51 to 52 year olds (mostly in the graduate courses).

Of the 941 respondents, 63.3% were females and 37% were males.

Students' level of sensitivity to other cultures

Results showed that 72.05% of the respondents registered high sensitivity (ISS Mean score between 89 to 120) , 28% were moderately sensitive (ISS Mean score between 57 to 88), and only 0.21% had low sensitivity (ISS Mean score between 24 to 56). Overall, the Mean ISS score was 93.60 (falling in the high sensitivity range).

Using Chen and Starosta's (1997) conceptualization of intercultural sensitivity, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents have a high 'positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences' and as a result, they also 'promote appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication'. The respondents with high ISS scores revealed they felt more understanding towards people from other cultures. They were able to easily accept cultural differences and therefore were more tolerant of different behaviors. One explanation for the respondents' high sensitivity could be their early and continued exposure to foreign cultures. The first recorded colonization of the Philippines was that of the Spaniards in 1521 which lasted for over 300 years. This was followed by colonization by the Americans and the Japanese. Prior to those periods, Filipinos were known to have traded with other cultures such as China, India, Japan, and some European nations. To this day, the presence of foreign businesses and immigrants continues to be apparent in Philippine society. No wonder Filipinos are accustomed to the presence of foreign cultures. Chen and Starosta further explained that someone who is intercultural sensitive possesses the desire to "understand, appreciate, and accept" others' culture and seeks encouraging results from interactions with them. This explanation was illustrated by some of the Filipino respondents. A group of mature graduate students from the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG), for example, admitted that they were generally understanding and accepting of foreigners in the country. As a matter of fact they tended to be very hospitable when the occasion called for it and tolerant when they observed differences.

Hypothesis 1 (that Filipinos, have moderate to high levels of intercultural sensitivity) was supported. Majority of the respondents had high intercultural sensitivity while a few registered moderate sensitivity. The table below shows a summary of the frequency and percentage, according to the arbitrary classification:

Table 1: Respondents' Intercultural Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Frequency	Percent
High (89 to 120)	678	72.05
Moderate (57-88)	261	27.74
Low (24-56)	2	0.21
TOTAL	941	100

Intercultural sensitivity and the communication proficiencies

Willingness to Communicate

When the respondents' ISS scores were correlated with their WTC, results showed that there was a moderately low but significant association between the two ($r=.23$, $p\text{-value}=.00$). This meant that if an individual had the willingness to communicate in different contexts he also had the sensitivity towards people from other cultures.

Although McCroskey specified that WTC is only "a predisposition toward communication behavior, not a behavior itself," it was nonetheless apparent from the report of Asian Center (ASIAN) graduate students that they felt comfortable communicating with people from other cultures. They believed that people everywhere were basically the same so interacting with them, whatever their nationality, was not a major effort. See Table 2 for summary statistics.

Communication Competence

When ISS was correlated with CC, results showed that there was a moderate significant relationship between the two ($r=.34$, $p\text{-value}=.00$). Respondents who achieved high CC scores also achieved high ISS scores. This meant that respondents who perceived themselves as communicatively competent were also sensitive to other cultures.

McCroskey (1997) explained that people who see themselves as communicatively competent also become more willing to engage in interaction. The results of the present study showed that if respondents were competent and willing to interact, they were also more aware of other people's feelings. For example, a number of respondents from the School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR) affirmed that, when they were comfortable about speaking in general, they were also more receptive. They tended to focus more on the other person rather than on themselves. This was true even if they were interacting with foreigners.

The present findings were in accordance with those of Peng et al.'s (2005) that there was a strong correlation between intercultural sensitivity and communication competence in English. They found that those who were proficient in English were also more experienced and sensitive when interacting with other cultures. Another study with similar results was that of Keith et al. (2009) which discovered that Thai students who reported the least competence when communicating with strangers were also the ones who scored significantly lower in sensitivity. See Table 2 for summary statistics

Personal Report of Intercultural Apprehension

Results of the correlation done between ISS and PRICA revealed that the two variables were significantly negatively associated ($r=-0.54$, $p=.00$). This showed that if an individual had low apprehension when communicating with people from another culture he also tended to be very sensitive to them.

However, Wrench et al. (2008) argued that even if people were effective communicators they still found difficulty communicating with those from other cultures because of the novelty of the situation. They further explained that the apprehension usually happened during the initial

stages of interaction. The present study’s respondents from the Technology Management Center (TMC) affirmed that even if they were mature and used to interacting with people in general, they still felt apprehensive when communicating with foreigners. They did qualify that the apprehension only happened during the first few minutes of interaction. Their bearing usually improved after a while. They added that when they felt apprehensive about interacting with foreigners, they also became less sensitive to them. But as they felt less anxious, they also became more sensitive to them. This was also attested to by students from other colleges such as the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy (CSSP) and College of Social Work and Development (CSWD).

Hypothesis 2 (that there is a significant correlation between intercultural sensitivity and the three communication traits namely: communication competence, willingness to communicate, and intercultural apprehension) was confirmed. Intercultural sensitivity was positively correlated to communication competence and willingness to communicate, and negatively correlated to intercultural communication apprehension. See Table 2 for summary statistics.

Table 2: Correlation between ISS and communication proficiencies

		WTC	CC	PRICA
ISS	Pearson Correlation	0.232	0.339	-0.54
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.00	0.00

N=941

Intercultural sensitivity and selected demographic variables

The 11 demographic variables were individually tested to determine which among them influenced intercultural sensitivity. ANOVA, T-test, and Jonckheere analyses showed that 10 of the 11 variables registered significant results. These were age, sex, college, year level, membership in organizations, number of years of membership in organizations, number of countries visited, length of stay in other countries, number of foreign friends, and frequency of communication with them. Only the variable socio-economic status failed to reach statistical significance. See Table 3 below for summary of tests conducted, findings, and conclusions.

Table 3: Summary of tests, findings, and conclusions on the demographic variables

Variables	Tests conducted, significance	Conclusions
Age	ANOVA p-value=.00; Jonckheere p-value=.01	The older the age ,the higher the sensitivity score.
Sex	T-test p-vlaue=.012	Males had higher sensitivity score than females.
College	ANOVA p-value=.00; Jonckheere p-value=.00	The colleges differed in their sensitivity scores.
Year level	ANOVA p-value=.00; Johckheere p-value=.00	The higher the year level, the higher the sensitivity score.
Memberships	ANOVA p-value=.00; Jonckheere p-value=.00	The more affiliations, the higher the sensitivity score.
Years of memberships	ANOVA p-value=.00; Jonckheere p-value=.00	The longer the membership, the higher the sensitivity.
Countries visited	ANOVA p-value=.00; Jonckheere p-value=.00	The more countries visited, the higher the sensitivity.
Length of stay	ANOVA p-value=.00; Jonckheere p-value=.00	The longer the stay in another country, the higher the sensitivity.
Number of foreign friends	ANOVA p-value=.00; Jonckheere p-value=.00	The more foreign friends, the higher the sensitivity.

Frequency of communication	ANOVA p-value=.00; Jonckheere p-value=.00	The more frequent the communication, the higher the sensitivity.
Socio-economic status	ANOVA p-value=.191	Socio-economic status failed to reach statistical significance

Age

ANOVA test showed that the oldest age group did significantly better than all the other groups. The Jonckheere-Terpstra test further revealed that there was a significant overall trend showing that the older the age group, the higher the sensitivity score (p-value=.01). The qualitative findings strongly supported the quantitative results. Maturity was shown to influence a person's sensitivity to other people. An explanation for this could be that maturity comes with life experiences that generally lead to better understanding and tolerance for differences. A number of mature respondents disclosed that with age also came the trait of self-acceptance. They clarified that if they could accept themselves they could also accept others. This attitude permitted them to be more broadminded and therefore more tolerant of differences in culture.

Sex

Males did significantly better than females (Mean diff= 1.54, p-value= .012). The 596 females obtained a Mean score of 92.99 while the 345 males had a Mean score of 94.53. A number of male respondents from the College of Mass Communication (CMC) disclosed that they indeed felt at ease interacting with foreigners. In addition, they found intercultural interaction more challenging than other levels of communication. The same view was expressed by a number of male respondents from the other colleges (College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, College of Social Work and Development, College of Arts and Letters, School of Statistics).

College

Results proved that the five highest Mean sensitivity scores were from the Asian Center (ASIAN) with 99.44, School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR) 99.24, Institute of Islamic Studies (ISLAM) 98.00, School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) 97.96, and Technology Management Center (TMC) 97.80. The three lowest Mean ISSI scores were from the College of Human Kinetics (CHK) 89.80, College of Engineering (ENG) 88.07, and Asian Institute of Tourism (AIT) 82.60. ANOVA results showed that there were significant differences among the scores of the 24 colleges. It would seem that the nature of the course (such as Asian studies, Islamic studies, Urban and Regional studies) was responsible for the students' sensitivity to other cultures, but it could also be due to maturity as the top 5 colleges all offer graduate programs where students' ages ranged from 24 to 52. At closer glance, when selected students from the high scoring colleges were interviewed, it was brought to light that their courses indeed provided ample opportunities to learn about other cultures. In addition, their age and experience also contributed to their mature views.

It was surprising to note that the lowest Mean score was from the Asian Institute of Tourism (AIT). Considering the nature of the course, it was expected to generate the highest sensitivity rating. When the tourism students were interviewed, it was revealed that although they did not rate high, they expected to improve themselves in the future because they realized that intercultural sensitivity was vital to their course. Another reason for their low scores could be their lack of exposure to opportunities because they were still in the early part of their stay in the institute and had not had the exposure and training. It should be noted that the scores of the three lowest colleges were still within the moderate sensitivity level arbitrarily set at the beginning of the study. See Table 4 below for summary.

Table 4: Summary of N, Mean ISS, SD of the 24 colleges

Colleges	N	Mean ISS	SD
1 Asian Center or ASIAN (graduate)	25	99.44	9.47
2 School of Labor and Industrial Relations or SOLAIR (graduate)	25	99.24	8.15
3 Institute of Islamic Studies or ISLAM (graduate)	5	98.00	17.03
4 School of Urban and Regional Planning or SURP(graduate)	25	97.96	8.34
5 Technology Management Center or TMC (graduate)	25	97.80	7.99
6 College of Social Sciences and Philosophy or CSSP	55	97.25	7.99
7 College of Social Work and Development or CSWD	36	97.00	7.94
8 College of Arts and Letters or CAL	75	96.16	9.00
9 College of Home Economics or CHE	40	95.13	6.60
10 School of Statistics or STAT	31	94.9	9.58
11 College of Education or EDUC	54	94.54	7.35
12 College of Public Administration or NCPAG	30	94.53	7.82
13 College of Music or MUSIC	35	93.94	10.5
14 College of Mass Communications or CMC	60	93.92	5.87
15 College of Business Administration or CBA	45	93.73	8.04
16 College of Fine Arts or CFA	35	93.17	10.15
17 College of Architecture or ARCHI	30	92.03	6.91
18 Institute of Library Science or LIBSCI	25	91.84	7.46
19 School of Economics or ECON	55	91.84	10.3
20 College of Law or LAW (graduate)	35	90.77	7.36
21 College of Science or CS	65	90.62	9.01
22 College of Human Kinetics or CHK	30	89.8	10.52
23 College of Engineering or ENG	75	88.07	8.47
24 Asian Institute of Tourism or AIT	25	82.6	5.86
Total	941	93.93	9.07

Year level

ANOVA results showed that there were significant differences among the different year levels ($p\text{-value}=.00$). The Jonckheere-Terpstra supported the findings that as the year level went up, the sensitivity level also improved ($p\text{-value}=.00$). This result agreed with the findings on the variables age and course: that as the respondents matured, their sensitivity to other cultures also improved and that respondents from graduate courses rated among the top 5, besting all the undergraduate courses. The qualitative findings strongly supported the quantitative results. Respondents from the graduate levels, for example, agreed that maturity was a big factor in making them more comfortable in the presence of foreigners. In addition, mature respondents were found to practice more empathy and self-monitoring and were therefore able to easily adjust to other people. Because of their maturity, they were able to control themselves and did not judge others right away.

Affiliations in organizations

Differences among the sensitivity scores of groups with varying memberships in organizations were significant ($p\text{-value}=.00$). Respondents with memberships in three or four organizations showed the highest Mean ISS score of 95.89 while those without memberships had the lowest at 91.37. These findings illustrated that number of memberships in organizations

may be associated with intercultural sensitivity. The Jonckheere-Terpstra test supported the findings that the more memberships one had, the higher that individual's sensitivity tended to be. The qualitative data supported the quantitative results. Interviews with high scoring students disclosed that they benefited from interaction with different personalities. The ability to mix with different people gave them the confidence to effortlessly socialize with other cultures. In addition, being used to different people also gave them the ability to be more tolerant about differences in values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Years of membership in organizations

Respondents with 7 to 8 years of affiliation in organizations obtained the highest Mean ISS score of 98.22 while those with no membership whatsoever ranked the lowest with 91.37. ANOVA test revealed that years of membership had varying effects on the respondents sensitivity scores (p -value=.00). The Jonckheere-Terpstra test supported the findings that the higher the number of years of memberships in organizations, the higher the sensitivity score (p -value=.00). The qualitative data supported the quantitative results. According to those with long years of memberships in organizations, this experience helped tremendously in developing their confidence in intercultural communication.

Exposure to other cultures: number of countries visited

Among the respondents, those who have been to the most number of countries (11 to 20) ranked the highest in sensitivity scores (Mean ISS= 100.5) The lowest scores were from those who have not been to another country (Mean ISS=92.26). ANOVA results showed that the differences among the groups were significant (p -value=.000). The Jonckheere-Terpstra also supported the ANOVA results showing that the more countries one visited the higher his sensitivity score (p -value=.00). The qualitative data further explained the quantitative findings. According to the well-travelled respondents, traveling indeed broadened their outlook in life. The wisdom and insights gained from those travels were deemed invaluable.

Exposure to other cultures: length of stay in another country

Respondents with more than 6 months of stay in another country scored the highest Mean sensitivity of 101.34 while the lowest Mean score of 92.25 was from those who did not stay in another country. ANOVA results showed that the differences among the groups were significant (p -value=.000). The Jonckheere-Terpstra, supported the findings that the longer the stay outside the country, the higher the sensitivity score (p -value= .00). Findings from the in-depth-interviews supported the quantitative data. Respondents who had stayed in another country for 6 months or more revealed that the extended exposure helped develop in them broadmindedness and acceptance of other cultures. Where before they would tend to be judgmental when it came to strange cultures, now they would tend to be more accepting and appreciative.

Exposure to other cultures: number of foreign friends

When sensitivity scores were compared according to the respondents' number of foreign friends, results revealed that those with 11 or more foreign friends had the highest sensitivity Mean score of 112.5 while those with no foreign friends had the lowest sensitivity Mean score of 93.53. ANOVA test revealed that there were significant differences among the groups (p -value=.00). The Jonckheere-Terpstra test supported the finding that the more foreign friends one had the higher his sensitivity (p -value=.00). Qualitative data confirmed the quantitative findings. Respondents who had the most number of foreign friends disclosed that experiences gained from friendly or business relationships with foreigners helped them become more sociable, open-minded, tolerant, and confident.

Exposure to other cultures: frequency of communication

Exposure to other cultures may also come in the form of frequency of communication with foreign friends, business associates, or clients. Communication may take place in different ways: face-to-face, phone, email, chat, or letters. The specific means was not specified in the study. Respondents who communicated regularly (daily, weekly, monthly) had the highest Mean sensitivity score of 96.03 while those who communicated irregularly (yearly, occasionally) had a Mean score of 95.36. The lowest Mean sensitivity score of 90.65 was from those who did not have any foreign friends to communicate with. ANOVA test showed that there were significant differences among the three groups (p-value=.00). These results revealed that the more one communicated with a foreign friend, the more interculturally sensitive one tended to be. The Jonhckheere-Terpstra test further supported this finding (p-value=.00). Data gathered from in-depth-interviews with respondents who communicated frequently with their foreign friends, business associates, or clients indicated that their experiences resulted in the positive development of their general outlook towards others. Their regular communication with foreigners helped develop in them a more relaxed and assured demeanor. It did not matter that not all communications were done face-to-face, since other forms like email or chat achieved the same results.

Socio-economic status

The only demographic variable that failed to reach statistical significance was socio-economic status (p-value=.191). For the respondents, perhaps economic status no longer mattered. Students, whether rich or poor, were equally exposed to all the influences in the university environment such as libraries, local or international student organizations, internet cafes, cultural activities, and media. Perhaps the demographic variables that were found to have significant influences on the respondents' sensitivity were the ones that helped them become what they are: highly interculturally sensitive individuals, regardless of their economic status.

Hypothesis 3 (that the 11 variables have a significant effect on intercultural sensitivity) was partially confirmed. The variable socio-economic status failed to reach statistical significance. All the other 10 variables, however, have significant influence on intercultural sensitivity.

Predicting overall level of sensitivity

When all the variables were combined and tested to see which ones could be included in a model to predict intercultural sensitivity, results of the Multiple Regression test showed the following significant predictors: intercultural apprehension, number of foreign friends, communication competence, length of stay in a foreign country, and sex. Seven colleges (AIT, CHK, ENG, LAW, ECON, BA, CMC) were also predicted to obtain significantly lower ISS scores than the others. The model is shown below :

$$\text{ISS} = 104.22 + 0.08 \text{ CC} - 0.43 \text{ PRICA} + 0.50 \text{ Friends} + 0.96 \text{ Length of stay} + 1.41 \text{ Sex} \\ - 12.67 \text{ AIT} - 6.14 \text{ CHK} - 4.18 \text{ ENG} - 5.22 \text{ LAW} - 3.68 \text{ ECON} - 3.67 \text{ BA} - 2.15 \text{ CMC}$$

The model illustrates that for every 1 unit increase in communication competence score, there was an expected 0.08 increase in sensitivity score. Meaning, if one felt comfortable about his own competence, he also became more sensitive to others. This made a lot of sense

because if one felt comfortable about one's own competence, one could then give attention to the other person's needs and feelings.

The model also explains that for every 1 unit increase in intercultural apprehension score, there was an expected 0.43 decrease in sensitivity score. The more apprehensive a person was about communicating with a stranger, the less sensitive one became. The probable reason for this was that an apprehensive person tended to be more occupied with oneself and therefore less aware of others.

The model also indicated that for every 1 unit increase in the number of foreign friends, there was an expected 0.50 increase in sensitivity score; for every 1 category increase in length of stay in another country, there was an expected 0.96 increase in sensitivity score. Exposure to other cultures in the form of number of foreign friends and length of stay in another country proved to be essential in developing intercultural sensitivity. This was understandable because exposure to other cultures naturally developed skill in intercultural interaction. It also followed that the longer the exposure to other cultures, the more enhanced the sensitivity. Further, as shown by the results, the more foreign friends, business associates or clients one had, the better one's sensitivity.

Another demographic variable that proved to be a significant component of the model was sex. Males were predicted to score better than females by 1.41. Qualitative data have similarly illustrated that the males tended to be more self-assured when it came to interacting with foreigners. They saw interactions with foreigners as novel opportunities that were different and exciting.

The last coefficient in the model was college course. Seven colleges were predicted to rate lower than the others namely: students from the AIT were expected to have a decrease in sensitivity score by 12.67, students from CHK by 6.14, students from ENG by 4.18, students from LAW by 5.22, students from ECON by 3.68, students from BA by 3.67, and students from CMC by 2.15. Perhaps it was indeed the lack of exposure in interacting with foreign cultures that caused reduced sensitivity. This was the claim by some students from the AIT, BA, ECON and CMC who admitted that they had very little or no foreign contacts because they were still in the early stages of their course work. Another probable reason, as related by CHK and ENG students, could be the lack of intercultural training because it was not in the nature of their courses. It is to be recalled that although these 7 colleges scored lower than the others, their ratings were still within the moderate sensitivity level arbitrarily set at the beginning of the study.

Hypothesis 4 (that all the communication and demographic variables together could be included in a model to predict intercultural sensitivity) was partially supported. Only two communication proficiencies and four demographic variables were finally included in the model. See Table 5 for summary statistics.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model	Coefficients	
	B	Sig.
(Constant)	104.219	0.000
PRICA	-0.432	0.000
foreign friends	0.496	0.001
CC	0.084	0.000
length of stay	0.965	0.001
Sex	1.408	0.003
AIT	-12.674	0.000
CHK	-6.136	0.000
ENG	-4.176	0.000
LAW	-5.216	0.000
ECON	-3.682	0.000
BA	-3.669	0.001
CMC	-2.151	0.022

Summary and Conclusion

The study's findings illustrated that Filipinos, in the personae of the UP college students, have a high level of intercultural sensitivity which may be predicted by a model with the following coefficients: communication competence, intercultural apprehension, length of stay in another country, number of foreign friends, sex, and college. Overall, the study's 941 respondents had a Mean ISS score of 93.6 signifying that they had high intercultural sensitivity. Strongly indicated in both the quantitative and qualitative results, the Filipino respondents are able to successfully communicate with varied cultures. In the Philippines, a number of cultures have been living harmoniously alongside the Filipino culture for centuries. Although there were major cultural conflicts during the Spanish, Japanese, and American colonial regimes, recent history has seen no serious friction among the cultures that have chosen to put down roots in the country. With so much adaptation and assimilation, Filipinos sometimes find it difficult to trace the origins of their many traditions and practices. They have become so accustomed to the presence of different cultures in their midst that they have adopted a number of foreign practices as their own.

The presence of foreign cultures perhaps also make the Filipinos interculturally sensitive. One distinguishing characteristic of the Filipinos is their hospitality. They are generally so hospitable that they would serve their last bowl of food to a guest who might have dropped by unannounced. Or, they would offer their only bed if a guest needed a place for the night. As Chen and Starosta (1997) explained that although "intercultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence are three different concepts, they are closely related" to the point that "an individual "promotes a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication" (7). In the case of the Filipinos, their historical experience with varied cultures was instrumental in embedding intercultural awareness and sensitivity deep into their being that at present these two concepts are almost automatically manifested in their behavior.

Among the six vital elements of intercultural sensitivity mentioned by Chen and Starosta (1997), the following were most exhibited in the present study: self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and suspending judgment. The more mature respondents mentioned monitoring their own behavior during interactions with foreigners to make sure they act in accordance with what was pleasing and acceptable. They also tried their best to be open minded and delayed their judgment when they observed some peculiarity in other people's culture. Further, they practiced empathy to make sure they understood other people's feelings.

Going back to the question posted in the beginning of the study: Are Filipinos interculturally sensitive enough to survive the challenges posed by a fast growing global community? The present study proves, whether they realize it or not, Filipinos have indeed arrived at the global scene. As the global changes take place around them, Filipinos have also adapted and shown they are ready to face the challenges. It might be the centuries of being under three separate colonial powers that contributed to their readiness, or the presence of other cultures that have chosen to settle in their midst, or it might be the exposure brought about by the global changes themselves, or it could be the realization that in this day and age of globalization it was beneficial to be sensitive to other cultures. We mentioned earlier that 10% of the population is abroad as overseas workers. It is not unusual to find a Filipino with a family member who is working in another part of the world. Graduate students from the NCPAG, being mostly in government service, knew the implications of intercultural sensitivity in international relations. They agreed that they had everything to gain by being sensitive to other cultures. Whatever the reasons, Filipinos are highly interculturally sensitive and are therefore ready to face what the global developments have to offer.

In closing, a word of caution is needed in understanding the results of this study. The findings are by no means applicable to the general population of Filipinos because the study's 941 respondents all came from the University of the Philippines. Future research should look into the general Philippine population to get a more representative picture.

References

- Adler, P. (1977). Beyond cultural identity: Reflections upon cultural and multicultural man. In R.W. Brislin (Ed). *Culture learning concepts, application and research*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. In Chen & Starosta. 1997. A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice (25th anniversary ed.)* Cambridge, MA: Perseus. In Wrench, J., McCroskey, J. & Richmond, V. 2008. *Human Communication in Everyday Life Explanations and Applications*. . Pearson Education, Inc.: Boston, New York, San Francisco.
- Bahk, M. & Jandt, F. (2003). The Perception of Whiteness and Interracial Communication Anxiety among Koreans in the United States. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 32,(1), 97-115*.
- Bahk, M. & Jandt, F. (2008). Explicit and Implicit Perceptions of Non-White and Interracial Interaction Reluctance in the United States. *Human Communication. Vol 11, (3) 313-332*.
- Bennett, M. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 10, 179-196*.
- Berger & Douglas, (1982). In Chen, G. & Starosta, W. 1997. A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., Harding, J. & Gallwey, M. (1958). *The Measurement of skill in social perception*. In Chen, G. & Starosta, W. (1997). A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Campbell, R.J., Kagan, N. & Krathwohl, D.R. (1971). The development and validation of a scale to measure affective sensitivity (empathy). *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 18, 407-412*. In Chen, G. & Starosta, W. (1997). A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Chen, G. & Starosta, W. (1997). A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Dong, Q., Day, K., & Collaco, C. (2008). Overcoming Ethnocentrism through developing Intercultural Communication Sensitivity and Multiculturalism. *Human Communication 11, (1,2,3,4) 27-36*.
- Farmer, Fedor, Goodman, & Maslyn. (1993). In Chen, G. & Starosta, W. (1997). A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Foote & Cottrell. (1955). In Chen, G. & Starosta, W. 1997. A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Gardner, G.H. (1962). Cross-cultural communication. *Journal of Social Psychology, 58, 241-256*. In Chen, G. & Starosta, W. 1997. A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Gudykunst, W.B. & Kim .(1992). In Chen, G. & Starosta, W. 1997. A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Hamachek. (1982). In Chen, G. & Starosta, W. (1997). A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1), 1-16*.
- Jackson, R., Shin,C., & Wilson, K. (2000). The meaning of whiteness: Critical implications of communicating and negotiating race. *World Communication, 29, 69-86*.
- Keith, D., McCroskey, J., Richmond,V. & McCroskey, L. (2009). Self-Perceived Communication Competence in the Thai Culture. Paper presented in the Pacific and Asian Communication Association Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- Khan, I. online statement (n.d.). In Manuzon, M. (n.d.) "Managing Foreigners: A number of foreign companies are now managed by local executives". Philippine Business Magazine: Volume 8 No.2.
- Lee, Y.T. & McCauley, C.R. (Eds). (1995). *Stereotype accuracy: Toward appreciating group differences*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. In Wrench, J, McCroskey, J. Richmond, V. (2008). *Human Communication in Everyday Life Explantions and Applications*. . Pearson Education, Inc.: Boston, New York, San Francisco.
- McCroskey, J. (1984). Communication competence: The elusive construct. In r. N. Bostrom (Ed) *Competence in communication*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. In Wrench, J, McCroskey, J. Richmond, V. (2008). *Human Communication in Everyday Life Explantions and Applications*. Pearson Education, Inc.: Boston, New York, San Francisco.
- McCroskey, J. (1997). Willingness to communicate, communication apprehension, and self-perceived communication competence: Conceptualizations and perspectives. In J.A. Daly, J.C. McCroskey, J. Ayres, T. Hopf, & D.M. Ayres (Eds). *Avoiding communication: Shyness, reticence, and communication apprehension* (pp. 75-109). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. In Wrench, J, McCroskey, J. & Richmond, V. (2008). *Human Communication in Everyday Life Explantions and Applications*. . Pearson Education, Inc.: Boston, New York, San Francisco.
- Manuzon, M. (n.d.) "Managing Foreigners: A number of foreign companies are now managed by local executives". Philippine Business Magazine: Volume 8 No.2
- Neuliep, J, Chaudoir, M., & McCroskey, J. (2001). A cross-cultural comparison of Ethnocentrism Among Japanese and United States College Students. *Communication Research Reports, 18*, 137-146.
- Neuliep, J. & McCroskey, J. (1997). Development of a U.S. and generalized ethnocentrism scale. *Communication Research Reports, 14*, 145-156. In Wrench, J, McCroskey, J. Richmond, V. 2008. *Human Communication in Everyday Life Explantions and Applications*. Pearson Education, Inc.: Boston, New York, San Francisco
- Parks, M.R. (1976). *Communication competence and interpersonal control*. In M.L. Knapp & G. R. Miller (Eds), *Handbook of interpersonal communication* (pp. 589-618). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. In Chen and Starosta. (1997). A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1)*, 1-16.
- Samovar, L., Porter, R. & McDaniel, E. (2007). *Communication Between Cultures*. Thomson Wadsworth: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Mexico Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom, United States.
- Shi-Yong Peng, Savitree Rangsihaht, & Supaporn Tahipakdee. (2005). Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: A Comparative Study of Ethnic Chinese and Thai Nationals. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*. Vol. 34, No. 2, June 2005, pp 119-137.
- Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984. In Chen and Starosta. 1997. A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1 (1)*, 1-16.
- Wrench, J, McCroskey, J. & Richmond, V. (2008). *Human Communication in Everyday Life Explantions and Applications*. . Pearson Education, Inc.: Boston, New York, San Francisco.
- Witteborn, S. (2003). Communicative Competence Revisited: An Emic Approach to Studying Intercultural Communicative Competence. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 32 (3)* 187-203.

- Yamamoto, E., Abdulla, N., Sherif, & Tamam, E. (2009). University Students' Understanding of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity. University Putra Malaysia. Paper presented at the Pacific and Asian Communication Association Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Yang, L., Rancer, A., & Lim, S. (2003). Ethnocentrism and Intercultural Willingness to Communicate: A Cross-cultural Comparison between Korean and American College Students. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* Vol 32 No. 1, 117-128.