Intercultural Sensitivity of Filipinos in Multi National Corporations in the Philippines

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Abstract
The study ascertained how interculturally sensitive Filipinos are by surveying a heterogeneous sample from 15 Multi National Corporations (MNCs) in the Philippines. This is an extension of a previous survey of a large group of respondents from a state university also in the Philippines (Del Villar, 2010). Variables deemed important in the previous study were reevaluated. Hall’s and Hofstede’s cultural orientations were added to have a deeper understanding of the influences on intercultural sensitivity. Results showed significant correlations between intercultural sensitivity and three communication traits, sensitivity and twelve demographic variables, and sensitivity and five cultural orientations. Finally, when all the variables were regressed, five proved to be significant predictors of Filipinos’ intercultural sensitivity. These were: communication competence, intercultural apprehension, high context, power distance, and number of years as a member of an organization.

Key words: intercultural sensitivity, communication traits, cultural orientations
In an article by Bulos (2010) published in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, it was revealed that the “Philippines is no longer just a decent runner-up to India when it comes to outsourced voice services; it’s literally the call center heavyweight champion of the world (9).” Despite the odds the country went through in the past years among which were “rapid changes in the industry, never-ending challenges in talent supply, fierce competition among players… external forces such as political upheavals, natural disasters, and a global economic crisis (9)” Bulos argued that the country beat all the odds and even grew in power. In the same article it was cited that Hernandez, President of Contact Center Association of the Philippines, made a claim that “the Philippines is the preferred and the largest contact center destination (9).”

Further, an independent international research group, the Everest Research Institute, declared that the Philippines is the “new call center capital of the world as proof of its potential for growth” in the global business industry. It estimated the country’s earnings to be $5.7 B which is slightly higher than that of India at $5.58 B. There are now 35,000 workers who are employed in the call center business and 60,000 more will be needed starting 2010. Among the reasons that favored the Philippines over other countries were: familiarity with the English language, knowledge of the US culture, former president Ramos’ active support of the industry during his term, and Filipinos’ innate qualities.

In a more recent article published by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Information and Communications Technology Office (2011) it was revealed that the Philippine outsourcing industry is aiming to become a world leader not only in the call center industry but in three other off-shoring and outsourcing services namely: healthcare information management outsourcing, finance and accounting outsourcing, HR outsourcing and animation and game development. DOST Secretary Montejo guaranteed that all these goals could be achieved because of the “talent and resilience of the Filipino. They have proven themselves time and time again, weathering the Asian economic crisis and recent global economic down turn…They didn’t just survived they thrived as can be seen by the consistent growth of the industry.”

Because of all the assertions about the Filipinos’ so called competence in the global business industry, Del Villar, in 2010, did a study to determine their level of intercultural sensitivity and the reasons behind them. As a result of the study, a model was developed which could predict intercultural sensitivity with the following coefficients: communication competence, intercultural apprehension, length of stay in another country, number of foreign friends, sex, and course in college. Overall, the study’s 941 respondents (ages ranging from
18 to 52, from both sexes, from all the 24 colleges and institutes of a state university, with varying experiences in intercultural exposure) had a Mean Intercultural Sensitivity Score of 93.6 (SD=8.5) indicating high sensitivity. The qualitative data complimented the statistical results. Del Villar’s study sustained the reality that one’s abilities, beliefs, and demographic characteristics are to a certain degree vital to an individual’s communication success when in an intercultural context.

Although the sample size was large and the university where it was taken was seen as a fair representation of the different regions of the country, it was deemed appropriate to extend the study to a sector that was actually immersed in the intercultural environment. Could Bulos’, Hernandez’, The Everest Research Institute’s, and the DOST-ICTO’s claims about Filipinos’ so called talent in the international business industry be explained by the Del Villar model? Testing the model on a population that was actively immersed in intercultural communication was seen as necessary. Thus, the present study about Filipinos’ intercultural sensitivity in the multinational sector was conceived. In addition to the variables previously used, Hall’s high context orientation and Hofstede’s four cultural orientations (power distance, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity) were employed to have a deeper understanding of the Filipino culture. The specific questions addressed were:

1. What is the Filipinos’ level of sensitivity to other cultures?
2. What is the correlation between Filipinos’ level of sensitivity and their three communication traits (communication competence, willingness to communicate, and intercultural apprehension)?
3. What is the correlation between Filipinos’ level of sensitivity and selected demographic variables?
4. What is the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and Filipinos’ cultural orientations namely: high context, low uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, high power distance, masculinity?
5. What variables could adequately predict Filipinos’ level of sensitivity?

**Study Frameworks**

The concepts used to frame the previous study (Del Villar, 2010) were again employed in this study. In addition, Hall’s and Hofstede’s cultural orientations were used to add a deeper dimension to the analysis.

**Intercultural Sensitivity**

Chen and Starosta’s (1977) conceptualization of intercultural sensitivity states that someone who is interculturally sensitive possesses the desire to “understand, appreciate, and
accept” (7) 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.

Del Villar’s study (2010) showed that 72.05% of the Filipino respondents registered a high sensitivity score of 93.60 (SD=8.5). Using Starosta and Chen’s conceptualization of intercultural sensitivity, it was concluded that majority of the respondents had a high “positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences” (7) and as a result they also “promote appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication” (7).

Communication Traits:

The term communication traits was used to embrace different variables related to one’s skill or ability to communicate. These were communication competence, willingness to communicate, and intercultural communication apprehension. Previous empirical findings have associated these communication traits to intercultural sensitivity.

1. Willingness to Communicate

Wrench, McCroskey, and Richmond (2008) defined willingness to communicate (WTC) as “a predisposition toward communication behavior, not a behavior itself” (59). It is an individual’s inclination to engage in communication with others.

Del Villar’s study (2010) showed that Filipinos have a high WTC Mean of 70.20 (8.3). Their WTC also had a low but significant correlation with their ISS (r=.23, p=.00). It was apparent from the study that the respondents were actually comfortable communicating with people from other cultures and it was this feeling that also made them interculturally sensitive.

2. Communication Competence

McCroskey defined communication competence as “… an individual’s perception of her or his own competence in communication across a variety of contexts” (57) (McCroskey, 1984, 1997. In Wrench, et al. 2008). It is 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.
Del Villar’s study (2010) demonstrated that Filipinos have a high communication competence (Mean CC=77.40, SD=8.2) and this was significantly correlated with their intercultural sensitivity ($r=0.34$, $p=0.00$). This showed that because they generally perceived themselves as competent in communicating with others, they also saw themselves as sensitive to other cultures.

3. **Intercultural Communication Apprehension**

Wrench, et al. (2008) explained that although people spend 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. 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 Interpersonal Communication Apprehension (PRICA). They stated that during the initial stages of intercultural situations people with high levels of intercultural apprehension have more difficulty reducing their uncertainty.

Del Villar’s study (2010) illustrated that Filipinos have a moderate level of intercultural apprehension (Mean PRICA= 39.80, SD=6.1). Their apprehension was also found to be negatively correlated with their ISS ($r=-0.54$, $p=.00$). This means that when they felt less apprehensive about communicating with people from other cultures they also became more sensitive to them.

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

A number of studies associated different variables to intercultural sensitivity. One such study by Peng, Rangsipaht, & Thaipakdee (2005) discovered that ethnic Chinese and Thais differed in their levels of intercultural sensitivity and that the difference was associated with their levels of English proficiency and intercultural experiences. Those who were more proficient in English and had more experience interacting with other cultures were more interculturally sensitive.

Witteborn (2003) also looked into communicative competence and its interrelationship with selected variables like social interaction and socio-cultural norms. An association was found among those variables.
Keith, McCroskey, Richmond, and McCroskey (2009) examined communication competence in the Thai culture and suggested that Thai students felt the least competent when communicating in an intercultural context.

In a paper presented at the Pacific and Asian Communication Association conference in Malaysia, Yamamoto, Abdullah, Sheriff, and Tamam (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 as Malaysia is known to have major ethnic groups.

Another study compared ethnocentrism to willingness to communicate. Romanian and American students were compared by Yang, Rancer, & Trimbitas (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 when compared with their American counterparts.

Yan, Rancer, and Lim (2003) did a cross-cultural comparison of ethnocentrism and willingness to communicate between Koreans 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. Similar to this study Neuliep, Chaudoir, & McCroskey (2001) also found that males significantly scored higher than females in ethnocentrism in both the Japanese and American cultures.

A study by Dong, Day, & Collaco (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 and Jandt (2003) compared Koreans and Americans and discovered that Koreans have 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 and Jandt, 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 also see themselves in the minor position thus causing them to feel apprehensive.

In a study conducted in a large university in 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 with gays and lesbians.

Del Villar’s study (2010) discovered that Filipinos have a high level of intercultural sensitivity and that their sensitivity was associated with the following variables: age, sex, college enrolled in, year level, memberships in organizations, years of membership in organizations, countries visited, length of stay in foreign countries, number of foreign friends, and frequency of communication with foreign friends. The following conclusions were derived: The older the age the higher the sensitivity; males have higher sensitivity than females; students from different colleges differed in their sensitivity scores; the higher the year level the better the sensitivity score; the more affiliations the higher the sensitivity; the longer the membership in organizations the higher the sensitivity score; the more countries visited and the longer the stay in those countries the higher the sensitivity; the more foreign friends the higher the sensitivity; and the more frequent the communication with foreign friends the higher the sensitivity.

Further, Del Villar revealed that intercultural 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 course in college. Overall, the 941 respondents (ages ranging from 16 to 52) had a Mean Intercultural Sensitivity Score of 93.6 (SD= 9.3) indicating high sensitivity. The qualitative data complimented the statistical results. Del Villar sustained the reality that one’s abilities, beliefs, and demographic characteristics were, to a certain degree, vital to an individual’s communication success when in an intercultural context.

**Cultural Orientations**

1. **High context**

Filipinos belong to the high-context culture (Hall 1976). A receiver is expected to understand the message being expressed even if most of it were coded in the context (such as relationship and roles). Most of the verbal communication is done indirectly. Seldom would one find a message, especially a delicate one, bluntly spoken. An important consideration in communication is in-group harmony and should therefore precede other concerns even if fidelity of the message were at stake.
A message, especially a sensitive one, might well be communicated in a roundabout manner lest it hurts the feelings of someone in an in-group.

2. Low uncertainty avoidance

The Philippines is a low uncertainty culture ranking 44th among 54 countries (Hofstede 2001). This means that Filipinos “have lower stress levels and weaker super egos and accept dissent and take risks more than members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures” (395) (Hofstede 1979. In Gudykunst 2003). In an organization, Filipinos would generally find it easier to be accepting of other nationalities as co-workers or managers; they would be more tolerant and comfortable in situations that are uncertain or risky; they experience less stress and apprehension.

3. Collectivism

Hofstede (2001) ranked the Philippines number 31 among 50 countries in individualism-collectivism. In Filipino organizations, much importance is placed on the objectives, opinions, and wishes of the group rather than the individual self. As Triandis (1995) explained, in collectivistic cultures “social norms and duty [are] defined by the in-group rather than [the individual]” (52). He further explained that there is that “great readiness to cooperate” (52) in a collectivistic group.

4. Power distance

Hofstede (1980. In Gudykunst 2003) ranked the Philippines a high number four in power distance orientation. The dominant characteristics of high power cultures, particularly evident in Filipino organizations, are the inequality of individuals, dependence on superiors, and unquestioning acceptance of directives from them.

5. Masculinity (Hofstede)

The Philippines ranked 11/12 in Hofstede’s Masculinity values for 50 countries (Samovar 2007). Hofstede explained that masculine cultures “expect men to be assertive, ambitious, and competitive, and to strive for material success, and to respect whatever is big, strong, and fast” (148). Samovar described the masculine workplace where “women are expected to stay home and society doesn’t encourage a professional career” (149). Kim added that in the masculine workplace, “women face serious obstacles to achieving workplace equality. They are expected to assist men and are given lower wages, less stable employment, and fewer opportunities for advancement” (149) (Kim 2001. In Samovar, p 2007).
Because this study is an extension of Del Villar (2010), the variables previously used (intercultural sensitivity, communication competence, willingness to communicate, and intercultural apprehension) were again tested. In addition, the cultural orientation of Hall (high context) and Hofstede (collectivism, power distance, low uncertainty reduction, and masculinity) were included to have a deeper understanding of the respondents’ sensitivity. The demographic variables in the previous study were again used except those that did not apply to the MNC context. In their place, more relevant ones like business contacts and frequency of communication with business contacts were employed. The following hypotheses were formulated:

**Hypothesis 1:**

As was concluded by Del Villar (2010) majority of the study’s respondents from a state university in the Philippines have a high level of sensitivity towards other cultures. They felt more understanding towards foreigners and were able to easily accept cultural differences. This supported Starosta and Chen’s (1997) conceptualization of intercultural sensitivity. In the present study, it is also hypothesized that Filipinos in the multi national corporations will have a high level of sensitivity.

**Hypothesis 2:**

As has been proven in the Del Villar study (2010) a significant correlation existed between intercultural sensitivity and the three communication traits (communication competence, willingness to communicate, and intercultural apprehension) among Filipinos in a state university. It is therefore hypothesized that the same correlations will also exist among Filipinos in the MNC context.

**Hypothesis 3:**

As was demonstrated in the Del Villar study (2010), selected demographic variables strongly influenced Filipinos’ intercultural sensitivity. It is therefore hypothesized that the selected demographic variables will also influence the intercultural sensitivity of Filipinos working in the multi national corporations.

**Hypothesis 4:**

As Hall (1976) argued, Filipinos belong to the high-context culture which makes them very receptive and perceptive to meanings embedded in the non-verbal dimension of communication. Actions and behaviors speak louder than words. In addition, as has been found in the Del Villar (2010) study, Filipino respondents from a state university have a high level of sensitivity. It is hypothesized in the present
study that the two variables (high context cultural orientation and intercultural sensitivity) will also be correlated.

Hypothesis 5:

Applying Hofstede’s (1979, In Gudykunst 2003) assumption about Filipinos, it is expected that they would generally display the following behaviors of a low uncertainty culture: more accepting of other nationalities, more tolerant and comfortable in situations that are uncertain, less stressed and apprehensive. It is also suspected that the low uncertainty cultural orientation will be correlated to Filipinos’ high intercultural sensitivity (Del Villar 2010). It is therefore hypothesized that in the MNCs, Filipinos’ cultural orientation of low uncertainty avoidance will be significantly correlated to their intercultural sensitivity.

Hypothesis 6:

As Hofstede (2001) argued, Filipinos are collectivistic people. Much importance are placed on the objectives, opinions, and wishes of the group rather than the individual self. Individuals prefer cooperating with the group rather than asserting their own individuality. Filipinos also have a high intercultural sensitivity (Del Villar, 2010). It is hypothesized that in the present study, the two variables will also be correlated.

Hypothesis 7:

Applying Hofstede’s (1980 In Gudykunst, 2003) declaration that Filipinos have a very high power distance orientation, they are assumed to observe the following: Inequality of individuals, dependence on one another, and unquestioning acceptance of directives from superiors in an organizational context. Del Villar (2010) also found that Filipinos have a high level of intercultural sensitivity. In the present study, it is hypothesized that the two variables will also be correlated.

Hypothesis 8:

Following the arguments that Filipinos belong to the masculine cultural orientation (Hofstede’s 1980), and that they have a high level of sensitivity (Del Villar’s 2010), it is hypothesized that in the MNC context, Filipinos will be assertive, ambitious, competitive, materialistic and also highly sensitive.

Hypothesis 9:

As a result of the previous findings of Del Villar (2010) about the significant predictors of intercultural sensitivity (communication competence, intercultural apprehension, foreign friends, length of stay in a foreign country, sex, and college) it
is hypothesized that the same variables will significantly predict Filipinos’ intercultural sensitivity in the MNC context. It is to be noted that some demographic variables not applicable to the MNC context were replaced by more relevant ones (level of education, university classification, memberships in organizations, years of membership in present organizations, business contacts, frequency of communication with business contacts, and mode of communication with business contacts).

In addition, it is suspected that five cultural orientations (high-context, low-uncertainty-avoidance, collectivism, high-power-distance, and masculinity) will also be significant predictors.

**Method**

The main method used in the present study was survey of employees (front liners and managers) in 15 MNCs in the Philippines.

**Instruments**

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale or ISS by Chen & Starosta (1977), Communication Competence by McCroskey (1984), Willingness-to-Communicate by McCroskey and Richmond (2008), and Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension by Neulip and McCroskey (1997) were used. These are all valid, reliable, and recognized instruments in the field of communication. A fifth instrument, the Cultural orientation scale, is a questionnaire using the indicators provided by Hall (1976) and Hofstede (1979, 1980, 201). This was developed for the purpose of providing quantitative scores of the five cultural orientations already established by Hall and Hofstede. Lastly, interviews of selected respondents were conducted to complement the quantitative data.

**Data Analyses**

To address the first specific question (What is the Filipinos’ level of sensitivity to other cultures?) scores in the ISS were computed. For purposes of this study, an arbitrary classification of scores was done to distinguish among high (88 to 120), moderate (56 to 87) and low (24 to 55) levels of sensitivity.

To address the second specific question (What is the correlation between Filipinos’ level of sensitivity and their three communication proficiencies?) scores in the ISS were correlated with the scores in the WTC, CC, and PRICA using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation at = .05.
To address the third specific question (What is the correlation between Filipinos’ level of sensitivity and selected demographic variables?) ISS scores were computed and compared according to the 18 demographic variables using T-test and ANOVA at α=.05.

To address the fourth specific question (What is the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and Filipinos’ cultural orientations namely: high context, low uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, high power distance, masculinity?) the ISS scores were correlated with the cultural orientation scores using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation at α=.05.

To address the fifth specific question (What variables could adequately predict Filipinos’ level of sensitivity?) all the variables were subjected to Multiple Regression at α=.05. This test was preferred over others mainly because the “relative importance of each variable can be identified” (Reinard 2006) in a relatively simpler statistical procedure.

Results and Discussion

Demographic profile of the respondents

Three hundred eighty five respondents (385) from 15 large multi-national corporations agreed to participate in the study. Their ages ranged from 18 to 62, with majority (41.8%) belonging to the 22 to 25 age bracket. Sixty four percent (64%, 246) were females while 34.8% (138) were males.

Seventy six percent (76.4% or 294) belonged to the rank and file position, 20.3% (78) to the supervisory or middle management position, and only 3.1% (12) belonged to the top management position. Forty three percent (42.9% or 165) have served their company for one year or less, 35.8% or 138 have served for 1 to 3 years, 45 or 11.7%, 13 served for 6 to 10 years, 9 served for 10 to 13 years, while another 9 served for 25 to 32 years.

Majority (381 or 94%) finished college, 3 did not complete a degree, 1 finished a graduate degree, while 15 finished a non-formal or vocational education. Majority (274 or 93.36%) graduated from a class B university and 92 (8.96%) came from the top 3 universities in the country (referred to in the study as class A universities).

Filipinos’ level of intercultural sensitivity to other

Results showed that the Mean ISS score of the respondents was 93.63 (SD=9.43) which falls within the high sensitivity classification arbitrarily assigned by Del Villar (2010). Of the 385 respondents 71% (275) rated high sensitivity while the rest (28.6% or 110) rated moderate. None of the respondents rated low. This ISS Mean score of 93.63 is almost similar to the previous study’s Mean score of 93.93 (SD=9.07) (Del Villar 2010). Hypothesis 1 was supported.
Correlation between ISS and the three communication traits

a. ISS and communication competence

Results revealed a significant positive, although moderate, correlation between intercultural sensitivity and communication competence (r=0.36, p=.00). This means that if one perceived himself as competent in communicating with others, he was also likely to be more sensitive to people from other cultures. The respondents Mean communication competence score was 80.56 (SD=14.90) which was within the high range while their ISS Mean score was a high 93.63 (SD=9.07). Most of the respondents disclosed experiencing both competence and sensitivity to other cultures.

b. ISS and willingness to communicate

The correlation between intercultural sensitivity and willingness to communicate was significant (r=0.25, p=.00). This means that if one perceived himself as usually willing to communicate he would also be more sensitive to people from other cultures. The Mean willingness to communicate score was 74.06 (SD=18.62) which was within the high range, while their ISS was also a high 93.63 (SD=9.07). As exemplified by the respondents, those who felt more willing to communicate also rated high in sensitivity.

c. ISS and intercultural apprehension

Intercultural sensitivity and intercultural apprehension were found to be negatively correlated (r=-0.54, p=.00). The PRICA Mean score was 37.44 (SD=9.10) which was within the moderate low range while the ISS Mean score was a high 93.63 (SD=9.07). Respondents who were apprehensive about communicating with foreigners were also found to be less sensitive to them.

Hypothesis 2 was supported. The table below shows a summary of the correlation tests.

Table 1: Correlation between ISS and communication traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CC Mean=80.56</th>
<th>WTC Mean=74.06</th>
<th>PRICA Mean=37.44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's Correlation</td>
<td>0.3679</td>
<td>0.253</td>
<td>-0.53976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS Mean=93.638</td>
<td>SD=9.43</td>
<td>SD=18.62</td>
<td>SD=9.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correlation between ISS and the 18 selected demographic variables

Among the 18 demographic variables individually tested, 12 proved to have significant correlation to sensitivity and therefore influential in the respondents’ level of intercultural sensitivity. These were age, number of years affiliated with an organization, number of college affiliation, number of years affiliated with a college organization, number of business contacts, frequency of communication with business contacts, mode of communication with business contacts, number of countries visited, length of stay in another country, number of foreign friends, years of foreign friendship, frequency of communication with foreign friends. Six variables (sex, position in the company, years of service, educational level, university classification, and present affiliation) did not prove to have significant influence on sensitivity. The table below shows a summary of the tests conducted, significant results, and conclusions.

Table 2: Summary of tests, significance, conclusion on the influence of selected demographic variables on intercultural sensitivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Tests, significance</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlation r=0.104, p=0.042</td>
<td>Significant correlation between sensitivity and age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of membership in organizations</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlation r=0.134, p=0.009</td>
<td>Significant correlation between sensitivity and years of membership in organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations in college</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlation r=0.190, p=0.000</td>
<td>Significant correlation between sensitivity and number of organizations in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years spent in college organizations</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlation r=0.153, p=0.003</td>
<td>Significant correlation between sensitivity and number of years spent in college organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Business contacts</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlation r=0.210, p=0.000</td>
<td>Significant correlation between sensitivity and number of business contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of communication with business contacts</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlation r=0.132, p=0.009</td>
<td>Significant correlation between sensitivity and frequency of communication with business contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of communication with business contacts</td>
<td>ANOVA F=3.4, p=0.016</td>
<td>Significant difference among different modes of communication; internet and video conferencing results in highest sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of countries visited</td>
<td>ANOVA F=2.58, p=0.05</td>
<td>Significant difference among number of countries visited; the more countries the higher the sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of stay in another country/s</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlation r=0.107, p=0.037</td>
<td>Significant correlation between sensitivity and length of stay in another country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of foreign friends</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlation r=0.220, p=0.000</td>
<td>Significant correlation between sensitivity and number of foreign friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of friendship</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlation r=0.203, p=0.000</td>
<td>Significant correlation between sensitivity and length of friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of communication with foreign friends</td>
<td>ANOVA F=4.08, p=0.007</td>
<td>Significant difference in sensitivity according to frequency of communication</td>
</tr>
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</table>

a. Age

There was a weak but significant positive correlation between age and ISS (r=0.104, p=0.042). Further, ANOVA test revealed that there were significant differences
among the age groups (F= 2.23; p=.03) and that the older the respondents the higher their sensitivity score. The oldest age group (48 to 52 years old) obtained the highest ISS score of 97.76 (SD=3.96). The older respondents admitted that maturity played a role in sensitivity to other cultures. With maturity in age came a feeling of confidence and openness in connecting with others. These findings partially supported Hypothesis 3 and the previous findings of Del Villar (2010).

b. **Number of college affiliations**

Number of college affiliation, as a variable, was found to be significantly correlated with ISS (r=.190, p=.00). In addition, there were also significant differences among the groups with varying numbers of affiliations. The more the number of college affiliations, the higher the ISS (F=4.56, p=.004). With memberships in organizations came the benefits of interacting with diverse people and thereby developing poise and self-control. As the respondents divulged, the experience gained was priceless and came handy when they mixed with foreigners. This finding partially supported Hypothesis 3.

c. **Years of membership with college affiliation**

There was a moderately low but significant positive correlation between years spent in a college organization/s and ISS (r=.153, p=.003) which means that the longer one was affiliated the more sensitive he became. This test was further supported by ANOVA which proved that there were significant differences among the groups with different years of affiliation (F=3.107, p=.016). The highest Mean ISS score of 99.83 (SD=10.36) was achieved by those who were affiliated for more than 4 years while those with 2 or less had significantly lower sensitivity. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

d. **Years of membership with present organizations**

This variable proved to be moderately correlated with ISS (r=.134, p=.009) which means that the longer the membership in a present organization the higher the sensitivity. ANOVA test also proved that those with the most number of years had the highest sensitivity (Mean ISS score=100, SD=12.15) while those with the least had the lowest (F= 2.5, p=.04). Not only were college affiliations helpful in developing sensitivity among the respondents, present memberships in organizations were also valuable. This partially supported Hypothesis 3.
e. **Foreign business contacts**

Correlation between number of business contacts and sensitivity was significantly moderate at \( r=\cdot210 \) (\( p=.000 \)) which means that the more business contacts the higher the sensitivity. ANOVA results also showed that the highest sensitivity (Mean ISS=107, SD=8.08) was achieved by those with the most number of contacts while the lowest sensitivity was by those with the fewest (\( F=5.16, p=.002 \)). Having opportunities for growth and development provided by foreign contacts was shown to be crucial in cultivating sensitivity. Respondents who admitted having more foreign contacts were also those who rated high in sensitivity. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

f. **Frequency of communication with foreign business contacts**

There was a significant correlation between frequency of communication with foreign contacts and sensitivity (\( r=\cdot132, p=.009 \)) which means that the more one communicated with his business contact/s the better his sensitivity. ANOVA test also proved that the Mean ISS scores rose as the frequency of communication increased (\( F=3.00, p=.030 \)). It was evident that the more one communicated with his foreign business contacts, the more he became sensitive. Indeed, foreign contact developed the skill of sensitivity. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

g. **Mode of communication with foreign business contacts**

There were significant differences in the sensitivity levels of respondents who used different modes of communication with their foreign contacts (\( p=.016 \)). Those who used the internet and video conferencing achieved the highest Mean ISS of 95.68 (SD=8.08), while those who used the telephone achieved the lowest (94.12, SD=9.96). This finding demonstrated that the use of modern technology was the most preferred and the most beneficial in the development of sensitivity. The group that did not have any foreign contacts had the lowest Mean ISS score of 90.80 (SD=8.22). Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

h. **Countries visited**

Number of countries visited was also found to significantly influence sensitivity level (\( p=.05 \)). The highest Mean ISS score (95.48, SD=10.05) was attained by those who visited at least 3 to 4 countries, while the lowest was by those who did not visit any countries (92.45, SD=9.07). This result was apparent because those who visited foreign countries were exposed to other cultures and developed unique experiences.
The exposure made them more aware and attentive to differences in cultures. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

i. **Length of stay in foreign countries**

There was a significant correlation between length of stay in another country/s and ISS ($r=.107$, $p=.037$). The longer one stayed in a foreign country/s the higher his sensitivity. This was further confirmed by the ANOVA test which showed that those who stayed in another country/s for 7 months or more attained the highest ISS score of 100 ($SD=9.87$) while those who stayed for 6 months or less achieved 94.39 ($SD=9.36$). Those who did not visit a foreign country scored 92.45 ($SD=9.07$). The difference among the groups according to length of stay in another country was significant at $p=.022$. This result was noticeable in respondents who stayed longer in another country because the exposure provided them with more opportunities to deepen understanding and sensitivity to other cultures. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

j. **Number of foreign friends**

Number of foreign friends was significantly correlated with sensitivity ($r=.22$, $p=.000$) which means that the more foreign friends one had, the higher his sensitivity tended to be. ANOVA test further showed that those who had 5 or more friends had the highest sensitivity (Mean ISS=102.92, $SD=8.84$) while those who did not have any had the lowest (Mean ISS=92.13, $SD=9.18$). The difference among the groups classified according to number of foreign friends was significant ($F=6.96$, $p=.000$). Having foreign friends heightened one's appreciation for other cultures. And the more foreign friends one had, the deeper his understanding tended to be. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

k. **Years of friendship with foreign friends**

There was a moderately low but significant correlation between the variables years of foreign friendship and sensitivity ($r=.203$, $p=.000$) which means that the longer the friendship the higher the sensitivity tended to be. ANOVA test showed that those with 7 or more years of friendship enjoyed the highest Mean ISS of 96.75 ($SD=8.94$) while those with no friends had only 92.18 ($SD=9.31$). The differences among the groups according to number of years was significant ($F=3.46$, $p=.004$). Number of years with foreign friends was vital in cultivating sensitivity. It seemed natural that the longer the relationship the deeper the understanding and sensitivity. And that
sensitivity could be extended to people from other cultures. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

1. **Frequency of communication with foreign friends**

   There were significant differences among groups classified according to the variable frequency of communication with foreign friends ($F=4.081$, $p=.007$). Those who did not communicate at all had the lowest Mean ISS of 90.94 (SD=8.29) while those with the most frequent communication had the highest (Mean ISS=94.33, SD=9.73). This proved that the more one communicated with his foreign friends, the higher his sensitivity tended to be. This, according to respondents, was understandable because the more often they were in contact with their foreign friends, the more familiar and sensitive they became. Eventually, the sensitivity they learned from their friends was utilized when interacting with other cultures in general. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

   Overall, with 12 significant demographic variables out of the 18 tested, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

**Correlation between cultural orientations and intercultural sensitivity:**

Results showed that all the five cultural orientations correlated significantly with intercultural sensitivity. The table below shows the summary of results:

Table 3: Summary of correlations between intercultural sensitivity and cultural orientations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural orientations</th>
<th>High Context reduction</th>
<th>Low uncertainty reduction</th>
<th>Collectivistic</th>
<th>High power distance</th>
<th>Masculinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$r=.460$, $p=.000$</td>
<td>$r=.172$, $p=.001$</td>
<td>$r=.341$, $p=.000$</td>
<td>$r=.442$, $p=.000$</td>
<td>$r=.395$, $p=.000$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. **High context orientation**

Filipinos indeed belong to the high context culture with a Mean score of 18.46 (SD=1.25), with 20 as the highest possible score. This confirmed Hall’s (1976) previous claim that the Philippines is a high context culture. When this score was correlated with ISS, results showed a significant relationship between the two ($r=.46$, $p=.000$). In the interviews conducted with selected respondents, most of them divulged that: They expected others to understand their feelings without verbally articulating them, they somehow understood what others expressed through non verbal messages, they did not directly divulge sensitive messages to avoid hurting others’ feelings, and they felt sensitive to people from other cultures. Hypothesis 4 was supported.
b. Low Uncertainty avoidance
The study’s respondents registered a Mean score of 17.63 (SD=1.7) in low uncertainty avoidance (20 signifying the lowest possible score). This supported Hofstede’s (1979) claim that the Philippines belong to the low uncertainty avoidance culture. When this variable was correlated with sensitivity, results showed that there was a low but significant positive correlation (r=.172, p=.001). Interviews with respondents revealed the following observations: Disagreements were common and accepted, other nationalities or cultures were easily accepted into the workplace, unusual behaviors (strange fashion, bizarre practices, different beliefs) were tolerated, and foreign managers were generally accepted. Hypothesis 5 was confirmed.

c. Collectivism
The Mean collectivism score of the respondents was 17.8 (SD=.94) which confirmed Hofstede’s (2001) argument that Filipinos belong to a highly collective culture. Further, there was a moderately positive but very significant correlation between collectivism and sensitivity (r=.341, p=.000) which means that if respondents were highly collectivistic, they were also highly sensitive. From the interviews, a number of respondents corroborated the quantitative results with the following observations: There was more focus on the company’s goal rather than the individual’s, fitting into the company in-group was important, much weight was given to the “we” identity, and conformity was stressed to keep harmony. Hypothesis 6 was confirmed.

d. High Power distance
With a Mean score of 18.22 (SD=1.32) Filipinos indeed belong to the high power culture as Hofstede claimed (1980). There also existed a moderately high positive correlation between high power distance and sensitivity (r=.442, p=.000) which means that when respondents perceived themselves as belonging to a high power distance culture, they also saw themselves as being more sensitive. A number of observations were shared by the respondents namely: Inequality was a fact in their workplace, subordinates were dependent on and did not question their superiors, older people were respected. Hypothesis 7 was confirmed.

e. Masculinity
The respondents rated a Mean score of 18.34 (SD=1.22) in masculinity orientation. This finding supported Hofstede’s (1980) claim that Filipinos belong
to the masculine culture. There was also a moderate but highly significant positive correlation between masculinity and sensitivity ($r=.395$, $p=.000$). A number of respondents witnessed the following in their workplace: Males and females had different roles, it seemed natural for men to deal with facts while women dealt with feelings, influence and power were emphasized, and lastly, competence, ambition, and material things were given importance. Hypothesis 8 was confirmed.

**Predicting overall intercultural sensitivity**

All variables under study were tested to determine which of them could be included in a model to predict intercultural sensitivity. The model generated showed a good fit ($p=.000$) where 49% of the variability of the dependent variable could be explained by the independent variables. Five out of the 26 variables were found to be significant predictors of sensitivity. These were communication competence, intercultural apprehension, high context cultural orientation, power distance cultural orientation, and number of years as a member of an organization. The table below summarizes the result of the regression test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>47.915</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRICA</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi context</td>
<td>2.603</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power distance</td>
<td>1.023</td>
<td>0.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in present affiliation</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td>0.054</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the Multiple Regression test, a model that could help predict Filipinos’ intercultural sensitivity was developed. This could actually be used in computing the probable sensitivity score of a respondent given his scores in communication competence (CC), intercultural apprehension (PRICA), high context orientation, power distance orientation, and years of membership in an organization. The model is shown below:

$\text{ISS}=50.589 + .106 \text{ CC} - .361 \text{ PRICA} + 2.538 \text{ high context} + 1.086 \text{ power distance} + .228 \text{ number of years in present affiliation}$

This model illustrates that for every one unit increase in communication competence (CC) there is an expected increase of .106 in sensitivity score. Meaning, if one feels comfortable about his competence he also becomes more sensitive to the person he is
communicating with. This made sense to the respondents because as they explained, their competence in communication made them feel less self-conscious and more cognizant of others.

The model also explains that for every unit decrease in intercultural apprehension (PRICA) there is an expected decrease of .361 in sensitivity score. This is understandable because if one were apprehensive he would also be more conscious of himself and less mindful of others.

Another significant coefficient in the model was the high context cultural orientation which explains that for every unit increase in high context score there is an expected increase of 2.538 in sensitivity score. This means that if an individual possesses high context qualities he also tends to be more sensitive to those around him.

The model also indicates that being in a high power culture makes one more sensitive. As illustrated, for every one unit increase in power distance score there is an expected increase of 1.086 in sensitivity score. As some respondents claimed, they were so mindful of their behavior especially in front of their superiors. When asked why, they explained that their superiors exuded authority and power.

One demographic variable that was found to be a significant predictor of sensitivity was number of years in an organization. The model indicates that for every one unit increase in years of membership, there is also an increase of .228 in sensitivity. The years of affiliation with other members in an organization must be partially responsible for the development of sensitivity. As was apparent among the respondents, more years of affiliation also recorded higher sensitivity scores. This illustrates that spending time with people significantly builds one’s ability to be sensitive. As the findings showed, the respondents receptiveness to foreigners was heightened by the experience they gained from years of membership in organizations.

Hypothesis 9 was only partially supported because not all the variables tested proved to be significant predictors of intercultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

The study proved that Filipinos in multinational corporations in the Philippines have a high intercultural sensitivity level affirming the previous findings of Del Villar in 2010. Their intercultural sensitivity was related to their communication traits (communication competence, willingness to communicate, and intercultural apprehension) and cultural orientations (high context, collectivistic, high power distance, low uncertainty reduction, and masculinity). Further, their demographic characteristics were influential in
raising their level of sensitivity. Specific characteristics found to be significant were age, number of college affiliations, years of membership in college organizations, years of membership in present affiliations, number of business contacts, frequency of communication with business contacts, mode of communication with business contacts, number of countries visited, length of stay in foreign countries, number of foreign friends, length of friendship with foreign friends, and frequency of communication with them. When all the variables were regressed, the following were found to be significant predictors of sensitivity: communication competence, intercultural apprehension, high context cultural orientation, power distance cultural orientation, and number of years of membership in an organization. The old model in the Del Villar 2010 study was improved with the addition of Hall’s and Hofstede’s cultural orientations and the elimination of all the demographic variables except for one – years of membership in a present organization.

The results of the study point to an image of Filipinos in the MNCs as responsive, receptive, aware, and accustomed to the intercultural environment. In short, they are interculturally savvy. In addition, they are also communicatively competent, willing, open, and confident. And the more they communicated the more interculturally sensitive they became. At the same time, their feet have remained grounded to their old cultural values. True to Hofstede’s image of the Filipinos, their value orientations remained deeply entrenched even as they lead global lives. Their cultural orientations were significantly related to their sensitivity. They have essentially remained: highly contextual, highly power distanced, collectivistic, low in uncertainty reduction, and high in masculinity. The combinations of all these qualities: Being communicative, outgoing, extroverted even as they remained conventional, old-fashioned and traditional, have apparently worked to their advantage. As what has been written about them, Filipinos excel in the outsourcing industry despite fierce competitions; 10% of the population continue working overseas in different capacities and categories from technical to professional, managerial, clerical, service, and agricultural even as the rivalry for the availability of overseas employment remained acute, Filipino managers continue to do well in the multinational sectors locally and overseas. On the whole, Filipino workers are assets to the foreign corporations that chose to build business in the country.

It may seem that the economy of the country is not growing in sync with the people’s intercultural potentials and capabilities, but one could not help but be optimistic in the coming years for how could a young developing country with interculturally savvy people not progress and be comparable to the more developed ones? Meanwhile, Filipinos
continue being themselves – interculturally sensitive, hard working, loyal to their superiors, faithful to their company, and assets to the MNCs they work for.

At this point, it should be emphasized that the study had a number of limitations. Firstly, the sample was small and not representative of the MNCs in the Philippines. Conducting the survey to multinational corporations proved to be challenging as these organizations were very apprehensive about surveys and interviews. In the future, a more ingenious way must be devised to obtain their cooperation. Secondly, the sample was taken from Filipinos working in MNCs in the Philippines. It would also be interesting to survey Filipinos working in organizations abroad. Thirdly, the study focused only on Filipinos’ own perceptions. Studying other cultures’ perceptions of Filipinos would add another dimension to the research. Fourthly, the influence of intercultural sensitivity on economic growth was not explored. A research partnership with the economic sector would provide invaluable practical implications of the study. Finally, the model developed from this study should be further tested using a bigger sample from the MNCs.
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