INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN RELATION TO PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to see if there was a relationship between intercultural sensitivity and psychological well-being among university students. A random sample technique was used to pick 100 final year university students, 50 males, and 50 females, from various departments within Panjab University. The Chen and Starosta (2000) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) and Sisodia and Choudhary (2012) Psychological Well Being Scale were used in assessing intercultural sensitivity and psychological well-being of university students. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data. Findings of the research revealed no significant correlation between the intercultural sensitivity and psychological well being (r=0.053, p=0.59, p>0.05) of university students but there was a significant difference in the intercultural sensitivity of male and female students. Mean scores of psychological well being of male students was found higher than that of females and no significant difference was found between the psychological well being of male and female students.

Keywords: Intercultural Sensitivity, Psychological Well Being, University Students.

INTRODUCTION

People move from one place to another in search of education, work, recreation, adventure, and a style of life, thanks to advancements in communication, easy access to information, and means of transport. Individuals' intercultural sensitivity to other's culture and communication skills are necessary parameters to adjust in a better manner among such multicultural societies to order to achieve a successful and harmonious living in a diverse world.

India's higher education system has evolved rapidly in the last decade, while also earning a reputation on the international stage for educational quality and research in fields such as science, humanities, technology, medicine, and space technology.

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These are the prime factors that attract students from all across the globe, not only from India. These students, who arrive from various origins and settings, converge, interact, and struggle to adapt to a diverse culture. Students will have more opportunities to grow physically and academically, learn to be self-sufficient, and engage with a variety of individuals in the new favourable setting.

Intercultural Sensitivity

International sensitivity is characterized as a person's ability to develop a positive sentiment toward knowing and respecting cultural differences, which encourages acceptable and effective intercultural communication behaviour.

Reungthai (2012) has defined intercultural sensitivity (IS) refers to the subjects' active desire for self-motivation in understanding, appreciating, and accepting differences in other cultures.

In contrast, in his study, Logashenko (2010) defined intercultural sensitivity as a person's ability to observe, interpret, recall, and structure cultural features of other people or groups to order to forecast their behaviour and actions.

Intercultural sensitivity is defined by Sinicrope et al. (2007) as an individual's ability to "go beyond [his/her] own culture and function with other persons from linguistically and culturally different backgrounds."

As a result, there was confusion due to a lack of agreement on a definition that encompassed all aspects of intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural sensitivity is defined by (Chen & Starosta, 1997) as an individual's ability to generate a positive emotion toward knowing and respecting cultural differences, which fosters acceptable and effective intercultural communication behaviour.

Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being is a term that has been used to describe mental health and overall quality of life. Subjective and objective indicators have been used to study it.

Burris et al. (2009) defined psychological well being as happiness, advantages, interests, utility and quality of life.

According to Kahnemann and Riis (2005), it is a hybrid notion having two components that can be labeled "experienced well-being" and "assessed well-being." The first component is concerned with very short-term (or instantaneous) emotive emotions, such as life as it is experienced. The second component refers to global psychological evaluations of one's life

overall which may be deemed life as remembered - and spans a considerably longer (or indefinite) period.

Orden and Bradburn (1969), defined that an individual's psychological well-being is strongly linked with his or her emotional state. It discusses how people evaluate their life, whether people do so through cognition or by consequence.

From a hedonic perspective, psychological well-being is equal to the good life or happiness with life, (Kahneman et al., 1999). The hedonistic definition of well-being, in which well-being is operationally defined by a high level of good effects, a low level of negative effects, and a high degree of life satisfaction, is where the concept of well-being gets its start.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Intercultural Sensitivity

Lim (2015) carried out a research on "the impact of cultural experience on intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence for improving communication competence between Indians and Koreans". The survey method was conducted on 3,000 Indian and Korean participants before and after they gathered the cultural experience at the 3rd Korean Indian Cultural Festival held in Pune, India on December 8, 2016. A total of 311 out of 700 copies of questionnaires were collected and analyzed through SPSS. The major findings of the studies were as follows: Firstly, it shows that Indians' ISS appeared to be higher than Koreans in the natural condition where the experimental intervention was not performed.

Hou (2010) evaluated the intercultural sensitivity of 120 EFL learners in China at Xi'an International Studies University. The study used a questionnaire to collect the data by implementing Chen and Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS). The findings revealed that the Chinese learners had gone beyond the "uncertain stage" and approached the stage of "agreement", which indicated that all Chinese learners had a relatively positive attitude towards intercultural communication.

Furthermore, Altshuler et al., (2003), used the intercultural development inventory in their research of physician trainees. The study included 26 second-year pediatric residents from (Maimonides Medical Centre [MMC], 2000–2001). Gender disparities were found among the

demographic determinants of intercultural sensitivity, with females displaying stronger intercultural sensitivity as a result of intercultural training.

Pederson (1998) studied the breadth of intercultural sensitivity and key elements related to it in his study. The study's goal is to better understand the connections between empathy, authoritarianism, gender, intercultural contact, second language learning, and early adolescent intercultural sensitivity (ICS) levels.

Psychological well-being

Lin and Mar (2016) conducted a study on the relationship between parent and peer attachment and psychological wellbeing of 310 (150 male and 160 female) university students in late Adolescence. It was found that the perceived quality of both parent and peer attachment was significantly related to the psychological well-being of university students. It was found that adolescents who were highly securely attached reported greater satisfaction with themselves and less symptomatic response to stressful life events.

Akhtar (2015) examined the psychological well-being of gender differences. The findings of the study revealed significant differences in the levels of psychological well-being among students.

According to Kaneez (2015), he did experiments on the association between home environment and psychological wellness in 60 teenagers aged 16 to 19, 30 of who were male and 30 of whom were female. The findings revealed a favourable and significant link between teenagers' psychological well-being and many aspects of their parental environment. Gender differences in psychological well-being were also discovered.

Gencoz & Ozlale (2004) conducted a study on the impact of social support on psychological well-being at the university level and come out with results that social support associated with appreciation showed a direct impact on psychological wellbeing.

Furthermore, other studies have shown that psychological well-being is a multifaceted concept developed through a combination of emotional regulation, personality characteristics, identity, and life experience (MacLeod & Moore, 2000; Ryff, 1989b; Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002), (Helson & Srivastava, 2001). It rises with age, education, extraversion, and consciousness while falling with neuroticism (Keyes et al., 2002). In terms of gender, however, research (Roothman et al., 2003) suggests that there is no substantial difference in psychological well-being between men and women.

RATIONALE OF THE PROBLEM

India's higher education system has grown rapidly in recent decades, while simultaneously earning a reputation for high-quality teaching and research in fields such as science, humanities, technology, medicine, and space technology on the international stage. These are the primary elements that draw students from all around the world, not only from India. These students, who come from many regions and backgrounds, converge, engage, and attempt to adapt to a diverse culture. The new atmosphere may also provide a better opportunity for students to grow physically and academically, learn to be self-sufficient, and engage with a variety of people.

As a consequence, there is limited literature on intercultural sensitivity in Indian conditions, based on different personal, demographical, educational, social, and psychological factors. Although there have been few studies on how sensitive Indians (Verghese, 2016) are to other sub-cultures in their own country. As an outcome, the study attempts to fill in the gaps by examining the factors that influence intercultural sensitivity, such as students' psychological well-being, and trying to measure intercultural sensitivity based on these factors among students studying in different higher education institutes in India. The study's relevance will be stretched to university students because these universities provide such a platform for a diversified environment. The study is to show that intercultural sensitivity is crucial in today's modern diversified and competitive world.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Intercultural sensitivity in relation to psychological well-being of University students

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and psychological well-being in university students.
2. To compare male and female university students' intercultural sensitivity.
3. To compare male and female university students' psychological well-being.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There exists no significant relationship between intercultural sensitivity and the psychological well-being of university students.

2. There exists no significant difference in intercultural sensitivity between male and female university students.

3. There exists no significant difference between the psychological well-being of male and female university students.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to only 100 final-year students, 50 of which were males and 50 of which were females, who were all studying in different departments at Panjab University, Chandigarh.

SAMPLE AND METHODS USED

Using a simple random sampling method, 100 people (50 males and 50 females) were randomly selected from various departments at Panjab University. The association between intercultural sensitivity and psychological well-being among college students was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. In addition, the t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between male and female participants.

TOOLS USED

1. Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) by Chen and Starosta (2000).
2. Psychological Well Being Scale by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012).

DATA COLLECTION

A Google form comprising the above-mentioned tools was created and distributed to 100 final-year students. For comparing males and females, the obtained data were examined using the t-test. The degree of correlation between intercultural sensitivity and psychological well-being among university students was determined using Pearson product-moment correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Hypothesis 1: There exists no significant relationship between intercultural sensitivity and the psychological well-being of university students.

Table 1 shows the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and psychological well being among university students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Correlation	P- Value	Remarks
Intercultural Sensitivity		98.87	8.72	0.053	0.59	Non-Significant
Psychological Well Being	100	196.90	22.25			

Table no.1, Calculated value of co-efficient of correlation (r) between intercultural sensitivity and psychological well being of university students is 0.054 and p-value is 0.59 which is greater than 0.05, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance which reveals that intercultural sensitivity and psychological well being are not significantly correlated to each other. As a result, intercultural sensitivity seems to have a weak relation to psychological well-being. Thus, the above mentioned null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There exists no significant difference in intercultural sensitivity between male and female university students.

Table 2 Shows the Mean, SD, and t-value of intercultural sensitivity among males and females

Variables	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-Value	Remarks
Males	50	101.44	8.70			
Females	50	96.30	8.04	98	2.10	Significant

In table no. 2 the calculated t- value is 2.10 which is more than the table value 1.984 (Significant at 0.05 level) indicates a significant difference in the intercultural sensitivity of male and female students. The mean score of males is found higher than that of females students. It is clear from

the mean values (Male = 101.44, Female = 96.30) that level of intercultural sensitivity of male is higher than of female students. The results are consistent with those of (Pederson, 1998), (Altshuler et al., 2003). Thus, the above mentioned null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There exists no significant difference between the psychological well-being of male and female university students.

Table 3 Shows the Mean, SD, and t-value of psychological well-being among males and females.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-Value	Remarks
Males	50	200.84	22.88	98	0.076	Non-Significant
Females	50	192.96	21.10			

From table 3 it is evident that the t-value of psychological well being scores of male and female students is 0.076 which is not significant as the calculated value (0.076) is less than the table value 1.96 at df 98. It indicates also the mean scores of male and female adolescents do not have much difference. And findings are in accordance with (Roothman et al., 2003). Thus the above mentioned null hypothesis is accepted.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The association between intercultural sensitivity and psychological well-being among university students was found to be almost non-existent. This suggests that psychological well-being has a minor impact on intercultural sensitivity.

2. There was a significant difference in intercultural sensitivity between male and female university students. Males, on the other hand, are more culturally sensitive than their female counterparts.

3. Although no significant differences in psychological well-being were discovered between male and female university students, the men's mean score was slightly higher than the females'.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. The current study examines the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and psychological well-being, demonstrating that psychologically well-being individuals are better able to deal with life's problems and adjust to university life.

2. Teachers should plan activities such as psychotherapy, group discussions, project work, yoga, and meditation to improve their interpersonal relationships and psychological health, which in turn can improve their personality types and make them better human beings.

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