UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID
FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA

TESIS DOCTORAL

Los valores humanos y la competencia intercultural en universidades internacionalizadas: la perspectiva del personal administrativo y de apoyo en dos escenarios europeos

Human values and intercultural competence in internationalised universities: the views of the administrative and support staff in two eropean settings

MEMORIA PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE DOCTOR

PRESENTADA POR

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Madrid

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RESUMEN

La globalización, la internacionalización y, más concretamente, los movimientos migratorios que estos fenómenos han provocado durante las últimas décadas han ampliado la diversidad cultural y lingüística en los entornos cotidianos de las personas. Además, debido al incremento del uso de las nuevas tecnologías para comunicarse a nivel global desde la pandemia del COVID-19, las interacciones entre personas de distintas partes del mundo, sin necesidad de viajar, se han vuelto constantes. A raíz de estos acontecimientos, se ha planteado un asunto clave: las aptitudes necesarias para formar parte de manera activa en este mundo multicultural ya no se basan simplemente en las habilidades lingüísticas; la competencia intercultural se ha vuelto indispensable. Si el objetivo es evitar malentendidos y hacer que la convivencia sea lo más armoniosa posible, la competencia intercultural es esencial, no solo para trabajar en equipos o en las aulas con compañeros y compañeras de diferentes culturas, sino también para interactuar en el día a día con personas de diversos orígenes.

La competencia intercultural implica poseer un conjunto de habilidades y destrezas que juntas permiten entablar interacciones interculturales con mayor o menor grado de efectividad. Sin embargo, la competencia intercultural no consiste en alcanzar un nivel en el que uno sea plenamente competente interculturalmente. Por el contrario, para mantener la diversidad tanto cultural como lingüística, la competencia intercultural debe entenderse como un proceso continuo que se desarrolla a lo largo de la vida, porque el aprendizaje nunca se detiene.

Deardorff (2004) define la competencia intercultural como “la capacidad de desarrollar conocimientos, habilidades y actitudes específicos que conducen a un comportamiento y una comunicación visiblemente efectivos y apropiados en las interacciones interculturales” (p. 194). En otras palabras, ser interculturalmente competente implica no solo comprender otros sistemas culturales, sino también ser capaz de interactuar con personas de otras culturas sin

sentirse vulnerable o amenazado (Hiller & Wozniak, 2009). Esta investigación presta especial atención a las actitudes como base de la competencia intercultural y plantea la hipótesis de que su origen se encuentra en los valores humanos. Los valores internos de las personas se reflejan en las actitudes que demuestran en las interacciones con individuos de otras culturas; por lo tanto, los valores humanos son la base desde la cual se debe trabajar para desarrollar la competencia intercultural.

La competencia intercultural parece crucial en las instituciones internacionales de educación superior, el área en el que se centra esta tesis doctoral, porque las interacciones entre culturas ocurren a diario. Esta investigación se realizó con una población específica dentro de la comunidad universitaria: el personal administrativo y de apoyo. Este sector ha sido poco estudiado a pesar del importante papel que desempeña. Antes de que los visitantes internacionales entren en las aulas, tienen que pasar por una serie de obstáculos burocráticos frente a los cuales son el personal administrativo y de apoyo quien les ayuda. Las muestras estudiadas en esta investigación formaban parte de dos universidades europeas: la Universidad Complutense de Madrid en España y la Universidad de Groninga (*Rijksuniversiteit Groningen*) en los Países Bajos.

En primer lugar, esta tesis doctoral estudia específicamente cómo los participantes percibían su propia competencia intercultural a través de la Escala de Eficacia Intercultural (The Kozai Group, 2009). El cuestionario fue completado por setenta y cinco participantes, los cuales eran parte del personal administrativo y de apoyo de las dos universidades internacionalizadas. Cabe destacar su alto grado de autoconciencia, así como su curiosidad por descubrir y aprender de las culturas que les rodean. En general, los participantes reportaron que se consideraban interculturalmente competentes.

La segunda parte empírica de esta investigación consistió en analizar diez entrevistas realizadas con una muestra propositiva. El primer paso fue establecer una relación directa entre

las actitudes propuestas por Deardorff (2006) como esenciales para el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural: respeto, apertura, y curiosidad y descubrimiento; así como los diez valores universales básicos propuestos por Schwartz (1992): universalismo, benevolencia, estimulación, autodirección, logro, poder, hedonismo, seguridad, tradición y conformidad.

Una vez establecida esta relación, se procedió a realizar un análisis en profundidad del discurso de los participantes. De este análisis, cabe señalar que la actitud de 'respeto', que es el resultado visible de los valores de 'universalismo' y 'benevolencia', prevaleció a lo largo de todas las entrevistas a pesar de las diferencias contextuales entre los participantes. También destacaron las actitudes de 'curiosidad y descubrimiento', resultantes de los valores de 'estimulación', y las actitudes de 'apertura', derivadas de los valores de 'autodirección'. Estas actitudes son fundamentales para el desarrollo efectivo de la competencia intercultural. Estos hallazgos indicaron que los participantes valoraban muy positivamente la oportunidad que les brindaban sus puestos en las oficinas de universidades internacionalizadas de interactuar continuamente con personas de otras culturas. De hecho, algunos compararon sus trabajos con viajar: aprendían mucho de estas interacciones interculturales y también conocían gente de otras culturas, lo que hacía que sus rutinas diarias fueran mucho más entretenidas y enriquecedoras.

Además, los análisis de las entrevistas revelaron el conocimiento, la comprensión y las habilidades interculturales de los participantes. De manera similar a sus respuestas en el cuestionario, los participantes confirmaron su alto grado de concienciación sobre cómo sus propias culturas afectaban a su comportamiento y a su forma de percibir el mundo, del mismo modo que cómo las culturas de los visitantes internacionales influían en sus propias acciones. Previsiblemente, poseer conocimientos, comprensión y habilidades interculturales les ayudaría a gestionar las disonancias interculturales, a mantener una perspectiva etnorelativa y a evitar caer en estereotipos.

Asimismo, durante las entrevistas, se preguntó a los participantes sobre incidentes críticos que ellos mismos habían experimentado con personas de otras culturas en sus puestos de trabajo. A partir de estas narraciones, se elaboró una rúbrica, basada en la rúbrica de Sánchez-Hernández y Maíz-Arévalo (2021) para medir la adaptabilidad intercultural de los participantes en tres niveles: inicial, intermedio y avanzado. La mayoría de las experiencias fueron calificadas en el nivel intermedio, lo que sugiere que, aunque la interacción con personas de otras culturas podría ayudar al personal a desarrollar adaptabilidad intercultural, la formación en competencia intercultural podría mejorarla.

Finalmente, a los participantes se les plantearon tres situaciones con personas de otras culturas en las que se podría producir una disonancia intercultural. Sus reacciones a estos escenarios se utilizaron para evaluar la capacidad de los participantes para ser flexibles, adaptables y empáticos, así como su habilidad para observar el mundo desde una perspectiva etnorelativa, lo que Deardorff (2006) considera los resultados internos del proceso de competencia intercultural. Además, se examinaron los resultados externos, que pueden usarse para predecir si una persona es capaz de comunicarse y comportarse de manera efectiva y adecuada en las interacciones interculturales. De este último análisis, cabe destacar la versatilidad que demostraron los participantes a la hora de comunicarse con los visitantes internacionales, un hallazgo que podría anticipar su exitoso desempeño en situaciones reales.

Las conclusiones derivadas de esta investigación confirman la importancia de la competencia intercultural del personal administrativo y de apoyo en las universidades internacionalizadas, así como su papel clave como agentes imprescindibles. Como principal aporte, esta tesis propone un método interdisciplinario para evaluar la competencia intercultural desde una perspectiva émica (a través de cuestionarios y entrevistas) y desde una perspectiva ética (analizando las construcciones discursivas de los participantes para revelar sus valores humanos). La dificultad para medir los valores humanos, dada su dependencia del contexto,

hace que su estudio sea complejo, pero a la vez esencial, pues los valores son tan cambiantes como la sociedad misma. Establecer una conexión entre lo invisible (los valores) y lo visible (las actitudes) podría facilitar una investigación en profundidad de la base de la competencia intercultural a través de este método interdisciplinar.

ABSTRACT

Globalisation, internationalisation, and more specifically, the migratory movements that these phenomena have caused during the last decades, have expanded cultural and linguistic diversity in people's daily environments. In addition, because of the increase in the use of new technologies to communicate globally since the COVID-19 pandemic, interactions between people from different parts of the world have become constant—without any need to travel. Because of these events, a key concern has been raised: The abilities needed to take an active part in this multicultural world are no longer simply based on language skills; intercultural competence has become indispensable. If the aim is to avoid misunderstandings and make coexistence as harmonious as possible, intercultural competence is essential—not only to work on teams or in classrooms with colleagues from different cultures but also to interact daily with people from diverse backgrounds.

Intercultural competence implies possessing a set of skills and abilities that together allow one to engage in intercultural interactions with a greater or lesser degree of effectiveness. However, intercultural competence does not consist of reaching a level at which one is fully interculturally competent. On the contrary, to maintain both cultural and linguistic diversity, intercultural competence must be understood as a continuous process that is developed throughout life, because learning never stops.

Deardorff (2004) defines intercultural competence as 'the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills, and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions' (p. 194). In other words, being interculturally competent entails not only understanding other cultural systems but also being able to interact with people from other cultures without feeling vulnerable or threatened (Hiller & Wozniak, 2009). This research aims special attention at attitudes as the basis of intercultural competence and hypothesises that their origin lies in human values. People's internal values

are reflected in the attitudes they demonstrate in interactions with individuals from other cultures; therefore, human values are the foundation from which one should work to develop intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence seems crucial in international higher education institutions, the area on which this doctoral thesis focuses, because interactions among cultures occur daily. This research was conducted with a specific population within the university community: the administrative and support staff. This group has been understudied, despite the important role they play. Before international visitors enter the classrooms, they must overcome a range of bureaucratic obstacles, through which they are helped by the administrative and support staff. The samples studied in this research were part of two European universities: the Complutense University of Madrid (*Universidad Complutense de Madrid*) in Spain and the University of Groningen (*Rijksuniversiteit Groningen*) in the Netherlands.

First, this thesis specifically studies how participants perceived their own intercultural competence through the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009). The questionnaire was completed by seventy-five participants who were part of the administrative and support staff of the two internationalised universities. It is worth noting their high level of self-awareness as well as their curiosity to discover and learn from the cultures around them. In general, participants reported they considered themselves interculturally competent.

The second empirical part of this research consisted of analysing ten interviews conducted with a purposeful sample. The first step was to establish a direct relationship between the attitudes proposed by Deardorff (2006) as essential for the development of intercultural competence—respect, openness, and curiosity and discovery—and the ten basic universal values proposed by Schwartz (1992)—universalism, benevolence, stimulation, self-direction, achievement, power, hedonism, security, tradition, and conformity.

Once this relationship was established, an in-depth analysis of the discourse provided by participants was implemented. From this analysis, it is worth highlighting that the attitude of 'respect', which is the visible result of 'universalism' and 'benevolence' values, prevailed throughout all the interviews despite the contextual differences among the participants. The attitudes of 'curiosity and discovery', resulting from the values of 'stimulation', and the attitude of 'openness', stemming from the values of 'self-direction', also stood out; these attitudes are fundamental to the effective development of intercultural competence. The findings indicate that the participants highly valued the opportunity they received from their positions in the offices of internationalised universities to interact continuously with people from other cultures. In fact, some compared their jobs to travelling—they learned so much from these intercultural interactions, and in addition, meeting people from other cultures made their daily routines much more entertaining and enriching.

Further, the interview analyses revealed participants' intercultural knowledge and comprehension, and skills. Similar to their questionnaire responses, participants asserted their keen awareness of how their own cultures affected their behaviour and their way of perceiving the world, as well as how the cultures of international visitors influenced their own actions. Predictably, possessing intercultural knowledge, comprehension, and skills helped them handle intercultural dissonances, maintain an ethnorelative perspective, and avoid falling into stereotypes.

In addition, during the interviews, participants were asked about self-experienced critical incidents with people from other cultures in their job positions. Grounded on these narrations, a rubric was adapted from Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo's (2021) rubric to evaluate participants' intercultural adaptability at three levels: initial, intermediate, and advanced. Most of the experiences were rated at the intermediate level, suggesting that even

though interaction with people from other cultures could help staff develop intercultural adaptability, intercultural competence training could enhance it.

Finally, three situations with people from other cultures in which intercultural dissonances were likely occur were posed to the participants. Their reactions to these scenarios were used to assess participant's capacity to be flexible, adaptable, and empathetic, as well as their ability to observe the world from an ethnorelative perspective—what Deardorff (2006) considers the internal outcomes of the process of intercultural competence. In addition, the external outcomes, which can be used to predict whether a person could communicate and behave effectively and appropriately in intercultural interactions, were examined. From this last analysis, it is worth noting the versatility demonstrated by participants when communicating with international visitors, a finding that could anticipate staff members' successful performance in real situations.

The conclusions derived from this investigation confirm the importance of intercultural competence of the administrative and support staff in internationalised universities, as well as their key role as essential agents. As its main contribution, this research proposes an interdisciplinary method to evaluate intercultural competence from an emic perspective—through questionnaires and interviews—and from an etic perspective—analysing participants' discursive constructions to reveal their human values. The difficulty of measuring human values, given their dependence on the context, makes their study complex but at the same time essential, because values are as changeable as society itself. Establishing a connection between the invisible—values—and the visible—attitudes—may facilitate in-depth investigation of the basis of intercultural competence through this interdisciplinary method.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACE: American Council on Education

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

DMIS: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

IA: Intercultural Adaptability

ICR: Intercoder Reliability

IEI: Intercultural Empathy Index

IES: Intercultural Effectiveness Scale

IETM: Intercultural Empathy Test Model

INCA: Intercultural Competence Assessment

IRC: Intercultural Readiness Check

L2: Second Language

MPQ: Multicultural Personality Questionnaire

OBP: *Ondersteunend en Beheerspersoneel*

PAS: *Personal de Administración y Servicios*

RUG: *Rijksuniversiteit Groningen*

UCM: *Universidad Complutense de Madrid*

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Background

The historical and economic events and technological advances of the last few decades are collectively labelled ‘globalisation’ (Dagen et al., 2019). Globalisation can be defined as ‘the spread of culture across nations’, or, in other words, ‘the interchange of views, values, norms, and practises across nations of the world’ (Oyekola, 2018, p. 84). By adopting this globalised perspective and applied-linguistic angle, people shift their perceptions of the world as consisting of individual territories with their own languages and cultures and view it instead as a whole in which English is, without doubt, the international language (Canagarajah, 2006; Crystal, 2003; Eichhorst, 2010).

From this standpoint, one of the recognised negative sides of globalisation is ‘Englishisation’, which may lead to the loss of minority languages (Alzaben et al., 2019; Ceramella, 2012; Duarte et al., 2020; Tao, 2019), and, concurrently, the loss of cultural identities (Hauser, 2009; Kaul, 2012; Robinson-Jones et al., 2020; Tong & Cheung, 2011). As the catalyst for this doctoral thesis, this investigation focuses on global citizens’ need to develop specific competences to recognise cultural and linguistic diversity despite globalisation.

Against this backdrop, the increase of diversity in today’s globalised era demands individuals be capable of adapting, living, and coexisting peacefully with one another. People need to learn how to communicate with those who have different values and beliefs in an appropriate, respectful, and successful manner (Dalib et al., 2017). From an educational perspective, the phenomenon of globalisation raises interest in its effects on different entities, such as, for instance, higher education institutions, the spotlight of this research. Altbach et al. (2009) states,

> Globalisation, a key reality in the 21st century, has already profoundly influenced higher education. . . . We define globalisation as the reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information, and communications technology, the emergence of an international knowledge network, the role of the English language, and other forces beyond the control of academic institutions. . . . Internationalisation is defined as the variety of policies and programmes that universities and governments implement to respond to globalisation. (p. 7)

Nevertheless, the internationalisation of higher education has drawbacks similar to those of globalisation. Accordingly, universities should apply appropriate internationalising frameworks to avoid the dangers observed regarding the growing spread of English-medium education (Dafouz & Smit, 2020). These threats include the previously mentioned loss of linguistic diversity, notably among minority languages (e.g., Basque, Catalan, Frisian; Doiz et al., 2011; Jongbloed-Faber et al., 2016; Lasagabaster, 2011); the imitation of Anglocentric and Westernised paradigms of education and practises at the cost of local and national archetypes (Tietze, 2004); and the commercialisation of education in exchange for internationalisation (Knight, 2018).

In an attempt to problematise these dangers, this PhD thesis applies Lyngstad's (2015) comprehensive definition of university internationalisation: 'the attempts of higher education institutions to integrate intentionally an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service function of the institution' (p. 3). In this context, most previous research has focused on the linguistic skills of teachers and students (e.g., Chacón-Beltrán, 2021; Jenkins, 2013; Khasawneh, 2021; Pham, 2022; Rubio-Cuenca & Perea-Barberá, 2021; Sánchez-García, 2020), on students' international experiences (e.g., Deardorff, 2020; Rawal & Deardorff, 2021; Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2022), and on curriculum adaptation and policy implementation (e.g., Leask, 2015; Orduna-Nocito & Sánchez-García, 2022; Sánchez-García

& Dafouz, 2020). Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to the intercultural competence of the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities, even though they are often the first people with whom international visitors establish contact (Llurda et al., 2014).

1.2. Rationale for the Research

During the last few decades, universities have become microworlds in which many nationalities and cultures coexist, and many languages are spoken. The term 'superdiversity'[1] was used to refer to this phenomenon in educational settings (Gogolin & Duarte, 2017). However, despite the high level of interest in this topic, room exists to focus on various aspects of superdiversity in educational research from an applied linguistics perspective. In the case of European higher education, the lack of research may stem partly from the conventional belief that linguistic and cultural variety is rare inside nation-states, similar to the idea that the 'classical' European concept of 'nation' relates to the concept of a 'homogeneous' society made up of people who share a history, culture, and language (Gogolin, 2002).

Aiming to overcome these limiting beliefs, internationalising higher education involves the integration of diverse cultures and languages into the university by *all* its members, including students, teaching and research personnel, and administrative and support staff. For this reason, one of the most important competences that institutions need to foster is the intercultural competence of their members (Bennett, 2015; Byram & Masuhara, 2013; Gibson, 2021; Maíz-Arévalo & Orduna-Nocito, 2021). Being interculturally competent entails mastering two main skills: to be sensitive to other cultural systems and to interact with cultural 'others' without feeling vulnerable or threatened (Hiller & Wozniak, 2009). This description agrees with Deardorff (2004), who defines intercultural competence as 'the ability to develop

[1] The term 'superdiversity' is first used by Vertovec (2007) in the field of Ethnic and Racial Studies. Vertovec uses the term to describe the intricate composition of current migrant flows and the societal diversity they create.

targeted knowledge, skills, and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions' (p. 194). These three dimensions—attitudes, knowledge, and skills—are essential in intercultural contexts, as internationalised universities are (or ought to be).

Focusing on the attitude dimension more particularly as the basis of intercultural competence, attitude is conventionally defined as 'a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour' (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). Thus, in the specific context of intercultural interactions, attitudes might depend on the judgement members make about other cultures. However, the unknown comprises the attitudes underpinning these evaluations—in other words, the origin of the attitudes.

With the objective of exploring the motives of these attitudes, and therefore, of the basis of intercultural competence, the lens is expanded, taking an interdisciplinary approach that could shed light on this phenomenon. In this specific setting, the importance the administrative and support staff attach to their work, the type of reward they seek to achieve from it, and the degree of concern about being promoted are crucial. All these factors affect intercultural interactions with international visitors—these factors are part of their work. Thus, all matters seem to be closely related to human values. Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, p. 551) define human values as beliefs pertaining to desirable end states or modes of conduct that transcend specific situations; guide selection or evaluation of behaviour, people, and events; and occur according to importance relative to other values to form a system of value priorities. For this reason, Schwartz's (1992, 2012) framework on human values is considered a potential tool to conceptualise the different types of self-attributes that individuals may bring to sensitive interactions (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 20). Emerging from this investigation is the hypothesis that the origin of attitudes, and thus of intercultural competence, is found in human values.

1.3. State of Affairs

As stated earlier, this research aims attention towards a specific group: the administrative and support staff of two internationalised universities at two institutions: Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Spain and Rijksuniversiteit Groningen in the Netherlands. This research focuses on this understudied population because they are quite often the first people at the target university with whom international visitors interact. Before entering the classroom, international visitors must overcome the administrative issues needed to enrol in the university. If the intercultural interactions between the administrative and support staff and prospective international visitors fail, the internationals may choose to enrol at a different university. For this reason, support staff members play an essential role in the successful internationalisation of universities. However, their intercultural competence is often overlooked because their responsibilities are wrongly thought to be exclusively administrative, even though these personnel are in charge of solving a great number of intercultural problems beyond bureaucratic issues. For these reasons, special attention needs to be paid to the administrative and support staff as key agents in the internationalisation process.

1.4. Aim and Research Questions

The overall objective of this PhD thesis is to raise awareness of the importance of intercultural competence in the internationalisation of higher education, especially regarding the essential roles of the administrative and support staff. To achieve this aim, intercultural competence and intercultural effectiveness[2] were examined in a purposeful sample of administrative and support staff from UCM and RUG using several data-collection and analysis tools. First, seventy-five surveys and ten interviews with personnel from these institutions were

[2] It is important to note that intercultural effectiveness is a component of the behavioural side of intercultural competence (Yilmaz et al., 2020). In other words, intercultural effectiveness assesses how adequately individuals act in intercultural interactions, putting into practise their intercultural competence.

collected and analysed. Using two main complementary data-collection methods—questionnaires and interviews—facilitated the ability to compare and contrast the findings from the two tools and from the emic and etic perspectives (Pike, 1954) in order to arrive at solid conclusions. Further, in the interviews, participants were asked to share their own self-experienced critical incidents with people from other cultures, and the interviewer posed three situations to the participants in which intercultural dissonances were likely to occur. Their reactions were analysed, becoming the third and fourth sources of data.

The first specific objective of this research was to examine how the administrative and support staff perceived their own intercultural competence. With this purpose in mind, Research Question 1 was formulated as follows:

RQ1. How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised higher education institutions perceive their own intercultural competence?

This first question was answered using an interuniversity survey divided into the dimensions of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (also referred to as the IES; The Kozai Group, 2009): continuous learning (self-awareness and exploration), interpersonal engagement (global mindset and relationship interest), and hardiness (positive regard and emotional resilience). Next, a semistructured interview was designed to examine how participants perceived university internationalisation. With this objective in mind, participants' answers were analysed. Research Question 2 guided this part of the investigation.

RQ2. How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised higher education institutions perceive university internationalisation?

To explore intercultural competence, the research focuses on the dimensions of Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence: attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, skills, and the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence. As mentioned, the main hypothesis of this PhD thesis is that the origin of attitudes, and thus, of

intercultural competence, is found in human values. In an attempt to consider this hypothesis from the applied-linguistics perspective, the participants' language collected from the interviews was analysed to obtain a general discursive picture of how their values emerged linguistically. Research Question 3 led this value analysis.

> **RQ3.** What values do participants' linguistic choices reveal when talking about internationalisation, and how are these values constructed discursively?

On the questionnaire, participants could freely add written comments to share their own experiences with people from other cultures. Further, during the interviews, participants were explicitly asked about their experiences working in the administrative and support units of internationalised universities. The aim of these questions was to assess to what extent, if any, intercultural competence was necessary for staff by analysing the critical incidents they had lived and to investigate what their experiences revealed about their own intercultural competence. Research Question 4 was formulated to guide this part of the investigation.

> **RQ4.** To what extent, if any, has the administrative and support staff experienced intercultural dissonances; more specifically, what do their experiences reveal about their intercultural competence?

The administrative and support staff members' views of internationalisation of higher education and of the role of human values and intercultural competence in these two European settings were examined using several analytical methods, which are explained in depth in the subsequent chapters. The following section details the organisation of this thesis.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

The present thesis is structured around eight chapters organised into three parts. The current chapter (Chapter 1) introduces the investigation by connecting internationalisation and intercultural competence and justifying the need to pay attention to a set of agents—namely, the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities, who, as stated, have been

largely understudied. The general and specific objectives are presented, and the research questions are formulated to guide the study.

Part I, divided into two chapters, is devoted to explaining the theoretical frameworks articulating the research. First, Chapter 2 explores the concept of higher education internationalisation, defines basic concepts, and reviews the frameworks and theories of intercultural competence most relevant for the aim of this research. The remainder of Chapter 2 engages in an in-depth discussion of the theoretical foundations upon which this thesis is built: the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009).

Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive explanation of the theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 1992), crucial to this investigation for its hypothesised relevance to intercultural competence. At the end of each chapter of the theoretical discussion (Part I), a review of current investigations into intercultural competence and human values that apply similar frameworks to the ones used in this study is presented in order to support the relevance of the research. Overall, Chapters 2 and 3 aim to provide useful insights into the investigation's relevant theoretical features, laying the groundwork for a better understanding of the methodology. Part I closes with a summary.

Part II, Data and Overview of Methods, is composed of Chapter 4, which, in addition to restating the main hypotheses and research questions, details the research approach and design selected for the investigation. Further, the chapter depicts the two internationalised universities studied and describes the participants engaged in the investigation—that is, the administrative and support staff. Next, the chapter outlines the different data-collection instruments and discusses the data-gathering process. Finally, the chapter offers a fine-grained explanation of the corpus gathered and analysed for the study, as well as the procedures for coding and analysing the data.

Part III presents the results yielded from the study, distributed into two chapters in accordance with the two main data-collection tools: questionnaires and interviews, and a third chapter in which findings obtained from both tools are compared. In Chapter 5, the discussion of the questionnaires is divided into the different dimensions of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009), in which the findings are described, and results are discussed. Further, an additional dimension that evaluates participants' verbal and nonverbal linguistic skills is presented.

Chapter 6 covers the interview analyses, presented according to the dimensions of the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). First, a deep analysis of the values and their resulting attitudes revealed by the participants' linguistic choices is presented and justified. Second, the themes that emerged during the analysis of the interviews are discussed, corresponding to the intercultural knowledge and comprehension, and skills dimensions. Third, the narratives of the participants' self-experienced critical incidents are analysed to examine their capacity to be adaptable. Next, participants' reactions to the three intercultural scenarios provided during the interviews are studied according to the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence.

Chapter 7 offers an overview and discussion of the main findings of the research, including discussions of attitudes; knowledge and comprehension, and skills; internal and external outcomes; and implications of the research, classified into the three main research aspects of this investigation: methodological, analytical, and conceptual.

Finally, Chapter 8 summarises the thesis and gathers the conclusions reached from the analysis by answering the research questions. The implications of the findings are discussed, the limitations of the study are described, and pointers to future research are suggested at the end of the chapter.

I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS ARTICULATING THE RESEARCH

CHAPTER 2

Intercultural Competence in the Internationalisation of Higher Education

2.1. Introduction

Internationalisation has become an increasingly important topic in higher education institutions in an era in which the world's citizens are seeking to be more unified and interconnected. For institutions to be truly internationalised, intercultural competence seems essential. During the last decades, researchers have defined and investigated intercultural competence across many academic areas. A growing consensus is emerging on the nature of intercultural competence as it aims towards 'the successful acquisition of the international perspective' (Bennett, 1993, p. 24). Chapter 2 addresses these issues, focusing first on the internationalisation of higher education to establish the context of the research, and second, on intercultural competence, two of the main theoretical foundations on which this investigation is based. The topic is expanded in Chapter 3, which describes the remaining theoretical aspects. To fulfil these objectives, after the background on higher education internationalisation (2.2), a chronological review of the notion of culture is presented (2.3). Next, the term 'intercultural competence' is defined (2.4), followed by a brief review of the various models of intercultural competence (2.5) to observe the similarities and differences among them.

After establishing the context through the most relevant theoretical aspects, the following sections describe the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006; 2.6), the notion of intercultural empathy (2.7), and the role of intercultural competence in the internationalisation of universities (2.8). Next, different tools for assessing intercultural competence are briefly reviewed (2.9); the chapter focuses specifically on the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009; 2.9.1). Given the important role of context in intercultural communication, in the succeeding section, the relationship between pragmatics and intercultural competence is discussed (2.10). In addition, an instrument that measures

intercultural competence through pragmatic skills is introduced (Sánchez-Hernández & Maíz-Arévalo, 2021). Finally, intercultural adaptability, one of the dimensions of the rubric, is discussed in depth (2.11).

As mentioned in Chapter 1 (Introduction), one of the main hypotheses proposed in this research is that attitudes and, consequently, intercultural competence, originate in human values. For this reason, the relationships among these elements are discussed (2.12) in order to introduce Chapter 3, which focuses fully on human values. Finally, some of the most relevant and recent investigations about the fundamental frameworks and tools used in this PhD thesis are presented (2.13). The chapter closes with a summary (2.14).

2.2. Internationalisation of Higher Education

There are various definitions for the internationalisation of higher education. Knight (2012) notes that internationalisation in higher education has different meanings to different people. For example, some people view this concept as a series of international activities, while others view it as the effective delivery of education to other nations. A widely adopted definition by Knight (2012) describes internationalisation as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education' (p. 29). A revised version by de Wit et al. (2015) defines internationalisation as the intentional integration of the intercultural dimension to higher education with the aim of enhancing education and research quality for a productive society. Generally, these updated definitions reflect internationalisation as a more inclusive concept. This section aims to review the literature on this notion to establish the context of the investigation.

2.2.1. Comprehensive Internationalisation

Various scholars and key players in higher education suggest a comprehensive approach to internationalisation. According to the American Council on Education (2012),

comprehensive internationalisation is defined as a deliberate, coordinated process for harmonising and integrating global policies, programmes, and activities to position higher education institutions as more internationally minded and globally linked. This definition focuses on and highlights the elements of comprehensive internationalisation and discourses implementing a strategic process approach. Hudzik (2014) discusses comprehensive internationalisation as a genuine commitment, established by action, to integrate global and comparative perspectives into higher education's teaching, research, and service undertakings.

Literature positions comprehensive internationalisation as an attempt to shape the ethos and values in the entire field of higher education. Hudzik (2014) emphasises the importance of embracing institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and services to implement comprehensive internationalisation successfully. Similarly, de Wit et al. (2015) reiterate that comprehensive internationalisation is an institutional imperative affecting all aspects of campus life, including its external dimensions and relationships.

Comprehensive internationalisation focuses on coordinated actions. Bedenlier (2017) stresses the need for an institution-wide approach for the effective integration of global policies. Such an approach could make colleges and universities more successful and meaningfully responsive to environmental challenges. However, developing such a strategic capacity towards internationalisation takes time. Many higher education institutions have the challenge of matching the comprehensive internationalisation rhetoric but only have fragmented approaches (de Wit et al., 2015). Implementing comprehensive internationalisation demands a vibrant commitment by the institutional leadership because it significantly affects curriculum, school policies, and programmes.

The focus for comprehensive internationalisation is on collaboration. According to Hudzik (2014), every higher education institution must ascertain that internationalisation is a collaborative, integrated ethos and infuse this understanding within the school mission and

culture. Comprehensive internationalisation thus needs cooperation and partnerships. De Wit et al. (2015) emphasises that higher education institutions must have broad policies that cover a wide range of academic cooperation, for example, joint degrees, support for capacity-building, cooperative research projects, and remote learning initiatives. Comprehensive internationalisation can be helpful in preparing students for a globalised workforce and fostering cultural awareness.

2.2.2. ACE Model of Comprehensive Internationalisation

The American Council on Education (ACE) proposes a model for comprehensive internationalisation. Critical considerations for four-year institutions and community colleges emerged during development of the ACE model for comprehensive institutionalisation. According to Butler (2016), the foundational projects for the ACE model are the Promising Practices and Global Learning for All. These projects included participants from four-year institutions and community colleges who offered valuable information for the model.

The ACE model has six target areas, which are linked to three core areas: initiatives, policies, and programmes (Butler, 2016). The outer ring of the ACE model connects the six target areas to three key strategic lenses: diversity, equity, and inclusion; agility and transformation; and data-informed decision-making. The first lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion focuses on internationalisation, in which people play a part in racial and social justice. The internationalisation emphasis ensures that everyone in the learning institution feels included and respected. The agility and transformation lens focuses on the readiness and ability of colleges and universities to adapt their policies and procedures in response to disruptive factors (American Council on Education, 2012). It is thus a measure of the institution's local and global value to serve the diverse body of students and staff. The third lens of data-informed decision-making ensures schools develop goals and programmes through self-study and

assessments. This process encompasses careful and inclusive listening and incorporates ideas from all stakeholders in decision-making.

The six target areas of the ACE model include institutional commitment and policy; leadership and structure; curriculum and co-curriculum; faculty and staff support; mobility; and collaboration and partnerships (American Council on Education, 2012). The institutional commitment to internationalisation clarifies the necessity for school leaders to send a strong message to all stakeholders that internationalisation is a top priority that guides the campus processes. A formal strategic plan helps to measure the commitment and can also be articulated through the school mission statement. According to de Wit (2019), establishing a task force for internationalisation and setting measurable objectives may help solidify the institution's commitment to internationalisation as well as serve as a measure of accountability.

The second target area under the ACE model of comprehensive internationalisation addresses the need for leadership and structure. Creating an established administrative and staffing structure for effective internationalisation efforts is necessary (American Council on Education, 2012). A typical structure could include the senior leadership position or the chief academic leaders; key offices coordinating school-wide global engagements; and an office or staff providing international student services, guidance, and counselling (de Wit et al., 2015). Adequate human and financial resources and a task force are important staffing and structure support that can facilitate internationalisation. Wang (2014) emphasises that the flow of information, engagement, and accountability that comes from effective leadership is essential for successful implementation.

The third target area of the ACE model is the curriculum and co-curriculum. Because the curriculum is the central element for student success, it must allow all students in higher education to access international education to develop their global perspectives (McRaven & Somers, 2017). In addition to course-based instruction, co-curricular programmes and activities

provide high-quality learning environments consistent with the competences and skills needed to work in a diversified postgraduate setting. This target area of internationalisation highlights the necessity for defining learning outcomes that assess specific knowledge of other cultures and intercultural competence. Rumbley et al. (2012) notes that technology could be useful as an innovative approach to enhancing global learning and research.

Faculty and staff support, the fourth target area of the ACE model, can be useful in implementing internationalisation. According to the American Council on Education (2012), faculty and staff have critical roles in students' success and internationalisation. Therefore, institutional policies should address the needs of the staff. One important way to establish this need is professional development for the faculty and the staff. According to de Wit et al. (2015), seminars and targeted workshops can help faculty to develop their expertise and knowledge on internationalisation. In return, they can mentor college students and address the challenges effectively in their teaching.

The fifth target area of the ACE internationalisation model focuses on student and staff mobility. This level is about the outward and inward physical movement of individuals. In terms of internationalisation initiatives, student mobility is still quite prevalent in higher education institutions (Bruhn-Zass, 2022). However, as mentioned, community colleges have a hard time achieving the outward flow of students. Students' intercultural understanding, global awareness, and language competency can be greatly enhanced by living abroad and experiencing immersion (American Council on Education, 2012).

The sixth target area of the ACE model addresses collaboration and partnerships. According to Brajkovic and Helms (2018), this area focuses on the need for building relationships and sharing new ideas, which is critical to comprehensive internationalisation. Assembling different viewpoints helps address global issues in education (Altbach, 2002). Such an approach provides unique ways for students and staff to develop their research

capacities. Generally, all six areas of the ACE model perform crucial roles in providing students and staff in higher education with the opportunity to engage in global perspectives.

2.2.3. Internationalisation of Higher Education Outside the Global North

Since the internationalisation of higher education has gained importance in the wider society, researchers have examined its implementation worldwide. Literature reveals considerable differences in the impact and approach of implementing internationalisation in the Global North and Global South areas. According to Finardi and Guimaraes (2020), the countries outside the Global North view the internationalisation process within higher education as 'mobility', in contrast with the perspective in the Global North, where the same concept is understood in terms of 'global citizenship education'. Outside the Global North, the focus on the internationalisation of higher education is regional. Such a nonglobal perspective results in multilateralism. For instance, Brazil is known to encourage mobility with South partners, especially at the postgraduate level (Morosini et al., 2017).

Research indicates that several factors drive internationalisation in regions outside the Global North. According to Le Ha (2018), the growing demand for higher education, global competitiveness, and the need for a skilled workforce are the main factors influencing internationalisation in the Global South. However, challenges in the Global South hinder the implementation of the internationalisation agenda. These areas have limited resources and infrastructure, thus affecting the process (Zeleza, 2012). Access to technology is limited, and financial difficulties affect institutions. Although some obstacles exist, institutions outside the Global North are progressing in terms of internationalisation. Morosini et al. (2017) argue that international partnerships and collaborations and recruitment of international students are evidence that the Global South institutions are developing on the right path towards internationalisation.

2.2.4. The Role of Intercultural Competence in Higher Education Internationalisation

Intercultural competence is the individual's ability to understand, appreciate, and navigate cultural differences. It is a critical skill for both students and faculty in the internationalisation of higher education. According to Pinto (2018), developing intercultural competence helps change discriminatory attitudes. This skill prepares students in higher education to navigate the global world effectively and empowers them professionally. Intercultural competence also helps students and staff build healthy communication networks, collaborate, and relate effectively with people from different cultural orientations (Deardorff & Jones, 2012). Research suggests that such relationships are vital for enabling students to work with people from diverse cultures. Guimarães et al. (2019) argue that, in addition, intercultural competence could greatly benefit the faculty because with this skill, they will more effectively mentor and support international students and work with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. Further, higher education institutions rely on intercultural competence to develop international partnerships with other universities worldwide. In order to explore the phenomenon of intercultural competence in depth, the next section will start by reviewing the concept of culture.

2.3. The Notion of Culture in Intercultural Competence

In 1874, Tylor provides a classic definition of culture: 'Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (p. 1). Notably, Tylor's definition of culture is influenced by culture itself, in which Western-centric thinkers equate culture to civilisation (Gaston, 2017). Tylor's definition is criticised for its implication of homogeneity among members of a given community and thus perpetuates hierarchical assumptions about atypical members of society (Dunne, 2009). Despite these weaknesses, Tylor's definition of culture was the standard for a long time.

After more than a century of seeking to define culture, scholars still lack consensus. In 1952, Kroeber and Kluckhohn identify 164 definitions of the concept of culture (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). In 1973, Geertz provides an anthropological definition of culture as 'an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life' (p. 89). From this perspective, culture is a specific lens through which people see and interpret the world. Individuals acquire this interpretative lens through socialisation as members of the group, but the lens can be modified and even adapted through interactions with others.

In this vein, Hall (1982, p. 9) defines culture as common and implicit experiences that members of a given culture share, communicate without knowing it, and use to form the stage from which all other events are judged. For Hall, experience plays a key role in the construction of culture. This conceptualisation implies that individuals' lived experiences ultimately form common culture and personal identity. Thus, if those experiences change, common culture and personal identity can be ultimately modified.

Fay (1996) describes culture as 'a complex set of shared beliefs, values, and concepts enabling a group to make sense of its life and providing it direction for how to live' (p. 132). Fay attaches great importance to the role of culture in individuals' daily lives, because culture gives meaning to human actions, guiding them (often unconsciously) when making decisions and thereby justifying their actions.

Spencer-Oatey (2008) suggests defining culture from the perspective of intragroup differences rather than just from intergroup differences, taking into account the different roles of individuals within groups:

> Culture is a fuzzy set of assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures, and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that

> influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and their interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour. (p. 8)

This definition supports the idea that despite the influences of the group's belief systems, all individuals in the group are responsible for interpreting and making meaning out of their interactions themselves. Therefore, not all misunderstandings or dissonances[3] arise from cultural aspects. As Gaston (2017) states, 'Individual identities and experiences indeed colour the way that one sees the world' (p. 18). Accordingly, personal background and shared background ultimately combine to construct the basis for individuals' personalities, values, and their resulting attitudes.

Hofstede's (2011) concept of culture is currently one of the most widely accepted: 'Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others' (p. 3). However, this definition may limit individual identity in a way similar to Tylor's (1874) classical definition. This definition seems to assume that, within the same culture, all members are programmed in the same way. Thus, those who express opposing ideas are excluded from that cultural label, consequently limiting diversity.

Hofstede claims that even though the term 'culture' is often associated with ethnic groups and nations, it can also be associated with other elements, such as, for instance, job, gender, generation, and social class. Nevertheless, values (often unconscious), in the sense of general dispositions to prefer some states of affairs over others, are at the heart of societal cultures (Hofstede, 2011, p. 5). Organisational cultures are, however, based on (visible and

[3] In this thesis, the terms 'dissonance' and 'misunderstanding' are used interchangeably to avoid repetition. It should be noted that the researcher used the word 'misunderstanding' with the participants instead of 'dissonance' to avoid confusion, because 'misunderstanding' is a commonly used word, and thus, less technical than the term 'dissonance'. For this reason, during the codification process, they were labelled under 'misunderstandings' instead of 'dissonances'. Nevertheless, it should be clarified that 'dissonances' are understood in this investigation to be 'circumstances in which speakers, deliberately or not, organise the linguistic action in such a way that hearers perceive it as conflicting with the harmonious flow of the conversation' (Zamborlin, 2007, p. 22).

conscious) practises, or, in other words, on how individuals perceive what is happening in their workplace (Hofstede, 2011, p. 4).

From the perspective of the multicultural educational settings caused by globalisation, Ylimaki and Brunderman (2022) define culture as 'the values, beliefs, and norms of behaviour embedded within the individual, the leadership team, the organisation, and the larger community' (p. 44). This definition emphasises that culture originates inside the self (e.g., personal values, background, and identity) to form a larger group containing different cultures. Thus, culture does not define the self; rather, culture is a construction formed from the different identities of the individuals who are part of a specific group with something in common (e.g., family, friendship, and occupation).

In short, values, in the form of morals and attitudes, seem to be present in the definitions and conceptualisations of culture offered over the years. When different cultures live together, multiculturalism arises, however, the phenomenon of interculturalism does not occur automatically. According to Lavić (2014, p. 341, as cited in Bakić & Dudić-Sijamija, 2021, p. 2007), the word 'interculturalism' refers to exchange relationships based on a set of dynamic fluxes that characterise interactions among individuals of various cultural backgrounds. Thus, in the context of dealing with issues that arise among members of different cultures, interculturalism requires acceptance and mutual respect.

Reflections on differences related to cultural, psychological, cognitive, ethnic, religious, sexual, and other traits lead to interculturalism. Interculturalism requires overcoming stereotypes and prejudices and promotes mutual and peaceful coexistence among nations, organisations, and individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Bakić & Dudić-Sijamija, 2021, pp. 2007–2008). Thus, to communicate successfully with other cultures and take advantage of cultural diversity, individuals need intercultural competence.

2.4. Conceptualising Intercultural Competence

Past researchers offer several definitions and frameworks of intercultural competence. However, proposed elements differ, as Klemp (1979, as cited in Deardorff, 2006, p. 242) notes: 'Competence can be measured. But its measurement depends first on its definition' (p. 41). Thus, the lack of specificity in defining intercultural competence might stem from the difficulty of identifying its specific components. For this reason, Deardorff (2004) uses the Delphi technique[4] to develop agreement among well-known scholars, academics, and administrators—all experts on interculturality—on a working definition of intercultural competence and its components with the ultimate intention of evaluating it in international institutions. One of the issues lacking consensus among experts is the name that should be given to this competence. Researchers use different terms—for instance, 'cross-cultural competence', 'global competence', 'intercultural competence', and 'global citizenship' (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247).

In the context of institutions' internationalisation strategies, the highest-rated definition, obtaining 3.5 of 4 possible points, is Byram's (1997): 'Knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviours; and relativising one's self. Linguistic competence plays a key role' (p. 34). The definition with the second-highest rating, 3.3 of 4 points, is Lambert's (1994), summarised by Deardorff (2004) as follows: 'Five components: world knowledge, foreign language proficiency, cultural empathy, approval of foreign people and cultures, ability to practice one's profession in an international setting' (p. 230). The investigators seek agreement on the factors critical in assessing intercultural competence. According to Deardorff

[4] Linstone and Turoff (1975) define the Delphi technique as a method used to structure anonymous information in order to achieve consensus among a larger group of individuals. The final aim of using the method is to allow all members to contribute equally and avoid dominance by any of them. This technique was commonly utilised before the invention of the Internet when agreement on a topic and the specialists were not close.

(2006), the top three common elements on which experts agree are (a) awareness, valuing, and understanding of cultural differences; (b) experiencing other cultures; and (c) self-awareness of one's own culture.

The scholars in Deardorff's (2004) investigation agree on defining intercultural competence as 'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes' (p. 194). To clarify this notion, 'effective' and 'appropriate' are defined. The individual can regulate 'effectiveness', while 'appropriateness' can only be determined by others taking part in the interaction. Thus, appropriateness is linked to cultural sensitivity and to the degree of others' attachment to their cultural norms and values. Other statements on which 85 percent or more of the academics in Deardorff's study agree involve individuals' capacity to switch their points of view appropriately and to act and behave adequately in intercultural situations (Deardorff, 2006). Thus, experts primarily emphasise successful communication in intercultural situations.[5]

After studying the different intercultural competence frameworks developed over the past decades, one common element seems clear among them: attitudes. In the next section, a brief review of the different models of intercultural competence appears, exemplified by one example of each type, aimed at illustrating the relevance of studying attitudes in intercultural competence development with different approaches.

2.5. Models of Intercultural Competence

Researchers propose five models of intercultural competence: co-orientational models, compositional models, developmental models, causal path/process models, and adaptation

[5] The distinction between intercultural competence and intercultural communication competence should be highlighted. Intercultural communication competence is traditionally defined as the mutual agreement of interactants' cultural identity wherein both speakers engage in behaviour perceived to be appropriate and efficient (Collier, 1989, p. 287). Nevertheless, because this research is focused on intercultural competence, intercultural communication competence will not be exhaustively described. This notion will be used rather as a blanket term to acknowledge that the use of a common language is an important element in multicultural situations but not the only element that guarantees a successful outcome.

models (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Nae, 2021; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Co-orientational models focus on conceptualising the interactional accomplishment of intercultural understanding (perceptual accuracy, empathy, clarity, and overlap of meaning systems). These models primarily involve reciprocal communication and shared meanings. Compositional models include a range of skills and personal characteristics necessary to be interculturally competent. Developmental models illustrate the stages in which people compare other cultures to their own cultures during an intercultural interaction. Causal path/process models describe correlations between the models' components. Adaptation models tackle progression of intercultural development and members' interdependence in their experience in another culture (Reid, 2013). The next sections explain and exemplify these models further to explore the common aspects among them.

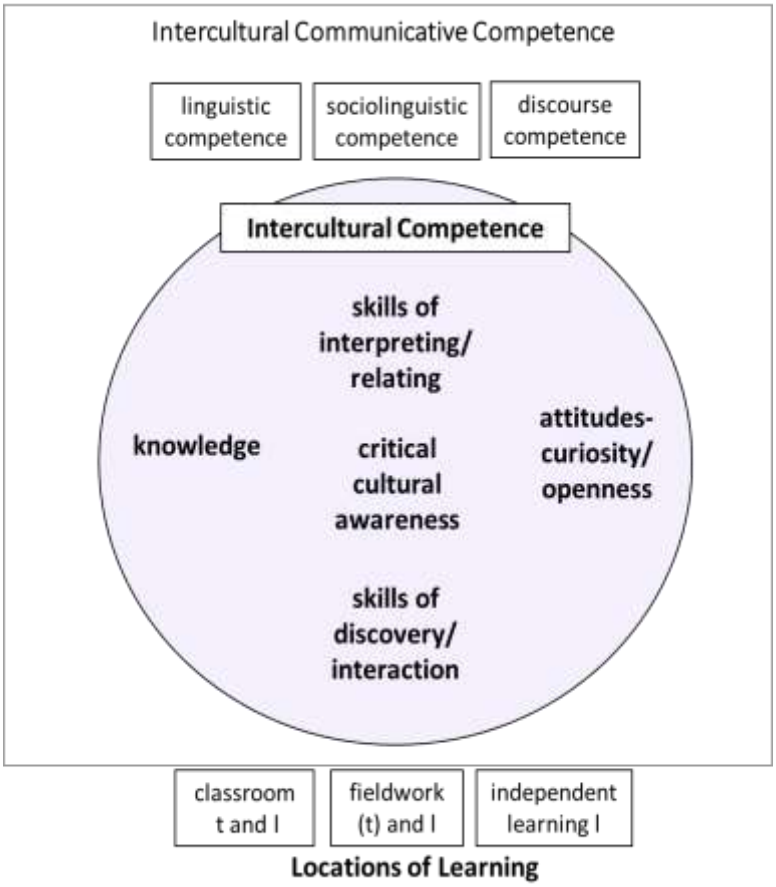
2.5.1. Co-Orientational Models

The term 'co-orientation' is used to describe five associated concepts essential to comprehending outcomes of interactional processes: understanding, overlapping perspectives, accuracy, directness, and clarity. Co-orientation may be a suitable term for conceptualising intercultural competence, as Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) explain, 'All subsequent progress in interaction seems logically predicated upon the achievement of some base level of co-orientation toward the common referential world' (p. 15). Therefore, when an interaction occurs between individuals from different cultural and historic backgrounds who have diverse experiences and speak different languages, miscommunication is likely to occur. Thus, intercultural competence needs to be developed to avoid or overcome intercultural misunderstandings.

Byram's (1997, 2008) intercultural dimensions model includes the concept of social identities, noting the necessary awareness of how they influence intercultural interactions, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Intercultural Communicative Competence: The Fifth Savoir



Note. From 'The Intercultural Speaker and the Pedagogy of Foreign Language Education', by M. Byram, 2009, in D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, p. 323.

Byram's approach rests on the principle that intercultural interactions cannot work successfully without the interactants' awareness of their own social identities and behaviours. Byram proposes several essential elements, including **attitudes**, knowledge, interpreting and relating skills, discovery and interaction skills, and critical awareness. This is the 'fifth savoir', also known as 'critical cultural awareness' in English and *savoir s'engager* in French, which is defined as 'an ability to evaluate critically and, on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries' (Byram, 2009, p. 323).

Further, Byram introduces the notion of the 'intercultural speaker'. The aim of this inclusive proposal is to avoid stereotypes caused by relying too much on one's national identity. To achieve this aim, Byram et al. (2002) suggest instruction aimed at helping learners comprehend the existence of multiple identities in a single context.

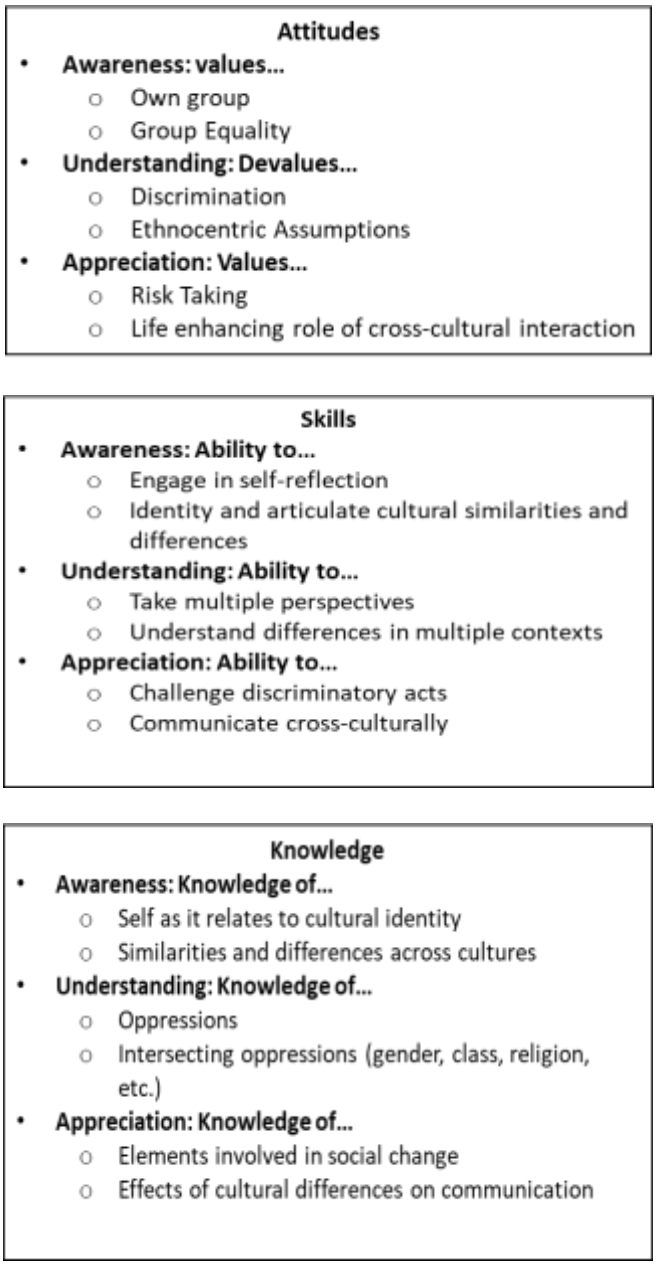
2.5.2. Compositional Models

Howard-Hamilton et al. (1998) propose a list of intercultural competence components. It is worth noting that Howard-Hamilton et al. (1998) use the terms '**attitudes**' and '**values**' interchangeably in this model, which are in fact the first dimension, because interculturally competent individuals are expected to adopt a multicentric perspective, open to taking risks. Further, interculturally competent people consider intercultural interactions an opportunity to improve their quality of life.

Their values and attitudes are complemented with knowledge competences related to understanding cultural identities, group boundaries (stereotypes), and histories of oppression of the target cultural group, as well as being aware of how these differences may affect the communication process. Motivation and knowledge are enhanced with self-reflection and the skills of articulating differences, taking perspectives, and challenging discriminatory actions assertively (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). This model is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Intercultural Competence Components Model



Note. Adapted from 'Conceptualizing Intercultural Competence', by B. H. Spitzberg and G. Changnon, 2009, in D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, p. 11.

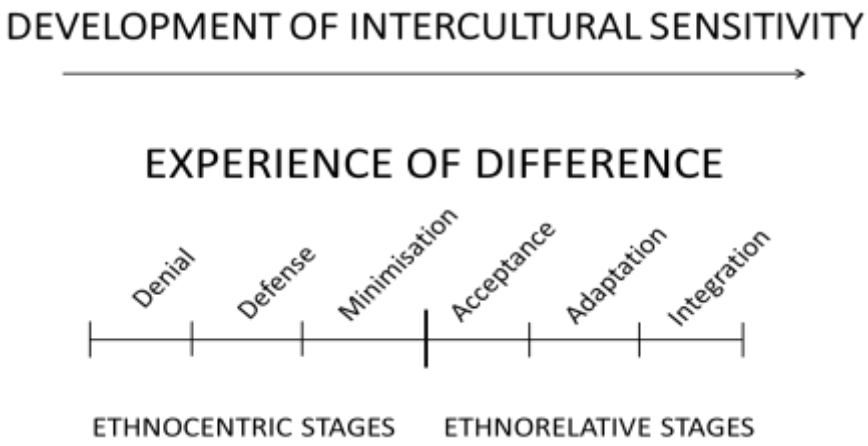
2.5.3. Developmental Models

Bennett introduces the development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) in 1993. The DMIS is designed to study how individuals build their identities by constructing

boundaries of ‘self’ and ‘other’ in intercultural situations. This model consists of testing individuals’ behaviour in intercultural scenarios and explaining how they perceive and interpret intercultural experiences. Cultural patterns are analysed to evaluate if they limit or guide individuals’ behaviour in intercultural settings (Bennett, 2018, p. 1). This model is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity



Note. From ‘Developing Intercultural Sensitivity: An Integrative Approach to Global and Domestic Diversity’, by M. Bennett and J. Bennett, J., 2004, in D. Landis, J. Bennett, and M. Bennett (Eds), *The Handbook of Intercultural Training*, p. 153.

These patterns are divided into six categories of the assessment tool, ranging from low (monocultural) to high (intercultural) sensitivity towards cultural differences.

In the first three sensitivity levels—denial, defense, and minimisation—people consider their own culture ‘superior’ to other cultures, leading to an ethnocentric attitude towards difference. At the higher sensitivity levels, the acceptance, adaptation, and integration stages involve accepting the existence of multiple cultures as being as valid as one’s own, thus demonstrating an ethnorelative perspective towards differences. Bennett’s model also includes the dimension of ‘intercultural mindset and skillset’ based on the assumption that ‘although the primary emphasis of intercultural communication is on behaviour, no behaviour exists

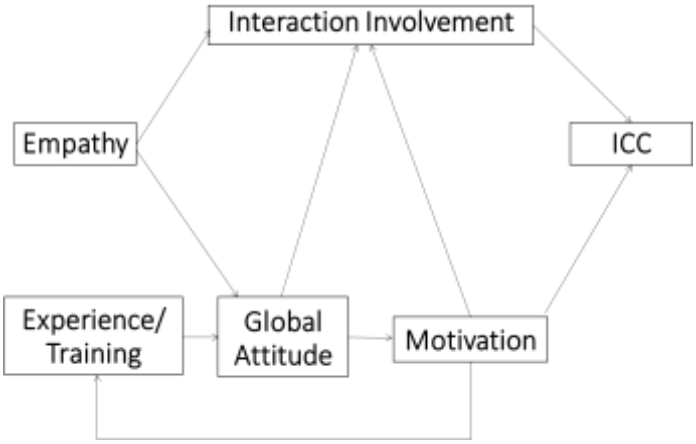
separately from thought and emotion' (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 149). Thus, maintaining **attitudes** such as curiosity and ambiguity tolerance, which motivate searching out cultural differences, is part of the 'mindset' (or, better, 'heartset') dimension.

2.5.4. Causal Path/Process Models

Using data from thirty-seven participants from fifteen different countries, Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) devise a semantic network analysis to identify five key features: empathy, experience, motivation, listening, and positive **attitudes** towards cultures different from theirs. They call this model the integrated model of intercultural communication competence (Figure 4).

Figure 4

The Integrated Model of Intercultural Communication Competence



Note. Adapted from 'Conceptualizing Intercultural Competence', by B. H. Spitzberg and G. Changnon, 2009, in D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, p. 29.

The empirically tested model demonstrates a causal relationship among these variables (Deardorff, 2017). In an improved version of the model, sensation-seeking and ethnocentrism variables are added, given their influence on intercultural competence. Sensation-seeking is a personality variable linked to a desire for new experiences. Those who seek out physiologically stimulating events and the intense feelings that come with them are known as high sensation

seekers (Arasaratnam et al., 2010). Sensation-seeking is especially significant from an international higher education point of view because high sensation seekers are actively willing to participate in intercultural contact-seeking experiences (Arasaratnam, 2006; Arasaratnam et al., 2010), such as, for instance, study-abroad programmes, courses on different languages and cultures, and intercultural competence training.

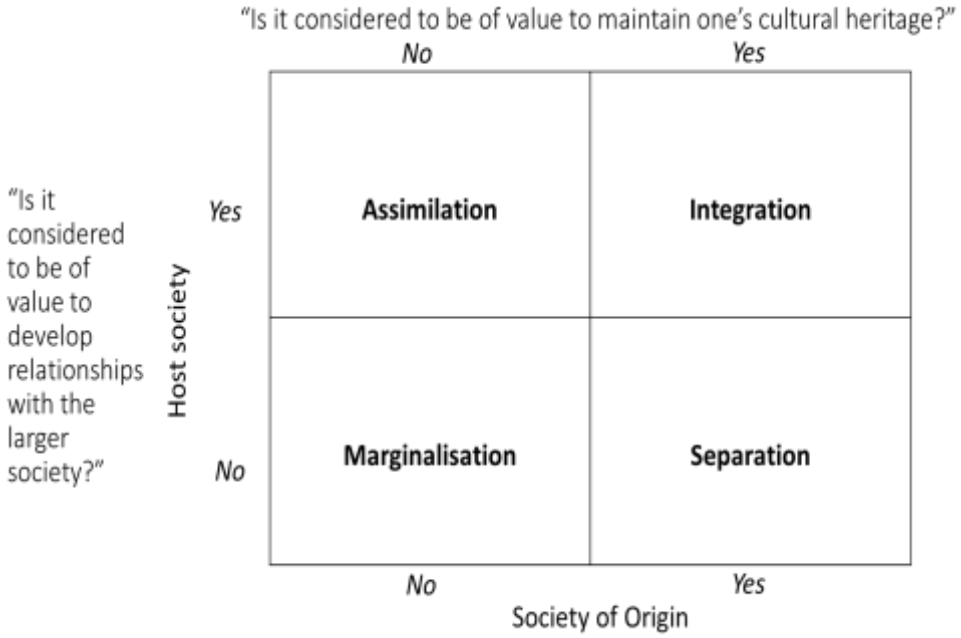
2.5.5. Adaptation Models

Adaptation models either envision multiple interactants in the process or emphasise interdependence of multiple interactants by modelling the process of mutual adjustment. Adaptation models are exemplified by Berry et al.'s (1989) **attitude** acculturation model. This model is based on the idea that if attitudes towards adapting to a new environment and keeping one's own cultural identity are seen as orthogonal and potentially contradictory, a typology of four possible acculturation styles emerges. On the one hand, 'assimilation' occurs when one chooses the value of identity absorption into the host culture. On the other hand, 'integration' recognises that multicultural groups can coexist in a multicollective system. This means that each group and its members keep their individual identities while also acknowledging the significance of maintaining the working collective, which necessitates the preservation of alternating group identities.

However, when there is little interest in the status of other groups paired with a desire to preserve one's own group connection identity, imposed 'segregation' or voluntary 'separation' may be undertaken. Berry et al. (1989) believe that a sense of acculturative stress is expected when there is little interest in either taking on another cultural identity or taking on the identity of one's own cultural origins, resulting in a sense of 'marginalisation' (Deardorff, 2017). This model is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Attitude Acculturation Model



Note. Adapted from 'Conceptualizing Intercultural Competence' by B. H. Spitzberg and G. Changnon, 2009, in D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, p. 27.

After reviewing several intercultural competence framework models, attitudes seem to appear in every one. In the following section, Deardorff's (2006) proposal, which emerges from the previously mentioned 2004 investigation, is explained in depth.

2.6. The Process Model of Intercultural Competence

According to Deardorff (2004), the essential elements of intercultural competence on which experts agree are specific attitudes, knowledge, and skills, which when applied lead to intercultural internal and external outcomes. Based on these findings, Deardorff (2006) suggests a model of intercultural competence involving these elements.

2.6.1. Attitudes

Deardorff (2004) reveals four basic attitudes exemplifying intercultural competence: discovery, openness, curiosity, and respect. Individuals who are curious and open to new

experiences are willing to leave their comfort zones to discover the world beyond their own 'cultural lenses'. Respect is important when relating to people from different cultures, showing all interactants are equally valued and fairly treated and these relationships are maintained through time. A favourable view on diverse cultures, a desire to comprehend them, and a refusal to engage in ethnocentric behaviour are all examples of intercultural attitudes (Teekens, 2003).

2.6.2. Knowledge and Comprehension

Several types of knowledge related to awareness are necessary to develop intercultural competence successfully. One knowledge type is cultural self-awareness, which means being aware of how one's own culture influences identity, behaviours, values, and perspectives (Deardorff, 2006). Becoming aware that everyone wears a cultural 'lens' is a first step towards adopting neutral views and respect for others. Another kind of knowledge is culture-specific knowledge. To understand the world from others' perspectives, one needs to learn from other cultures by travelling, reading, watching documentaries and films, and researching on the Internet. In addition, people from other cultures can serve as sources of knowledge.

Other types of knowledge include deep cultural knowledge. Gaining extensive knowledge about cultures with which one often interacts is crucial to avoid misunderstandings. Finally, sociolinguistic awareness—using language appropriately according to the cultural context—is essential to developing successful relations with diverse cultures (Deardorff, 2006). When interacting with other cultures, it is critical to examine one's cultural self-awareness; to develop culture-specific knowledge, such as, for instance, how gender roles are perceived in other cultures; and to learn the local language as well as to understand how language works in different cultures (Gopal, 2011).

2.6.3. Skills

Deardorff (2004) determines the need for several essential abilities for the acquisition and processing of this knowledge. The first essential skill is observation—the ability to observe

others' behaviours without judging, just to learn and comprehend other views. Another important skill is listening. Listening means paying attention to what others express without comparing it to one's own perspectives. Third is the skill of evaluating. Being able to examine circumstances, taking into consideration all the contextual variables, is an essential ability for building intercultural competence. Two other necessary skills are analysing and interpreting. Analysing is the ability to assess situations in a neutral and impartial way. Interpreting means making sense of situations and being aware of how one's own culture influences actions and behaviours. Finally, relating is the ability to associate causes and effects in interactions, which helps individuals perceive cultural differences and not take misunderstandings personally. Improving one's capacity for critical self-reflection, reflexivity, and communication across cultures are examples of intercultural skills (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

2.6.4. Internal Outcomes

Adaptability, flexibility, empathy, and an ethnorelative perspective are the ideal results of the acquisition of these attitudes, knowledge, and skills, all of which are crucial for intercultural competence. When one reaches this point, one can empathise with others, to interpret situations from others' perspectives, and act appropriately. Individuals can successfully accomplish these objectives to different degrees (Deardorff, 2006). However, many other variables play roles, including context, age, and the relationship between interactants. These variables should be considered.

2.6.5. External Outcomes

Individuals' behaviours and communication methods visibly demonstrate the successful or unsuccessful acquisition of these attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Thus, communicating effectively in intercultural interactions is the outcome others perceive as a noticeable indicator of intercultural competence.

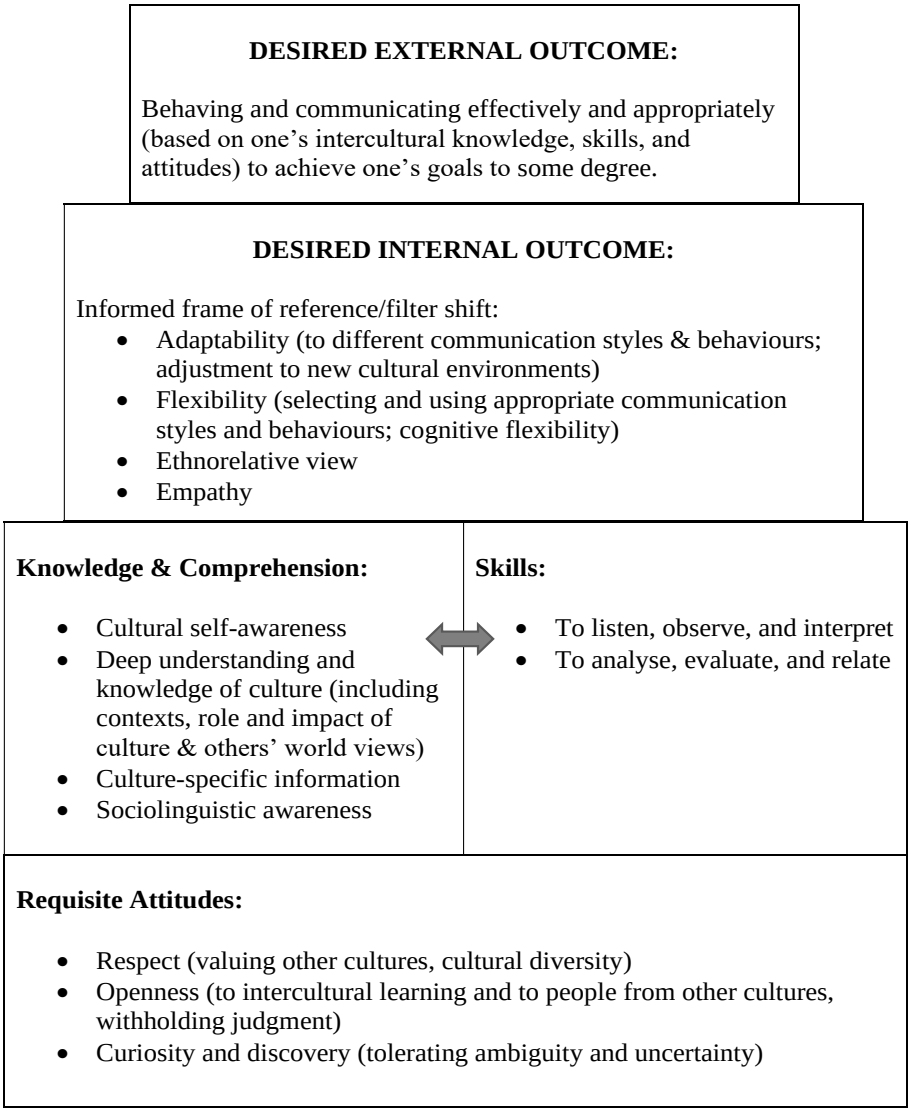
From these findings, Deardorff (2006) proposes the pyramid model of intercultural competence, which is classified as a compositional model. Deardorff's (2006) conative approach illustrates the essential attitudes required to communicate and behave minimally effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations. People who are willing to learn the fundamental knowledge and skills and to be flexible, adaptable, and empathic will likely perform successfully in intercultural interactions. Deardorff clarifies that possessing factors from the lower levels (attitudes) enhances upper levels (external and internal outcomes). Nevertheless, intercultural competence is a lifelong process.

Therefore, individuals' attitudes are critical to developing intercultural competence. In other words, if one is not open-minded, if one does not accept differences, and if one does not want to learn from these differences, intercultural competence will not occur. Even though some individuals may be able to enter these frameworks at any specific stage, attitude is an essential starting point and thus the basis of intercultural competence development (Byram, 1997), as shown in the pyramid model (Deardorff, 2006) in Figure 6.

The relevance of attitudes in the acquisition process is underlined in other models, such as Krashen's (1982, as cited in Deardorff, 2006; Ortega, 2013) theory of the affective filter. This affective filter works as a metaphor to show how a learner's attitudes influence the relative lack of success at acquiring a second language. Negative emotions, including lack of motivation, lack of self-confidence, and learning anxiety, impede and hamper language learning. Even though Krashen (1982) studies second-language acquisition, this affective filter is relevant to the process of developing intercultural competence. Similarly, Lynch and Hanson (1998) emphasise the essential role that attitudes play in intercultural competence development by declaring 'after all the books have been read and the skills learned and practiced, the cross-cultural effectiveness of each of us will vary. And it will vary more by what we bring to the learning than by what we have learned' (p. 510, as cited in Deardorff, 2006, p. 255).

Figure 6

The Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence[6]



Note. Adapted from 'The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States', by D. K. Deardorff, 2006, *Journal of Studies in International Education, 10,* p. 254.

In addition, Deardorff's (2006) framework shows that intercultural competence is a lifelong process. In other words, no one point exists at which someone becomes completely

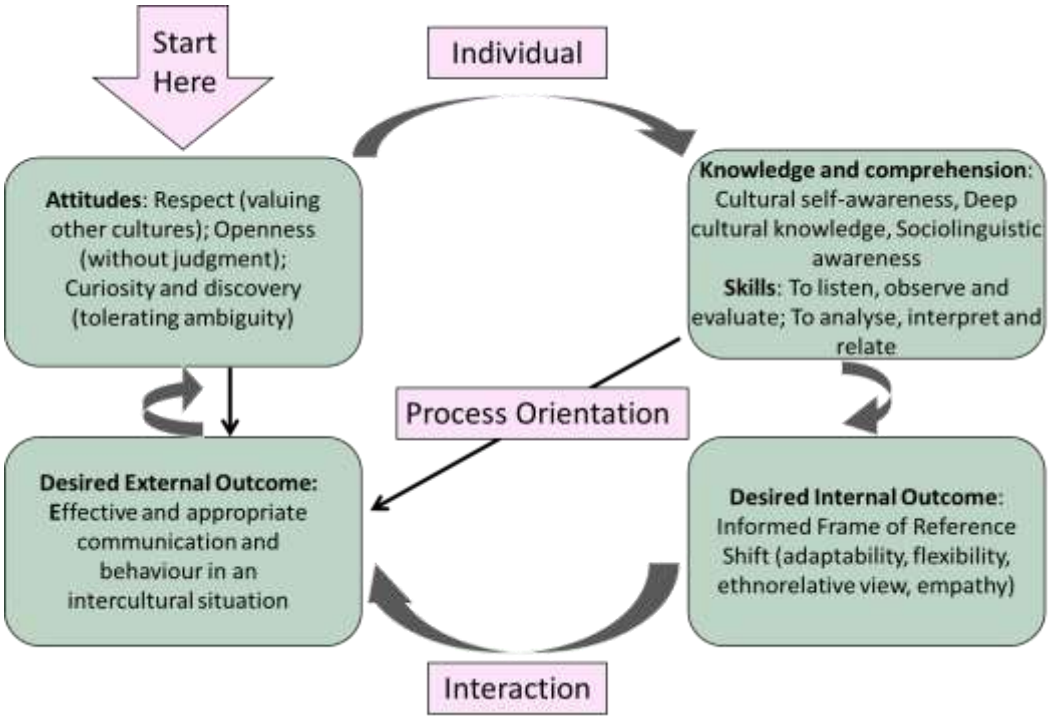
[6] Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes). Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of attitudes, knowledge/ comprehension, and skills (Deardorff, 2006, p. 254).

interculturally competent. For this reason, self-awareness and critical reflection are crucial skills in its development. In this vein, one of Deardorff's (2004) most relevant findings is that the experts on interculturality cannot completely agree on the role of language in intercultural competence development—in other words, language alone does not guarantee speakers' competency in the target culture. Hence, linguistic skills are necessary and may help, but speaking the language of the target culture is not enough to develop one's intercultural competence and avoid misunderstandings. However, specific attitudes seem to be the crucial starting point (Deardorff, 2006, p. 255).

To illustrate how this lifelong process works, Deardorff (2006, p. 256) proposes the process model of intercultural competence (Figure 7). Deardorff's (2006) model implies movement from the personal level (attitudes) to the interpersonal level (intercultural interaction). As in the pyramid model, moving from attitudes or moving from attitudes and skills/knowledge dimensions directly to the external outcome is possible; however, the degree of appropriateness and effectiveness of these outcomes may not be as high as when possessing the requisite foundations. For instance, behaving and communicating appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations without being flexible, adaptable and empathic, is conceivable to some extent.

Figure 7

The Process Model of Intercultural Competence[7]



Note. Adapted from 'The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalisation at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States', by D. K. Deardorff, 2006, *Journal of Studies in International Education, 10*, p. 256.

That is, if individuals do not learn to see from others' perspectives by being empathic and flexible, cultural clashes are likely to occur even if the interactants have learned about both their own culture and the target culture. Yet, **attitudes** seem to be the non-negotiable, indispensable element necessary to develop, or at least to begin to develop, intercultural competence (Bloom, 1965; Deardorff, 2006; Dinges, 1983; Huber, 2012). As Deardorff (2006) declares, 'Specifically, the attitudes of openness, respect (valuing all cultures), and curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity) are viewed as fundamental to intercultural competence' (p. 255).

[7] Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes). Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of attitudes, knowledge/ comprehension, and skills (Deardorff, 2006).

Further, the element of ‘understanding others’ worldviews’ seems to be a basic aspect of intercultural competence as well—in fact, it is the only element that received 100 percent agreement among scholars in Deardorff’s (2004) study. If understanding is the base from which to develop intercultural competence and thus one of the main issues needing attention, empathy could serve as the starting point. As mentioned, intercultural empathy is one of the main outcomes of the lifelong process of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Moreover, intercultural empathy is hypothesised to be one of the requisite values necessary for the rest of the internal outcomes of intercultural competence—adaptability, flexibility, and ethnorelative view—to develop. Thus, intercultural empathy links human values and intercultural competence. For these reasons, the next section is devoted to exploring the concept of intercultural empathy in depth.

2.7. Intercultural Empathy

The concept of culture has been used for centuries to describe the distinctive characteristics of a group of people, including their beliefs and behaviours. As a result of globalisation, the term ‘culture’ is now applied to an increasing number of entities: countries, regions, cities, neighbourhoods, companies, organisations, and even groups of people within these entities, such as social classes. The ability to empathise with others is an important life skill often associated with prosocial behaviour and is present in different cultures across the world (Zhu, 2011). However, the concept of intercultural empathy is relatively new. It represents an important shift from only partially understanding other cultures towards being able to understand them with the same depth and insight as one’s own. Applying intercultural empathy does not mean no longer feeling or appreciating one’s own culture. Rather, it means connecting with other cultures in a meaningful way—in ways that foster learning from others, thereby contributing to those cultures in positive ways.

Only recently in human history has multiculturalism been on the rise (Ashford & Bevir, 2019). In the modern world, it is commonplace to interact with people from other cultural backgrounds. These interactions can occur in various situations, but the most common are in internationalised environments, where individuals from different cultures often work together on projects. Although they may share a common language, this does not mean that they will always understand each other or know how to communicate with each other. Because of their different cultural backgrounds, they might not understand certain things about each other or be able to relate to each other (Lahdesmaki & Koistinen, 2021).

As people become increasingly intertwined in a global economy, it is more important than ever for people to understand those around them who have different cultural backgrounds (Boynazarov, 2022). Studies have shown that several factors, including ethnocentrism and stereotyping, determine if someone will be able to identify and empathise with another person who has a different background from their own (Bagwe & Haskollar, 2020). To ensure that interactions are smooth and efficient, people must be aware of their culture and the cultures of others around them (Kong et al., 2020). Simply because a person is part of a certain culture does not mean that person will necessarily follow behaviours associated with that particular group.

Intercultural empathy involves trying to understand the perspective of someone from a different cultural background. Intercultural empathy is the ability to step outside the limits of one's awareness and inhabit another person's world (Broome, 2017). This ability includes understanding that a person or group may do or believe something one may not necessarily agree with. It should be noted that this is not the same as tolerance. Intercultural empathy requires going beyond tolerance and looking at the world through another person's eyes. It is not enough to simply know what it feels like to be different—it is also important to know how it feels to be like others (Zhu, 2011). However, when trying to understand others, one should

remember there will always be differences between their experiences and those of others. Nevertheless, this realisation should not limit one's ability to appreciate and empathise with other cultures.

In addition, intercultural empathy calls for a shift in focus from a self-centric outlook towards the experiences of other people. Synthesising the perspectives of others helps overcome the differences that often separate people. It should be noted that although empathy is a complex cognitive process requiring imagining what someone else is feeling based on one's own experiences, intercultural empathy involves adopting the perspective of someone from another culture—that is, seeing the world through their eyes while acknowledging and understanding the differences between perspectives.

Intercultural empathy is a component of intercultural communication, crucial in today's global economy and increasingly diverse societies (Calloway-Thomas et al., 2017). Intercultural empathy helps one get along with others in everyday life and can even increase productivity. For example, when working with people from other countries, it can be helpful to view things from their point of view. Different perspectives regarding various issues may emerge, augmenting effective communication and improving relationships. According to Broome (2017), intercultural empathy enhances human interaction and makes it easier to engage in tasks requiring consensus and coordination.

2.7.1. Assessing Intercultural Empathy

Although the definition of intercultural empathy seems simple, its measurement is not (Gonzalez-Gonzalez et al., 2015). There are several theories and models that attempt to describe and measure the concept, but in practise, these models can be simplified into two general categories: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative models rely on metrics such as survey questions or self-assessments to determine levels of empathy. Qualitative models involve interviews and observations.

Some tools used in measuring intercultural empathy include knowledge tests, observation, and self-report. Knowledge tests measure general information about another culture. Observation measures the extent to which an individual judges the target person's behaviour accurately; it is usually accompanied by a pretest questionnaire asking participants to describe their mental images of people from the other culture. Self-report tools measure attitudes towards members of another culture and willingness to cooperate with them (Brossard-Børhaug & Harnes, 2020).

For instance, the Intercultural Empathy Index (IEI) consists of a series of questions about a hypothetical person from another culture whom participants have never met before. Based on the answers, the score will indicate participants' levels of intercultural empathy. The IEI consists of two parts: affective empathy and cognitive empathy. Affective empathy refers to how much one feels for another person's emotions; cognitive empathy refers to how much one understands or identifies with another person's emotions. In education, the Intercultural Empathy Test Model (IETM) helps students enhance their intercultural competence through self-study (Brossard-Børhaug & Harnes, 2020).

2.7.2. The Role of Empathy in Intercultural Competence

The role of empathy in intercultural competence has long been acknowledged. For example, Ruben and Kealy (1979) classify empathy as one of the seven elemental variables in successful intercultural adaptation and later interactions. Ruben and Kealy define empathy as the 'capacity to "put one-self in another's shoes"—or to behave as if one could' (p. 17). Further, Arasatnam and Doerfel (2005) studied how people from fifteen different countries defined how an interculturally competent person should behave; empathy is present in all responses. In a similar vein, Arasatnam et al. (2010) detected a direct causal relationship between empathy and intercultural competence. Empathic individuals tend to have positive attitudes towards those from different cultural backgrounds and are willing to listen, which is, in fact, one of their main

skills. Arasatnam (2006) suggests that the empathy value could compensate in contexts in which the interlocutors have no prior experience in intercultural communication.

Similarly, Calloway-Thomas et al. (2017) connect the value of empathy to intercultural competence, defining empathy as 'the ability "imaginatively" to enter into and participate in the world of the cultural "Other" cognitively, affectively, and behaviourally' (p. 35). These authors note, 'Of all the sentiments that have the potential to alter what we do interculturally and especially in higher education, none is more important than empathy' (p. 33). In fact, the term 'empathy' appears in much of the literature on intercultural competence (Chen, 2013; Deardorff, 2006; Guntersdorfer & Golubeva, 2018; Yongchen, 2003; Zhu, 2011). For this reason, this value might be essential particularly among the members of internationalised higher education institutions who seek to achieve 'internationalisation at home', as well as for those students and staff who cannot travel abroad and immerse themselves in the intercultural experience but still want to develop their intercultural competence at their home university.

Intercultural competence trainers, as well as educators of international higher education institutions, should be aware of the boundaries that might prevent intercultural empathy from developing successfully. Zhu (2011, p. 117, as cited in Calloway-Thomas et al., 2017, p. 35) lists several barriers that could impede its development:

- Stereotypes and prejudices that may lead to negative inferences about others;
- Overreliance on human universals without paying attention to cultural differences;
- Lack of awareness of cultural differences, especially in the underlying values patterns of thinking; and
- 'Indiscriminate application' of one's own cultural practices (p. 38).

In short, internationalised universities' curriculums and programmes need to consider these obstacles to implement appropriate measures to prevent them.

2.8. Intercultural Competence and Internationalisation

Deardorff (2004) notes intercultural competence as one of the long-term desired outcomes of internationalisation of higher education. Deardorff investigates how institutions define and develop students' intercultural competence and concludes that intercultural competence does not 'just happen' for most of the university members taking part in internationalisation, not even for students who have been abroad for a long time. Therefore, intercultural competence should be intentionally addressed. Deardorff's (2006) framework could help guide higher education institutions with an integrated and comprehensive approach. Table 1 summarises these ideas.

Table 1

General Programme Logic Model Applied to Internationalisation

Element	Definition
Inputs/resources	Needed for implementation of components of internationalisation (i.e., interested students, funding, institutional leadership and support)
Activities/components of Internationalisation	College leadership, faculty international involvement, curriculum, study abroad, international students/scholars/faculty, international cocurricular units (Ellingboe, 1998)
Outputs of internationalisation	For example, number of international students, number of study-abroad programmes, number of students studying foreign languages, etc.
Outcomes of internationalisation	For example, interculturally competent graduates (Knight, 1997). Intercultural competence—what is it? How do higher education administrators define it? Intercultural scholars? How can it be assessed?

Note. Adapted from *Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization,* by D. K. Deardorff, 2006, p. 243.

Deardorff (2009) observes that assessing the entire intercultural competence process at the same time could be complex and challenging and might not lead to successful results. For

this reason, Deardorff recommends prioritising specific aspects of intercultural competence 'based on the overall mission and purpose of the course, programme, or organisation' (p. 481) starting by attitudes, as the basis of the process.

The process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) was selected for this investigation for the following reasons:

- This framework includes what experts in interculturalism from different approaches have proposed as key elements in the development of intercultural competence.
- Rather than being a temporary framework, Deardorff's model defines intercultural competence as a lifelong process. This aspect is essential in terms of attitudes and values, the central point of this research, because people's values and their resulting attitudes can vary over time depending on maturity and experience.
- This model focuses on the context of higher education, specifically in internationalised universities, where the participants of this investigation worked.

For these reasons, Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence was considered the most suitable for carrying out this research. In the next section, various tools to assess intercultural competence are discussed.

2.9. Assessing Intercultural Competence

As discussed, intercultural competence refers to thinking, functioning, communicating, and acting across all cultural disciplines (European Commission, 2023). With increased and improved modes of transport, it is possible to explore every part of the world; thus, the integration techniques for socialisation are the basic principles of intercultural competence. Intercultural competence includes skills such as critical thinking, analysing, observing, and listening, all valuable when there is a need to acknowledge cultural elements such as self-awareness, beliefs, values, and identity. Attitude is fundamental, comprising elements such as

curiosity, openness, respect, and discovery, while communication relates to literacy, dialogue, nonverbal communication, and language (Intercultural Readiness Check, 2021).

The Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA) project focuses on subject knowledge and language (Boynazarov, 2022). This tool is significant for creating meaning, communicative awareness, respect for other people, tolerance for ambiguity, empathy, and knowledge discovery (Prechtl & Lund, 2008). According to Boynazarov (2022), the Intercultural Competence Assessment consists of twenty-one questions that test reactions to intercultural situations.

The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) consists of ninety-one items informed by questions that focus on cross-cultural psychology to investigate how people interact with others within a culturally diversified setup (Hofhuis et al., 2020). The principle behind the framework is to acknowledge the differences in how people behave when meeting new individuals from distinct backgrounds. As a personality questionnaire, this tool emphasises parameters such as cultural empathy, social initiative, flexibility, emotional stability, and open-mindedness (Boynazarov, 2022). Communication across cultural boundaries is critical in elaborating on how people interact; thus, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire is useful for assessing international employees and students (Van der Zee et al., 2013). The objective is to ascertain if employees and students are fit for the job market or if they can handle new ways of life.

The Intercultural Readiness Check (IRC) uses sixty questions to determine interculturalism among individuals (Dodd, 2007). The questions are based on aspects such as preference for certainty, intercultural communication, building commitment, and intercultural communication. In addition, the tool uses a scale to measure conflict resolution strategies, relationship building, tolerance for ambiguity, and leadership (Fantini, 2009). The instrument

has proven effective: People who pass Intercultural Readiness Check assessments are highly adept at surviving in a multicultural environment.

Hammer and Bennett (2009) developed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a tool consisting of fifty questions based on Bennett's developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Boynazarov, 2022). The IDI measures cognitive structure, which emphasises how people interact with ethnic communities (Intercultural Development Inventory, 2022). Acknowledging the relevance of having adaptive behaviour is essential—adaptive behaviour is critical when interacting with people from diverse cultures.

Measuring intercultural competence accurately involves a multimeasure, multiperspective approach. However, the focus of this study was on attitudes—an important factor affecting intercultural competence. For this reason, a tool to assess intercultural competence was sought that was more focused on evaluating personal characteristics (values), with the aim of observing how these are reflected in the daily life of internationalised university workers. After reviewing many intercultural competence assessment tools, the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009) was considered the most suitable in the context of the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities. Further, the different dimensions proposed in this scale seem to align with Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence. The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale is described in the following section.

2.9.1. The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale

To propose a method to assess intercultural competence, the Kozai Group[8] (2009) offers the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES), a questionnaire that evaluates participants' capacity

[8] The Kozai Group is composed of five partners: Allan Bird, Mark Mendenhall, Gary Oddou, Joyce Osland, and Michael Stevens. Their group helps people and organisations work more effectively across their differences in order to live harmoniously and successfully achieve their social and professional goals. The group uses their intercultural experiences and extensive knowledge about cross-cultural effectiveness to provide training

to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. This scale measures several dimensions, including continuous learning, interpersonal engagement, and hardiness, composed of subdimensions, described in the following sections (Mendenhall et al., 2012, pp. 7–12).

2.9.1.1. Continuous Learning

Attitudes towards culture and towards individuals from other cultures influence one's success in intercultural social and professional interactions. Thus, the continuous learning dimension cognitively evaluates how individuals perceive cultural differences. Specifically, the dimension reflects how they engage with the world by seeking to understand themselves as well as by learning about the actions, behaviours, and events taking place in an intercultural setting unfamiliar to them (Mendenhall et al., 2012, p. 7). This dimension is divided into two relevant skills: self-awareness and exploration. These abilities affect intercultural success or failure by functioning as internal motivators intended to discover why individuals from other cultures act and think in a specific way. People who are always striving to learn about other cultures and societies live and work more favourably with individuals from other cultures than do those who are content and satisfied with what they already know (Fernandez-Araoz et al., 2018; Silvia & Christensen, 2020). Exploration and self-awareness are the two aspects comprising this dimension.

2.9.1.2. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness affects one's ability to learn on a continual basis as well as the way in which one learns. This dimension measures (a) the degree to which individuals are aware of their strengths and weaknesses; (b) their own values and principles; (c) the ways experiences

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to private, public, and nonprofit organisations on five continents. For further information: https://www.kozaigroup.com/about/

have helped shape who they are as individuals; and (d) the impact their values and behaviours have on themselves and others (Mendenhall et al., 2012).

On the one hand, those who obtain high scores on this dimension are acutely aware of their own values, strengths, limits, behavioural inclinations, as well as of the ways these elements can affect and influence others. Those with high self-awareness are continuously evaluating themselves during their lives. On the other hand, those who obtain low scores express little interest in learning about themselves or in discovering how their values and behavioural inclinations influence others. They are uninterested in attempting to comprehend their experiences. Low self-awareness can foster self-deception and hubris, whereas high self-awareness may lead to purposeful development of new competences and abilities (Feize & Gonzalez, 2018).

This subdimension seems to align with the cultural self-awareness dimension in Deardorff's model, given that values, limits, and behavioural inclinations are highly influenced by culture. If individuals are aware of this influence, they may be able to evaluate themselves to identify their own strengths and weaknesses from a more neutral point of view.

2.9.1.3. Exploration

Exploration is defined as broad-mindedness and openness to new and diverse ideas, beliefs, norms, contexts, and behaviours, as well as an active willingness to understand them. Exploration entails a desire to learn about the underlying causes of cultural differences while avoiding stereotyping people from other cultures. It also refers to a person's ability to seek out possibilities for development and learning (Mendenhall et al., 2012). Exploration represents a core curiosity, an innate drive to discover new things, and the capacity to learn from failures and alter personal methods to guarantee success in social and professional environments (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018).

This subdimension is related to the requisite openness, curiosity, and discovery attitudes in Deardorff's (2006) model, which allow the individual to obtain deep cultural knowledge to be able to behave effectively in intercultural interactions.

2.9.1.4. Interpersonal Engagement

Strong bonds with individuals from diverse cultures could serve as sources of knowledge and social support to help people comprehend the cultures of others. Developing meaningful relations mostly stems from individuals' desires to learn about people from different cultures, including their habits, customs, values, and so forth. The more information they can learn, the larger the common ground on which to build an adequate relationship and a solid connection (Mol et al., 2005). Two different scales are used to measure this dimension: global mindset and relationship interest.

2.9.1.5. Global Mindset

Global mindset assesses the degree to which one is interested in and willing to learn about other cultures and the individuals who live in and belong to those cultures. International newspapers, foreign media, the Internet, and films and documentaries, among other resources, are useful sources of information (Mendenhall et al., 2012). The strength of a global mindset is reflected in the degree to which one actively pursues these sources to enhance personal knowledge about different people and their cultures (Ursu, 2018). Moreover, a global mindset establishes the basis for more productive interactions with individuals from diverse cultures and societies, which could lead to successful intercultural relationships (MacGregor & Esmail, 2018).

This subdimension closely relates to curiosity and discovery attitudes in Deardorff's model. These attitudes are indispensable for individuals to learn from other cultures and obtain deep cultural knowledge about them.

2.9.1.6. Relationship Interest

Relationship interest involves evaluating the degree to which one has a desire and readiness to begin and maintain relationships with people from various cultures. Those who score highly on this dimension strive to form consistent bonds with others and enhance feelings of belonging, a trait positively evaluated for intercultural effectiveness (Meleady et al., 2021; Wolff & Borzikowsky, 2018). Possessing high relationship interest means that, for them, establishing social relations is an energy-producing activity. This interest might also serve as a motivation to learn new languages, which can lead to establishing better relationships with more people. In contrast, for those who score low on this measure, this activity can be energy-depleting; for them, the responsibility of maintaining social relationships falls to others (Mendenhall et al., 2012).

This subdimension aligns with the dimension of attitudes in Deardorff's (2006) model. First, respect, which implies valuing other's cultures, is essential if individuals are interested in maintaining relationships with people from other cultures. Second, openness attitudes require refraining from judging people from other cultures, which is required for maintaining relationships with people from other cultures. Finally, curiosity and discovery attitudes are essential for people to feel integrated into a different culture, and thus, for individuals from the predominant culture to maintain positive relationships with people from other cultures. Further, this dimension aligns with the relating skills in the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

2.9.1.7. Hardiness

Appreciating differences in a positive way (cognitively and emotionally) and avoiding being judgemental is essential to collaborating efficiently with people from different cultural backgrounds and to adapting oneself to new cultural contexts. Having a favourable attitude towards cultural diversity improves the chances of forming meaningful relationships

(Mendenhall et al., 2012). At the same time, these intercultural bonds enhance the desire to learn more about the new culture and gain a deeper understanding of it. Mendenhall et al. (2012) find open-mindedness 'helps to build cultural bridges rather than build walls between cultures' (p. 11). Nevertheless, even if one shows this open orientation towards different cultures, problems and challenges in multicultural situations can arise and cause frustration. Being unsure of what to do can be discouraging. Developing the characteristic of hardiness—the capacity to handle stress and remain relaxed—is a necessary skill for long-term intercultural success (AlTaher, 2019). Positive regard and emotional resilience are the two dimensions that make up this scale.

2.9.1.8. Positive Regard

Positive regard describes a tendency to see other cultures and people from other cultures from a positive viewpoint, thus showing a preference for a more optimistic view of human nature (Mendenhall et al., 2012) rather than falling into negative stereotypes. Those who score highly on this dimension generally have a more constructive outlook on people and are more tolerant towards diverse behaviours, habits, and values. They do not normally rely on unfavourable prejudices about other cultures or their members, preferring instead to make positive assumptions. As a result, individuals from different cultures are more likely to respond positively to them, contributing to more effective intercultural relations and experiences, and decreasing levels of frustration, anxiety, and stress (Aski & Weintritt, 2020; de Hei et al., 2020; Swartz et al., 2020).

In contrast, those who score low on this dimension are more likely to fall into unfavourable stereotypes towards cultures different from their own, making them more prone to focusing on the negative elements of their relationships with individuals from other cultures. They tend to categorise individuals and circumstances negatively to make sense of the world and consequently fail to trust others, always seeing only the negative side. As a result, they are

unable to form successful relationships with people from cultures that differ from their own, which increases their stress and dissatisfaction (Mendenhall et al., 2012).

This subdimension seems to align specifically with respect attitudes. Those who value other cultures may be able to perceive others from a positive perspective and thereby demonstrate an optimistic view towards human nature in the context of different cultures. Further, deep cultural knowledge helps people value other cultures and avoid falling into stereotypes and baseless generalisations. As a result, they may have a more positive perspective of other human beings.

2.9.1.9. Emotional Resilience

Emotional resilience is defined as a person's emotional strength when dealing with difficult (intercultural) situations. Emotional resilience refers to the ability to persevere in the face of significant intercultural obstacles (Mendenhall et al., 2012). People who are able to regulate and control their emotions are better at using other global competences, compared to those who are not (Khukhlaev, 2020; Liu & Boyatzis, 2021). This notion is similar to the concept of emotional intelligence, defined as the capacity to recognise, use, and control one's own emotions in a positive way with the objective of reducing stress and frustration, communicating successfully, sympathising with others, and overcoming the obstacles and conflicts that may arise, thereby enhancing intercultural competence (Guntersdorfer & Golubeva, 2018).

This subdimension closely relates to the internal outcomes of Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence. Individuals who are going through the lifelong process of intercultural competence development will be emotionally stronger. This occurs because possessing those attitudes, knowledge, and skills enhances people's adaptability and flexibility and encourages their ethnorelativism and empathy. Specifically, deep cultural knowledge helps strengthen individuals; if one is aware of the differences and similarities

between cultures and has the tools to face discrepancies or clashes that may occur, intercultural interactions will not be a problem but an opportunity to acquire deeper cultural knowledge.

According to Mendenhall et al. (2011, p. 8), intercultural competence is developed efficiently as the result of combining all these skills. The competence that has the most impact on people's ability to adapt and perform successfully is their motivation to learn (exploration). In other words, and in line with Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006), attitudes are the basis of intercultural competence. Facing new situations, rules, conventions, values, and communication styles that differ from one's own in an efficient way occurs through taking great interest in other cultures and the people who live in them (global mindset). The quality of what people learn is contingent on their willingness to comprehend what they encounter (positive regard). Knowledge instils confidence, which is necessary to become completely involved in a new environment (similar to Krashen's [1982] affective filter). Meeting individuals from the same and different cultural backgrounds provides one with extra sources of knowledge and a sense of belonging.

Further, the educational path would be incomplete without the development of human relations (relationship interest). The extent to which one communicates and acts responsibly and respectfully determines the value of those relationships with other individuals. To accomplish this goal, one needs to have a firm grasp of one's own values, conventions, and inclinations, as well as an understanding of how these elements affect others and oneself (self-awareness). Sense of belonging is enhanced by confidence in understanding of the world and high-quality interactions caused by healthy human relationships, which generate positive attitudes. All these factors, paired with a natural capacity to manage stress (emotional resilience), allow people to perform efficiently in intercultural situations.

The extent to which individuals develop all these intercultural capacities largely depends on the context in which interactions take place because cultures differ in their use of

context and information to create meaning (Hall, 1976). For this reason, the relationship between pragmatics and intercultural competence is discussed in the next section.

2.10. Pragmatics and Intercultural Competence

Most basic and standardised definitions of 'pragmatics' deal with meaning in use or meaning in context (Thomas, 2014). More accurately, 'pragmatics can be usefully defined as the study of how utterances have meanings in situations' (Leech, 1983, p. 10). Nevertheless, something seems to be missing from the concept of standard pragmatics; the definition assumes that communication success depends on the presence of commonalities and conventions between speaker and hearer. However, it is widely known that conventions and commonalities are not universal, and they hardly count when dealing with intercultural situations—in reality, a common basis or background cannot be taken for granted. For this reason, the aim of intercultural pragmatics is to bring these missing notions to the fore (Kecskes, 2014).

Following this line of reasoning, Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo (2021) propose an innovative method to measure intercultural competence through pragmatics. Based on the assumption that globalisation has changed the role of English, people no longer learn English to communicate only with native speakers of the language; rather, they use it as a lingua franca in any intercultural context. Thus, communication skills transcend grammar to involve pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and behavioural abilities, probably more than ever, because of the current international role of English. The changeable essence of intercultural competence itself makes it difficult to measure with questionnaires or scales; instead, Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo suggest critical self-reflection as the tool for assessing intercultural competence, a method supported by other experts in the field (e.g., Deardorff, 2019; Holmes & O'Neill, 2010; Snow, 2015).

Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo (2021) observe that, although communicative and interpersonal dimensions are included in some models, none of the instruments contains

an assessment of pragmatic abilities despite the importance some authors place on them in the development of language learners' intercultural competence (Félix-Brasdéfer, 2017; Jackson, 2019; McConachy, 2018; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). For this reason, their proposal involves an evaluation of pragmatic competence, more particularly, of (meta)pragmatic awareness.

Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo (2021) define pragmatic awareness as 'a cognitive ability that involves understanding the norms of appropriateness concerning the use of individual utterances to carry out speech acts and other pragmatic functions given the communicative setting and aspects of the sociocultural context' (p. 203). In other words, pragmatic awareness includes both pragmalinguistic aspects, such as linguistic forms employed to accomplish specific communicative purposes, and sociopragmatic aspects of language, comprising social and cultural conventions that help define the context and appropriateness in language use (Leech, 1983).

Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo (2021) propose a tool to measure intercultural competence through assessing pragmatic awareness (pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects) and intercultural adaptability. These authors gave three intercultural scenarios to their students and examined the students' self-reflections according to a rubric the researchers designed. In this rubric, students' intercultural awareness and adaptability were classified at the initial, intermediate, or mature level, which together indicate students' levels of intercultural competence.

For instance, a student at the mature level of intercultural awareness, in terms of sociopragmatic aspects, could identify in metapragmatic comments precisely which kind of pragmalinguistic elements are being used as well as perceive other background aspects of the utterance (Sánchez-Hernández & Maíz-Arévalo, 2021). A student at the intermediate level of intercultural awareness, regarding sociopragmatic aspects, would be aware that the

interlocutors' relationship is likely to influence the interaction by explicitly mentioning, for instance, social distance, power, or cultural similarities (Sánchez-Hernández & Maíz-Arévalo, 2021). This research pays special attention to intercultural adaptability. For this reason, this dimension is explored in the next section.

2.11. Intercultural Adaptability

Adaptability is conceptualised as the skill to act and behave effectively in a wide variety of situations. To be adaptable, interactional abilities need to be developed so pragmatic information can be applied efficiently in a flexible manner (Ishihara, 2019, p. 165, as cited in Sánchez-Hernández & Maíz-Arévalo, 2021, p. 202). Lacking this skill could hinder intercultural competence. In Deardorff's (2006) model, intercultural adaptability is considered one of the main internal outcomes of the lifelong process model of intercultural competence, together with flexibility, ethnorelative view, and empathy. This research devotes special attention to intercultural empathy because it is an essential human value present in intercultural competence, and because it is considered the first step towards intercultural adaptability. If one is able to understand another without judgement, the adaptation process will be easier.

Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo (2021) consider intercultural adaptability one of the three dimensions hypothesised to measure intercultural competence. In their investigation, students at the initial level of intercultural adaptability were not willing to adjust to the situation (i.e., did not believe the intercultural dissonance posed by the researchers could have been averted); the students therefore provided ineffective solutions or blamed the other interactant. Overall, people at this level revealed strong evidence of ethnocentrism and the perpetuation of stereotypes. In contrast, students at the intermediate level of intercultural adaptability demonstrated willingness to adapt to the situation through linguistic or psychological flexibility and suggested adaptation strategies the narrator could have used. Nevertheless, they exhibited a culturally neutral stance that concealed neither ethnocentrism nor respect for the target

culture. Finally, students at the mature level of intercultural adaptability showed an ability to see the perspectives of the two cultures, an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, and a willingness to adapt to the situation, whether through communicative or psychological adaptability. They also did not perceive cultural differences as a barrier to communication (Sánchez-Hernández & Maíz-Arévalo, 2021, p. 225).

In sum, the extent to which people are ethnocentric and governed by stereotypes instead of trying to challenge them when travelling or meeting someone from a different culture will strongly depend on their internal values and resulting attitudes, which lead to the development of their intercultural competence. The relationships among these three concepts are discussed in the following section.

2.12. Values, Attitudes, and Intercultural Competence

As reviewed throughout this chapter, specific attitudes, knowledge, and skills are the key elements for successfully developing intercultural competence. Knowledge and skills can be taught; nevertheless, attitudes, the basis of intercultural competence, seem to present a greater challenge when training on intercultural competence. The question of whether attitudes can be taught and how they can be taught has been an ongoing discussion in society (Arold et al., 2022; Lichtenstein, 1934; Piper, 1993; Ricci & Markulis, 1992). Education is generally considered a tool for social change; if so, it is assumed that attitudes can be modified (Lichtenstein, 1934). In fact, students at primary and secondary schools learn about subjects such as ‘ethics’ and ‘citizenship education’ that aim to influence students’ attitudes and values.

As previously discussed, there seems to be an intrinsic relationship between values and attitudes, and thus, between values and intercultural competence. Empathy is a clear example of this link. Individuals who are or want to be interculturally competent need to be empathic to be able to see from the other’s perspective. At the same time, according to Deardorff (2006), empathy is one of the internal outcomes of intercultural competence. Thus, empathy seems to

be both a requisite attitude for developing intercultural competence and at the same time an internal outcome of developing intercultural competence. What distinguishes empathy from other values is that it can be facilitated but also disrupted and prevented. Empathy cannot be forced (Stein, 1989). In other words, it occurs *to* people; it is 'nonprimordially' given. Thus, individuals find themselves experiencing empathy rather than directly causing it when it takes place (Davis, 1990). As with attitudes, the debate on whether empathy, and values in general, can be taught is still open.

The present study hypothesises that the same mental process happens with all human values, which ultimately define people's attitudes. In other words, values are within each individual, while attitudes are the visible evidence of those values. People can perceive others' attitudes but not necessarily their values. For this reason, values, as the origin of attitudes, play a key role in intercultural competence. Values are hypothesised as the jumping-off point from which intercultural competence trainers should work to develop intercultural competence successfully. Hofstede (2009) supports the relationship between values and intercultural competence:

> Intercultural competence requires the ability to participate in the social life of people who live according to different unwritten rules. This implies being a 'good member' of a community other than one's own. A community, potentially ranging from a few people to all the people in the world, constitutes a 'moral circle', that is, a group of which the members expect to live by a shared standard of moral rules. While these rules are usually unwritten and implicit, adhering to them is crucial. (p. 85)

This moral circle, governed by the cultural 'unwritten rules', is determined by the values of society, which ultimately produce one's attitudes towards the world and towards others.

To conclude, knowledge, comprehension, and skills are essential to developing intercultural competence, and these elements can be taught, learned, and assessed. In contrast,

understanding attitudes requires a different perspective. This PhD thesis hypothesises that the motives that produce people's attitudes rely on their internal values, which would explain the complexity involved in measuring and testing attitudes and, as a result, in measuring and testing intercultural competence.

For this reason, the next chapter (Chapter 3) dives deeply into a discussion of human values, considered the origin of attitudes and the basis of intercultural competence. Before focusing on human values, a brief review of investigations similar to the one carried out in this study is presented in the next section.

2.13. Research Tendencies in the Field: A Review of Literature

With the objective of testing the validity of the frameworks selected in the educational context, this section reviews some of the most relevant and updated investigations that have applied the two main models used to assess intercultural competence in this PhD thesis—the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009).

2.13.1. The Process Model of Intercultural Competence

Spooner-Lane et al. (2013) explored the intercultural competence of a group of preservice teachers composed of domestic (Australian) and foreign (Malaysian) students using Deardorff's (2006) model as the foundation. They did so through the Patches Program, developed by a group of lecturers from an Australian university's faculty of education. Participants were grouped with approximately four Malaysian pupils for every Australian student. Throughout the semester, the Malaysian and Australian preservice teachers collaborated on a common assignment (critical reflective writing tasks) as well as on three organised social activities. Further, twelve extra hours of informal activities were part of the programme, such as, for instance, cooking and playing football together outside the university.

However, all domestic students exceeded this time limit, some by many hours, as real friendships developed between the Australian and Malaysian participants over the semester.

Samples of students' reflective writing as well as focus group interviews were the main sources of data for the Spooner-Lane et al. (2013) study. Forty-eight Malaysian and eleven Australian students participated in a final reflective writing exercise. At the end of the programme, eight Australian and forty-seven Malaysian students took part in semistructured interviews in small focus groups (four to six participants). Spooner-Lane et al. conducted a theoretical thematic analysis examining transcriptions and reflective responses in search of important words and phrases that revealed Deardorff's (2006) intercultural competence dimensions.

Regarding the 'attitudes' dimension, all Australian preservice teachers were willing to interact with their Malaysian mates to understand Malaysia's complex culture and traditions better. Additionally, a third of the Australian participants intended to visit Malaysia or other Southeast Asian nations. Malaysian participants were excited to know more about Australian culture and to meet more Australian people.

Concerning the elements 'knowledge and comprehension' (cultural and sociolinguistic awareness) and 'skills' (listening, observing, interpreting, analysing, evaluating, and relating), the Malaysian preservice teachers' questions and discussions throughout the conversations inspired the preservice Australian teachers to reflect on their own values, beliefs, and traditions as well as on how to interact with people from varied cultural backgrounds. The Malaysian preservice teachers displayed a sense of cultural and sociolinguistic awareness. Moreover, they demonstrated a strong feeling of pride in their culture and traditions and perceive speaking with local Australians as a great chance to practise their English.

Respecting the 'desired internal outcomes' (cognitive flexibility, empathy), most Australian participants responded with a great sense of empathy for Malaysian students and

their struggles in adjusting to living and studying abroad. Numerous Malaysian students claimed their relatively ethnocentric worldview was being challenged and altered while they were studying abroad in Australia. Finally, regarding the 'desired external outcomes' (behaving and communicating appropriately and effectively), the Australian preservice teachers began to consider ways to work more effectively with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This occurred because of their knowledge and understandings gained through their conversations with the Malaysian students. The Malaysians discussed how they modified their natural communication style to adjust to the Australian setting without sacrificing their own cultural identity.

Spooner-Lane et al. (2013) conclude that both Australian and Malaysian participants demonstrated respect towards all viewpoints by actively engaging in intercultural talks and activities. Their participation in this programme increased their understanding of the diversity of people's cultures and origins and helped reduce stereotyping.

In a similar vein, Ottoson and Sato (2018) conducted a study as part of a larger investigation in which four students who were about to travel overseas for international stays were interviewed prior to their departure. Participants were third-year English majors at a small, foreign-language focused, private university in Japan who were going to Australia, Canadian, and South Korean universities. The aim of the semistructured interviews was to measure the three dimensions of Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence: attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, and skills.

Throughout the interviews, the participants discussed many topics, including their motives for studying abroad, their previous multicultural experiences, their understanding of the host culture, their anxieties about enduring unfamiliar situations, and their expertise in intercultural communication. In terms of attitudes, participants' comments revealed a desire to venture outside their comfort zones—in other words, their 'openness and curiosity' attitudes.

Participants' remarks on intercultural knowledge showed a high degree of cultural self-awareness, especially about stereotyping. Regarding intercultural communication, participants seemed to value knowledge, forgiveness, understanding, adaptation, and nonverbal language.

Otton and Takehiro (2018) support openness and curiosity attitudes as the foundation in the lifelong process of acquiring intercultural competence. Further, intercultural communication requires knowledge of one's own culture and knowledge of other cultures. To minimise dissonances, deeper cultural awareness is preferred over surface information. The researchers emphasise the importance of exploring forgiveness and other intercultural component values. Otton and Takehiro conclude that intercultural competence research remains prevalent in Western contexts among higher socioeconomic participants; therefore, new conceptualisations of intercultural competence should be examined in a wider variety of environments and subjects.

Along similar lines, Dalib et al. (2019) observe much research on intercultural competence is heavily influenced by Western academic viewpoints. For this reason, they aim to present a Malaysian perspective on intercultural competence. Specifically, they investigated how Malaysian universities' local undergraduate students of diverse ethnic backgrounds interpreted their day-to-day life with international students. Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence was utilised to analyse the students' experiences with their foreign mates and discover how they conceptualised intercultural competence.

Even though Deardorff's (2006) elements seem to match with the Malaysia's multilingual and multicultural environment, the language component appears significant. People 'need not only make themselves understood through language but also they need to use language that is generally understood in relating with one another' (Dalib et al., 2017, p. 18). However, language alone cannot ensure suitable and effective intercultural communication;

attitudes, knowledge, and skills of culturally different individuals are essential for intercultural interactions.

Dalib et al.'s (2019) research participants were local undergraduate students from three public universities from the Northern region of Malaysia, one representing each of its three different states. These participants represented the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia (Malay, Chinese, and Indian). Thirteen participants were interviewed, specifically from each of the three ethnicities: three Chinese, three Indians, and seven Malays. Interviews were conducted in English or in Malay language (the official language of Malaysia), as preferred. Dalib et al. (2019) used NVivo 10 qualitative data software to conduct a conceptual thematic analysis focused on utterances or complete dialogue that reveal feelings, attitudes, and reactions of the participants' experiences with international students.

Two main themes emerged when participants narrated their experiences: language ability and language strategies. Participants mentioned language problems and the need to be tolerant when dealing with strong accents. Further, they admitted the lack of language skills created a second barrier on some occasions. The need to develop communication skills became clear to participants as they reflected on their experiences with linguistic and cultural diversity, particularly in an environment where English is a lingua franca among non-native English speakers.

These findings align with Deardorff's (2006) model, which establishes attitudes as the essential foundation for developing intercultural competence. Attitude encourages participants to be conscious of the difficulties of using a foreign language and to consider how to negotiate meanings in conversation. Further, the capacity of the participants not only to recognise one another's linguistic skills but also to be flexible by adopting the right language methods demonstrates their mindfulness. Expanding this notion shows it also fits with the knowledge and skills dimensions in Deardorff's (2006) model, because they depend on one's development

of one's cultural self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness, openness to cultural variance, and interpersonal communication abilities. Thus, Dalib et al. (2019) contribute to expanding the dimensions of intercultural competence by showing how language can be a crucial component in addition to other intercultural competence skills.

All these investigations support the practicality of Deardorff's (2006) proposed dimensions in the university context and show the feasibility of assessing the dimensions through interviews. Further, the investigations bring to light the language factor, which could apply to Spain, where a large part of the population has not mastered English.

2.13.2. The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale

Bates and Rehal (2017) investigated how Carnegie Mellon University-Qatar (CMUQ) employed the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) as an instrument to describe students' intercultural competence skills. Over 58 percent of undergraduate students travelled abroad every course and agreed to take part in a series of predeparture seminars. At the first workshop, participants completed the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale preprogramme assessment. In addition, they were informed that their eligibility to take part in the programme was unrelated to their results. After finishing the preassessment, students met privately with the programme leaders to discuss their scores, to learn how the results obtained in each dimension might relate to their experiences, and to develop an individual action plan for applying one of the three dimensional areas based on their unique preprogramme Intercultural Effectiveness Scale results. The plans often focused on the dimension in which students obtained the lowest score. Nevertheless, if students had equal results, action plans targeted the intercultural dimension where the student felt most insecure.

Depending on the students' developmental stages, action plans may include, for instance, facilitating an informative session to assess the scope of their experiences (for students looking to improve their positive regard subdimension or hardiness dimension).

Similarly, students might read two news articles per week about the host nation (for students looking to improve their global mindset subdimension or continuous learning dimension). Students had several chances on each international experience to improve their intercultural skills and advance the objectives listed in their action plan for personal and cultural exploration.

Students completed a postprogramme Intercultural Effectiveness Scale assessment on the last day of their cultural immersion experience to determine how it affected them in the essential characteristics of continuous learning, interpersonal engagement, and hardiness. Students were asked to evaluate and reflect on their expectations of how the international experience would affect them compared to the reality of the experiences they had when comparing the pre/post programme Intercultural Effectiveness Scale assessment scores. Thirteen students and two student affairs programme leaders completed this pre/post-programme evaluation as part of a pilot project in April 2016 for a global service-learning programme to Romania. In addition, the pre/post Intercultural Effectiveness Scale evaluation for this programme was completed by fourteen students who travelled to Indonesia in December 2016 as part of an international health and wellbeing programme.

Results showed that ten participants improved their abilities in one or more of the three dimensions throughout their cultural immersion experience in Romania. Three participants saw growth in one or more of the six subdimensions of the scale, even though their overall level of intercultural effectiveness did not increase. One or more of the three dimensions decreased for two individuals, resulting in a decline in their overall level of intercultural success. Among the fourteen participants who travelled to Indonesia, nine improved their overall Intercultural Effectiveness Scale score. Four individuals demonstrated progress in one or more of the subdimensions but did not perceive an overall rise in their intercultural effectiveness. Only one person obtained a decline in overall intercultural effectiveness. The fact that the postprogramme Intercultural Effectiveness Scale score was lower overall for some students

may potentially be a sign that the intercultural learning process was hampered by difficulties encountered during the foreign travel experience.

Bates and Rehal (2017) conclude that using the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale for short-term foreign travel experiences has a significant positive impact on the overall learning environment. The key advantage is that it provides students with the chance to identify their intercultural strength and weakness before they leave for their international adventure, which helps them prepare for any difficulties they might have with intercultural communication or personal growth.

Along the same lines, Armstrong (2020) sought to expand the understanding of how a faculty-led study-abroad programme for leadership education contributed to students' growth in intercultural competence. Armstrong investigated possible increases in intercultural skills by undergraduate students taking the Intercultural Perspectives on Leadership course over a five-week study-abroad programme in Zambezi, Zambia, using the IES. Armstrong specifically delved into the results of an international leadership programme that incorporated service-learning into the teaching methodology. The data were based on the intercultural growth of students occurring in a short-term study-abroad programme at a mid-sized, private liberal arts university. Over the course of five years, each cohort of approximately twenty students received a pre- and post-tests using the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale over a nine-month period (2013 to 2017).

Ninety-one undergraduate students from a range of disciplines (fifty-eight women and thirty-three men) participated in the investigation. A small African town in Zambia's Northwestern Province was the setting for this program. Lunda and Luvale were the two largest tribes, each with a long history and distinctive cultural traditions that contributed to the foundation of this community. The academic curriculum of this study-abroad programme included speakers from the local businesses, health care, schools, churches, and tribal culture,

as well as nightly faculty-led lessons and reflections, a group diary, daily blog postings, and numerous written tasks. Each student worked four to five hours each day in one of the community development projects run by the programme, which included initiatives to educate leadership and sustainability, computer skills, health care, or primary school literacy. The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale was administered online to participants twice, first in February during a one-credit spring semester and then in May/June before the study-abroad immersion course. The second time was in October following the end of the study-abroad course.

Results demonstrated statistically significant progress across all Intercultural Effectiveness Scale dimensions, indicating an improvement in all participants' intercultural competence. The hardiness dimension had the smallest impact size, whereas the interpersonal engagement dimension showed the most noticeable development. The ability for self-awareness demonstrated the most notable rise among the subcompetences. These findings confirm that international study-abroad programmes might have an impact on student growth through deliberate pedagogy and a variety of cross-cultural experiences. Armstrong (2020) concludes that the development of interculturally competent global leaders arises from leadership instructors who incorporate in-depth thought, continuous engagement, dedication to pre- and postimmersion learning, and active teaching.

In a similar vein, starting with the premise that America's relative geographical isolation from the rest of the world exacerbates Americans' lack of intercultural awareness, Tanoos and Lyu (2022) argue that higher education institutions should incorporate intercultural competence into their curriculum so that students graduate ready for globalisation. Tanoos and Lyu used the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale with university students from the United States taking a six-week Introduction to Globalisation Distance subject, administered at the beginning and end of the course. The researchers chose this technique of assessment because they

believed the intercultural score did not only measure intercultural competence but also forecast (un)success in other cultures. Findings suggest that the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale could help educators predict student progress, as well as anticipate other trends.

Tanoos and Lyu (2022) find that a positive improvement in the interpersonal engagement and hardiness dimensions, as well as on pre- and postsurvey scores, leads to a favourable change in the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale after using their instrument. Nonetheless, several participants showed negative changes in both the pre- and postsurvey scores in the continuous learning dimension, although their overall Intercultural Effectiveness Scale scores were positive. Encouraging findings imply that 'curricular aspects of globalisation may have affected students' development in these dimensions' (Tanoos & Lyu, 2022, p. 147). Further, they conclude that extroverted people who seek out new friendships may be candidates for high intercultural competence.

These investigations support the efficacy of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale in the context of higher education and indicate how it can be used not only to measure individuals' scores on intercultural dimensions in the present but also to predict how they will evolve in the future. Further, the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale might provide profiles of intercultural competent people, which could serve as a guide for intercultural competence trainers.

2.14. Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 served as the first chapter of the theoretical part of this PhD thesis, covering the topic of intercultural competence. First, the notion of higher education internationalisation was introduced in order to establish the context of the investigation. Next, the word 'culture' was defined chronologically through history, and the term 'intercultural competence' was explored. In the succeeding section, a review of the different kinds of models and frameworks of intercultural competence was presented. Next, the main models and frameworks of intercultural competence on which this investigation depends—the process model of

intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009)—were discussed.

Subsequently, the relationship between pragmatics and intercultural competence was described in the context of Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo's (20021) rubric on intercultural competence. Next, intercultural adaptability, one of the dimensions of the rubric and one of the main intercultural outcomes of intercultural competence, was explored. The relationships among values, attitudes, and intercultural competence were justified. Finally, the last section of the chapter reviewed some of the most relevant and current research on the frameworks and tools used in this thesis. In the following chapter, human values will be discussed in depth, hypothesised as the origin of attitudes, and thus, as the foundation of intercultural competence.

CHAPTER 3

Human Values

3.1. Introduction

Intercultural competence consists of an understanding of the target culture combined with self-awareness—together, this comprehensive competence identifies cultural differences and reconciles them by turning opposing values into complementing values (Paige, 1993). Thus, the comprehension of values of the self and other cultures seems to be crucial in the development of intercultural competence. Further, according to the American Council on Education (ACE), one of the components of the ACE model for comprehensive internationalisation includes diversity, equity, and inclusion, whose core foundation rests on the values of the members of the institution. With this idea in mind, this second chapter of the theoretical part of this PhD thesis presents a deep review of the theory of the ten basic universal human values (Schwartz, 1992, 2012).

Starting from the premise that, in this research, human values are considered the origin of attitudes, and thus, the foundation of intercultural competence, the notion of values is first conceptualised (3.2). Next, the ten universal basic human values proposed by Schwartz (1992) are discussed (3.3). In the succeeding sections, the dynamic structure of values and the relationships among them are explained (3.4). Section 3.5 develops the common hierarchy of values across cultures, and the roots of the dynamic structure of value relations is described in section 3.6. The two models of measurement that Schwartz utilises to validate the theory, namely, the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; 1992; 3.7) and the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ; 2012; 3.8) are explained next. Afterwards, other variables that might affect human values are considered (3.9), and the relationship between attitudes, the basis of intercultural competence, and human values is discussed (3.10). Finally, the current research tendencies in the field are reviewed (3.11). The chapter closes with a summary (3.12).

3.2. Conceptualising Values

Shalom H. Schwartz (1992), a social psychologist from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, writes about values in a chapter entitled 'Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests In 20 Countries' as part of a larger project implemented in many contexts and cultures delving into the importance of human values. For Schwarz and other experts in the field (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Tyler et al., 2000; Williams, 1968; Wolf et al., 2020; Yik & Tang, 1996), values are not just inherited qualities; rather, they are the criteria people use to choose and justify actions and to evaluate outcomes, other individuals, and themselves. Schwartz (2012) states, 'Values are the socially desirable concepts used to represent these goals mentally and the vocabulary used to express them in social interaction' (p. 12).

Values have long played a key role in explaining social and personal change in organisations (Durkheim, 1897/1964; Feather, 1975; Finegan, 2000; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Macky et al., 2008; Weber, 1905/1958). For this reason, understanding the role of values is relevant in the field of university internationalisation—values drive change and adaptation of a whole institution, affecting employees and students who may be required to have specific values and attitudes to participate in the internationalisation of higher education.

In the early version of this theory, Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, p. 551) define values as incorporating five formal features:

1. Values are concepts or beliefs.
2. Values pertain to desirable end states or behaviours.
3. Values transcend specific situations.
4. Values guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events.
5. Values are ordered by relative importance.

Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) emphasise that the primary content aspect of values is the type of goal or motivation they convey. Accordingly, the authors propose a universal typology of the different contents of values. According to Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, 1990), values represent three universal requirements of human existence based on humans' conscious goals. Such goals involve the needs of people as biological organisms, underpin coordinated social interaction, and support the welfare and survival needs of groups (Schwartz, 1992, p. 4). From these three main categories, eight values are derived: prosocial, restrictive conformity, enjoyment, achievement, maturity, self-direction, security, and power. In 1992, Schwartz modifies some aspects of this theory to sharpen the meanings of the value types and clarify their origins in terms of universal requirements and their relationships with and among other values.

Schwartz (1992) studies three broad topics related to values. First, Schwartz explores how common social experiences (e.g., age, gender, education, occupation, social class) and individuals' personal experiences (e.g., parental relationships, traumas, immigration) influence individuals' value priorities. Second, Schwartz questions how people's value priorities affect their behavioural orientations and actions (e.g., ideologies, politics, religion). Third, and of most concern for this PhD thesis, is the fact that similarities and differences in value priorities among cultures might be associated with people's actions, attitudes, and behaviours.

Based on previous studies (e.g., Allport, 1961; Feather, 1995; Morris, 1956), this values theory comprises six main features (Schwartz, 2012, pp. 3–4):[9]

1. Values are beliefs linked inextricably to affect. When values are activated, they are automatically united with feelings. For example, people to whom social prestige is

[9] For the sake of clarity, the specific characteristics of human values are followed by an example the author of this thesis provides.

an important value feel anxiety if their status is threatened and satisfaction if they are admired and have a favourable reputation.

2. Values refer to desirable goals that motivate action. The origin of human values stems from the motivation people feel to accomplish certain goals. For instance, people who worry about social justice and consider helpfulness an important value are motivated to achieve this goal and make the world more equitable and fairer.
3. Values transcend specific actions and situations. The meaning of values is context-dependent; the degree of relevance varies according to the situation and the participants. Obedience, for example, is significant in the workplace or in school, while honesty is more valuable to friends or family, and politeness is appropriate for strangers.
4. Values serve as standards or criteria. Values regulate the actions, people, policies, and events that are chosen and evaluated. Individuals decide what is good or bad, fair or illegitimate, worth doing or avoiding, based on possible consequences for their preferred values. From these criteria, societies and cultural groups are constructed. Consequently, individuals who are not part of a given society may not understand the reasons why its members perform certain actions. These sets of values determine what is accepted and what is not in a group. For example, in some parts of the world, dogs and cats are eaten daily, while in others, cows and pigs are part of the daily diet. Individuals may not understand why other individuals perform certain actions, but if they want to be integrated into a specific cultural group, its customs should be respected and experienced. However, individuals are rarely aware of the impact of values in daily decisions. Individuals become conscious when the actions or judgements they are considering conflict with different values they hold.

5. Values are ordered by importance relative to other values. People's values constitute an organised system of priorities that characterise them as individuals. This hierarchical feature also differentiates values from norms and attitudes. For instance, if individuals attribute more importance to tradition than to other values, this preference will decisively determine their identities and social faces and, ultimately, their attitudes. For instance, in Catholic societies, if a group decides to celebrate the Holy Week according to tradition (e.g., being part of religious fraternity processions and not eating meat during Lent), they would be defined as conservative based on actions that reveal their apparent values.
6. The relative importance of multiple values guides action. When individuals perform some actions as habits, they are following certain values, consciously or unconsciously, and disregarding others at the same time. Therefore, not only are their values relevant; those they dismiss, according to their actions, should also be considered. For example, practicing extreme sports as a habit expresses and promotes stimulation values at the expense of conformity values.

One of the key ideas of values research is that human beings are not isolated organisms but are inherently social. For this reason, according to the values theory, people are not able to manage these six requirements successfully on their own. Rather, individuals need to set appropriate goals to cope with them, talk about them, and collaborate as a social group in their inquiry.

3.3. The Classification of Values

In the next section, the ten universal values proposed by Schwartz[10] (1992, pp. 5–11) are described in the same order the author suggests. To illustrate the theory and justify its

[10] The first list of universal values proposed by Schwartz (1992) contains one more set of values: spirituality. Nevertheless, it has not been included because spirituality is described and accepted in different ways

practicality, examples of the value sets are adapted to the context of the administrative staff of internationalised universities.

3.3.1. Self-Direction

Self-direction values are related to independent thought and action. This value set stems from human organismic[11] needs for control and mastery (Bandura, 1977; Deci & Ryan, 2000) and interactional requirements of autonomy and independence (Arundale, 2006; Kohn & Schooler, 1983). In addition, those guided by self-direction values tend to be creative, and intelligent, free to choose their own goals (Schwartz, 1992). These characteristics may result in self-respect and pursuit of privacy in life, despite the influences of others. Accordingly, self-direction values could be compared to Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) negative face concerns[12] (Spencer-Oatey, 2005).

People who hold self-direction values might interpret internationalisation as an opportunity to discover, explore, and understand new perspectives. The independent nature of these individuals frees them from any national or social identity, and therefore, they are open to observing new and different situations from a more objective perspective. This kind of personality is curious; thus, they may ask questions freely without considering social conventions, just to feed their own curiosity. Self-direction values may lead to positive attitudes towards internationalisation—in short, such people may not be influenced by stereotypes or prejudices because they want to discover everything themselves and develop their own opinions.

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and represented by different values for different people, in other words, it varies according to cultural groups. Therefore, no particular set of values may be universally established in terms of spirituality.

[11] This term belongs to the field of organismic psychology and, according to the American Psychological Association (2022), is an approach that highlights the total organism, denying distinctions between mind and body and taking into consideration the interaction between the organism and its environment.

[12] According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 67), 'negative face' is defined as the ambition to be free to act and not be interrupted or unimpeded by anyone, while 'positive face' refers to the desire of being accepted and positively approved by, at least, part of the members of the society.

For example, a self-directed person who works in an office of an international university asks questions openly to international students when they arrive or when they have experienced problems, without worrying about protocols. Further, they listen openly to international students without judging, leaving behind social biases and stereotypes.

3.3.2. Stimulation

The stimulation value involves feelings of excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (Schwartz, 1992). Humans have the organismic need for variety and stimulation to maintain an optimal, positive level of activation and avoid falling into routines that may result in boredom and negative emotions (Cignacco, 2019).

Administrative staff members who hold stimulation values might consider helping and interacting with individuals from other cultures a challenge that makes life more thrilling. Working with foreign people might help to break the routine and make daily work more interesting. Therefore, holding stimulation values is positive for the staff of international universities, as internationalisation is addressed as something new and exciting, not as an obligation or responsibility added to their work. For instance, people with stimulation values are willing to participate in workshops and seminars on interculturality to learn and to improve the quality of their work. They accept these activities as challenges and opportunities instead of as compulsory tasks, which could consequently provoke a lack of attention and interest in the workplace.

3.3.3. Hedonism

The hedonism value includes pleasure and gratification for self, based on humans' organismic need for the pleasure and satisfaction produced from actions performed. Relevant historical theorists from many disciplines have studied hedonism (e.g., Drakopoulos, 1991; Freud, 1933; Kajonius et al., 2015; Williams, 1968). Specifically in the field of psychology, hedonism is identified with self-indulgence because the main concern is to enjoy oneself fully.

In the case of administrative and support staff members, if communicating and establishing social relationships with people from other cultures causes a feeling of happiness and personal fulfilment, hedonistic individuals will be willing to participate. Hedonistic people need to fulfil social rituals even if such rituals are unfamiliar—their goal is to experience the personal pleasure of doing something correctly, even without an external reward. Consequently, being part of the internationalisation phenomenon is worthwhile because it offers enjoyment at work.

3.3.4. Achievement

The achievement value is defined as the pursuit of personal success through demonstrating competences according to social standards. The achievement value is similar to hedonism; however, in this case, success and pleasure feelings are produced when social norms and models are fulfilled. Therefore, people who believe in achievement values might be more in-group-dependent than are those who adhere to hedonism values. Human beings, as social individuals, need to be accepted by the rest of society to survive in it. At the same time, social groups and institutions need to be supported to reach their objectives. People with achievement values might be ambitious and influential, looking for self-respect and social recognition. Achievement values aim towards demonstrating competence according to the prevailing cultural standards, thereby allowing individuals to obtain social approval.

Administrative staff members who believe in achievement values perceive internationalisation as a personal and social goal. Learning new languages and understanding other cultures, even from the point of view of the prevailing culture, is seen as a social norm that should be followed and respected in the global society of the 21st century. For example, knowing more than one language, especially English, has become a kind of social convention during the last decades. Hence, if people speak only one language, and the language is not English, they may not feel completely integrated into the social group because they lack a

lingua franca for establishing effective communication. Accordingly, learning other languages and cultures represents an achievement that needs to be fulfilled to be integrated in an international context.

3.3.5. Power

The power set of values mainly relates to social status, prestige, and control or dominance over people and resources. For social institutions to function, status differentiations and hierarchies are needed (Cilliers, 2001). Most empirical analyses of interpersonal relationships show a dominance–submission dimension both within and across cultures (Robinson et al., 2008). Thus, to turn this social life feature into an advantage, groups should perceive power as a value and treat it as such.

This value can be understood as a way to fulfil the human need for control and dominance. This need typically appears in Western societies (de Moor, 1995) through abundance and authority manifesting as dominant values intended to gain social recognition and preserve the public image. Another important aspect of the power value is holding a sense of cultural superiority over others' cultures—namely, ethnocentrism. The power value should be avoided in internationalised settings—by definition, internationalisation might imply the integration of diverse cultures and languages (Guo & Chase, 2011) and not the superiority of one over others. Moreover, an ethnocentric lens would prevent staff from being able to analyse situations from a global perspective and from different points of view. Schwartz (2012) clarifies,

> Both power and achievement values focus on social esteem. However, achievement values (e.g., ambitious) emphasise the active demonstration of successful performance in concrete interaction, whereas power values (e.g., authority, wealth) emphasise the attainment or preservation of a dominant position within the more general social system. (p. 6)

For staff members concerned with power values, internationalisation might be interpreted as a chance to obtain a better position in a given society. For example, being interculturally competent and knowing more than one language could mean an improvement of social status and prestige (De Mejía, 2002) and even lead to job promotions. Therefore, staff with the power value might be willing to be part of the process of internationalisation.

3.3.6. Security

Security values involve safety, harmony, and stability in terms of society, relationships, and self. Some security values focus primarily on individual interests, as simple as, for example, maintaining order at home, something that can make people feel more secure, whereas other security values serve the group's interests, such as, for instance, national security (e.g., the army, the police). Group-based security interests represent the goal of security for self or for those with whom one identifies to a significant degree, perhaps involving reciprocation of favours, social order, or family security. These social values are associated with the sense of belonging that gives security to most individuals. Further, of note, the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged people's feeling of security, which was taken for granted before this global crisis, especially by younger generations (Karabchuk, 2020).

Internationalisation should take place in a secure environment, without conflicts or alterations of any kind, representing a normal step towards becoming citizens of the world who feel safe talking to or establishing relationships with people from any culture. Otherwise, cultural and linguistic clashes may result in distressing situations or misinterpretations attributable to a lack of self-security.

For example, the administrative and support staff guided by security values might feel outside their comfort zones when dealing with foreign people because of fear of not understanding and not being properly understood. For this reason, instruction on both linguistic and cultural aspects is a necessary part of the internationalisation process. Thus, employees can

familiarise themselves with foreign languages and cultures, helping them feel secure in intercultural situations and avoid anxiety and frustration.

3.3.7. Conformity

The conformity set of values implies a restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others or to violate social expectations or norms. Conformity values underpin an extreme respect for the rules and routine procedures. Conformity values stem from a desire to prevent behaviours that might undermine the group functioning and disrupt the flow of interactions among its members. Individuals who believe in conformity values tend to be obedient, self-disciplined, polite, responsible, and respectful towards elders (Schwartz, 1992).

Dealing with people from other cultures should occur within the standard regulations, without altering the normal dynamics of daily work. Holding conformity values could cause a dilemma—such personalities may not be flexible when facing intercultural problems, especially with visitors who speak different languages, which may consequently provoke misunderstandings. Thus, knowing the international lingua franca—English, in this case—is a key factor in avoiding or overcoming conflict (Baker, 2017).

For instance, if foreign students have bureaucracy problems and visit the office for guidance but are not fluent in the country of residence's language, the administrative and support staff might get frustrated when trying to help. To prevent misunderstandings, the use of English, along with adaptability and mutual respect, may be useful to solve problems. Therefore, if the parties cannot understand each other but the interaction is respectful, clashes could be avoided. For this reason, respect is considered a key attitude in Deardorff's (2006) model with adaptability one of its main internal outcomes.

3.3.8. Tradition

Traditional values include respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas attributable to culture and religion. Moreover, certain personal customs and traditions

take precedence over others. Historically, humans have represented their shared experiences and fate through symbols, practices, ideas, and beliefs, which become accepted as valued group customs and traditions. Such customs are often symbolised through norms of behaviour or religious rites. According to some experts, customs are a way to express solidarity and contribute to group survival (Durkheim, 1912/1954; Piller, 2017).

Schwartz (2012) notes, 'Tradition and conformity values are especially close motivationally; they share the goal of subordinating the self to socially imposed expectations' (p. 6). The main difference between tradition and conformity is the object to which people are subordinated. In general, conformity involves subordination to close people, such as parents and teachers, while tradition entails subordination to more abstract objects, such as religious and cultural customs and ideas. Schwartz (2012) states, 'As a corollary, conformity values exhort responsiveness to current, possibly changing expectations. Tradition values demand responsiveness to immutable expectations from the past' (pp. 6–7).

Traditional individuals might attach the utmost importance to behaving and acting according to what they learned from their family; they feel a strong respect for tradition, tend to be humble and devout, and seek to live a spiritual and moderate life. This lifestyle means they are expected to do everything in a balanced way, but the limits are set by their ancestors. For example, the meaning of spending 'too much' money on something is determined according to people's family social class or by the type of education people have received, or both.

In the case of university administrative staff members with traditional values, accepting other cultural and religious values might be difficult. Therefore, such staff members are more likely to suffer cultural clashes (Chapdelaine et al., 2004; Zhou et al., 2008). As a remedy, these people are advised to travel and attend courses about other cultures and languages; learning about others could help prevent disturbing situations in the administrative offices. For example,

if international visitors have problems because the bureaucratic system is different in their native countries, the administrative staff guided by tradition values may get frustrated easily instead of being open-minded and trying to understand the other universities' systems to help and support the foreign students.

3.3.9. Benevolence

Benevolence values imply preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact—in other words, within one's in-group. Benevolence values derive from the human need to belong to a group; in turn, such values are a basic requirement for a group's successful functioning (Mellor et al., 2008). Benevolence values are generally more visible in relationships within the family and other primary groups, occurring as collectivist values. Benevolence values manifest as a continuous voluntary worry about others' welfare over one's own.

Of note, benevolence values provide an internalised motivational base for such behaviour. In opposition to this, conformity values promote cooperation to avoid negative consequences for oneself. For example, being hungry and sharing food with a friend who does not have any money and is starving would be a benevolent action. For the benevolent, the intrinsic motivation of helping others would overcome the feeling of hunger.

Benevolent individuals tend to be helpful, honest, and forgiving in addition to loyal and trusting. For the administrative and support staff who believe in these values, interacting with foreign people is positive; the goal is to ensure everyone is comfortable with the situation. These staff members prioritise their close colleagues and then focus on the international visitors in the administrative office. For instance, if a conflict occurs with international visitors, benevolent staff members will defend and believe the people they know—that is, they will defend their colleagues before defending others. This tendency could be considered a drawback; they should be unbiased. Nonetheless, such staff will likely show sympathy and

concern for all parties in the conflict, a positive and appropriate trait for working in an intercultural context.

3.3.10. Universalism

The universalism set of values involves understanding, appreciation, tolerance, justice, and protection for the welfare of all people (even for the unknown) as well as for the natural environment. This value set contrasts with benevolence values, which focus on the in-group. The origin of universalist values stems from the need for individuals to live in society and cooperate peacefully with other communities.

However, individuals might not recognise these needs until they must confront other individuals beyond their extended primary group. At that moment, people become aware of the insufficiency of natural resources. Schwartz (2012) declares, 'People may then realise that failure to accept others who are different and treat them justly will lead to life-threatening strife' (p. 7). Further, people may comprehend that failure to protect the natural environment will lead to the destruction of the resources on which life depends.

Universalism is composed of two subtypes of concerns. First is a concern for the welfare of individuals living in society, that is, the world as a social environment, and second is a concern for nature—the world as a home. Consequently, universalism involves values related to social justice, equality, peace among citizens, and unity with nature. In that sense, promoting internationalisation is promoting equality; thus, every person in the world should be treated equally and have the same opportunities (Caruana & Ploner, 2010). Therefore, the universalism value might be the most appreciated for individuals who work, or aim at working, in an internationalised university. For example, if international visitors suffer racist treatment, an administrative office of the university will be a good place to report it and find help. Employees in the international office will defend foreign students to achieve equal conditions.

For a clearer understanding of the theory, the next section explains the dynamic structure of the relations between these ten values.

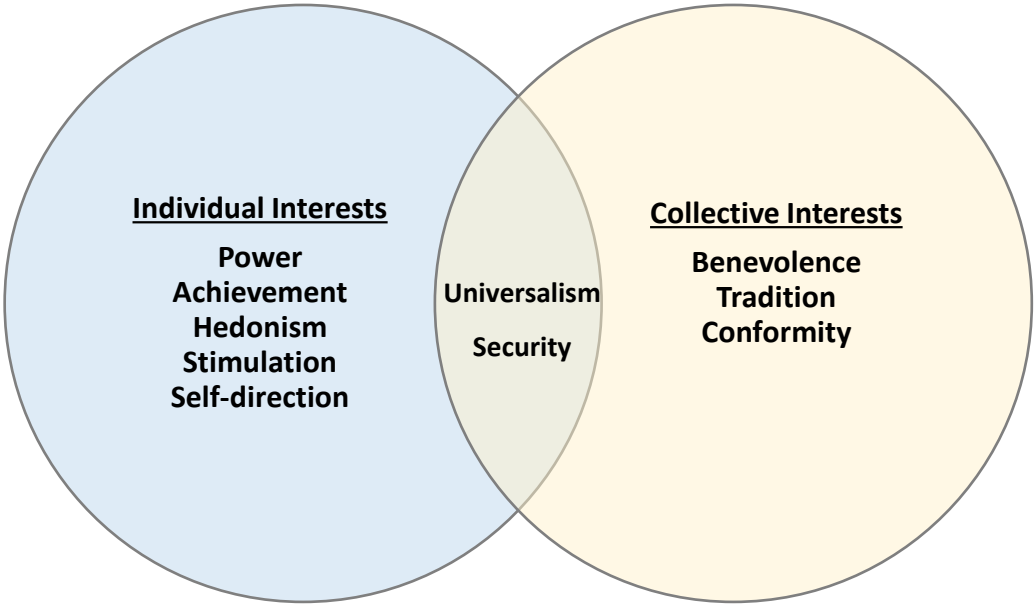
3.4. The Dynamic Structure of Value Relations

The dynamic structure emerges from the central idea that carrying out any kind of action will have practical, psychological, and social effects. Therefore, actions have consequences that will conflict with some sets of values and, at the same time, will be congruent with others. For instance, values whose objective is to serve individual interests oppose values that aim to serve collective interests.

According to Schwartz (1992, p. 13), the five value types hypothesised to serve primarily individual interests are power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction. These five values form a contiguous dimension in opposition to a second dimension composed of the set of values that serve primarily the three collective interests, benevolence, tradition, and conformity. Universalism and security serve both kind of interests and consequently appear on the boundaries between these two dimensions. Figure 8 shows the theoretical structure.

Figure 8

Theoretical Structure of Interests Among Types of Values[13]



Note. Adapted from 'Universals in the Context and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries', by S. H. Schwarz, 1992, in M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 25, Elsevier, p. 42.

For clarity, the relationship among values is developed in the next section.

3.4.1. Relationships among Values: The Circle

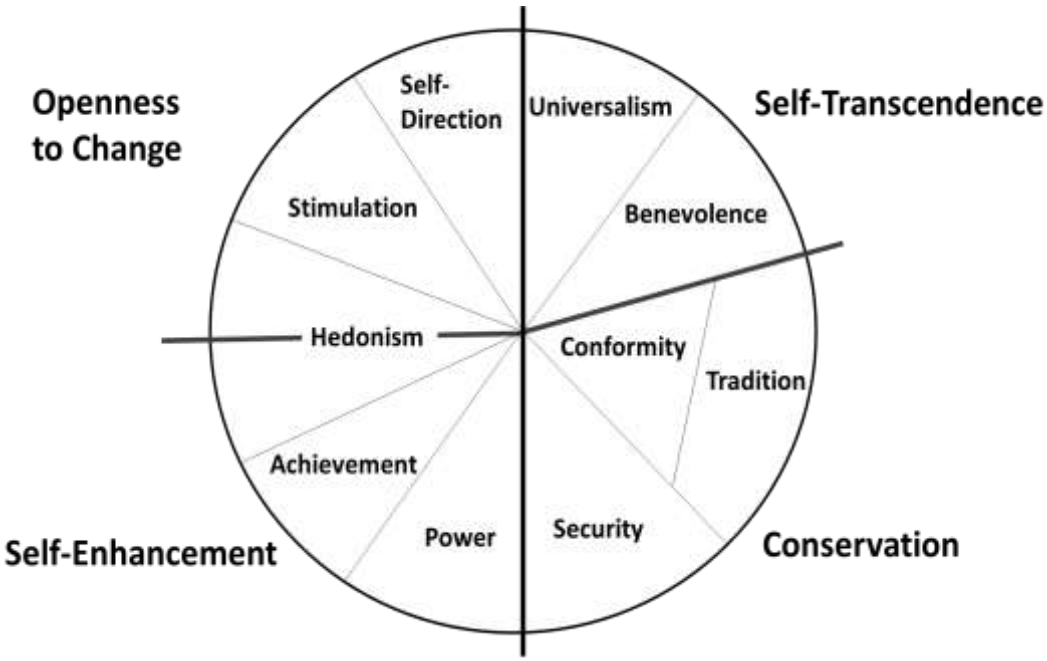
Values are divided into dimensions according to their motivational goal. As Figure 9 shows, two values, tradition, and conformity, appear in a single dimension, because they share the same motivational goal. Further, conformity is situated more towards the centre and

[13] The two dimensions should not be confused with the contrast between individual and collectivist cultures proposed by Hofstede (1980, 2001). On the one hand, Hofstede's is culture-level research conducted in different countries to create profiles. On the other hand, many values that serve individual interests may have priority in the way institutions work in collectivist cultures, and vice versa; values that serve collective interest may be beneficial and receive a higher institutional priority in individual cultures. In other words, values that serve collectivist interests related to equality, loyalty, and responsibility are considered part of an individualist culture in a culture-level analysis (Schwartz, 1992). For example, in the United States of America, equality is a basis of its Constitution, but the U.S. is scored as the most individual country (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). Meanwhile, values that serve individual interests related to social power, wealth, and authority are appropriate for a collectivist culture in a culture-level study (Schwartz, 1992). For instance, Egypt is scored as a collectivist country (Hofstede, 1980, 2001); however, the military holds much power, according to its Constitution. Further, the differences between 'country' and 'culture' should be emphasised for the aim of this investigation, as one of the benefits of globalisation implies culture is no longer bound to a specific geographical area, ethnicity, or religion, as previously postulated by anthropologists (Birukou et al., 2013).

tradition towards the periphery. This means that tradition values conflict more strongly with the opposing values (self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism).

Figure 9

Theoretical Model of Relationships among Motivational Types of Values



Note. Adapted from *An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values*, by S. H. Schwarz, 2012, p. 9.

Values are organised along two bipolar dimensions, which summarise the oppositions between competing values. The dimension called openness to change contrasts with its opposite, the conservation dimension. This opposition exposes the conflict between values that emphasise willingness and readiness for change and independence of thought and action (self-direction and stimulation values) and values that focus on resistance to change, preservation of the past, order, and self-restriction (tradition, security, and conformity values).

In similar fashion, the self-enhancement dimension opposes the self-transcendence dimension. This opposition presents the disagreement between values that are focused on the interests and welfare of others (universalism and benevolence) and values that emphasise seeking personal interests, success, and dominance over others (achievement and power

values). As an exception, hedonism shares elements of both the openness to change and self-enhancement dimensions.

Although the theory distinguishes ten values, it also asserts that, at a basic level, values constitute a continuum of related motivations. From this continuum, the circular structure arises. To clarify the nature of the continuum, Schwartz (2012) notes the shared motivational prominence of adjacent values:

1. Power and achievement → social superiority and esteem;
2. Achievement and hedonism → self-centred satisfaction;
3. Hedonism and stimulation → a desire for affectively pleasant arousal;
4. Stimulation and self-direction → intrinsic interest in novelty and mastery;
5. Self-direction and universalism → reliance upon one's own judgement and comfort with the diversity of existence;
6. Universalism and benevolence → enhancement of others and transcendence of selfish interests;
7. Benevolence and tradition → devotion to one's in-group;
8. Benevolence and conformity → normative behaviour that promotes close relationships;
9. Conformity and tradition → subordination of self in favour of socially imposed expectations;
10. Tradition and security → preserving existing social arrangements that give certainty to life;
11. Conformity and security → protection of order and harmony in relationships; and
12. Security and power → avoiding or overcoming threats by controlling relationships and resources (pp. 9–10).

Schwartz (2012) states, ‘The closer any two values in either direction around the circle, the more similar their underlying motivations; the more distant, the more antagonistic their motivations’ (p. 10). In summary, the circular arrangement of the values represents a motivational continuum.

Schwartz (1992) states that the pursuit of the following three sets of values at the same time would cause strong social or psychological conflict, as follows:

1. Self-direction and stimulation values versus conformity, tradition, and security values: people accept change and emphasise the importance of their own independent action and thought but experience conflicts related to their own submissive attitudes, constraints, and desire to preserve traditional practices;
2. Universalism and benevolence values versus achievement and power values: people recognise others as equals and show concern for their welfare but at the risk of impeding their own success and blocking their control over others; and
3. Hedonism values versus conformity and tradition values: People prioritise their own desires but experience conflicts with self-restraint of their own instincts and acceptance of externally imposed limits (p. 15).

For instance, if individuals seek success for themselves (achievement values), their actions may impede the welfare of others who need help (universalism values). In a job interview, for example, people display their best skills to obtain the job, but for economic reasons, some candidates could need the job more than others do. Leaving the interview and allowing the person who has financial needs to obtain the job would show universalist values, even though competing for the job shows achievement values. Therefore, applying both sets of values at the same time to certain contexts is not possible. Consequently, individuals choose the kinds of values they are willing to follow.

Further, in accordance with one's context, individuals give priority to specific values over others, forming a hierarchy, discussed in the following section.

3.5. The Common Hierarchy of Values across Cultures

Although people, as individual beings, disagree significantly on the importance they give to values, in terms of societies, as groups of people, there is unexpected consensus regarding the hierarchical order of the values (Schwartz, 2012). Findings have shown that among the ten values, benevolence seems to be the most important, and power values seem to be the least important. This pan-cultural hierarchy of values most probably stems from the adaptive role of values in controlling societies, as well as from common human nature (Campbell, 1975; Schwartz & Bardi, 1997). Schwartz (2012) identifies three principles that might justify the hierarchical order of values for the most relevant interests of human nature and conditions of societal functioning:

1. Promoting, encouraging, and preserving cooperative and supportive relations among primary group members is essential. Therefore, when people seek to transmit certain values, the aim is to develop positive relationships with other members of the social group, feel identified with them and by them, and be loyal and faithful to them.
2. People must be motivated and willing to invest time and effort on working productively, to solve problems that may arise when working, and to reflect on new ideas and solutions to difficulties they may face.
3. Legitimising gratification of self-oriented needs and desires is socially functional as long as the needs do not weaken the objectives of the group. If the group rejects their quest for self-gratification, individuals might feel frustrated, leading to a lack of energy to fulfil the group tasks and goals. (p. 15)

In line with these human interests and societal conditions, Schwartz (2012), suggests a ten-tiered hierarchy, described next.

3.5.1. First – Benevolence Values

Benevolence values are the most important because they focus on positive and cooperative social relationships with family and among people who continuously interact with each other—in other words, in the main context in which value acquisition takes place. People who are guided by benevolence values will internalise and prioritise these relationships.

3.5.2. Second – Universalism Values

Universalism values encourage positive social relationships. They are essential when individuals must relate to people outside their primary group, for example, those with whom they do not readily identify, such as classmates or work colleagues. If a conflict arises in the in-group, benevolence values could be threatened for people guided by universalism values. For this reason, according to Schwartz (2012, pp. 15–16), universalism values are considered less important than benevolence values.

3.5.3. Third – Self-Direction Values

Self-direction values serve the creativity aspect of human beings, intrinsically motivating innovation, and encouraging a positive view of challenges and, consequently, of coping with them. Self-direction values are based on satisfying individual needs without harming or bothering others; thus, normally, these values do not threaten positive social relationships.

3.5.4. Fourth and Fifth – Security and Conformity Values

In similar fashion to self-direction values, security and conformity values encourage harmonious and peaceful social relations by motivating the avoidance of conflict and violations of the norms established by the social group. Nevertheless, these values are usually acquired by individuals who want to evade sanctions and demands by avoiding risks, controlling

forbidden impulses, and restricting the self to the socially accepted norms, thus clashing with the principle of gratifying self-oriented needs and desires. Further, people guided by these values emphasise maintaining the status quo, thereby conflicting with finding innovative solutions to group problems and hindering progress and development.

3.5.5. Sixth – Hedonism Values

People guided by hedonism values seek their own pleasure and gratification over the group's welfare. Therefore, as long as individual and social objectives are not the same, this value conflicts with positive social relationships.

3.5.6. Seventh – Achievement Values

People guided by achievement values invest their time and effort on the group's tasks and welfare, but they also seek social approval. A group member seeking to fulfil achievement values could alter the positive relationships among group members and affect the pursuit of the group's objectives at the expense of the social approval.

3.5.7. Eighth – Tradition Values

People guided by tradition values contribute to smooth group functioning and survival by helping to achieve the group's objectives. Nevertheless, the importance they give to abstract beliefs and symbols could provoke a lack of social behaviour that successful interactions require.

3.5.8. Ninth – Stimulation Values

Even though people guided by stimulation values foster the fulfilment of their own inborn needs for novelty and excitement, their pursuit does not necessarily threaten positive social relationships if these objectives can be obtained without bothering the rest of the group.

3.5.9. Tenth – Power Values

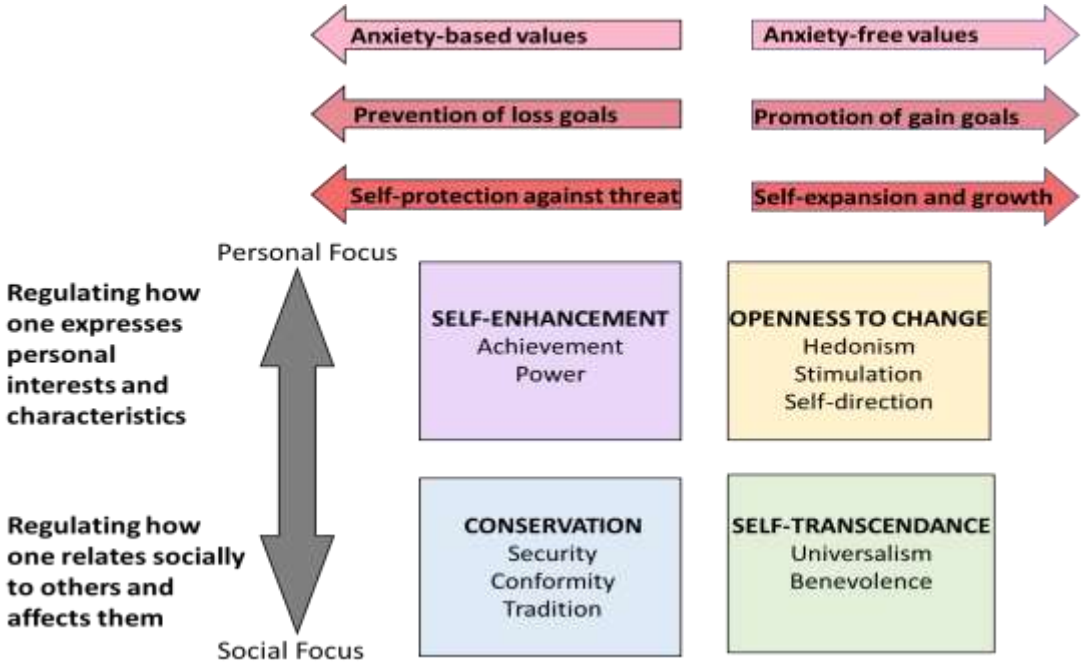
Pursuing any kind of power could affect social relations negatively. However, achieving the group's goals may serve as a motivation if power-seeking individuals obtain power.

3.6. Roots of the Dynamic Structure of Value Relations

To explain why the structure of relations seems to be common to all the human societies studied, Schwartz (1992) proposes one dynamic principle organising the structure of values involving the interaction between congruence and conflict among the values implicated simultaneously in individuals' decisions. After revising the theory, Schwartz (2012) suggests other principles, illustrated in Figure 10.

Figure 10

Dynamic Underpinnings of the Universal Value Structure



Note. Adapted from *An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values,* by S. H. Schwartz, 2012, p. 13.

These new principles proposed are based on the interests that value realisation serves. According to Schwartz (2012),

- Power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction values principally control how people express personal interests and characteristics; and
- Benevolence, universalism, tradition, conformity, and security values primarily control how people relate to others in social terms as well as how their interests are affected by these social relationships (p. 14).

As shown in Figure 10, security and universalism values are boundary values in this new principle. The reason for this conclusion is that the main concern of those guided by security and universalism values is others' interests. They put others' interests over theirs. However, according to this new principle, they also pursue their own interests.

The relation between values and anxiety is the third organising principle of the revised theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 2012). Individuals guided by self-enhancement (achievement and power) and conservation values (security, conformity, and tradition) deal with anxiety stemming from the unpredictability of the social and physical world. Therefore, these values are organised under the category of self-protective values. The intention of these individuals is to avoid conflict (conformity values) and to maintain the established order (tradition and security values) or to be able to control threats (power values).

Contrarily, people guided by openness to change (hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, and benevolence values) feel less anxiety because their goals do not depend on others (Schwartz, 2012). Thus, these values are considered growth or self-expansive values. It should be mentioned that values can be anxiety-producing or anxiety-free, depending on the person and the context. For example, people guided by achievement values may feel a sense of competence when they meet social standards successfully. This satisfaction might make them feel complete and, consequently, help them avoid or control anxiety. Being aware of the

relationships among values, interests, and anxiety can be helpful to predict and understand certain attitudes and behaviours and, hence, to prevent anxiety (Schwartz, 2012).

With the objective of testing the universality of the postulated value types, Schwartz develops different instruments of measurement, explained in depth in the next sections.

3.7. The Schwartz Value Survey (SVS)

The Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; Schwartz, 1992) is the first instrument developed to measure values based on the theory of basic human values. The SVS presents fifty-six items that explain potentially desirable ways of acting, each element expressing an aspect of the motivational goal of one value. To clarify each value, an explanatory phrase in brackets placed after the item further specifies its meaning. For example, pleasure (gratification of desires) is a hedonism component, and equality (equal opportunity for all) is a universalism element.

Participants rate each value 'as a guiding principle in my life' on a scale of nine points ranging from −1 (opposed to my values); 0, 1, and 2 (not important); 3 (important); 4 and 5 (unlabelled); 6 (very important); and 7 (of supreme importance). Rating instead of ranking enables researchers to measure 'negative' values—those that people try to avoid conveying or encouraging through their actions and behaviours. Respondents to the original survey considered most values as ranging from mildly important to very important.

With the objective of testing the dynamic relationships among values, a set of culturally, linguistically, and geographically diverse samples were investigated. The samples were drawn from twenty countries on each inhabited continent, representing thirteen different languages, and including eight major religions, as well as atheists. Most participants belonged to two main occupational groups: schoolteachers and university students; however, five more samples of adults with diverse professions were also considered.

Taking into consideration important variables such as age, gender, and occupation that may have affected results, the SVS authors believe that the meanings of values should be

similar among people from the same cultural background. For this reason, for thirteen countries, at least two samples with similar cultural backgrounds (religion, education, residential area, etc.) were included. The intent was to differentiate among within-culture (intracultural) and between-culture (intercultural) variations in the empirical content of value types and their structure of relationships, which helps separate culture-specific aspects from universal aspects.

In each country, local researchers collected data from samples of approximately two-hundred teachers in grades 4 to 10, preferably from schools that taught the largest number of students per class. Even though a single professional group cannot represent a whole culture, schoolteachers were considered a distinct group because they play a key role in society, teaching, and transmitting culture and values. Hence, their personal values directly influence the values of future generations. University undergraduate students were less accessible because of their availability, compared to teachers, but they represented a wide variety of courses and subjects.

The original value survey was written in Hebrew and English. In countries that used any of these versions, Hebrew and English surveys were provided directly to researchers. In the case of non-English and non-Hebrew speaking countries, local researchers prepared native language versions, which were sent to Schwartz for approval. In addition, Schwarz received alternative translations into English and Hebrew. These alternatives were taken into account, and local researchers made the final decisions about the definitive versions of the translations.

The original SVS followed three important principles:

1. Values considered to represent the same value type are separated from each other by at least two other values. In this way, the same value sets do not appear together in order.

2. Values considered to have the same importance are separated by at least three other values.
3. The order of the values is exactly the same in all versions.

Values appeared in two lists. The first list contained terminal values (1 to 30), phrased as nouns, and the second list contains instrumental values (31 to 56), phrased as adjectives. Before rating the values on each list, respondents read the whole list, select, and rated the value considered most important to them, and then chose the one most opposed or least important to them.

In about half the samples, the survey questionnaire was administered in groups of five to one hundred participants. For the rest of the samples, the questionnaire was administered individually. Japanese and Dutch adult samples were obtained in a mail survey. In every case, responses were anonymous. Supplementary questions regarding demographic information and other aspects were asked at the end of the questionnaire.

Schwarz (1992) sought to determine if all ten types of values were present across cultures and form distinct values dimensions. The answer was positive for the vast majority of samples; value dimensions appeared much like the dimensions in the prototype (Figure 9). Moreover, in 67.5 percent of the samples, all ten value types were identified, and in 92.5 percent of the samples, at least eight or more types were distinguishable. Of forty samples, a value type arose in a distinct value dimension or in a combined value dimension with one of its two presupposed neighbours as follows: achievement (40), stimulation (40), self-direction (40), universalism (38), hedonism (37), tradition (37), power (37), security (36), benevolence (33), and conformity (33; Schwarz, 1992, p. 23).

3.7.1. Universality of the Value Structure

The constant patterns of compatibilities and conflicts among value dimensions across cultures justify one of the main hypotheses of this theory: ‘When people pursue the various

types of values, the universal aspects of the human social condition lead to cross-culturally consistent psychological, practical, and social consequences' (Schwartz, 1992, p. 47).

The generality of this theory was tested by samples from various cultural, linguistic, religious, geographic, and ethnic groups. More specifically, the same results emerged among schoolteachers, university students, and the other five heterogeneous samples of professions. Nevertheless, Schwartz (1992) points out no single value structure is considered universal; therefore, generalisations should be avoided. In fact, new samples should be studied, because value structures probably change over time as cultural and social conditions change (Rokeach, 2008). Other factors, such as economic and political situation, may also affect people's value priorities. For example, in an economic crisis, individuals have specific survival goals, and consequently, their values may be influenced by circumstances.

These facts were confirmed by Schwartz's (1992) investigation. For instance, the typical opposition between universalism values and security values (national security and social order) was not found in countries in which popular revolutions were taking place. Nevertheless, because values are grounded in the core aspects of the human condition, researchers considered such deviations in value structure exceptional—such deviations are caused by sudden social disturbances that may be only transitory. For example, the common opposition between universalism and security values may reappear in these nations after several years, after socio-political stability is reestablished.

In addition to transitory social disturbances, other factors may influence how individuals value priorities and structure. For example, in Schwartz's (1992) analyses in Israel, results show that secular participants rated tradition values as more conflicting to self-direction and universalism values and as more related to power values than do religious people. Further, regarding anomalous findings, China's case should be mentioned—the three Shanghai samples and the (Chinese) Hebei teachers revealed considerably different value structures. Values

related to power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction emerged clearly, and their order and opposition to the rest of values coincided with the prototype (Figure 9). Nevertheless, the remaining values could not be divided into value dimensions. Consequently, researchers distributed them into three particular sections, confirmed in the three Shanghai samples but less clear in Hebei.

Schwartz (1992) suggests that these value dimensions represented three uniquely Chinese value types and proposed labels according to the central motivational goal common in each value dimension (p. 49). They were named 'societal harmony' (social order, social justice, national security, world peace, protecting the environment, world of beauty); 'virtuous interpersonal behaviour' (responsible, loyal, honest, obedient, forgiving, helpful, politeness, humble, self-discipline); and 'personal and interpersonal harmony' (family security, acceptance of one's fate in life, honouring parents and elders, inner harmony, health, devout). Zhi-gang (1990, as cited in Schwartz, 1992) established a relationship between these values and the largest religions in Chinese cultures: personal and interpersonal harmony is associated with Buddhism, societal harmony is related to Taoism, and ethical interpersonal behaviour is linked to Confucianism.

To conclude, Schwartz's (1992) investigation examined a broad variety of cultures using different contextual variables. The results that differed most from the ideal structure were from China, Taiwan, Zimbabwe, Estonia, and Poland. One of the hypotheses formulated by the author is that these countries were, at that time, less influenced by Western societies than most of the rest. In order to overcome the weaknesses of this theory, Schwartz continued their research over subsequent years. Schwarz's later proposed tool of measurement is explained in the next section.

3.8. The Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ)

Researchers noted that 5 percent of the samples of the Schwartz Value Questionnaire (SVS) deviated significantly from the theorised pattern, leading them to question if the theory of basic human values is truly universal. Critics observe the theory might not fully comprehend the values of cultures of some less developed and non-Western populations. However, Schwartz et al. (2001) suggest that the problem may not be the theory itself, but the method used to measure values. The SVS requires a high level of abstract thought and poses value concepts without any specific context. This problem could contradict the theory because the method assumes participants are educated in Western schools that emphasise abstract and context-free thinking. Respondents' education levels would inevitably affect the answers provided on the questionnaires.

In order to assess the actual universality of the ten human values postulated in the theory, Schwartz et al. (2001) propose the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ). Schwartz sought to overcome the weaknesses of the previous model by focusing on samples from populations that provided negative or ambiguous evidence in the SVS. The PVQ instrument was designed to be more specific, adding concrete contexts and examining only the relationships among values, not specific value items.

The PVQ incorporates short verbal representations of forty different individuals, gender-matched with the participants. Every portrait depicts a person's objectives, goals, aspirations, or wishes showing the significance of a value. Examples of statements include 'It is important for him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things'. This statement portrays a person for whom power values are significant. As another example: 'Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way'. This statement describes an individual who believes in self-direction values.

For each portrait, participants were asked to answer the question, 'How much like you is this person?' Responses ranged from 'very much like me' to 'not like me at all'. Respondents' own values are deduced from their self-announced likeness to the portrayed individuals implicitly in terms of particular values. Participants were requested to contrast the portrait with themselves instead of contrasting themselves to the portrait. The act of comparing others to oneself directs attention only towards aspects of the other people portrayed. Along these lines, the comparability judgement is additionally liable to concentrate on these value-relevant aspects.

The verbal portraits define respondents in terms of the values they consider vital. Thus, these verbal portraits catch individuals' values without expressly recognising values as the point of examination. The PVQ achieves some information about comparability among people in terms of specific objectives and goals (values) rather than specific traits (e.g., shrewdness, dutifulness, ambition). Nevertheless, individuals who value an objective do not necessarily show the corresponding goal; nor do individuals who display that characteristic necessarily value the corresponding trait. For instance, some individuals who choose imagination as a core value in daily life may not be creative; similarly, some inventive individuals may credit little significance to imagination as a guiding value. For these reasons, Schwartz et al. (2001) selected the valued goals, wishes, and aspirations using three different methods:

1. Portraits are constructed from the conceptual definitions of the values using words not included in the SVS. For instance, the definition of achievement values became 'It's very important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does'.
2. Parts from the SVS that are not clear enough are paraphrased. For example, in the case of values related to universalism, 'Protecting the environment' changes to 'He strongly believes that people should care for nature'.

3. Abstract terms or phrases that are ambiguous in the SVS are made more specific and concrete. For instance, the conformity value ‘politeness’ turns into ‘It is important to him to be polite to other people all the time’. (p. 524)

Moreover, the SVS used nine-point numerical response scales containing positive and negative numbers. These numerical scales might not be clear for participants with limited numeracy skills or experience with numerical scales or negative numbers. For this reason, in the PVQ participants were required to select one of six labelled boxes.

Aiming at testing the validity of the theory, investigations were carried out in countries whose SVS results deviated significantly from the theorised pattern, thus providing the impetus for the development of the PVQ, recently used to test the universality of values (Cieciuch & Davidov, 2012; Passini, 2020; Schwartz, 2017; Różycka-Tran et al.; 2017; Daniel et al., 2022). The results obtained in these countries are explained in the following sections.

3.8.1. Italy

The first PVQ revision was conducted on a representative national sample of 5,870 Italians (Schwartz et al., 2001). Participants answered an Italian version rigorously prepared through back-translation. Because the first part of the study focuses on the characteristics of mobile phone users, PVQ interviews were conducted by mobile phone.

The results of this first study showed that eight of the ten values constitute different dimensions (Schwartz et al., 2001). The findings include all items expected to be measured except for one item from the universalism dimension and another one from the conformity dimension. These data confirm that, as the theory of basic human values hypothesises, the PVQ was able to segregate the ten values in a Western sample. Moreover, these findings demonstrate the validity of the PVQ as a new instrument to measure the universality of values.

In addition, this first attempt yielded positive results regarding the theorised structure of relationships among values (Schwartz et al., 2001). This beneficial finding appeared because

the studied structure followed the circular motivational order hypothesised by Schwartz in 1992. However, there was one exception. Peculiarly, power values appeared behind rather than achievement values, as seen in most Western samples. The Italian structure showed the bipolar dimensions of openness to change (self-direction and stimulation) versus conservation (security, conformity, and tradition) and of self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence) versus self-enhancement (power and achievement). Thus, the Italy study findings corroborated the postulated structure of the theory and supported the claim that if the structure of value relations exists in a sample, the PVQ would be able to detect it.

3.8.2. South Africa

The second study, conducted in South Africa, was designed to retest and demonstrate the validity of the theory of basic human values with the new PVQ method of measurement (Schwartz et al., 2001). South Africa was chosen because some of the most confusing SVS results were from a sample of Black South African university students. In the case of that sample, only one value met the criteria for discrimination among dimensions postulated by Schwartz (1992); the rest of the values were mixed, creating a random pattern. Further, the circular order of the two bipolar value dimensions hypothesised in the theory did not emerge. For these reasons, the PVQ was used with this particular population to assess if the list of values and relationships among them were not truly universal or if the problem was the mechanism used to measure them.

The PVQ sample consisted of 3,493 subjects, considered a representative national sample of South Africa (Schwartz et al., 2001). In this case, the interviews were conducted face-to-face as part of a marketing investigation. The sample was composed of 2,000 Blacks,

938 Whites, 390 Coloureds,[14] and 165 Asians.[15] The PVQ was translated into participants' native languages, generating eight versions: (African) English, Afrikaans, Venda, Zulu, Tswana, Xhosa, North Sotho, and South Sotho. Only the Black participants were considered for the structural analysis in order to compare the sample more accurately to the Black South Africans taking part in the SVS in the past. Among these participants, only 4 percent continued their studies after high school, and 26 percent did not complete their last grade. It is important to point out that this was the least-educated sample analysed to test the theory of basic human values.

After examination, results show that seven out of ten values emerged in different dimensions: self-direction, hedonism, stimulation, achievement, power, tradition, and conformity (Schwartz et al., 2001). In the case of universalism, benevolence and security values composed a combined dimension. Using the PVQ instead of the SVS in the representative Black South African sample yielded results closer to the ideal structure but not identical. Nevertheless, these findings support the theory of basic human values more strongly than do the results obtained from the SVS; just one value type emerged in previous studies using SVS, whereas seven distinctive dimensions were formed using the PVQ as the measurement method.

Regarding the hypothesised structure of values, findings agree with the theory (Schwartz et al., 2001). Conformity and tradition (conservation values), power and achievement (self-enhancement values), and stimulation, hedonism, and self-direction (openness to change values) are all adjacent. Power values appear behind achievement values, as occurred in the study carried out in Italy.

[14] The term 'Coloured' is a specific racial designation in South Africa initiated during Apartheid. Currently, Coloured is defined and situated in the 'racial middle' as neither White nor Black African (Pirtle, 2021).

[15] These labels are provided by Schwartz et al. (2001) and not by the author of this PhD thesis.

However, in addition, results in the South Africa study showed something exceptional: Security values appear in the self-transcendence dimension (Schwartz et al., 2001). These findings may be related to historical events—when this questionnaire was implemented, the struggle against Apartheid had recently taken place. Moreover, this population was suffering an enduring social, political, and economic transition to a non-racial and desegregated democracy. These significant historical events may have influenced the values of individuals, motivating them to identify security values with the pursuit of equality and justice, compared with seeking to conserve the status quo, as participants from Western cultures do.

In general, the Black South African sample showed its structure and order of values closely coincided with the prototypical model postulated by the values theory (Schwartz et al., 2001). Thus, these facts demonstrate that the negative findings causing critics to question the universality of values in previous investigations stemmed from the problematic measurement method and not from the limitations of the theory.

3.8.3. Uganda

Uganda was the country chosen for the third study because when the SVS was conducted there, only three of ten value sets emerged among a sample of 422 Ugandan teachers (Schwartz et al., 2001). The structure and the relationships among values did not vary considerably from a random ordering of values. For these reasons, researchers sought to test the validity of the values theory in Uganda, using the PVQ as a possibly better measurement method for non-Western cultures.

This PVQ study focused on Ugandan girls aged thirteen to fourteen years old because the SVS was considered too complex and abstract to use with individuals younger than fifteen years old (Schwartz et al., 2001). Hence, this was the youngest sample of people on whom the theory had been tested. The PVQ was conducted using a written English questionnaire administered to all 840 eighth-grade students in eight girls' schools in Kampala. Even though

English was not the first language of most of participants, it was the official language in Uganda, and children learned it from an early age in school. Nevertheless, some participants found the test challenging; consequently, some data were missing (Schwartz et al., 2001).

Despite these facts, results showed a worthwhile structure of values; the five values that imply collective interests (benevolence, conformity, and tradition) and individual and collective interests (universalism and security) emerge together on one side of the circle (Schwartz et al., 2001). The other five values principally related to individual interests (self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and power) appear on the other side of the circle. In fact, the data from this sample of participants distinguished perfectly among stimulation, self-direction, power, achievement, and hedonism values, creating discriminated dimensions. However, the data were not able to differentiate collective interest values clearly—dimensions for these five values did not emerge. Nevertheless, the findings did discriminate between self-transcendence and conservation, the two higher-order sets of values that embrace the other values. To sum up, the findings show five different values (in five different dimensions) and two higher-order sets of values that include the other five values.

Concerning relationships among value set dimensions, results of the Uganda study seem to agree with Schwartz's (1992) hypothesised bipolar value dimensions (Schwartz et al., 2001). For example, an openness-to-change dimension emerges opposed to a conservation dimension, and a self-enhancement dimension appears in opposition to a self-transcendence dimension. Even though some of the boundaries of some of the values seem distorted, the sample of Ugandan girls demonstrates an organisation of values similar to the suggested structure by the values theory.

These findings support the idea that in tests of the values theory with the SVS, the problem stems from the degree of complexity of the survey; that is, the SVS simply did not correspond with the level of academic education of the participants.

In conclusion, these three studies validate the application of the theory of basic human values to a wider range of samples from different parts of the world with diverse contextual variables (e.g., age, political situation, degree of academic education), compared to those tested in the previous investigation by Schwartz (1992). Moreover, all the value items show close comparability of importance across cultures. Even though the PVQ's quality of estimation might be undermined by the decrease in the number of items, the instrument shows logical meaning equivalence across cultures and significant farsighted legitimacy (Davidov et al., 2008; Schwartz, 2006).

3.9. Other Variables Affecting Values Priority

In addition to the variables selected to test the theory of basic human values, Schwartz (1992) was informed by Israeli, Italian, and South African subjects about other possible variables that should be considered depending on the aim of the research. In this section, age and education, the variables that were taking into consideration for this investigation, are discussed.[16]

3.9.1. Age

Age is one of the most important variables affecting values priority. Social norms influence personalities increasingly with age. During childhood, social filters are not still formed, and children act and speak freely (Sargeant, 2007). This freedom stems from the fact that children are not yet able to distinguish danger clearly. Nevertheless, adults are completely aware and tend to be less willing to experience novelty and exciting challenges (Schwaba et al., 2018; Whitbourne, 1986).

[16] In addition to these variables, eight more are discussed by Schwartz (2001): religiosity, political orientation, gender, autocratic interpersonal behaviour, major subject of study, change seeking, use of mobile telephones, and use of alcohol. However, they are not further argued in the present study because they go beyond the scope of this PhD thesis.

This hypothesis correlates with Schwartz's (1992) findings. Older individuals feel more identified with conservation values such as tradition, conformity, and security, while younger individuals are often more open to change, feeling more identified with self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism values (Feather, 1975; Rokeach, 1973; Taylor & Keeter, 2010). The reason behind this may be that when people start a family or achieve stable positions in their professional lives, they tend to prioritise others' welfare and focus less on their own preferences (Dunlop et al., 2013). Consequently, as Schwartz (1992) hypothesises, adults feel more identified with self-transcendence values that include benevolence and universalism, while younger individuals align with self-enhancement values such as power and achievement. These results appear in Schwartz's research in Italy and South Africa using the PVQ (Schwartz et al., 2001).

3.9.2. Education

Education makes individuals freer and more flexible and opens minds to diversity and new perspectives (Robinson & Aronica, 2016). Therefore, educational experiences affect values (Halstead & Taylor, 1996; Kohn & Schooler, 1983). When people receive more education, their personalities tend towards stimulation values (Schwartz et al., 2001, p. 533). In contrast, individuals who have not received formal education and have not had the opportunity to live these educational experiences are often guided by conformity and tradition values without questioning the prevailing traditions, expectations, and social norms. As examined in previous investigations (Prince-Gibson & Schwartz, 1998; Schwartz, 1992), educated participants show a clear preference for stimulation and self-direction values and opposition to tradition and conformity values. This hypothesis is further demonstrated by the results of the study in South Africa.

This research hypotheses that human values are the invisible internal part of human beings, while attitudes are the visible behaviour, derived from values. For this reason, the relationship between values and attitudes will be discussed in the next section.

3.10. Values and Attitudes

The relationship between values and attitudes has been previously established. Nelson (1990) conducted research on theories pertaining to the processes of attitude creation and change. Nelson proposes and tests the value promotion model, a new model of mindful attitude formation. This model implies that people's attitudes are influenced by their values and their perceptions of whether an attitude object upholds or compromises those values. Nelson (1990) supports the hypothesis that values are vital in the formation and changing of attitudes because values serve as the foundation for people's evaluations of the world (people, objects, abstract ideas, etc.). Further, this model reinforces the altering of values, and thus, of their resulting attitudes. These ideas seem to align with Deardorff's model—if intercultural competence is a lifelong process, attitudes and values may be dynamic, changing throughout life.

Ajzen (2012) classifies attitudes into two main categories: towards general targets and towards specific targets. On the one hand, broad attitudes towards physical objects (e.g., Tower of London), racial, ethnic, or other groups (e.g., LGBTQIA+), institutions (e.g., European Union), social issues (e.g., abortion on demand), belief systems (e.g., Communism), and other broadly defined targets. These kinds of attitudes could serve to predict future behaviours, but only in very general terms; thus, such attitudes are not accurate predictors. On the other hand, attitudes towards specific behaviours, such as, for instance, drinking alcohol at a party, taking public transport to work, and donating blood at a blood drive can accurately predict the relevant behaviours. However, because of their limited range, they are unlikely to correlate substantially with any other particular behaviour, even within the same behavioural domain. Further, Ajzen (2012) states that general values may underlie 'attitudes towards general targets, such as

freedom, equality, achievement, power, hedonism, conformity, and so forth' (p. 33), thus, supporting the hypothesis that values are the underlying cause of attitudes.

The following section reviews some investigations most relevant for the aim of this PhD thesis. These studies have applied the theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 1992) using different approaches in various fields.

3.11. Research Tendencies in the Field: A Review of Literature

In 2003, Renner proposes a comprehensive taxonomy of value-descriptive nouns and adjectives in German, subsequently examining the factorial structure of this classification. Renner adopts Schwartz's (1992) approach and definitions of values and classifies them into terminal values (nouns) and instrumental values (adjectives), as Rokeach (1973) suggests. Renner collected 383 nouns and 299 adjectives that describe human values from the German lexicon, which were then evaluated by 456 participants as motivational goals in life. These participants were divided by sex (male and female) and categorised by age (younger than 45 years old and older than 45 years old). In addition, participants were divided by education status (with and without a high school diploma).

Five sets of values appeared as nouns: balance, intellectualism, conservatism, salvation, and profit. Regarding adjectives, four value dimensions emerged: balance, salvation, profit, and intellectualism. Values related to conservatism, salvation, and profit partially agreed with the domains of Schwartz's (1992) values theory. The value set of openness to experience equated positively with intellectualism and negatively with conservatism. In sum, compared to previous studies, Renner presents a more exhaustive taxonomy of values.

Along the same lines, Ponizovskiy et al. (2020) propose the Personal Values Dictionary designed to validate a tool that studies human values in text. Ponizovskiy et al. describe the development and validation of a theory-driven dictionary for automatic assessment of references to personal values in everyday language. Their approach relies on the premise that

text is an author's behaviour; values in text are behavioural manifestations of corresponding values. Schwartz's (2012) reformulated theory of basic human values serves as their theoretical base.

Ponizovskiy et al.'s (2020) data were collected from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA; 5,190,728,184 words), the Blog Authorship Corpus (personal blogs; 64,523,017 words), the CMU 2008 Political Blog Corpus (political blogs; 6,918,235 words), essays on values and behaviours (158,223 words), and Facebook Status updates (141,408 words). The results from this investigation align with the theoretical motivational continuum proposed by Schwartz (2012). For instance, self-enhancement values are closer to conservation values than to openness values in three of the five corpora. Similarly, conservation values are closer to self-enhancement values than to self-transcendence values. In addition, the pattern of negative correlation coincides; for example, positive correlation with openness values implies negative or zero correlation with conservation values. One of the most relevant linguistic findings indicates that people who frequently used words reflecting openness to change values also used fewer words that relate to morality.

For the sake of testing the validity of the values dictionary, Ponizovskiy et al. (2020) analysed correlations with gender, age, and political orientation. Their results align with Schwartz's (2012) investigation. For instance, older participants attribute more importance to self-transcendence and conservation values (social focus), while younger people feel more identified with self-enhancement and openness values (personal focus). This tendency varies in the analysis of essays, where the opposite occurs: 'References to self-enhancement decreased with age, while references to self-transcendence increased' (Ponizovskiy et al., 2020, p. 897). Thus, Schwartz's (2012) theory of human values and the values dictionary proposed based on this theory are both validated. Further, Ponizovskiy et al. acknowledge the importance of

context when using their values dictionary—it is applicable to a large variety of texts, but not to all.

In a similar vein, with the objective of improving the internal consistency of the theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 2012), Giménez and Tamajón (2019) propose increasing the number of values, noting that in the two previous versions (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987), no clear limits are set among them. Using this method, dimensions could be more homogeneous and more accurately defined in order to avoid overlapping. Giménez and Tamajón applied the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) to a sample of 1,559 students, alumni, personnel, and in-house and affiliated staff of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Open University of Catalonia [UOC], in Barcelona, Spain). Findings agree with the refined theory of Schwartz (2012), thereby validating and supporting Schwartz's hypothesis while reducing multicollinearity problems.

Finally, because of the context in which this research takes place—during a global pandemic—Daniel et al.'s (2022) study should be considered. These authors carried out a longitudinal investigation of values before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic in order to observe possible changes in value priorities attributable to the exceptional circumstances. Schwartz's (2012) theory of basic human values served as the foundation for their research. Daniel et al. hypothesise that the COVID-19 pandemic would increase conservation values and decrease openness to change values. Their data consisted of the values surveys from Australian adults who participated during three different periods. The first survey occurred three years prior to the pandemic (2017–2018, n = 1,498); the second occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic (April 2020, n = 2,321), and the third was implemented after the hardest phase of the pandemic (November–December 2020, n = 1,442).

Values are expected to stay relatively stable during people's lives (Schuster et al., 2019). However, after the COVID-19 pandemic, people's values have changed as they have

adjusted to the new reality, as predicted by the theory of basic human values and evolutionary theories. People with moderate or high levels of worry about the pandemic are guided more by conservation values. Openness to change values increase regardless of how worried individuals are. Regarding self-transcendence values, according to this research, during the pandemic, there has been a decrease in overall care for others, which could be caused by the decrease in social interaction stemming from the lockdown. Self-enhancement values do not seem to vary because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, those who strongly prioritise specific values stay true to their values before, during, and after the pandemic.

Daniel et al. (2022) conclude that during the global crisis, conservation values increased, and openness values decreased, as predicted, especially among worried individuals. This change of values may be a response to environmental conditions and could have possible long-term implications. This new value hierarchy 'provide[s] fertile ground for authoritarian policies as individuals strive for increased order and care less for others and society' (Daniel et al., 2022, p. 579).

These investigations support the relationship between human values and human language and lay the foundation to explore how values are expressed and perceived cognitively in different contexts and languages, which are intrinsically attached to cultures. Further, they also reinforce the validity of the list of exclusively ten human values (Schwartz, 2012), without the need to add more, as in the previous version (Schwartz, 1992), in which spirituality is included, and in the redefined version, where nineteen human values are found (Schwartz, 2017). Finally, the fact that human values might change because of the exceptional circumstances taking place when this investigation was carried out strengthens the theory that human values are not static, and thus, they are worthy of study in the current era.

3.12. Chapter Summary

The third theoretical chapter of this PhD thesis was devoted to human values. First, this notion was defined, followed by a deep explanation of each of the ten basic human values suggested by Schwartz (1992). The dynamic structure of values and the relations among them was explored in depth. Next, the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; 1992) and the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ; 2012) were explained, along with the studies that Schwartz carried out to validate the theory and other variables that might affect human values. The succeeding section was devoted to discussing the relationship between attitudes, the basis of intercultural competence, and human values. Finally, a review of the most relevant investigations that previously delved into human values was presented.

In addition to linking the discussion to the forthcoming chapters, the theoretical part of this PhD thesis attempted to validate the frameworks and instruments used in the investigation and to identify the research gaps to which it seeks to contribute. Part I of the thesis aimed to provide a clear discussion of the relevant theoretical elements of this research in order to establish a solid foundation for assessing the applied research methodologies explained in the next chapter.

SUMMARY OF PART I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS ARTICULATING THE RESEARCH

Chapter 2 was devoted to establishing the context of the study by exploring the concepts of higher education internationalisation and intercultural competence. The notion of culture was reviewed, and different frameworks of intercultural competence were discussed, delving into the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) and describing the tool selected to assess intercultural competence (the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale; The Kozai Group, 2009). Further, intercultural empathy and intercultural adaptability, two essential elements of intercultural competence, were explored in depth. The aim of Chapter 2 was to provide the basis for Research Question 1 (How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised higher education institutions perceive their own intercultural competence?) and Research Question 2 (How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised higher education institutions perceive university internationalisation?). The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009) was used to examine how participants perceived their own intercultural competence. To address Research Question 1, an intra-university survey was conducted, which is explained in depth in Chapter 4. Further, Research Question 2 was addressed through interviews with the administrative and support staff, explained in detail also in Chapter 4.

Values have been hypothesised to be the origin of attitudes, which are the basis of intercultural competence. Therefore, Chapter 3 discussed the notion of human values and showed how they are constructed across cultures in order to provide the basis for Research Question 3 (What values do participants' linguistic choices reveal when talking about internationalisation and how are these values constructed discursively?) This question was answered through the linguistic analysis of the aforementioned interviews, classifying the

lexical choices participants made into the different human values proposed by Schwartz (1992) as universal.

As part of this study, participants narrated their self-experienced critical incidents with people from other cultures. To answer Research Question 4 (To what extent, if any, has the administrative and support staff experienced intercultural dissonances; more specifically, what do their experiences reveal about their intercultural competence?), participants' interviews were analysed in depth to observe what their discourses revealed about the different dimensions forming the intercultural competence process proposed by Deardorff (2006).

Some of the research tendencies in the field were briefly reviewed at the end of each chapter. Nevertheless, the intercultural competence of the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities seems to be an understudied topic that needs special attention to fulfil the promise of internationalisation at institutions, especially at universities. As the ACE comprehensive internationalisation model (American Council on Education, 2012) suggests, all university members are important agents in this phenomenon, and intercultural competence is one of the main capacities students and staff should develop to promote diversity and inclusion in these institutions.

Further, even though the connections among values, attitudes, and intercultural competence have been previously explored, as discussed at the end of each chapter in Part I, direct relationships between specific attitudes and concrete values needs to be established. Moreover, research on the discursive construction of values is lacking, at least in the context of the administrative staff of internationalised universities. This unique population deserves special attention, given the changeable nature of human values, and thus, of their resulting attitudes, as the basis of the lifelong development of intercultural competence, a critical job skill of administrative staff at internationalised universities.

II. DATA AND OVERVIEW OF METHODS

CHAPTER 4

Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The conceptual frameworks necessary for the execution of the current research investigation were described in the previous chapters. This chapter is purposefully placed between the theoretical and empirical sections of the thesis in an effort to inform readers about the essential methodological choices that constitute the foundation of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodological approach, the research design, and the procedures used in the study, covering key information regarding the numerous pertinent features characterising this study, from a methodology perspective. In order to fulfil this objective, this chapter is organised into multiple sections.

First, the research questions are revisited, followed by the description of the study design used to guide the investigation (4.2). Subsequently, the chapter describes the investigation's context and participants (4.3). The data-collection instruments and the data-gathering process are described next (4.4). In the succeeding section, a description of the corpus is provided (4.5). Finally, the procedures used to analyse the data are explained in depth (4.6). The chapter closes with a summary (4.7). This chapter's overall goal is to lay the groundwork for the inclusion of different approaches in the empirical part of this PhD thesis.

4.2. Research Approach and Design

This PhD thesis studied the intercultural competence of the administrative and support staff of two international higher education institutions and assessed how their intercultural competence was constructed discursively, starting from their values and their resulting attitudes, hypothesised as its foundation. The research approach was designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised higher education institutions perceive their own intercultural competence?

RQ2. How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised higher education institutions perceive university internationalisation?

RQ3. What values do participants' linguistic choices reveal when talking about internationalisation and how are these values constructed discursively?

RQ4. To what extent, if any, has the administrative and support staff experienced intercultural dissonances; more specifically, what do their experiences reveal about their intercultural competence?

As mentioned, this study followed a mixed-method design consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Four data sets were gathered to conduct these combined analyses. One questionnaire and one interview comprised the two main data-collection methods. In addition, during the interviews, participants were given three intercultural scenarios; their reactions to the intercultural situations constitute the third data set. Finally, the narratives derived from critical incident episodes that participants have experienced formed the fourth data set.

Using several methods to collect and analyse data decreases bias caused by using a single method, approach, or theory. Further, using multiple methods improves validity by employing diverse tools to approach one topic, thereby promoting credibility by providing a complete picture of the research topic (Graham, 1999; Hammond, 2005; Noble & Heale, 2019; Seawright, 2016). Moreover, this approach helps reveal more clearly the salient features on which to focus and thereby obtain richer results (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006).

The research methods used to obtain the data and the methods employed to analyse them were considered appropriate to address the encompassing objectives of the study. On the one hand, the methods assessed participants' perceptions of their own intercultural competence,

and, on the other hand, the methods measured participants' intercultural competence linguistically, including participants' values. Participants' values could have gone unnoticed with other kinds of methods. For example, discourse-completion tasks (DCTs), in which participants receive enough time to think and answer idyllically, might satisfy a researcher's objectives but keep internal values hidden. As Maíz-Arévalo (2015) concludes, the use of DCTs as the only research method can cause the data to misrepresent reality because researchers might arrive at simple results.

Further, it is possible to quantify attitudes by simply asking respondents to report them or by extrapolating attitudes from spontaneous responses to the presentation of the attitude object (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2018; Ehret et al., 2015; Sheets et al., 2011; Stanley et al., 2011). Implicit measurements, also known as indirect measures of attitudes, are intended to evaluate automatic judgements that may be separated from the explicit, self-report measures but may still be able to predict behaviour in specific settings.

Moreover, using a multimethodological approach allowed the researcher to examine the degree of alignment between the emic and the etic perspectives. In the 1950s, linguists coined the 'emic/etic' distinction to differentiate two complementary approaches indicating two opposing points of view in the study of human language and behaviour. 'Etic' is conceptualised as the aspiration to build an objective, scientific approach to the study of culture, whereas 'emic' alludes to the ideal of understanding the world through the interlocutors' points of view (Mostowlansky & Rota, 2020).

Given that attitudes are considered the basis of intercultural competence and hypothesised as the visible result of human values, these methods were used to obtain a richer perspective of the phenomenon of human values and intercultural competence in the internationalisation of universities.

4.3. Research Context

The participants of this investigation were all part of the administrative and support staff of Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. These two internationalised higher education institutions are described in the following two subsections. Participants' data are presented at the end of this section, even though the specific demographic information of each group of participants is illustrated in Chapters 5 and 6 of the empirical part of this thesis, before the analysis of questionnaires and interviews, respectively, for the sake of clarity.

4.3.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

At the time of this study, Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM henceforth) was an international higher education institution with 80,619 university members, including students, teachers, researchers, administrators, and support staff from more than forty countries (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2021). Administrative officers totalled 3,313.[17] Among the teaching and research staff, 133 of 6,453 (2.06%) were internationals. Among the 70,853 UCM students, 6,927 (9.77%) were from abroad. More than eleven languages were used on the school's campuses each day. For these reasons, the UCM exemplifies an internationalised university whose administrative and support staff deserve special attention.

In 2016, the UCM approved its UCM *Plan para la Internacionalización de la Docencia* (Plan for Curricular Internationalisation[18]), a strategic project consisting of an integrated programme whose main objective is to make internationalisation real and successful.[19] The project blueprint seeks to promote visibility and accessibility to a wider number of participants.

[17] The number of international members of the administrative and support staff was not reported on the webpage of the university when this investigation was carried out.

[18] Retrieved June 11, 2021, from https://www.ucm.es/pci/introduction

[19] The UCM Plan for Curricular Internationalisation offers an intensive course (known as INTER-COM) that seeks to develop the strategies of teachers who work in international classrooms where the language of instruction is not normally the native language of the teacher (nor that of the students).

Some of the goals of this programme include bringing international experiences to the UCM campuses without requiring students to leave the home university—a practice known as 'internationalisation at home'. To accomplish this goal, international and intercultural competences are encouraged to be part of the learning outcomes. Further, involving students in international networks and projects worldwide is a key factor. Among the more concrete objectives of this plan is an emphasis on the use of English (and gradually, other foreign languages) as a lingua franca in undergraduate degrees, master's degrees, courses, and other academic activities.

The fulfilment of these goals is intended to improve future students' employment prospects by promoting their linguistic and intercultural competences and preparing them to work in a globalised world. Moreover, thanks to this international vision of the university, talented staff and students from other countries are interested in attending and working at the UCM. In fact, the latest report indicates that in 2018, Spain received the highest number of Erasmus[20] students during that academic year: 51,321 European students (European Commission, 2021). Further, 40,226 Spaniards study abroad in foreign institutions through this program. In fact, UCM is the second highest attended host university, after Granada University (European Commission, 2018).

At the time this investigation was carried out, according to the UCM website, among the wide variety of degrees offered, the degree in English studies was the only degree taught completely in English. However, other undergraduate programmes were offered in which students could learn at least one module in English—specifically, twenty-seven degrees at sixteen different faculties were taught in English. Additionally, UCM offered eight master's

[20] Erasmus is a programme encouraged and economically supported by the European Union that allows students to continue their studies at a foreign university. Since 2014, it is named Erasmus+. Retrieved June 15, 2021, from https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/

degrees at six faculties taught completely in English, and three master programmes from three faculties offered at least one module in English (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2021).

Among these faculties, the Faculty of Economics and Business stands out for being one of the most involved in the process of internationalisation over recent years. Its departments provide their students with the opportunity to obtain a dual degree in Business Administration (UCM together with Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin [HWR]). Further, other degrees (Business Administration and Management and Economics) and double degrees (Law and Business Administration and Management and Economy and International Relations) that have a differentiated group in English are in high demand.

4.3.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

The main reason Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG henceforth) was suitable for this research is its prestige as a model of internationalisation. This reputation is demonstrated by having a 'Top 100' position in highly acclaimed international rankings that measure quality in many different aspects, such as research, teaching, and societal impact. These rankings include the ARWU Shanghai Ranking, the World University Rankings, QS World University Rankings, and the U.S. News Best Global Universities Ranking, among others (University of Groningen, 2021). RUG is active in terms of mobility as part of several mobility programmes, such as Erasmus+, Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility, and Marco Polo. According to the RUG webpage, internationalisation is one of the main points on its strategic policy agenda for its capability to improve educational quality and innovation (University of Groningen, 2021).

Further, internationalisation is considered an essential instrument to increase and develop diversity among RUG students and staff. In fact, intercultural competence is critical among its university members. Summer and winter schools on intercultural competence are offered. Moreover, administrative and support staff receive intercultural training if desired, although such training is not compulsory.

At the time of this study, RUG had 14,500 members, including students, teachers, researchers, administrators, and support staff. More than 120 nationalities study or worked at RUG. This university employed 6,250 people. Specifically, 1,404 of the 3,600 (39%) members of the research and teaching staff were internationals. Moreover, 2,650 employees were part of the administrative and support staff[21] (including those from the University Medical Centre Groningen). Regarding enroled students, 8,250 of the 34,000 (24.26%) came from abroad.

Along this line, RUG has a programme called Internationalisation at Home containing a policy known as the International Classroom and Language and Cultural Policy. This programme concerns competences and development required for staff and students to make internationalisation possible and successful. RUG language and culture policy is aimed at helping international and Dutch staff and students feel comfortable when using a language different from their first languages, with the objective of improving academic excellence (University of Groningen, 2021).

Regarding the role of English in the Netherlands and at this institution, it must be noted that English is spoken by the vast majority of the population (91%; Keydeniers et al., 2021). The common linguistic root between English and Dutch, both being Germanic languages, could explain the high level of linguistic proficiency of English in the Netherlands. Further, the previously mentioned geographical location and the role of English in this country provide its citizens with more opportunities to practice it. In addition, the Dutch language is spoken by a small number of people compared to Spanish,[22] which might 'force' Dutch speakers to learn English. According to the sixth annual EF English Proficiency Index[23] (Education First, 2021),

[21] The number of international members of the administrative and support staff was not reported on the webpage of the university when this investigation was conducted.

[22] Spanish is spoken by more than 472 million of people, being the second most spoken language in the world, behind standard Mandarin Chinese language (Instituto Cervantes, 2016).

[23] Retrieved June 15, 2021, from https://www.ef.co.uk/epi/

which ranks countries by the English skills of its inhabitants, the Netherlands obtained the highest score,[24] notably among young adults between 21 and 25 years old. This fact supports the benefits of internationalisation of higher education.

At the time of this study, RUG offered thirty-six bachelor's degree programmes instructed completely in English, taught at the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Economics and Business, the Faculty of Science and Engineering, the Faculty of Medical Sciences, the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Philosophy, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, the University College, and the University College Fryslan. Moreover, the university offered one hundred eighty-five master's degree programmes in English.

4.3.3. Participants

As mentioned, the subjects who participated in this study were part of the administrative and support staff of UCM and RUG. These personnel primarily worked in the International Relations units, Erasmus offices, Exchange offices, (Foreign) Languages Centre offices, Immigration offices, and the Rectorate offices,[25] where interaction with international visitors occurred daily. These employees were designated by different names depending on the institution and the country. At UCM, they were called '*personal de administración y servicios*' (PAS; administration and services staff), while at RUG, they were named '*ondersteunend en beheerspersoneel*' (OBP; support and management staff).[26]

[24] In the same index, Spain obtained position 34; 'moderate level of English'.

[25] More information about the participants appears in the different chapters of the Results and Discussion section (III), according to the part of the investigation in which they participated—questionnaires or interviews.

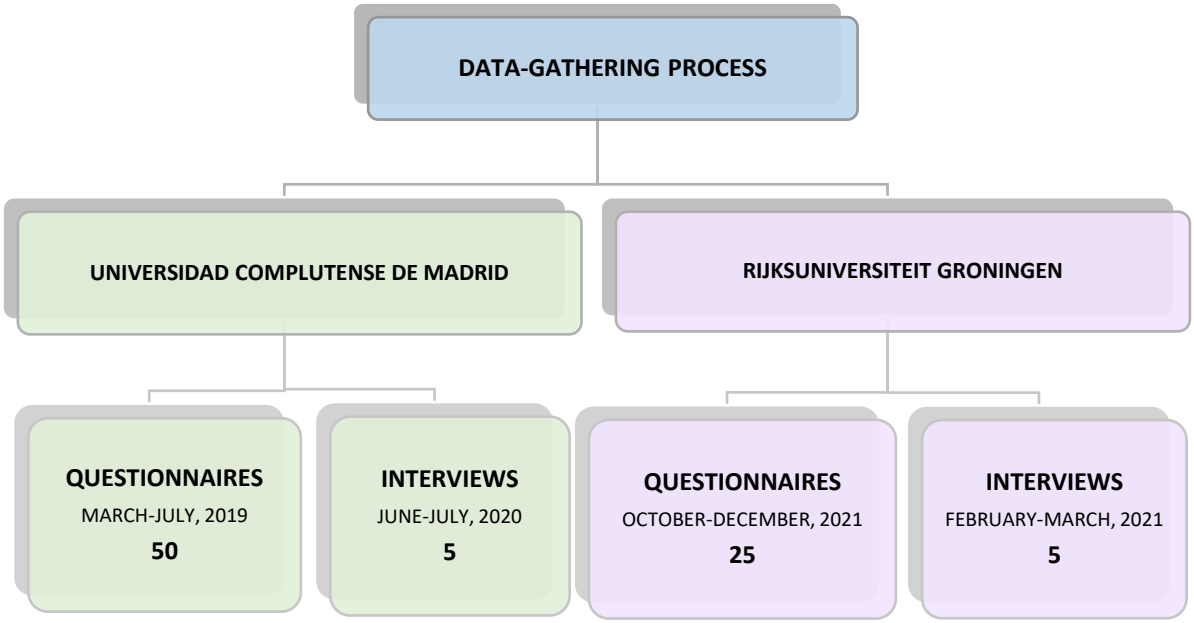
[26] The author of this PhD thesis uses 'they' as a generic third-person singular pronoun. The American Psychological Association (APA, 7th ed.) recommends using the singular 'they' as inclusive of all people in order to help writers and readers avoid making assumptions about gender. For this reason, 'they' is used as a generic third-person singular pronoun to refer to a person whose gender is unknown or irrelevant to the context of the usage. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://rb.gy/oxw2ii

4.4. Description of the Data-Collection Instruments and Data-Gathering Process

The succeeding sections explain the instruments used to carry out the study, including a comprehensive description of the tools used to collect data, followed by an explanation of the data gathering process. For clarity, Figure 11 represents the data-gathering process visually.

Figure 11

Data-Gathering Process



4.4.1. Questionnaires

The first set of data was collected through questionnaires presented in surveys (Appendix A). Before implementation, several frameworks measuring intercultural competence through different methods were considered (e.g., Hammer 2012; Hofstede, 1980). Finally, the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009) was chosen, as discussed in Chapter 2. The main reason for using this questionnaire instrument was that it includes critical self-reflection questions, which are advantageous when studying intercultural awareness (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Those reflections, analysed from an emic perspective (Pike, 1954), are considered more subjective and culture-specific. Further, in order to validate the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951), a common

method used to test the reliability of Likert scales, was calculated. According to Cronbach's Alpha, the instrument is valid ($\alpha = .85$).

The questionnaire instrument, entitled Interculturality and Internationalisation, was divided into three main parts. UCM participants completed the questionnaires in Spanish, and RUG participants did so in English. The first part included four questions regarding demographic information of the participants, specifically, age (Item 1), sex (Item 2), job position (Item 3), and nationality (Item 4). The intention of asking these four questions was to observe whether these variables might relate with differences in responses and, if so, how and to what extent. Additionally, the purpose of asking these questions was to mitigate the situation of tackling daily issues so participants feel more comfortable when answering the remaining questions.

The second part of the questionnaire instrument consisted of twenty-two questions divided into four categories. In this part, participants were asked to select on a 5-point Likert scale the score they considered most appropriate, 1 being the minimum and 5 the maximum. They were asked to be honest and objective and to share any experiences if desired in the comments section at the end of each category. The first three categories were the same macrodimensions used on the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009): continuous learning, interpersonal engagement, and hardiness. The hardiness dimension was entitled 'personal and attitudinal skills' in the questionnaire so participants could not perceive that their emotional strength was being tested through these questions. The names of the subdimensions of each dimension (self-awareness, exploration, global mindset, relationship interest, positive regard, and emotional resilience) were not provided to the participants so they had fewer cues to guess the exact abilities being measured. In fact, in each dimension, the subdimension questions were mixed, following an arbitrary but coherent order, so participants could not realise the same notions were being examined through different questions. All these

decisions were made in an attempt to avoid the Hawthorne effect (Mayo, 1933), so that the answers obtained were as reliable as possible.

A fourth category that examined participants' verbal and nonverbal linguistic skills was included, in order to observe possible relations between participants' linguistic skills and intercultural competence. Further, some follow-up questions that were not part of the original questionnaire were added to gather specific information in the form of written data to observe how participants' intercultural competence was constructed discursively. These dimensions and their questions are described in the following paragraphs.

The first category, composed of three questions, concerned continuous learning. The first question (Item 5) was about participants' interest in understanding and learning from the activities, behaviours, and events that happened around them, both at work and outside work. This question belongs to the 'exploration' subdimension (Mendenhall et al., 2011), aimed at examine participants' curiosity and willingness to learn. The question measures two basic attitudes involved in intercultural competence: 'discovery and 'curiosity' (Deardorff, 2006). These attitudes are essential for those who work in constant contact with people from different cultural backgrounds because international students' behaviours may differ from what is considered standard in the culture in which the interaction is taking place. Further, individuals characterised by these attitudes may try to comprehend why people coming from abroad act in different ways.

The second question (Item 6) asked if participants knew themselves—for example, if they were aware of their own values, strengths, weaknesses, personality, and behaviours in certain situations. The aim of this question was to explore how participants knew and valued themselves, consistent with the self-awareness subdimension (Mendenhall et al., 2011), related to the 'cultural self-awareness dimension' in Deardorff's (2006) words. Being aware of their own values and behaviours, that is, aware of their own cultural 'lenses' and of how such

‘lenses’ affect them and others could help participants foster a more ethnorelative perspective, which ultimately could lead to respect for differences.

The third question (Item 7) of this dimension asked if participants were open to ideas, norms, and situations different from theirs—in other words, if they were willing to leave their comfort zones. This question belongs to the ‘exploration’ subdimension (Mendenhall et al., 2011). Its aim was to investigate participants’ willingness to seek out new experiences that could change their perspectives and, consequently, their behaviours. A high score implies willingness to face new challenges, even if the challenges are unfamiliar or involve something unpleasant or disagreeable. The question also measured participants’ attitudes of ‘openness’ (Deardorff, 2006). Being willing to leave one’s comfort zone is indispensable to becoming interculturally competent. Interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds, even without travelling abroad, may take interlocutors away from familiar surroundings—that is, their comfort zones. Therefore, this is a challenge that individuals should be willing to face if they work in internationalisation units in which they are in constant contact with people from diverse cultures who have different habits and routines.

The next pair of questions was added to the ‘exploration’ dimension of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009) to investigate participants’ responses in depth. Participants were asked if, when travelling abroad, they had tried any food that they would not have eaten at first (Item 8), and if so, what dishes they had tried (Item 9). These questions aimed to gather supporting evidence for the previous questions about being open-minded by examining experiences in which participants were truly able to leave their comfort zones. In the questionnaire, these questions were distant from the previous ones, so participants could not perceive they were being examined about the same notion through different questions.

The second category of questions involved interpersonal engagement. The intent of this set of seven questions was to evaluate participants’ curiosity about other cultures. The first

question of this category asked if they were interested in other cultures (Item 10). This question belongs to the 'global mindset' subdimension (Mendenhall et al., 2011) and aimed to evaluate participants' willingness to actively learn from other cultures, what Deardorff (2006) terms their 'curiosity and discovery' attitudes. Having interest (attitude) is the first step to carrying out a real action, in this case, learning from other cultures and the people who live in them, a trait essential to developing intercultural competence.

The second question asked if participants read books or watched films from other cultures (Item 11). This question belongs to the 'global mindset' subdimension (Mendenhall et al., 2011). The objective of this question was to evaluate if participants truly invested their time in learning from other cultures, that is, showing 'curiosity and discovery' attitudes (Deardorff, 2006), which would lead to culture-specific knowledge. People might have an interest in something but not spend time doing it. Attitudes need to be supported by real actions that demonstrate interest in other cultures. Films and books could provide participants with knowledge about how other cultures live, for example, about habits, routines, traditions, and values. Therefore, spending their free time reading books or watching films from different cultural backgrounds could teach staff a great amount of knowledge. Consequently, these habits are essential to develop intercultural competence, especially if travelling abroad is not possible, as happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, when part of this investigation occurred.

The next question asked if participants thought it was important to relate to individuals from other cultures (Item 12). This question belongs to the 'relationship interest' subdimension (Mendenhall et al., 2012), designed to examine Deardorff's (2006) intercultural relating skills. Participants' positive responses towards developing social relationships with people from other cultures would imply that engaging others is a stimulating, energy-producing activity. In

addition, a desire to relate to people from abroad may serve as a motivation to learn foreign languages.

In connection with the previous questions, the next question was intended to measure the 'relationship interest' subdimension (Mendenhall et al., 2012) by asking participants if they had friends from other cultures (Item 13). An additional question was added to the original version of the questionnaire (The Kozai Group, 2009) to ask those who answered affirmatively how many friends[27] from other cultures they had (Item 14). The aim of this question was to evaluate this notion numerically and thereby improve accuracy. People from other cultures represent an essential source of deep cultural knowledge from whom staff could learn a lot. The ability to have friends from other cultures implies possessing an attitude open-minded enough to initiate relationships with people who are different, as well as 'respect' attitudes to maintain friendship despite cultural dissimilarities.

The next question asked if participants liked to travel abroad (Item 15) to investigate participants' interest in exploring the world. This question belongs to the 'global mindset' dimension (Mendenhall et al., 2012). If participants liked to travel ('curiosity and discovery' attitudes), and if they travelled frequently, they could learn about new cultures and other people, at least in the target countries to which they travelled, thereby acquiring the culture-specific knowledge needed to develop intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

The subsequent question asked if, when they travelled, participants related to local people from that country (Item 16), measuring the 'relationship interest' subdimension (Mendenhall et al., 2012). The question aimed to explore participants' willingness to interact with foreign people, and thus, their open attitudes (Deardorff, 2006). These attitudes are a

[27] It should be acknowledged that the meaning of the term 'friend' might vary culturally and individually itself. In other words, what people regard as 'friends' might actually change. This would be a possible limitation is this study, but still the question is considered valid, at least to obtain an approximate idea.

measure of skills such as knowing other languages and possessing the ability to relate with unknown people successfully.

The third category was entitled ‘psychological and attitudinal skills’. As mentioned, this title was given to the ‘hardiness’ dimension (Mendenhall et al., 2012) in an attempt to avoid the Hawthorne effect (Mayo, 1933). This category, consisting of six items, aimed to assess the participants’ skills to handle their feelings in intercultural situations.

In the first question (Item 17), participants were asked if they were able to control their thoughts and emotions in intercultural situations—that is, if they were able to avoid falling into prejudices or stereotypes when dealing with someone from another culture. This question belongs to the ‘emotional resilience’ subdimension, representing deep cultural knowledge (Deardorff, 2006). It aimed to measure participants’ emotional strength by inviting them to reflect on whether they could persevere in the face of significant intercultural obstacles without relying on negative stereotypes.

The second question (Item 18) belongs to the ‘positive regard’ dimension, intended to determine if participants were able to be open-minded and respond without prejudice to ideas and behaviours new to them. The aim of this question was to measure to what extent participants thought positively or negatively about individuals from cultures different from theirs and to assess their inclinations towards prejudices, what Deardorff (2006) termed ‘deep cultural knowledge’.

The next question asked participants if they were able to learn from failures and setbacks that might arise (Item 19). This question belongs to the ‘emotional resilience’ subdimension (Mendenhall et al., 2012). The objective was to encourage participants to reflect on negative experiences they have lived and to assess if they have been able to learn from the experiences and improve themselves. In this question, participants self-evaluated their own actions and behaviours to learn from their mistakes. The skill to find the origin of a failure is

necessary to improve on a personal level and develop intercultural competence appropriately (Mendenhall et al., 2012). Finally, participants were asked to share some examples of learning from failures and setbacks (Item 20). Their written answers to this question were analysed to observe if participants reported to able to behave and communicate successfully in intercultural interactions. In other words, their self-reported internal or external outcomes of the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) were evaluated.

The fourth and final category involved verbal and nonverbal linguistic abilities. The first four questions, out of six, involved speaking a foreign language. Participants were asked if they spoke any foreign language (Item 21), at what level (Item 22), and if they would like to learn a new language (Item 23). To study participants' responses in depth, a question was added to the original questionnaire (The Kozai Group, 2009) to ask which languages they would like to learn, if any, and why (Item 24). This section was relevant to the aim of this research because participants' knowledge—or at least, their interest in other languages—implies curiosity about other cultures and a willingness to learn new things. Moreover, the selection of languages they wanted to learn, and the reasons to choose them, could reveal their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Further, high scores in this subdimension could reinforce other subdimensions. For example, an interest in learning new knowledge that might not be compulsory could imply high scores in the 'exploration' subdimension as well. Moreover, participants' willingness to make an extra effort to learn a new language in their free time might reveal attitudes of curiosity and discovery about other languages and their cultures, as well as relationship interest, if staff members aimed to communicate with the people who speak those languages.

The final two questions of this category asked participants if they were aware of nonverbal language in their own culture (Item 25) and in other cultures (Item 26). Cultural self-awareness and sociolinguistic awareness are two of the most relevant requisites to developing

intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006), part of the ‘continuous learning’ dimension (Mendenhall et al., 2012).

Nonverbal language is an essential but complex part of culture because it is acquired unconsciously. In other words, nonverbal language is perceived but in an unconscious way. Nonverbal communication relays meaning through techniques other than words, such as, for instance, eye contact (oculesics), body language (kinesics), and use of space and time (proxemics and chronemics; Knapp & Hall 2002). Nonverbal communication is used to regularise meaning, to emphasise, and to reinforce information, in addition to providing a vital complementary function to verbal communication (Adetunji & Sze, 2012). In addition, paralinguistic elements should be considered, such as frequency and intensity range, speech pauses, rate, duration (e.g., Duncan, 1969; Crystal & Quirk, 1964), and other complex aspects such as irony and sarcasm (e.g., Caucci & Kreuz, 2012; Mehrabian, 2017). According to experts, 65 percent of communication is conveyed nonverbally (Burgoon et al., 1989). Therefore, raising awareness of nonverbal communication is critical to enhancing intercultural competence.

4.4.1.1. Data-Gathering Process

The questionnaire instrument was administered using Google Forms. In the case of UCM, the questionnaire was launched between March and July of 2019, while RUG participants completed their survey between October and December of 2021. The reason for the time discrepancy was that the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the data-gathering process. Nevertheless, the collected data could be used to compare attitudes before and after the pandemic. The rationale was that the experience could change participants’ perceptions of the world and, thus, their perceptions of internationalisation.

The first step was to carry out a pilot study in which three pilot participants filled out questionnaires and provided feedback regarding the clarity of the instructions, questions, and

possible answers. According to the feedback received, no modifications were required. Therefore, the researcher sent the survey directly to the administrative and support staff of three Spanish public universities (Universidad Complutense de Madrid among them) and two private universities that at first had agreed to participate. At one of the public universities, eleven administrative officers answered the questions; however, no responses were received from the other public university. Regarding the private universities invited to participate, just two people from one and none from the other completed questionnaires. Because of the low participation rates by the other four Spanish universities, comparisons could not be performed as initially planned—the data were not comparable. For that reason, the focus of the investigation shifted towards Complutense University of Madrid, where fifty people from the administrative staff voluntarily participated.

After the COVID-19 crisis, the author of this thesis completed an international research stay at the public University of Groningen in the Netherlands. The administrative staff from this institution were asked to participate in the investigation, and twenty-five people voluntarily completed questionnaires. Although the number of the participants from Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (N = 25) was half the number of participants from Universidad Complutense de Madrid (N = 50), this numerical difference was proportional to the size of the universities. That is, UCM had almost twice as many students and staff as did RUG. For this reason, the two institutions were considered equitable samples to study. Further, including the Dutch university responses in the research allowed the analysis of a greater amount of data from staff who worked in countries in which different languages were spoken.

4.4.2. Interviews

The interview questions (Appendix B) were designed after analysing the questionnaire answers obtained from the UCM participants. The interview was semistructured[28] because, even though the information that needed to be collected was known beforehand, and even though the questions were already designed, flexibility was sought for the participants to speak freely in order to explore participants' values and other intercultural dimensions in depth through their language.

It should be noted that UCM participants were interviewed in Spanish, and RUG participants received their interviews in English. The questions were divided into two main sections: event questions and perspective questions. According to Heigham and Croker (2009), event questions are 'designed to elicit chronologies, relationships, reactions, and so on' while perspective questions 'invite explanation and interpretation' (p. 188). One event question was 'How long have you been working at your current position?' (Question 1), asked in order to establish a chronology. However, 'When someone enters the office, how do you realise that person is an international visitor?' (Question 8) is an example of a perspective question—it allowed the participants to explain their thoughts and feelings.

Further, three subsections—reflections, experiences, and reactions—were added to obtain the necessary data to accomplish the goals of the investigation. These three subsections were integrated into the interviews so the questions followed a coherent order. At the beginning of the interviews, participants were asked for their permission to record the interviews for later

[28] For the sake of clarity, a definition of the three kinds of interviews is provided. According to Easwaramoorthy and Zarinpoush (2006, p. 1), in structured interviews, the interviewer asks a set of planned questions in a specified order about specific themes. The respondents are asked to choose their responses from a variety of options provided by the interviewer who may also supply additional information if needed. In semistructured interviews, the interviewer uses a set of predefined questions and the respondents answer using their own words. The interviewer can elicit additional information from the responder by asking follow-up questions. In unstructured interviews, the interviewer is given no precise instructions, constraints, predefined questions, or possibilities. The interviewer offers a few broad questions to elicit an open, informal, and spontaneous response from the responder. In order to acquire additional in-depth information on the topic, the interviewer probes with extra questions and investigates contradictions.

examination. In addition, participants were told all the information they shared would be anonymous. At the end of the interviews, they could share their opinions about the role that the administrative staff played in the process of internationalisation, provide some feedback based on their experiences, and make proposals. The structure of the interview is illustrated in Figure 12. The interview questions are explained in depth in the following paragraphs.

Figure 12

Structure of the Semistructured Interviews

4.4.2.1. Event Questions

In this section, participants were asked how long they had been in their job position (Question 1). Participants could describe their duties and responsibilities (Question 2). Moreover, they were requested to provide an approximate number of international visitors with whom they interacted per day or per week (Question 3) and to report which language they normally used with these visitors (Question 4). Further, they were asked to describe the experience of working in an international environment and being in continuous contact with people from different cultures and nationalities (Question 5).

4.4.2.2. Reflections

In this subsection, participants were asked to share the first word(s) that came to mind when they heard the terms ‘culture’ (Question 6) and ‘international visitor’ (Question 7). In

addition, they could provide definitions. After participants answered, the terms could be clarified as needed.

4.4.2.3. Perspective Questions

In this section, participants were first asked how they recognised international visitors when they entered the office (Question 8). Second, they were asked to explain their reactions when visitors entered—particularly, what they did and if they thought they treated international visitors differently compared to students and staff from their own university (Question 9).

4.4.2.4. Experiences

In this subsection, participants were asked to share their experiences with international visitors in which dissonances and misunderstandings could happen (Question 10). They were asked if these situations happened because of not belonging to the same culture or because of not sharing the same first language (if applicable; Question 11). In addition, participants were asked about their feelings and sensations when these episodes, positive or negative, occurred (Question 12).

4.4.2.5. Reactions

This subsection of the interview focused on the reactions of the participants to three intercultural scenarios previously designed by the researcher. The invented scenarios came from previous studies (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fernández Amaya, 2008; Liddicoat, 2016; Zamborlin, 2007), adapted to the specific context of administrative staff of international universities. Participants could share their subjective experiences with the three scenarios or, if they had no experience, describe how they thought they would react in those circumstances.

The first scenario (Question 13) relates to linguistic skills. In this situation, a student with a low level of Spanish/Dutch enters the administrative office and explains that they have problems filling out the registration form because of the language in which it is written

(Spanish/Dutch). They state that they know English better than they know Spanish/Dutch and, in fact, the master's degree in which they are trying to enrol is taught completely in English.

The second scenario (Question 14) relates to politeness. In this scenario, an administrative employee helps an international student with administrative problems between the student's home university and the host university (i.e., UCM or RUG). This issue takes some time for the employee, but they finally solve it. The next day, the same student surprises the administrative officer by bringing in a large box of chocolates as a gift to thank the administrative officer for their help.

The third scenario (Question 15) relates to nonverbal language. In this scenario, an international student enters the office. Because of COVID-19, both the administrative officer and the student wear masks and stay at a safe distance. For this reason, the employee must speak in a louder voice than usual and asks the student to spell their last name to locate them in the database. When the administrative officer has identified them, they make an OK gesture with their hand (👌). The student's expression turns to anger, and they prepare to leave.

The reason for asking participants about their personal intercultural experiences first was to avoid answers biased by the intercultural scenarios provided later. Despite this fact, their reactions to the three intercultural scenarios were analysed first, followed by the examination of the narrations of the critical incidents participants had experienced.

4.4.2.6. Feedback

In the closing section of the interview (Question 16), participants were asked about their points of view regarding the role of the administrative staff in the process of internationalisation. They were asked if they would change anything to improve the process, and if so, they were encouraged to share their ideas and proposals.

4.4.2.7. Data-Gathering Process

Among the fifty participants from Universidad Complutense de Madrid who took part in the survey, seven volunteered to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted through Google Meet because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in place between June and July of 2020. The intention was to interview a proportional sample of staff from each unit in which there was continuous contact with people from other cultures. Nevertheless, three of the seven people who volunteered to be interviewed worked in the same office; therefore, two of the three interviews with the staff who worked in the same office had to be randomly discarded. Finally, five interviews, one from each office, were analysed.

In the case of Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, the steps followed were different. Participants from the Dutch university were interviewed between February and March of 2021, before they completed the questionnaire. The first months of the author's research stay happened virtually because of COVID-19. For this reason, interviews were conducted online through Google Meet. First, an email was sent to different units related to international issues in which contact with people from other cultures was continuous. Nine people answered the email and voluntarily agreed to be interviewed. However, four of the people who were interviewed held senior positions at the RUG related to internationalisation and had received instruction on intercultural competence. Therefore, those interviews had to be discarded because those participants' job positions and backgrounds were not comparable to the Spanish university participants' backgrounds. During the interviews, contact was made with the administrative and support staff of RUG. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and send it to their colleagues. As mentioned, twenty-five people complied.

Regarding the interview process, first, participants were contacted by email to choose the days on which the interviews would take place. In these emails, the prospective participants were told that the questions would be about the process of internationalisation and that they

would be asked to share personal experiences in intercultural encounters. Disclosing the purpose in the email gave participants time to reflect and remember their experiences. Few specific details of the research investigation were provided to avoid social desirability bias (Kaushal, 2014). It should be emphasised that all participants of this research took part on a voluntary basis. Further, most of the interviews were conducted during participants' free time and not during working hours.

All the interviews were recorded and later transcribed manually. At the time this investigation occurred, most of the models of transcription were intended for the analysis of naturally occurring discourse (Edwards & Lampert, 2014; Ehlich, 1993) and not interviews; however, the framework proposed by Du Bois et al. (1993) was adapted for this research because not all codes are necessary for this specific kind of discourse. In order to preserve their privacy, all participants were anonymised in the transcripts (Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.). A link to the transcriptions of the ten interviews is available in Appendix C.

4.5. Corpus Description

The description of the corpus according to the method used to collect the data for each university is shown in Figures 13 and 14.

Figure 13

UCM Corpus Description

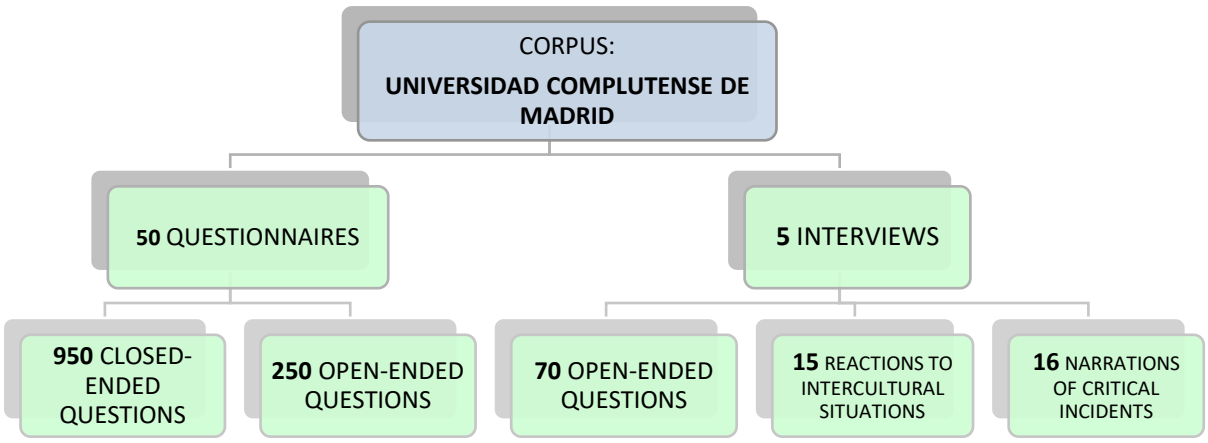
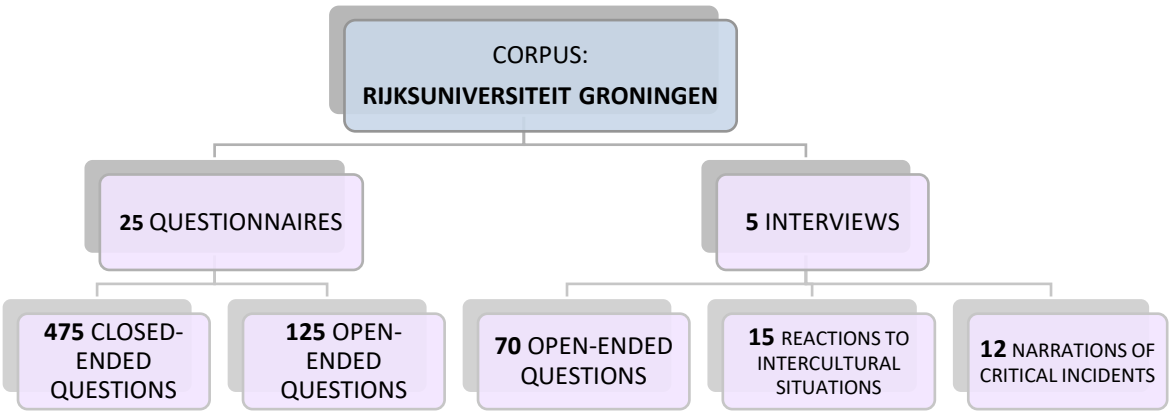


Figure 14

RUG Corpus Description



As shown in Table 2, the data consist of 311 minutes of recorded interviews containing 176,744 words. Specifically, 163 minutes were recorded during the interviews with the staff from Universidad Complutense de Madrid, providing a total of 100,096 words to be analysed, and 148 minutes with the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen staff, who provided 76,648 words.

Table 2

Data Collection: Number of Minutes and Words

Institution	Time (minutes)	Number of words
Universidad Complutense de Madrid	163	100,096
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen	148	76,648
Total	311	176,744

On the premise that this was a multiple-case study in which a restricted number of subjects was examined in detail, the limited amount of data should be noted. This small sample size does not represent the entire administrative and support staff population; therefore, the findings cannot be generalised or extrapolated to other contexts. Nevertheless, the conclusions

obtained from this investigation are intended to contribute to the research on this field (Stake, 2006).

4.6. Procedure

In the next paragraphs, the procedure followed in this investigation to analyse data and present results is explained in depth.

4.6.1. Questionnaires

To analyse the answers provided by participants to the questionnaires, the average scores ($\bar{x}$) of the answers of each institution were calculated (ranging from 1 to 5). Further, written comments were analysed to examine if they concorded with the numerical results. At the end of each dimension, the average scores ($\bar{x}$) of the two universities combined were calculated according to participants' age ranges to study possible correlations. Finally, the average scores ($\bar{x}$) of the two universities combined were calculated in agreement with participants' nationalities to observe possible variations between national (Spanish and Dutch) participants and internationals.

4.6.2. Interviews

Regarding the methodology used to analyse the participants' answers to the interviews, qualitative content analysis was selected for the purpose of this thesis. According to Mayring (2014, p. 10), the core notion of qualitative content analysis is to start with the same methodological foundation as quantitative content analysis, but to think of the process of assigning categories to text passages as a qualitative interpretive act that adheres to content-analytical criteria. Thus, qualitative content analysis is a mixed-method approach involving first assigning categories to text (qualitative) and then working through multiple text passages and analysing frequency of categories (quantitative).

After selection of the most appropriate methodology to analyse the interviews, the process of assessing categories was carried out through codification. The coding process was

based on the grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory is an analysis of data dictated by the data (data-driven), rather than starting from a previous taxonomy; hence, analysis starts from the ground. It is inductive and fundamentally qualitative (Mruck & Mey, 2007). Coding in grounded theory methodology is a process of conceptual abstraction accomplished by assigning general concepts (codes) to singular incidences in the data.

4.6.2.1. Coding Process

The first step in the coding process consisted of separating the information the participants provided during the interviews to reflect responses to the questions posed. This process could not be automated because questions were open-ended. In actuality, participants answered the questions formulated but also shared other pieces of information that came to mind. On some occasions, they mixed the information with the answers to other questions that reminded them of something. The underlying reason for their response behaviour shows the importance of context in the analysis of values and resulting attitudes. Words and utterances do not necessarily have the same meaning if they are responses to different questions; in fact, they might not reveal the same values. Therefore, this first codification was essential to interpreting the data, because values are context-dependent (Inglehart et al., 1998). In addition, showing the questions to which the specific utterances were answered prevented the analysis from being biased. In accordance with the knowledge that these codes provide, they are referred to as ‘information codes’. Table 3 illustrates the relationship between the information codes and the interview questions.

Table 3

Information Codes and their Corresponding Interview Questions

Information Codes	Questions
[1_TIME_AT_JOB_POSITION]	Question 1
[2_DUTIES_AND_RESPONSIBILITIES]	Question 2
[3_NUMBER_OF_INTERCULTURAL_INTERACTIONS]	Question 3
[4_LANGUAGE_CHOICES]	Question 4
[5_DESCRIPTION_ OF_THEIR_EXPERIENCE]	Question 5
[6_DEFINITION_OF_CULTURE]	Question 6
[7_DEFINITION_OF_INTERNATIONAL_VISITOR]	Question 7
[8_FIRST_IMPRESSIONS]	Question 8
[9_TREATING_INTERNATIONAL_VISITORS]	Question 9
[10_PERSONAL_EXPERIENCES]	Question 10
[11_CAUSES_OF_MISUNDERSTANDINGS]	Question 11
[12_FEELINGS_CAUSED_BY_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS]	Question 12
[13_REACTION_TO_LANGUAGE_PROBLEMS]	Question 13
[14_REACTION_TO_GIFTS]	Question 14
[15_REACTION_TO_NONVERBAL_LANGUAGE_MISUNDERSTANDING]	Question 15
[16_OPINIONS_AND_PROPOSALS]	Question 16

After identifying the information codes, the data were coded in three stages, based on Strauss and Corbin's (1990) coding processes for developing a grounded theory from the data: open, axial, and selective coding.

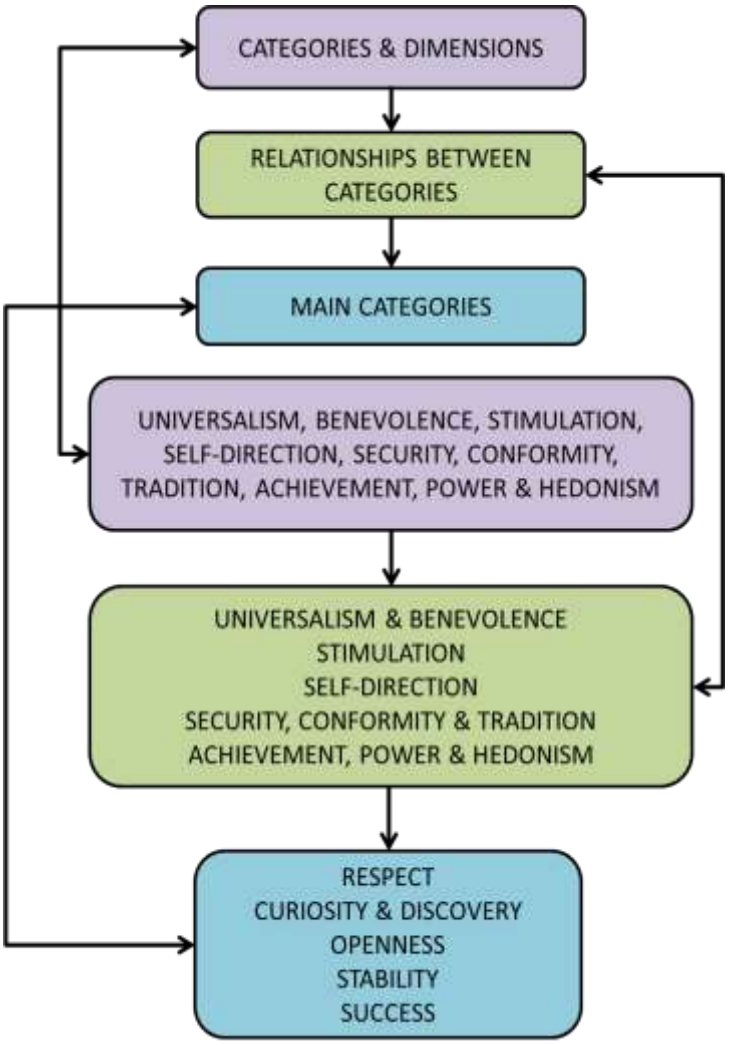
Open coding was the initial step. Open coding is a type of data analysis that aims to categorise and conceptualise phenomena through a thorough examination of the data. In this initial round of open coding, the data were divided into smaller bits and thoroughly analysed (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). The goal of this analysis was to comprehend each part's basic notion

and create a code to explain it. The overall purpose of open coding was to create a large number of codes to describe data. Because this thesis hypothesises that values are the origin of attitudes, in the analysis, the codes consisted of the ten basic human values proposed by Schwartz (1992): universalism, benevolence, stimulation, self-direction, security, conformity, tradition, achievement, power, and hedonism.

The second step was axial coding. **Axial coding** is required, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), to study the links between the information codes that come from the open-coding procedure and the codes inside their content. In this investigation, the link was established between human values and their resulting attitudes. Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommend reviewing the data and codes using a coding paradigm that focuses on and relates causative conditions (questions; information codes), context (the universities), intervening conditions (COVID-19), action/interaction strategies, and outcomes to discern the relationships among the categories (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). These perspectives on the data aid in detecting relationships among concepts (value codes) and categories (attitudes) so they can be linked on a meta level. This process is illustrated in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Axial Coding Process



Note. Elaboration based on *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, by J. Corbin and A. L. Strauss, 2014, SAGE, p. 216.

Finally, **selective coding** was performed. The purpose of selective coding is to combine the several categories (information codes and value codes) generated, elaborated, and mutually related throughout axial coding (attitudes) into a single unified theory (the process model of intercultural competence [Deardorff, 2006]). The findings of axial coding are further expanded, integrated, and validated to achieve this purpose. As they are subsumed under a core category related to all the other categories generated in axial coding, the categories are incorporated into a cohesive overall theory (Deardorff, 2006; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).

Thus, selective coding is the act of selecting the core categories (attitudes) and linking them to the other axial-coded categories (values). Further, these relationships need to be validated, and during the validation process, certain categories could be modified and expanded. The core category is 'the central phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116). After identifying the core category, the researcher becomes aware of the investigation's central phenomenon and can respond to the research questions.

The coding paradigm, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), is an essential component of grounded theory development; without it, the theory would lack density and clarity (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). In other words, if the participants' language is analysed without the context (information codes), neither the framework (value codes) nor the results (attitudes) will be accurate; hence, they will not be relevant.

In this study, the coding process was performed using the NVivo 13 (2020) software application. In NVivo, codes (nodes) are the containers of the categories used to encode the text, in this case, the interviews (Sabariego Puig, 2018). These categories can be obtained and created directly from the data, because the meanings can be discovered inductively, or they can be created deductively, in other words, created based on previous theories or ideas. In this study, the codification process occurred deductively, because it was based on Schwartz's (1992, 2012) theory of basic human values and on Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence. Thus, the categories consisted of an established coding system.

The values analysis of the language used in the interviews occurred through the codification of utterances,[29] which included key lexical words linked to the definitions of the

[29] Utterances are coded through an analysis of spoken discourse. Thus, participants' speeches do not always follow fixed grammatical structures nor contain complete semantic meanings; they are completely context-dependent. To address this situation, the information codes provide the necessary context during the analysis to justify the findings.

basic human values proposed by Schwartz (1992). According to Corver and van Riemsdijk (2006, p. 1), lexical words (also called 'content' or 'substantive categories') are the lexical items that have detailed or particular semantic content and hence contain the sentence's main meaning. Corver and van Riemsdijk refer to objects (nouns), actions (verbs), properties (adjectives), and locations or directions (prepositions) at the heart of the message the sentence is intended to communicate. Functional words, on the other hand, have a more 'nonconceptual' meaning and have a primarily 'grammatical' role. Theoretically, functional words are required by the surface structure to bind the content words together, specifying what goes with what and how. The functional domain's abstract meaning includes features such as tense, modality, definitions, quantity, degree, and interrogatives (Corver & van Riemsdijk, 2006, p. 1).

For this reason, utterances containing key lexical words related to human values were coded. Further, the lexical words common among the utterances of the staff interviews from both universities in each value code were analysed according to their resulting attitudes, in order to achieve a clearer idea of the phenomenon.

Because this study was an independent endeavour, only one researcher assigned codes, which could be considered a limitation. To mitigate this potential problem, an experienced investigator in qualitative research, Dr. Luelmo del Castillo, carried out the same codification process. The aim was to apply the intercoder reliability (ICR) technique to the analysis of the interviews to guarantee trustworthiness, consistency of codes and to prevent any form of prejudice. The second coder analysed two of ten interviews (i.e., 20% of the total data), one from each institution—one in Spanish and one in English. O'Connor and Joffe (2020) state that coding between 10 percent and 25 percent of the same data is acceptable to calculate the ICR. Ninety-four percent of the codification coincided; in other words, the result was an ICR of 0.94, which, according to experts (e.g., Glesne, 2016; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), demonstrated sufficient reliability.

4.6.3. From Deductive Analysis to Inductive Analysis

The analysis of the interviews occurred in two phases: deductive and inductive, according to combined methods used in traditional qualitative content analysis (Armat et al., 2018). The deductive technique is useful when preexisting viewpoints, ideas, research findings, or conceptual frameworks are present for the issue being investigated (Mayring, 2014). In the analysis, two frameworks were used: the theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 2012) and the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). However, when this investigation was conducted, no existing framework linked human values with human linguistic choices in the context of intercultural competence and internationalised universities. Therefore, the analysis began by applying the preexisting categories proposed by the theory, clearly demonstrating deduction (Armat et al., 2018). Nevertheless, when some coded portions of the text do not fit the categorisation, new categories might be constructed inductively (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Such induction happened with some of the utterances found in the interviews; they did not fit into any of the value codes. Thus, new categories developed inductively as the research advanced, resulting in tentative hypotheses (Bernard, 2011).

In this analysis, participants' linguistic choices could reveal not just their attitudes and values but also other relevant factors for the efficient development of intercultural competence—for example, knowledge, comprehension, skills, and the (desired) outcomes of intercultural competence. As suggested by Armat et al. (2018) and Neuendorf (2002), during the remainder of the analysis process, hypotheses were evaluated and retested to reach the most accurate conclusions possible. The new categories that emerged inductively corresponded to Deardorff's (2006) dimensions of knowledge and comprehension—that is, cultural self-awareness, deep cultural knowledge, and sociolinguistic awareness—which constituted the second part of the interview analysis.

Collecting participants' narrations of self-experienced critical incidents facilitated the assessment of their adaptability towards people from other cultural backgrounds in accordance with an adapted version of the rubric proposed by Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo (2021, see Chapter 2, Section 2.10). In the original version of the rubric, three aspects were measured: pragmatic awareness, which included pragmalinguistic aspects and sociopragmatic aspects, divided into two dimensions, and intercultural adaptability. The modifications were mainly based on the intercultural adaptability dimension, given its relevance; in addition, some aspects of the remaining dimensions examined in Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo's (2021) original version of the rubric were taken into consideration for the adapted rubric. Because the participants of this research were not university students but administrative and support staff of internationalised universities, this rubric was adapted to their specific context as well. Further, the rubric was used to examine participant's intercultural adaptability according to their self-experienced critical incidents narrated orally, instead of to situations posed, in written format, as occurred in the original study (Sánchez-Hernández & Maíz-Arévalo, 2021). The most relevant finding of this inductive part of the analysis was the resulting rubric (Schreier, 2014), which is illustrated and discussed in Chapter 6 with the results (Appendix D).

Finally, participants' reactions to the three intercultural scenarios provided during the interviews, representing situations in which intercultural critical incidents were likely to occur, were classified according to the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence proposed by Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence.

A link to the coded extracts from the interviews is available in Appendix E, divided into the sections previously described.

4.7. Chapter Summary

The goal of Chapter 4 was to give a thorough description of the main methodological choices made during this research process. First, the research questions designed to guide the investigation were restated. Second, the investigation context and the participants were described. Although more specific methodological considerations are addressed in the forthcoming chapters, an overview of the data-collection instruments and the data-gathering process was offered. Finally, a discussion of the procedures used to analyse the data was presented.

Now that the overall methodological framework and theoretical underpinnings supporting this research have been presented, the next part of this PhD thesis describes the empirical investigations carried out to answer the research questions and thus contribute to the field of investigation. Chapter 5 presents the analysis of the questionnaires.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 5

Analysis of Questionnaires

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the first empirical exploration of the intercultural competence of the participants. Specifically, this chapter discusses the results obtained from the analysis of questionnaires with the objective of answering the first research question:

RQ1. How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised higher education institutions perceive their own intercultural competence?

In this chapter, the answers provided by the sample of 75 participants—50 members of the administrative and support staff from Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM; $N = 50$) and 25 from Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG; $N = 25$)—are examined. In accordance with the main definitions and frameworks for intercultural competence provided in Chapter 2, the purpose of this chapter is to present the results from an emic perspective, obtained from the questionnaire, which draws on the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES; The Kozai Group, 2009).

To this end, this chapter is organised in several sections. The first section (5.2) explains the demographic information of the participants. Next, the continuous learning dimension (5.3) is examined and a discussion of the self-awareness and exploration subdimensions is presented. The next section presents an analysis of the interpersonal engagement dimension (5.4), composed of the global mindset and relationship interest subdimensions. The hardiness dimension (5.5) is evaluated next, consisting of psychological and attitudinal skills, including the positive regard and emotional resilience subdimensions. The final dimension of this questionnaire instrument consists of assessing participants' linguistic skills (5.6) and nonverbal language awareness (5.7). In addition to presenting the numerical results, the section displays the comments written by participants at the end of each corresponding dimension. In the

following discussion, these written responses are evaluated according to the internal and external outcomes of the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Further, the participants' results are examined in relation to the independent variable of age. Finally, the average scores obtained by the national (Spanish and Dutch) participants are compared with the internationals' average scores (5.8). The chapter closes with a summary (5.9).

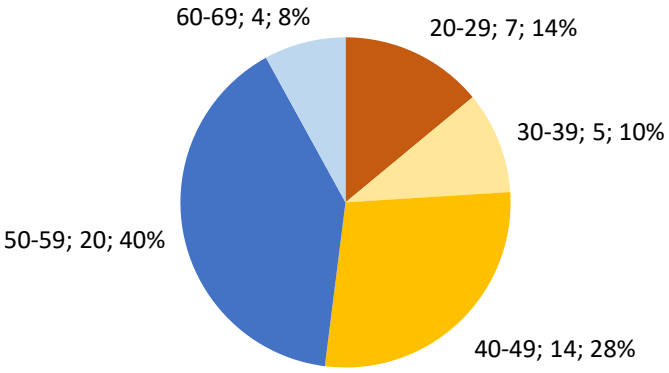
5.2. Demographic Information

The participants who completed the questionnaires were administrative and support staff of Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

Out of the 50 participants from Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 20 (40%) were between 50 and 59 years old, 14 (28%) were between 40 and 49 years old, 7 (14%) were between 20 and 29 years old, 5 (10%) were between 30 and 39 years old, and 4 (8%) were between 60 and 69 years old. The average age of the UCM participants was 46.3 years. Figure 16 shows this information.

Figure 16

UCM Participants' Ages



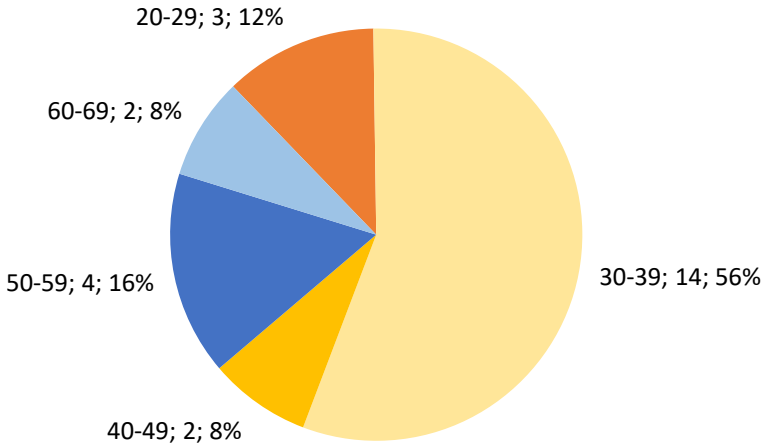
Note. $N = 50$.

Out of 25 participants from Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 14 (56%) were between 30 and 39 years old, 4 (16%) were between 50 and 59 years old, 3 (12) were between 20 and 29

years old, 2 (8%) were between 40 and 49 years old, and 2 (8%) were between 60 and 69 years old. The average age of the RUG participants was 39.7 years. Figure 17 shows this information.

Figure 17

RUG Participants' Ages

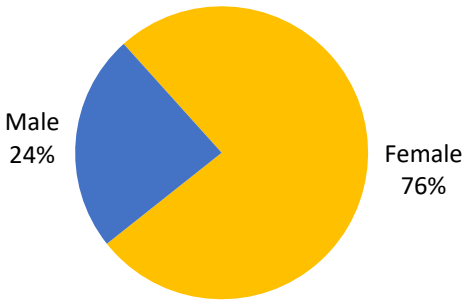


Note. $N = 25$.

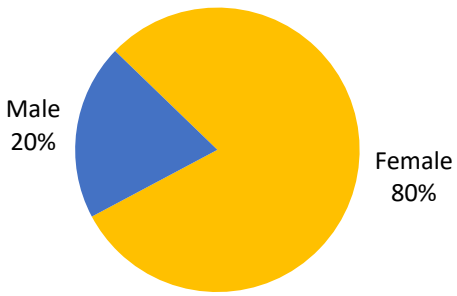
With respect to sex, of 50 UCM participants, 38 (76%) were females, and 12 (24%) were males. Among RUG participants, 20 (80%) were females, and 5 (20%) were males, as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18

Comparison of Participants' Sex



Note. UCM, $N = 50$.

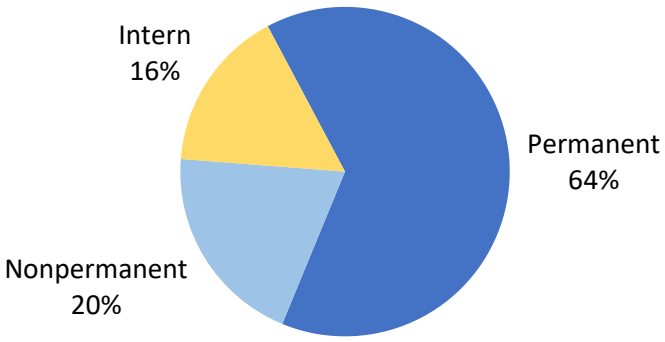


RUG, $N = 25$.

Participants were asked about their current positions in their university units. Among UCM participants, out of 50, 32 (64%) had a permanent position, 10 (20%) had a nonpermanent position (interims), and 8 (16%) were interns (Figure 19).

Figure 19

UCM Participants' Job Positions

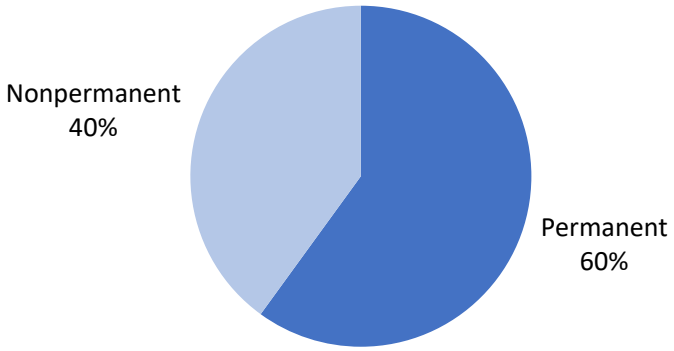


Note. $N = 50$.

Among RUG participants, of 25, 15 (60%) were permanent staff, and 10 (40%) were nonpermanent. Interns did not participate in RUG's questionnaires (Figure 20).

Figure 20

RUG Participants' Job Positions

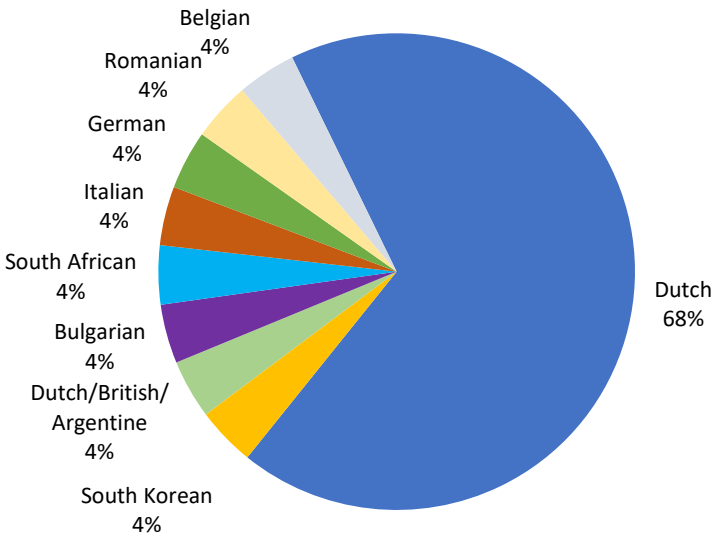


Note. $N = 25$.

Regarding nationality, among UCM staff, 49 of 50 participants were Spanish (98%), and 1 (2%) was from Romania. Among RUG staff, more nationalities were found, compared to UCM. Of the 25 RUG participants, 17 (68%) were Dutch, and 1 person (4%) from each of the following nationalities participated: Belgian, Romanian, German, Italian, South African, Bulgarian, and South Korean. Finally, 1 person had three different nationalities: Dutch, British, and Argentinian, as shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21

RUG Participants' Nationalities



Note. $N = 25$.

In the following sections, the findings from the analysis of the questionnaires completed by the staff from UCM and RUG are presented and discussed according to the dimensions of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009). As explained in the previous chapters, participants completed the questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale. At the end of each section, participants could write comments if they wished, which are analysed here according to the internal and external outcomes of the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

5.3. Overview of Results and Discussion on Continuous Learning

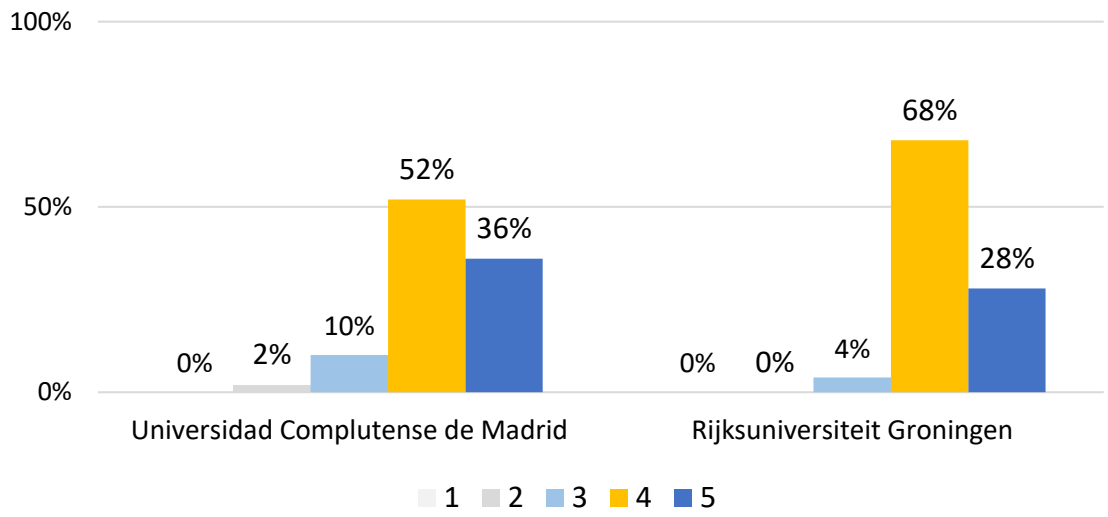
The questions of the continuous learning dimension evaluated participants' awareness of themselves—self-awareness—and their willingness to discover the world—exploration—and learn from what was different to them.

5.3.1. Self-Awareness

The first question of the self-awareness category was 'Would you say that you know yourself (for example, your values, strengths, and weaknesses, your personality, your behaviour in certain situations, etc.)?' Results are illustrated in Figure 22.

Figure 22

Would you Say that you Know yourself (for Example, your Values, Strengths, and Weaknesses, your Personality, your Behaviour in Certain Situations, etc.)?



Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.

Results show that 36% of participants from UCM and 28% from RUG gave the highest score, 5 out of 5. In this case, most participants chose the second highest score, 4 out of 5, specifically, 52% from UCM and 68% from RUG. From UCM, 10% selected 3 points, and 2% selected 2 points of 5. From RUG, 4% selected 3 out of 5.

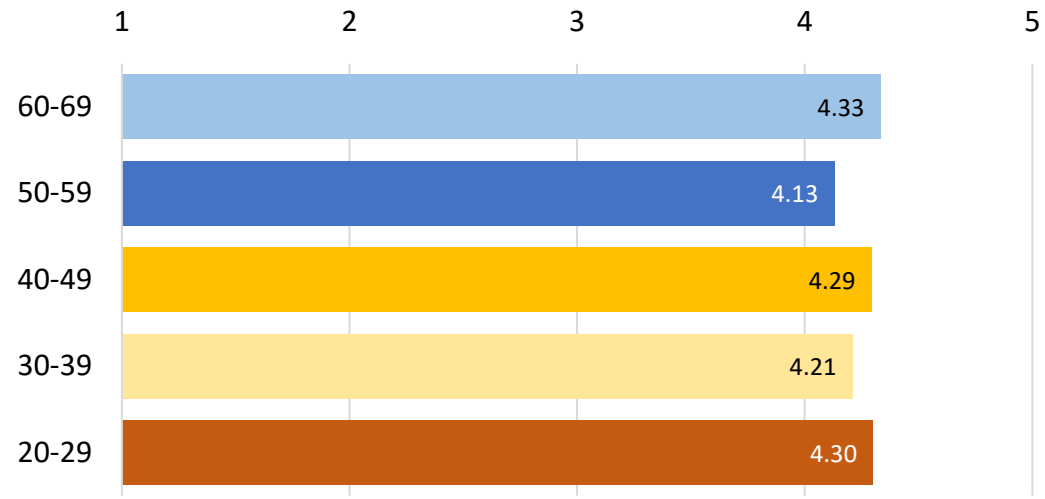
Most participants believed they knew themselves and were able to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses in most contexts, reporting a high level of self-awareness and self-evaluation skills. The staff from RUG showed slightly higher results in this dimension ($\bar{x}$ = 4.24) than did those from UCM ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22). This difference may have been caused by the varied nationalities of the participants from the Dutch university—moving abroad can help people develop a clearer sense of self (Adam et al., 2018). In other words, when individuals live in a 'host' culture, they often become more aware of their own 'home' culture, because they may be forced to change at least some habits and routines they may have taken for granted before moving.

5.3.1.1. Discussion on Self-Awareness and Age

The senior age group among participants (60–69) showed the highest score in the self-awareness dimension ($\bar{x}$ = 4.33), followed by the youngest (20–29; $\bar{x}$ = 4.30) and, with a very similar average score, the age group of 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.29), followed by the 30 to 39 age group ($\bar{x}$ = 4.21). The lowest level of self-awareness was shown by the group of participants between 50 and 59 years old ($\bar{x}$ = 4.13). These results are summarised in Figure 23.

Figure 23

Age Range—Self-Awareness



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

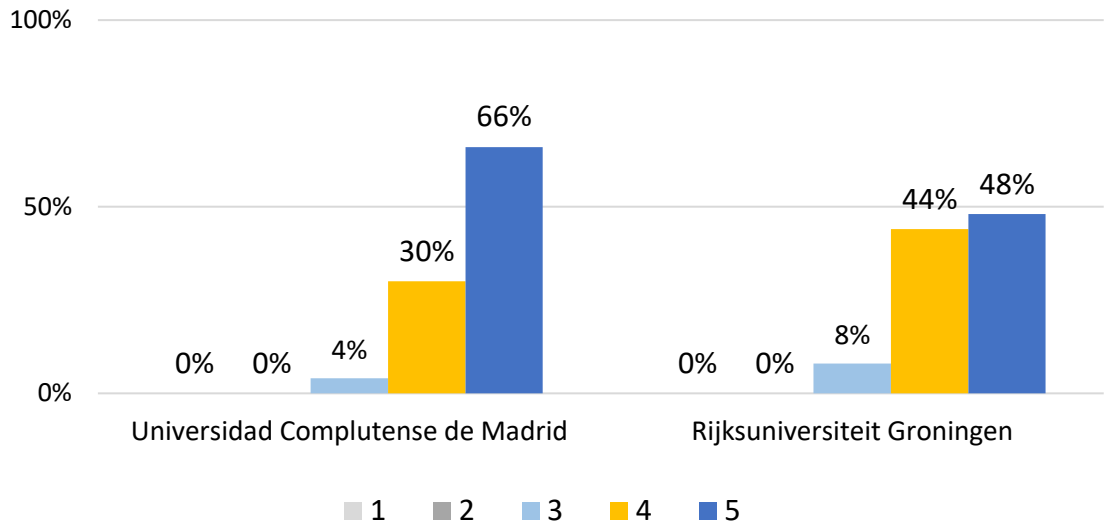
Even though the average scores did not vary greatly among age groups, the differences are worth discussing. The results partially support the hypothesis that self-awareness is acquired through time and experience (Rousse, 2019). That is, as people get older, their degree of self-awareness in standard situations is expected to increase, as these results show. Nevertheless, the senior age group average was very similar to the youngest age group average, standing out from the 50 to 59 age group, thereby challenging the hypothesised direct relationship between age and self-awareness.

5.3.2. Exploration

The first question of this subcategory was ‘Are you interested in understanding and learning from the activities, behaviours, and events that happen around you (both at work and outside of it)?’ The participants’ answers are summarised in Figure 24.

Figure 24

Are you Interested in Understanding and Learning from the Activities, Behaviours, and Events that Happen around you (both at Work and Outside of it)?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

Regarding this question, 65% of UCM participants, compared to 48% from RUG, selected 5, the highest number on the 5-point scale. Among the participants, 30% from UCM and 44% from RUG selected 4 out of 5. Further, 4% of participants from UCM and 8% from RUG chose 3 out of 5. The results show a common desire among the staff of both institutions to know and learn about the activities, behaviours, and events that occurred around them. Participants from UCM reported slightly higher results in this question ($\bar{x}$ = 4.62) than did those from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 4.40).

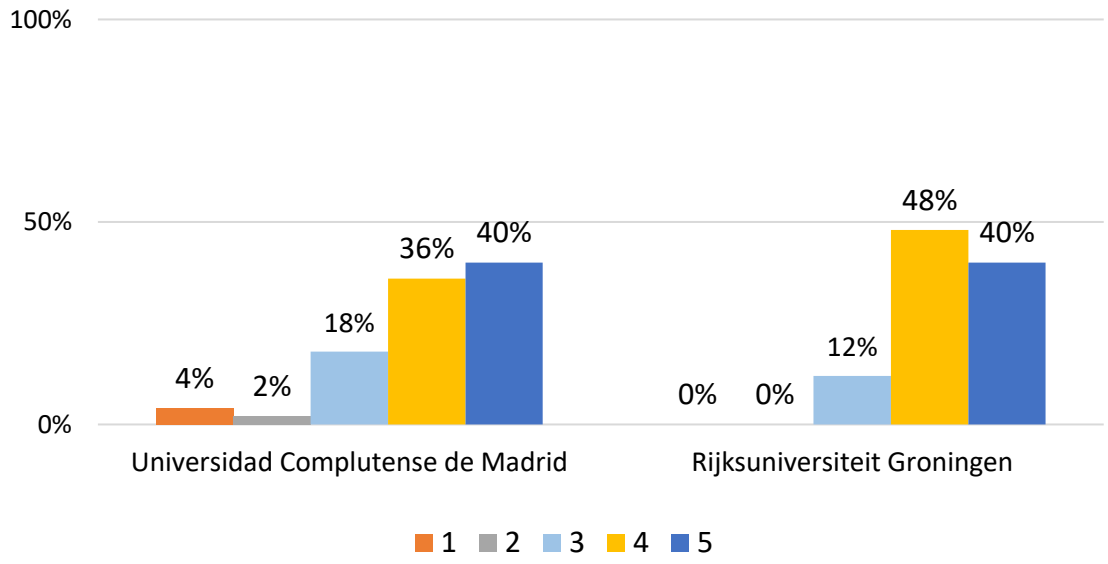
Most of UCM participants (68%) selected 5 out of 5 possible points. On the one hand, it is important to note that attitudes as the basis of intercultural competence might compensate for the lack of other aspects necessary for its development. For example, if a person has not lived or travelled abroad but displays a curious attitude, shows willingness to understand, and evinces a desire to learn from what is happening around them, this person's intercultural competence will likely develop successfully. On the other hand, a person who has an

ethnocentric attitude might not develop intercultural competence efficiently, despite having travelled extensively or even lived abroad.

The next question was 'Are you open to ideas, norms, and/or situations that are different from yours? That is, are you willing to step out of your "comfort zone"?' Results show that 40% of UCM participants and 40% of RUG participants rated this question with the highest score, 5 on the 5-point scale. Participants' responses show 38% from UCM and 48% from RUG selected 4 out of 5. Additionally, 18% from UCM and 12% from RUG chose 3 out of 5. Finally, among UCM participants, 2% chose 2, and 4% selected 1 out of 5. None of the RUG participants chose 1 or 2. The scores are illustrated in Figure 25.

Figure 25

Are you Open to Ideas, Norms, and/or Situations that are Different from yours? That is, are you Willing to Step Out of your 'Comfort Zone'?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

RUG participants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.28) obtained higher results on this question than did those from UCM ($\bar{x}$ = 4.02). The fact that the participants from the Dutch university hailed from a wide variety of countries may have played a key role in these findings. Those who moved from

foreign countries to live in the Netherlands may have already left their comfort zones and faced new contexts and situations which were unfamiliar. Further, for those who had the Dutch nationality, working with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds could have increased their willingness to explore (Yu et al., 2021).

As explained in Chapter 4, two questions were added to the original scale to examine participants' responses in depth. The first question was 'When travelling, have you ever tried any food that in principle you would not have eaten?' The second question was 'If so, what foods have you tried?'[30] Among UCM participants, 62% admitted having tried new foods they would not normally have eaten; 38% indicated they had not. In the case of RUG staff, all the participants (100%) asserted they had tried something new.

These results are in line with the previous observations about participants' willingness to leave their comfort zones—trying unknown food is a good occasion to go beyond the familiar. Accordingly, RUG participants indicated greater readiness to try new foods and experiences, which suggests predisposition to discovery and openness attitudes.

The second added question aimed to explore participants further regarding their willingness to try something new by asking them 'If so, what foods have you tried?' The responses were divided by university into two categories: food that differed from what could be found in the European cuisine (Gillespie & Cousins, 2001) and food whose ingredients are traditionally eaten in European countries. The former foods are listed in Tables 4 and 5.

5.3.2.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Among the 50 participants from UCM, 28 commented on the dishes they had tried. Some of them simply reported they had tried something different. Some mentioned the country

[30] In the questionnaire, these questions are distant from the previous ones, so participants could not perceive they were being examined about the same notion through different questions.

of origin of unfamiliar foods but did not specify the name of the dish. In all, 10 participants named specific foods considered different from what might be traditionally eaten in Europe.

These foods show highly concordant results between what participants considered different to what is nonstandard in European cuisine. Even though some participants admitted not trying new foods, more than half of the participants (28 of 50) commented on this section, a finding that supports their 'openness' and 'exploration' attitudes. Further, 1 UCM participant reported being open to trying new food and was especially interested in exotic dishes, which indicates a curious attitude. Table 4 shows UCM participants' responses.

Table 4

Dishes Tried—Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Spanish	English
Cocodrilo, gacela, ñu	Crocodile, gazelle, wildebeest
Cui (conejillos de indias), hormigas, canguro, cocodrilo.	Cuy (guinea pigs), ants, kangaroo, crocodile.
Saltamontes	Grasshopper
Ranas, bisonte	Frogs, bison
Carne de camello	Camel meat
Sangre de serpiente	Snake blood
Reptiles, tiburón, ballena	Reptiles, shark, whale
Insectos fritos en China	Fried insects in China
Tendones e insectos	Tendons and insects
Hormigas	Ants

5.3.2.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Among the 25 RUG participants, 17 shared their experiences trying new foods. Six participants mentioned specific foods that can be considered different from food typically found in Europe.[31]

In total, 17 of the 25 participants reported being open to trying new foods by commenting on this section, thus supporting the answers provided to the previous question. These dishes show their willingness to leave their comfort zones, reinforced by real experiences. Moreover, two participants stated they would eat anything. In addition, 1 RUG participant admitted being vegetarian; nevertheless, this person ate meat in some countries because of being a guest. Meat was specifically cooked for them, and they did not want to be impolite. This act suggested respect in addition to the curiosity and discovery attitudes conveyed by all RUG staff members. Table 5 shows the dishes RUG participants tried.

Table 5

Dishes Tried—Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Food
Reindeer meat
Kangaroo, crocodile, insects
Dog stew, chicken feet, goose beak
Moose
Goat intestines, fried spleen
Şırdan[32]

[31] Escargots and snails are mentioned twice among RUG staff, and once among UCM staff. Sea snails are frequently eaten in some European countries, including Spain. However, some of the participants consider them 'different' from what they are used to—they may have tasted earth snails, which are insects. Insects, in general, and specific insects are mentioned by five participants.

[32] *Şırdan* is a traditional Turkish dish prepared from the muscles of sheep or lamb, stuffed with minced meat, onions, and paprika, and seasoned with salt and pepper. The opening is normally stitched with a needle and thread.

In the following section, participant's scores are compared to their ages to observe possible relations.

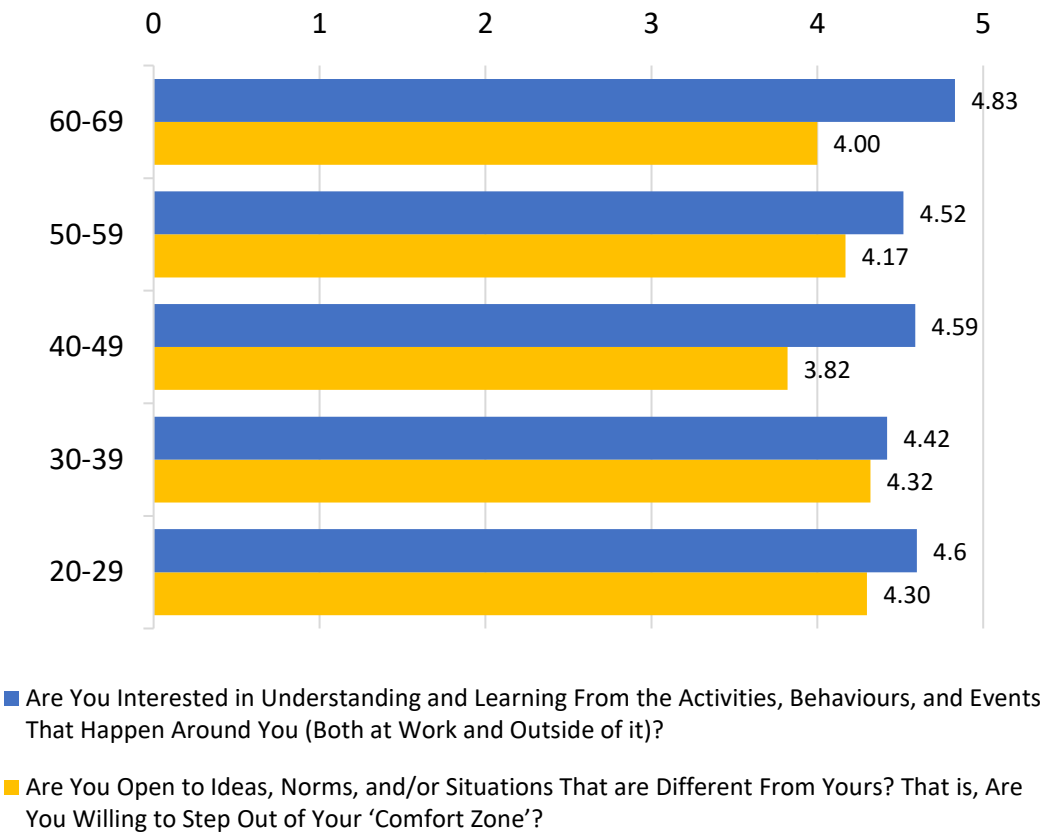
5.3.2.3. Discussion on Exploration and Age

The senior age group (60–69) showed the highest score towards learning from things that were new to them (mean $\bar{x}$ = 4.83), followed by the youngest group of 20 to 30 years old ($\bar{x}$ = 4.60). Showing similar average scores were the age groups 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.59), 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.52), and 30 to 39 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.42). Results varied when participants reported leaving their comfort zones. The group who obtained the lowest score in the previous question achieved the highest score in this one: 30 to 39 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.32), followed by 20 to 29 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.30), 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.17), 60 to 69 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00), and 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.82). The results for the exploration dimension are shown by age range in Figure 26.

The relationship between the 'exploration' dimension and age seems to contrast with previous research showing older people feel more identified with conservative attitudes, whereas younger people are more curious and willing to learn (Feather, 1975; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz et al., 2001; Taylor & Keeter, 2010). In contrast to the attitudes typically associated with people in these age ranges, these results show discrepancies. One explanation for this could be that older participants may have been working in internationalisation and interacting with people from other cultures for a longer time, compared to younger workers. These intercultural experiences and relationships may have increased their interest in learning about differences in others, deviating from the trend in their age group (Murray et al., 2021).

Figure 26

Age Ranges—Exploration



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

5.3.3. Comments from Participants

As mentioned, at the end of each section, participants were invited to leave comments in case there was something else they wanted to share with the researcher. Those who provided enough information and context for the comments to be interpreted are discussed next. For each comment, the Spanish text is followed by the English translation.

5.3.3.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Among UCM participants, 2 people of the 50 participants in the sample commented about interculturality.

1. *No me importa salir de mi 'zona de confort' si es para ayudar, pero* [*si*] *es por ganas de aventura, no.* [I do not mind coming out of my 'comfort zone' as long as it is to help out, but I do if it is just for a taste of adventure.]

The author of Comment 1 admitted they would not leave their comfort zone for pleasure but only if it was necessary to help someone. This answer reveals 'altruism' and 'empathy' values. The participant was willing to do something they may not like just to help someone who needed it. They showed a high level of self-awareness, acknowledging personal preferences but a lower level of 'discovery' attitudes, that is, the 'exploration' dimension.

2. *Me cuesta enfrentarme a situaciones nuevas y no conozco mis fortalezas, las debilidades diría que en exceso.* [It is difficult for me to face new situations and I do not know my strengths, I would say I know my weaknesses excessively.]

The person who made Comment 2 accepted the difficulty of facing new situations and underlines that they knew their weaknesses but not their strengths. This answer shows a low level of emotional resilience. This key component, which is labelled with different names in other models—for instance, the 'affective filter' (Krashen, 1982)—played a vital role in this specific example. If the participant had low self-esteem, meaning if they could identify only what they did wrong, intercultural competence would not be developed efficiently.

5.3.3.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Among the 25 participants from RUG, 2 people commented at the end of this section.

3. I am interested in other people; want to get to know their motivation and want that people feel safe.

The participant who made Comment 3 shows 'curiosity and discovery' attitudes, part of the 'exploration dimension', together with 'empathy' and willingness to protect others, which are key elements to developing intercultural competence.

4. Sometimes willing to step out of the comfort zone. However, as it seems it's only one side that needs to do that these days, in the end the opposite effect is achieved. . . . Potentially it's a 5, but seen the last couple of years this tolerance has become less.

The author of Comment 4 believed they would be willing to leave their comfort zone. However, the global pandemic inspired them to reflect and conclude they were not as tolerant as they were two years earlier, before COVID-19. Reflecting on their changes and admitting their limits are essential skills that help people develop intercultural competence, as the 'self-awareness' dimension supports. If individuals are capable of analysing themselves and the reasons why their tolerance has decreased, they will be capable of adopting an ethnorelative view more easily.

5.4. Overview of Results and Discussion on Interpersonal Engagement

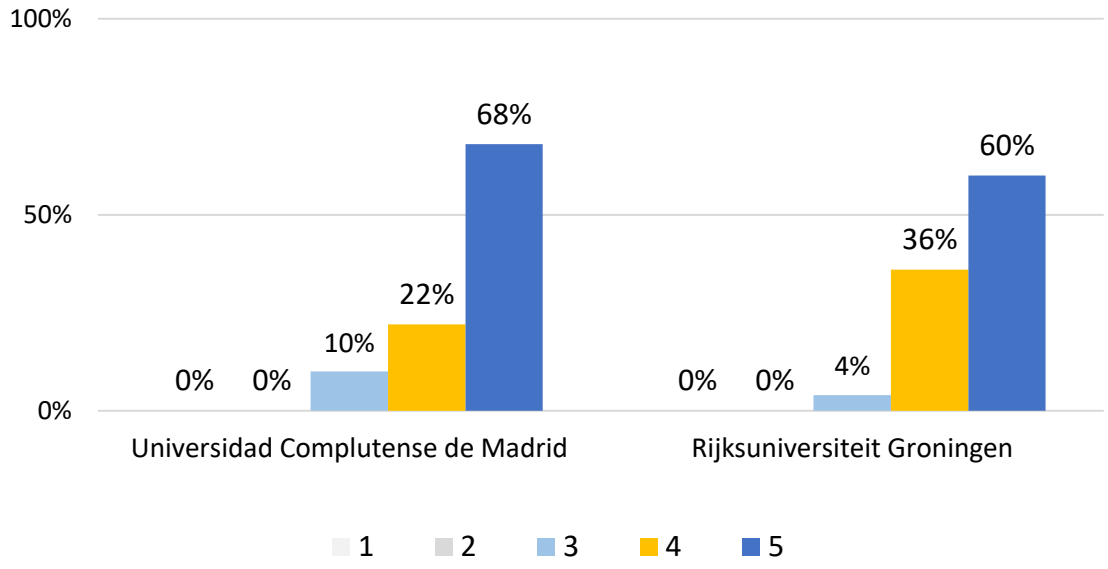
The questions of the next section examined participants' intentions to learn from different cultures—'global mindset'—as well as their predispositions to establish social relationships—'relationship interest'—with the people who belonged to them.

5.4.1. Global Mindset

In this subcategory, participants were first asked, 'Are you interested in other cultures?' Among participants, 68% from UCM and 60% from RUG chose the highest score, 5 out of 5, for their interest in learning. In addition, 22% from UCM and 36% from RUG selected 4 out of 5. Further, 10% of UCM participants, and 4% of RUG participants chose 3 out of 5. None of the UCM or RUG participants selected 1 or 2. The results are illustrated in Figure 27.

Figure 27

Are you Interested in Other Cultures?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

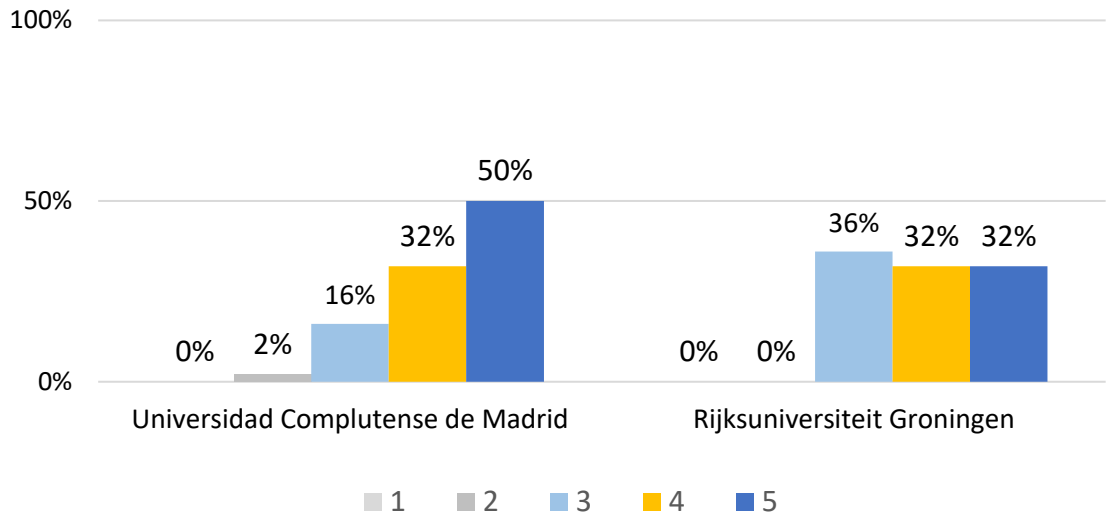
Most participants rated this question with a 5, the highest score, showing a disposition to explore and discover, which was the expected attitude of people who choose to work in internationalisation units. Even though results for both universities were very similar, participants from UCM ($\bar{x}$ = 4.58) selected slightly higher numbers in their answers than did those from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 4.56). Because 36% of RUG participants were already living in a different country from where they were born, their interest in cultures different from theirs may be taken for granted, at least with the aim of being integrated into the host country.

After asking about participants' willingness to learn from other cultures, their habits were examined through the next question: 'Do you usually read books and/or watch films from other cultures?' Among UCM participants, 50% chose 5 out of 5 points, as 32% of RUG participants did, reporting that they frequently read books or watched films from other cultures. Among UCM participants, 32%, the same percentage as RUG participants, chose 4 out of 5,

indicating they did these actions frequently. Among UCM participants, 16% chose 3, and 2% selected 2. Among RUG participants, 36% chose 3. The results are illustrated in Figure 28.

Figure 28

Do you Usually Read Books and/or Watch Films from other Cultures?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

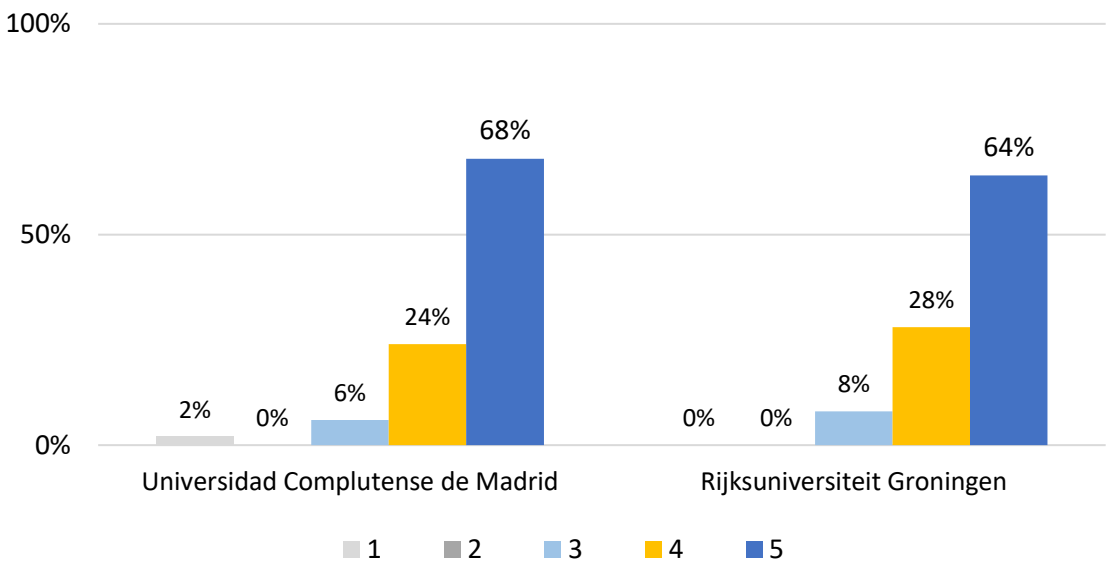
On average, participants from UCM obtained higher results on this question ($\bar{x}$ = 4.30) than those from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 3.96) did. The fact that twice as many RUG participants chose 3 out of 5, compared to UCM participants, admitting that watching films or reading books from other cultures was not a habit, is an interesting finding. The general level of proficiency in the English language in the Netherlands, where these RUG participants worked, was higher than English proficiency levels in Spain (Education First, 2021). This linguistic proficiency in the international language may have made access to media and books from different countries and cultures easier. However, it should be noted that because Spanish is the second most-spoken language in the world (Instituto Cervantes, 2016), many media and books are translated into Spanish, offering easier access for participants from the Spanish-speaking country. Therefore, these answers imply that although linguistic skills are essential for developing intercultural competence, individuals also need to develop their 'curiosity and discovery' attitudes so that

learning can take place. In other words, access to knowledge of other cultures can be facilitated, but without these attitudes, it would be useless.

The next question was 'Do you like travelling to other countries?' More than half of the participants selected the highest score, 5 out of 5. Among participants, 68% from UCM and 64% from RUG chose 5, and 24% from UCM and 28% from RUG selected 4. Further, 6% of UCM participants and 8% of RUG participants chose 3 out of 5. Finally, 2% of UCM participants chose 1 out 5, thereby reporting little interest in exploring the world by selecting the lowest possible score (Figure 29).

Figure 29

Do you Like Travelling to other Countries?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

These results imply that many participants were curious and interested in discovering and living new experiences, which are essential attitudes measured on the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009). Numerical results were the same on average (UCM, $\bar{x}$ = 4.56; RUG, $\bar{x}$ = 4.56). Most participants from both universities selected the maximum, 5 out 5 possible points, thus indicating their love for travelling abroad. The only

difference was that two people from UCM admitted not being as interested as were their UCM colleagues in travelling abroad. Nevertheless, 2 people out of a total of 50 does not seem to be representative.

5.4.1.1. Discussion on Global Mindset and Age

Cultural diversity seemed to be especially interesting for the youngest participants (20–29; $\bar{x}$ = 4.60), followed by ages 50 to 59 years old ($\bar{x}$ = 4.52). The senior group (60–69; $\bar{x}$ = 4.50) and the 40 to 49 age group ($\bar{x}$ = 4.29) were in the middle. Finally, those from 30 to 39 years old showed the lowest score in this subcategory. The youngest group showed the same score in the first two questions of this category (20–29; $\bar{x}$ = 4.60). The second age group that seemed to invest free time in learning from other cultures was the 50- to 59-year-olds ($\bar{x}$ = 4.26), followed by 60 to 69 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.16), 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11), and 30 to 39 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.94).

Travelling abroad seemed especially attractive for age groups at both extremes—people in their young adult years (20–29; $\bar{x}$ = 4.90) and those in later life (60–69; $\bar{x}$ = 4.83), followed by the groups in the middle, 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.74) and 30 to 39 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.47), and, finally, by the age group 40 to 49 years old. This group showed the lowest level of interest in travelling to other countries ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11). These numbers are illustrated in Figure 30.

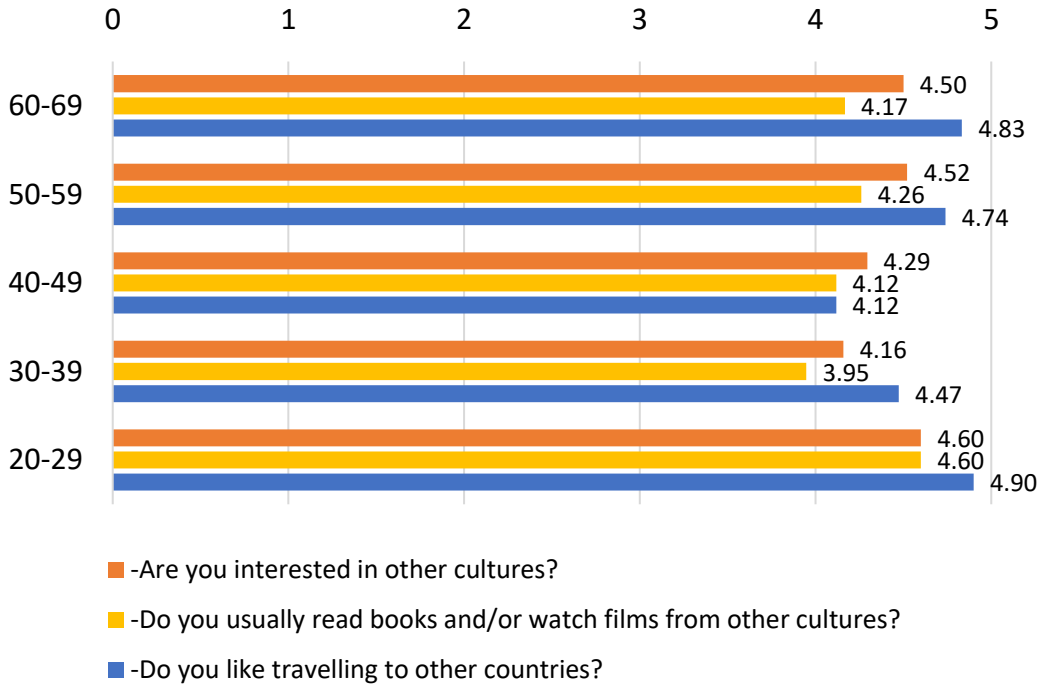
In general, the age groups in the middle band (from 30 to 49 years old) reported the lowest scores in the 'global mindset' dimension. These results are consistent with other studies (Javidan et al., 2010; Javidan & Walker, 2012), which focus on the global mindset dimension in the context of global leadership.[33] In this research, participants aged from the low-40s to mid-50s showed the lowest average 'global mindset' ratings compared to other age groups.

[33] The field of global leadership is mostly focused on the attributes and competencies of successful global executives and includes over 100 key qualities, such as energy, ability to build global teams, global change agent skills, envisioning, environmental sense making, empowering, cognitive complexity, business acumen, personal effectiveness, relationship management, and many others (Javidan & Bowen, 2013, p. 147).

Further, the youngest group of people (ages 20–39) and the senior group (over 60 years) returned higher results than did those in the middle group (40–59).

Figure 30

Age Ranges—Global Mindset



Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.

In order to interpret these results, the historical and societal context of these generations should be taken into consideration. Attitude differences between generations typically result from and reflect broad social changes that happen during historical periods (Donnelly et al. 2016; Twenge & Kasser, 2013). Thus, generational differences are a reflection of the impact of the larger cultural context on the individual (Albarracin, & Shavitt, 2018). For example, in the case of Spain, those aged between 60 and 69 years old when they participated in this research had lived their youth at the end of a dictatorship and experienced a transition to a democracy. In the case of the Netherlands and many other countries, this age group (60–69) lived their youth close in time to the end of the Second World War and thus experienced post-

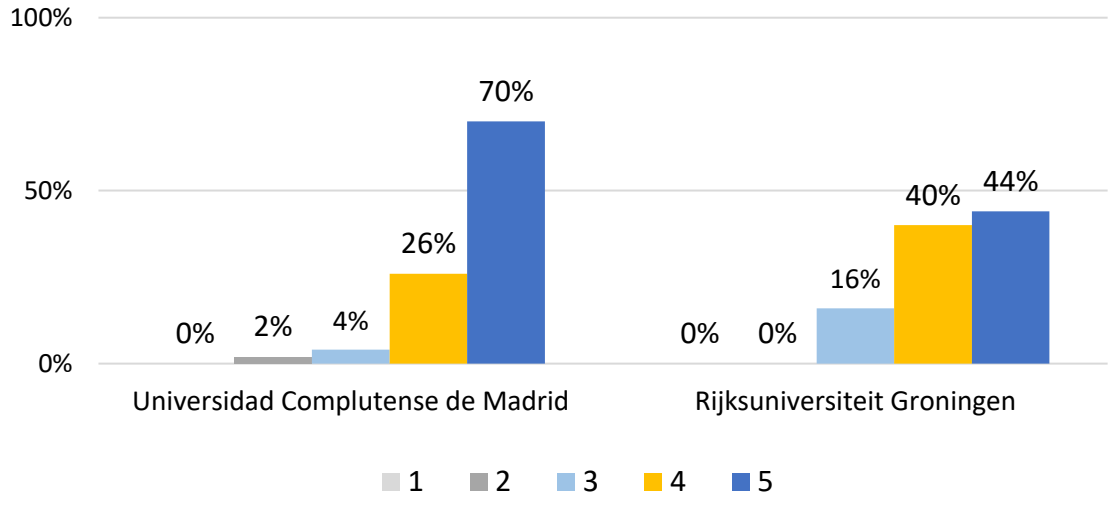
WWII life and other important historical moments, such as the fall of the Berlin wall. The historical context in which they lived could have influenced their attitudes towards other cultures, influencing their desire to learn from them and travel abroad—they could not travel when they were younger because of the historical contexts they had experienced (Kramsch, 2013). Consequently, their intercultural competence development could have been affected.

5.4.2. Relationship Interest

The next section was designed to measure the degree of importance that participants gave to relating with people from other cultures. The first question was 'Do you think it is important to develop relationships with people from other cultures?' Among UCM staff, 70% reported that developing relationships with people from other cultures was essential for them, giving the highest score of 5 to this question; among RUG staff, 44% chose 5. Further, 26% from UCM selected 4 out of 5, compared to 40% from RUG. Among participants from UCM, 4% chose 3, and 2% selected 2 out of 5. Among RUG participants, 16% selected 3 out of 5. These results are illustrated in Figure 31.

Figure 31

Do you Think it is Important to Develop Relationships with People from other Cultures?



Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.

These findings show that participants from both universities asserted to a greater or lesser extent the importance of relating with people from cultural backgrounds different from theirs. The average responses of the UCM participants were numerically higher ($\bar{x}$ = 4.66) than were those from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 4.28). Most of the UCM participants admitted that relating with people from unfamiliar cultural backgrounds was vital. This result may have been caused by the cultural backgrounds of the participants. Most UCM participants (49 of 50) were born in the same country in which they worked. However, 34% (8 of 25) of RUG participants were born in a different country. Therefore, the concept of 'other cultures' may have been conceived in a different way. In other words, among RUG participants, 8 were already integrated into a culture different from the culture of the country in which they were born. Thus, they may have developed a multicultural mind, taking for granted the intercultural relationships they already had.

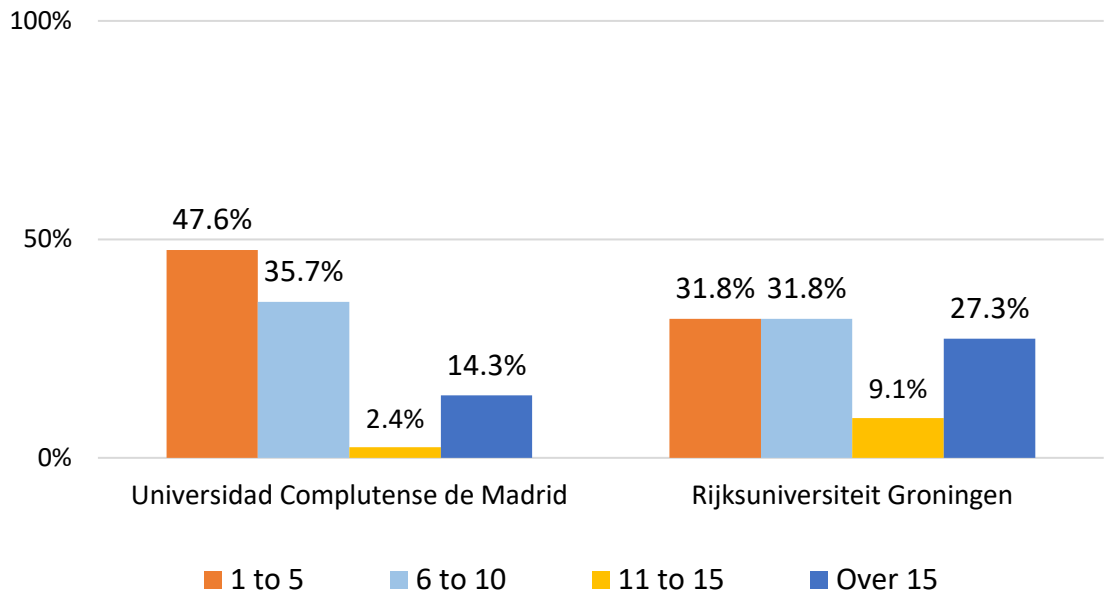
After examining the degree of importance participants gave to these social relationships, the next questions sought to discover if participants actually put their beliefs into practice. The next question was 'Do you have any friend(s) from other cultures?' Among participants, 86% of the sample from UCM and 88% from RUG claimed to have friends from other cultures. In contrast, 14% from UCM and 12% from RUG acknowledged not having friends from other cultures. The answers provided by the participants from both universities were very similar; both groups yielded high scores.

In connection with the previous question, the next question was intended to measure numerically the number of friends from other cultures that participants had. Among UCM participants, 47.6% claimed to have between 1 and 5 friends from other cultures, compared to 31.8% among RUG staff. From UCM, 35.7% reported having between 6 and 10 friends from other cultures, compared to 31.8% from RUG. Among the UCM staff, 2.4% said they had between 11 and 15 friends from other cultures, compared to 9.1% from RUG. Finally, 14.3%

of the participants from UCM and 9.1% from RUG claimed to have more than 15 friends from other cultures. These answers are illustrated in Figure 32.

Figure 32

If so, How Many [Friends] do you Have?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

According to results, participants from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 2.59; 6–10 friends) had more friends from different cultural backgrounds than did those from UCM ($\bar{x}$ = 1.83; 1–5 friends). As mentioned, the fact that some of them (8 of 25) were born outside the Netherlands may have increased their chances to establish relationships with people from other cultures—in fact, theirs may already be different from the predominant culture in that country. Further, those who were born in the Netherlands were already working with colleagues from other cultures, as this sample shows, which may have increased opportunities to establish intercultural social relationships.

In general, the findings suggest that even though most participants considered having friends from other cultures essential in their lives, they did not have large numbers of such

friends. The different perceptions of the term ‘friend’ across cultures (Buijs & Stulp, 2022) could have influenced participants’ answers to these questions. Without the intention of generalising, Spanish citizens are generally considered close and sociable (Masgoret et al., 2000), at least by other Europeans. For this reason, Spanish participants might identify people as friends ‘more easily’ than do Dutch participants. This idea is supported by Hofstede’s (2011) cultural dimensions, specifically, by the dimension of individualism. On this dimension, Spain scores 51, indicating a perception as being collectivist by the rest of European countries (except among those from Portugal). The Netherlands scores 80 on the individualism dimension and therefore is considered a highly individualist society. In fact, one of the participants from RUG clarifies the meaning of the word ‘friend’ in the comments section of the questionnaire:

> 5. Friend is an interesting term: I would only call seven persons my personal friend [sic], and one of them is a (white) South-African. But in US terms, friend is often much wider interpreted. I keep in touch with many international friends, that I would call acquaintances in the Dutch sense (‘*kennissen*’).

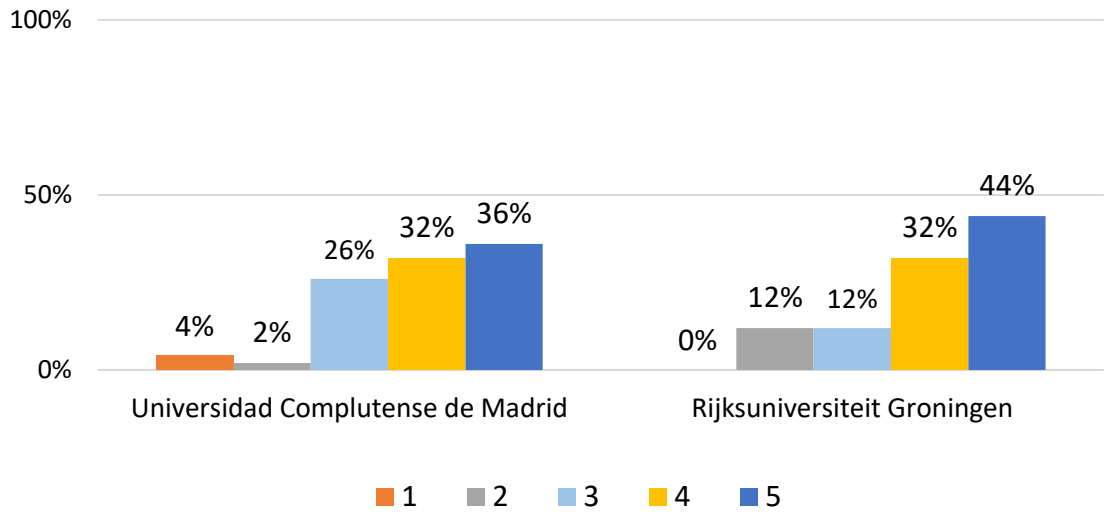
This participant claimed to have 1 close friend from a different cultural background but kept in touch with many international acquaintances, thereby exhibiting a high score on the ‘relationship interest’ dimension. In addition, the participant explained the difference between the US term ‘friend’ and the Dutch word for ‘acquaintance’. These declarations demonstrate a high level of cultural self-awareness and knowledge of other cultures (‘culture-specific knowledge’).

In this vein, as discussed earlier in the analysis, participants were asked if they liked travelling to other countries (Figure 29). Their comments convey a high level of motivation to travel and explore new scenarios. However, people may like travelling abroad but dislike experiencing actual immersion in the target country’s cultures and people. For this reason, the next question was ‘When you travel to other countries, do you interact with locals?’ Results

show that 36% of UCM participants and most of RUG participants (64%) claimed to interact with locals when travelling. For example, 32% of both UCM and RUG participants selected 4 out 5, implying they interacted with locals when travelling most of the time. Among UCM, 26% selected 3 out of 5, compared to 12% of RUG staff, indicating some frequency of interacting with locals when travelling. However, 2% of UCM participants and 12% of RUG participants selected 2 out of 5, which means that they did not usually interact with locals when travelling. Finally, 4% of participants from UCM chose 1 out of 5, indicating they hardly ever interacted with locals when travelling. These answers are illustrated in Figure 33.

Figure 33

When you Travel to other Countries, do you Interact with Locals?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

These results are consistent with the importance participants gave to their desire to relate to people from different cultural backgrounds (Figure 31). Trips abroad are the ideal context to initiate these social relationships. Even though results were quite similar, participants from UCM ($\bar{x}$ = 3.94) reported higher frequency than did those from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 3.76). However, more than three quarters (76%) of participants from RUG chose 4 or 5 points. The reason for this finding may relate to RUG participants' higher level of English language, which could

have provided them with more skills to interact with people from other countries using English as a lingua franca.

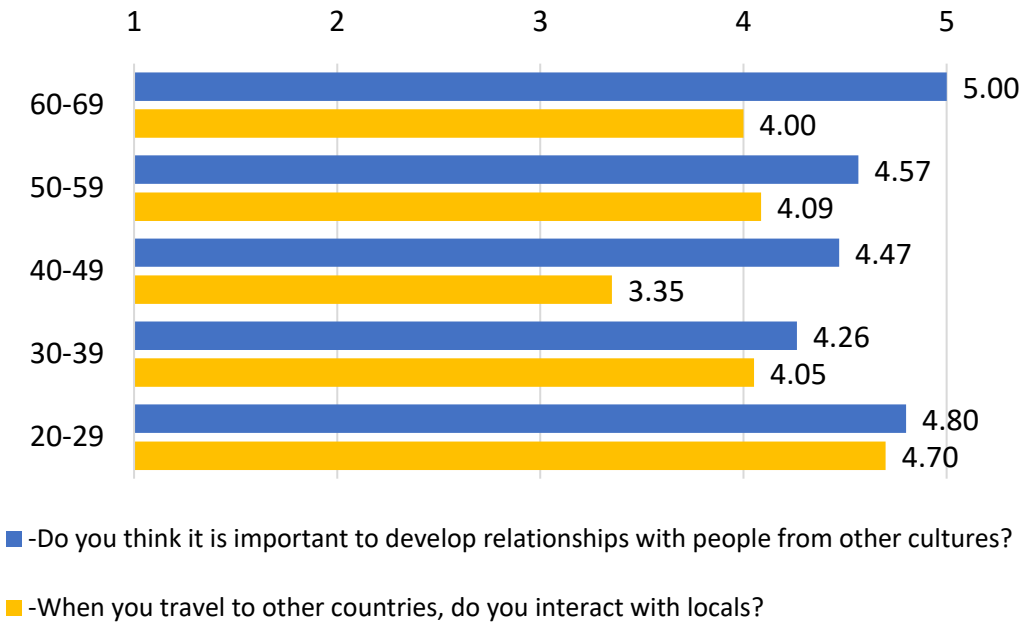
Further, it should be considered that the conception of 'interaction' could be understood differently. Interaction, in this question, has a social meaning—beyond merely talking to locals to ask for directions, for instance. In this question, 'interaction' referred to actions undertaken with the aim of learning about culture and customs. Nevertheless, some participants may have understood the idea of interacting as merely asking locals for information, while others may have interpreted 'interaction' as establishing a real social relationship with them, which, as participants stated (Comment 8), was difficult during a holiday.

5.4.2.1. Discussion on Relationship Interest and Age

Establishing relationships with people from other cultures seemed to be essential for the senior group of participants (60–69; $\bar{x}$ = 5), followed by the youngest (20–29; $\bar{x}$ = 4.80), and then by those in their middle age years 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.56) and those from 40 to 49 years old ($\bar{x}$ = 4.47). The age group between 30 and 39 years old showed the lowest results ($\bar{x}$ = 4.26), as was found in the question about their interest in other cultures. These findings align—if travellers do not have a lot of interest in other cultures, they may be unlikely to be interested in establishing relationships with people from those cultures. When indicating their level of interaction with locals in trips abroad, participants' responses to this question varied. The youngest (20–29) interacted with locals very frequently ($\bar{x}$ = 4.70). Other age groups showed similar results: 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.08), 30 to 39 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.05), and 60 to 69 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00). The age group showing the lowest score to this question was 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.35). These numbers are illustrated in Figure 34.

Figure 34

Age Ranges—Relationship Interest



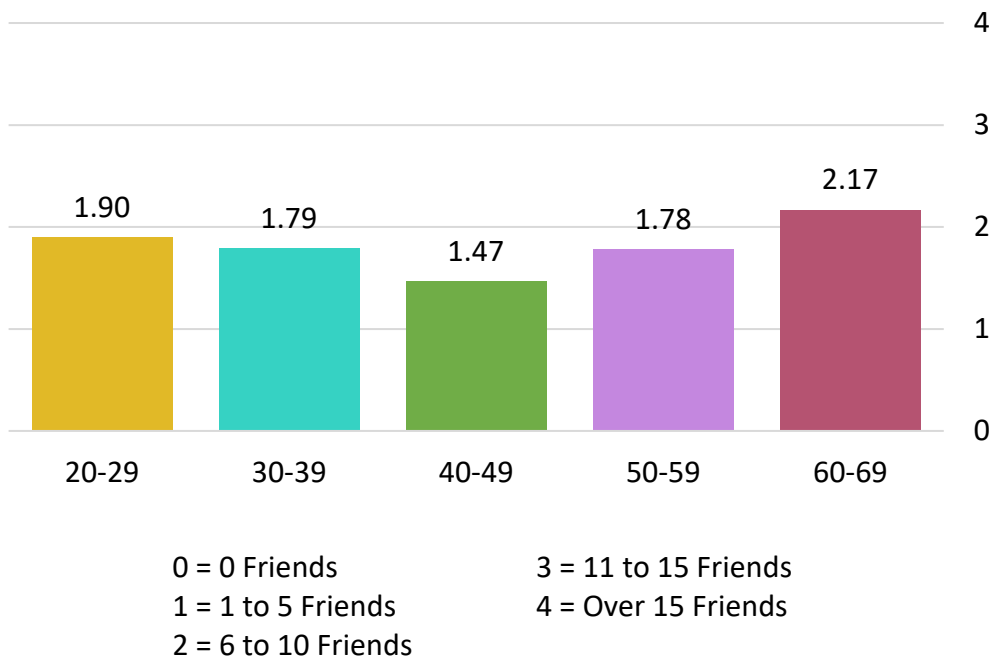
Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

These results could have been affected by the youngest participants' English language proficiency. In fact, the age group 21 to 30 had the highest level of English in Europe (Education First, 2021, p. 19), which eased their communication with locals. The kinds of trips taken by these age groups was another crucial factor (Vergori & Arima, 2020)—that is, whether the trips were with other people from their countries of origin or involved participation in organised activities such as guided tours. Such activities typically would not allow travellers to establish conversations with local people from the host countries, as supported by Comments 6 and 8 below. Younger people tend to make 'cheaper' trips, which may involve sharing rooms with people from the host country or from other countries. For example, young people who volunteer abroad have opportunities to interact with people from other cultures and develop their intercultural competence (Vveinhardt, 2019).

The question that measured participants' number of friends from different cultures was analysed separately so the results could be aligned with the participants' ages. The senior group seemed to have a larger number of friends from other cultures on average ($\bar{x}$ = 2.16), claiming to have between 6 and 10 friends. The youngest age group (20–29; $\bar{x}$ = 1.90) reported having between 1 to 5 friends, the same number as the rest of the age groups, with similar but somewhat lower average scores: 30 to 35 ($\bar{x}$ = 1.79) and 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 1.78). Finally, participants aged 40 to 49 years old reported having the fewest number of friends from other cultures ($\bar{x}$ = 1.47). These numbers are illustrated in Figure 35.

Figure 35

How many Friends from other Cultures do you Have?



Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.

The results seem to contrast with previous research showing that older people have fewer friends (Amati et al., 2018; von Soest, 2020). In this study, participants from 60 to 69 years old reported having the higher number of friends from other cultures. As stated earlier,

this finding could stem from a different conception of the notion of 'friendship' among different age groups (Kitts & Leal, 2021), even among people from the same culture. Further, the concept of 'friend' has evolved since the appearance of social networks in the last decades (Gonal et al., 2018; Vallor, 2012). Moreover, as previously discussed, the lack of free time among people aged 30 to 59 years old could explain these results, even though the values varied slightly among age groups.

5.4.3. Comments from Participants

At the end of this section in the questionnaire, participants were invited to add open written comments to clarify their answers.

5.4.3.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

In the UCM sample, 2 participants out of the 50 participants provided written comments.

> 6. *Si es un viaje organizado es más difícil relacionarse con la gente del lugar.* [If it is an organised trip, it is more difficult to interact with the locals at your destination.]

The author of Comment 6 declared that if the trip abroad was prearranged, it was more difficult to relate to local people. This answer implies a high level of awareness of the fact that travelling does not necessarily mean being immersed in the target culture; culture is much more complex. This consciousness reveals the participant's 'global mindset', suggesting they might be able to question stereotypes when travelling instead of being governed by them, as Holliday (2010) suggests. Further, as mentioned, age plays a key role in the kind of trips people choose and thus in the opportunities they encounter to establish intercultural relationships.

> 7. *Creo que es importante estar abierta a otras culturas pero mi falta de conocimiento de otros idiomas me limita, me limito yo por mi gran sentido del ridículo*. [I think it is important to have an open mind as regards other cultures but my lack of knowledge of other languages restricts me, I hold back as I really fear embarrassing myself.]

The participant who made Comment 7 provided evidence to support the key role of language when developing intercultural competence. If individuals do not speak the language of the target culture, or at least speak a lingua franca, they will not feel safe, not even if they have the necessary attitudes and global mindsets to interact with internationals. Therefore, lack of language proficiency is a barrier to developing intercultural competence efficiently. In addition, the so-called affective filter (Krashen, 1982), previously mentioned by Deardorff (2006), could play a substantial role. If people feel ridiculous, as the participant stated, the affective filter is activated. Consequently, acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to develop intercultural competence is much more complex. Thus, linguistic competence eases the path to developing intercultural effectiveness and decreases frustration stemming from intercultural interactions, thereby increasing emotional resilience as well.

5.4.3.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Among RUG participants, 4 of 25 provided written comments in response to the question.

> 8. It's not easy to interact with locals during a holiday, it's better to stay a while in another country like during an exchange (which I did during my studies).

Comment 8 relates to Comment 6. Both participants agreed on the difficulty of interacting with people from the target country to which they were travelling as tourists. The author of Comment 8 added that when doing exchanges, it was better to immerse fully in the target country and its culture, thereby demonstrating a willing and open attitude, as well as knowledge about these experiences, and thus exhibiting a global mindset.

> 9. I like to make contact with local people, talk with them, [ex]change[34] ideas. This is important to me, as much as seeing the touristic highlights.

[34] Given the context of the questionnaire, it is assumed that 'exchanging' is the verb to which this participant refers.

For the person who made Comment 9, interacting with people from the country in which they travelled was as important as visiting the tourist places. These words suggest that this participant had an open-minded personality and needed to feed their curiosity, thereby showing a global mindset and interest in other cultures and the people who lived there ('relationship interest').

10. Being internationally focused made and makes me more aware of where I come from and that I can and should be proud of that.

The participant who made Comment 10 shared an important benefit of internationalisation: raising self-awareness of their origins and feeling pride in them, thereby demonstrating cultural self-awareness. Internationalisation provided more than just knowledge about the other cultures with which the staff interacted daily. These relationships with others made this participant reflect on and value their own cultural background and origins (Adam, 2018). This declaration supports the two-step process of knowledge in the development of intercultural competence: knowing oneself as a first step in order to know others and learn from them (Desai et al., 2020).

5.5. Overview of Results and Discussion on Hardiness—Psychological and Attitudinal Skills

The next section corresponds to the dimension of hardiness on the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009), called 'psychological and attitudinal skills' on the questionnaire. The questions of this section examine to what extent people think positively or negatively about other individuals—'positive regard'—and their strength in intercultural situations—'emotional resilience'.

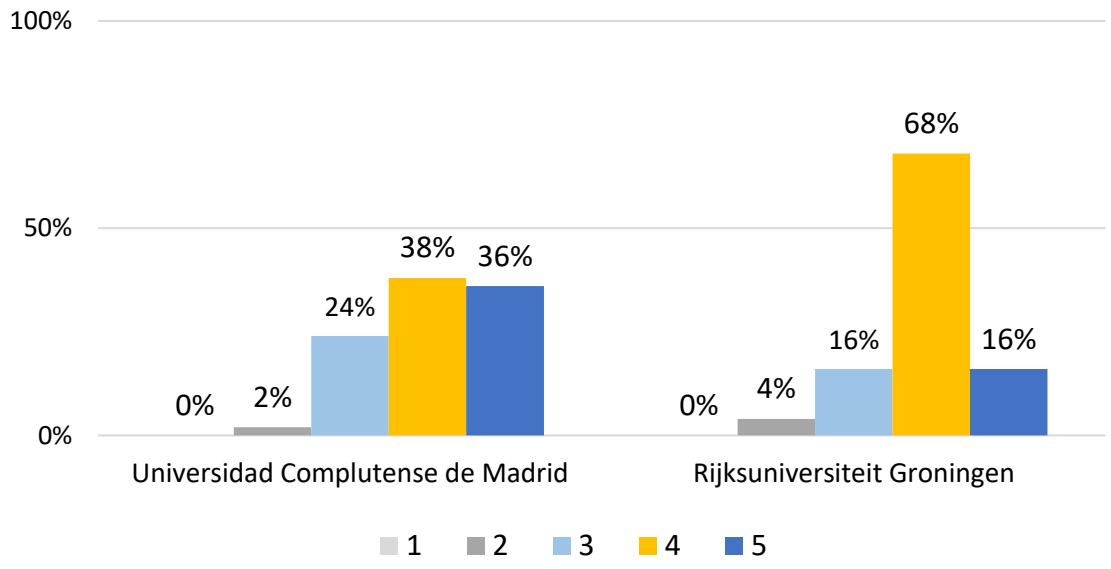
5.5.1. Positive Regard

The first question of this dimension was 'Do you consider that you are able to be open-minded and avoid prejudice to ideas and behaviours that are new to you?' Results show that

36% of the participants from UCM and 16% from RUG considered themselves completely open to novelty and able to avoid prejudice, selecting 5 points out of 5. Among UCM participants, 36% selected 4 on the scale. Among RUG participants, 68% selected 4 as well, the highest number of participants. Further, 24% from UCM and 16% from RUG chose 3 on the scale. Finally, 2% of participants from UCM and 4% from RUG selected 2 out of 5. Most of participants considered themselves to have these skills by choosing 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale. Nevertheless, a few people selected 2 out of 5, thereby admitting not having that ability completely developed. These results are illustrated in Figure 36.

Figure 36

Do you Consider that you are Able to Be Open-Minded and Avoid Prejudice to Ideas and Behaviours that are New to you?



Note. UCM N = 50, RUG N = 25.

On average, participants from UCM showed slightly higher results for this question ($\bar{x}$ = 4.08) than did those from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00). Nevertheless, among participants from RUG, 84% selected 4 or 5. The cause of these results may be the context in which participants from RUG grew up. Given that 36% were born in a different country from the Netherlands, they may have

already lived the experience of facing ideas and behaviours that were new to them when moving from their home countries. In short, their international backgrounds may have helped enhance the skills that allowed them to be open-minded and avoid prejudices.

Further, working in international environments, as the people who participated in this study did, could have helped staff members develop these skills unconsciously (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). For example, if they interacted with internationals from a target country as part of their job, they could have come to realise that countries are composed of many cultures and identities. Thus, these intercultural interactions could help staff overcome the stereotypes they may have held in the past towards some nationalities and thus become more tolerant and open-minded.

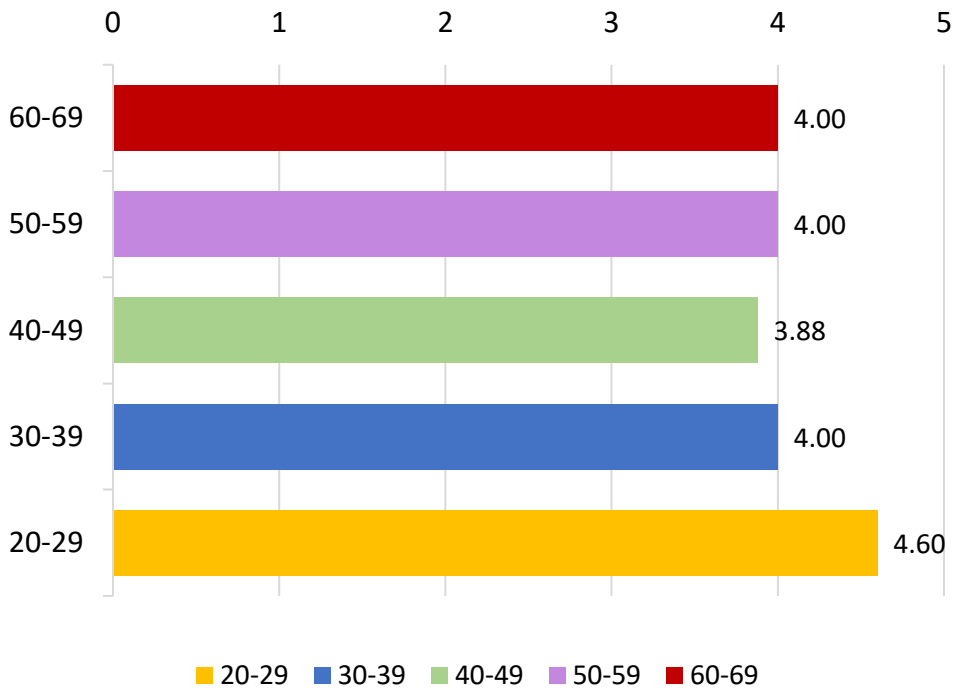
5.5.1.1. Discussion on Positive Regard and Age

The youngest group of participants stood out in the 'positive regard' dimension ($\bar{x}$ = 4.60). Participants aged 30 to 39 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00), 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00), and 60 to 69 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00) showed the same scores to the question about being open-minded. The 40 to 49 age group showed the lowest score but were very similar to the rest of the participant scores ($\bar{x}$ = 3.88). Results appear in Figure 37.

The historical context and the society in which participants lived may have played a key role. These results may stem from the many opportunities young people have to travel and expand their cultural minds, as, for example, through international mobility programmes (Sobkowiak, 2019). Moreover, participants who were between 20 and 29 years old during this research study grew up with the Internet, which gave them the opportunity to relate with and learn from other cultures at home from a very early age (Rawal & Deardorff, 2021). Thus, the context in which they were educated could have influenced their attitudes towards other cultures.

Figure 37

Age Ranges—Positive Regard



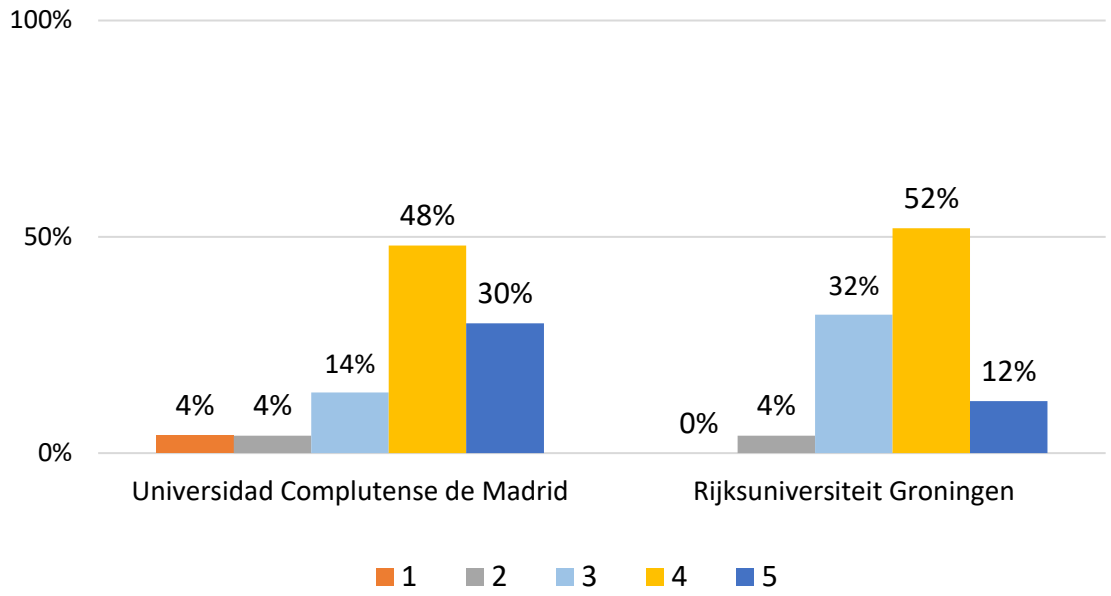
Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.

5.5.2. Emotional Resilience

The first question in this dimension was 'Are you able to control your thoughts and emotions in intercultural situations? That is, are you capable of not falling into prejudices and/or stereotypes when dealing with someone from another culture?' Results show that 30% of participants from UCM and 12% from RUG reported being completely certain about their ability to control their thoughts and emotions in intercultural situations, selecting 5 out 5, the highest score. Approximately half the participants from both universities selected 4 out of 5, specifically, 48% from UCM and 52% from RUG. Further, 14% from UCM and 32% from RUG chose the number in the middle, 3 out of 5. Among participants from both universities, 4% chose 2 of 5 possible points. Finally, 4% from UCM selected 1 out of 5. These numbers are illustrated in Figure 38.

Figure 38

Are you Able to Control your Thoughts and Emotions in Intercultural Situations? That is, are you Capable of Not Falling into Prejudices and/or Stereotypes When Dealing with Someone from Another Culture?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

Participants from UCM ($\bar{x}$ = 3.96) scored this question higher, compared to those from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 3.72); more than three quarters chose 4 or 5 points. This is a relevant finding given that participants from RUG reported having a higher number of friends from other cultures than did those from UCM. Having many friends from other cultures could have prevented these participants from falling into negative prejudices and stereotypes. For example, individuals who had more friends from other cultures may have created their own mental schemata about those cultures based on their friends. Consequently, they might have more easily trusted their preconceived ideas, which were not necessarily negative.

In general, these results demonstrate not only high scores in the 'emotional resilience' dimension but also a high degree of self-consciousness by participants of both institutions.

They admitted not being completely able to control their own thoughts, which is in fact an ambitious task among humans (McKay et al., 2021); thus, their scores might be lower because of this self-critical bias. The context in which individuals were educated plays a key role in this dimension. For example, if a family tends to make racist comments, family members, especially children, are more likely to fall into negative stereotypes towards other cultures and nationalities even after they have grown up (Aral, 2021). However, even though thoughts and emotions are difficult to control, they can be altered through interacting with people from other cultures, among other potential strategies.

The next question in the emotional resilience dimension was 'Can you learn from failures and setbacks?' The objective of the question was to encourage participants to reflect on negative experiences they had lived and to assess if they had been able to learn from the experiences and improve themselves. Among participants from UCM, 96% of them stated they were able to learn from failures and setbacks; 4% admitted not being able to do so. Among RUG participants, all staff members claimed to be capable of learning from failures and setbacks. Even though RUG participants reported a higher number of affirmative answers, the staff from both universities showed remarkably similar results.

5.5.2.1. Comments about Failures and Setbacks

Participants were asked to share examples of failures and setbacks from which they had learned through the question 'Can you please give me some examples?' (Item 20) In the next section, the answers provided to this open-ended question were classified and discussed according to the (desired) internal and external outcomes of the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

5.5.2.1.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Among UCM participants, 12 participants explained their failures and setbacks in intercultural situations.

11. *Si la pregunta se refiere a los fallos y contratiempos en los viajes, siempre aprendes a fluir con la propia vida. Si se refiere al intercambio cultural, reta tu etnocentrismo y expande tu concepto de cultura.* [If the question refers to failures and setbacks when travelling, you always learn to flow with your own life. If it refers to cultural exchange, it challenges your ethnocentrism and broadens your concept of culture.]

Comment 11 is divided into two parts. First, the participant wrote, 'If the question refers to the failures and setbacks when travelling, you always learn to flow with your own life'. These words reveal the participant's skill at adapting to unexpected situations that may arise, supported by a strong emotional resilience. Further, this person shows willingness to adjust to a new cultural environment when travelling. The second part of the comment states, 'Cultural exchange . . . challenges your ethnocentrism and expands your concept of culture'. This participant emphasised the importance of relating with people from diverse cultures. These experiences made them reflect on their own culture, on the lens through which they saw the world.

Further, it is worth noting that the participant used the term 'ethnocentrism', which ordinary individuals would be likely to ignore. This term shows certain knowledge of the field of cultural studies. The statement reveals the participant's cultural self-awareness, as well as their intercultural skills of analysing, interpreting, and relating, which enhances their relationship interest. Moreover, taking an ethnorelative view, as the participant did in this comment, is one of the main desired internal outcomes from intercultural competence development.

12. *Estar sin un sitio para dormir ni forma de volver a la capital de Honduras desde un pueblo un tanto alejado y conseguir un sitio donde dormir a través de gente local haciendo autostop que nos ayudó acercándonos a otro pueblo algo más grande.* [Being without a place to sleep or a way to return to the capital of Honduras from a somewhat

remote town and getting a place to sleep with the help of locals and by hitchhiking, we reached a somewhat larger town.]

The author of Comment 12 described intercultural experiences in the context of an emergency. In emergencies, individuals are forced to be flexible for survival (Morphy, 2020). This specific participant talked to the local people and even stayed in their houses, acts that demonstrate trust for individuals from different cultural backgrounds, thereby showing positive regard. Such situations challenge individuals' views and help them to their intercultural competence.

13. *Al trabajar con estudiantes, la casuística es muy variada y a veces impredecible. Especialmente situaciones de emergencia enseñan a adaptar la mentalidad, controlar las respuestas, solicitar ayuda a personas expertas.* [When working with students, casuistry is very varied and sometimes unpredictable. From emergency situations in particular, we learn to be more broad minded, measure our responses, ask for help from experts.]

The participant offering Comment 13 acknowledged how working with national and international students helped to develop their adaptability and flexibility, the main internal outcomes of intercultural competence. The act of asking for help also shows modesty and high self-awareness.

14. *En el día a día, surgen siempre nuevas dificultades, a las que suelo enfrentarme en lugar de huir. Esto va haciendo que supere miedos y haga las cosas con mayor seguridad.* [On a daily basis, new difficulties always arise, which I usually face rather than flee from. This is helping me overcome fears and do things with more confidence.]

The participant who shared Comment 14 affirmed their ability to face challenges and adapt to different situations. Their words reveal a flexible mind that would easily demonstrate the internal outcomes of intercultural competence development. Further, the act of 'not fleeing' implies a strong emotional resilience.

15. *La impuntualidad en países de Oriente Medio me cuesta.* [Unpunctuality in Middle Eastern countries is difficult for me.]

The author of Comment 15 acknowledged not having a completely flexible and adaptable mind, which implies a lower score on the 'positive regard' dimension. However, accepting this fact demonstrates a high level of self-awareness and an ethnorelative view of the problem—that is, the participant was aware of a possible cultural clash and prepared for it.

16. *Entender planes de estudios extranjeros y buscar la manera que sean compatibles con los nuestros.* [Understanding foreign study plans and finding ways to make them compatible with ours.]

Comment 16 refers to what seems to be a task in an international office. Because study plans are often a reflection of the predominant culture of the country hosting the institution, understanding foreign study plans involves the skills of observing, analysing, and interpreting other cultures (James & Derrick, 2020). In addition, this comment reveals exploration attitudes, showing a willingness to learn and improve. Therefore, being competent at these tasks could predictably enhance the internal outcomes of adaptability and flexibility. Based on these skills, the participant would also be able to behave and communicate effectively.

17. *Dar por sentada* [sic] *a qué religión pertenece una persona y que ésta se ofenda.* [Taking for granted which religion a person belongs to and that this person gets offended.]

The person who offered Comment 17 shared their own experience, but it is likely they recognised it as a failure and could learn from this mistake. This statement shows, in principle, a low score in the 'positive regard' dimension but a high score of self-awareness when acknowledging taking a person's religion for granted should not occur. Nevertheless, the same person commented at the end of this section, 'When I speak of religion now, I am extremely careful. Sometimes a culture has inherited complexes from centuries ago and they soon feel

criticised' (Comment 25). This finding shows the favourable progress of intercultural competence development. To avoid conflict, this person preferred not to tackle religious issues any longer, revealing relationship interest. In this specific example, this person reported to have the capacity to behave effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, directly from their experience rather than by having the preferred attitudes and necessary knowledge. Deardorff (2006) mentions this phenomenon can happen; nevertheless, if individuals do not go through the entire process, from the personal part (attitudes) to the external outcome, their development will be not complete. Having components at the lower level enhances the upper levels (Deardorff, 2006).

> 18. *En la oficina en la que estoy me relaciono con muchos alumnos y tengo muchos prejuicios, ante alumnos de otras culturas que hablan conmigo cambio este fallo.* [In the office where I am, I interact with many students and I feel a lot of prejudice towards students from other cultures, however, when they talk to me I change this fault.]

The participant sharing Comment 18 admitted something negative changed when interacting with students from other cultures. Maintaining negative prejudices, even towards people from their same culture, can cause unfair consequences and discrimination. This comment demonstrates that prejudices are not just formed based on what is different but also on what is similar. Further, the comment reveals a high level of self-awareness.

> 19. *En general, aumentar la paciencia en los países menos eficientes y controlar la espontaneidad en los más desarrollados, cuando te miran mal por algo que estás haciendo ver lo que hace la gente y copiarlo. Ver lo que les enorgullece y valorarlo.* [In general, having more patience in less efficient countries and being less spontaneous in more developed ones, when they look down on you for something you are doing, observing what people do and copying it. Seeing what makes them proud and valuing that.]

The participant writing Comment 19 revealed an adaptable mind, thereby exhibiting a global mindset. The participant was able to be patient, for example, when dealing with transport problems in some countries whose economies did not allow for quicker machines. At the same time, this person recognised their own culture—self-awareness—acknowledging that spontaneity could be inadequately interpreted by other cultures. Therefore, this participant reported knowledge of the appropriate communication style (adaptability and flexibility) they can use, depending on location.

> 20. *Cuando detecto que la gente no se siente cómoda con lo que digo, lo tomo en cuenta para no volver a repetirlo.* [When I detect that people do not feel comfortable with what I say, I take it into account so as not to do it again.]

The author of Comment 20 seemed to be able to recognise intercultural clashes and consider them to avoid conflict, thus showing relationship interest. This finding demonstrates empathy and adaptability, two of the essential internal outcomes of intercultural competence.

> 21. *El ritmo de otros países no siempre es como el nuestro. En algunas culturas las mujeres se tienen que cubrir la cabeza, los hombros y las piernas para entrar en determinados sitios.* [The pace of other countries is not always like ours. In some cultures, women must cover their heads, shoulders, and legs to enter certain places.]

The UCM participant offering Comment 21 showed some culture-specific knowledge regarding, most probably, the cultures of the countries to which they had travelled. The perspective of time, namely chronemics, is mentioned as a highly cultural issue not easy to overcome (Hooker, 2003). Further, the assumption of some cultural and religious factors implies adaptability and flexibility when travelling to those target countries in which those cultures are present, thereby showing a global mindset.

5.2.2.1.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Three participants from RUG shared some situations in which they dealt with setbacks and failures. Comments referring to intercultural situations are discussed according to the (desired) internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

> 22. Humour in formal situation, about incapability to give proper feedback in hierarchical unclear situations and value priority differences regarding truth and (self)-respect/honour.

The participant making Comment 22 demonstrated a high level of cultural self-awareness, showing they could detect these cultural differences instead of taking them personally, which tends to cause misunderstandings among interlocutors. For example, making jokes in formal contexts is acceptable in some cultures, probably in the culture to which the participant belonged, but may be perceived as conflicting in others where the dissonance took place (Yang & Yeh, 2021). This comment supports the importance of sociolinguistic awareness in intercultural situations. Moreover, the participant showed culture-specific knowledge acquired by their experiences in intercultural interactions. According to this comment, this participant seemed to possess the attitudes, knowledge, and skills required by the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006), which would lead to the internal and external outcomes of its effective development.

> 23. Changes in travel plans (it will work out, be patient and flexible); international negotiations not going as efficiently as I would like (different planning and expectations next time); experience international contact as rude, disinterested [sic], etc. (first your emotion may rule, but reflection can let you consider the [cultural] background of the other party, leading to a different explanation/interpretation of their behaviour).

Comment 23 contains different parts. First, the informant wrote, ‘Changes in travel plans (it will work out, be patient and flexible)’. Through this comment, the participant directly

mentioned the outcome when they adapted to different circumstances and noted their cognitive and emotional flexibility if this happened, thereby showing emotional resilience. The participant added, 'International negotiations not going as efficiently as I would like (different planning and expectations next time)'. It is assumed the reasons for the inefficient negotiations were cultural; the participant therefore demonstrated future adaptability as well, including changing their expectations, which would enhance their emotional reliance. Next, the participant declared, 'Experience international contact as rude, disinterested, etc. (first your emotion may rule, but reflection can let you consider the [cultural] background of the other party, leading to a different explanation/interpretation of their behaviour)'. This participant explained the process that commonly took place when an interaction with a different culture did not go as expected and was negatively perceived. Such an interaction could be negatively marked, both pragmatically and affectively (Zamborlin, 2007). This person, from their experience, admitted that having some knowledge, at least of the other's culture, could help explain why clashes took place. This participant seemed to have proceeded through the entire intercultural competence process, as evidenced by their respect and openness attitudes towards other cultures. In addition, cultural self-awareness is revealed, together with knowledge about other cultures to change expectations. The participant's abilities to detect and evaluate intercultural misunderstandings through observing, listening, evaluating, analysing, interpreting, and relating stand out. Mastering these abilities allowed them to enhance the internal outcomes of adaptability and flexibility and, predictably, the external outcomes of communicating effectively and appropriately, according to their interactant's culture.

> 24. I usually beat myself up badly if I make a mistake or fail, so it can take me some time to look at the failure objectively. But afterwards, I try to learn from the experience so as to prevent similar situations in the future. A more positive attitude towards the process would be useful, though.

The person writing Comment 24 revealed high scores in the ‘emotional resilience’ dimension by stating that they learned from mistakes to prevent the same situation from happening in the future. This finding shows the participant’s internal outcomes of adaptability and flexibility after learning from what went wrong. This process of continuous learning leads to behaving and communicating effectively, thereby avoiding intercultural misunderstandings. Nevertheless, they added, ‘A more positive attitude towards the process would be useful, though’, showing a high level of self-awareness by acknowledging a low level of positive regard they wanted to improve.

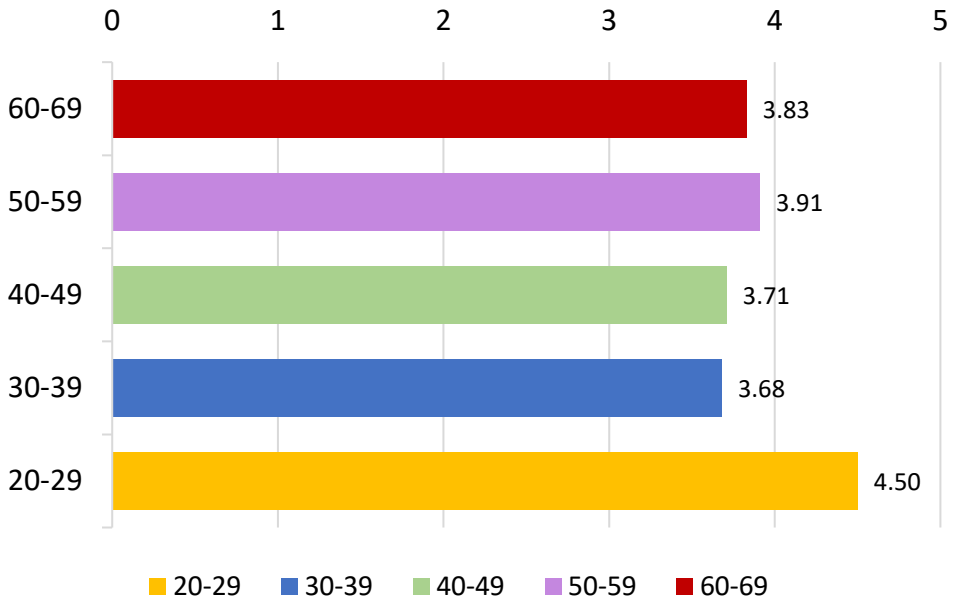
5.5.2.2. Discussion on Emotional Resilience and Age

Regarding controlling their own thoughts and not falling into stereotypes, participants aged between 20 and 29 years old obtained the highest score ($\bar{x}$ = 4.50). Those from 50 to 59 years old showed the second highest score ($\bar{x}$ = 3.91), closely followed by 60 to 69 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.83), 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.70), and 30 to 39 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.68). These numbers are illustrated in Figure 39.

The historical context and the society in which participants were educated are essential to interpret these results. When the senior generations participating in this study were younger, the perceptions of some sensitive issues, such as ethnic differences, for example, were quite different compared to the information available currently (Pelevin et al., 2018). Therefore, the education they received could have determined their more or less tolerant attitudes towards other cultures and thus their tendency to fall or not fall into stereotypes.

Figure 39

Age Ranges—Emotional Resilience



Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.

5.5.2.3. Comments from Participants

At the end of the section, some participants shared more information about their intercultural experiences. These comments are categorised by institution.

5.5.2.3.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Among UCM participants, 1 person (Comment 25) clarified the information they provided to the previous question about failures and setbacks (Comment 17).

> 25. *Cuando ahora hablo de religión, soy extremadamente cuidadosa. A veces una cultura tiene complejos heredados desde hace siglos y se sienten atacados fácilmente*. [When I speak of religion now, I am extremely careful. Sometimes a culture has inherited complexes from centuries ago and they soon feel criticised.]

This statement was discussed previously with the other participant's comment (Comment 17).

5.5.2.3.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Among RUG participants, 2 comments were related specifically to cultural issues.

> 26. From the Omani people you can learn a lot regarding development from a poor and devastated country to a young and developing country in less than 40 years.

The participant making Comment 26 showed some culture-specific knowledge about the Omani culture and a global mindset, demonstrating interest in other cultures and people who lived there. These words reveal the participants' empathy, respect, and admiration for others, which are essential factors for the effective development of intercultural competence.

> 27. Not falling into prejudices and/or stereotypes: as these days anything is quickly considered offensive and/or insulting, I try to fight this hypocrisy by not abiding to it all the time.

The participant sharing Comment 27, in contrast to the general results from RUG staff, showed a lack of empathy and respect attitudes. As mentioned, the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence cannot be developed efficiently without the foundation elements. The comment implies low scores in the 'positive regard' dimension—this participant seemed to have a somewhat negative view of unfamiliar people and cultures and acted accordingly.

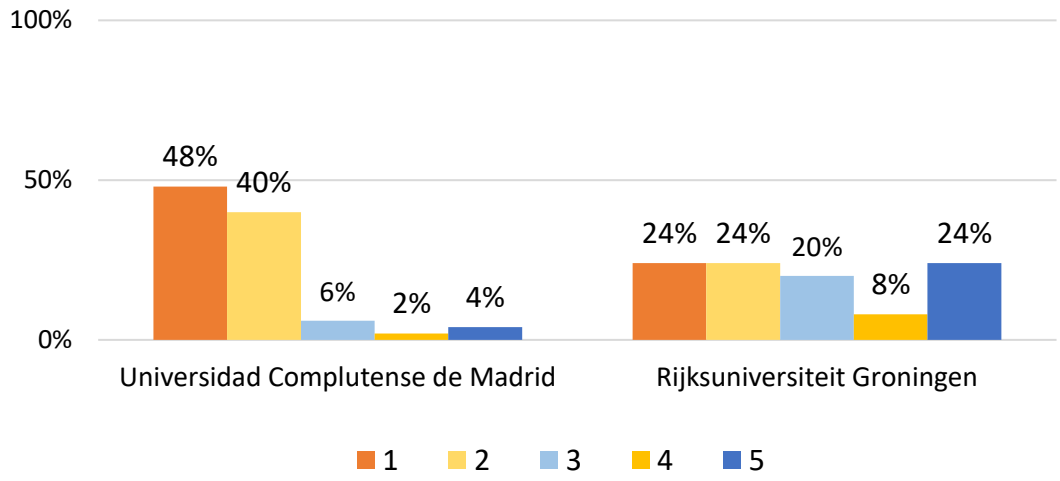
5.6. Overview of Results and Discussion on Linguistic Skills

In this section, participants were asked, 'Do you speak any foreign language(s)? Mark 1 if you speak one foreign language and so successively'. The answers provided to this question were the most variable between the two universities compared to the rest of dimensions. Among UCM participants, almost half claimed to speak one second language (48%), while 24% of RUG staff reported doing so. From UCM, 40% stated they spoke two foreign languages, compared to 24% from RUG. Among UCM participants, 6% declare they spoke three foreign languages, compared to 20% from RUG. Further, 2% of UCM participants and 8% of RUG participants claimed to speak four languages. Finally, 4% of UCM participants

reported speaking five languages, compared to 24% of RUG participants (the same percentage of people who spoke one or two foreign languages). These findings are illustrated in Figure 40.

Figure 40

Do you Speak any Foreign Language(s)? Mark 1 if you Speak one Foreign Language and so Successively



Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.

These results might have been influenced by the participants' interpretations of the phrase 'speaking another language'. When asking about speaking foreign languages, the researcher intended the phrase to refer to the ability to have a coherent conversation in the target foreign language. It did not necessarily mean to be completely proficient but rather to have at least a B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).[35] However, this intention might not have been clear to the participants. No

[35] According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), those at the B2 (Upper Intermediate) level can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation; interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without strain for either party; produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects; and explain a viewpoint on topical issues giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options (Council of Europe, 2022).

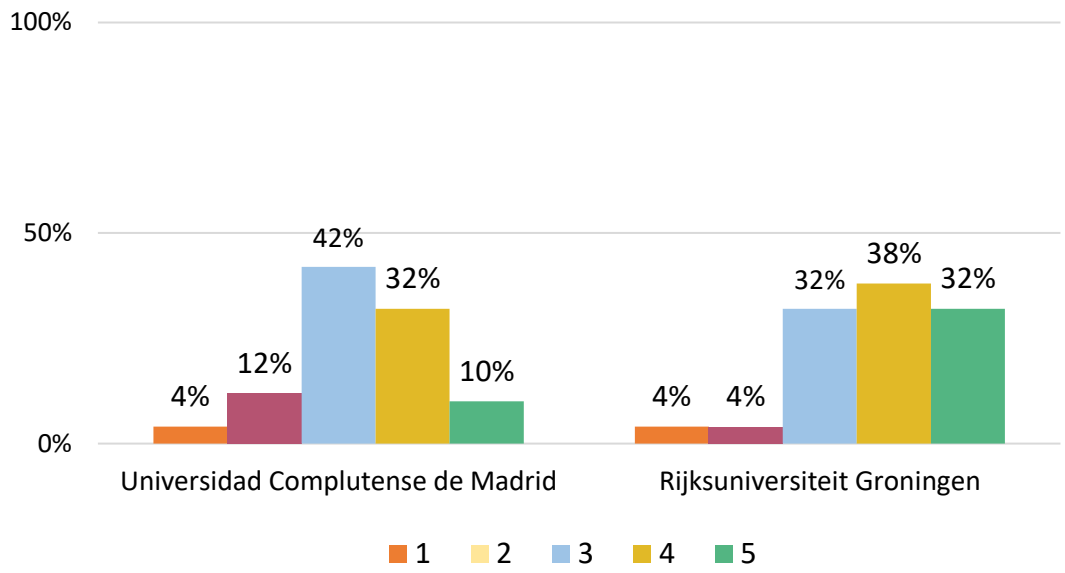
clarifications were given when participants completed the questionnaire. Nevertheless, it is worth discussing these results despite possible differences in the interpretations.

Participants from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 2.84) reported speaking a higher number of foreign languages than did those from UCM ($\bar{x}$ = 1.74). More than half (52%) of those from the Dutch university spoke more than two foreign languages, compared to 12% of the participants from UCM. To ensure these data were properly interpreted, it was important to consider the contexts of the countries in which the universities were located as well as the role of the universities' official languages and English, as discussed in Chapter 4. Further, in the case of those participants from RUG who were not born in the Netherlands or in English-speaking countries, they had to learn at the least Dutch or English to be able to work there, which could explain these results.

The next question asked participants about their level of proficiency in the language they considered their second language ('If so, how proficient would you say you are in your second language? Mark from 1 [basic] to 5 [bilingual]'). The same percentage of participants from both universities (4%) claimed to have the most basic level in their second language. Among UCM participants, 12% reported having a more advanced basic level, and 4% from RUG did the same. A middle level proficiency of the second language was selected by 42% of UCM participants and by 32% of RUG participants. An advanced level of the second language was chosen by 32% of UCM participants and by 38% of RUG participants. Finally, 10% of the participants from UCM and 32% from RUG considered themselves bilingual. These results are illustrated in Figure 41.

Figure 41

If so, how Proficient would you Say you Are in your Second Language? Mark from 1 (Basic) to 5 (Bilingual)



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

Participants from RUG ($\bar{x}$ = 3.8) reported a higher level of linguistic proficiency in their second language; 70% of them claimed an advanced or master level, while 42% of UCM participants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.3) did so. Therefore, considerable difference was found between universities for both the number of languages spoken and linguistic proficiency in the second language.

The reasons for these results may have been the previously mentioned linguistic context of both countries and the different understanding of what 'speaking a language' might have meant to the participants. Nevertheless, the more that staff members are able to master foreign languages, the easier it will be for them to communicate effectively with people from different cultures (Byram & Wagner, 2018). These results might thus imply greater ease in intercultural communication for RUG participants, compared to UCM participants. In addition, these results show high scores in the 'relation interest' dimension, demonstrating interest in other languages, cultures, and people.

With the aim of examining participants' willingness to learn, they were asked 'Would you like to learn more languages?' Most of the answers were affirmative; 86% of UCM participants and 72% of RUG participants wanted to learn more languages, while 14% and 28%, respectively, did not want to do so. Participants from UCM selected more affirmative answers to this question than did those from RUG. These results demonstrate a greater interest in learning reported by the participants from the Spanish university—in fact, twice as many participants from RUG, compared to UCM participants, acknowledged not wanting to learn more languages. The fact that RUG participants, on average, spoke more foreign languages than UCM participants may also explain these results.

5.6.1. Languages Reported by Participants

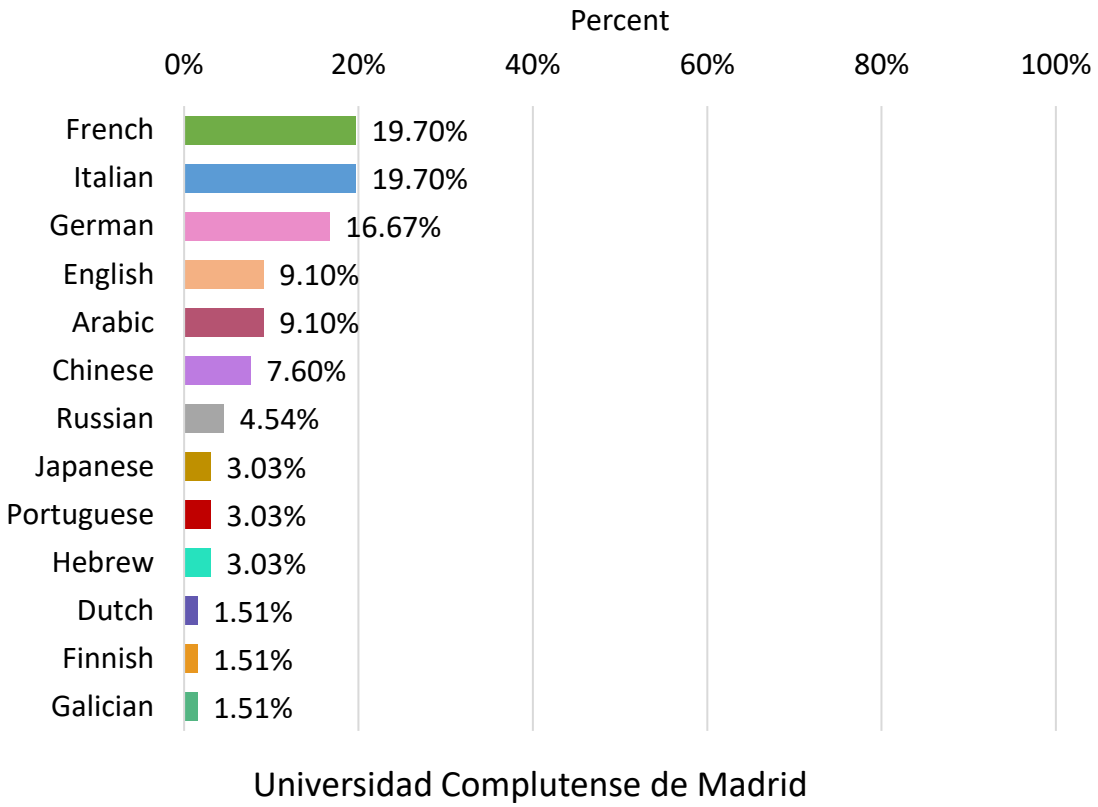
The next question of this section asked, 'If so, what language(s) would you like to learn? Why?' Participants could freely write their answers and reasons.

5.6.1.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Among the UCM participants who wanted to learn new languages (40 out of 50), 66 languages were mentioned. French and Italian were written 13 times each (19.70%), thus becoming the languages UCM participants most wanted to learn. German was mentioned 12 times (16.67%). Arabic and English were found 6 times each, in the third position. Chinese was mentioned 5 times (7.60%). Russian was noted 3 times (4.54%) as one the languages UCM administrative staff wanted to learn. Japanese, Hebrew, and Portuguese were written 2 times each (3.03%) among the comments. Finally, Dutch, Finnish, and Galician were mentioned 1 time each (1.51%). These answers are illustrated in Figure 42.

Figure 42

If so, What Language(s) would you Like to Learn? Why?—UCM



Note. UCM, *N* = 50.

Participants gave varied reasons why they wanted to learn these languages. Among UCM participants, 3 mentioned the international role of Chinese as the main reason to learn it. Further, 1 person admitted being interested in the Asian culture. Chinese linguistic differences with European languages seemed to be another important reason that raised curiosity to learn Chinese. It is worth mentioning that China was one of the main countries of origin for international students coming to UCM. Chinese students were in fact the most numerous international students visiting from outside the European Union (Corrales-Chicote, 2016), which could have affected participants' choices.

The practicality of English as an international language was mentioned 3 times among participants. Arabic was named 2 times because of the high number of native Arabic speakers

and because the administrative staff wanted to understand the Arabic students. Moreover, 1 person showed interest in the Arabic culture. Further, 3 participants considered French useful, 1 person thought French was 'relatively easy', and 1 participant valued French culture. Two participants found Italy and its culture attractive. Further, 4 people commented on the usefulness of the German language when travelling and reading. Finally, 2 people mentioned the practicality of Russian because of the great number of native speakers of this language.

Worth mentioning, 1 participant stated that the reason they wanted to learn Portuguese was because it is a 'romantic language' in the 'amorous' sense. This romanticism apparently conveyed by languages is itself a cultural judgement (Dewaele, 2008). Further, this category is usually associated with languages that come from Latin and belong to the Romance languages, as Portuguese does.

Finally, 1 participant named Dutch because they wanted to live in the Netherlands. Other reasons related to personal situations (families and partners) and to the simple pleasure of learning languages and cultures. As 1 participant wrote, 'The more languages you know, the easier communication is'.

The selections of languages made by UCM participants, together with the reasons to learn them, demonstrate a diverse view of linguistic proficiency. Most of the reasons seemed to be practical, but the responses also indicate interest in the cultures of the countries where those languages were spoken, as well as a desire to communicate with international students successfully. In general, participants' responses show global mindsets interested not just in the professional benefits of mastering foreign languages but also in the cultures and the people with whom they interacted daily. These attitudes lay the foundations for intercultural competence to develop effectively.

In sum, the motivation to learn new languages seemed to be mostly extrinsic—in other words, stemming from practical reasons—rather than intrinsic, that is, pursued for the pleasure

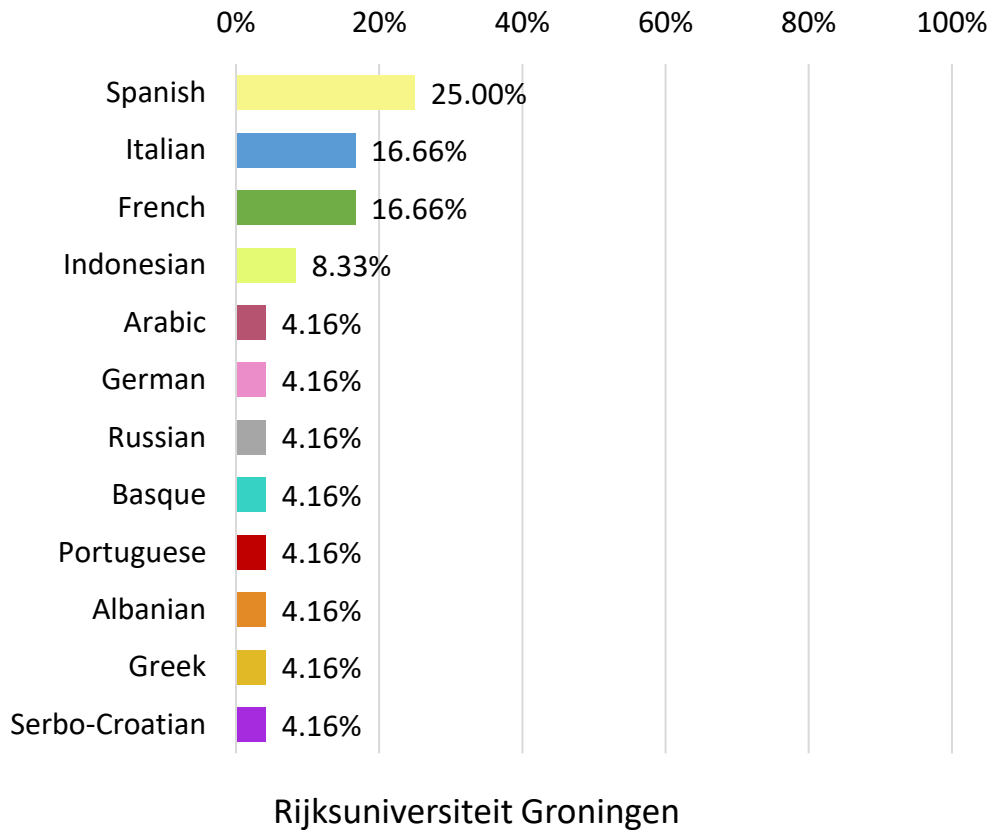
of learning (Gilakjani et al., 2012). Nevertheless, when learning a new language, such motivation is essential when combined with attitudes, self-confidence, and a low level of anxiety, according to the previously mentioned affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) and to other researchers in the field of second language acquisition (e.g., Baxriddinovna & Guzaloy, 2022; Ortega, 2013; Zhang et al., 2020).

5.6.1.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Among participants from RUG, 18 of 25 wanted to learn new languages, mentioning 24 specific languages. Spanish was mentioned 6 times (25.00%), thus becoming the language participants most wanted to learn. Italian and French were in the second position, written 4 times each (16.66%). Indonesian was mentioned 2 times (8.33%). Finally, Albanian, Arabic, Basque, German, Greek, Portuguese, Russian and Serbo-Croatian were found 1 time each (4.16%). Dutch was written 3 times, given that it was not the first language of some of the participants; however, because they lived and worked in the Netherlands, they wanted to improve their proficiency level. Dutch is not considered a foreign language in the Netherlands. In addition, 1 participant stated they wanted to learn sign language; sign language is not considered among the total number of languages because it is not a foreign language, attached to a specific culture, which was the topic of this PhD thesis. Therefore, a discussion of sign language is beyond the scope of this project. The results are illustrated in Figure 43.

Figure 43

If So, What Language(s) Would You Like to Learn? Why?—RUG



Note. $N = 25$.

RUG participants provided diverse reasons to learn the languages they listed. Among the responses, 2 participants noted the 'Spanish culture' as the main reason to learn this language. Additionally, 2 people stated the reason was because Spanish is a world language with an important role in Europe. Finally, 1 participant mentioned being able to communicate successfully when travelling to Spanish-speaking countries was an essential reason to learn Spanish.[36]

[36] It is worth noting that participants could know some information about the researcher, as, for instance the fact that the researcher is Spanish. Consequently, this could have affected participants' answers. However, in this study, the researcher was not present when the participants filled in the questionnaires, and their answers were completely anonymous.

The important role of Italian in Europe was pointed out by 1 participant. ‘The sound of it’ was another reason to learn this language, according to 1 participant. Like UCM participants, 1 RUG participant mentioned the beauty of Portuguese. German was mentioned by 1 participant, because Germany is ‘a neighbour country’. French, its culture, and the ‘way of thinking’ of its people were the main reasons to learn this language, according to 1 participant. Finally, 1 person found Chinese attractive. The linguistic differences of Chinese compared to European languages seemed to spark curiosity among both sets of participants and, consequently, to motivate a willingness to learn Chinese.

Among RUG participants, practicality seemed to be one of the main reasons to learn new languages, as seen among UCM participants. Given that RUG participants had already mastered English, Spanish was the international language they wanted to learn. In addition, culture and ‘ways of thinking’ were important reasons. Therefore, RUG participants demonstrated global mindsets, showing their willingness to learn, and curious attitudes, which are the starting points of the intercultural competence process.

In sum, participants from the Dutch university reported being guided by an intrinsic motivation to learn new languages, possibly because they had already mastered English, the international language. Thus, they seemed to consider learning languages a pleasant activity rather than an obligation required to communicate with foreign students at work.

Besides Spanish and Dutch, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Russian were the common preferred languages among staff from both universities. These answers could have stemmed from the demographics of both countries and the migration movements caused by globalisation (Dagen et al., 2019). Further, the linguistic origins of their official languages should be considered. For example, Spanish is a Romance language, as are French and Portuguese—which are also bordering countries—and Italian. Dutch is a Germanic language, and German is also the language of a neighbour country (Günther-van der Meij et al., 2022).

Participants from both universities reported the main reason to learn new languages was to communicate with more people. Consequently, UCM participants wanted to learn and improve their English, and RUG participants, who already had a high level of English, wanted to learn Spanish.

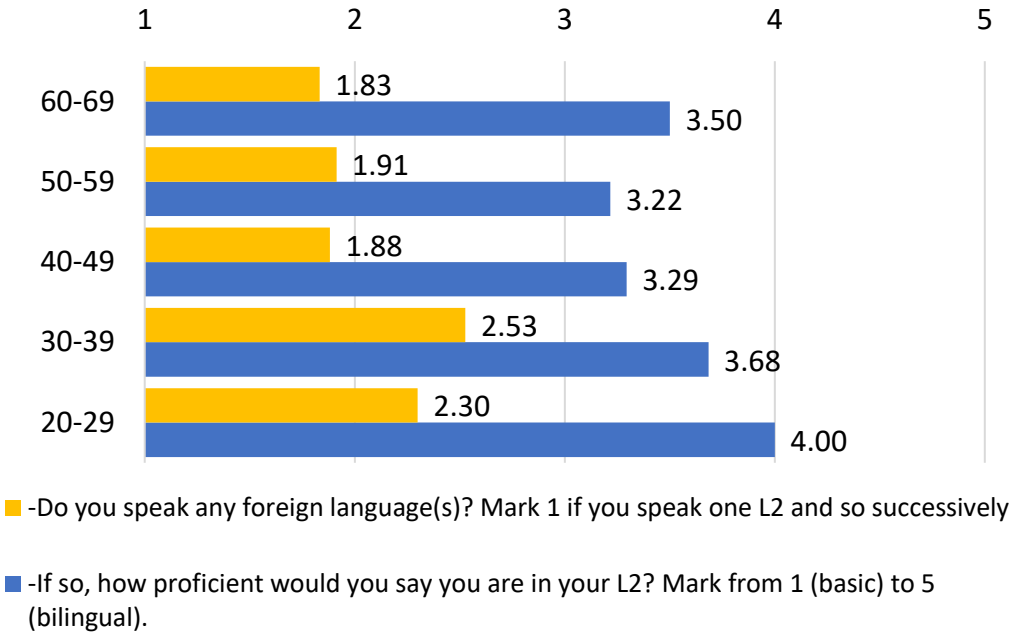
Overall, there seemed to be linguistic, sociolinguistic, and geopolitical factors affecting participants' interest in learning new languages. UCM participants seemed to be guided more by an extrinsic motivation than were those from RUG, whose motivations seemed to be intrinsic. As previously mentioned, the high level of English usage in the Netherlands as well as its role in this country helped residents master this language—in fact, they used it as a lingua franca on a daily basis. Those from the Spanish institution seemed to be interested in learning the languages that students spoke. At any rate, participants from both universities showed a high level of motivation to learn new languages and positive attitudes towards other cultures, which implies a solid basis from which to develop their intercultural competence.

5.6.2. Discussion on Linguistic Skills and Age

The group of participants between 30 and 39 years old reported speaking a larger number of foreign languages on average ($\bar{x}$ = 2.52); however, this age group emerged in the second position according to the self-reported level of proficiency in their second language (L2; $\bar{x}$ = 3.68). Those from 20 to 29 years old were in the second position regarding the number of languages they spoke ($\bar{x}$ = 2.30) but in the first position according to the linguistic proficiency they claimed to have in their second language (L2; $\bar{x}$ = 4.00). Further, the age group of participants between 50 and 59 years old were next in the number of foreign languages they spoke ($\bar{x}$ = 1.91), very closely followed by the rest of the age groups: 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 1.88) and 60 to 69 ($\bar{x}$ = 1.83). Regarding the level of proficiency in the second language (L2), the 60 to 69 age group was in the third position ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50), followed by 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.29) and 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.21). The results are shown in Figure 44.

Figure 44

Age Ranges—Linguistic Skills



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

These results support previous research finding the age group with the highest level of English in Europe was 21- to 30-year-olds (Education First, 2021, p. 19). In addition, these findings demonstrate that even though younger people seemed to know more languages, regarding the linguistic proficiency in their second language, they competed with the senior group. The fast development of internationalisation during the last decades likely played a key role in these results—the youngest generations grew up in educational environments that are often bilingual and even multilingual (Sánchez-García, 2020). However, older generations were generally raised in more monolingual and monocultural contexts, which likely had a direct impact on their linguistic proficiency.

Further, the historical context may have negatively influenced the senior group of participants from UCM. During Franco's dictatorship, since 1941 when the 'Law of Defense of the Language' was enacted, all the multimedia products, such as foreign films, were dubbed

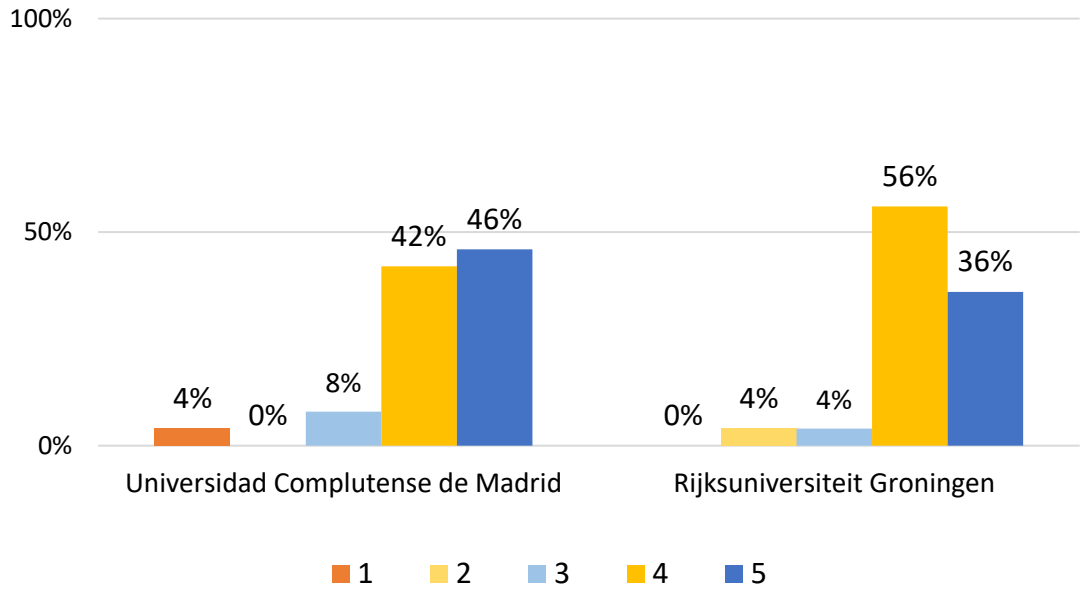
into Spanish to conform to the dictator's ideology (Gutiérrez-Lanza, 2000; Rabadán, 2000). Therefore, access to foreign languages was more difficult at that time than in other European countries in which English started to spread after the victory of the allies in the Second World War (Perez, 1999).

5.7. Overview of Results and Discussion on Awareness of Nonverbal Language

The concluding section of the questionnaire instrument aimed to evaluate participants' nonverbal language awareness. The first question was 'Are you aware of nonverbal language in your own culture (for example, gestures, distance, etc.)?' Results show that 46% of participants from UCM and 36% from RUG considered themselves completely aware of nonverbal language in their own culture, selecting 5 out 5. An advanced level of awareness was reported by 42% of UCM participants and by most of RUG participants (56%). The middle level, 3 out of 5, was chosen by 8% of UCM and 4% of RUG participants. None of UCM participants and 4% of RUG participants selected 2 out of 5. Finally, 4% of UCM participants and none of RUG participants chose the lowest level of awareness, 1 out of 5. These results are illustrated in Figure 45.

Figure 45

Are you Aware of Nonverbal Language in your own Culture (for Example, Gestures, Distance, etc.)?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

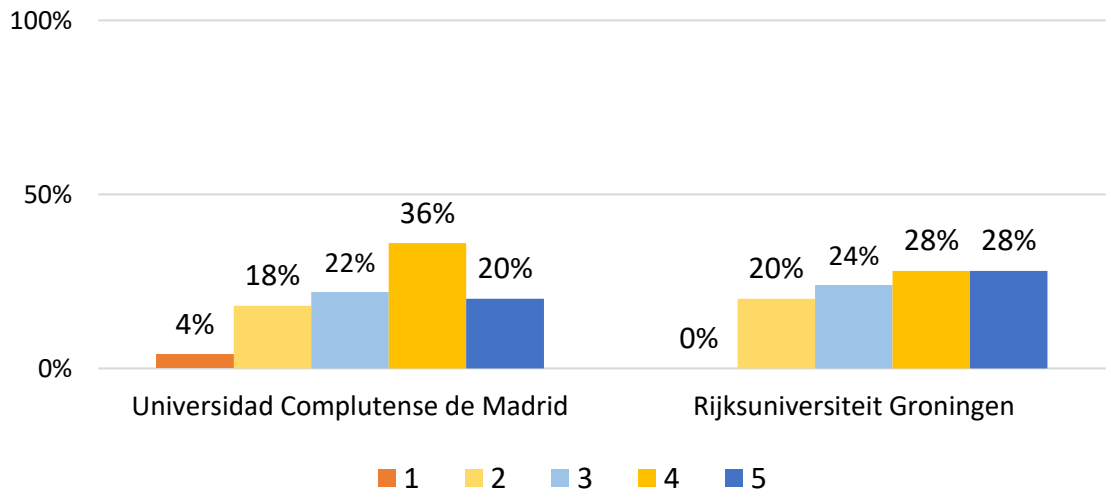
The answers to this question reveal highly positive results among participants from both universities. On average, they reported the same results in terms of awareness (UCM, $\bar{x}$ = 4.24; RUG, $\bar{x}$ = 4.24). Among RUG participants, most chose 4 out of 5 (56%). A plurality of the UCM participants considered themselves completely aware of nonverbal language; most (88%) selected 4 or 5. These answers imply that the administrative and support staff from both universities were aware they did not know every part of nonverbal language in their own culture, but they knew most of it. This high level of awareness could have stemmed from encountering misunderstandings with people from other cultures, because participants interacted with internationals daily.

The final question asked participants about their nonverbal language awareness, but in cultures different from theirs: 'Are you aware of nonverbal language in other cultures (for example, gestures, distance, etc.)?' The highest level of awareness of nonverbal language when

interacting with individuals from different cultures (5 of 5) was selected by 22% of UCM participants and by 28% of RUG participants, the same percentage that selected an advanced level of awareness (4 of 5). This score was chosen by more than a third of UCM participants (36%). The middle level of awareness was selected by 22% of the participants from UCM and by 24% of those from RUG. The second lowest score was chosen by 18% of the participants from UCM and by 20% of those from RUG. The minimum score (1 of 5) was selected by 4% of participants from UCM and by none from RUG. These numbers are illustrated in Figure 46.

Figure 46

Are you Aware of Nonverbal Language in other Cultures (for Example, Gestures, Distance, etc.)?



Note. UCM, N = 50; RUG, N = 25.

In general, participants' levels of awareness seemed to decrease when they were dealing with other cultures. RUG participants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.64) reported a slightly higher level of awareness than did UCM participants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50). These results align with the number of languages that RUG participants claimed they had mastered. Even though nonverbal behaviours are culturally determined (Gao, 2006), according to these findings, as more languages are spoken, the higher the awareness level of nonverbal language in other cultures. Further, the fact that 36% of RUG

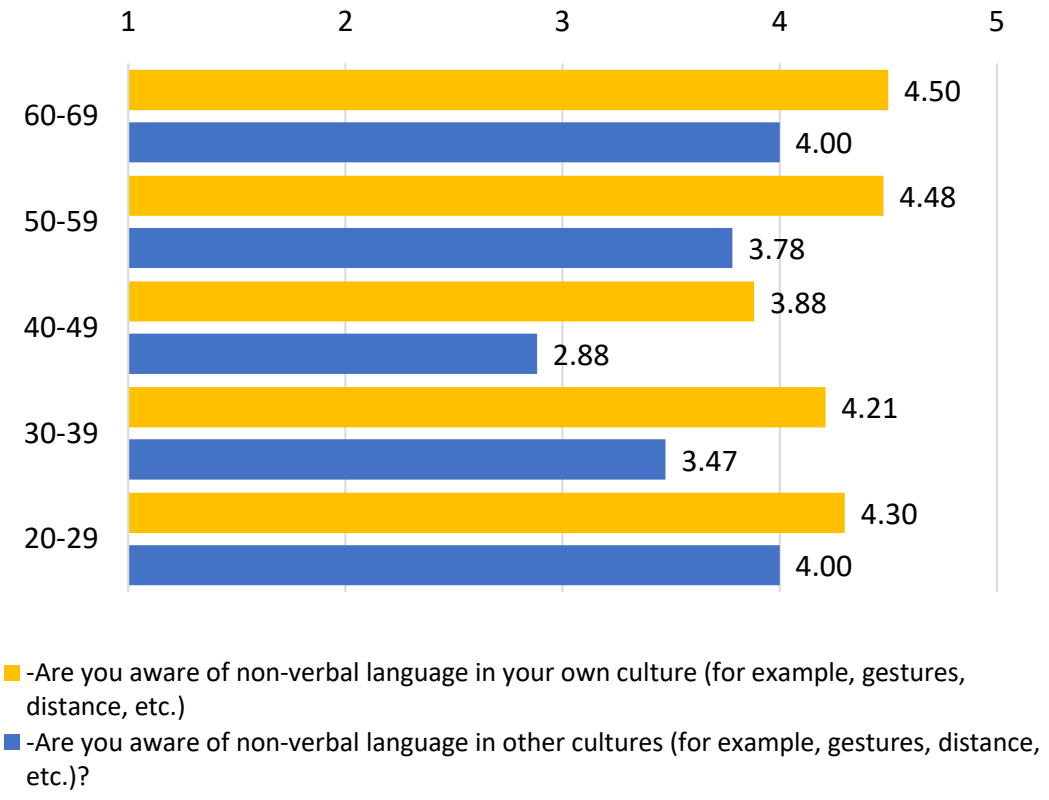
participants were living in a country that was not their home country may have played a role—that is, they may already have faced situations (or misunderstandings) in the Netherlands where differences in nonverbal language were present.

5.7.1. Discussion on Awareness of Nonverbal Language and Age

Highest on awareness of nonverbal language in their own cultures were the senior groups of participants of 60 to 69 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.50) and 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.47), followed by the youngest (20–29; $\bar{x}$ = 4.30), 30 to 31 ($\bar{x}$ = 2.21), and 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.88). Awareness of nonverbal language in other cultures seemed to be mastered by the age groups on both extremes; 60 to 69 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00) and 20 to 29 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00), closely followed by 50 to 59 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.88) and 30 to 39 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.47). The age group of 40 to 49 ($\bar{x}$ = 2.88) reported the lowest score in this dimension. These numbers are shown in Figure 47.

Figure 47

Age Ranges—Nonverbal Language Awareness



Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.

The levels of (verbal) linguistic proficiency and nonverbal language awareness seemed to match according to age, at least among the youngest participants. This implies that if they know more languages and have higher levels of linguistic proficiency in those languages, they will also know nonverbal aspects and thus possibly perform better in intercultural interactions. In fact, these results could represent a development in methods used to teach foreign languages, including the nonverbal and cultural dimensions of languages, an implementation that younger generations could have experienced (Baugh et al., 2020). Similarly, the senior group could have acquired this knowledge by their experience in internationalisation, through interacting with people from other cultures for a long time. These results are consistent with participants' interest in travelling abroad, which could have taught both sets of participants, belonging to different generations (60–69 and 20–29) about intercultural nonverbal cues (Jena, 2020).

5.7.2. Comments from Participants

At the end of this section of the questionnaire, some participants shared their anecdotes and ideas.

5.7.2.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Among participants from UCM, 2 participants commented at the end of this section.

28. *Pautas para concienciar del lenguaje no verbal puede ser indispensables para la relación con otras culturas.* [Guidelines for raising awareness on nonverbal language may be essential in order to relate to other cultures.]

The person writing Comment 28 emphasised the importance of being aware of nonverbal language in relating appropriately with other cultures, as the administrative and support staff of these international universities did in their work. The comment supports the hypothesis that nonverbal language is essential to communicate efficiently with people from other cultures, developing one's intercultural competence. In addition, the comment shows a global mindset

towards learning from other cultures and people, as well as a relationship interest in establishing and maintaining respectful relations with others.

29. *Intento aprenderlo cuando estoy con personas o viajo a distintas culturas.*

[I try to learn it when I am with people or travel to different cultures.]

Another participant (Comment 29) revealed attitudes of curiosity and discovery and willingness to learn from other cultures, all aspects of the 'exploration' dimension.

30. *Me fijo poco pero me doy cuenta de detalles, los asiáticos son muy distantes, los alumnos del este muy serios, los latinos muy educados y melosos.* [I pay little attention, but I notice details, the Asians are very distant, the Eastern students are very serious, the Latinos are very polite and sweet.]

Comment 30 shows that the participant's experience determined their mental schemata, which was not necessarily negative—in fact, stereotypes may have helped this person interact with visitors from these nationalities (Pluzhnova & Stasyuk, 2017). However, interculturally competent people need to become aware of the existence of the different cultures and the different identities present among individuals from the same country. The comment implies, in principle, low scores on the positive regard dimension; this participant could easily fall into stereotypes (Hetts et al., 1999; Ladegaard, 2020). Nevertheless, this reflection is positive because this participant knew cultural differences existed, which could help them avoid conflict and intercultural clashes. For example, if a person from an Eastern country speaks in a serious tone of voice, this participant would interpret it as a cultural issue rather than a personal issue, and the conversation could continue successfully.

5.7.2.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Among RUG participants, 5 commented at the end of this section of the questionnaire.

31. I'm a bit aware of it, but don't know what's normal in which culture (distance I can imagine something about that, but not really about gestures and face expressions).

32. I am aware of these languages, but do not master them.

33. I'm probably less aware of nonverbal language in my own and other cultures than I think I am.

34. I do know that nonverbal language is important, but in my communication, I am not really aware of this and how it could be interpreted by the other party.

35. I do not 'speak' a sign language, but I am aware of gestures.

Among RUG participants, 1 person (Comment 31) admitted being partially aware of nonverbal language but not having enough knowledge about what was acceptable in other cultures. The person making Comment 32 was aware of nonverbal language but had not mastered it completely, similar to the responses of the authors of Comments 33, 34, and 35. These experiences shared by the RUG participants reinforce the importance of nonverbal language in the development of intercultural competence (Benattabou, 2020; Ilie, 2019; Purnell, 2018). Moreover, these comments show a high level of self-awareness among participants; they acknowledged not knowing as much as they thought.

36. I have learned a lot from working with people from different cultures. This is the case for me every day.

37. Growing up in South Africa I have learned a lot from the traditional cultures.

Comment 36 highlights the amount of knowledge the participant had learned working in internationalisation. In the case of Comment 37, whose author was raised in South Africa, the person learned from the traditional cultures there. These comments demonstrate high scores in the 'interpersonal engagement' dimension, exhibiting both a global mindset interested in learning from people from different cultures and in establishing social relationships with them—in other words, relationship interest.

38. I once worked in France and to mark my positive attitude towards something I ate, I waved my hand next to my cheek. My French colleague didn't understand the

(apparently) Dutch sign and showed me the French sign to indicate the same feeling—rubbing your belly :) I never realised it was a Dutch sign.

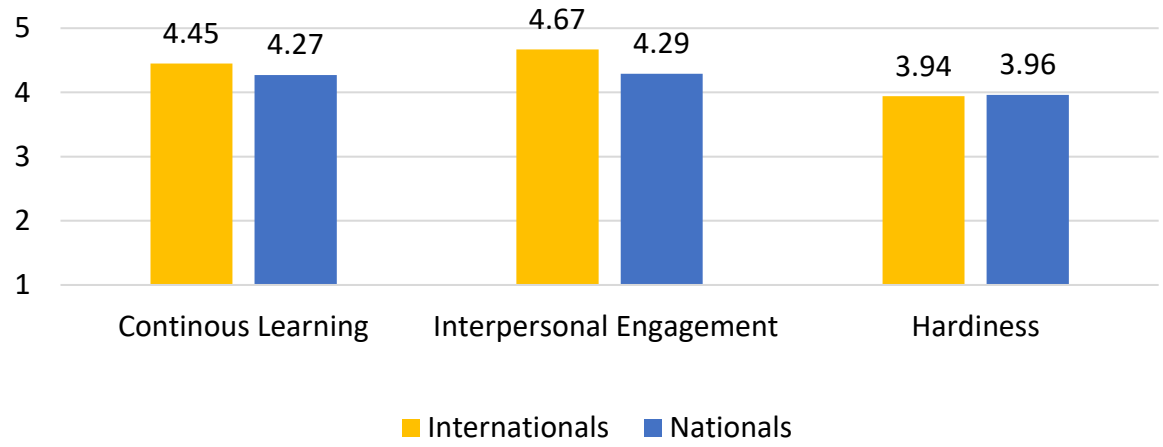
The participant writing Comment 38 shared an anecdote in which a misunderstanding caused by nonverbal language occurs between a Dutch person and a French person. The reason for the dissonance was that the French person did not understand the information conveyed by the Dutch person's gesture, given that in French culture, that feeling is expressed in a different way. This anecdote demonstrates participants' self-awareness and attitudes to learn ('global mindset') and reinforces the vital role of nonverbal skills in intercultural communication.

5.8. Overview of Results and Discussion on Intercultural Competence and Nationality

Throughout the discussion of results, this study has assumed that RUG participants might have obtained higher results on some of the dimensions because 36% of RUG participants were not born in the Netherlands. The assumption was that they may had already experienced intercultural misunderstandings and, as a consequence, they were more aware of the importance of at least some intercultural aspects. In fact, researchers on intercultural studies question if being a foreigner living abroad helps improve intercultural competence (Fantini, 2018; Maharaja, 2018; Sobkowiak, 2019; Yu & Moskal, 2019). For this reason, the average results are reported for those participants who were born in the country of the two universities in this study—Spain and the Netherlands—and for those who declared they had different nationalities, according to the dimensions of continuous learning, interpersonal engagement, and hardiness (Figure 48). The dimension of linguistic skills (verbal and nonverbal) was not considered in this variable, given the advantage participants from different nationalities might have had with regard to speaking other languages.

Figure 48

Intercultural Competence according to Nationality



Note. Internationals, N = 9; Nationals, N = 66.

In the ‘continuous learning’ dimension, internationals ($\bar{x}$ = 4.45) obtained slightly higher results than did national participants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.27). The same occurred in the ‘interpersonal engagement’ dimension; international participants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.67) obtained higher results than did national participants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.29). However, national participants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.96) reported slightly higher scores in the ‘hardiness’ dimension, compared to internationals ($\bar{x}$ = 3.94). These results align with previous research (Maharaja, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2018; Wolff & Borzikowsky, 2018) showing that experiences abroad improve intercultural competence. In this study, participants who were living in countries different from those in which they were born demonstrated higher results in two of the three dimensions and almost the same in the third one. Therefore, living and working abroad may have helped enhance their intercultural competence but, according to these findings, there is not a remarkable difference.

Nevertheless, experience seems to be the key factor that improves intercultural competence. National participants of this study obtained closely similar results compared to internationals because they worked in intercultural environments in which they had the

opportunity to interact with people from different backgrounds. In the case of international participants, they may have lived more intercultural experiences because they were already living abroad but also because they worked in these internationalisation units. Further, participants who liked travelling, interacting with locals, and trying new food when travelling obtained higher scores on the rest of dimensions.

Therefore, experience seems to be the most powerful implicit instruction on intercultural competence for its ability to help staff acquire tolerant, flexible attitudes. In addition, intercultural experiences provide knowledge and improved skills to interpret that knowledge to perform efficiently in intercultural interactions.

5.9. Chapter Summary

The chapter presented the findings obtained from participants' answers on the questionnaire. These findings were discussed according to the dimensions of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale proposed by the Kozai Group (2009). First, the 'continuous learning' dimension, composed of 'self-awareness' and 'exploration', was evaluated, followed by an analysis of the 'interpersonal engagement' dimension, comprising the 'global mindset' and 'relationship interest' subdimensions. In the next section, the dimension of 'hardiness', which includes the 'positive regard' and the 'emotional resilience' subdimensions, was examined.

Participants' linguistic skills and nonverbal language awareness were discussed next. An analysis of the texts written by the participants to answer the open-ended questions was presented at the end of each dimension after the discussion of the numerical results. Additionally, the possible relationships between the participants' combined responses from both universities and the independent variable of age were considered in each dimension. The final section compared the average scores obtained by the Spanish and Dutch participants with those obtained by participants who had a different nationality and discussed possible reasons for this outcome.

As explained in the methodology chapter, five people from each institution were selected among participants who answered the questionnaires as a purposeful sample to be interviewed. Chapter 6 focuses on the analysis of the interviews.

CHAPTER 6

Analysis of Interviews

6.1. Introduction

Chapter 6 presents the empirical exploration of the interviews with the objective of analysing how participants perceived university internationalisation and what their discourse revealed about their intercultural competence. This chapter aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ2. How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised higher education institutions perceive university internationalisation?

RQ3. What values do participants' linguistic choices reveal when talking about internationalisation, and how are these values constructed discursively?

RQ4. To what extent, if any, has the administrative and support staff experienced intercultural dissonances; more specifically, what do their experiences reveal about their intercultural competence?

To accomplish this purpose, Chapter 6 begins with the demographic information of the ten interviewees (6.2), followed by four sections analysing the dimensions of Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence. The first section (6.3) is devoted to analysing how human values, hypothesised as the origin of attitudes, were constructed discursively in the interviews. After the analysis of values, their resulting attitudes are studied in terms of the lexical words that the participants of both universities used in common during the interviews. The following section (6.4) presents the different kinds of intercultural knowledge and comprehension, and skills, revealed by participants' discourse on internationalisation. The succeeding section (6.5) introduces an analysis of participants' narrations of the intercultural dissonances they had experienced and the resulting rubric that measures their intercultural adaptability based on their discourse. In the next section (6.6),

participants' reactions to the three intercultural scenarios provided during the interviews are classified according to the desired internal and external outcomes of the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). All these dimensions are exemplified by extracts classified into information codes to provide the context in which these extracts were reported. As explained in Chapter 4 (see Table 3), these information codes correspond to the interview questions. At the end of each section, the relationship between each dimension and the independent variable of age is discussed. The chapter closes with a summary (6.7).

6.2. Demographic Information

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the participants interviewed represented the different units in charge of a wide, diverse range of tasks that required staff to be in continuous contact with people from various cultural backgrounds. Regarding sex, among the 5 UCM participants, 1 (2%) was male, and 4 (88%) were female. All 5 (100%) RUG participants were female. Tables 6 and 7 show the units at which participants from each university worked, their years of experience working there, and their ages.

Table 6

UCM Participants' Demographic Information

Office	Years of Experience	Age
International Office at the Faculty of Philology	1–5	30–39
Foreign Languages Centre	6–10	40–49
International Relations Office	11–15	50–59
Erasmus Office of the Faculty of Philology	6–10	50–59
Erasmus Office for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities	16–20	50–59

Table 7

RUG Participants' Demographic Information

Office	Years of Experience	Age
Immigration Service Office	1–5	20–29
Internationalisation Office at the Faculty of Economics and Business	1–5	30–39
International Admissions Department	1–5	30–39
Incoming Exchange Students Office	6–10	40–49
Student Information Administration Office	1–5	40–49

As reported in Chapter 4 (Methodology), the interviews with the staff from RUG were shorter (148 minutes, 76,648 words) than were the interviews with UCM participants (163 minutes, 100,096 words). The findings resulted from the analysis of the interviews with staff from UCM and RUG are presented and discussed in the following sections divided into human values and their resulting attitudes; knowledge, comprehension, and skills; intercultural adaptability; and internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence.

As stated in Chapter 4 (Methodology), the limited sample size and amount of data should be noted. Ten interviews were conducted with participants chosen from a narrow range of ages (for example, only 1 person between 20 and 29 years old was interviewed, as shown in Tables 6 and 7). Thus, this small sample size does not represent the entire staff population. Therefore, the results discussed in the following sections cannot be generalised or extrapolated to other settings.

6.3. Overview of Results and Discussion on Human Values and their Resulting Attitudes

The following paragraphs illustrate and discuss the findings on the basic human values revealed by the analysis of the language participants used during the interviews. As explained in the previous chapters, human values are hypothesised as the origin of attitudes. The ten basic

human values (Schwartz, 1992, 2012) are grouped according to the attitudes they produce: 'universalism' and 'benevolence' values ('respect' attitudes), 'stimulation' values ('curiosity and discovery' attitudes), 'self-direction' values ('openness' attitudes), 'security', 'conformity', and 'tradition' values (stability attitudes), and 'achievement', 'power', and 'hedonism' values ('success' attitudes).

Each section begins with a summary of the findings regarding the specific value revealed by the language used by participants in the interviews. Next, these values are analysed in depth. Given the importance of context for the accurate analysis of values, utterances in their contexts deserved a specific analysis on their own in which they were scrutinised more exhaustively. To accomplish this goal, utterances revealing specific values (value codes; see Appendix F) are discussed in accordance with the contexts (information codes; see Table 2 in Chapter 4) in which they appeared. After each value or set of values, the resulting attitude or group of attitudes are explored. For each attitude or set of attitudes, the lexical words conveying them in the interviews with the staff from both universities are presented and justified. This analysis shows the lexical patterns revealing specific attitudes and, consequently, human values. Finally, the variable of age in relation to attitudes is illustrated and discussed.

In total, 150 utterances were found revealing human values in the interviews, 100 from the staff at UCM and 50 from RUG participants. Because the number of utterances revealing values was not the same among the interviews with staff for the two samples, numerical results are presented with percentages; in other words, results are normalised in order to facilitate comparisons (Zhan et al., 2020). Table 8 shows the distribution of human values revealed in participants' interviews, organised by resulting attitudes.

Table 8

Distribution of Human Values and their Resulting Attitudes

Values	UCM	RUG	Attitudes	Frequency		Total
Universalism	70 (70%)	26 (52%)	Respect	UCM	74 (74%)	
Benevolence	4 (4%)	4 (8%)		RUG	30 (60%)	
						104 (68.66%)
Stimulation	15 (15%)	7 (14%)	Curiosity and Discovery	UCM	15 (15%)	
				RUG	7 (14%)	
						22 (14.66%)
Self-direction	9 (9%)	9 (18%)	Openness	UCM	9 (9%)	
				RUG	9 (18%)	
						18 (12%)
Security	0	4 (8%)	Stability	UCM	0	
Conformity	0	0		RUG	4 (8%)	
Tradition	0	0				
						4 (2.66%)
Achievement	2 (2%)	0	Success	UCM	2 (2%)	
Power	0	0		RUG	0	
Hedonism	0	0				
						2 (1.33%)

Note. UCM, $N = 100$; RUG, $N = 50$.

The human values and their resulting attitudes discovered in the UCM and RUG data, ranked from the most frequent to the least frequent, were ‘universalism’ and ‘benevolence’ values (‘respect’ attitudes), ‘stimulation’ values (‘curiosity’ and ‘discovery’ attitudes), ‘self-direction’ values (‘openness’ attitudes), ‘security’, ‘conformity’, and ‘tradition’ values (‘stability’ attitudes), and, finally, ‘achievement’, ‘power’, and ‘hedonism’ values (‘success’ attitudes). As Table 8 illustrates, among the utterances revealing attitudes ($N = 150$), ‘respect’ was the most numerous, appearing in 74% (74 of 100) of the utterances of UCM staff, and in 60% (30 of 50) of those stated by RUG staff. Among the utterances stated by UCM participants,

15% (15 of 100) showed ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes and 14% (7 of 50) of the utterances in the case of RUG participants. ‘Openness’ attitudes appeared in 9% (9 of 100) of the utterances reported by UCM participants, compared to 18% (9 of 50) of those stated by RUG participants. ‘Stability’ attitudes emerged only among RUG participants, representing 8% (4 of 50) of the total. ‘Success’ attitude was found only in the interviews with UCM staff, representing 2% (2 of 100) of the total utterances revealing attitudes. Results regarding human values and their resulting attitudes are analysed in depth and discussed in the forthcoming sections.

6.3.1. Universalism and Benevolence Values: Respect attitudes

As shown in Table 8, ‘respect’ attitudes were revealed in 104 of the utterances (UCM, 74%, 74 of 100; RUG, 60%, 30 of 50). ‘Respect’ is hypothesised to be the resulting visible attitude stemming from ‘universalism’ values (UCM, 70%, 70 of 100; RUG, 52%, 26 of 50) and ‘benevolence’ values (UCM, 4%, 4 of 100; RUG, 8%, 4of 50). In the following sections, the discursive constructions of ‘universalism’ and ‘benevolence’ values are discussed, and the lexical words used in common by participants from both universities revealing ‘respect’ attitudes are presented.

6.3.1.1. Universalism Values

People who follow universalism values pursue respect and egalitarianism for all individuals, both from the ‘in-group’ and from the ‘out-group’. Table 9 shows an extract from the codebook (Appendix F).

Table 9

Extract from the Codebook—Universalism

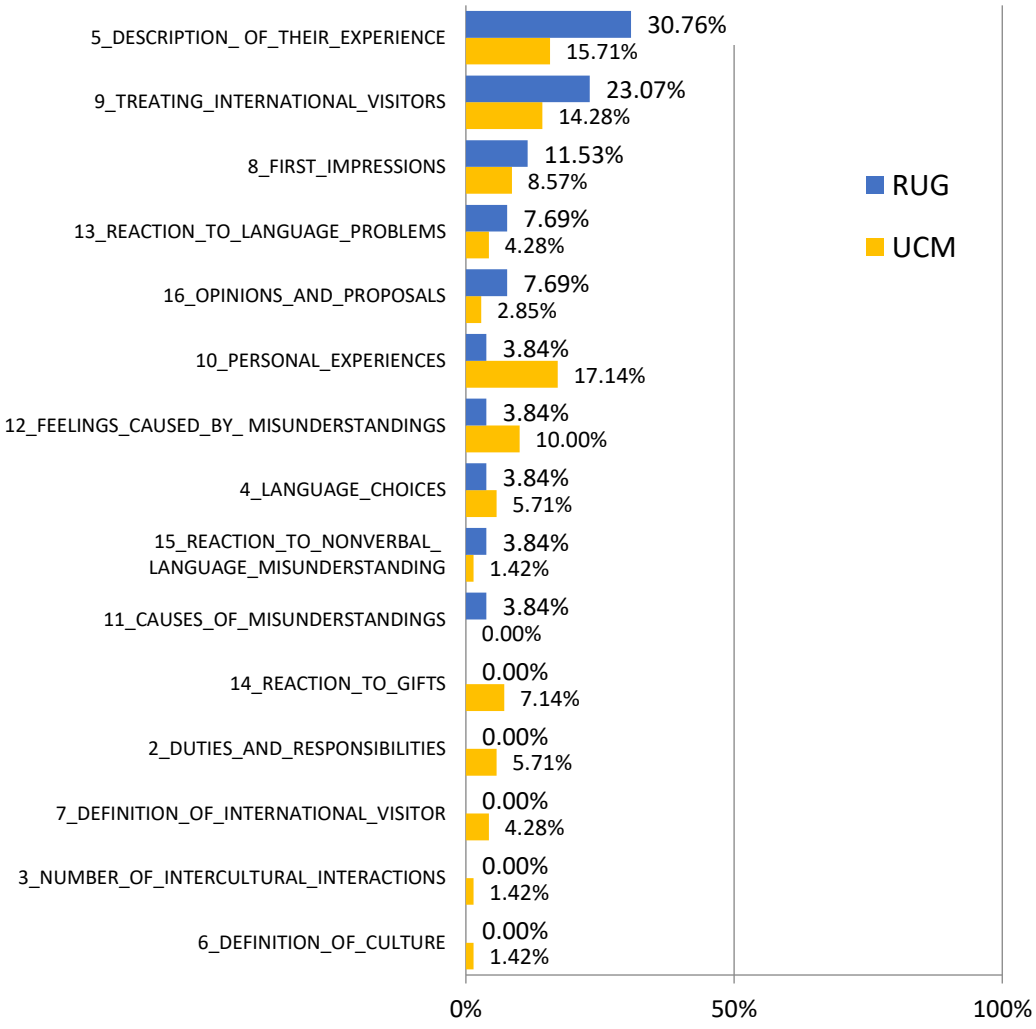
Value Code	Description
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, justice, and protection for the welfare of all people (even for the unknown) and for nature

6.3.1.1.1. Universalism Value Code According to Information Codes

Regarding ‘universalism’, 70% (70 of 100) of the UCM utterances conveyed this value, out of the 100 identified revealing human values. In the case of RUG, 52% (26 of 50) of the utterances revealed ‘universalism’ values. Figure 49 shows the UCM and RUG percentages for each information code in which the value code of ‘universalism’ was present.

Figure 49

Information Codes—Universalism Values



Note. UCM, *n* = 70; RUG, *n* = 26.

As illustrated, ‘universalism’ values were found when participants described their first-hand experiences working in internationalisation units (UCM, 15.71%, 11 of 70; RUG, 30.76%, 8 of 26). Extracts 1 and 2 in Table 10 exemplify these codes.

Table 10

Extracts—Description of Their Experience

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
5_DESCRIPTION_ OF_THEIR_ EXPERIENCE	UCM Extract 1: *he estado en la posición de ser ‘el de fuera’, y hay una serie de incomodidades que no tienes en tu país y que a veces se hacen un poco difíciles. Entonces, a mí me gusta tratar de* ***facilitarles*** *las cosas y como ellos son muy* ***agradecidos****, pues es bastante* ***reconfortante****, la verdad.* [I have been in the position of being ‘the outsider’, and there are a series of inconveniences that you do not have in your country and that sometimes become a little difficult. So, I like to try to make things **easier** for them and since they are very **grateful**, it is quite **comforting**, really.] RUG Extract 2: [Internationalisation] is not just about cultural differences. It’s about **understanding** or, you know, getting to **understand** how people view the world, how people order, or structure society, how people make sense of our planet, how people engage with each other, and that how that is different to how people view education, how people view **nature**...

The participant who provided Extract 1 had lived abroad. Experiences abroad often help people develop a clearer sense of self (Adam, 2018) and self-culture, which could have given this participant an understanding of the difficulties of being from the ‘out-group’. Consequently, this participant expressed concern for the welfare of international students, showing they were trying to make students’ paths easier after arriving at a new place.

Extract 2 mentions two key elements for those guided by ‘universalism’ values: ‘understanding’ and ‘nature’. Regarding ‘understanding’, this RUG participant found it an essential factor for working in internationalisation—that is, empathy, above cultural differences. For this person, internationalisation provided them with the opportunity to learn

from different perspectives. As for ‘nature’, the RUG participant mentioned ‘our planet’ and ‘nature’ as crucial elements, which can be perceived differently according to the cultures in which individuals were raised. This response shows a universalist view of the world, taking into consideration not just the world’s citizens but also the planet.

These descriptions support Schwartz’s (2012) classification of two subtypes of concern for universalism. On the one hand, concern is evident for the welfare of people living in society. The world is perceived as occurring in a social environment in which people are constantly ‘getting to understand’ how it works for others. On the other hand, concern for nature is evident: The world is considered a home that needs to be protected and looked after, despite the different cultures that coexist in it.

The information code related to how participants treated international visitors contained 14.28% (UCM, 10 of 70) and 23.07% (RUG, 6 of 26) of the responses revealing ‘universalism values’. Table 11 provides two extracts for this information code.

Table 11

Extracts—Treating International Visitors

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
9_TREATING_ INTERNATIONAL_ VISITORS	UCM Extract 3: *Nos hacemos cargo de que ellos no conocen la universidad, para ellos es un mundo nuevo, diferente, y entonces intentamos hacer las cosas lo más **fáciles** posible y lo más **cercanas** posible.* [We take into account the fact that they don’t know the university, for them it is a new, different world, and so we try to make things as **easy** as possible and as **close** as possible.] RUG Extract 4: you want to make them feel **comfortable** and **welcome** in the Netherlands

The participant who provided Extract 3 reported an empathic attitude willing to 'enter into and participate in the world of the cultural "other" cognitively, affectively, and behaviourally' (Calloway-Thomas et al., 2017, p. 35). Making things easier for international visitors was a way to avoid unfair situations that their lack of specific knowledge could provoke—thus, a way to promote equity. The participant who provided Extract 4 admitted that their attitude changed when interacting with someone from abroad; they wanted the student to feel at home in the host country, thus protecting the welfare even of unknown people.

In addition, 'universalism' values were found when participants explained how they realised that someone who entered the office was from abroad (UCM, 8.57%, 6 of 70; RUG, 11.53%, 3 of 26). Table 12 shows two extracts for this information code.

Table 12

Extracts—First Impressions

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
8_FIRST_IMPRESSIONS	UCM Extract 5: *En realidad es que no me lo he planteado nunca porque intentamos no hacer esa* ***diferenciación***. [Actually, I have never considered it because we try not to make that **differentiation**.] RUG Extract 6: I don't think I will decide based on appearance if someone is an international or not.

Extract 5 shows that, for this participant, every person should be treated equally and have the same opportunities, and internationalisation helps make that goal possible. For this reason, the participant did not differentiate international students from UCM students. In fact, the participant clarified that they worked so that there was no such differentiation, thereby revealing social justice and equality values. The participant who provided Extract 6 explained

the consequences of expanding one's mind: realising that cultures and appearance are not necessarily linked. Overcoming this barrier enhances universalism values and helps develop intercultural empathy (Calloway-Thomas et al., 2017).

In the answers provided by participants to the question about their personal lived experiences working in internationalisation, 17.14% (UCM, 12 of 70) and 3.84% (RUG, 1 of 26) of responses revealing 'universalism' values were found. Table 13 provides two extracts for this information code.

Table 13

Extracts—Personal Experiences

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
10_PERSONAL_ EXPERIENCES	UCM Extract 7: *Y* [*es necesario*] *ponerse un poco en lugar del otro... La* ***empatía*** *es muy necesaria; trabajamos con* ***personas****.* [And [it's necessary] to put yourself in their shoes... **Empathy** is extremely necessary; we work with **people**.] RUG Extract 8: So, it's not good or bad. It's just a **difference** in student life.

Even though the interviewer did not mention the term 'empathy' during the interview, the participant from UCM who provided Extract 7 mentioned 'empathy' as one of the most necessary values for working in internationalisation and for interacting with people regardless of their country of origin. This finding is in line with Arasatnam and Doerfel's (2005) investigation showing that the term 'empathy' was present in all the definitions of intercultural competence provided by participants from fifteen different countries. Further, this finding seems to align with Deardorff's (2006) work in which 'the understanding of others' world views' received 100 percent agreement among scholars when defining intercultural competence. In Schwartz's (2012) terms, this understanding and appreciation for all people,

even for unknown individuals (in this case, international visitors), is an attitude present in individuals guided by 'universalism' values. This participant showed that internationalisation was not just the agenda of the university but a shared goal that included the integration of students who chose UCM to enjoy their international experiences.

The participant author of Extract 8 demonstrated a high level of 'cultural self-awareness' and 'respect' for other cultures (Deardorff, 2006). Despite misunderstandings, this participant did not fall into negative stereotypes; instead, the interviewee reported a perspective of the problem, which also reveals tolerance values.

When participants shared the feelings they had experienced when intercultural dissonances occurred, 'universalism' values appeared in 10% (UCM, 7 of 70) and 3.84% (RUG, 1 of 26) of the utterances revealing human values. Table 14 provides two extracts for this information code.

Table 14

Extracts—Feelings Caused by Misunderstandings

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
12_FEELINGS_ CAUSED_BY_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS	UCM Extract 9: *En nuestro caso pues con **preocupación** e intentando decirle: 'Mira, disculpa, no hay ninguna intención en ello, es una forma de ser, lo vamos a evitar y ya está'. Pero **nos sentimos mal**, cualquier cosa que incomode a alguien **te hace sentir fatal**, sí.* [In our case, well, with **concern** and trying to say: 'Look, sorry, there's no intention in it, it's a way of being, we're going to avoid it and that's it'. But **we feel bad**, anything that makes someone uncomfortable **makes you feel terrible**, yeah] RUG Extract 10: If I feel confused about such a situation, the way I always handled it is take [sic] a step back and see, try to find out why my **perspective** is different from the students and take it from there.

Extract 9 shows the ‘universalism’ values that characterise a person who is concerned about all people, including strangers such as the international visitors new to UCM. This participant reported how bad they felt when dissonances happened, demonstrating empathy for those from other cultures (Calloway-Thomas et al., 2017). These staff explained to the international visitors that misunderstandings occurred because of cultural reasons, and they tried to avoid such misunderstandings in order to protect internationals from suffering cultural clashes.

The participant who mentioned Extract 10 was able to see misunderstandings from an ethnorelative point of view (Bennett, 2004). Further, this participant showed skills to adapt cognitively and emotionally to intercultural interlocutors to either avoid dissonances or handle them appropriately.

When participants explained the language(s) they used with international visitors, ‘universalism’ values appeared (UCM, 5.71%, 4 of 70; RUG, 3.84%, 1 of 26). Table 15 provides two extracts for this information code.

As illustrated in Extract 11, the use of the first-person plural to talk to international students was a noteworthy attempt to integrate the interactant into the context (Jiménez-Fernández & Tubino-Blanco, 2022). This would be an example of ‘clusivity’, making use, in this case, of the inclusive ‘we’ (Scheibman, 2004). This linguistic marker, as in this example, might be typical of individuals guided by ‘universalism’ values. They want to promote equality and the integration of those from the ‘out-group’; thus, this linguistic strategy helps enhance inclusion so international visitors feel as if they are part of the university and not just foreigners.

Table 15

Extracts—Language Choices

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
4_LANGUAGE_ CHOICES	UCM Extract 11: *Alguna vez lo que he hecho es decirle: '**Vamos** a intentar hablar en español, no te preocupes que yo hablo inglés, entonces, **vamos** a tener la conversación en español y si al final tienes alguna duda o algo no lo has entendido, o te ves que te pones muy nervioso o muy nerviosa, o que está fallando la comunicación, **cambiamos** al inglés'.* [Sometimes what I have done is tell them: '**Let's** try to speak in Spanish, don't worry, I speak English, then **we are going to** have the conversation in Spanish and if at the end you have any questions or there's something you haven't understood, or you see that you get very nervous, or there's a breakdown in communication, **we'll change** to English'.] RUG Extract 12: So, I always say: 'just talk to me **in your own language**, but I will speak back in English'.

The participant who provided Extract 12 seemed willing to make an extra effort to understand international visitors in their native languages, so they felt comfortable and not pressured to speak Dutch or English. This person reported having the ability to 'put themselves in the foreigner's shoes' and understood the difficulty of arriving at a new country in which a different language was spoken. As a result, they might have been able to adapt cognitively, affectively, and behaviourally to intercultural interactions (Calloway-Thomas et al., 2017).

In this vein, 4.28% (UCM, 3 of 70) and 7.69% (RUG, 2 of 26) of the utterances that participants used to express their reactions to dissonances caused by linguistic proficiency revealed 'universalism' values. Table 16 provides two extracts for this information code.

Table 16

Extracts—Reaction to Language Problems

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
13_REACTION_TO_ LANGUAGE_ PROBLEMS	UCM Extract 13: *es un **entorno controlado**, es una oficina en la que saben que* [*el español*] *no es tu lengua materna y que si hay algún problema se puede recurrir al inglés como un ambiente más **amigable**.* [it is a **controlled environment**, it is an office where they know that [Spanish] is not your mother tongue and that if there is a problem they can resort to English as a **friendlier** environment.] RUG Extract 14: I tried to identify **together** with them, what they could do to **bridge** the **discrepancy**.

The participant who reported Extract 13 acknowledged that linguistic proficiency helped not only to improve communication with international students but also to create a familiar atmosphere to make them feel comfortable. Further, being willing to use both languages—Spanish, so international visitors could practice, and English, so they felt more comfortable—implied the extra effort they were willing to make. These actions revealed the participant's ability to adjust to different communication styles and behaviours.

Similarly, the participant who mentioned Extract 14 reported an empathic response to a linguistic problem; the administrative officer got involved in the student's issue in order to solve it in the most efficient way. This attitude shows protection for the welfare of all people, even for unknown individuals.

When participants shared their opinions and proposals about the internationalisation of the university, 2.85% (UCM, 2 of 70) and 7.69% (RUG, 2 of 26) of the utterances revealing 'universalism' values were found. Table 17 provides two extracts for this information code.

Table 17

Extracts—Opinions and Proposals

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
16_OPINIONS_ AND_PROPOSALS	UCM Extract 15: *cuantas más **facilidades** se le dé al alumno extranjero, pues mejor que mejor*. [the more **facilities** given to the foreign student, the better.] RUG Extract 16: there's a lot more we should do well to be more **inclusive** and to make them feel **welcome**

The participants who provided Extracts 15 and 16 showed concern for those who could be considered in the 'out-group' for belonging to a different culture or having a different nationality. These 'universalism' values were reinforced by empathy: The participants understood that the paths were not the same for international students, compared to the paths for national students; therefore, the paths needed to be eased so equity could be achieved.

Further, Extract 16 implies that the participant was putting international students' welfare first. For example, these improvements would have required compulsory language courses or instruction on intercultural competence for the university staff. Nevertheless, this participant reported being willing to take action to make international visitors feel welcome at RUG even in this meant extra work for the staff member.

Finally, the last information code in which 'universalism' values were found in the interviews with the staff from both universities appeared when participants explained their reactions to a misunderstanding caused by nonverbal language, appearing in 1.42% (UCM, 1 of 70) and 3.84% (RUG, 1 of 26) of the utterances. Table 18 provides two extracts for this information code.

Table 18

Extracts—Universalism Values when Reacting to Nonverbal Language Misunderstanding

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
15_REACTION_TO_ NONVERBAL_ LANGUAGE_ MISUNDERSTANDING	UCM Extract 17: *Preguntándole por qué se ha sentido mal, para **entender** qué es lo que ha pasado, ¿no? Y aclararlo, por supuesto.* [Asking them why they felt bad, in order to **understand** what happened, right? And come to an understanding, of course.] RUG Extract 18: the first reaction will be to **apologise**, because obviously you did something to offend them, which should never be the case.

Extract 17 shows the participant's empathy; their first reaction was to ask the cause of the dissonance in order to understand it and try to solve the problem. Thus, 'universalism' values are revealed; the objective was to protect the international visitor from feeling bad. Further, taking for granted that offending the other interactant should never occur and apologising as a first reaction to a misunderstanding, as illustrated in Extract 18, shows a respectful personality open to admitting mistakes and learning from them.

The value code of 'universalism' appeared in some information codes of the interviews with UCM staff that did not in the interviews with RUG staff and vice versa. These information codes are discussed next in different sections for each university.

6.3.1.1.1.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

The information code corresponding to what came to UCM participants' minds when they heard the phrase 'international visitor' contained 4.28% (3 of 70) of utterances revealing 'universalism' values. Table 19 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 19

Extract—Definition of International Visitor

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
7_DEFINITION_ OF_INTERNATIONAL_ VISITOR	UCM Extract 19: *Compartir.* Sharing.

As illustrated in Extract 19, relating this concept with 'sharing' shows appreciation and respect for the different cultures with which the staff interacted. Further, perceiving international visitors as sources of knowledge with whom to share experiences supports Deardorff's (2006) emphasis on deep cultural knowledge, one of the essential dimensions to developing intercultural competence.

UCM participants' reactions to receiving gifts from international students contained 7.14% (5 of 70) of the utterances revealing 'universalism' values. Table 20 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 20

Extract—Reaction to Gifts

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
14_REACTION_ TO_GIFTS	UCM Extract 20: *Nosotros somos una pequeñísima parte de lo que se* ***deben tener que enfrentar*** *para conseguir tramitar todos los trámites para conseguir un visado.* [We are a very small part of what **they must face** to be able to process all the paperwork to obtain a visa.]

The participant who mentioned Extract 20 referred to international visitors who needed an official certificate of Spanish language to obtain a visa. The participant reported an empathic

view of the obstacles that visitors who were not from the European Union had to overcome. These words revealed a high level of understanding.

UCM participants' explanations of their duties and responsibilities included 5.71% (4 of 70) of the utterances revealing 'universalism' values. Table 21 shows an extract for this information code.

Table 21

Extract—Duties and Responsibilities

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
2_DUTIES_ AND_ RESPONSIBILITIES	UCM Extract 21 *Cuando recibimos visitas tanto de colegas míos como de estudiantes, pues en realidad lo que es, es* ***enriquecedor***. [When we receive visits from my colleagues as well as from students, actually it is, it is **enriching**.]

Working with international visitors required some extra skills compared to other administrative positions at the university, as stated by several participants during the interviews. Nevertheless, as Extract 21 illustrates, they considered the position worthwhile because they received something in return: meeting people from different cultural backgrounds and learning from them. Thus, the participant who mentioned Extract 21 reported appreciation and respect for those cultures and valued the opportunities that their job positions brought to them.

When UCM participants were asked to define the term 'culture', 1.42% (1 of 70) of the utterances revealed 'universalism' values. Table 22 illustrates an extract for this information code.

Table 22

Extract—Definition of Culture

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
6_DEFINITION_ OF_CULTURE	UCM Extract 22: [*La cultura*] *es una cosa bastante* ***profunda****, por un lado, la cultura suele estar asociada a una lengua y a un lugar o a veces también a una nación, a una serie de* ***idiosincrasias*** *o de* ***tradiciones****. Y al igual que es* ***enriquecedor*** *también a veces genera* ***conflictos*** *o* ***problemas de comunicación****.* [[Culture] is a very **profound** thing, on the one hand, culture is usually associated with a language and a place or sometimes also with a nation, with a series of **idiosyncrasies** or **traditions** and, just as it is **enriching**, it also sometimes generates **conflicts** or **communication problems**.]

The participant who mentioned Extract 22 assumed misunderstandings might occur in interactions between cultures, but such interactions were still worthwhile, because the participant obtained something in return, in this case, knowledge of other cultures. Similarly, appreciation for other cultures was revealed by the adjective '*enriquecedor'* (enriching), also illustrated in Extract 21. Further, the use of the word 'idiosyncrasies' to define culture demonstrated respect for those who were different, as well as deep cultural knowledge, because 'idiosyncrasy' is a specific term used in cultural studies (Guo, 2019).

In the information code that included the number of intercultural interactions that participants had per day, 1.42% (1 of 70) of the utterances revealed 'universalism' values. Table 23 shows an extract for this information code.

Table 23

Extract—Number of Intercultural Interactions

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
3_NUMBER_OF_ INTERCULTURAL_ INTERACTIONS	UCM Extract 23: *Porque no estábamos 'moviendo' solo números, ¿no? 'Mueves'* ***personas***. [Because we weren't just 'moving' numbers, right? You 'move' **people**.]

Extract 23 shows that this participant did not see university internationalisation as a strategy to increase the number of international students but rather as an opportunity to promote equality in education. For this reason, the term 'people' was used not to differentiate international students from national students, in other words, to emphasise the universal aspect of internationalisation.

6.3.1.1.1.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

The value code of 'universalism' appeared in the answers provided by RUG participants to the question in which they analysed the causes of the misunderstandings they had experienced (3.84%, 1 of 26). Table 24 illustrates an extract for this information code.

Table 24

Extract—Causes of Misunderstandings

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
11_CAUSES_OF_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS	RUG Extract 24: I think it has to do with our social **identity**, not just one aspect in **culture**, but it's the whole construct of our **identity**

The participant who reported Extract 24 acknowledged that culture is just one aspect of social identity that may ultimately cause misunderstandings. This utterance supports Gaston's (2017, p. 18) perception that individual identities and experiences affect the way individuals

perceive the world. Subsequently, the personal context and shared background ultimately combine to construct the basis for individuals' personalities, attitudes, and values.

6.3.1.1.2. Universalism and Internationalisation

After analysing the data, findings show that for individuals guided by 'universalism' values, promoting internationalisation was promoting equity. For them, every person in the world, those from the 'in-group' and those from the 'out-group', should be treated equally and have the same opportunities. Internationalisation was perceived as an opportunity to achieve this goal. Therefore, individuals who worked, or sought to work, in internationalised universities should be guided by 'universalism' values, because these values seemed to be the most appreciated in intercultural settings.

6.3.1.2. Benevolence Values

Those guided by 'benevolence' values tend to prioritise the welfare of others' (from the in-group) over their own welfare (Schwartz, 2012). Further, this value stems from the organismic need for affiliation and belonging (Le et al., 2021), which is critical in internationalisation. Table 25 provides an extract from the codebook (Appendix F).

Table 25

Extract from the Codebook—Benevolence

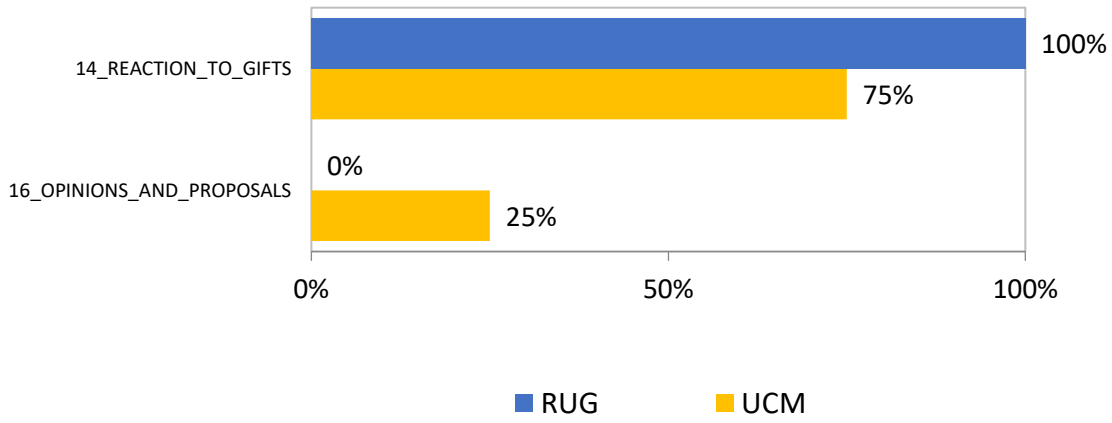
Value Code	Description
Benevolence	Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (i.e., the in-group)

6.3.1.2.1. Benevolence Value Code according to Information Codes

Among the 150 utterances revealing values, 4% (4 of 100) of those reported by UCM participants, and 8% (4 of 50) of those stated by RUG participants disclosed 'benevolence' values. Figure 50 provides the information codes in which 'benevolence' values were found.

Figure 50

Information Codes—Benevolence Values



Note. UCM, *n* = 4; RUG, *n* = 4.

Most of the 'benevolence' values were found in the information code related to participants' reactions to gifts from international students (UCM, 75%, 3 of 4; RUG, 100%, 4 of 4). Extracts 25 and 26 illustrate this value code (Table 26).

Table 26

Extracts—Reaction to Gifts

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
14_REACTION_ TO_GIFTS	UCM Extract 25: ***Compartimos*** *de entrada con todos los compañeros de la oficina y le invitamos a él* [*estudiante internacional*]. [From the beginning, [we] **share** them with all the colleagues in the office and we invite [the international student]]. RUG Extract 26: we accepted those gifts to **share** them with our colleagues.

The participants from both universities who mentioned Extracts 26 and 27 admitted sharing their gifts with people from the 'in-group', which, as mentioned, is a characteristic of individuals guided by 'benevolence' values.

The value code of 'benevolence' appeared in one information code of the interviews with UCM staff that did not emerge in the interviews with RUG staff. This information code is discussed next.

6.3.1.2.1.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

'Benevolence' values were found in the information code of opinions and proposals shared by the staff of UCM (25%, 1 out of 4) but not among those from RUG. This value code is exemplified in Extract 27, shown in Table 27.

Table 27

Extract—Opinions and Proposals

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
16_OPINIONS_ AND_ PROPOSALS	UCM Extract 27: *si yo no hubiera tenido* ***compañeros*** *becarios, el trabajo no hubiera salido por ningún lado.* [if I hadn't had **fellow** interns, there's no way the work would have got done.]

The participant who provided Extract 27 mentioned the importance of the work that interns performed in these offices, giving most credit to them. This utterance reveals their concern for the 'in-group', thus showing 'benevolence' values.[37]

[37] This comment may be attributable to the possible larger number of interns in the UCM offices, compared to RUG units. This proposed explanation stems from the larger number of UCM interns who filled out the questionnaires (16%), compared to RUG (0%). This could be a topic for future research.

6.3.1.2.2. Benevolence and Internationalisation

After analysing the data, findings show that employees who believed in 'benevolence' values perceived internationalisation as a chance to build new relationships and make people from the 'out-group' feel part of the 'in-group'. In other words, internationalisation seems to have offered the opportunity to enlarge and strengthen the 'in-group'.

As mentioned, 'respect' is hypothesised to be the resulting attitude of those guided by 'universalism' and 'benevolence' values. For this reason, the next section is devoted to examining the lexical patterns revealing 'respect' attitudes in the interviews with UCM and RUG participants.

6.3.1.3. Respect Attitudes

The first finding worth mentioning is the high number of utterances revealing 'respect' attitudes, especially noteworthy when compared with the rest of the attitudes ((*N* = 104; UCM, 74%, 74 of 100; RUG, 60%, 30 of 50). The attitude of 'respect' is conceptualised as appreciation for self-culture and other cultures and for the differences among them. As mentioned, this PhD thesis hypothesises that the basis for such attitude rests on the basic human values of 'universalism' and 'benevolence'.

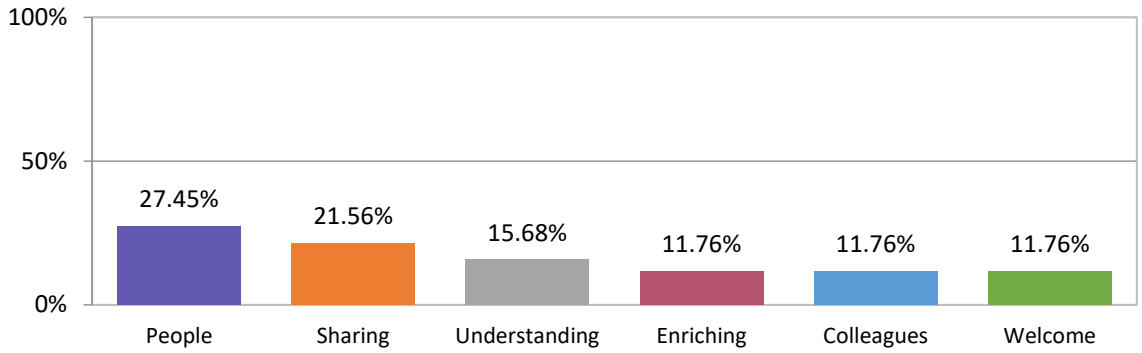
6.3.1.3.1. Lexical Patterns Revealing Respect Attitudes

In total, 51 lexical words revealing 'respect' attitudes were found in common among the staff interviews from both universities. The most numerous words were 'people', 'sharing', 'understanding', 'enriching', 'colleagues', and 'welcome'. Figure 51 summarises these results.[38]

[38] Results are normalised (Zhan et al., 2020), presented in terms of percentages, calculated by dividing the number of specific words by the total number of common words conveying 'respect' attitudes used by participants from both universities.

Figure 51

Lexical Patterns—Respect Attitudes



Note. $N = 51$.

As Figure 51 illustrates, the noun ‘people’ was the lexical item most frequently found in the interviews with the staff from both universities (27.45%, 14 of 51). Even though the noun ‘people’ has been discussed from social, philosophical, political, and many other perspectives (Badiou, 2016), in this specific context, participants used this term to avoid differentiating between those who came from abroad and home students and staff. Participants referred on several occasions to international visitors as individuals who were part of the ‘in-group’, not as ‘numbers’ for the internationalisation of the university, but as humans with their own problems beyond mobility issues (e.g., Extract 23). These students deserved attention and equal treatment—that is, respect. As stated by Schwartz (2012), those guided by ‘universalism’ values conceive of the world as a social environment. For this reason, using this term not to differentiate international students from national students supports this value profile.

The verb ‘to share’ (21.56%, 11 of 51; e.g., Extract 2) was the second most often occurring lexical word revealing respect attitudes. This verb was mainly used when participants explained how they reacted to receiving gifts from international students. They said they felt grateful and always shared gifts with those from the ‘in-group’, that is, with colleagues, as well

as with the international visitor. Sharing gifts implies sharing the achievements they may have made to deserve the gifts. Gifts not only express relationships between givers and recipients, but they also help to foster 'social solidarity' (Giesler, 2006, p. 283). As a result, the giver provides more than a gift—the gift signifies admission into a larger group (Olsen, 2012, p. 1). In other words, accepting and sharing those gifts imply the acceptance of the giver into the 'in-group', enhancing their sense of belonging.

The verb 'to understand' (15.68%, 8 of 51; e.g., Extract 19) was the third most often found lexical word among those revealing 'respect' attitudes. Individuals guided by these attitudes, in other words, by values of 'universalism' and 'benevolence', are characterised by having the ability to understand and appreciate all individuals (Jacques & Noël, 2021). Further, the use of the word 'understanding' reveals empathy—understanding others is the main trait of empathic people. Empathy is one of the fundamental internal outcomes of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) especially important in the setting of internationalised universities (Arasatnam et al., 2010).

The adjective 'enriching' (11.76%, 6 of 51; e.g., Extract 21) was also found in the interviews with the staff from both universities. Describing international experiences as enriching implies that participants enjoyed these interactions and appreciate the opportunity their job positions provided. This also shows a high degree of respect for those from the 'out-group'; participants admitted there were differences, and they valued these differences positively.

The noun 'colleagues' (11.76%, 6 of 51; e.g., Extract 25) was used by the staff from both universities in the interviews as well to explain with whom participants shared their gifts, and to recognise their coworkers' efforts in daily work. Emphasising the important role of colleagues reveals participants' concern for the 'in-group' and their humility, which has been considered a predictor of intercultural competence (Paine et al., 2016).

The adjective ‘welcome’ (11.76%, 6 of 51; e.g., Extract 16) was mentioned by people from both universities to clarify how they wanted international visitors to feel when they arrived at their host universities. Helping those from the ‘out-group’ feel part of the ‘in-group’ is a characteristic of individuals guided by ‘universalism’ values. These participants aimed to protect all people, even unknown visitors; welcoming them was a way to express their desire to protect.

In the following section, the attitudes found second most often stemming from ‘stimulation’ values—‘curiosity and discovery’—are discussed.

6.3.2. Stimulation Values: Curiosity and Discovery Attitudes

As previously shown in Table 8, ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes were revealed in 22 utterances (UCM, 15%, 15 of 100; RUG, 14%, 7 out of 50). ‘Curiosity and discovery’ are hypothesised to be the resulting visible attitudes stemming from ‘stimulation’ values. In the following sections, the discursive constructions of ‘stimulation’ values are discussed, and the lexical choices shared by participants from both universities revealing ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes are presented.

6.3.2.1. Stimulation Values

As Berlyne (1960) states, people need variety and stimulation in their daily lives. This stimulation is essential to keep a positive level of activation, which affects not only productivity at work but also emotional well-being (Cignacco, 2019). Those guided by stimulation values consider challenges as excitement that makes life more interesting. Table 28 shows an extract from the codebook (Appendix F).

Table 28

Extract from the Codebook—Stimulation

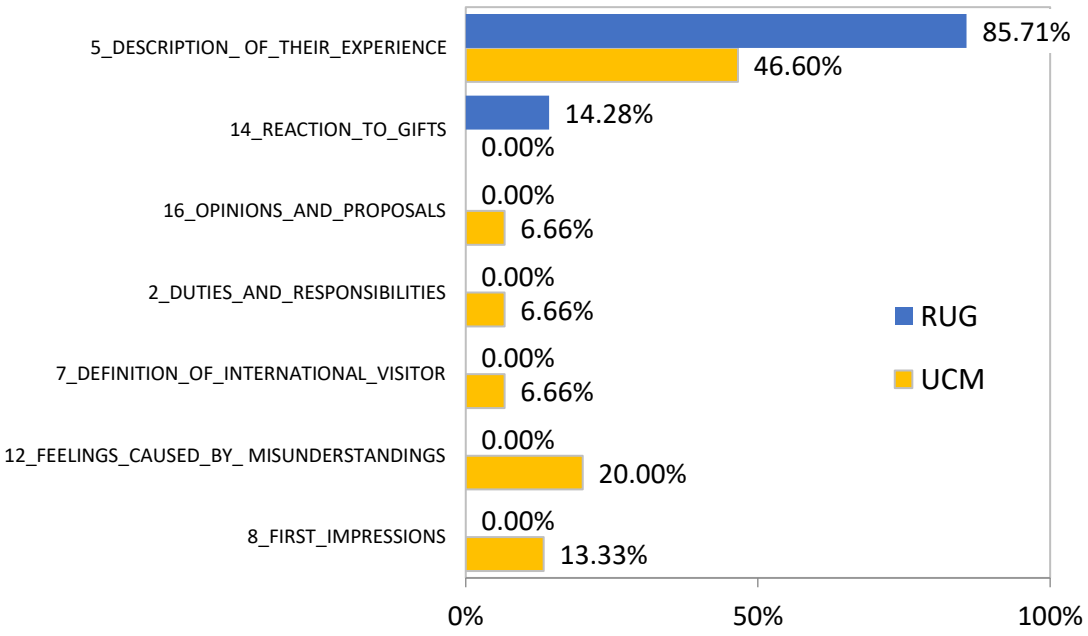
Value Code	Description
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life

6.3.2.1.1. Stimulation Value Code According to Information Codes

Figure 52 shows the distribution of 'stimulation' values among participants' answers classified into their corresponding information codes.

Figure 52

Information codes—Stimulation Values



Note. UCM, *n* = 15; RUG, *n* = 7.

As Figure 52 illustrates, most of the 'stimulation' values were revealed when participants described their own experiences working in international universities (UCM, 46.60%, 7 of 15; RUG, 85.71%, 6 of 7). Extracts 28 and 29 in Table 29 exemplify 'stimulation' values in this information code.

Table 29

Extract—Description of Their Experience

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
5_DESCRIPTION_ OF_THEIR_ EXPERIENCE	UCM Extract 28: *Me resulta más **entretenido** tratar con los que vienen de otros países* [I find it more **entertaining** to deal with those who come from other countries] RUG Extract 29: Being exposed to **cultural differences** while working in my, in my home country, it's basically given me an **opportunity** to **travel** the world without traveling.

The UCM participant who provided Extract 28 acknowledged, as other participants did, that they were more interested in relating to students and staff who came from abroad than to those from their home country. The main reason seemed to be the novelty of meeting someone from a different cultural background who understood the world from a diverse perspective. Even though this could imply a challenge in some contexts—for example, regarding bureaucratic matters—they were able to perceive the positive benefits of novelty (Kashdan & Silvia, 2009).

Along this line, the RUG participant who mentioned Extract 29 highly valued their job in an internationalisation unit. For this person, interacting with people from different parts of the world and from diverse cultural backgrounds was like travelling from the office. Therefore, these intercultural interactions that internationalisation provided to them worked as a stimulus.

The value code of 'stimulation' appeared in some of the information codes of the interviews with UCM staff but did not appear in the interviews with RUG staff and vice versa. These codes are discussed next in different sections for each university.

6.3.2.1.1.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

The next information code in which UCM participants' utterances revealed 'stimulation' values occurred when they explained the feelings that intercultural misunderstandings caused (20%, 3 of 15). Table 30 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 30

Extract—Feelings Caused by Misunderstandings

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
12_FEELINGS_ CAUSED_BY_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS	UCM Extract 30: *yo pedí que por favor me dejasen ir a la oficina de Relaciones Internacionales, a mí* ***es lo que me hace que me guste el trabajo más que otra cosa***. [I asked to please let me go to the International Relations office, it is **what makes me like the job more than anything else**.]

The participant who mentioned Extract 30 acknowledged the incentive that working in internationalisation meant to them. Even though they reported having more responsibilities and lower salaries than they had received in other offices, they said it was worthwhile because there they had the opportunity to meet people from other cultures, which motivated them to break their routine, even if misunderstandings occurred. Thus, the unpredictability in these internationalisation units seemed to be the stimulus for this participant.

When UCM participants were asked how they recognised an international visitor when they entered the office, 13.33% (2 of 15) of the utterances revealed 'stimulation' values. Table 31 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 31

Extract—First Impressions

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
8_FIRST_ IMPRESSIONS	UCM Extract 31: *una sensación, lo que te decía antes, de que no importa salir de la* ***zona de confort*** *y buscar cosas* ***nuevas****, indagar en cosas* ***nuevas****, proyectos* ***nuevos*** *que, generalmente te cuesta un esfuerzo.* [a feeling, what I was telling you before, that it doesn't matter if you come out of your **comfort zone** and look for **new** things, investigate **new** things, **new** projects, which generally requires effort.]

The participant who provided Extract 31 agreed with their colleagues about the effort that working in these offices might require. Nevertheless, they were willing to leave their comfort zone. They had the chance to explore, something that in their view could not be done in other administrative positions.

When UCM participants expressed their opinions and proposal to improve their role in the internationalisation of higher education, 6.66% (1 of 15) of the utterances revealed 'stimulation' values. Table 32 shows an extract for this information code.

Table 32

Extract—Opinions and Proposals

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
16_OPINIONS_ AND_ PROPOSALS	UCM Extract 32: [[*Trabajar en internacionalización*] *es* ***entretenido*** *y gratificante y* ***divertido***. [[Working in internationalisation] is **entertaining** and gratifying and **fun**.]

Extract 32 includes the adjective '*entretenido*' (entertained) and the adjective '*divertido*' (fun) to express participants' opinions about internationalisation. Finding entertainment rather than boredom in daily routines is the objective of people guided by

'stimulation' values. For this reason, those characterised by these values tend to see intercultural dissonances from an optimistic perspective, and to interpret them as amusing anecdotes from which they can learn (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000).

The next information code in which 'stimulation' values were found was when UCM participants defined 'international visitor' (6.66%, 1 of 15). Table 33 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 33

Extract—Definitions of International Visitor

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
7_DEFINITION_ OF_ INTERNATIONAL_ VISITOR	UCM Extract 33: *Pues con una **nueva** experiencia.* [So, with a **new** experience.]

As Extract 33 illustrates, having the opportunity to meet people from all around the world motivated these individuals to participate actively in the internationalisation process.

The next information code in which 'stimulation' values was found occurred when they narrated their duties and responsibilities (6.66%, 1 of 15). Table 34 shows an extract for this information code.

Table 34

Extract—Duties and Responsibilities

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
2_DUTIES_ AND_ RESPONSIBILITIES	UCM Extract 34: *lo bueno es que es muy **dinámico**, nos obliga a estar siempre muy **abiertos a cosas nuevas**.* [the good thing is that it is very **dynamic**, it forces us to always be very **open to new things.]**

In a similar vein, Extract 34 demonstrates that internationalisation served as a motivation for staff who were guided by ‘stimulation’ values. Interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds was reported as one of the most positive parts of their job positions because these interactions made their daily routines more dynamic.

The ‘stimulation’ value was found in one of the answers provided by one RUG participant to a specific question that was not found in UCM participants’ answers. This information code is discussed next.

6.3.2.1.1.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

The last information code in which ‘stimulation’ values appeared was when RUG participants explained how they reacted to gifts from international students (14.28%, 1 of 7). Table 35 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 35

Extract—Reaction to Gifts

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
14_REACTION_ TO_GIFTS	RUG Extract 35: kind of **excited** when people bring stuff

As Extract 35 illustrates, this participant reported feeling excited when people brought gifts. Other adjectives such as ‘grateful’ and ‘pleased’ were found in this information code. However, acknowledging a feeling of excitement implies an extra motivation that worked as a stimulus.

6.3.2.1.2. Stimulation Values and Internationalisation

As illustrated through these extracts, the administrative staff members who held ‘stimulation’ values considered helping and interacting with individuals from other cultures a positive challenge that made life more thrilling. Working with foreign people helped to break

the routine and made every day more interesting. Further, they perceived international visitors as sources of knowledge from which they could learn.

As mentioned, the resulting attitudes of ‘stimulation’ values are ‘curiosity and discovery’. For this reason, the next section is devoted to exploring the lexical patterns revealing ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes in the interviews with UCM and RUG participants.

6.3.2.2. Curiosity and Discovery Attitudes

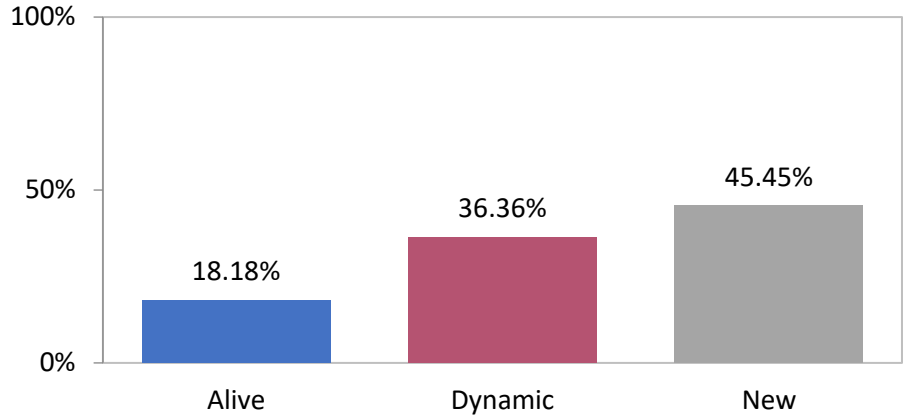
After analysing the interviews with the administrative and support staff from UCM and RUG, 15% (15 of 100) of the utterances from UCM and 14% (7 of 50) of those from RUG were found to reveal ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes, as previously shown in Table 8. These attitudes involve participants’ willingness to learn from other cultures. Without interest in what and who is different, intercultural competence will hardly develop (Deardorff, 2006). For this reason, ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes are crucial for those working in internationalised universities. The lexical words that were used in common by the participants from both universities are presented and discussed in the following section.

6.3.2.2.1. Lexical Patterns Revealing Curiosity and Discovery Attitudes

In total, 11 lexical words revealing ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes were found used in common by the staff from both universities in the interviews. Figure 53 illustrates this finding.

Figure 53

Lexical Patterns—Curiosity and Discovery Attitudes



Note. *N* = 11.

The adjective ‘new’ was the most frequently found word revealing ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes (45.45%, 5 of 11). One of the objectives of individuals who follow ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes is to find novelty in daily life (Roccas, 2002). Therefore, encountering others’ experiences would successfully fulfil this aim. People who need novelty consider intercultural interactions an advantage because such interactions imply the acquisition of new knowledge and, therefore, a stimulus for their brains (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003).

The adjective ‘dynamic’ (36.36%, 4 of 11), used to describe participants’ daily routines and personal experiences, was found among the interviews with the staff from both universities revealing ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes. Describing a job as dynamic means that it does not stop. In fact, one of the participants used this adjective followed by the adjective ‘*extenuante*’ (‘strenuous’), which supports this hypothesis. Dynamic job positions are perfect for those guided by ‘stimulation’ values because they do not have time to get bored (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003).

Along this line, the adjective ‘alive’ (18.18%, 2 of 11) was repeated among the staff from both universities during the interviews. Participants used this adjective to describe how

interacting every day with new people from different parts of the world made them feel. Individuals who need adventure and challenge in their routines need dynamic activities to feel alive and motivated (Houston & Mednick, 1963).

In the following section, the discursive constructions revealing 'self-direction' values, from which 'openness' attitudes emerge, are discussed.

6.3.3. Self-Direction Values: Openness Attitudes

As shown in Table 8, 'openness' attitudes were revealed in 18 utterances (UCM, 9%, 9 of 100; RUG, 18%, 9 of 50). 'Openness' is hypothesised to be the resulting visible attitude stemming from 'self-direction' values. In the following sections, the discursive constructions of 'self-direction' values are discussed, and the lexical words reported by participants from both universities revealing 'openness' attitudes are presented.

6.3.3.1. Self-Direction Values

'Self-direction' values imply independent thought and action, and for this reason, represent the hallmarks of curious, creative, and intelligent minds free to choose their own goals (Schwartz, 1992). Table 36 shows an extract from the codebook (Appendix F).

Table 36

Extract from the Codebook—Self-Direction

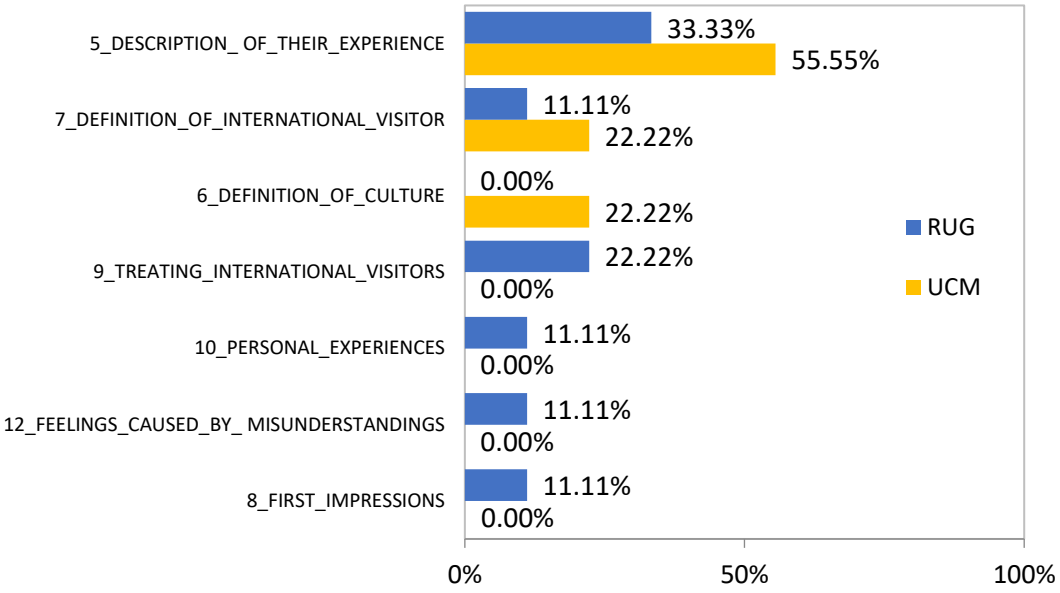
Value Code	Description
Self-Direction	Independent thought and action-choosing

6.3.3.1.1. Self-Direction Value Code According to Information Codes

Figure 54 shows the frequency of 'self-direction' values according to each information code in which this value was found.

Figure 54

Information Codes—Self-Direction Values



Note. UCM, *n* = 9; RUG, *n* = 9.

As Figure 54 illustrates, most of the ‘self-direction’ values were revealed when participants described their own experiences working in international universities (UCM, 55.55%, 5 of 9; RUG, 33.33%, 3 of 9). Table 37 provides two extracts for the information code related to description of their experience for UCM and RUG participants.

Table 37

Extract—Description of Their Experience

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
5_DESCRIPTION_ OF_THEIR_ EXPERIENCE	UCM Extract 36: *Para mí, personalmente, me resulta bastante* ***interesante***. [For me, personally, I find it quite **interesting**.] RUG Extract 37: For me, it's very **interesting**, actually

As Extracts 36 and 37 illustrate, participants from both institutions found working in internationalisation 'interesting'. Their job positions gave them the chance to establish social relationships with people from different countries and learn from them. Further, interest is the core intrinsic motivation for learning (Silvia & Sanders, 2010).

The second information code in which most of the 'self-direction' values were found was seen when participants were asked to define 'international visitor' (UCM, 22.22%, 2 of 9; RUG, 11.11%, 1 of 9). Table 38 provides two extracts for the information code related to definition of international visitor for UCM participants.

Table 38

Extracts—Definition of International Visitor

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
7_DEFINITION_OF_ INTERNATIONAL_ VISITOR	UCM Extract 38: [*Yo relaciono visitante internacional*] *con* ***aprendizaje****, sobre todo, con* ***intercambio*** *diría, no por* ***intercambio*** *de movilidad, sino* ***intercambio*** *de* ***experiencias*** *y de* ***conocimientos.*** [[I relate international visitor] with **learning**, above all, with **exchange**, I would say, not by **exchange** in terms of mobility, but **exchange** of **experiences** and **knowledge**.] RUG Extract 39: **New** knowledge.

The participants who provided Extracts 38 and 39 acknowledged that international visitors were sources of knowledge. In an intercultural interaction, interactants from both cultures could learn from each other, and these participants perceived these opportunities as an advantage of their job positions.

The value code of 'self-direction' appeared in some information codes of the interviews with UCM staff that did not in the interviews with RUG staff and vice versa. These codes are discussed next in different sections for each university.

6.3.3.1.1.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

'Self-direction' values were found when UCM participants were asked to say the first words that came to their minds when they heard the word 'culture' (22.22%, 2 of 9). Table 39 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 39

Extract—Definition of Culture

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
6_DEFINITION_ OF_CULTURE	UCM Extract 40: *Aprendizaje.* [Learning.]

As seen in Extracts 38 and 39, the participant who answered Extract 40 directly related 'culture' with 'learning'. Those guided by 'self-direction' are generally characterised by their curious minds (Schwartz, 1992).

6.3.3.1.1.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

When participants from RUG were asked about how they treated international visitors, 'self-direction' values were found (22.22%, 2 of 9). Table 40 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 40

Extract—Treating International Visitors

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
9_TREATING_ INTERNATIONAL_ VISITORS	RUG Extract 41: If I know someone is **from abroad**, I think I'm more **interested**, like: 'okay, where are you coming from? What are you doing here? For how long are you here? Do you like it or not?' Something like that.

Those guided by 'self-direction' values may ask questions freely without considering social conventions to satisfy their own curiosity. Extract 41 indicates that, as Extract 28 did, participants were more interested in those who came from abroad. Further, participants from both universities acknowledged they asked international visitors questions that were more personal than the questions they asked students and staff from their home university, with

whom interactions took place mainly for administrative purposes. These conversations with people from other cultures made participants' routines more interesting. Further, these questions might have been perceived as participants' concern for international students, leading to a desire to help them feel more welcome in the target country.

In addition, 'self-direction' values emerged when RUG participants were asked how they recognised international visitors (11.11%, 1 of 9). Table 41 shows an extract for this information code.

Table 41

Extract—First Impressions

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
8_FIRST_ IMPRESSIONS	RUG Extract 42: By talking to them and **asking questions**, that's when you **learn** where someone's located, what **experiences** they have…

The participant who supplied Extract 42 reported not trusting first impressions; instead, they asked questions to find out about the international visitor and to satisfy their own curiosity. Moreover, this participant might have wanted to avoid stereotypes and baseless generalisations.

When RUG participants narrated their personal intercultural experiences, 'self-direction' values were found (11.11%, 1 of 9). Table 42 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 42

Extract—Personal Experiences

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
10_PERSONAL_ EXPERIENCES	RUG Extract 43: I find it very **interesting**

Similar to the UCM participant (Extract 40), the participant who reported Extract 43 defined intercultural experiences as 'interesting'. Even if misunderstandings occurred, they were perceived positively by individuals guided by 'self-direction' values, because such misunderstandings could be sources of learning. Dissonances with other cultures were challenges they felt motivated to overcome.

'Self-direction' values were also found when participants explained the feelings that these intercultural misunderstandings caused for them (11.11%, 1 of 9). Table 43 provides an extract for this information code.

Table 43

Extract—Feelings Caused by Misunderstandings

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
12_FEELINGS_ CAUSED_BY_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS	RUG Extract 44: [Intercultural dissonances] are part of my **learning** path, but also part of other people's **learning** paths.

Extract 44 conveys a high degree of understanding and tolerance towards intercultural misunderstandings. Even though relating to people from different cultural backgrounds could provoke uncomfortable situations, it was part of the path towards developing intercultural

competence. As suggested by Mendenhall et al. (2012), learning from failures and setbacks enhances emotional resilience and helps improve intercultural competence.

6.3.3.1.2. Self-Direction Values and Internationalisation

The analysis of the interviews shows that participants guided by 'self-direction' values reported being interested in international visitors' cultures, languages, countries, and problems. In fact, they acknowledged being more interested in interacting with international visitors than they were with those from their home university, because they learned from the visitors' experiences and different life perspectives.

People who hold 'self-direction' values seem to interpret internationalisation as an opportunity to explore new perspectives and learn from them. The independent nature of these individuals frees them from any national or social identity, and therefore, they are open to observing new and different situations from a more objective viewpoint. In short, such people may not be influenced by stereotypes or prejudices because they want to explore and learn everything themselves and develop their own opinions. Therefore, self-directed people highly appreciate the benefits of internationalisation.

6.3.3.2. Openness Attitudes

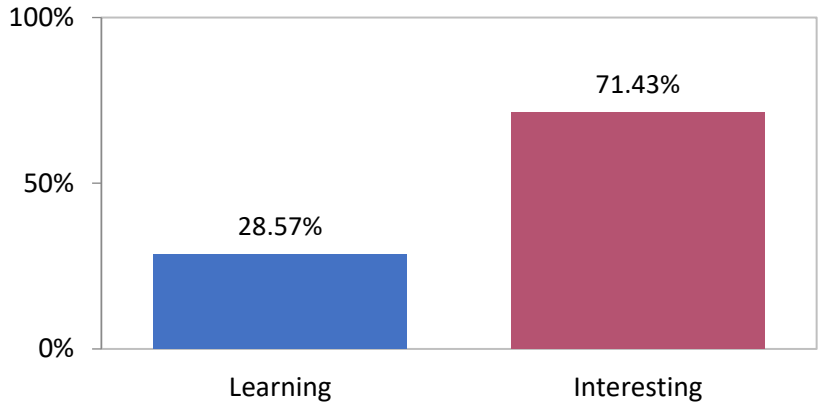
'Openness', the requisite attitude that allows new knowledge to evolve into awareness of the self and of other cultures, emerged in 9 (9%, 9 of 100) utterances from UCM staff and 9 (18%, 9 of 50) from RUG staff. As mentioned, the underlying value of 'openness' attitudes is hypothesised to be 'self-direction'.

6.3.3.2.1. Lexical Patterns Revealing Openness Attitudes

Among participants from both universities, 2 lexical words revealing 'openness' attitudes were reported in common during the interviews. These words were mentioned 14 times. Figure 55 shows the frequency of these lexical words.

Figure 55

Lexical Patterns—Openness Attitudes



Note. *N* = 14.

As illustrated by Figure 55, the most often repeated word revealing ‘openness’ attitudes among the participants of both universities during the interviews was the adjective ‘interesting’ (71.42%, 10 of 14). Participants used this adjective to describe their jobs and their intercultural experiences. The quality of interest is the main feature that people guided by ‘self-direction’ values search for in their activities (Ros et al., 1999). These individuals usually perceive and enjoy facts and information that others guided by other kinds of values would not find appealing (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003).

The noun ‘learning’ (28.57%, 4 of 14) was the second most frequently found lexical word revealing ‘openness’ attitudes. Participants who emphasised learning as the most positive aspect of their job positions revealed curious minds stimulated by the knowledge received from intercultural interactions. This knowledge may work as an intrinsic motivation, key to develop intercultural competence (Dong et al., 2018), and to participate actively in the internationalisation process. Further, the fact that participants perceived international visitors and intercultural dissonances as sources of knowledge revealed their willingness to obtain

culture-specific knowledge, which is critical for the efficient development of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

In the following section, the utterances that revealed ‘security’ values and their resulting ‘stability’ attitudes during the interviews are discussed.

6.3.4. Security Values: Stability Attitudes

As shown in Table 8, ‘stability’ attitudes were revealed by 4 utterances (RUG, 8%, 4 of 50). ‘Stability’ is hypothesised to be the resulting visible attitude stemming from ‘security’, ‘conformity’, and ‘tradition’ values. However, only ‘security’ values were found during the interviews and only among participants from RUG. In the following sections, the discursive constructions of ‘security’ values are discussed, and the lexical words that characterised ‘stability’ attitudes are presented.

6.3.4.1. Security Values

‘Security’ values involve a need for feeling safe in all aspects of life (Schwartz, 1992, 2012). Interestingly, security values appeared among RUG participants but not among UCM participants. These values appeared in 4 (8%, 4 of 50) utterances. Because there were no common lexical words, in this section, 3 utterances exemplifying this value are discussed in their context (information code) together with their illustrating lexical words in bold. Table 44 shows an extract from the codebook (Appendix F).

Table 44

Extract from the Codebook—Security

Value Code	Description
Security	Safety and harmony in terms of one’s society, relationships, and self

6.3.4.1.1. Security Value Code according to Information Codes

All the utterances revealing security values were found in the information code in which participants described the feelings caused by the intercultural misunderstandings they had experienced.

6.3.4.1.1.1. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

As mentioned, security values were found only among participants from RUG. Extracts 45, 46, and 47 exemplify this value code (Table 45).

Table 45

Extracts—Feelings Caused by Misunderstandings

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
12_FEELINGS_ CAUSED_BY_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS	RUG Extract 45: Sometimes I get a bit **frustrated**. RUG Extract 46: and it can be a little bit like… **annoying** RUG Extract 47: I do feel **exhausted**, like it's not all positive.

The participant who mentioned Extract 45 admitted feeling frustrated when misunderstandings took place. RUG participants used this adjective twice. Using the adjective 'frustrated' to describe how they felt when intercultural dissonances took place is a characteristic of those guided by 'security' values. Such people are likely to feel easily frustrated when disagreements occur with another person or a group of people (Schwartz, 2005; Williams, 1968) Individuals who hold security values tend to magnify situations that can affect their feeling of safety, even if these situations could be solved without difficulty. When people feel frustrated in a situation, it means there is a problem that cannot be solved, and they are not

comfortable with that (Andalib et al., 2013). One of the causes of frustration can be that their security or the security of the people from their group feels threatened. Feeling frustrated when an intercultural dissonance takes place can hinder ways to find solutions (Kampermann et al., 2021).

The adjective ‘annoying’ (Extract 46) was used by one participant to describe intercultural experiences to indicate they may have felt their stability was threatened, and this caused annoyance. Dissonances broke the flow of a conversation, and thus, may have produced certain uncertainty. Those guided by ‘security’ values prefer life to be stable, without clashes of any kind.

The adjective ‘exhausted’ (Extract 47) was used to describe intercultural experiences, implying that dissonances caused more than just confusion—participants metaphorically related dissonances to physical states.

Uncertainty avoidance seems to play a key role in these results. Uncertainty avoidance is a concept in cross-cultural psychology that describes how cultures differ in their tolerance for unpredictability, concerned with a society’s tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty (Ratner & Hui, 2003). Uncertainty avoidance reflects how much a society has conditioned its members to feel uncomfortable or at ease in unstructured situations (Hofstede, 2011). Unstructured situations are novel, unfamiliar, startling, and out of the ordinary, as intercultural interactions may be.

According to Hofstede’s (2011) cultural dimensions, the Netherlands scores 53 on the uncertainty avoidance dimension, therefore exhibiting a slight preference for avoiding uncertainty. Nevertheless, Spain scores 83 on the uncertainty avoidance dimension. Thus, ‘security’ values were expected to appear in the interviews with the staff from both universities. However, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Hofstede’s culture-level research was conducted in different countries to create general profiles on countries and not necessarily on individuals.

It should be noted that the different job positions among participants might have played a role in this dimension as well. All interviewees from UCM were civil servants, implying they had permanent and stable positions at the university. This fact could have decreased their level of uncertainty avoidance and thus their 'security' values in this specific context. Because termination was less likely to happen, they may have felt safer in these intercultural situations and thus performed efficiently.

Therefore, behaviour is determined by dispositional or situational factors (Triandis & Suh, 2002, p. 154), represented in this specific context by participants' type of contract. However, the fact that the participants from the Spanish institutions were civil servants could be a reflection of how the Spanish public system works. Consequently, findings would be in agreement with Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions—these kinds of contracts provide security to citizens and thus enhance uncertainty avoidance.

Alternatively, these findings could be explained by idiocentrism and allocentrism (Triandis & Suh, 2002). Because a person with a more idiocentric personality could perceive misunderstandings with people from other cultures as a personal attack that threatens their professional reputation. In contrast, allocentric people would see the intercultural misunderstanding as a problem of the group, in this case, of the institution as a whole. Thus, for them, these experiences would not cause feelings of frustration, and therefore their security values would not be constructed discursively because they would not feel threatened.

6.3.4.1.3. Security Values and Internationalisation

For participants guided by 'security' values, cultural and linguistic clashes may result in distressing situations or misinterpretations attributable to a lack of self-security. Internationalisation might therefore be perceived as a challenge that may cause frustration but may also motivate an interest in learning from other cultures to feel safer when relating with internationals.

As mentioned, the resulting attitude of those guided by ‘security’, ‘conformity’, and ‘tradition’ values is hypothesised to be ‘stability’. However, only ‘security’ values were revealed in the interviews.

6.3.4.2. Stability Attitudes

‘Stability’ attitudes manifest in people who do not want anything to change. Individuals who hold this attitude highly value their mental, personal, and economic stability. For this reason, these people are more affected by conflicts, because their stability may be threatened. As mentioned, this PhD thesis hypothesises that the values underlying ‘stability’ attitudes are ‘security’, ‘conformity’, and ‘tradition’. However, among the participants, only ‘security’ values were revealed. Further, no common lexical words emerged—this value only appeared among RUG participants.

6.3.5. Achievement Values: Success Attitudes

As previously shown in Table 8, ‘success’ attitudes were revealed in 2 utterances (UCM, 2%, 2 of 100). ‘Success’ is hypothesised to be the resulting visible attitude stemming from ‘achievement’, ‘power’, and ‘hedonism’ values. However, only ‘achievement’ values were found in the interviews in the interviews with UCM staff. In the following sections, the discursive constructions of ‘achievement’ values are discussed, and the lexical words revealing ‘success’ attitudes are presented.

6.3.5.1. Achievement Values

As previously illustrated in Table 8, ‘success’ attitudes were found among UCM participants but not among RUG participants. These attitudes appeared in 2 (UCM, 2%, 2 of 100) utterances. The ‘achievement’ value is defined as the pursuit of personal success through demonstrating competences according to social standards (Schwartz, 1992, 2012). Table 46 provides an extract from the codebook (Appendix F).

Table 46

Extract from the Codebook—Achievement

Value Code	Description
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competences according to social standards

6.3.5.1.1. Achievement Value Code according to Information Codes

As mentioned, 'achievement' values were found only among participants from UCM. Because there were no common lexical words, these 2 utterances are discussed in their contexts (information codes) together with their illustrating lexical words in bold.

6.3.5.1.1.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Out of the 2 UCM utterances, 1 (1%, 1 of 100) was reported when the participant described what they felt when intercultural misunderstandings occurred. Table 47 provides Extract 48, which illustrates this value in its corresponding information code.

Table 47

Extract—Feelings Caused by Misunderstandings

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
12_FEELINGS_ CAUSED_ BY_ MISUNDER-STANDINGS	UCM Extract 48: *Pues me da **rabia**, porque nosotros queremos dejar una buena **imagen*** [Well, it makes me **angry**, because we want to leave a good **image**]

The participant who mentioned Extract 48, used the noun 'anger' to describe the feelings caused by the intercultural dissonances because of the importance of the public image of the office in which the individual worked. Therefore, there was a need for social approval, and the lack of it caused negative feelings such as anger.

Further, participants may have felt their social image—in other words, their positive face[39] (Brown & Levinson, 1987)—was threatened. In the refined theory of basic human values, Schwartz (2017) suggests 'face' should have its own dimension, because preserving a public self-image is a crucial goal with a strong defensive connotation absent in the more proactive 'power' values. For this reason, it should be noted that because this participant used the word 'image', in the sense of 'public face', this utterance could be also labelled as revealing 'power' values. Nevertheless, this utterance was classified in the 'success' attitudes dimension, which also involves 'power' values.

In addition, 'achievement' values appeared when UCM participants explained their reactions to a nonverbal language misunderstanding. Table 48 shows an extract illustrating this situation.

Table 48

Extract—Reaction to Nonverbal Language Misunderstanding

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
15_REACTION_ TO_NONVERBAL_ LANGUAGE_ MISUNDERSTANDING	UCM Extract 49: *intentaría **resolverlo** porque puede irse con una **mala experiencia** y comentárselo a otras personas o incluso el **conflicto** puede **escalarse**.* [I would try to **solve** it because they can leave with a **bad experience** and tell other people about it or the **conflict** can even **escalate**.]

The person who provided Extract 49 showed concern for what other people thought; that is, they were considering their positive face. Further, the use of the noun 'conflict' to define intercultural dissonances was relevant. A conflict is a situation in which at least two parties are involved and disagree on something (Bex-Priestley & Shemmer, 2017). Those who define their

[39] According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 67) 'positive face' refers to the desire to be accepted and positively approved of by at least a part of the members of the society, while 'negative face' is defined as the ambition to be free to act and not be interrupted or impeded by anyone.

experiences as conflicts imply that one of the individuals is right and another is wrong. Thus, there is an intention to pursue personal success according to social standards of the culture in which the dissonances occurs. Finally, the verb 'to solve' is noteworthy. The use of this word involves the existence of a problem caused by the misunderstandings with people from other cultures. This problem arose because of what other people may have thought. Thus, social recognition was important for this participant.

6.3.5.2. Achievement Values and Internationalisation

The administrative and support staff members who were guided by 'achievement' values perceived internationalisation as a personal and social goal that needed to be realised. Therefore, learning new languages and understanding other cultures, even from the point of view of the prevailing culture, might be perceived as a social norm that should be followed and respected in the globalised society of the 21st century, at least to enhance one's positive face.

As mentioned, the resulting attitude for those guided by 'achievement', 'power', and 'hedonism' values is 'success'. However, only 'achievement' values were revealed. This attitude is described in the next section.

6.3.5.3. Success Attitudes

'Success' attitudes imply the continuous search for positive results in one's activities. In other words, the individuals who have these attitudes guide their actions by the result they can obtain from them. For these people, internationalisation might be perceived as a strategy to achieve this success.

As mentioned, this attitude emerged only among UCM participants; thus, there were no common lexical words. In the following section, the distribution of attitudes according to participant's ages is discussed.

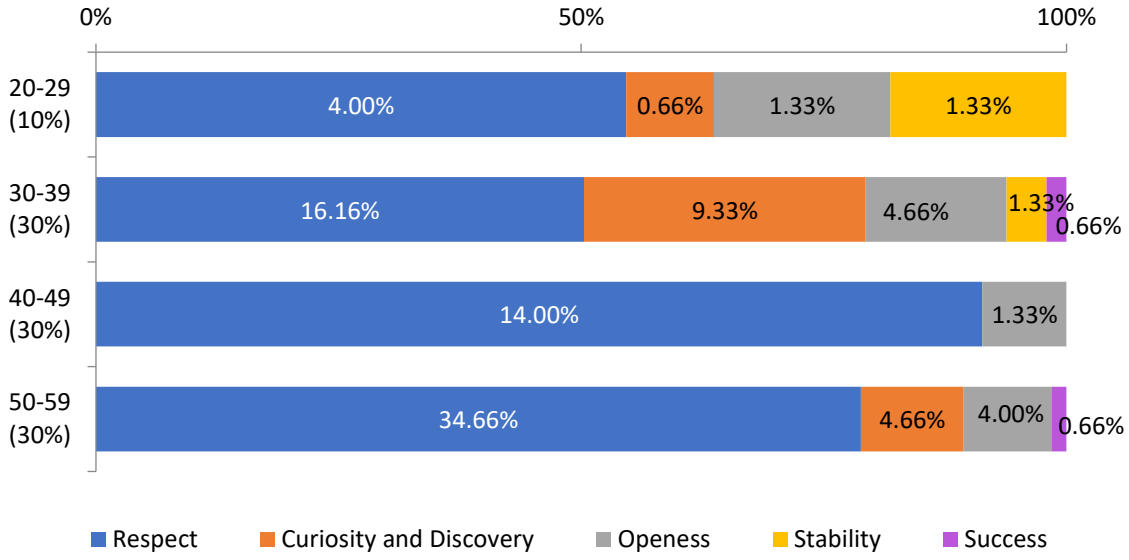
6.3.6. Distribution of Attitudes According to Age

As illustrated in Figure 56, most ‘respect’ attitudes (34.66%, 52 of 150) were found among the senior group of participants, aged between 50 and 59 years old, followed by those aged between 30 and 39 years old (16.16%, 25 of 150). Participants who were between 40 and 49 years old showed 14% (21 of 150) of ‘respect’ attitudes. Finally, the youngest group of participants, those between 20 and 29 years, showed 4% (6 of 150) of the utterances revealing ‘respect’ attitudes.

Regarding ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes, most of them (9.33%, 14 of 150) appeared among people aged from 30 to 39 years old, followed by the senior group (50–59; 4.66%, 7 of 150). Those aged between 20 and 29 years old revealed just 0.66% (1 of 150) of ‘curiosity and discovery’ attitudes, while those aged between 40 and 49 and did not show these attitudes. ‘Openness’ attitudes appeared mostly among those aged between 30 and 39 years old (4.66%, 7 of 150), followed by 50 to 59 (4%, 6 of 150), and the remaining age groups (20–29 and 40–49) revealed exactly the same percentage of these attitudes (1.33%, 2 of 150). ‘Stability’ attitudes appeared only among those aged 30 to 39 and 20 to 29 (1.33% each age group, 2 of 150). Finally, ‘success’ attitudes were slightly visible among those aged between 50 and 59 and between 30 and 39 years old (0.66% for each age group, 1 of 150). These findings are illustrated in Figure 56.

Figure 56

Distribution of Attitudes by Age



Note. $N = 150$.

Results seem to agree partially with Schwartz's (1992) results. In this research, the senior group of participants felt more identified with 'self-transcendence' values ('respect' attitudes), which included 'benevolence' and 'universalism' values. Nevertheless, according to Schwartz (1992), the youngest individuals tend to align with 'self-enhancement' values such as 'power' and 'achievement'. However, in this study, 'power' values did not appear, and 'achievement' values emerged primarily in the senior group (50–59) and among those aged between 30 and 39 years old.

Schwartz's (1992, 2012) findings show that older individuals feel more identified with 'conservation' values such as 'tradition', 'conformity', and 'security'. Nevertheless, in this research, 'security' values emerged in the data, but they did not appear among the senior group but only among the youngest. Further, Schwartz's (1992) investigation hypothesises that younger individuals are often more open to change, feeling more identified with 'self-direction', 'stimulation', and 'hedonism' values (Feather, 1975; Rokeach, 1973; Taylor &

Keeter, 2010). However, in this data set, only ‘stimulation’ values appeared, and most of them were present among participants aged between 30 and 39 and 50 and 59 years old, not among the youngest.

The limited sample size aside, it is possible participants’ positions in the internationalisation units played a key role in these results. The senior participants had been interacting with people from other cultures for a long time, an advantage that people in other job positions might not have enjoyed. These intercultural experiences might have opened senior participants’ minds and provoked an increased interest to learn and leave their comfort zones. This idea is supported by findings obtained from the questionnaires.

6.4. Overview of Results and Discussion on Knowledge, Comprehension, and Skills

During the data-driven analysis of the language used in the interviews, three themes emerged: cultural self-awareness, deep cultural knowledge, and sociolinguistic awareness. The three themes belong to the knowledge and comprehension dimension in Deardorff’s (2006) process model of intercultural competence. According to this model and to numerous theories and frameworks of intercultural competence (e.g., Hammer et al., 2012; Barrett, 2018; Byram, 1997, 200; Fantini, 2020; Portera et al., 2020), self-awareness is a major and crucial component in the conceptualisation of intercultural competence. Cultural self-awareness implies being conscious of how one’s culture influences one’s identity, behaviours, values, and perspectives (Deardorff, 2006). Deep knowledge of other cultures and comprehension of their influence on people’s values, behaviours, and actions are also key elements for the successful development of intercultural competence. Further, participants’ answers to the interview questions revealed their sociolinguistic awareness, which is crucial to use verbal and nonverbal language appropriately when interacting with other cultures.

Intercultural skills are included in this section with knowledge and comprehension because they are considered indivisible when using these specific data-collection tools.

Participants were not asked specifically about their knowledge and comprehension of their own and other cultures in the questionnaires nor in the interviews. Therefore, the only way to examine if they had acquired the necessary intercultural knowledge and comprehension was through description of their behaviours, in other words, through the application of their intercultural skills.

Table 49 provides a summary of the themes coded from the interview text, discussed in the following paragraphs, organised by university.

Table 49

Summary of Knowledge, Comprehension, and Skills

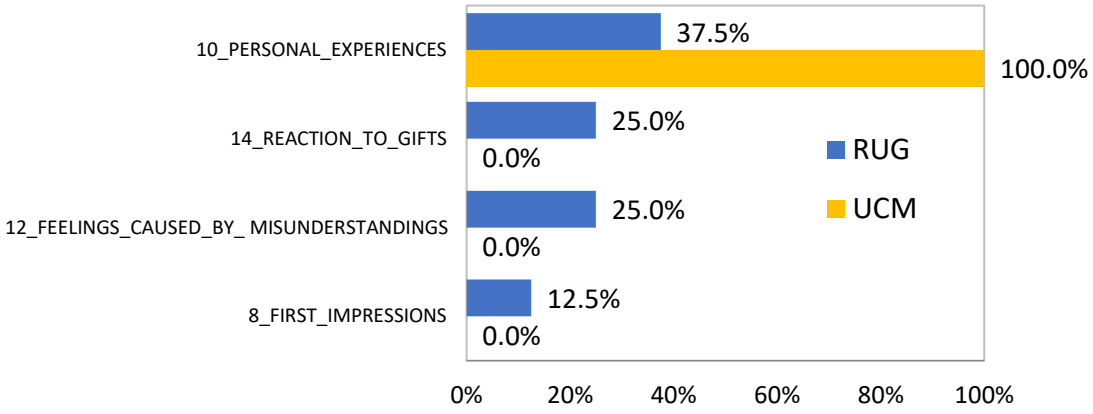
	Cultural Self-Awareness	Deep Cultural Knowledge	Sociolinguistic Awareness	Total
UCM	2 (13.33%)	7 (46.66%)	6 (40.00%)	15 (100%)
RUG	8 (21.05%)	24 (63.15%)	6 (15.78%)	38 (100%)
TOTAL	10 (18.86%)	31 (58.49%)	12 (22.64%)	53 (100%)

6.4.1. Cultural Self-Awareness

Among the utterances revealing participants' intercultural knowledge and comprehension, 2 of 15 (13.33%) of the UCM staff responses conveyed cultural self-awareness; in comparison, 8 of 38 (21.05%) of those narrated by RUG staff did so. Figure 57 shows the distribution of utterances revealing cultural self-awareness according to the information code in which they appeared.

Figure 57

Information Codes—Cultural Self-Awareness



Note. UCM, *n* = 2; RUG, *n* = 8.

As illustrated in Figure 57, the only information code in which cultural self-awareness appeared among the staff from both universities was the information code of participants' personal experiences. In the case of UCM participants, the 2 utterances were in this information code (100%). In the case of RUG participants, most of the utterances appeared in this information code (37.5%, 3 of 8). Extracts 50 and 51 exemplify these codes, illustrated in Table 50.

Table 50

Extracts—Personal Experiences

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
10_PERSONAL_ EXPERIENCES	UCM Extract 50: *Y a lo mejor* ***nuestra manera de ser****, pues es de aproximarnos más o incluso de cara a esa persona o de agarrarle del brazo o algo, y eso puede crear en una persona de* ***una nacionalidad o una cultura diferente****, así, un poco de sorpresa.* [And maybe **our way of being**, well, it's about getting closer or even facing that person or grabbing their arm or something, and that can slightly shock a person from a **different nationality or culture**.] RUG Extract 51: I was very **Dutch**. Because I thought: 'Come on, just, you know, act normal', which is a very **Dutch** thing to do (…) So, that's a very **Dutch** response in that situation.

The UCM participant who mentioned Extract 50 showed awareness of not just how culture affected people but also of how cultural ways of being and acting may have affected others. These words show an ethnorelative attitude towards cultural habits—for instance, habits that could threaten the other's personal space. Similarly, the participant from RUG who mentioned Extract 51 reported being completely aware of how their culture affected their actions and behaviours in certain situations.

Cultural self-awareness appeared in some information codes of the interviews with RUG staff that did not appear in the interviews with UCM staff. These information codes are discussed next.

6.4.1.1. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Cultural self-awareness appeared in the interviews with RUG staff when they explained their feelings caused by dissonances (25%, 2 of 8; Extract 52), their reactions to gifts from

international students (25%, 2 of 8; Extract 53), and how they recognised international visitors (12.5%, 1 of 8; Extract 54). Table 51 shows extracts for these information codes.

Table 51

Extracts—Feelings Caused by Misunderstandings, First Impressions, Reaction to Gifts

Information Code	Examples from the Corpus
12_FEELINGS_ CAUSED_BY_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS	RUG Extract 52: my solution might be a very **Dutch** one, but I tried to take a step back if I feel confused about it.
14_REACTION_ TO_GIFTS	RUG Extract 53: it's my job to do that. I would also say, but that maybe has to do with, like, **Dutch cultural context** is that bringing me a box of chocolates does not mean that I will work more on their cases in the future.
8_FIRST_ IMPRESSIONS	RUG Extract 54: I think **Dutch culture** and **Dutch academic culture** is quite conformist.

As illustrated by Extracts 52, 53, and 54, these RUG participants reported being aware of their own culture and cultural habits when they analysed intercultural situations. This awareness might lead to ethnorelative perspectives of the problems; not taking anything for granted. Consequently, they would be able to propose solutions that included their interlocutor's culture and not just the dominant culture, and act according to it—that is, they would show cognitive and behavioural flexibility.

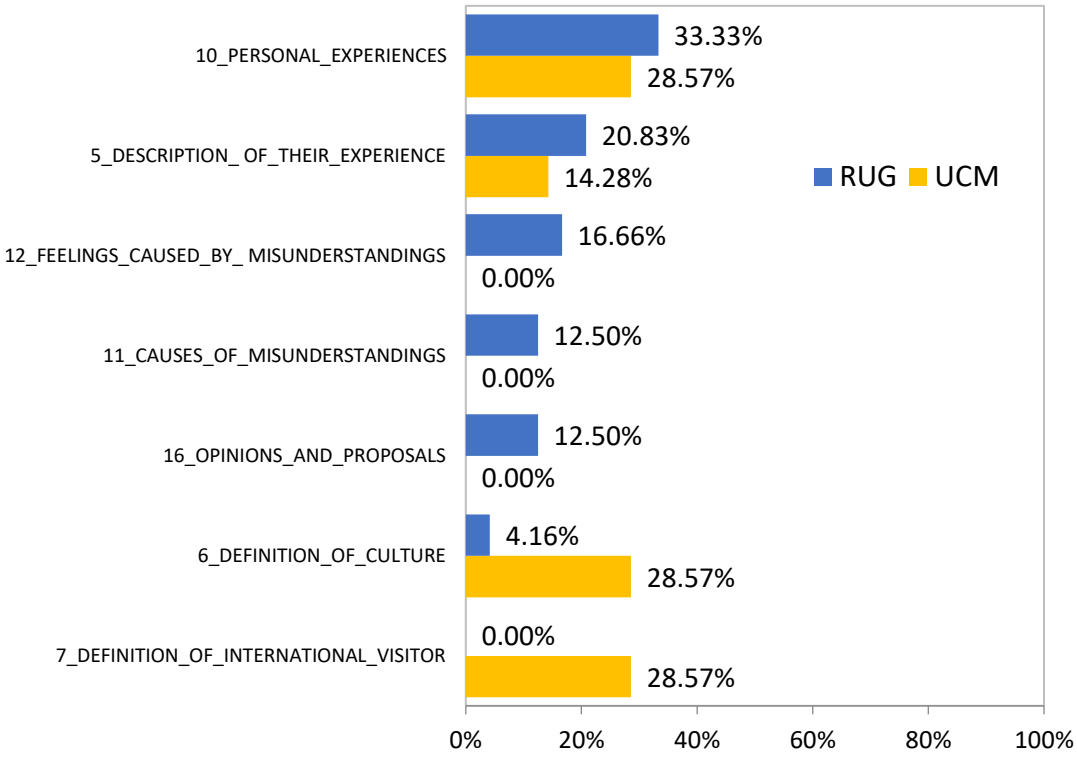
6.4.2. Deep Cultural Knowledge

Among the utterances revealing participants' intercultural knowledge and comprehension, 7 of 15 (46.66%) of UCM staff comments conveyed deep cultural knowledge; in contrast, 24 of 38 (63.15%) of those narrated by RUG staff did so. Figure 58 shows the

distribution of utterances revealing deep cultural knowledge according to the information code in which they appeared.

Figure 58

Information Codes—Deep Cultural Knowledge



Note. UCM, *n* = 7; RUG, *n* = 24.

As Figure 58 illustrates, most of utterances revealing deep cultural knowledge were found when participants narrated their personal experiences (UCM, 28.57%, 2 of 7; RUG, 33.33%, 8 of 24). Table 52 shows extracts for this information code.

Table 52

Extracts—Personal Experiences

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
10_PERSONAL_ EXPERIENCES	UCM Extract 55: *las **culturas** chocan y la forma de **relacionarnos**.* [**cultures** collide and the way we **interact**.] RUG Extract 56: that always makes me think again, like, are they meaning it? impolitely? Or is that my **perception**? Is it just **difference** in **cultures**? So, in **communication**, I think that's always the thing to do.

The UCM participant who mentioned Extract 55 did so after explaining dissonances they had suffered, showing awareness of cultural differences and the consequences they may provoke. Similarly, the RUG participant who mentioned Extract 56 reported knowledge about the different courtesy protocols among different cultures. This participant explained the process they went through when a dissonance occurred; they reflected on the prevailing cause of that dissonance instead of taking for granted that the interlocutor should act according to the culture in which the interaction was taking place.

The second information code common among the interviews for both universities in which deep cultural knowledge was revealed was when participants described their experiences working in internationalisation units (UCM, 14.28%, 1 of 7; RUG, 20.83%, 5 of 24). Extracts 57 and 58 exemplify these codes, shown in Table 53.

Table 53

Extracts—Description of Their Experience

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
5_DESCRIPTION_ OF_THEIR_ EXPERIENCE	UCM Extract 57: [*La internacionalización*] *a mí me ha cambiado mucho, porque cuando te mueves en ambientes internacionales es verdad que cambia tu* ***punto de vista****, que se aprende mucho de* ***interculturalidad****, se aprende mucho de* ***respeto***. [[Internationalisation] has changed me a lot, because when you move in international environments it is true that your **point of view** changes, that you learn a lot about **interculturality**, you learn a lot about **respect**.] RUG Extract 58: I think it has very much **shaped me** to who I am, and how I navigate difficult conversations, how I navigate **new contexts** and **building relationships**, **across cultures**, I think it's a very **enriching** experience can be quite **challenging**, you know, talking about **differences** and talking about cultural **diversity**, nationality, different **norms**, and **values**, of course, being in place. But, you know, when asking the right questions, you can also **learn from different perspectives**, so for me, it's a very **enriching** experience.

The UCM participant who provided Extract 57 seemed to reinforce the hypothesis formulated from the results of the questionnaires: working in internationalisation units served as implicit instruction on intercultural competence. The participant affirmed that working in international environments—in other words, relating with people from different cultures—helped develop the attitude of 'respect'. Thus, being in continuous contact with people from other cultures expanded people's understanding of the world, enhancing intercultural competence. Similarly, the RUG participant who mentioned Extract 58 reported appreciation for the opportunities that internationalisation brought to them, not just at a professional level but also in personal terms.

The last information code in which deep cultural knowledge was revealed occurred when participants said the first words that came to their minds when hearing the word 'culture'

(UCM, 28.57%, 2 of 7; RUG, 4.16%, 10 of 24). Table 54 shows extracts for this information code.

Table 54

Extracts—Definition of Culture

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
6_DEFINITION_ OF_CULTURE	UCM Extract 59: *en una **comunicación intercultural**, hay una serie de elementos que no solo están asociados a la lengua, sino también a esos **rasgos culturales** que implican también un determinado carácter, una determinada forma de hacer las cosas o de estar en el mundo, una **cosmovisión**.* [In **intercultural communication**, there are a series of elements that are not only associated with the language, but also with those **cultural traits** that also imply a certain character, a certain way of doing things or being in the world, a **worldview**.] RUG Extract 60: **Different** nationalities, **different** habits. People living in their own environment with different kinds of **views** of life and way of **communicating**.

During the interviews, the term 'intercultural communication' was not mentioned; however, the UCM participant who provided Extract 59 explained this term from their own perspective, relating culture with communication, thereby demonstrating awareness of the different worldviews among different cultures and of how they affected people's actions and behaviours. Along this line, the RUG participant who mentioned Extract 60 emphasised differences as one of the key characteristics of cultures, showing a high degree of ethnorelativism.

Deep cultural knowledge appeared in some information codes of the interviews with UCM staff that did not appear in the interviews with RUG staff and vice versa. These information codes are discussed next in different sections for each university.

6.4.2.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Deep cultural knowledge appeared in the interviews with UCM participants when they tried to define the term 'international visitor' (28.57%, 2 of 7). Table 55 shows an extract for this information code.

Table 55

Extract—Definition of International Visitor

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
7_DEFINITION_ OF_INTERNATIONAL_ VISITOR	UCM Extract 61: [*Con los visitantes internacionales*] *hay un* ***intercambio de visiones****, hay un* ***intercambio de conocimientos*** [[With international visitors] there is an **exchange of visions**, there is an **exchange of knowledge**]

The participant who mentioned Extract 61 recognised international visitors as sources of knowledge from which they could learn. This knowledge could include not only cultural habits but also values and perspectives, thus showing a high degree of ethnorelativism.

6.4.2.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

The information code in which deep cultural knowledge was revealed occurred when RUG participants reflected on the reasons of the misunderstandings they had experienced (12.5%, 3 of 24). Extract 62 exemplifies these codes, shown in Table 56.

The participant who provided Extract 62 acknowledged that culture was just one of the aspects that could cause misunderstandings among people. Nevertheless, other variables existed that could construct the self. These words demonstrated an ethnorelative view: They acknowledged that not all members of a culture act the same way—in fact, other factors in people's identities may clash, even among people belonging to the same culture. As Extract 24 did, this utterance reinforces Gaston's (2017, p. 18) perception that individual identities and experiences affect the way individuals perceive the world. Thus, the personal context together

with shared background (such as culture) ultimately build the basis for individuals' personalities, attitudes, and values.

Table 56

Extract—Causes of Misunderstandings

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
11_CAUSES_ OF_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS	RUG Extract 62: And it's not just about **cultural diversity**, but it is mostly because of **cultural diversity**. But it's also about the **differences** in the broader sense because it's **intersectional** right? So, I think **culture** played a role, **language** played a role, **nationality** played a role, **gender** played a role, **work experience** played a role, in like what someone did before, **socioeconomic background** plays a role, **skin colour** played a role, um, **educational background** played a role…

Similarly, this kind of knowledge was found among RUG staff when they explained the feelings that misunderstandings caused for them (16.66%, 4 of 24). Table 57 shows an extract for this information code.

Table 57

Extract—Feelings Caused by Misunderstandings

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
12_FEELINGS_ CAUSED_BY_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS	RUG Extract 63: In the past, I used to feel really upset and crippled, that I couldn't and paralysed a little bit that I couldn't change it, but now by moving from that **emotional response** to a **meta level**, **normalising** the **emotions** and then **reflecting** on it, I do feel that I have **tools** to respond and to **move forward**.

In addition, Extract 63 seems to support the findings obtained from the questionnaires—experience in internationalisation may have worked as implicit instruction on intercultural

competence, specifically, according to this participant, on emotional resilience towards dissonances.

Similarly, deep cultural knowledge was found in the interviews with RUG staff when they explained their opinions and proposals for the process of internationalisation of their universities (12.5%, 3 of 24). Extract 64 illustrates these codes, as shown in Table 58.

Table 58

Extract—Opinions and Proposals

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
16_OPINIONS_ AND_PROPOSALS	RUG Extract 64: I feel like it [intercultural competence] should be a **precondition**, you cannot do your work without having that level of **awareness** in your conversations.

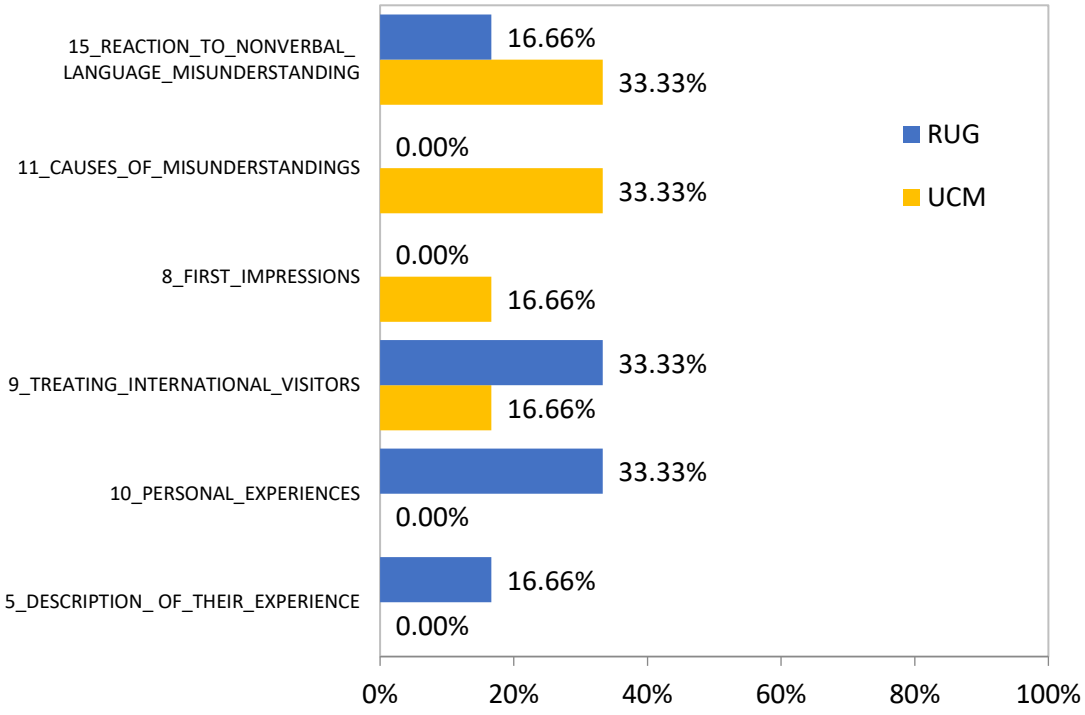
The participant who mentioned Extract 64 emphasised the importance of intercultural competence to perform their work efficiently, showing a high degree of intercultural awareness.

6.4.3. Sociolinguistic Awareness

Among the 53 utterances revealing participants' intercultural knowledge and comprehension, 6 of 15 (40%) of UCM staff comments conveyed sociolinguistic awareness; in comparison, 6 of 38 (15.78%) of those narrated by RUG staff did so. Figure 59 shows the distribution of sociolinguistic awareness according to the information codes in which they were found.

Figure 59

Information Codes—Sociolinguistic Awareness



Note. UCM, *n* = 6; RUG, *n* = 6.

Sociolinguistic awareness emerged in the interviews for both universities when participants explained their reactions to dissonances caused by nonverbal language (UCM, 33.33%, 2 of 6; RUG, 16.66%, 1 of 6). Table 59 shows extracts for this information code.

Table 59

Extracts—Reaction to Nonverbal Language Misunderstanding

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
15_REACTION_TO_ NONVERBAL_ LANGUAGE_ MISUNDERSTANDING	UCM Extract 65: *Estamos muy acostumbrados a hablar con el cuerpo, porque es que muchas veces* ***el lenguaje no verbal comunica mucho y ayuda mucho la comunicación***. [We are very used to using body language because **non-verbal language often communicates a lot and aids communication a great deal**.] RUG Extract 66: It can be **tricky** in some [intercultural] conversations like, **non-verbal signs**.

The participants who provided Extracts 65 and 66 both agreed on the importance of nonverbal language in intercultural interactions and on the problems that its use might cause, such as dissonances. It should be noted that all the participants reported they tried to avoid using signs when interacting with people from other cultures, thereby demonstrating a high level of sociolinguistic awareness.

In addition, sociolinguistic awareness was revealed when participants explained how they treated international visitors (UCM, 16.66%, 1 of 6; RUG, 33.33%, 2 of 6). Table 60 provides extracts for this information code.

Table 60

Extracts—Treating International Visitors

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
9_TREATING_ INTERNATIONAL_ VISITORS	UCM Extract 67: *Va a depender, como todo, depende cómo sea la otra persona y* ***cómo se te dirija a ti****, pues tú también reaccionas e* ***intentas estar acorde***. [It will depend, like everything else, it depends on what the other person is like and **how they address you**, because you also react and **try to have the right approach.]** RUG Extract 68: I think the way, the extent to which I make **eye contact** differs, if I communicate **directly or indirectly** differs, **what kind of questions** I ask and if it's **appropriate** to ask those questions to someone given their **cultural context**, I think that is something I consider in first contact.

Extracts 67 and 68 seem to show participants' flexibility and ability to adapt their communication to their interlocutor—that is, they were able to consider sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors such as addressing protocols, making eye contact, and being direct. This adaptation can be explained by the speech accommodation theory (Giles, 1973), recently called communication accommodation theory (Zhang & Giles, 2018), which states that speakers adjust the way in which they speak according to the person they are addressing.

Sociolinguistic awareness appeared in some information codes of the interviews with UCM staff but did not appear in the interviews with RUG staff. These information codes are discussed next in different sections for each university.

6.4.3.1. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Sociolinguistic awareness was found in the interviews with UCM participants when they explained the reasons for the misunderstandings experienced (33.33%, 2 of 6) and how

they recognised international visitors (16.66%, 1 of 6). Table 61 shows extracts for these information codes.

Table 61

Extracts—Causes of Misunderstandings, First Impressions

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
11_CAUSES_ OF_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS	UCM Extract 69: *estas cosas que chirriaban un poco eran una cuestión **cultural** o **pragmática** de uso del lenguaje más en ese aspecto que de decir no estás conjugando bien.* [these things that sounded a bit strange were a **cultural** or **pragmatic** issue of language related more to that aspect than saying you're not conjugating well.]
8_FIRST_IMPRESSIONS	UCM Extract 70: [*Reconozco a los visitantes internacionales porque*] *sí, es verdad que hay unas **normas de cortesía*** [[I recognise international visitors because] yes, it is true that **there are rules on courtesy**]

The participants who mentioned Extracts 69 and 70 were able to recognise the importance of pragmatic and sociolinguistic skills when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. Further, Extract 69 exemplifies the key role that these factors played when speaking English as a lingua franca; even though this participant reported having a high level of linguistic proficiency in English, dissonances took place.

6.4.3.2. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Sociolinguistic awareness was found when RUG participants described their personal intercultural experiences (33.33%, 2 of 6) and their experiences working in internationalisation (16.66%, 1 of 6). Table 62 shows extracts for these information codes.

Table 62

Extracts—Description of Personal Experiences

Information Code	Example from the Corpus
10_PERSONAL_ EXPERIENCES	RUG Extract 71: Because sometimes we are asking quite personal information like money wise or family… more specific kind of language on their policies, etc. And on the other hand, I guess that that's a **pragmatic skill** to explain everything.
5_DESCRIPTION_ OF_THEIR_ EXPERIENCE	RUG Extract 72: I think in every conversation, there is a kind of a **clash**, but we, I think **unconsciously**, we try to **smooth** that over immediately. So, we are trying to constantly **fix** it.

The participant who stated Extract 71 was able to perceive the mechanism they used in their daily work routine as a pragmatic skill, emphasising its importance. The participant who mentioned Extract 72 acknowledged there were always clashes, independent of the cultural origins of the interlocutors. Sociolinguistic and pragmatic awareness helped 'fix' those clashes to avoid breaking the flow of the conversation.

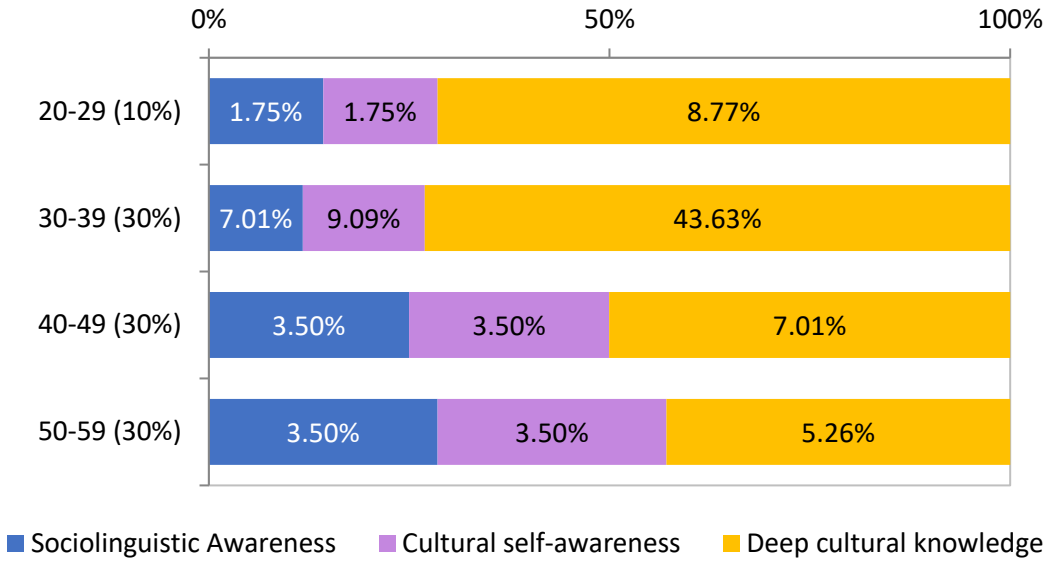
6.4.4. Distribution of Knowledge, Comprehension, and Skills According to Age

Figure 60 shows the distribution of the kinds of knowledge according to the participants' ages. Cultural self-awareness was mostly found among those aged 30 to 39 years old (8.77%, 16 of 55), followed by those aged 30 to 39 and 50 to 59 years old (3.5%, 2 of 55, for each age group), and the youngest (20–29, 1.75%, 1 of 55). Deep cultural knowledge stands out among participants aged between 30 and 39 years old (43.85%, 24 of 55), followed by 20 to 29 (8.77%, 5 of 55), 40 to 49 (7.01%, 4 of 55), and 50 to 59 (5.26%, 3 of 55). Finally, sociolinguistic awareness was mostly found among participants aged between 30 and 39 years old (7.01%, 4 of 55), followed by those between 50 and 59 and 40 and 49 years old (3.5%, 2

of 55). Half that percentage (1.75%, 1 of 55) was revealed by the youngest group of participants (20–29).

Figure 60

Distribution of Knowledge and Comprehension by Age



Note. $N = 55$.

Regarding the relationship between age and knowledge and skills essential for the development of intercultural competence, the age group of participants between 30 and 39 years old stood out in the three dimensions. The results obtained by the 30- to 39-year-old age group seem to coincide with their linguistic skills, obtained from the questionnaires, in which they were the second highest rated age group after those aged between 20 and 29 years old. These findings suggest that knowledge of other languages may improve to some extent the awareness of cultural differences and sociolinguistic features that may go unnoticed for those who speak fewer foreign languages.

6.5. Overview of Results and Discussion on Intercultural Adaptability

Given the relevance of intercultural adaptability for intercultural competence, as one its main internal outcomes (Deardorff, 2006), and especially in light of higher education, in this study, intercultural adaptability was thought to deserve special attention. In order to measure this element, a rubric (Appendix D) based on Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo's (2021; see Chapter 2, Section 2.10.) rubric was adapted from the participants' own experiences. The interviewees shared 28 intercultural experiences; 16 were from UCM participants, and 12 were from RUG participants. Table 63 provides an overview of the results of participants' levels of intercultural adaptability (IA henceforth).

Table 63

Summary of Intercultural Adaptability Levels by University

	Initial	Intermediate	Advanced	Total
UCM	1 (6.66%)	7 (46.66%)	7 (46.66%)	15 (100%)
RUG	2 (16.66%)	8 (66.66%)	2 (16.66%)	12 (100%)
Total	3 (11.11%)	15 (55.55%)	9 (33.33%)	27 (100%)

Among the 15 critical incidents encountered by UCM participants, 1 of 15 (6.66%) of their experiences revealed an initial level of IA, 7 of 15 (46.66%) showed an intermediate level, and 7 of 15 (46.66%) demonstrated an advanced level of IA. Among the 12 experiences narrated by participants from RUG, 2 of 12 (16.66%) were at the initial level, 8 of 12 (66.66%) showed the intermediate level, and 2 of 12 (16.66%) demonstrated an advanced level of IA. In total, among the 27 experiences shared by the participants from both universities, 3 (11.11%) of the narrations revealed an initial level, 15 (55.55%) showed an intermediate level, and 9 (33.33%) were at an advanced level of IA.

To delve further into these findings, the following sections detail each level of intercultural adaptability and discuss the results regarding participants' reactions to their own critical incidents.

6.5.1. Initial Level of Intercultural Adaptability

In general, people at the initial level of IA tend to have ethnocentric attitudes, blame the international visitors when dissonances happen, and suggest no solutions or offer unhelpful solutions to avoid conflict. Individuals at this initial level place all the responsibility on the interlocutor, because the interlocutor is part of the nondominant culture. People at the initial level of IA tend to rely on negative stereotypes to excuse themselves from misunderstandings.

As Table 63 illustrates, 6.66% (1 of 15) of the experiences shared by UCM participants and 16.66% (2 of 12) of those shared by participants from RUG were at the initial level of IA. One utterance exemplifying each type of reaction provided by participants related to intercultural dissonances is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Table 64 shows a RUG participant's experience with an intercultural dissonance they had encountered in which a group of Japanese people came to the Netherlands to visit the university. When greeting the visitors, the participant tried to shake the Japanese person's hand. The Japanese person seemed to be offended by the participant's greeting. Extract 73 shows the participant's reaction to this situation.

Table 64

Extract—Blaming the Interlocutor

Initial IA level	Example from the Corpus
Blaming the interlocutor	RUG Extract 73: It would have been very, I think, normal for him maybe also to look into how you greet someone in the Netherlands. And then if someone sticks out their hand, not be completely surprised that you have to shake.

The participant's words in Extract 73 showed the participant blamed the international visitor for not seeking cultural knowledge regarding manners of greeting in the target country. Blaming the person from the other culture shows a low level of IA. Even though the situation took place in the participant's culture, both parties were expected to be prepared to interact with people from the other culture—their encounter had been planned, and dissonances could have been prevented (Kunert & Schumacher, 2018).

A UCM participant described common situations they faced working in offices in which they were in continuous contact with visitors from other cultures. This description is illustrated in Extract 74, shown in Table 65.

Table 65

Extract—Generalisation

Initial IA Level	Example from the Corpus
Generalisation	UCM: Extract 74: *Algunos alumnos hispanoamericanos, que a veces son un poco agotadores. Son muy melosos a la hora de comunicarse, muy diferentes a nosotros.* [Some Hispanic American students, who can be bit tiring at times. They are very smarmy when it comes to communicating, very different from us.]

When narrating their experiences, the participant who provided Extract 74 seemed to fall into generalisation, which indicates a low level of IA. The adjectives this participant used to describe the target culture were negative; further, they emphasised that the 'Hispanic American' culture was very different from their own culture, revealing an ethnocentric attitude. There seemed to be an emphasis on 'us versus them', which is characteristic of polarisation mindsets that might rely on a defence strategy: 'My cultural practices are superior to other cultural practices' (Hammer, 2012, p. 121). Moreover, this participant seemed to oversimplify the diversity of cultures in South America to one—the 'Hispanic American' culture.

One participant from RUG shared several experiences they had lived with students from the United States and Spain. The way they reacted to these experiences is illustrated in Extract 75, shown in Table 66.

Table 66

Extract—Ethnocentrism

Initial IA Level	Example from the Corpus
Ethnocentrism	RUG Extract 75: And the way I always handle this, I just do it in the Dutch way, because exchange students know that they should expect a different culture, so I tend to do it our way.

Even though the participant seemed aware of the cultural differences, their way of managing such differences showed a low level of IA. Similar to Extract 73, Extract 75 shows the participant assumed the international students should adapt themselves completely to the host culture. The personal context of the visitors and the reasons why they had travelled to the host country could vary greatly. However, working in an international office requires a welcoming attitude and intercultural skills to ease the path of these visitors from other cultures so they can adapt easily and not feel as if they are just foreigners.

Further, in addition to adaptability, Extract 75 reveals a lack of another essential element in intercultural competence: agency (Taguchi, 2019). Agency is defined as the skill to make conscious decisions about one's own compliance with or deviation from pragmatic norms (Ishihara, 2019, p. 165, as cited in Sánchez-Hernández & Maíz-Arévalo, 2021, p. 202). This person was imposing the dominant culture's pragmatic and cultural norms on international students, which should not be the case in the context of internationalised universities.

6.5.2. Intermediate Level of Intercultural Adaptability

People at the intermediate level of IA are able to recognise that there has been an intercultural dissonance and identify the cause (cultural, linguistic, or other). These individuals are willing to adapt to the situation with the objective of avoiding conflict. They suggest solutions they may have already implemented successfully. Nevertheless, they tend to rely on positive or neutral stereotypes and demonstrate an indifferent position towards other cultures and the opportunity to interact with them.

As Table 63 shows, almost half of the experiences that UCM participants shared revealed an intermediate level of IA (46.66%, 7 of 15). In the case of RUG participants, more than half of their experiences did so (66.66%, 8 of 12). One utterance exemplifying each type of reaction to intercultural dissonances provided by participants is discussed in the following paragraphs.

One of the participants from UCM shared an experience regarding a woman from the United States or Great Britain (the participant was not sure), in which an intercultural dissonance had occurred. The woman wanted to visit the university, but at this Spanish university, private visits or open days were not held. The common procedure was that high school students in their last grade visited the university with their teachers on a specific date. According to the participant, the woman did not understand what the participant was saying, not because of the language, but because of cultural differences. Extract 76 shows this participant's reasoning, as shown in Table 67.

Table 67

Extract—Generalisation

Intermediate IA Level	Example from the Corpus
Generalisation	UCM Extract 76: *No se tiene la misma visión de los estudiantes como personas que van a contratar un servicio.* [Students are not seen as people who are going to hire a service.]

This participant was able to analyse the situation and deduced that the misunderstanding had cultural rather than linguistic causes. Nevertheless, they justified the misunderstanding, relying on preconceived ideas towards North American students, even though their interlocutor did not mention this information. In fact, the participant was 'almost sure' that the woman was from the United States. The participant's assumption was based on their own perspective that in North America, students consider education similar to hiring a service. Hence, the participant's justification of the misunderstanding was based on a mental schema about the woman's nationality. This specific case was considered a cultural schema rather than a stereotype because this participant had lived in the United States before, where they might have acquired it. However, the neutral mental schemata did not seem to affect the way the participant treated the woman. Further, the participant proposed helpful solutions, such as talking to one specific degree coordinator.

One of the participants from RUG shared experiences with specific nationalities in which intercultural dissonance tended to take place. In this specific situation, the participant referred to American students, but they did not specify if they were from North or South America. Extract 77 illustrates the participant's narration of critical incidents, shown in Table 68.

Table 68

Extract—Ethnorelativism

Intermediate IA Level	Example from the Corpus
Ethnorelativism	RUG Extract 77: American students they are used to being served and to have things arranged for them more than we do here. So, I tend to find it a bit presumptuous of them sometimes, but it's just what they expect. And I expect something different from students. So, it's not good or bad. It's just a difference in student life.

As Extract 77 illustrates, this participant was aware of the cultural differences between them and 'American' students. According to the participant, it was not the international students' fault nor the participant's fault, but just a different way of perceiving students' obligations. This participant's ability to adjust to the intercultural situation and react according to it showed an intermediate level of IA—they internally judged the other culture, but this judgement did not seem to affect their resulting behaviour.

Acceptance of cultural differences is the most basic stage of ethnorelativism. Therefore, individuals with ethnorelative perspectives are able to not only conceptually agree that other cultures are as valid as their own but may also experience the other culture in depth at this stage (Bennett, 2012). Individuals with ethnorelative perspectives are able to see their interlocutors from the perspective of their cultures and try to comprehend them. However, at this stage, people still tend to judge their interlocutors' actions and ideas in comparison to those held by their community of origin (Ventura, 2012).

One of the participants from UCM explained how they had encountered intercultural interactions. The participant's experience is illustrated by Extract 78, shown in Table 69.

As Extract 78 illustrates, this participant was aware of the cultural differences between their international colleagues and them. Their words reveal a flexible attitude and a willingness

to adapt to the visitors' customs and behaviours. It is implied that, being aware of this, they tried to respect personal space and distance in order to avoid conflict, showing a high level of behavioural adaptation. Behavioural adaptation involves the need to change some actions when engaging with other people, especially if the interlocutors are from diverse cultural backgrounds. Interaction between cultures will not work without behavioural adaptation; the greater the distance between cultures, the more difficult it will be to interface (Anawati & Craig, 2006, p. 45).

Table 69

Extract—Flexibility

Intermediate IA Level	Example from the Corpus
Flexibility	UCM Extract 78: *Cuando viene alguna visita, algunos colegas a vernos o así, pues, por ejemplo, o bueno, no te digo nada, si es fuera de Europa, si son orientales, japoneses, por ejemplo, que tienen todo un protocolo de saludos y demás, pero incluso con colegas europeos, sí que notas que ellos mantienen más su distancia. Si tienes confianza con ellos, te pueden dar un abrazo monumental, de estos que te arropan, pero en general respetan más el espacio vital. Y eso, nosotros somos más próximos, más de cercanía.* [When a visitor comes, some colleagues come to see us or something like, for example, not to mention, if they are non-European, if they're from the East, Japanese, for example, they have a whole protocol of greetings and so on, but even with European colleagues, you do notice that they keep their distance more. If they feel confident with you, they can give you a huge hug, one of those that wraps you up, but in general they respect the social distancing more. And we are friendlier with less distance.]

One of the participants from UCM shared an experience with a Turkish student. Their experience is illustrated in Extract 79, shown in Table 70.

Table 70

Extract—Cultural Sensitivity

Intermediate IA Level	Example from the Corpus
Cultural Sensitivity	UCM Extract 79: *Pues, por ejemplo, una alumna turca, que, a lo mejor al llegar a España, alguien se haya aproximado demasiado, o se haya acercado o le haya tocado y le parece como raro porque es ajeno a su cultura. No ha planteado ningún problema, pero es verdad que esas cosas hay que tenerlas en cuenta.* [Well, for example, a Turkish student, who, perhaps when arriving in Spain, someone has come too close, or has approached or touched her and it seems strange to her because it is alien to her culture. It's not an issue but it is true that these things must be taken into account.]

The participant who provided Extract 79 was willing to take preventive measures, based on previous experiences, to relate to people from other cultures. Even though these cultural differences may not have caused problems in the past, considering cultural issues to avoid making people feel uncomfortable demonstrates a high level of cultural sensitivity acquired through experience.

Cultural sensitivity entails being aware of the existence of cultural differences and similarities and recognising these differences and similarities have a significant impact on values, learning, and behaviour (Stafford et al., 1997). Cultural sensitivity begins with recognising that cultures differ and understanding that these differences are frequently reflected in how various groups interact and connect to one another. Cultural sensitivity involves more than just being aware of cultural differences to engage properly. An interculturally competent person sees all people as distinct individuals. They understand how experiences, beliefs, values, and language shape people's perspectives (Altan, 2018, p. 2) and act accordingly.

6.5.3. Advanced Level of Intercultural Adaptability

People at the advanced level of IA fully understand international visitors and value their efforts to adapt to the target culture. People at the advanced level of IA are able to recognise the causes of the dissonances (cultural, linguistic, or other), basing assumptions on real evidence. They are willing to adapt to the situation either through communicative, behavioural, or emotional adaptability. Further, they show an ability to see the two cultures' perspectives and demonstrate comprehension and appreciation for cultural diversity. For these participants, cultural differences are not an impediment but an opportunity to learn.

As Table 63 shows, almost half of the experiences shared by UCM participants were at the advanced level of IA (46.66%, 7 of 15), compared to 16.66% (2 of 12) of the experiences shared by RUG participants. One utterance exemplifying each kind of reaction provided by participants to intercultural dissonances is discussed in the following paragraphs.

One of the UCM participants shared their personal experiences working in internationalisation units. The general description they provided is illustrated by Extract 80, shown in Table 71.

Table 71

Extract—Empathy

Advanced IA Level	Example from the Corpus
Empathy	UCM Extract 80: *A los estudiantes internacionales no se pueden atender en una ventanilla como si fueran estudiantes UCM. ¿No? ¿Por qué? Porque es que acaban de llegar, no saben, no lo entienden. Y recuerdo el caso de una chica que vino llorando a nuestra oficina. Claro, un sitio donde le podían atender cara a cara sin prisas. Entonces hay que tener en cuenta la situación y no sé...* [International students cannot deal with at a counter as if they were UCM students. No? Why? Because they have just arrived, they don't know, they don't understand. And I remember the case of a girl who came to our office crying. Of course, a place where she could be assisted in person without feeling rushed. So, you must take into account the situation and I dont know...]

The participant who mentioned Extract 80 seemed to comprehend fully the difficulties that international students may face when arriving in a new country. The participant emphasised that the situations of international visitors were different from those who were in their home country; for this reason, the university needed to be adaptable to handle the arrival of international students to enhance their sense of belonging and not feel as if they were just foreigners.

As explained by Yan Pei (2018), the sense of belonging is crucial to enjoying an international stay abroad and minimising or avoiding possible stress and depression. International students find it difficult to develop a sense of belonging because they are dealing with strangers or new acquaintances in a new place far from home. However, to satisfy the need to belong, recurrent interactions with the same individuals and relatedness with frequent encounters should be gratifying (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The administrative and support staff of international universities have most of this responsibility—they are the people from the

host university international that students contact when they arrive and visit if they have problems.

One of the RUG participants proposed a useful solution to a dissonance with an international visitor caused by the interlocutors' linguistic proficiency, shown in Table 72.

Table 72

Extract—Helpful Solutions

Advanced IA Level	Example from the Corpus
Helpful solutions	RUG Extract 81: we always try to even, if we spoke on the phone or on the desk or whatever, we always try to summarise the meeting by email. So, they know everything.

As illustrated in Extract 81, this participant was willing to write all the information by email in order to make sure that the international visitor understood everything clearly. These words show a high level of adaptability to someone living in a country in which their native language was not spoken and demonstrate a willingness to make an extra effort to help.

In the following section, the distribution of the different levels of intercultural adaptability according to participants' ages is discussed.

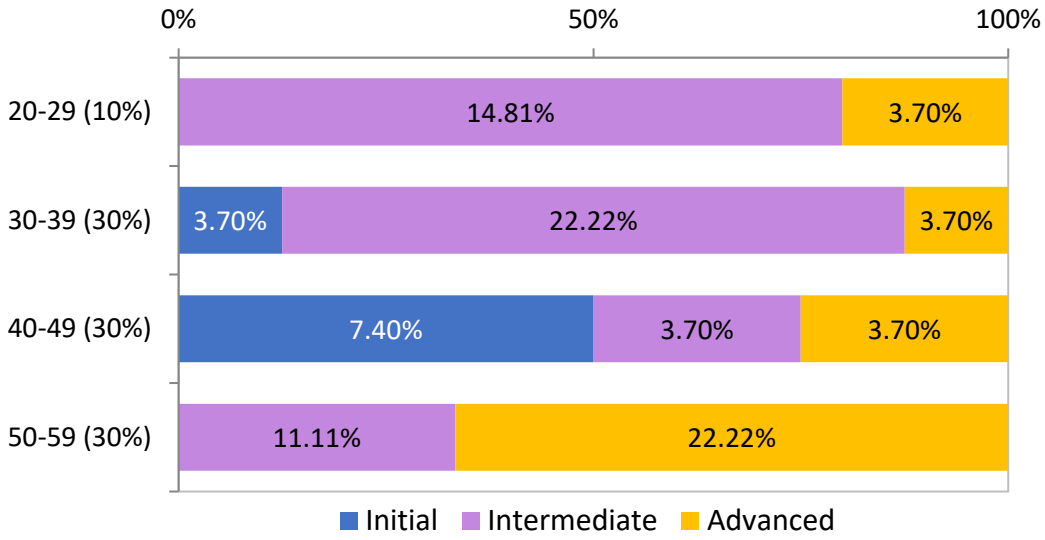
6.5.4. Distribution of Levels of Intercultural Adaptability According to Age

Figure 61 shows the distribution of intercultural adaptability levels according to participants' ages. The three reactions to experiences that were rated at the initial level of IA were narrated by participants aged 40 to 49 (7.40%, 2 of 28) and 30 to 39 (3.70%, 1 of 28). Participants aged between 30 and 39 years old showed the highest percentage (22.22%, 6 of 28) of intermediate level of IA, followed by the age groups 20 to 29 (14.81%, 4 of 28) and 50 to 59 (11.11%, 3 of 28) years old. Among those aged 40 to 49 years old, 3.70% (1 of 28) of their narrations showed an intermediate level of IA. Finally, most of the participants at the

advanced level of IA were between 50 and 59 years old (22.22%, 6 of 28). The rest of the age groups (20–29, 30–39, and 40–49) showed the same percentage (3.70%, 1 of 28) of advanced level of IA throughout their experiences.

Figure 61

Distribution of Levels of Intercultural Adaptability by Age



Note. $N = 28$.

These findings seem to concord with those obtained from the analysis of the questionnaires and of participants' intercultural skills. The senior groups of participants performed better in most of the dimensions of intercultural competence than younger participants did. Accordingly, those from 50 to 59 years old show an advanced level of IA, one of the fundamental outcomes of intercultural competence. These findings support the hypothesis that experience may serve as implicit instruction of intercultural competence, helping develop intercultural adaptability. Further, life experiences in general may increase adaptability as well. As mentioned, the senior group of participants had lived through a greater number of historical events that could have affected their perceptions of life and enhanced their adaptability to other cultures.

6.6. Overview of Results and Discussion on Internal and External Outcomes

As mentioned in Chapter 4 (Methodology), at the end of the interviews, three scenarios in which critical incidents with international students were likely to occur were posed to the participants. They were asked to tell the interviewer how they would react or how they had reacted if they had experienced these situations before. Their reactions were classified according to Deardorff's (2006) proposed internal outcomes—adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative view, and empathy—and external outcomes of the process model of intercultural competence. 'Adaptability' was demonstrated in 3 of 30 (10%) reactions, (UCM, 13.33%, 2 of 15; RUG, 6.66%, 1 of 15). 'Flexibility' was revealed in 5 of 30 (16.66%) of the reactions (UCM, 20%, 3 out of 15; RUG, 13.33%, 2 out of 15). An 'ethnorelative view' of the different scenarios in which intercultural dissonance was likely to occur was shown by 5 of 30 (16.66%) of the reactions (UCM, 20%, 3 of 15; RUG, 13.33%, 2 of 15). 'Empathy' was found in 4 of 30 (20%) of participants' reactions (UCM, 13.33%, 2 of 15; RUG, 26.66%, 4 of 15). Finally, the external outcomes of intercultural competence, in other words, the ability to behave and communicate effectively in intercultural interactions was revealed by 11 of 30 (36.66%) reactions (UCM, 33.33%, 5 of 15; RUG, 40%, 6 of 15). These reactions are summarised and illustrated in Table 73.

Table 73

Summary of Internal and External Outcomes

Intercultural Scenario	University	Adaptability	Flexibility	Ethnorelative View	Empathy	External Outcomes	Total
Linguistic proficiency problems	UCM	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	0	1 (20%)	0	5 (100%)
	RUG	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	0	2 (40%)	0	5 (100%)
Receiving gifts from international students	UCM	0	0	1 (20%)	0	4 (80%)	5 (100%)
	RUG	0	0	1 (20%)	0	4 (80%)	5 (100%)
Misunderstanding caused by nonverbal language	UCM	0	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	5 (100%)
	RUG	0	0	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)
Total	UCM	2 (13.33%)	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.33%)	5 (33.33%)	15(100%)
	RUG	1 (6.66%)	2 (13.33%)	2 (13.33%)	4 (26.66%)	6 (40%)	15(100%)
	Total	3 (10%)	5 (16.66%)	5 (16.66%)	6 (20%)	11 (36.66%)	30 (100%)

In the following sections, the three different scenarios are briefly explained, and participants' reactions to each of them are discussed, including an example of each internal or external outcome demonstrated.

6.6.1. Linguistic Proficiency Problems

In the first scenario, a student with a low level of Spanish/Dutch enters the administrative office and explains that they have problems filling out the registration form because of the language in which it is written (Spanish/Dutch). They state that they know English better than Spanish/Dutch and, in fact, the master's degree in which they are trying to enrol is taught completely in English.

'Adaptability' is the most numerous feature that participants demonstrated when this situation arose (UCM, 40%, 2 of 5; RUG, 20%, 1 of 5). This scene seems to be common because many students attend these two internationalised universities to take courses in English. Thus, they are not required to know Spanish nor Dutch in advance. This lack of requirement to know Spanish or Dutch could be one of the drawbacks of internationalisation that administrative and support staff had to endure. However, in this study, they show positive attitudes towards these kinds of situations, as Extracts 82 and 83 illustrate, shown in Table 74.

Table 74

Extracts—Linguistic Proficiency Problems, Adaptability

Linguistic Proficiency Problems	Example from the Corpus
Adaptability	UCM Extract 82: *Les preguntamos y prefieren que hablemos en español. Como hay muchas nacionalidades y a veces lo hacemos en inglés y en español, a veces solo las dudas en inglés. Pero esa demanda, lo que el alumno necesite en realidad. Si es en inglés, en inglés.* [We ask them and they prefer that we speak in Spanish. As there are many nationalities and sometimes we do it in English and Spanish, sometimes only questions in English. But it's according to demand, what the student really needs. If it is in English, in English.] RUG Extract 83: I always ask them first, so, 'do you prefer English or Dutch?' Most of the times, they say [sic] doesn't matter. Sometimes they just say I prefer this question. So, I always tried to get them. If they speak both, then what is your preferred language, because we speak both. And then we try to continue within that language. And if that doesn't really work, we can always try to switch. And if you still cannot understand them very well just keep repeating. And just make sure that you do your best to try to understand them.

The UCM participant who reacted to the linguistic problem in this way demonstrates an ability to adjust to the students' language preferences or needs. Similarly, a RUG participant asked students what language they preferred to use. Further, both participants seemed willing to switch from one language to another one whenever necessary to improve communication among interactants and to make an effort to understand students despite the linguistic difficulties.

In a similar vein, 'flexibility' (UCM, 40%, 2 of 5; RUG, 40%, 2 of 5) is the other essential internal outcome that participants from both universities reported to master when explaining their reactions to this linguistic problem, as presented in Extracts 84 and 85 in Table 75.

Table 75

Extracts—Linguistic Proficiency Problems, Flexibility

Linguistic Proficiency Problems	Example from the Corpus
Flexibility	UCM Extract 84: *Sí, explicarle de manera resumida, porque claro, es mucha información; y resolverle las dudas que pueda tener, en inglés o facilitándole de la manera que sea.* [Yes, explaining to them in a summarised way, because, of course, it is a lot of information; and solving any doubts they may have, in English or by facilitating it in any way.] RUG Extract 85: In the end, I just I told him like 'Okay, I will send you an email and explain everything by email because then you can read it again. And we can take it from there. You work on the steps you need to follow, and then we can, like communicate via email, because then we both have time to try to understand what somebody is meaning'.

This UCM participant was willing to explain the information in English or through any other method that could help the international student. Similarly, the participant from RUG shows willingness to make an extra effort by explaining the information that the international visitor needed in written format to make sure everything was clear and both interactants understood each other, thus aiming to avoid linguistic misunderstandings.

Regarding 'empathy' (UCM, 20%, 1 of 5; RUG, 40%, 2 of 5), this value was demonstrated when participants explained their reactions to this situation. Participants seemed to be aware that the linguistic problem was not completely the international visitors' fault and tried to put themselves in their shoes. In other words, if they were in that situation, what they would like to be warned against before starting a course abroad. Extracts 86 and 87 illustrate these reactions, shown in Table 76.

Table 76

Extracts—Linguistic Proficiency Problems, Empathy

Linguistic Proficiency Problems	Example from the Corpus
Empathy	UCM Extract 86: *Lo primero que hacemos es ayudarle a hacerle la matrícula. Y luego también le recomendamos que, puesto que está en el país, que adquiera más competencia lingüística en España, que es más fácil para su inclusión, para que pueda conocer más cosas. Pero lo más inmediato es ayudarla a hacer la matrícula.* [Yes, well, we help her to do the registration. The first thing we do is help them with the registration. And then we also recommend that, since they are in the country, that they acquire more linguistic competence in Spain, which is easier for their inclusion, so that they can learn more things. But the first thing is to help them do the registration. Of course, there's no problem at all in helping them in English. We guide them in English.] RUG Extract 87: The form is a reflection of the language proficiency that you also need when you're entering the master's degree. How does it make you feel when you're filling it in?', and then sometimes a student would say 'I feel demotivated, or I find this very challenging'. I tried to identify together with them, what they could do to bridge the discrepancy.

The first reaction this UCM participant had when this situation was posed was the need to help the student, thus showing concern and empathy. This empathic attitude is supported by the use of the word 'inclusion', representing a key ingredient for international students to enjoy their stay. In a similar vein, the RUG participant worried about international visitors' welfare and tried to anticipate the problem that the lack of linguistic competence may present for their future studies at that university and devise a solution for it.

6.6.2. Receiving Gifts from International Students

In the second scenario, an administrative officer helps an international student with administrative problems occurring between the student's home university and the host university (i.e., UCM or RUG). This issue takes some time for the officer, but they finally solve

it. The next day, the same student surprises the administrative officer by bringing in a large box of chocolates as a gift to thank them for their help.

First, the fact that all participants reported receiving gifts from international visitors suggests that students appreciated the administrative and support staff's efforts, and ultimately indicate that these personnel successfully applied their intercultural competences to solve problems. Further, the way in which all the participants reacted to receiving gifts shows that they also fulfilled the external outcomes of intercultural competence (UCM, 80%, 4 of 5; RUG, 80%, 4 of 5)—all of them reported thanking the gift-giver, accepting the gift, and sharing the gift. Further, they only accepted gifts that could be shared. In other words, they would behave effectively and appropriately in this intercultural situation, as illustrated by Extracts 88 and 89 in Table 77.

Table 77

Extracts—Receiving Gifts, External Outcomes

Receiving Gifts	Example from the Corpus
External Outcomes	UCM Extract 88: *Sí, sí que nos pasa. Nos traen a lo mejor recuerdos, alguna cosa pequeña de su país o alguna cosa así. Reaccionamos encantados, compartimos de entrada con todos los compañeros de la oficina y le invitamos a él; encantados de la vida. Ningún problema.* [Yes, it does happen to us. Maybe they bring us souvenirs, something small from their country or something like that. We love it, in the first place, we share it with all colleagues in the office and we invite them [the international student]; we get a lot of pleasure from it.] RUG Extract 89: I would accept it. I would say that was absolutely not necessary. But I think it might be I would think it might be insulting to decline. So I would accept it and then share it with my colleagues.

The UCM participant reported feeling delighted when someone thanked them for their work and behaved appropriately. Similarly, the RUG participant showed respect and

intercultural communication skills when they stated, ‘I would think it might be insulting to decline’. This participant considered how they would feel if they gave a present to someone, and the recipient rejected it. Thus, the participant did not want to threaten the international visitors’ positive face, demonstrating a high degree of intercultural empathy and intercultural competence.

Similarly, taking an ethnorelative view (UCM, 20%, 1 of 5; RUG, 20%, 1 of 5) of the situation is fundamental. Some of the participants reported they would indirectly clarify to the gift-giver that they would not receive special treatment, thus demonstrating awareness that the meaning of gift-giving is not universal. In fact, accepting or declining a gift in the workplace may convey different ideas in different cultures. Extracts 90 and 91 in Table 78 illustrate this view.

Table 78

Extracts—Nonverbal Language, Ethnorelative View

Receiving Gifts	Example from the Corpus
Ethnorelative View	UCM Extract 90: *Depende de lo que sea el regalo, si no aparece con un maletín... Sí, bueno, le pedimos que nos manden postales e incluso los propios estudiantes de la Complutense que se han ido y han tenido problemas administrativos y ha habido que dedicarle más tiempo, vienen con la caja de bombones. Se lo agradecería, le diría que no hace falta, pero no sé, me sentiría bien, me sentiría halagado y lo aceptaría. Porque me parece que no es, sobre todo, que es una cosa que ha pasado, el regalo lo ha traído después. No ha venido primero con el regalo para recibir un trato de favor. Pero claro, siempre teniendo en cuenta que es un regalo, una postal, unos bombones, algo, no una cosa que quiero pensar en un soborno. Pero me sentiría bien, me parecería que es alguien que está agradeciendo el trabajo.* [It depends on what the gift is, if (the student) does not show up with a briefcase... Yes, well, we ask them, to send us postcards and even the Complutense students themselves who have left and have had administrative problems and we have had to devote more time, they come with the box of chocolates, I would appreciate it, I would say that it is not necessary, but I don't know, I would feel good, I would feel flattered and I would accept it. Because it seems to me that it is not… Above all, that it is something that has happened, the gift has been brought later. They didn't come first with the gift to get favoured treatment. But of course, always keeping in mind that it is a gift, a postcard, some chocolates, something… Not something that I want to think of as a bribe. But I would feel good, it would seem to me that it is someone who is thankful for our work.] RUG Extract 91: I would say thank you in the first place, I would also point out that they don't have to thank me to do my job in this way. Like, I'm, it's my job to do that. I would also say, but that maybe has to do with like Dutch cultural context is that bringing me a box of chocolates does not mean that I will work more on their cases in the future. I wouldn't, I wouldn't say it this way. But I would kind of integrate that in the conversation, like, it's my job. So, you know, there's no need to do that, etcetera. 'I will do the same for you as I do for others, right?' That's very present in that culture. But if it's an Asian student, or sometimes a student from the African continent, depending on what country, I do express it, I understand that they really want to thank me. And then I share the chocolates with my colleagues. I got flowers one time. I said, 'thank you'.

The UCM participant noted they would accept the gift or not depending on what it was, while the RUG participant would accept it or not depending on the culture to which the gift-giver belonged. Both participants adopted an ethnorelative view of the situation, being aware that the act of gift-giving did not mean the same everywhere; in other words, they knew the meaning of a gift is not universal. For this reason, both reflected on this before directly accepting the gift to make sure the gift-giver did not expect special treatment; in other words, the gift was not a bribe.

6.4.3. Misunderstanding Caused by Nonverbal Language

In the third scenario, an international student enters the office. Because of COVID-19, both the administrative officer and the student wear masks and stay at a safe distance. For this reason, the administrative officer must speak in a louder voice than usual and asks the student to spell their last name to locate them in the database. When the administrative officer has identified them, they make an OK gesture with their hand (👌). The student's expression turns to anger, and they prepare to leave.

In the responses, participants demonstrated ethnorelative views (UCM, 40%, 2 of 5; RUG, 20%, 1 of 5), aware of the fact that gestures are not universal, as illustrated in Extracts 92 and 93 in Table 79.

Table 79

Extracts—Nonverbal Language, Ethnorelative View

Nonverbal Language	Example from the Corpus
Ethnorelative View	UCM Extract 92: *No haría ese gesto. Supondría que el problema es que ese gesto, en su país, tal vez no sea aceptable, bueno, si el alumno se ha ido sin explicar por qué, yo iría tras él y le diría: 'Oye, creo que ha habido algún malentendido, ese gesto significa OK, no sé el gesto que usas en tu país para mostrar confirmación'* [I would not gesticulate like that. I would guess that the problem is that that gesture, in their country, might not be acceptable, well, if the student has left without explaining why, I would go after him and say, 'Hey, I think there has been some misunderstanding, that gesture means OK, I don't know the gesture you use in your country to show confirmation'.] RUG Extract 93: No, this hasn't happened to me. But I do know that I shouldn't make that gesture. So, if I would inadvertently make that gesture and see their face, I would probably realise, 'Oh, dear, I shouldn't have done that'. And then try to explain that that is a Dutch gesture. And maybe ask them what they would do, what their gesture would be from their background or culture.

This UCM participant correctly interpreted the student's reaction and noted they would try to solve the problem by explaining the meaning to the student. This act shows concern for the international student and a desire to avoid future misunderstandings in the Spanish context in which the student was going to study, live, and communicate daily. Similarly, the RUG participant reported they would explain the meaning of the gesture in the Dutch context. Further, they reported they might also ask about the meaning of that gesture in the interactant's culture, thus showing curiosity attitudes.

In similar fashion, 'empathy' (UCM, 20%, 1 of 5; RUG, 40%, 2 of 5) emerged when participants handled nonverbal communication problems. It should be borne in mind that in the questionnaires, participants admitted lacking adequate knowledge of nonverbal

communication used in other cultures. Participants' empathic reactions are illustrated by Extracts 94 and 95 in Table 80.

Table 80

Extracts—Nonverbal Language, Empathy

Nonverbal Language	Example from the Corpus
Empathy	UCM Extract 94: *Pues escribiéndolo, ha habido un malentendido, no te preocupes. Nosotros somos súper acogedores, en ese sentido estamos muy acostumbrados a ese tipo de... No nos enfadamos ni nada, sino entendemos que no nos ha entendido, o sea, que no nos hemos expresado bien, o él, o no nos hemos escuchado por la mascarilla, porque es difícil.* [Well, writing it, there has been a misunderstanding. Don't worry, we are super welcoming, in that sense we are very used to that kind of... We don't get angry or anything, but we understand that he hasn't understood us, that is, that we have made ourselves clear, well, or they have not, or we have not listened to each other because of the mask, because it is difficult.] RUG: Extract 95: I think I would say, 'Oh, I realised I made a gesture'. I'm very hyper aware of my gestures. So, always. And I'm not perfect. So, I can mistake, I can make mistakes, right. 'Please tell me if you understood my nonverbal cues differently, then we can move forward'. And I would apologise. And I would ask them what the meaning is of the gesture I made. But I don't think I would make that gesture.

The UCM participant emphasised the high degree of understanding among their colleagues as they reported they would perfectly comprehend the misunderstanding. Further, they would accept they had done something wrong instead of blaming the student. With the objective of solving the problem, they would write the information, thus demonstrating problem-solving skills. Similarly, the RUG participant admitted they made mistakes, even though they tried to be aware of gestures. This participant would apologise and ask the student about the meaning of that gesture in their culture, thereby showing curiosity attitudes as well.

The desired external outcomes of intercultural competence are also demonstrated by participants from both institutions when dealing with gestures (UCM, 20%, 1 of 5; RUG, 40%, 2 of 5), as illustrated by Extracts 96 and 97 in Table 81.

Table 81

Extracts—Nonverbal Language, External Outcomes

Nonverbal Language	Example from the Corpus
External Outcomes	UCM Extract 96: (...) *si pasa nos vamos detrás de él corriendo y le explicamos; y tenemos siempre una relación muy fluida y bromeamos con ellos. La parte de las bromas a lo mejor es más complicada, pero son muy receptivos y se ríen muy bien.* [(...) if it happens we run behind him and explain it to him; and we always have a very fluid relationship and we joke with them. The part of the jokes is perhaps more complicated, but they are very receptive and laugh very well.] RUG Extract 97: I know there are some kinds of signs that are not appropriate, so yeah, I'm not going to say I'm always aware of that because, yeah, maybe I also do this, and I think this is somewhere also not appropriate. And so yes, when I noticed when I do this and students walk away then I will realise, 'Okay, I did something that's not nice to him or her'. So probably I will send an email or if I can catch up, yeah, explain like 'Okay, I'm sorry, for me doesn't mean anything'.

This UCM participant assumed the good relationship they had with international students and that they even joked with them. This participant remained aware of how complex humour can be across cultures, thus demonstrating a high degree of sociolinguistic awareness and positive regard towards international visitors and their receptive attitudes. The RUG participant reported awareness of nonverbal signs and tried not to use them to avoid offending the interactant from the other culture. However, they acknowledged they were not always conscious, thereby showing a high degree of self-awareness; in addition, they mentioned apologising as the first thing to do when a dissonance occurred, followed by an explanation to

justify what happened. All these actions demonstrate that these participants were able to behave and communicate efficiently with people from other culture—the external outcomes of intercultural competence.

'Flexibility' (UCM, 20%, 1 of 5) was demonstrated by one UCM participant when handling a critical incident caused by the wrong use of nonverbal communication. This reaction is illustrated in Extract 96, as shown in Table 82.

Table 82

Extracts—Nonverbal Language, Flexibility

Nonverbal Language	Example from the Corpus
Flexibility	UCM Extract 96: *No, a mí no me ha pasado, la verdad. Hombre, intentaría aclararlo, ¿no? Si veo que la persona lo ha interpretado mal, pues no le dejo que se vaya. Si claro, si me lo permite, ¿no?, aclarárselo. Pero no, intentaría aclararlo, claro, por su puesto. Se lo explicaría. Claro, en su lengua materna no, si habla inglés se lo explicaríamos en inglés, para que lo entendiera bien y no haya ninguna duda.* [No, it hasn't happened to me, really. Well, I'd try to clear it up, wouldn't I? If I see that the person has misunderstood it, well, I wouldn't let them go. Yes, of course, if they allow me, right? I'd clarify it. But no, I would try to clarify it, of course, on my behalf. I would explain it to him/her. Of course, not in his/her mother tongue, if they speak English, we would explain it to them in English, so that they understood it well and there was no doubt.]

This UCM participant had not suffered a similar misunderstanding, but if this situation happened, they stated they would not allow the student to leave; they would try to clarify the meaning of the gesture in English to make sure everything was clear, thus demonstrating a flexible mind towards possible dissonances.

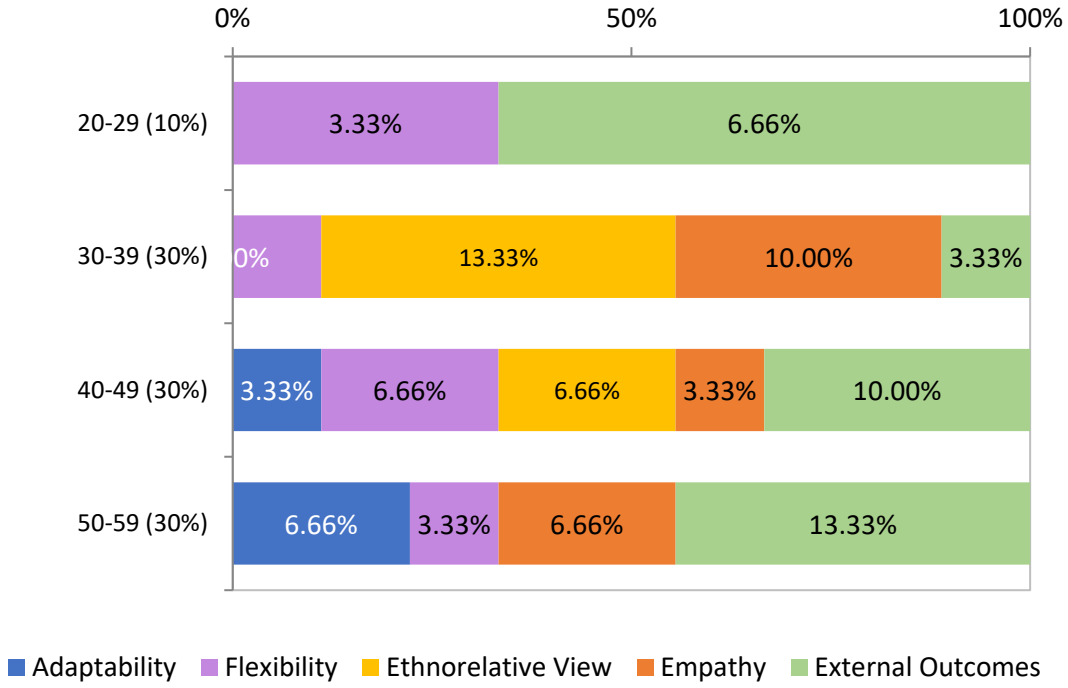
6.6.4. Internal and External Outcomes and Age

The internal outcome of 'adaptability' was mainly demonstrated by the senior group (50–59; 6.66%, 2 of 30) followed by those between 40 and 49 (3.33%, 1 of 30). 'Flexibility' was mastered by all age groups. Those between 40 and 49 years old obtained the highest score

(6.66%, 2 of 30) on this dimension, compared to the rest of age groups (3.33%, 1 of 30, for each). 'Ethnorelative view' of the intercultural scenarios were found among participants between 30 and 39 years old (13.33%, 4 of 30) followed by those between 40 and 49 years old (6.66%, 2 of 30). 'Empathy' appeared in all age groups, except among the youngest ones (20–29), and stood out especially among participants who were between 30 and 39 years old (10%, 3 of 30), followed by the age groups between 50 to 59 (6.66%, 2 of 30) and 40 to 49 (3.33%, 1 of 30) years old. Finally, the 'external outcomes of intercultural competence' (i.e., behaving and communicating appropriately in intercultural situations) were shown by all age groups. The senior reported mastering these abilities with the highest score (50–59; 13.33%, 4 of 30), followed by those between 40 and 49 years old (10%, 3 of 30). The youngest age group was in the next place (20-29; 6.66%, 2 of 30), followed by those participants who were between 30 and 39 years old (3.33%, 1 of 30). These figures are illustrated in Figure 62.

Figure 62

Distribution of Levels of Internal and External Outcomes by Age



Note. $N = 15$.

As shown in Figure 62, according to their reactions, all the participants demonstrated the external outcomes of intercultural competence—to be able to communicate and behave effectively with international students from other cultures. Nevertheless, the group between 50 and 59 years old especially stands out. Their responses could be attributable to the essential role of experience, which seems to serve as the most useful implicit instruction on intercultural competence.

Further, the senior participants reported being also the most adaptable when dealing with intercultural situations. Their years of experience working in internationalisation units likely provided them with the ability to adjust to different languages and communication styles in order to approach international students in the best possible way and avoid misunderstandings or clashes. Those between 40 and 49 years old, however, demonstrated the highest level of flexibility when dealing with critical incidents. Participants themselves admitted that they learned through the years, for instance, to understand different accents. Those in the middle age groups of this sample (30–49) showed ethnorelative views of the situations, especially when receiving gifts, which also demonstrates their positive views towards people from other cultures. Empathy was revealed by all age groups except for the youngest (20–29).[40] Participants' backgrounds in these job positions at internationalised universities may have played a key role as well in these results; that is, the more misunderstandings they had experienced with people from other cultures, the higher their capacity 'to put on someone else shoes'.

6.7. Chapter Summary

Chapter 6 presented the findings of the analysis of the language used by participants in the interviews. These findings were discussed according to the dimensions of the process model

[40] This finding may be attributable to the smaller sample size of this age span.

of intercultural competence suggested by Deardorff (2006). First, human values, hypothesised as the origin of attitudes, were analysed. Second, the dimensions of intercultural knowledge and comprehension, and skills were explored. The third section was devoted to presenting an analysis of participants' narrations of the intercultural misunderstandings they had experienced, assessing their intercultural adaptability through a rubric. Finally, the participants' reactions to the three intercultural scenarios provided during the interviews were analysed in order to examine their capacity to be flexible, adaptable and empathic, and their ability to observe the world from an ethnorelative view, and to behave and communicate effectively with people from other cultures. At the end of each section, the relationships between each dimension and the independent variable of age were discussed. In the next chapter, the results obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews are compared and discussed.

CHAPTER 7

Overview of General Results and Discussion on Main Findings

7.1. Introduction

This chapter summarises the results of the analyses presented in Chapters 5 and 6 to offer a wider perspective of the most relevant findings of this investigation before presenting the conclusions in the next and final chapter. The chapter begins by discussing findings on attitudes, the visible result of human values and the basis of intercultural competence (7.2). In the subsequent section, findings on intercultural knowledge, comprehension, and skills are explored (7.3). Next, results regarding the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence are outlined (7.4). All these dimensions are presented for each of the two universities first, and then as a whole, according to the main tools used to collect data: questionnaires and interviews. Finally, the implications of these findings are explained (7.5), divided into methodological, analytical, and conceptual, before the chapter is summarised (7.6).

7.2. Attitudes

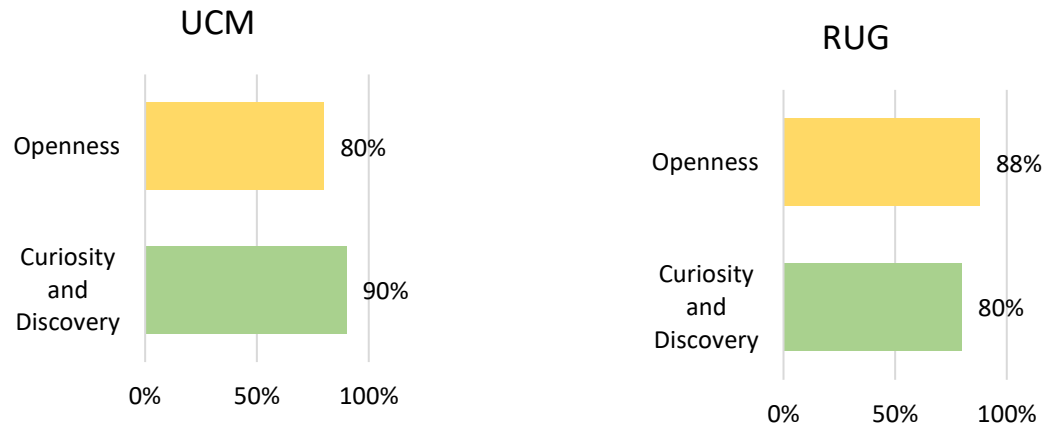
As discussed in Chapter 2, Deardorff (2006) considers the attitudes of 'respect', 'curiosity and discovery', and 'openness' the foundation for developing intercultural competence efficiently. Individuals who aim to develop intercultural competence tend to be curious about other cultures from a respectful point of view, prepared to leave their comfort zones when needed. In this PhD thesis, attitudes were hypothesised to stem from human values.

As explained, *'*curiosity and discovery*'* attitudes are reflected in the questionnaire items related to the 'exploration subdimension', which belongs to the 'continuous learning' dimension, and in the 'global mindset' and 'relationship interest' subdimensions, which belong to the 'interpersonal engagement' dimension of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009).

Results from the questionnaires show on average very high scores. UCM participants scored 'openness' attitudes with 80/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 4/5) and RUG with 88/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.4/5). Regarding 'curiosity and discovery', UCM participants obtained 90/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.50/5), while RUG participants scored 80/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 4/5). These results are illustrated in Figure 63.

Figure 63

Questionnaires—Summary of Attitudes in UCM and RUG



Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.[41]

As can be observed, little variation is found between the samples of both universities. Participants from RUG identified themselves with 'openness' attitudes, willing to leave their comfort zones and explore. Participants from the Spanish university reported, in general, more willingness to get information from other cultures through, for instance, watching films and reading books, despite their lower self-reported levels of second languages and of English used in their country. It is interesting to note that one participant from RUG admitted that the COVID-19 pandemic made them realise they were not as open as they thought they were.

[41] Numbers were normalised to facilitate the use of percentages. In the questionnaires, 5 was the maximum number; thus, 5 is 100%.

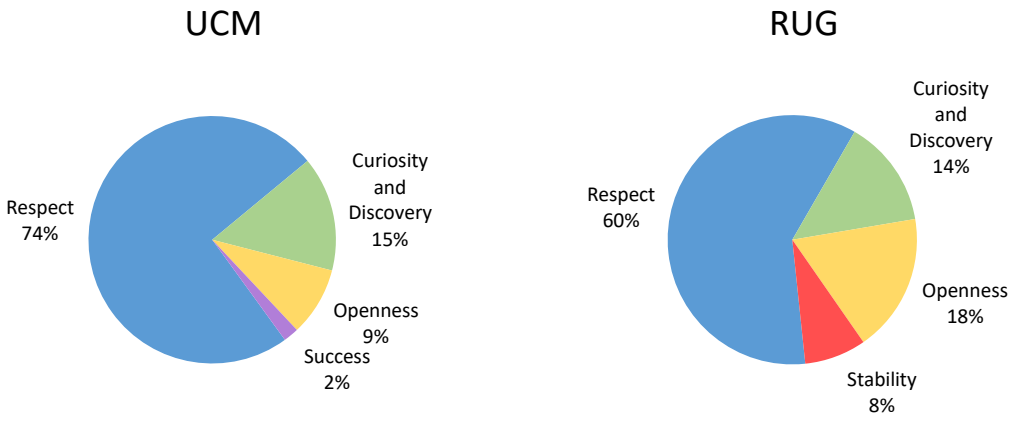
Further, one participant form UCM reported being able to leave their comfort zone, but just to help someone else, not for pleasure.

The differences between the two universities could be explained by the multicultural origins of some of the RUG participants—most probably they were already living in a culture not their own; thus, they would already have left their comfort zones at some point in their lives. If they were living in a place other than where they were born, immersed already in a new culture, it is likely they watched films and read books from their country of origin to keep connected and maintain their native tongue (Bamberger-Hayim, 2018). Given these possible explanations, the attitudinal differences between universities were minimal despite the contextual differences among participants, which is itself an interesting finding.

Focusing on the participants' discourse, 'respect' attitudes were present in 74% (UCM) and 60% (RUG) of the responses revealing attitudes, garnering the first position regarding the attitudes of the participants of this study, followed by 'curiosity and discovery' (UCM, 15%; RUG, 14%) and 'openness' (UCM, 9%; RUG, 18%). These results seem to coincide with the basis of Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence. Nevertheless, two more attitudes emerged but to a much smaller extent compared to the rest of the attitudes: 'stability' (RUG, 8%) and 'success' (UCM, 2%). These results are illustrated in Figure 64.

Figure 64

Interviews—Summary of Attitudes in UCM and RUG



Note. Sample sizes: UCM, *N* = 5; RUG, *N* = 5. Number of utterances: UCM, *N* = 100; RUG, *N* = 50.

It is interesting to note that, like the questionnaire findings, the results obtained from the two universities showed little variation. Specifically, despite the contextual differences, 'respect' seems to be the prevailing attitude shared in the two settings. The attitude was especially characterised by participants' empathy towards those who came from abroad: Their facility at 'putting themselves in others' shoes' is notable despite the extra effort this action may have required on some occasions.

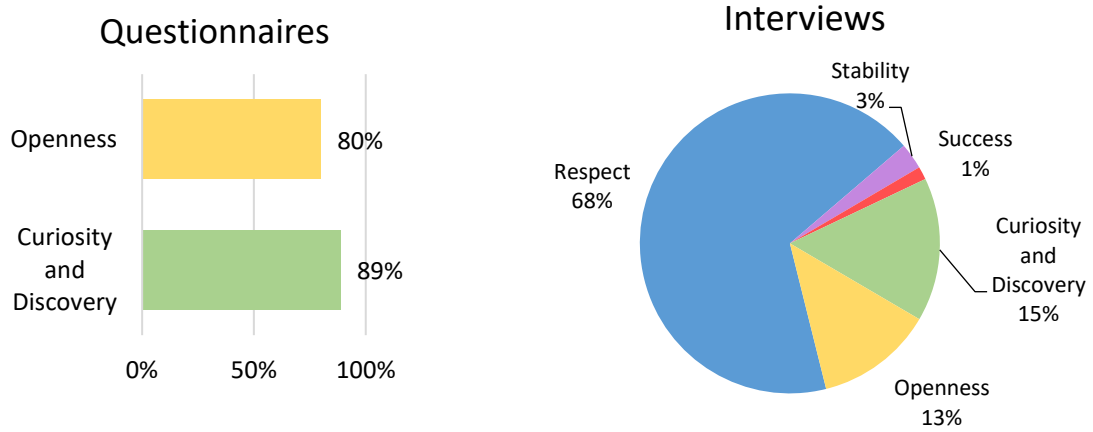
This agreement among participants' 'respect' attitudes, which stem from 'universalism' and 'benevolence' values, aligns with the common hierarchy of values across cultures suggested by Schwartz (2012; see Chapter 3, Section 3.5), in which 'benevolence' values are in the first position, followed by 'universalism' values. Nevertheless, in Schwartz's (2012) hierarchy, 'self-direction' values, resulting in 'openness' attitudes, ranked third, while, in this investigation, they appeared in the fourth position. Moreover, in Schwartz's (2012) hierarchy, 'stimulation' values, which are hypothesised to be the origin of 'curiosity and discovery' attitudes, ranked ninth, while in this research they emerged in second position.

Although the limited size of the research sample (compared to Schwartz's [1992] sample size) is no doubt a factor when interpreting the findings, it is also necessary to reflect on other possible reasons for the discrepancy between Schwartz's results and those obtained from this investigation. One plausible explanation may be related to the fact that almost thirty years have passed since Schwartz's (1992) first investigation and this study. During this time, the world and its diverse societies have changed; thus, values might also have evolved over time.

Comparing results from both data-collection instruments, in the questionnaires, the attitude dimensions obtained on average very high scores ('curiosity and discovery': $\bar{x}$ = 4/5 = 80/100; 'openness': $\bar{x}$ = 4.44/4 = 88.85/100). Regarding the interviews, among the 150 utterances revealing attitudes and their intrinsic values, 14% showed 'curiosity and discovery attitudes', and 11% demonstrated 'openness' attitudes. These findings are illustrated in Figure 65.

Figure 65

Summary of Attitudes in Questionnaires and Interviews



Note. Questionnaires: UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25. Interviews: UCM, *N* = 5, RUG, *N* = 5.[42]

[42] Numbers were normalised to facilitate the use of percentages. In the questionnaires, 5 was the maximum number; thus, 5 is 100%. In the interviews, 100% is 150 (the total number of utterances revealing participants' knowledge and comprehension).

Participants' responses on the questionnaires show a high degree of these attitudes; however, in the analysis of their discourse during the interviews, these attitudes do not seem to appear that often. The reason for these results may be related to the instruments themselves. People may consider themselves quite open and curious, but their discourse does not demonstrate the same level of these attitudes.

In addition, it should be noted that the COVID-19 global pandemic occurred when participants were collaborating in this investigation. Because the interviews were conducted during the year when the virus appeared (2020), as well as during the following year (2021), these exceptional global circumstances may have affected not only participants' values but also their concept of values themselves, as well as their hierarchical order. For instance, the dimension of 'conservation' values may have changed as a response to environmental conditions, leading to possible long-term implications (Daniel et al., 2022).

According to research (Barello & Graffigna, 2020; Cho et al., 2022; Pfattheicher et al., 2020), the COVID-19 pandemic might have caused an increase in empathy not only towards close people ('benevolence' values) but also towards all individuals around the world ('universalism' values). Awareness of being part of one species—the human species—and being residents of one planet might have increased, prompting a decline in ethnocentrism and a rise in ethnorelativism. These tentative conclusions are supported by participants' repetitive use of the word 'people' to avoid differentiating international students from home students, perhaps to integrate them into the 'in-group', thus avoiding the notion of 'us versus them' (Hammer, 2012, p. 121).

Moreover, the increase in the use of social networks during the last decades and especially during the pandemic could have affected the values and attitudes of individuals. The Internet brought opportunities to see the world through the eyes of others, which might have influenced people's capacity for empathy (Qin et al., 2022) as well as their desire to travel and

explore beyond their computer and smartphone screens (Wang & Xia, 2021), thus increasing their 'stimulation' values as well.

Nevertheless, a wide range of factors, such as economic, political, and personal, among many others, can affect human values. Values change as societies and the experiences of those who live in them change; values are far from static (Rokeach, 2008). For this reason, it is necessary to replicate them and understand them in their exact historical time, in their precise contexts, and with their specific populations to avoid stereotypes and baseless generalisations.

According to co-orientational models, specifically, Byram's fifth savoir (1997, 2008), these results may imply participants were able to evaluate themselves critically, admitting to not being completely open to new experiences or curious about other cultures in specific situations. This self-awareness may have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of compositional models, particularly, according to Howard-Hamilton et al.'s (1998) model, attitudes and values are considered the same. This model proposes awareness, which is focused on valuing one's own group and equality in the world; understanding, which implies devaluing discrimination and ethnocentric assumptions; and appreciation, which means valuing risk-taking and enhancing the role of cross-cultural interactions. Results demonstrate that participants of this investigation highly valued their group, as well as the concept of equality, admitting that they worked in internationalisation to make equality real and avoid discrimination and ethnocentrism. They knew their offices were the place international students went when problems arose. They also appreciated positively the risk that international students were taking when arriving in a new place without knowing anyone, demonstrating the importance of using their intercultural abilities to make these students feel safe as they enjoyed their stay.

In terms of developmental models, specifically, Bennet's (1993) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS), participants' attitudes show a very high level of respect

towards other cultures, being at the ethnorelative stage in which they possessed acceptance mindsets. Further, as the model suggests, curiosity is present in participants' results; curiosity motivates searching out cultural differences and thus are part of the 'heartset' dimension (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Nevertheless, Bennett (1993) mentions ambiguity tolerance, which would go against 'stability' attitudes; however, participants show a very low number of responses revealing this value.

According to other causal path/process models, such as Arasaratnam and Doerfel's (2005) integrated model of intercultural competence, participants show a high degree of motivation and sensation-seeking, which would correspond to 'stimulation' values towards interacting with people from other cultures and towards internationalisation in general. Participants perceived internationalisation as an opportunity to meet people from different parts of the world and learn from them.

Finally, in terms of adaptation models, the attitude acculturation model (Berry et al., 1989) is especially relevant for RUG participants because almost half of them were living in a country that was not their country of origin. These participants show positive attitudes towards the host society, in this case, Groningen, in the Netherlands, and just one of them mentioned during the interview their society of origin. Thus, in general terms, they seemed to be at the 'integration' dimension—they recognised that multicultural groups could coexist in a multiselected system in which they could maintain their identities while acknowledging the significance of maintaining the working collective. In other words, their multicultural backgrounds may have enhanced their intercultural competence because they had already experienced many intercultural situations, even in their daily lives at work.

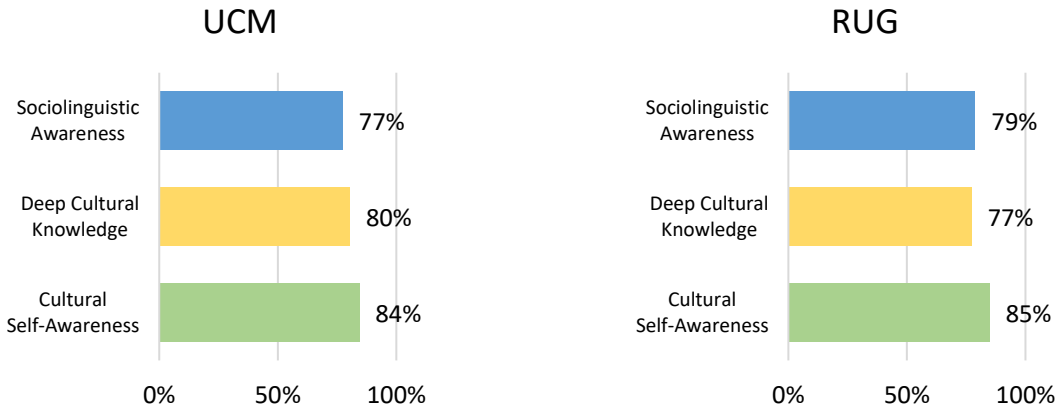
7.3. Knowledge, Comprehension, and Skills

The questionnaire items that examined the dimensions of knowledge, comprehension, and skills belong to the 'hardiness' dimension, composed of the 'positive regard' and

'emotional resilience' subdimensions, and to the 'nonverbal linguistic skills' section. As illustrated in Figure 66, 'cultural self-awareness' was scored with 84/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22/5) by UCM participants and with 85/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.24/5) by RUG participants. Second, 'deep cultural knowledge' was scored with 80/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.02/5) by UCM participants and with 77/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.86/5) by RUG's. Finally, 'sociolinguistic awareness' was scored with 77.44/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.87/5) by UCM participants and with 3.94/5 (79/100) by RUG's.

Figure 66

Questionnaires—Summary of Knowledge, Comprehension, and Skills in UCM and RUG



Note. UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25.[43]

In addition, the differences between universities may have been caused by the different backgrounds of participants. As discussed, some of the participants from RUG had nationalities other than Dutch, which implies they were living in a different country from where they were born. In this context, part of this sample may have already faced environments that were new to them, making them more aware of stereotypes and prejudices. Further, as already mentioned, their international backgrounds could mean that these participants lived intercultural situations

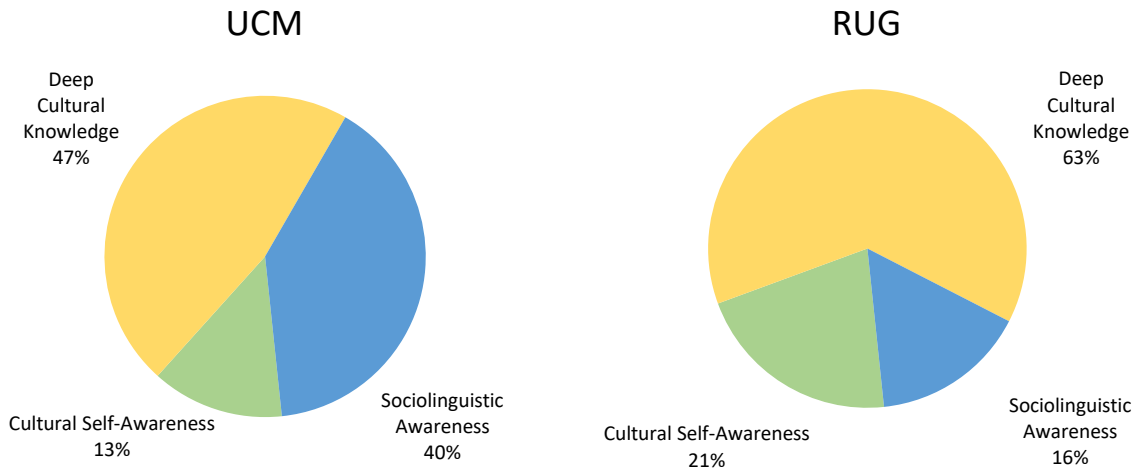
[43] Numbers were normalised to facilitate the use of percentages. In the questionnaires, 5 was the maximum number; thus, 5 is 100%.

daily. Further, it is possible their colleagues were more in contact with other cultures, given their multicultural backgrounds. These contextual differences could have affected the sociolinguistic aspect—that is, RUG participants may have already suffered dissonances because of nonverbal communication problems, thus enhancing their awareness. Nevertheless, UCM participants self-reported slightly higher scores for the question about controlling thoughts and emotions in intercultural situations. As mentioned, self-critical biases may have played a role in these results—in other words, RUG participants, who were more exposed to intercultural situations, might have been more willing to admit they were not completely able to control themselves because of their own experiences, potentially showing a high degree of self-awareness.

Focusing on the discursive construction of participants' experiences in internationalisation, the administrative and support staff from RUG show a higher number of instances demonstrating their intercultural knowledge and comprehension (38 extracts), compared to the UCM participants, who reported 15 extracts. Among the extracts, 'deep cultural knowledge' stands out (UCM, 46.66%; RUG, 63.15%). 'Cultural self-awareness' was evident in 13% of the UCM extracts and in 21% of those from RUG. 'Sociolinguistic awareness' emerged in 40% of the extracts shared by UCM participants and in 15% of those stated by RUG participants. These findings are illustrated in Figure 67.

Figure 67

Interviews—Summary of Knowledge, Comprehension, and Skills in UCM and RUG



Note. Sample sizes: UCM, *N* = 5; RUG, *N* = 5. Number of utterances: UCM, *N* = 15; RUG, *N* = 38.

Regarding these results, it should be noted that even though intercultural knowledge, comprehension, and skills aspects were not mentioned, they nevertheless emerged during the interviews, which itself is a remarkable finding. For example, participants mentioned expressions such as ‘our way of being’ or ‘I was very Dutch’, demonstrating their high level of cultural self-awareness. In terms of deep cultural knowledge, participants from both universities used similar vocabulary to talk about their intercultural experiences, such as ‘idiosyncrasies’, ‘worldview’, and ‘cultural diversity’, among other terms. In addition, participants from both institutions demonstrate a high degree of sociolinguistic awareness when they explicitly mentioned ‘pragmatics’ as a skill necessary to interact with people from other cultures.

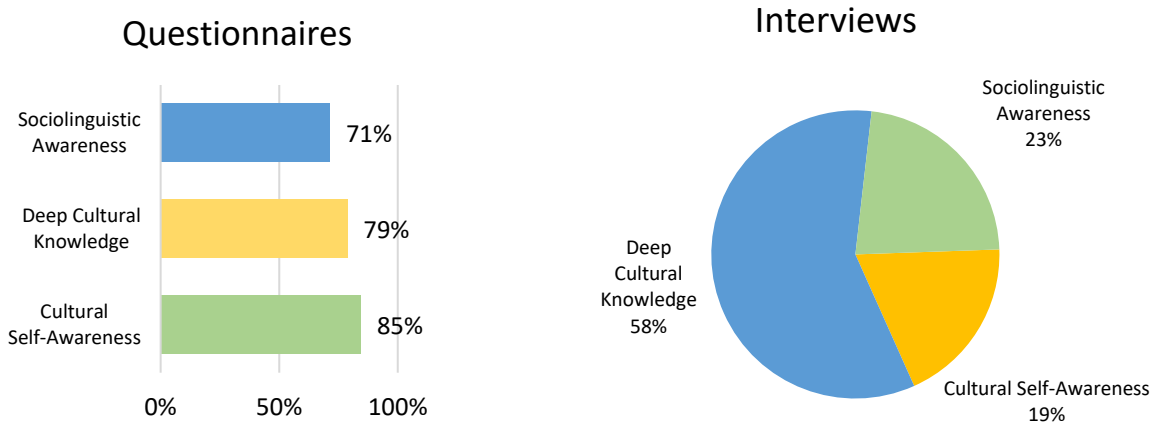
The fact that RUG participants show more extracts revealing intercultural knowledge, comprehension, and skills, compared to UCM participants, may be related to the multicultural background some RUG participants possessed, as well as to the multicultural atmosphere they reported was present in their offices. In any case, the fact that the administrative and support

staff of both universities obtained these results is outstanding. They were not required to be expert at cultural or linguistic studies; thus, they may have learned this knowledge and improved their skills through their experiences during the years they had been working in internationalisation or through voluntary training.

Comparing both data-collection tools, participants of this study obtained highly positive results on the questionnaires for the dimensions of intercultural knowledge, comprehension, and skills, in line with the codes that emerged during the interviews. The dimension of 'cultural self-awareness' obtained on average a score of 84.5/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.23/5) on the questionnaires; in comparison, in the interview data, 18.86% of the total of utterances revealing 'intercultural skills' show participants' cultural self-awareness. In general, participants disclosed a high level of awareness of their own cultures as well as awareness of how their own cultures affected their actions and behaviours. The dimension of 'deep cultural knowledge' obtained a score of 78.80/100 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.84/5) on the questionnaires; this dimension was the most frequently found skill revealed by the interviews (58.49%). Finally, 'sociolinguistic awareness' obtained high scores ($\bar{x}$ = 71.40/100 = 3.57/5) on the questionnaires and was constructed discursively by participants in 22.64% of the interview responses revealing intercultural knowledge. These findings are illustrated in Figure 68.

Figure 68

Summary of Knowledge, Comprehension, and Skills in Questionnaires and Interviews



Note. Questionnaires: UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25. Interviews: UCM, *N* = 5; RUG, *N* = 5.[44]

As observed, participants demonstrate high levels of cultural self-awareness. They reported being conscious of how their own cultures defined their actions and behaviours (Extracts 50 and 51). In other words, they were able to take off their own cultural 'lens' to try to comprehend international visitors. In addition, deep cultural knowledge stands out; these personnel seemed to be aware of how individuals might be influenced by their culture and how it affected communication (Extracts 55 and 56).

In addition, participants explained how they reflected on the existence of cultural differences when dissonances were likely to occur (e.g., Extract 58). Additionally, they show awareness of how circumstances affected understanding of the world and thus of the sociolinguistic aspects that should be employed to avoid conflict (i.e., sociolinguistic awareness; Extract 68). Participants acknowledged their job positions in international universities had taught them about respect and about how others saw the world (Extract 62).

[44] Numbers were normalised to facilitate the use of percentages. In the questionnaires, 5 was the maximum number; thus, 5 is 100%. In the interviews, 100% is 53 (the total number of utterances revealing participants' knowledge and comprehension).

Further, culture-specific knowledge was not directly evaluated through these data-collection and data-analysis tools, but it was implicit in some of participants' self-experienced critical incidents with specific cultures.

According to the co-orientational models, specifically, Byram's fifth savoir (1997, 2008), participants demonstrate a high level of critical self-awareness on the questionnaires, admitting they did not know everything about their own culture or about other cultures. Nevertheless, the interviews show a high degree of all kinds of knowledge. These results would predict the participants' ability not to trust baseless generalisations and stereotypes.

In terms of compositional models, specifically, according to Howard-Hamilton et al.'s (1998) model, skills and knowledge are separate dimensions. However, they are divided into the same subdimensions: awareness, understanding, and appreciation. Findings of this research show participants had to ability to engage in self-reflection, admitting their different levels of knowledge regarding, for instance, nonverbal language in other cultures. This skill implies their ability to identify similarities and differences with other cultures. Further, they demonstrate knowledge of themselves—being aware of their culture and how it affected intercultural communication, mentioning, for instance, 'And maybe our way of being (…) can slightly shock a person from a different nationality or culture' (Extract 50) and describing how people from various cultures perceived the world differently. Regarding understanding, they show an impressive ability to take multiple perspectives, supported by their intercultural empathy, understanding multiple contexts, despite the effort this may cost in some situations. They are also aware of oppressions and understood how different factors influenced, not just culture but also gender and social class, among others. Finally, regarding appreciation, participants directly mentioned their offices fought against discriminatory acts, for instance, in the cases of students with disabilities who wanted to have the same international experiences as other students—such interventions are themselves elements of social change. Participants' self-reported

experiences show their ability to communicate with other cultures, including their awareness of all the elements that affect intercultural communication. Nevertheless, real interactions were not examined. Thus, these findings show only an illustrative picture of participants' intercultural competence.

Regarding developmental models, particularly, Bennett's (1993) model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS), participant's knowledge, comprehension, and skills show they possessed adaptation mindsets—they were aware of the differences between their own culture and others' cultures and understood how communication was affected by these factors.

According to causal path/process models, specifically, Arasaratnam and Doerfel's (2005) integrated model of intercultural competence, participants' knowledge and skills seem to have been acquired mostly through their years of experience working in internationalisation, and for some of them, through living abroad. This model equates intercultural experience with intercultural training, which agrees with the results obtained from this study. Nevertheless, training on intercultural competence would enhance all the dimensions of intercultural competence development.

Finally, in terms of adaptation models, in particular, the attitude acculturation model (Berry et al., 1989), participants' positive results in knowledge, comprehension, and skills helped them integrate themselves (especially those who were not part of the predominant culture) and international visitors into the larger society.

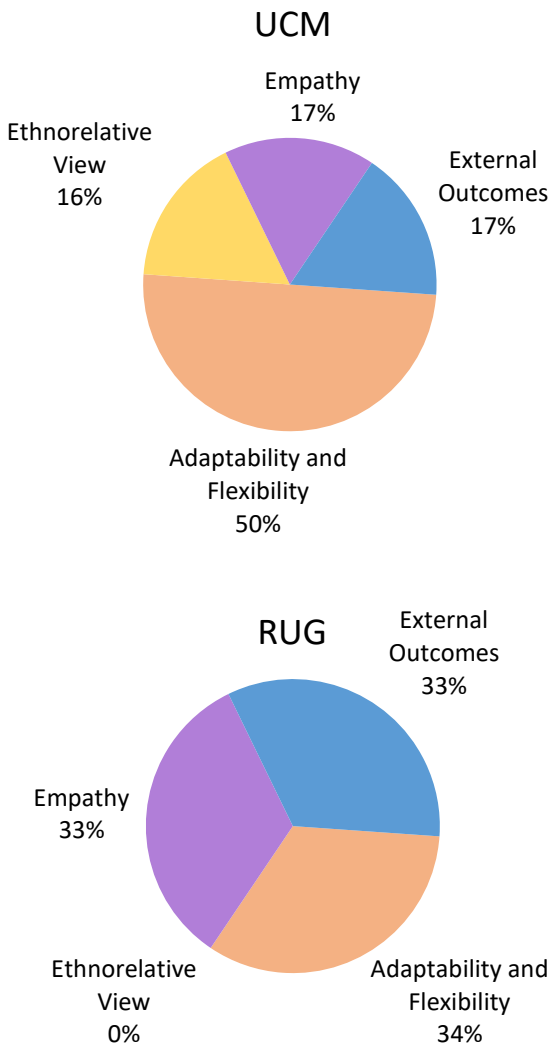
7.4. Internal and External Outcomes

Focusing on the questionnaires, the internal and external outcomes were examined according to participants' written comments. Among the 12 comments shared by UCM participants revealing the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence, 50% (6) reveal 'adaptability and flexibility', 16% (2) 'ethnorelative view', 16% (2) 'empathy', and 16% (2) demonstrate the external outcomes. Among the 6 RUG participants' comments that reveal

the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence, 33% (2) reveal ‘adaptability and flexibility’, 33% (2) ‘empathy’, and 33% (2) the external outcomes of behaving and communicating efficiently in intercultural situations. The results are illustrated in Figure 69 for the two universities.

Figure 69

Questionnaires—Summary of Internal and External Outcomes of IC in UCM and RUG



Note. Sample sizes: UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25. Number of utterances: UCM, *N* = 12; RUG, *N* = 6.

Participants’ written comments on the questionnaires reveal their high degree of self-awareness: They admitted some things about other cultures were difficult for them to accept,

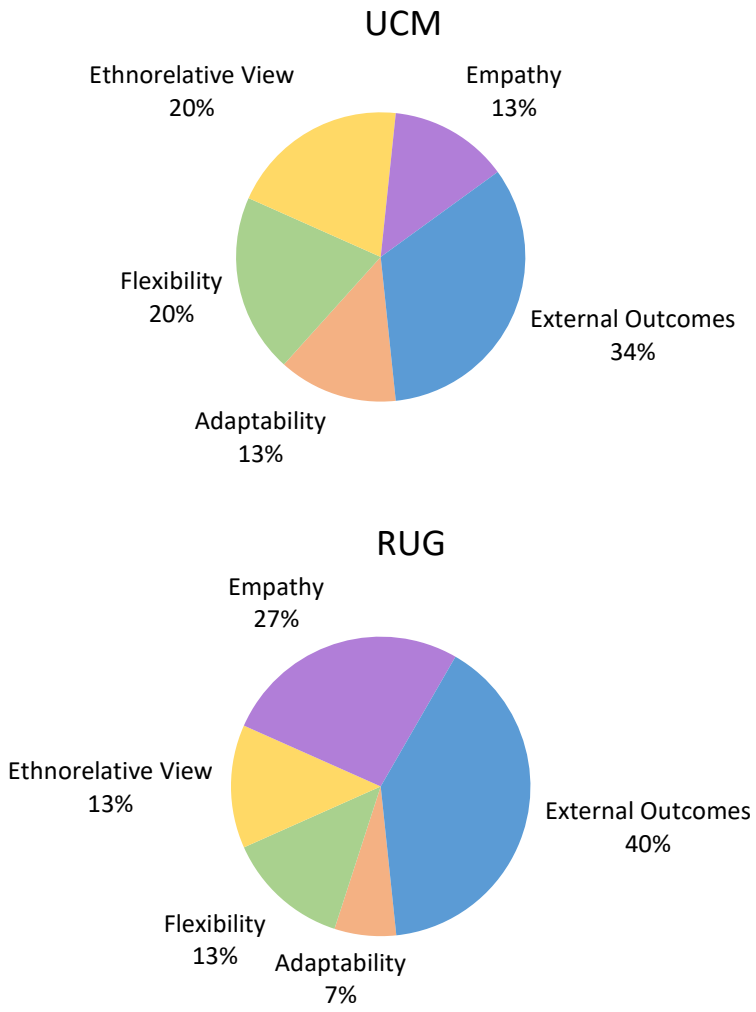
but being aware of this, they considered themselves flexible and able to adapt to the different situations they experienced by, for instance, imitating what people from the target culture did (Comment 19). Similarly, empathy is revealed by participants' different lived experiences. In the case of UCM, some participants demonstrate ethnorelative views of the situations narrated. Finally, participants from both universities reported being able to act and behave efficiently in intercultural situations.

Focusing on the interviews, specifically on the reactions of the five people chosen from each university to respond to the three intercultural situations, 'adaptability' is demonstrated in 13% of the reactions of UCM participants and in 6% of RUG participants. 'Flexibility' is shown by 20% of the reactions of UCM participants and by 13% of those from RUG. An 'ethnorelative perspective' of the situations is demonstrated by 20% of UCM participants and by 13% of those from RUG. 'Empathy' is identified in 13% of reactions by UCM participants and in 26% of those from RUG. Finally, the 'external outcomes' of intercultural competence are demonstrated by 33% of the reactions of UCM participants and by 40% of those from RUG. These results are illustrated in Figure 70.

The analysis of participants' reported reactions to the three intercultural situations (or of their previous experiences when dealing with these types of situations if they had already lived such experiences) demonstrate they would be adaptable and flexible to students' linguistic needs (Extracts 82 and 83). Moreover, participants show empathy when considering the difficulties international students endured if they had not mastered the official language of the country, not just at an academic level but also at the personal level. The staff wanted students to integrate into the country and fully enjoy their stay (Extract 86).

Figure 70

Interviews—Summary of Internal and External Outcomes of IC in UCM and RUG



Note. Sample sizes: UCM, *N* = 5; RUG, *N* = 5. Number of utterances: UCM, *N* = 15; RUG, *N* = 15.

Further, when receiving gifts from international visitors, participants perceived the act with optimism and gratitude because they felt that their work was valued (Extract 88). Their reported behaviours reflect these perceptions. Some of them demonstrate an ethnorelative view of the act of gift-giving across cultures—gift-giving may imply different meanings depending on the cultural backgrounds of the people involved and of the gift itself (Extracts 90 and 91). This awareness reinforced participants' knowledge of their own cultures and of other cultures, as well as of how culture affects people's actions and behaviours.

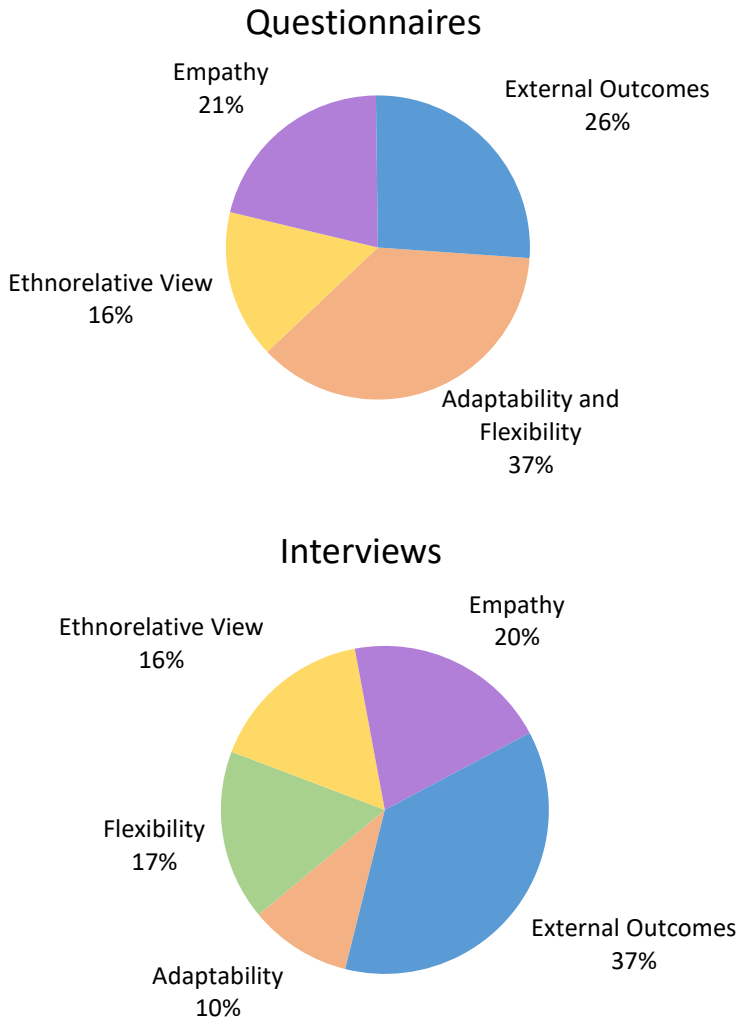
Finally, when dealing with nonverbal communication problems, participants show ethnorelative perspectives towards kinesics in their awareness that gestures are not universal. For this reason, they tried not to use gestures to avoid possible misunderstandings (Extract 93). Moreover, participants reported having generally good relationships with international students (Extract 96), whom they described as open-minded, sympathetic, and unlikely to feel threatened or angry.

Through analysing the administrative and support staff's personal experiences and reactions to different situations, the importance of intercultural competence to the work they performed in international institutions is confirmed, as previously hypothesised by research (Arasatnam et al., 2010; Calloway-Thomas et al., 2017).

Comparing the results obtained from the main data-collection tools in terms of the internal outcomes of intercultural competence, on the questionnaires, 36% of participants' written comments reveal 'adaptability' and 'flexibility', which always appeared together (e.g., Extract 13). During the interviews, 'adaptability' is demonstrated by 10% and 'flexibility' by 16% of the responses revealing these internal and external outcomes. Participants' 'ethnorelative view' is revealed by 15% of the written comments on the questionnaires and by 16% of the reactions to the scenarios provided during the interviews. In terms of 'empathy', the element is demonstrated in 21% of the written comments in the questionnaires and in 16% of the extracts in the interviews. Finally, the 'external outcome' of intercultural competence—in other words, the extent to which participants showed their ability to behave and communicate appropriately in intercultural situations—is revealed in 26% of the written comments and in 36% of the reactions to the scenarios provided during the interviews. These results are illustrated in Figure 71.

Figure 71

Summary of Internal and External Outcomes of IC in Questionnaires and Interviews



Note. Sample sizes: questionnaires, UCM, *N* = 50; RUG, *N* = 25; interviews, UCM, *N* = 5; RUG, *N* = 5. Number of utterances: questionnaires, *N* = 19, interviews, *N* = 30.

The results obtained from both data-collection methods seem to align in terms of the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence, even though such outcomes were not directly examined. As mentioned, for both internationalised universities, actual interactions between these personnel and international visitors should be observed to determine if staff members are able to behave and communicate successfully in intercultural interactions. Thus, these results may only be useful to predict the degree of success in performance among the

participants of these investigations in intercultural situations, especially when dealing with intercultural critical incidents. However, intercultural competence is a lifelong process.

The fact that the findings from the two main data-collection methods align validates to some extent the use of this multimethodological approach. These findings support the idea that the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence can be assessed to some degree by comparing participants' written comments on questionnaires and their reactions to scenarios provided during the interviews. Even though different tools would be necessary to measure their intercultural competence properly, this multimethodological tool could provide a representative picture of how participants would act in such situations.

According to co-orientational models, specifically, Byram's fifth savoir (1997, 2008), the high degree of participants' critical cultural awareness and of their own social identities and behaviours would pave the way to communicate successfully in intercultural interactions.

In terms of compositional models, particularly, Howard-Hamilton et al.'s (1998) model, the intercultural competence internal and external outcomes seem to be part of this model's knowledge dimension. As mentioned, participants reported awareness of the effects of cultural differences on communication, which could predict successful interaction with people from other cultures.

Regarding the effects of cultural differences on communication, these comments demonstrate that the participants of this investigation possessed acceptance and adaptation mindsets, according to the development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS; Bennett, 1993). None of the participants seemed to be at any of the ethnocentric stages; rather, they were all at ethnorelative stages, and some were moving towards the integration mindset. Nevertheless, the instruments used to examine participants' intercultural competence do not facilitate observing if the integration of their attitudes, knowledge, and skills truly took place.

However, these positive results could serve to anticipate successful interactions with people from other cultures.

According to other causal path/process models, such as Arasaratnam and Doerfel's (2005) integrated model of intercultural competence, participants' high levels of empathy was key to their development of a global attitude, resulting in a positive interaction involvement, which would lead to positive results in terms of in intercultural competence.

Finally, regarding adaptation models, specifically, the attitude acculturation model (Berry et al., 1989), participants' adaptability, flexibility, empathy, and ethnorelative view would ease the path for international students to be integrated into the host society, which would ultimately lead to communicating and behaving successfully.

7.5. Implications

The implications of these findings are classified into the three main research aspects of this investigation: methodological, analytical, and conceptual.

7.5.1. Methodological Implications

Given the difficulty of measuring human values and their resulting attitudes, the use of a multimethodological approach provided a broader perspective of this phenomenon, allowing unanticipated attitudes to arise and thus obtaining highly accurate, robust results supported by the data. Similarly, using this methodology to examine knowledge, comprehension, and skills helped to contrast the emic and etic perspectives. This approach is especially noteworthy considering the challenge inherent in examining theoretical dimensions without asking theoretical questions and in evaluating skills without observing real intercultural situations.

Regarding the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence, it should be noted that Deardorff (2006) mentions the possibility of moving from the 'attitudes' dimension or from the 'knowledge and comprehension' dimension directly to the external outcomes of intercultural competence. For instance, individuals can have some intercultural knowledge and

the skills to apply it to intercultural situations, and thus be interculturally competent to some extent. Nevertheless, according to the process model, the more requisite attitudes, knowledge, and skills individuals possess, the more interculturally competent they are likely to be.

7.5.2. Analytical Implications

Despite the limited sample studied, this investigation could serve to motivate further human values research focused on examining language in a broader geographical context. Given the lack of taxonomies on these topics, establishing a direct relationship between human values and attitudes, as performed in this investigation, could facilitate the comprehensive study of human values through language. The discursive study of informants from multiple cultural backgrounds in the context of the theory of human values could be a potential method to conceptualise the diverse kinds of self-attributes to which individuals may be sensitive during interactions (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Further, the values revealed by the linguistic analysis of participants' discourse aligned with the attitudes they self-reported in the questionnaires and conveyed in the interviews. Thus, the direct relationship between values and attitudes, supported by Nelson (1990), whose study demonstrated that people's attitudes are influenced by their values, is reinforced by the findings of the current investigation.

Regarding knowledge, comprehension, and skills, it should be noted that culture-specific knowledge was not measured using the questionnaires and interviews because these two instruments did not include culture-specific questions. However, culture-specific knowledge was implicit in some of the answers. For instance, according to the experiences narrated by participants, some knew how to react to intercultural dissonances because of specific knowledge of certain cultures, at least the ones with which they interacted more frequently. Additionally, these declarations showed their intercultural skills at putting their knowledge and comprehension into practice. For this reason, these elements were examined together.

As mentioned, none of these dimensions was intended to be addressed through the interviews—participants were not directly asked about their knowledge regarding their own or other cultures, nor were they asked about sociolinguistic aspects. Nevertheless, participants demonstrated their possession of high levels of these dimensions through their discourses on internationalisation. This fact is itself a noteworthy finding, especially considering participants' possible previous experiences and backgrounds on these topics. Further, this analytical tool has shown how notions that seem to be theoretical in principle can be also measured linguistically through the discursive study of informants.

Further, this analysis has demonstrated that empathy is especially important for the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities because they often handle sensitive issues, such as, for example, international students' mental health problems, vaccinations required for visitors coming from specific countries, economic problems, and the deaths of loved ones while being abroad. Special circumstances such as these occurring in the internationalisation context might have gone unnoticed using other kinds of data-analytics tools.

Finally, regarding the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence, the alignment of the findings from the different data-collection methods supports the idea that participants' narrations of their personal experiences and their self-reported reactions in intercultural scenarios could serve to obtain a representative picture of some of the outcomes of the intercultural competence process. Nevertheless, these findings are not sufficient for determining participant's intercultural competence by themselves—other methodological and analytical instruments would be needed to do so.

7.5.3. Conceptual Implications

As hypothesised in this research, human values are internal, representing responses to the different circumstances people have experienced during their lives. In contrast, attitudes

are the external, visible result of these values, ultimately determining the successful or unsuccessful development of intercultural competence. For this reason, the growth of intercultural competence depends strongly on altering these internal values through experiences and training. Thus, even though human values are highly context-dependent and difficult to examine because they are constructed according to the multiple factors that affect individuals throughout their lives, values are the key element on which to work to establish a solid basis for improving intercultural competence.

The findings of this investigation agree with Deardorff's (2006) model suggesting that successfully developing intercultural competence rests on the foundation of the attitudes of 'respect', 'curiosity and discovery', and 'openness', which correspond to 'universalism' and 'benevolence' values, 'stimulation' values, and 'self-direction' values, respectively. The fact that the same values emerged among participants from both universities is evidence of the hypothesised universality of these values and of its common hierarchy across cultures (Schwartz, 2012). Further, by establishing a direct relationship between values and attitudes, these findings may imply the universality of attitudes and thus of the foundation of intercultural competence.

7.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and compared the findings obtained from the four data-gathering tools: questionnaires, interviews, narrations of self-experienced critical incidents, and reactions to intercultural situations. Results were divided into the dimensions of Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence evaluated in this research. First, participants' attitudes, measured by their questionnaires' scores, were compared to how they constructed their internationalisation experiences discursively. Second, participants' intercultural knowledge, comprehension, and skills were discussed in depth. Next, participant's capacity to be flexible, adaptable, and empathetic, as well as their ability to observe the world from an

ethnorelative perspective, and to communicate and behave effectively and appropriately in intercultural interactions—the internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence—were examined according to their reactions to the three scenarios provided during the interviews and compared to participants' written comments shared in the questionnaires. Finally, the methodological, analytical, and conceptual implications were explained. In the next and final chapter, the conclusions reached from this investigation and the limitations of the study are explained, and future lines of research are suggested.

CHAPTER 8

Concluding Remarks

8.1. Introduction

Framed against the theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 1992), the overall purpose of this investigation was to study the different dimensions of the process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) among an understudied set of participants—the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities. In this closing chapter (Chapter 8), the conclusions reached from this investigation are explained through answering the research questions and summarising results on intercultural competence (8.2). Finally, the limitations of the investigation are described (8.3), and pointers to future research are suggested (8.4).

8.2. Conclusions

The research questions formulated to guide this investigation are answered in the following sections to offer an abridged overview on the core findings.

8.2.1. RQ1. How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities perceive their own intercultural competence?

The methodological tool used to measure how participants perceived their own intercultural competence was an intra-university survey based on the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (The Kozai Group, 2009). Results are categorised into each dimension and subdimensions of this scale as follows: continuous learning (self-awareness and exploration), interpersonal engagement (global mindset and relationship interest), hardiness (named 'psychological and attitudinal skills' in the survey and encompassing positive regard and emotional resilience), linguistic skills, and nonverbal language awareness.

In the 'continuous learning' dimension, specifically, on the 'self-awareness' subdimension, living abroad or having lived abroad seems to have had a positive influence. RUG participants came from a wide range of countries, which could have enhanced their

perceptions of self and self-culture. Further, the oldest group of participants (60–69 years old) obtained the highest score on the 'continuous learning' dimension. Because of their age, participants in this age span might have interacted with more people from different cultures than had younger participants. Thus, these intercultural interactions, in addition to their years of experience working in internationalisation units, could have served as sources of knowledge, similar to living or travelling abroad, situations in which humans tend to realise that their values, habits, and behaviours are not universal but culturally inherited.

In the 'exploration' subdimension, participants' performance scores were slightly higher compared to the 'self-awareness' subdimension scores, which implies that 'curiosity and discovery' attitudes could have compensated for limited experience living abroad or working in international offices. Further, those who were not living in their country of origin when they completed the questionnaires—that is, internationals living in the Netherlands, in this case—may have already left their so-called comfort zones. Regarding age, the youngest group of participants (20–29 years old) obtained the highest scores, concurring with previous research suggesting that young individuals tend to be more open to exploring (Feather, 1975; Schwartz, 1992; Taylor & Keeter, 2010). However, the oldest age group (60–69 years old) obtained the second position, a finding that could stem from historical events (e.g., a forty-year dictatorship in the case of Spain) that prevented these participants from exploring during their youth. Further, the senior group had lived more events and experiences in their job positions, compared to younger participants. Therefore, their own perceptions—both of themselves and of others—may have evolved, as these results reflect.

Regarding the 'interpersonal engagement' dimension, results in the 'global mindset' subdimension showed that attitudes are essential to learning about other cultures; that is, without interest in other cultures, intercultural competence cannot be developed. The youngest group of participants seemed more willing to learn about other cultures, possibly because of

their higher English proficiency levels, compared to the remaining age groups. Moreover, other factors—apart from individual socioeconomic and psychological circumstances—may have influenced these reported results. For instance, the fact that younger participants might be 'less established', without permanent jobs, without mortgages to be paid or children or elders to be looked after, means they may have enjoyed more opportunities to travel and meet people from other cultures (Yousaf, 2018).

In the 'relationship interest' subdimension, participants obtained the highest scores on average compared to the rest of the dimensions and subdimensions. Several factors may have influenced participants' interest in relating to people from other cultures. For example, the fact that 34% of RUG participants had nationalities other than Dutch means they may have been already living in a new culture; thus, they may have been 'forced' to establish these intercultural relationships. Further, those who were Dutch had colleagues from varied cultural backgrounds; hence, these intercultural interactions were more likely to happen among RUG participants. In addition, linguistic skills seemed to be critical in this dimension. The youngest group (20–29 years old) showed more willingness to interact with visitors from other cultures, compared to other age groups, perhaps corresponding to their English proficiency (Abdullah, 2019). Further, these results may have stemmed from the different types of trips younger participants did, compared to the older groups, for economic reasons and other factors. For instance, on their trips, they may have been more used to sharing rooms with locals or internationals than were older participants or more familiar with participating in volunteer programmes, which increased their opportunities to interact with people from other cultures (Vveinhardt, 2019).

On average, participants reported having between 5 and 10 friends from other cultures, which partially corresponded to the high level of importance they gave to intercultural relations. The senior group of participants (60–69 years old) reported having the highest number of friends from other cultures, a finding that could have stemmed from their years

working in international offices. Additionally, age itself should be considered: These older participants had had more time to establish social relationships and develop friendships.

Regarding the ‘hardiness’ dimension, specifically in the ‘positive regard’ subdimension, participants seemed to think positively of people from other cultures. Their positive regard may have been attributable to their job positions in international offices, influenced by their multicultural origins, or both. In other words, if they were used to interacting with individuals from the out-group, they might have been more inclined to show positive attitudes towards unknown visitors (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021).

In addition, participants’ emotional resilience may have been strengthened by their job positions. Given that working in international offices provided them with the opportunity to experience intercultural interactions, they may have been less affected by differences and thus less likely to rely on stereotypes and prejudices. Moreover, they showed a high degree of self-awareness by acknowledging they were not completely open to novelty and challenges, something that some of them admitted having learned after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The youngest group of participants particularly stood out in the ‘emotional resilience’ dimension. This finding could be related to the different educational systems this distinct age group attended. Those educated closer to the present time would have been more familiar with intercultural differences surfacing because of globalisation and internationalisation (thanks to the Erasmus programme, for instance; Sobkowiak, 2019), while participants in the older groups were exposed to more inward-looking educational experiences. Also worth bearing in mind are the advances of technology, especially in social media, which bring humans together from all over the world, potentially enhancing awareness and acceptance of diversity (Qin et al., 2022; Rawal & Deardorff, 2021).

The final dimension was devoted to linguistic skills, believed to facilitate but not to guarantee intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2004). The extrinsic motivation that

encouraged participants to learn languages may have stemmed from a desire to be able to communicate with the highest number of people possible. For instance, participants from the Spanish university mentioned English because of its international role. Nevertheless, those from the Dutch university mentioned Spanish as the international language because these Dutch participants had already mastered English. Participants between 20 and 29 years old reported knowing the highest number of languages and being the most fluent in their second languages. These findings are supported by previous reports stating 21- to 30-year-olds have the highest level of English in Europe (Education First, 2021, p. 19), thereby representing one of the most positive outcomes of the internationalisation of higher education.

Finally, regarding nonverbal language, participants reported high average scores in both awareness of self-culture and awareness of other cultures. Those aged between 20 and 29 years old reported the highest level of awareness, implying that the greater the number of languages spoken and the higher the level of proficiency in those languages, the higher the awareness of nonverbal language. Further, as mentioned, this age group most probably travelled more frequently than did older age groups, and the types of trips they made might have allowed them to interact more with locals and thus help them be more aware of nonverbal communication. In addition, they might also have related more with people from other cultures daily, compared to older groups, because of internationalisation programmes—such as Erasmus, for instance, as already mentioned—which might have influenced their awareness. Moreover, consuming more media from other cultures could explain these reported results as well (Schneider et al., 2022).

In sum, on the questionnaires, participants reported being aware of cultural differences; in general, they seemed to value and respect other cultures and showed interest in learning from them. Participants admitted that, when travelling, relating to locals as tourists was difficult, but they tried to learn from other cultures in other contexts, such as, for example, in their offices,

thereby improving their intercultural competence. Language proficiency was considered an important element, sometimes a barrier. Nevertheless, participants reported having flexible minds and being willing to adapt cognitively and behaviourally to any intercultural interaction. In conclusion, from an emic perspective, participants self-scored with high results in terms of intercultural competence.

8.2.2. RQ2. How do the administrative and support staff of internationalised higher education institutions perceive university internationalisation?

An interview protocol was designed to answer the remaining research questions. According to the interview data, in general, participants seemed to perceive internationalisation as an opportunity to establish relationships with people from other cultures and thus took advantage of the chance to learn from them. Participants reported that interactions with visitors from other cultures made daily life and routines more thrilling. Further, participants admitted being more interested in international visitors than in students and staff from their home universities. In addition, they acknowledged they were kinder to foreigners because they comprehended the difficulties of being in a different country, thus demonstrating empathy. Participants emphasised that they tried not to differentiate between foreign students and home students; in fact, some admitted they worked to make equality possible. Moreover, participants seemed to be aware of their own cultures and of how their cultures affected interactions, adapting themselves behaviourally with the aim of avoiding conflict and offense.

In these interviews, participants reported that culture was one aspect of identity that could cause dissonances, but not the only one. They seemed to be flexible and adaptable to their interlocutors' cultures and languages, and they provided useful solutions in case something went wrong. Some of them compared their jobs in international offices with travelling, because of the opportunity to meet visitors from all around the globe. They admitted internationalisation had shaped them and changed their views of the world. A few participants

indicated that intercultural interactions could cause frustration. Nevertheless, in general terms, findings suggest that internationalisation made participants' jobs more dynamic, breaking their daily routine, which they greatly appreciated.

8.2.3. RQ3. What values do participants' linguistic choices reveal when talking about internationalisation and how are these values constructed discursively?

After examining participants' interviews in depth, 'universalism' was the value that appeared in most of the utterances revealing values. The most remarkable linguistic marker that characterised this value was the emphasis participants gave to the word 'people' to clarify that foreigners were not just visitors or numbers; participants hoped to make foreigners feel part of the in-group. Additionally, using the verb 'to understand' to refer to the main task of those working in internationalised universities demonstrated empathy, an essential quality for those guided by 'universalism' values. In fact, most of the 'universalism' values were found when participants described the experience of working in these units. Internationalisation seemed to function as a strategy that facilitated equal opportunities.

'Stimulation' values were revealed mainly in the frequent use of the adjective 'interesting' to describe participants' job positions and the intercultural interactions they often experienced. Further, using the noun 'learning' to explain the advantages of their job positions was characteristic of those guided by these values. Most of the 'stimulation' values emerged when participants described their professional experiences. Overall, internationalisation was perceived as a positive challenge that made life more interesting.

'Self-direction' values were evident in the use of the adjectives 'new', 'dynamic', and 'alive' to describe participants' professional experiences in internationalisation offices. Participants noted how they felt when relating with visitors from other cultures. Thus, internationalisation seemed to work as a motivator that made those guided by self-direction values feel more alive.

‘Benevolence’ values were found when participants mentioned the verb ‘to share’ to refer to their colleagues—that is, those with whom they were in frequent contact (i.e., the in-group)—and to give credit to them. For participants guided by ‘benevolence’ values, internationalisation seemed to be perceived as an opportunity to enlarge the in-group.

‘Security’ values were revealed by participants’ use of the adjectives ‘frustrated’ and ‘exhausted’ to define the feelings caused by intercultural dissonances, as well as the term ‘annoying’, utilised to explain the intercultural experiences they had faced. For some participants, internationalisation was perceived as a threat that could cause frustration but could also motivate them to learn about other cultures to prevent such feelings.

‘Achievement’ values were found when participants showed their concern for their positive face, which they noted could be threatened by intercultural interactions. For individuals guided by ‘achievement’ values, internationalisation was perceived as a social and personal goal; thus, they tried to realise this objective, as part of the internationalisation process.

To conclude, according to Pinto (2018), developing intercultural competence helps change discriminatory attitudes, whose basis can be found in human values. Thus, intercultural competence training and intercultural experiences seem to have the power to modify values and their resulting attitudes.

8.2.4. RQ4. To what extent, if any, has the administrative and support staff experienced intercultural dissonances; more specifically, what do their experiences reveal about their intercultural competence?

As mentioned, intercultural dissonances were examined through interviews, during which participants discussed their self-experienced critical incidents, their reactions to three scenarios in which intercultural dissonances were likely to occur, and their general experiences with internationalisation. All the interviewees in this investigation acknowledged experiencing

intercultural dissonances and shared some of them with the interviewer. The participants' narrations of their own experiences in internationalisation revealed all the dimensions of Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence. Results obtained are summarised next according to the different elements: attitudes; knowledge and comprehension, and skills; intercultural adaptability; and internal and external outcomes to present a richer general perspective of what participants' intercultural experiences revealed about their own intercultural competence.

As mentioned, values were hypothesised as the origin of attitudes; thus, attitudes were measured according to the internal values from which they originated. 'Respect' attitudes were the most numerous, followed by 'curiosity and discovery' and 'openness'. Therefore, findings agree with Deardorff's (2006) theory that establishes these attitudes as the basis from which people develop intercultural competence. In addition, 'stability' and 'success' attitudes appeared, but in much smaller numbers, representing the main difference among participants from both universities. Despite their low frequencies, the cause for this divergence in participants' values seems to relate to the culture in which participants lived, as well as to the diverse kinds of job contracts they had. Regarding age, most instances of 'respect' attitudes were found among those aged between 50 and 59 years old. In comparison, 'curiosity and discovery' and 'openness' emerged mostly among participants between 30 and 39 years old.

Second, regarding participants' intercultural knowledge, comprehension, and skills, as mentioned, even though in Deardorff's (2006) model these elements are separated, in this study, the four data-collection tools measured them together. The strategy was to evaluate knowledge and comprehension through their application—in other words, through assessing participants' intercultural skills (theoretical knowledge was not examined). In terms of the discursive construction of participants' experiences in internationalisation, their cultural self-awareness was detected when they mentioned their own cultures and 'way of being', noting

how culture could affect intercultural interactions—this finding also demonstrated participants' self-evaluation skills. Participants emphasised the importance of culture and the dissonances that it may cause, pointing out that culture implies different ways of seeing life and everything that occurs in it. Finally, sociolinguistic awareness was apparent in the relevance participants gave to the context in which interactions took place, as well as in their nonverbal cues. The age group of 30- to 39-year-olds particularly stood out in this dimension, consistent with their linguistic skills—in fact, this was the age group with the second highest scores. Based on these findings, linguistic proficiency seems to facilitate intercultural knowledge but does not assure intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2004)—all the dimensions are crucial.

According to participants' self-experienced critical incidents, the senior group of participants (50–59 years old) stood out, revealing most of the characteristics associated with an 'advanced' level of IA. These findings suggest that their higher number of lived experiences and years of working in internationalisation units interacting with people from different cultures may have helped increase their understanding and empathy towards visitors from other cultures.

Finally, participants' internal and external outcomes were studied in the context of their reactions to the three intercultural scenarios in which intercultural dissonances were likely to occur. Adapting to students' language preferences and showing flexibility when intercultural dissonances occurred were the main features demonstrated by participants of both universities. Further, some showed an ethnorelative perspective of the cultural act of gift-giving. Empathy was especially evident when participants admitted the difficulties international students often endure in a new country. Finally, all participants demonstrated the external outcomes of intercultural competence; in other words, all participants reported they were able to behave and communicate appropriately and effectively in the three intercultural scenarios provided during the interviews.

In the following section, the results obtained through the four data-collection methods—questionnaires, interviews, self-experienced critical incidents, and reactions to intercultural situations—are summarised to observe participants' intercultural competence from a wider perspective.

8.2.5. Overview of Main Findings on Intercultural Competence

First, participants reported high scores on 'curiosity and discovery' attitudes on the questionnaires, a finding supported by the values and resulting attitudes disclosed by participants' linguistic choices made during the interviews. Further, the most frequently found attitude was 'respect', which, as stated throughout this investigation, stems from 'universalism' and 'benevolence' values, both essential for the efficient development of intercultural competence. Based on these findings, this research concludes that, in this specific context, the analysis of people's values could predict to some extent their attitudes towards other cultures, and thus, towards people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This information could help to establish the starting point from which to work towards ultimately enhancing one's intercultural competence.

Further, the changeable nature of attitudes and values supports the essence of Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence: Values and their resulting attitudes may change through life, as may intercultural competence, because their development is a continuous lifelong process. As people grow older and gain experiences, their values and resulting attitudes may be altered because of them. Therefore, the alteration process could continue throughout life depending on what individuals experience. This was acknowledged by participants of these investigation who admitted they thought they were more open before the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, global events may affect one's values and attitudes, and thus, the point of departure from which to develop intercultural competence. Personal experiences affect ways of perceiving the world and its inhabitants. As Ajzen (2012) states, people's values

and their resulting attitudes could serve to predict to a certain degree of accuracy, depending on their specificity, future behaviours. Nevertheless, the nonstatic condition of values and attitudes lowers their predictability.

Similarly, the dimensions of 'knowledge and comprehension' and 'skills', which includes knowledge of one's own culture and of other cultures, as well as the awareness of the context and cultural factors that affect communication, received high scores on the questionnaires. These findings align with participants' discourses on internationalisation (by mentioning, for instance, pragmatic competence as an essential ability to do the work they performed). Their narrations also affirm their intercultural skills; they reported being able to apply them to their self-experienced intercultural situations.

Participants' 'cultural self-awareness' is demonstrated when they acknowledged how their own culture influenced the way they and their colleagues acted and behaved, which would not have been possible without their ability to analyse themselves and take off their 'cultural lenses'. Further, participants would not have been able to obtain that 'deep cultural knowledge' without the skills to listen without judgement to people from other cultures, observing how they perceived life and evaluating possible reasons they perceived life in that way. Further, participants' skills to interpret and relate were key to avoiding dissonances or learning from them when they happened. In addition, these skills were the cause of their 'sociolinguistic awareness'; after years experiencing intercultural dissonances, they could interpret the possible causes and connect them with their effect to avoid them in the future, thereby adopting a neutral perspective when interacting with someone from a different cultural background.

Further, intercultural adaptability—one of the main outcomes of intercultural competence—is present in participants' written comments on the questionnaires. In the interviews, intermediate and high levels of intercultural adaptability are disclosed by the narrations participants provided about their self-experienced critical incidents with people from

other cultures. As mentioned, the rubric used to assess participants' degree of intercultural adaptability was an adaptation of Sánchez-Hernández and Maíz-Arévalo (2021). However, intercultural adaptability, as seen with all the dimensions and development of intercultural competence, is part of a lifelong process. Thus, people do not reach one point at which they are adaptable, flexible, and empathetic, but during all their lives, affected by internal and external factors, and by personal and general experiences, these outcomes will develop to a greater or lesser extent.

Further, another of the key outcomes of intercultural competence, intercultural empathy, indispensable for internationalising higher education institutions efficiently (Calloway-Thomas et al., 2017), is present in the results. The findings obtained from this investigation align with Arastanam and Doerfel (2005), who found 'empathy' present in all definitions of intercultural competence provided by participants from fifteen different countries. It is noteworthy that participants reported that their offices were the reference point for international students, the place to go when things went wrong; thus, empathy was indispensable among these personnel. These declarations are supported by previous research about international students who specifically stated, '[I] want an international office that not only organises accommodation for us when we have campus disruptions. I want an international office that makes me feel at home while being away from home' (Chinyamurindi, 2018, p. 218). Taking into consideration that the staff's personal circumstances and experiences, as well as other variables such as age and personal wellbeing (physical and mental), affect the development of all human values, including intercultural empathy, the findings suggest that interacting with visitors from around the world could help increase staff members' intercultural empathy. As discussed in Chapter 2, intercultural empathy seems to be both one of the requisite values to develop intercultural competence and one the main outcomes of this development. In order to strengthen this empathy without being affected by life

experiences, that is, to be able to maintain an ethnorelative perspective during this lifelong process, intercultural training and, specifically, methodologies such as the Story Circles proposed by Deardorff (2019) are strongly recommended.

Finally, participants reported positive results regarding the general internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence, as demonstrated by the responses on the questionnaires, by the results obtained for all the dimensions, and from evidence of their intercultural competence observed in their reported reactions to the intercultural situations. These self-reported behaviours could serve to predict participants' performance in real intercultural scenarios. Nevertheless, it should be underlined that intercultural competence is a lifelong process. Therefore, these results do not imply participants are fully interculturally competent—on the one hand, this would have required a much more extensive investigation, involving, for instance, others' perspectives, because intercultural competence is much more complex. On the other hand, this competence may change over time because, as mentioned, there is no one point at which people are fully interculturally competent. Thus, these findings only show that participants reported they would have been able to behave successfully in the situations posed; however, these tools did not allow the researcher to observe participants in real intercultural situations.

It should be noted that a main finding of this investigation was the number of commonalities found between participants of both universities despite the contextual differences among them; human values are indeed human, despite settings. The similarities emerged especially in the dimensions of values and their resulting attitudes, the basis of intercultural competence. This evidence aligns with the hypothesised universality of these values (Schwartz, 1992, 2012).

Exceptionally, 'respect' attitudes prevailed throughout all the interviews, regardless of participant age, country of origin, gender, or any other contextual difference. These results

align with the common hierarchy of values across cultures suggested by Schwartz (2012; see Chapter 3, Section 3.5) in which 'benevolence' values are in the first position, followed by 'universalism' values; 'respect' attitudes. As Schwartz (1992) states, 'When people pursue the various types of values, the universal aspects of the human social condition led to cross-culturally consistent psychological, practical, and social consequences' (p. 47).

Findings suggest that without respect, none of the remaining dimensions of the process model (Deardorff, 2006) would prosper, and thus, intercultural competence would not be developed. 'Respect' attitudes, resulting from 'universalism' and 'benevolence' values, seem to be the core that unites human beings and makes coexistence possible despite the dissimilarities, barriers, and problems individuals may face.

All in all, participants' answers on the questionnaires regarding internationalisation and interculturality largely concord with how they discursively constructed their experiences in these contexts; in other words, the emic and the etic perspectives align. The alignment among the results obtained from the different data-collection and data-analysis tools reinforces the in-depth examination of discursive constructions as a valid instrument to obtain a representative picture of participants' perceptions of their own intercultural competence.

To conclude, as argued by Guimarães et al. (2019), intercultural competence could greatly benefit the staff of internationalised universities, because they must effectively mentor and support international students and work with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. The findings of this investigation may serve to report on which elements of the lifelong process of intercultural competence participants must work on to continue its development.

8.3. Limitations of the Investigation

The first limitation that needs to be mentioned is the limited sample size: Only two European universities participated in this research. Thus, they are not representative of the

whole population of university and support staff of internationalised universities. In addition, the degree of internationalisation of the two universities studied could be questioned. They were considered internationalised in the context of world rankings and the information provided by their own web pages. Nevertheless, according to the theory of comprehensive internationalisation, many different factors measure the real degree of internationalisation of higher education institutions, and no framework was applied to corroborate this information.

Further, the validity and reliability of instruments should be considered a limitation. As mentioned, questionnaires and interviews were piloted, but with a small number of personnel. The pilot sample size was small because of the low level of participation; if the volunteer people had been used to pilot the study, there would not have been enough participants to carry out the investigation. Further, for the same reason, no control group was employed to compare results.

Moreover, the fact that participants worked in internationalisation units could be considered a limitation, because, presumably, they would have been more interculturally competent or at least more aware and willing to develop these competencies than were those who worked in other units. The lack of participants to pilot the instruments could have provoked confusion regarding some of the questions. Specifically, the concepts of ‘friend’, ‘interaction’, and ‘relate’ could have been interpreted differently according to participants’ personal and shared backgrounds.

Another important limitation of this research was the global pandemic. COVID-19 appeared in the middle of this PhD study, after the author had been working on the thesis for two and a half years and was about to collect data. The in-person interviews that had been planned had to be conducted online because of the mobility restrictions. All the unforeseen events that happened during those months meant that the administrative and support staff had even more work to do than usual, which made finding time to collaborate on the research even

more difficult for them. Nevertheless, they altruistically consented to participate, most of them in their free time; without their willingness to get involved, this investigation would not have been possible.

Further, the interviews with UCM participants were conducted during the harsh initial months of the pandemic. Restrictions were still in place when the interviews with RUG participants took place, almost a year later. For this reason, the administrative and support staff had to be contacted by email, without knowing the researcher beforehand, particularly in the case of RUG participants. Nonetheless, they voluntarily participated. It must be also mentioned that despite the challenges of that time, every participant from both universities was cordial, forthcoming, and sincere.

A final limitation occurred during the analysis of the data. Analysing the interviews was especially challenging given that no taxonomy existed delimiting how to recognise values and attitudes linguistically in the context of the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities, nor was there a mechanism linking Schwartz's (1992, 2012) theory of human values with Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence. First, a manual analysis process was employed and discarded; next, different computer programmes—ATLAS.ti, MAXQDA, and Python, among others—were used until an effective method was found to code participants' answers: NVivo 13. The first analysis required several iterations, because limiting categories was an especially challenging task. The intercoder reliability validation process was essential to overcome this limitation.

Moreover, an important goal of the project was to avoid producing a biased analysis of something as sensitive and personal as human values. The hope is that this classification of values is justified; however, this research occurred with a specific, and restrictive sample of participants. Generalising was not the intention; rather, the aim was to propose a possible

interdisciplinary method to evaluate intercultural competence in a very specific context. In the following section, some lines of future research are identified, derived from the present study.

8.4. Pointers to Future Research

First, it should be acknowledged that experience in internationalisation, even if it may help develop intercultural competence, might not be enough, especially because intercultural competence is considered a lifelong process. For this reason, training on intercultural competence should be implemented among the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities. Studying the effect of this explicit instruction on the daily interactions between these personnel and international visitors is recommended.

Along this line, it is suggested to analyse the natural interactions between the administrative and support staff of internationalised universities and international visitors with the intention of identifying the types of dissonances that take place in these offices. Examining the administrative and support staff's experiences may help identify the feelings that such dissonances create for those involved. Dissonances could be analysed in depth in order to explore possible reasons and try to find solutions to overcome or even avoid them. Specific courses based on the most common intercultural dissonances that usually occur in internationalised universities should be designed to train the administrative and support staff.

In addition to the foregoing recommendations, some specific suggestions are offered next regarding educational development, based on the findings of the research and on the participants' comments. First, intercultural competence courses that cover all the dimensions investigated should be designed and implemented. The focus should be primarily on nonverbal communication across cultures, which seemed to be especially challenging for these staff members, especially during and after the pandemic because of the use of facial masks (Schlögl & Jones, 2020). Moreover, using role-playing games could help avoid or overcome the frustration that intercultural dissonances may cause. These kinds of activities improve

intercultural skills and generate effective solutions when critical incidents occur. Additionally, methodologies such as the Story Circles proposed by Deardorff (2019) are strongly recommended.

Further, the administrative and support staff should be encouraged to participate in the Erasmus programme and in other international mobility projects. Travelling and working abroad would improve their intercultural attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, and skills. In this vein, holding virtual exchanges with administrative and support staff from universities with fewer resources could enhance staff members' intercultural empathy, among the other internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence. Additionally, language courses focused on pragmatic and social skills could help overcome their fear of speaking in a foreign language.

Concerning research, interdisciplinary methods for assessing intercultural competence are needed for the modern multicultural and multilinguistic world. As the literature review shows, questionnaires and interviews are often unconsciously biased by the researcher's own culture, and participants can always answer in a way they think is politically correct instead of offering what they really think or feel. Interdisciplinarity in research might be a potential means to overcome these restraints.

Additionally, most of the investigations on intercultural studies have been produced by 'Western cultures', mostly by English-speaking countries. Evidence of this is seen in the answers participants provided to the question about what came to mind when they heard the word 'culture'. The definitions they thought of were Western-centric, close to the traditional ones (see Tylor, 1874), even in the era of globalisation. Thus, to mitigate this limitation, more facilities should be provided to help less privileged countries and non-Western cultures access academia to achieve richer multicultural perspectives and equitable opportunities. Thus, a non-Westernised approach should be adopted to expand the lens, especially in the research of

human values and intercultural competence. To put it succinctly, the decolonisation of academia should be a goal (Begum & Saini, 2019; Kadiwal & Abu Moghli, 2021; Moosavi, 2020), particularly in terms of intercultural studies.

Further, the list of universal human values should be 'updated' to the current world situation. This thesis was written during a global pandemic and as a war was taking place in Europe. Because of societal changes, human values, or at least the conceptualisation of them, may have been altered. Values are far from static. Thus, research on values should be ongoing.

Despite its limitations, the hope is that this PhD thesis can cast light on the field of human values and intercultural competence in university internationalisation from an interdisciplinary perspective, specifically on the administrative and support staff as essential agents of this phenomenon. This research was intended to offer an interdisciplinary method to evaluate intercultural competence from an emic perspective—through questionnaires and interviews—and from an etic perspective—analysing participant's discursive constructions in order to reveal their human values, hypothesised to be the basis of intercultural competence, and the rest of its dimensions. The difficulty of measuring human values, given their dependence on the context, makes their study challenging but at the same time essential, because values are as changeable as society itself. Establishing a connection between the invisible—values—and the visible—attitudes—could help deepen the investigation through interdisciplinary methods.

Further, literature positions comprehensive internationalisation as an attempt to shape the ethos and values in the entire field of higher education. Thus, working on human values not just as the basis of intercultural competence, but as the basis to internationalisation, seems a potential strategy to make it real.

On a final note, it should be emphasised that the administrative and support staff of international universities is an understudied population, and more attention should be devoted

to them. They are often the first people with whom international visitors establish contact. Whether foreign students choose one university over another to carry out their studies or research stays may depend on administrative and support staff members' success or lack thereof in intercultural interactions. For this reason, part of the credit for the internationalisation of higher education is owed to their intercultural skills. Thus, it is important to be aware of the important role such staff play in the universities and of how little their work might be known and valued. To remedy this situation, their tasks, responsibilities, and necessary skills should be specified in their employment contracts, and they should be remunerated fairly.

Bringing the story full circle, higher education administrators should take advantage of the opportunities that globalisation in general, and internationalisation in particular, brings to maintain, support, and promote cultural and linguistic diversity, and intercultural competence seems to be one of the potential strategies to accomplish this goal. As one of the participants stated, 'Internationalisation is giving me an opportunity to travel the world without leaving my office'.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire in Spanish (UCM) and English (RUG)

Cuestionario sobre Interculturalidad e Internacionalización

El objetivo de este cuestionario es obtener datos completamente anónimos para un estudio que formará parte de una tesis doctoral centrada en la vital importancia del Personal de Administración y Servicios en el proceso de Internacionalización de la Universidad. Muchas gracias de antemano por tu participación. Te pido la mayor sinceridad posible a la hora de responder, el tiempo estimado es de entre 10 y 15 minutos, para cualquier duda o aclaración puedes contactar conmigo mediante el siguiente email: andmar07@ucm.es. ¡Gracias!

Bloque I: Datos demográficos

Ítem 1: Edad

20-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 50-69.

Ítem 2: Sexo

Masculino; Femenino; Otro.

Ítem 3: Puesto

Permanente; No-permanente; Becario/a

Ítem 4: Nacionalidad

Española; Otra.

Bloque II: Escala de Eficacia Intercultural

Selecciona del 1 al 5 la puntuación que consideras más adecuada (mínimo 1, máximo 5). Por favor, intenta ser sincero/a y objetivo/a. Cualquier experiencia que desees compartir en la sección de ‘comentarios'’ será bienvenida.

2.1. Aprendizaje Continuo

Ítem 5: ¿Estás interesado/a en entender y aprender de las actividades, los comportamientos y los sucesos que ocurren a tu alrededor (tanto en tu trabajo como fuera de él)?

Ítem 6: ¿Dirías que te conoces a ti mismo/a (por ejemplo; tus valores, fortalezas y debilidades, tu personalidad, tu comportamiento en determinadas situaciones, ¿etc.)?

Ítem 7: ¿Estás abierto/a a ideas, normas y/o situaciones que son diferentes a las tuyas? Es decir, ¿estás dispuesto/a a salir de tu "zona de confort"?

ítem 8: En tus viajes, ¿has probado alguna comida que en principio no hubieras comido?

ítem 9: Si la respuesta es sí, ¿qué comidas has probado?

Comentarios:

2.2. Compromiso Interpersonal

Ítem 10: ¿Estás interesado en otras culturas?

Ítem 11: ¿Sueles leer libros y/o ver películas de otras culturas?

Ítem 12: ¿Crees que es importante relacionarse con personas de otras culturas?

Ítem 13: ¿Tienes amigo/a(s) de otra(s) cultura(s)?

Sí; No.

Ítem 14: Si la respuesta es sí, ¿cuántos tienes?

1-5; 6-10; 11-15; Más de 15.

Ítem 15: ¿Te gusta viajar a otros países?

Ítem 16: Cuando viajas a otros países, ¿te relacionas con las personas de ese lugar?

Comentarios:

2.3. Habilidades Psicológicas y Actitudinales

Ítem 17: ¿Eres capaz de controlar tus pensamientos y emociones en situaciones interculturales? Es decir, ¿eres capaz de no caer en prejuicios y/o estereotipos cuando tratas con alguien de otra cultura?

Ítem 18: ¿Consideras que eres capaz de tener la mente abierta y sin prejuicios frente a ideas y comportamientos que son nuevos para ti?

Ítem 19: ¿Eres capaz aprender de los fallos y contratiempos que puedan surgir?

ítem 20: ¿Podrías darme algún ejemplo?

Comentarios:

2.4. Habilidades Lingüísticas

Ítem 21: ¿Hablas algún idioma(s) extranjero(s)? (Marca 1 si hablas un segundo idioma y así sucesivamente).

Ítem 22: Si es así, ¿qué nivel tienes en tu segunda lengua? (Marca desde 1 si tienes nivel principiante y hasta 5 si tienes nivel bilingüe o 'casi nativo')

Ítem 23: ¿Te gustaría aprender más idiomas?

Ítem 24: Si la respuesta es sí, ¿qué idiomas te gustaría aprender?, ¿por qué?

Ítem 25: ¿Eres consciente del lenguaje no verbal en tu propia cultura (por ejemplo, los gestos, la distancia, etc.)?

Ítem 26: ¿Eres consciente del lenguaje no verbal en otras culturas (por ejemplo, los gestos, la distancia, etc.)?

Comentarios:

Bloque III: Aclaraciones para mejorar el estudio

¿Hay alguna pregunta que no te haya quedado clara? Si es así, explica por qué a continuación, por favor.

Acepto que las respuestas aportadas a este cuestionario sean utilizadas de forma anónima para fines investigadores.

Sí; No.

Questionnaire on Interculturality and Internationalisation

The objective of this questionnaire is to obtain completely anonymous data for research that will be part of a PhD thesis focused on the fundamental importance of the administrative and support staff in the process of internationalisation of higher education. Thank you very much in advance for your participation. I would like to ask you to be as honest as possible when answering, the estimated time is between 10 and 15 minutes, for any questions or clarifications you can contact me at: andmar07@ucm.es. Thank you!

Section I: Demographic Data

Item 1: Age

20-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 50-69.

Item 2: Sex

Male; Female; Other.

Item 3: Job position

Permanent; Not-permanent; Intern.

Item 4: Nationality

Dutch; Other.

Section II: Intercultural Effectiveness Scale

Select from 1 to 5 the score you consider the most appropriate (minimum 1, maximum 5). Please try to be honest and objective. Any experience you want to share in the 'comments' section will be welcome.

2.1. Continuous Learning

Item 5: Are you interested in understanding and learning from the activities, behaviours and events that happen around you (both at work and outside of it)?

Item 6: Would you say that you know yourself (for example, your values, strengths and weaknesses, your personality, your behaviour in certain situations, etc.)?

Item 7: Are you open to ideas, norms and/or situations that are different from yours? That is, are you willing to step out of your ‘comfort zone’?

Item 8: When travelling, have you ever tried any food that in principle you would not have eaten?

Item 9: If so, what foods have you tried?

Comments:

2.2. Interpersonal Engagement

Item 10: Are you interested in other cultures?

Item 11: Do you usually read books and/or watch films from other cultures?

Item 12: Do you think it is important to develop relationships with people from other cultures?

Item 13: Do you have any friend(s) from other cultures?

Yes; No.

Item 14: If so, how many do you have?

1-5; 6-10; 11-15; More than 15.

Item 15: Do you like travelling to other countries?

Item 16: When you travel to other countries, do you interact with locals?

Comments:

2.3. Psychological and Attitudinal Skills

Item 17: Are you able to control your thoughts and emotions in intercultural situations? That is, are you capable of not falling into prejudices and/or stereotypes when dealing with someone from another culture?

Item 18: Do you consider that you are able to be open-minded and avoid prejudice to ideas and behaviours that are new to you?

Item 19: Can you learn from failures and setbacks?

Item 20: Can you please give me some examples?

Comments:

2.4. Linguistic Skills

Item 21: Do you speak any foreign language(s)? Mark 1 if you speak one foreign language and so successively.

Item 22: If so, how proficient would you say you are in your second language? Mark from 1 (basic) to 5 (bilingual).

Item 23: Would you like to learn more languages?

Item 24: If so, what language(s) would you like to learn? Why?

Item 25: Are you aware of non-verbal language in your own culture (for example, gestures, distance, etc.)?

Item 26: Are you aware of non-verbal language in other cultures (for example, gestures, distance, etc.)?

Comments:

Section III: Feedback to Improve the Research

Are there any questions that are not clear to you? If so, please, explain why below.

I agree that the answers provided to this questionnaire are used anonymously for research purposes.

Yes; No.

Appendix B
Interview Questions in Spanish (UCM) and English (RUG) and Information Codes (Codebook 1)

Preguntas de la entrevista y códigos de información

¿Aceptas que grabe la entrevista para poder analizarla y que la información que compartas será usada de manera completamente anónima y con fines puramente académicos?

Preguntas Contextuales

Pregunta 1: ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas trabajando en tu puesto actual → [1_TIME_AT_JOB_POSITION]

Pregunta 2: ¿En qué consiste tu trabajo? ¿Cuáles son tus responsabilidades? → [2_DUTIES_AND_RESPONSIBILITIES]

Pregunta 3: ¿Con cuántos estudiantes y/o profesores internacionales te relacionas al día o a la semana? → [3_NUMBER_OF_INTERCULTURAL_INTERACTIONS]

Pregunta 4: ¿Qué idioma sueles usar con los visitantes internacionales (alumnos, profesores, etc.)? → [4_LANGUAGE_CHOICES]

Pregunta 5: ¿Cómo describirías la experiencia de trabajar en un entorno internacional y estar en (continuo) contacto con personas de otras nacionalidades y de otras culturas? → [5_DESCRIPTION_ OF_THEIR_EXPERIENCE]

Preguntas de Reflexión

Pregunta 6: ¿Qué te viene a la cabeza cuando escuchas la palabra ‘cultura’? → [6_DEFINITION_OF_CULTURE]

Pregunta 7: ¿Qué te viene a la cabeza cuando escuchas la palabra ‘visitante internacional’? → [7_DEFINITION_OF_INTERNATIONAL_VISITOR]

Preguntas de Perspectiva

Pregunta 8: Cuando alguien entra en la oficina, ¿cómo reconoces que es un visitante internacional (del extranjero)? → [8_FIRST_IMPRESSIONS]

Pregunta 9: ¿Qué haces cuando esto sucede?, ¿cómo reaccionas?, ¿cambias algo en la manera de interactuar o en el trato con él o con ella consciente o inconscientemente? → [9_TREATING_INTERNATIONAL_VISITORS]

Experiencias Personales

Pregunta 10: Me gustaría que compartieras tus experiencias en contextos interculturales, por ejemplo, si alguna vez has vivido alguna situación incómoda o algún malentendido (en persona o por correo electrónico) con un estudiante o profesor extranjero, o algún visitante internacional. O, por supuesto, las experiencias positivas también son bienvenidas. Básicamente, cualquier experiencia que consideres singular.→ [10_PERSONAL_EXPERIENCES]

Pregunta 11: ¿Crees que estas situaciones se produjeron por no compartir el mismo idioma (si era así) o la misma cultural o por alguna otra razón? → [11_CAUSES_OF_MISUNDERSTANDINGS]

Pregunta 12: ¿Cómo te sentiste cuándo pasó esto? → [12_FEELINGS_CAUSED_BY_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS]

Reacciones

Pregunta 13: Entra en la oficina un alumno con un nivel de español muy bajo, te explica que tiene problemas para rellenar la matrícula debido al idioma, asegura que se defiende mejor en inglés y que de hecho el máster en el que se está matriculando es completamente en inglés. ¿Cómo reaccionarías ante esta situación?, ¿te ha pasado esto o algo parecido en alguna ocasión?

→ [13_REACTION_TO_LANGUAGE_PROBLEMS]

Pregunta 14: Ayudas a un alumno o a una alumna a internacional con problemas administrativos entre su universidad de origen y la Complutense. Esto te lleva algo de tiempo, pero finalmente consigues solucionarlo. Al día siguiente el alumno o la alumna aparece en una oficina con una enorme caja de bombones como obsequio por haberle ayudado. ¿Cómo reaccionarías?, ¿te ha pasado esto o algo parecido en alguna ocasión? → [14_REACTION_TO_GIFTS]

Pregunta 15: Entra un alumno o una alumna a internacional en la oficina, por el COVID19, ambos lleváis mascarillas y hay que mantener la distancia de seguridad. Por esta razón, hay que hablar en un tono un poco más alto de lo normal, le pides que te deletree su apellido para buscarle en la base de datos y al encontrarle le haces el gesto de OK con la mano (👌). El alumno o la alumna cambia su sonrisa por un gesto de enfado y se dispone a irse. ¿Cómo reaccionarías ante esta situación?, ¿te ha pasado esto o algo parecido en alguna ocasión? → [15_REACTION_TO_NONVERBAL_LANGUAGE_MISUNDERSTANDING]

Retroalimentación

Pregunta 16: Respecto al papel que juega el personal administrativo en el proceso de internacionalización que se está llevando a cabo en la universidad, ¿cambiarías o mejorarías algo? Si es así, ¿tendrías alguna idea o propuesta para hacerlo? → [16_OPINIONS_AND_PROPOSALS]

Interview Questions and Information Codes

Do you accept that I record the interview to analyse it and that the information you share will be used completely anonymously and for purely academic purposes?

Event Questions

Question 1: How long have you been working at your current position? You can tell your main duties. → [1_TIME_AT_JOB_POSITION]

Question 2: What does your job consist of? What are your responsibilities? → [2_DUTIES_AND_RESPONSIBILITIES]

Question 3: Approximately, how many international visitors do you interact with per day or per week? → [3_NUMBER_OF_INTERCULTURAL_INTERACTIONS]

Question 4: What language do you usually use with international visitors (professors, students, etc.)? → [4_LANGUAGE_CHOICES]

Question 5: How would you describe the experience of working in an international environment and being in (continuous) contact with people from other countries and from other cultures? → [5_DESCRIPTION_ OF_THEIR_EXPERIENCE]

Reflection Questions

Question 6: What comes to your mind when you hear the following word ‘culture’ → [6_DEFINITION_OF_CULTURE]

Question 7: What comes to your mind when you hear the following word ‘international visitor’ → [7_DEFINITION_OF_INTERNATIONAL_VISITOR]

Perspective Questions

Question 8: When someone enters the office, how do you realize that person is an international visitor (from abroad)? → [8_FIRST_IMPRESSIONS]

Question 9: What do you do when this happens? How do you react? Do you change anything in the way you interact or deal with him or her consciously or unconsciously? → [9_TREATING_INTERNATIONAL_VISITORS]

Personal Experiences

Question 10: I would like you to share your experiences in intercultural contexts, for example, I you have ever experienced any uncomfortable situation or any misunderstanding (in person or by email) with a foreign student or teacher, or any international visitor. Or, of course, positive experiences are welcome as well. Basically, anything you consider remarkable. → [10_PERSONAL_EXPERIENCES]

Question 11: Do you think that these situations happened because of not sharing the same language (if so) or the same culture or for any other reason? → [11_CAUSES_OF_MISUNDERSTANDINGS]

Question 12: How did you feel when this happened? → [12_FEELINGS_CAUSED_BY_ MISUNDERSTANDINGS]

Reactions

Question 13: An international student with a very low level of Dutch and English enters the office, s/he explains that s/he has problems filling out the registration due to the language, but s/he speaks English better than Dutch and s/he is learning both languages. In fact, the master in which s/he wants to enrol is taught completely in English. How would you react to this

situation? Has this situation or something similar ever happened to you?
→[13_REACTION_TO_LANGUAGE_PROBLEMS]

Question 14: You help an international student with administrative problems between his/her home university and Groningen University. This takes some time, but you finally solve the problem. The next day, the same student surprises you by bringing in a large box of chocolates as a gift to thank you for helping him/her. How would you react to this situation? Has this situation or something similar ever happened to you?
→[14_REACTION_TO_GIFTS]

Question 15: An international student enters the office and, due to COVID19, both of you are wearing masks and you must stay at a safe distance. For this reason, you have to speak with a louder voice than usual and ask the student to spell her/his last name to try to find her/him in the database. When you have identified her/him, you make an OK gesture with your hand (👌). The student's kind expression turns to anger and s/he prepares to leave. How would you react to this situation? Has this situation or something similar ever happened to you? → [15_REACTION_TO_NONVERBAL_LANGUAGE_MISUNDERSTANDING]

Feedback

Question 16: Regarding the role that administrative and support staff play on the process of internationalisation that is taking place at the university, would you change or improve something? If so, do you have any ideas or proposals to do it? → [16_OPINIONS_AND_PROPOSALS]

Appendix C

Interview Transcripts

Interview transcripts are available at the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Wr-gRyzefZ0gQ77goiX3yUMlLqUrph0f?usp=sharing

Appendix D

Rubric of Intercultural Adaptability

Internal Outcome	Initial	Intermediate	Advanced
Intercultural adaptability	People at the initial level of intercultural adaptability tend have an ethnocentric attitude, for this reason, they tend to blame the international visitors when dissonances happen and suggest no solutions or offer unhelpful solutions to avoid conflict. People at this initial level place all the responsibility on the interlocutor because they are part of the nondominant culture. They tend to rely on negative stereotypes to excuse themselves from misunderstandings.	People at the intermediate level of intercultural adaptability are able to recognise that there has been an intercultural dissonance and identify the cause (cultural, linguistic, or other). These people are willing to adapt to the situation with the objective of avoiding conflict. They suggest solutions they may have already implemented successfully. Nevertheless, they tend to rely on positive or neutral stereotypes and demonstrate an indifferent position towards other cultures and the opportunity to interact with them.	People at the advanced level of intercultural adaptability fully understand international visitors and value their efforts to adapt themselves to the target culture. They are able to recognise the causes of the dissonances (cultural, linguistic, or other), basing assumptions on real evidence. They are willing to adapt to the situation either through communicative, behavioural, or emotional adaptability. Further, they show an ability to see the two cultures' perspectives and demonstrate comprehension and appreciation for cultural diversity. For these participants, cultural differences are not an impediment but an opportunity to learn.

Appendix E

Coded Interviews

Coded interviews are available at the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_ZrMBof0KL1NTHmHe7UrHdocz3jVGRQg?usp=share_link

Appendix F

Codebook 2 – Attitudes and Values

ATTITUDE(S)	VALUE(S)	DESCRIPTION	INTERNATIONALISATION IS PERCEIVED AS	EXAMPLE FROM THE CORPUS
Respect	Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, justice, and protection for the welfare of all people (even for the unknown) and for nature.	An opportunity to promote and achieve equality and for all people.	'[Internationalisation] is not just about cultural differences. It's about understanding […]'
	Benevolence	Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact.	As a chance to build new relationships and make people from the 'out-group' feel part of the 'in-group'.	'If I hadn't had fellow interns, the work wouldn't have come out anywhere.'
Curiosity and Discovery	Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life.	A positive challenge that breaks the routine and makes life more thrilling and interesting.	'Being exposed to cultural differences while working in my, in my home country, it's basically given me an opportunity to travel the world without traveling.'
Openness	Self-Direction	Independent thought and action-choosing. Interest in learning.	An opportunity to be more independent, explore new perspectives and learn from them.	'[Intercultural dissonances] are part of my learning path, but also part of other people's learning paths.'
Stability	Security	Safety and harmony in terms of one's society, relationships, and self.	Internationalisation is perceived as a challenge that may cause frustration but may also result into an interest in learning from other cultures to feel safer when relating with foreigners.	'Sometimes I get a bit frustrated.'
Success	Achievement (Social success)	Personal success through demonstrating competences according to social standards.	A personal and social goal that needs to be successfully realised.	'Well, it makes me angry, because we want to leave a good image.'