

# Intercultural Communication Training in Vocational and Industrial Education Training

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**Abstract.** The globalization and free trade between countries and nations has created demands for the knowledge and skills in the area of intercultural interaction and transaction. Intercultural Communication Competences (ICC) is one of the capabilities that need to be possessed by workers and professionals who want to have a bigger role in the business and industries in international level. Vocational education institutions are demanded to provide their students with a certain degree of competences in multicultural interaction and communication. This paper aims to address the effectiveness of trainings in a vocational education institution in equipping its students with the intercultural communication skills. Using a sample of students from the ISP Cruiseship and Hotel School Surakarta, Central Java, this study will analyses the differences of ICC between groups of students who have undergone various forms of training in intercultural communication, in order to determine the effectiveness of the training in equipping the students with the necessary intercultural communication skills. The study incorporates a quantitative approach, using survey method. The data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and analysis of variations between groups. The result shows that the intercultural communication training increase the level of ICC especially in the intercultural confidence dimension.

## 1. Introduction

The globalization and free trade between countries and nations has created demands for the knowledge and skills in the area of intercultural interaction and transaction. Intercultural Communication Competences (ICC) is one of the capabilities that need to be possessed by workers and professional who want to have a bigger role in the business and industries in international level. Vocational education institutions, especially in the hospitality industries, are demanded to provide their students with a certain degree of competences in multicultural interaction and communication.

The implementation of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 raises many questions about challenges and impacts faced by enterprises in this geographic territory, which in turn questions the readiness of education/training institutions in preparing and equipping their students with necessary competences to meet the demands of the new-multinational trades and competitions. Education institutions need prepare their students to recognize their own culture and respect other cultures different from their own; in other word the students must be equipped with some intercultural communication skills [1].



### *1.1. Intercultural communication competence*

Intercultural communication, as the study of communication from the cultural perspective, focusing on the value of effective interaction between individuals of different cultures [2]. Seven categories for effective cross-cultural communication, including display of respect, orientation to knowledge, empathy, role behavior, interaction management, tolerance for ambiguity, and interaction posture [3]. Other scholar proposed instruments to measure the intercultural communication competence (ICC). Four dimensions in intercultural communication competence: personal attributes, communication skills, psychological adaptation, and cultural awareness [4]. To measure those dimensions, an instrument they include five traits, which are: intercultural confidence, intercultural attention, intercultural empathy, ethnocentrism, and intercultural tolerance [5].

### *1.2. Intercultural communication training*

Intercultural communication training aims to equip participants with awareness, knowledge and skills to engage intercultural situations Pusch [6]. The literature has discussed the characteristic of effective intercultural communication training Paige [7] Porter & Samovar [8]. Although no study has been able to determine the most effective model for intercultural communication training, the literature agrees that the experiential and interactive approach is more effective than the didactic approach.

The ISP Cruiseship and Hotel School Surakarta, Indonesia, is one of vocational training institution focused on the hospitality business, which offer a 1-year program in hotel and cruiseship training. Established in 2009, the school has become one of the best vocational training centre in Indonesia. The school was awarded with Indonesia Innovative Quality Award 2015 as The Best Institution Training and Education of Cruises Ship & Hotel and in 2016 the school was awarded The Best Vocational Training Center Management by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture.

The ISP Cruiseship and Hotel School uses two approaches in the intercultural communication training: (1) didactic approach in the form of intercultural communication subject in the classroom; and (2) interactive and practical approach in the form of internship program with international partners (hotels and cruiseship operators). Both training methods are conducted in second semester of the training program.

## **2. Methods**

In order to address the main issues of this paper, a quantitative approach was used in the data collection and analysis. The sample (N=210) was drawn from the students of The ISP Cruiseship and Hotel School Surakarta, Indonesia from classes of 2016 and 2017. Data collection was conducted using self-administered questionnaires. The research instrument comprised three main variables: demographic, attendance to intercultural communication training, level of intercultural exposure, and intercultural communication competence (ICC) (using Likert's 1-5 scale). The data then was analyzed using descriptive, simple linear regression, and Chi-square statistics.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The result of the study will be divided into three main parts: the description of the variables, the influence of demographic factors to the level of ICC, and the influence of intercultural communication training to the level of ICC.

### *3.1. Description of the variables*

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistic of each variables measured in this study, including the breakdown of the ICC dimensions. The media use variable is comprised of 7 items. The ICC scale is comprised the total of 24 items, divided into five dimensions: IC attention (3 items), IC confidence (4 items), IC empathy (3 items), ethnocentrism (3 items), and IC tolerance (4 items).

**Table 1.** Descriptive of the research's variables (n=210).

Demographics	Male = 108 (51.4%)		Female = 102 (48.6%)	
Enrolled to Intercultural Communication Training	Yes = 105 (50.0%)		No =105 (50.0%)	
Variables	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
Intercultural Exposure	8	25	12.23	3.040
Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)	51	80	63.13	5.967
Intercultural Attention	7	15	11,06	1,534
Intercultural Confidence	10	20	14,09	1,845
Intercultural Empathy	6	14	10,35	1.453
Ethnocentrism	6	15	11,09	1,881
Intercultural Tolerance	12	20	16.53	2.004

From Table 1, we can see that the composition of the sample is almost equal between male and female students, as well as between those who have enrolled to the internship program and those who have not. The average score of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) among the students is in the medium level (mean=63.13). When the ICC is broken-down into its five dimensions, this study finds that intercultural attention (mean=11.06), intercultural empathy (mean=10.35), and ethnocentrism (mean=11.09) are in the medium level; while intercultural confidence (mean=14.09) and intercultural tolerance (mean=16.53) are in the high level. We can conclude that the students have a high level of confidence to conduct intercultural communication as well as a high-level tolerance when encountering people from other culture background.

### 3.2. Variation of ICC based on demographic variable

Table 2 presents the results of Chi-square statistic for determining the differences of ICC scores based on the demographic variable and attending the intercultural communication training.

**Table 2.** Results of Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ).

	Sex	Intercultural Communication Training
Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)	1,103 sig. 0,576	0,332 sig. 0,847
Intercultural Attention	1,495 sig. 0,474	0,953 sig. 0,621
Intercultural Confidence	4,980 sig. 0,083	3,909 sig. 0,142
Intercultural Empathy	0,352 sig. 0,839	1,009 sig. 0,604
Ethnocentrism	2,486 sig. 0,289	0,421 sig. 0,810
Intercultural Tolerance	0,861 sig. 0,650	2,771 sig. 0,250

As we can see from Table 2, the results of Chi-square tests do not demonstrate any significant differences or variations of both total ICC scores and ICC dimensions among the students. We can conclude that based on the sex and enrollment in intercultural communication training, there is no difference of ICC level. All the students, regardless of their demographic backgrounds and their

attendance in the international communication training, possess a medium level of Intercultural Communication Competence.

### 3.3. Influence of intercultural exposure on the ICC level

Table 3 presents the results of linear regression statistic to determine the influence of intercultural exposure among the students on their ICC level.

**Table 3.** Linear regression with intercultural exposure as the predictor.

	R	R Square	F	B	t	sig.
Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)	0,251	0,063	19,059	0,520	4,366	0,000
Intercultural Attention	0,190	0,036	10,603	0,101	3,256	0,001
Intercultural Confidence	0,372	0,139	45,542	0,238	6,748	0,000
Intercultural Empathy	0,195	0,038	11,220	0,098	3,350	0,001
Ethnocentrism	0,001	0,000	0,003	-0,002	-0,540	0,957
Intercultural Tolerance	0,121	0,015	4,223	0,084	2,055	0,041

From Table 3 we can observe that intercultural exposure can be used as predictor of the level of intercultural communication competence ( $t=4,366$ ), although the influence is quite small (6,3%) in increasing the ICC. There are still other variables that influence the level of ICC, those variables are not included in this particular study. Although new media use is low, but we can conclude that the model we used in this study is sufficient to propose that intercultural communication training and exposure has certain impacts on increasing the level of intercultural communication competence.

Comparing the results of each five dimensions of ICC, this study finds that the intercultural exposure does not have influence on the ethnocentrism among the students. The intercultural exposure has various impacts on the other four ICC dimensions, with the highest on the IC confidence (13,9%), followed by IC empathy (3,8%), IC attention (3,6%), and IC tolerance (1,5%). The intercultural exposure significant impacts in boosting the student's confidence in communicating with other people from different cultural background.

## 4. Conclusions

This paper aims to describe the level of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) among the hospitality students and to examine the influence of demographics and intercultural communication training and intercultural exposure on the students' ICC. This study concludes that:

- The level of ICC among the students in this study is in the medium level, which means that they still have to be more prepared and equipped in the intercultural communication skills in order to face the demands and challenges of the new-multinational industries and enterprises.
- The intercultural communication training and exposure has proven impact for increasing the level of ICC, especially in boosting the confidence of the students to engage communication/ interaction with other people from different cultural background.
- From the conclusion point b, this study suggest that the students need to be encouraged and trained to use expand their intercultural exposure to initiate, engage, and maintain communication and interaction with people from other culture, in order to increase the students' intercultural communication competence.

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