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## **Intercultural Effectiveness of International and Domestic University Students: A Case of Turkey**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Among the vast and diverse discussions and research on international students, the intercultural status of university students holds a special place in terms of integration and academic success. One of the discussions is the intercultural competencies of the students in higher education. In this respect, this study aims to compare the intercultural effectiveness of international and domestic students, as well as examine their intercultural effectiveness status in terms of different background characteristics. The data were collected from a public university in Turkey using the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale developed by Portalla and Chen. The findings revealed that international students compared with domestic counterparts show a higher level of intercultural effectiveness. Additionally, some background characteristics are significant predictors of the intercultural effectiveness of university students: grade level, parent's nationality, being and living in a foreign country, and having a close friend(s) from a different culture. Some research and policy recommendations are provided.

**Keywords:** Intercultural effectiveness, international students, domestic students, Turkey, higher education

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## INTRODUCTION

Many people need to learn to communicate effectively with other individuals from different cultural backgrounds due to reasons such as global economy, global market and international partnerships, rapid development of communication technologies, wide-ranging international mobility, the developing multicultural profile of many societies around the world, and the internationalization of educational programs (Stone, 2006). In line with this need, individuals desire to benefit from a different intellectual experience outside their own country, mostly through international higher education.

International students' education in a foreign country provides benefit for both themselves and the host country. While these students meet their educational needs, they also bring their country's intellectual experiences to the country where they are receiving university education (Berry, 2005). Thus, they help increase awareness of and respect for different cultures in the host country (Bevis, 2002). In this context, international student mobility is an important foreign policy tool and a bridge that connects cultures in terms of increasing mutual cooperation, solidarity, and understanding between countries (Harrison, 2002). Internationalization in higher education institutions (HEIs) requires university students to acquire intercultural skills to successfully interact with students and academic members from other countries and to maximize their university experience (Griffith et al., 2016). Likewise, guest students need to have intercultural communication skills and intercultural effectiveness to interact with individuals in the host country and to socio-culturally adapt to the new environment (Hammer et al., 1978; Lee & Çiftçi, 2014). When the related literature is examined, it is seen that the relationship between intercultural effectiveness and factors such as personality traits, academic success, job performance, and socio-cultural adaptation or the relationship between intercultural effectiveness and various demographic variables has been investigated. However, it is noteworthy that the study groups of these studies investigating the intercultural effectiveness of higher education students only consist of either international students or local students. In the era where the global issues such as economic crisis and current Covid-19 pandemic seem to interrupt international movements of students and scholars and the increasing demand for internationalization at home requiring global citizenship of every participant (de Wit & Altbach, 2020), the examination of intercultural effectiveness of both incoming and domestic students of higher education is vital.

In the case of Turkey, internationalization is almost a new phenomenon as Turkish universities have begun to experience it massively in recent years with the help of both national policies/stimulates and the demand for internationalization by the HEIs. According to the statistics, with rapid growth, the number of international students has increased tenfold in the last 20 years, and the number reached up to around 154 thousand as of 2019 (YOK, 2020). However, as stated by Gök and Gümüş (2018), the majority of the students are from the neighboring countries who have either cultural or religious ties with Turkey. While there exist the examinations of the varying aspects of

internationalization of Turkish higher education, the studies on intercultural effectiveness of international students are limited. Additionally, the lack of investigation on the comparison of the intercultural effectiveness of domestic and international students suggests the need for such an examination. In the light of discussions above, the purpose of this study is to compare the intercultural effectiveness status of international and domestic students in Turkey as well as investigating the correlation of various factors with students' intercultural effectiveness.

### **Intercultural Competence**

As a broader term, intercultural competence or intercultural communication competence enables an individual to communicate effectively and acceptably with others in a group of members from different cultural backgrounds (Fantini et al., 2001). According to Chen and Starosta (1996), intercultural competence consists of three dimensions: intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural effectiveness. While intercultural awareness explains the cognitive process in which the individual gets to know his/her own culture and other cultures, intercultural sensitivity is the affective aspect of intercultural communication competence. However, intercultural effectiveness refers to the behavioral dimension of intercultural communication competence and the ability to achieve communication goals in the intercultural interaction (Chen & Starosta, 1996). It is important to have knowledge about cultures and to develop a positive attitude toward cultural differences for a successful intercultural interaction; however, for knowledge and attitudes to turn into a suitable action, the individual must also have intercultural skills (Bubas, 2006). In higher education systems, where internationalization is becoming a key component, acquiring intercultural competencies is crucial. As indicated by Almeida et al. (2016), the institutional interventions have a positive impact on increasing sojourners' intercultural competencies which in turn contribute to the efforts of HEIs in internationalization. Among the discussions on the nuance between the terms of intercultural competence ("demonstrating and acquiring culturally appropriate skills") and effectiveness ("getting a desired response/outcome") (Mamman, 1995, p. 43), intercultural effectiveness has been described differently (Simkhovych, 2009). While some definitions emphasize people from different countries living in a foreign country, there are more general definitions that do not emphasize sojourners. In the present study, intercultural effectiveness is conceptualized based on the definition of Stone in accordance with the purpose of the study. Intercultural effectiveness is "the ability to interact with people from different cultures so as to optimize the probability of mutually successful outcomes" (Stone, 2006, p. 338). There are different approaches that explain the factors affecting intercultural effectiveness and its dimensions.

The first approach explains intercultural effectiveness with the personality traits of individuals. According to this approach, intercultural effectiveness results from the personality of individuals (McGinty, 2011). Patience, tolerance, kindness, self-confidence, and entrepreneurship are considered as personality traits that play a role in ensuring intercultural effectiveness. Intercultural

effectiveness is also influenced by individuals' self-awareness of their own values and beliefs (Paige, 1993). However, perfectionism, dogmatism, ethnocentrism, and egocentrism are traits that have a negative relationship with intercultural effectiveness (Hannigan, 1990). This approach, which focuses on personality, ignores the behavioral dimension of intercultural effectiveness. Therefore, this situation raises the question "How does someone who values other cultures show this in an intercultural interaction?" (Abe & Wiseman, 1983).

The second approach suggested to eliminate this problem, focuses on the behaviors and social skills required for intercultural effectiveness (Furnham & Bochner, 1982). According to this approach, intercultural effectiveness includes communication skills that involve both verbal and nonverbal behaviors and these skills help individuals to be in an effective and appropriate intercultural interaction with others (Portalla & Chen, 2010). Ruben (1976) identified seven behavioral dimensions associated with intercultural effectiveness: (1) display of respect, (2) interaction posture, (3) orientation to knowledge, (4) empathy, (5) role behavior, (6) interaction management, and (7) tolerance for ambiguity. In another study, Hawes and Kealey (1979, 1981) found that similar communication skills were predictive of intercultural effectiveness. These communication skills were determined to be flexibility toward the ideas of others; respect toward others; listening and accurate perceptions of the needs of others; trust, friendliness, and cooperation with others; calm and self-control when confronted by obstacles; and sensitivity to cultural differences (Hawes & Kealey, 1979). Furnham and Bochner (1982) suggested that seven skills could be important for intercultural effectiveness. These are perceptive skills, expressive skills, conversational skills, assertive skills, emotional expression skills, anxiety management skills, and affiliative skills.

Besides the approaches described above, Gudykunst et al. (1977) developed a model that focuses on both personality traits and behaviors. This model involves the characteristics such as open-mindedness toward new ideas and experiences; the ability to empathize with people from other cultures; accuracy in perceiving differences and similarities between the sojourner's own culture and the host culture; being nonjudgmental, astute noncritical observers of their own and other people's behavior; the ability to establish meaningful relationships with people in the host culture; and being less ethnocentric (Gudykunst et al., 1977). According to this model, the behavioral dimension of intercultural effectiveness and the skills that constitute it are explained as follows: ability to deal with psychological stress (frustration, social alienation, interpersonal conflict, etc.), ability to effectively communicate (ability to enter into meaningful dialogue with other people, ability to deal with communication misunderstandings, ability to effectively deal with different communication styles, etc.), and ability to establish interpersonal relationships (ability to develop and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships with other people, ability to accurately understand the feelings of another person, ability to effectively work with other people, etc.) (Hammer et al., 1978). In this study, the model that puts emphasis on behaviors and social skills is employed to explain the intercultural effectiveness.

## **Objectives**

In this study, it was aimed to examine the intercultural effectiveness levels of university students in terms of various variables. Specifically, it was hypothesized as follows:

1. Intercultural effectiveness levels of students show a significant difference in terms of:
  - 1.1. Gender
  - 1.2. Year of school
  - 1.3. Faculty
  - 1.4. Nationality of parents
  - 1.5. Education level of parents
  - 1.6. Accommodation (on-campus/off-campus)
  - 1.7. Previous international travel experience
  - 1.8. Having close friend(s) from a different culture
2. There is a significant difference between domestic and international students in terms of intercultural effectiveness.
3. Variables such as gender, year of school, nationality, parents' nationality, accommodation (on-campus/off-campus), previous international travel experience, parents' education level, and having close friend(s) from a different culture are significant predictors of intercultural effectiveness.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

The population of the study consists of 12,732 undergraduate students studying in the Middle East Technical University (METU) in the spring semester of the 2017–2018 academic year. The findings are expected to be of interest to both international and Turkish audience since the chosen university is one of the few Turkish universities where the teaching is in English with a diverse international student population compared with other higher education institutions. The sample of the study consists of a total of 300 students (63% female, 27% male) selected from the population using the snowball sampling method. Participants' age ranges from 18 to 29 years ( $M = 21.51$   $SD = 2.031$ ). Of the participants, 80.7% are domestic students and 19.3% are international students. Students from 31 different countries participated in the study. Most of the students are from Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kenya, Morocco, Palestine, and Albania; 33.3% of the participants are first-year students and 29.3 of them receive education in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. While 81% of the participants'

mothers are Turkish and 19% are foreign; 80.7% of their fathers are Turkish and 19% are foreign. As for parents' level of education, 32.2% of mothers and 37.7% of fathers are university graduates. In addition to these data, it was determined that 50.7% of the students participating in the study live on the campus and 74.7% have close friends from different cultural backgrounds. Besides, while 58.7% of the students have never been to a foreign country, 83.3% have not lived in a foreign country. In other words, the majority of the students participating in the study do not have any previous international travel experience.

## **Measures**

### ***Intercultural Effectiveness***

In this study, a 20-item Intercultural Effectiveness Scale developed by Portalla and Chen (2010) was used to measure the intercultural effectiveness level of university students. The scale has six sub-dimensions: behavioral flexibility, interaction relaxation, interactant respect, message skills, interaction management, and identity maintenance. Answers were given on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). Scale reliability was good in this study ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

### ***Demographic Variables***

Participants were asked to state their gender, age, faculty, year of school, nationality, previous international travel experience, the place where they live (on-campus/ off-campus), whether they have close friends from different cultural backgrounds, their parents' nationality, and their parents' education level. The independent variables can be grouped under two broad categories to be tested. Personal or background factors (gender, age, and nationality) and previous experience with other cultures (previous international experience, the place where they live, close friends from other cultures, parents' nationality, and parents' education level) are included in the study. While personal factors mostly tested in social sciences are included, the previous experience with other cultures seems also promising to explain the status of an individual's intercultural effectiveness. For instance, Carlson and Widaman (1988) found that students with previous experience, for instance, living abroad, have more cross-cultural interest than the students who do not have any previous experience with other cultures. Additionally, parents' education level, and previous experience with other cultures (parents' nationality and close friend from other cultures) were included in the study to be tested for Turkish context, although the variables (growing up in bi- or multi-national family or having a close friend from another culture) were not evidenced as the core predictor of increasing intercultural competence in the study of Lantz-Deaton (2017).

**Data Analysis**

Based on the research questions, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. While descriptive statistics were conducted to show the trends within the data, inferential statistics including *t*-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to test Hypotheses 1 and 2. Also, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to find the predictive power of the variables used in the study on intercultural effectiveness (Hypothesis 3). The significance level of the statistical analysis was selected as .05.

**RESULTS**

**Descriptive Statistics**

To determine the intercultural effectiveness level of the students, descriptive statistics on this variable and its sub-dimensions are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Intercultural Effectiveness and Sub-dimensions**

	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>Ss</i>	Min.	Max.
Intercultural effectiveness	300	3.70	.54	2	5
Behavioral flexibility	300	3.73	.74	1.5	5
Interaction relaxation	300	3.62	.70	1.80	5
Interactant respect	300	4.33	.60	1.67	5
Message skills	300	3.44	.81	1.33	5
Interaction management	300	3.74	.81	1	5
Identity maintenance	300	3.39	.70	1.67	5

According to Table 1, students' intercultural effectiveness was found to be at a satisfactory level ( $\bar{X} = 3.70$ ;  $Ss = .54$ ). In addition, it is seen that the highest average score among six sub-dimensions belongs to interactant respect ( $\bar{X} = 4.33$ ;  $Ss = .60$ ), and the minimum average score belongs to identity maintenance ( $\bar{X} = 3.39$ ;  $Ss = .70$ ).

**Analysis of Intercultural Effectiveness According to the Demographic Variables**

To test Hypothesis 1, the level of students’ intercultural effectiveness was examined according to demographic characteristics (Tables 2 and 3). Demographic variables were categorized under three main categories: (a) personal variables (gender, year of school, faculty, accommodation), family variables (mother’s nationality, father’s nationality, mother’s education level, father’s education level), and internationalization related variables (being in a foreign country, living in a foreign country, having close friend(s) from a different culture, nationality).

**Table 2: *t*-Test Results Regarding Intercultural Effectiveness of University Students in Terms of Different Demographic Variables**

Variables		<i>N</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	Male	111	3.70	.53			
	Female	189	3.70	.54	298	.10	.91
Grade level	1st grade	100	3.59	.55			
	Other grades	200	3.75	.52	298	-2.46	.01***
Mother’s nationality	Turkish	243	3.64	.52			
	International	57	3.97	.52	298	-4.35	.00***
Father’s nationality	Turkish	242	3.63	.52			
	International	58	3.98	.52	298	-4.51	.00***
Being in a foreign country (visit)	Yes	124	3.84	.52			
	No	176	3.60	.52	298	-3.87	.00***
Living in a foreign country (residency)	Yes	50	4.04	.54			
	No	250	3.63	.51	298	5.12	.00***
Mother’s education level (HE)	Yes	138	3.76	.54			
	No	162	3.65	.53	298	-1.87	.06
Father’s education level (HE)	Yes	187	3.73	.51			
	No	113	3.65	.57	298	-1.29	.19
Accommodation	On-campus	152	3.70	.55			

Variables		<i>N</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Off-campus	148	3.69	.52	298	.16	.87
Having close friend(s) from a different culture	Yes	224	3.79	.52			
	No	76	3.43	.50	298	5.23	.00***

\*\*\* $p < .05$ .

In terms of personal characteristics, Table 2 shows that the average intercultural effectiveness scores of male and female students ( $\bar{X} = 3.70$ ) are the same, but these scores are not statistically significant [ $t(298) = 0.107, p > 0.05$ ]. In terms of the year of school, students were examined in two categories as those who are in the first year and those who are in the second, third, and fourth years. Accordingly, the t-test analysis results indicate that there is a significant difference in the intercultural effectiveness level between the first year students and the second, third, and fourth year students [ $t(298) = -2.467, p < 0.05$ ]. According to the students' mean scores, the average intercultural effectiveness score of the first year students ( $\bar{X} = 3, 59$ ) is lower than the average score of those studying in other grades ( $\bar{X} = 3.75$ ). When the t-test results regarding intercultural effectiveness of the students are examined, it is seen that there is not any significant difference in the intercultural effectiveness level between the students living on the campus ( $\bar{X} = 3.70$ ) and those living outside the campus ( $\bar{X} = 3.69$ ) [ $t(298) = 0.163, p > 0.05$ ].

Students' family backgrounds were also analyzed. It was found that there is a significant difference in the intercultural effectiveness level between the students whose mother has a foreign nationality and those whose mother is Turkish [ $t(298) = -4.355, p < 0.05$ ]. When the mean scores of the students are examined, it is seen that the average intercultural effectiveness score of the students whose mother is not Turkish ( $\bar{X} = 3, 97$ ) is higher than the average score of those whose mother is Turkish ( $\bar{X} = 3.64$ ). Similarly, a significant difference was found between the intercultural effectiveness level of the students whose father has a foreign nationality and the level of those whose father is Turkish [ $t(298) = -4.516, p < 0.05$ ]. When the average scores of the students are examined, it is seen that the average intercultural effectiveness score of the students whose father is not Turkish ( $\bar{X} = 3, 98$ ) is higher than the average score of those whose father is Turkish ( $\bar{X} = 3.63$ ). Education level is another component in the analysis as part of the family background. Education level of the participants was included in the study as the college effect. Parents' education levels are dichotomized as having a higher education and above degree or not. The findings show that there is not any significant difference between the intercultural effectiveness score of the students whose mother has a higher education or above

degree ( $\bar{X} = 3.76$ ) and the score of those whose mother does not have a higher education degree ( $\bar{X} = 3.65$ ) [ $t(298) = -1.874, p > 0.05$ ]. Similarly, any significant difference was not found between the average intercultural effectiveness score of the students whose father has a higher education or above degree ( $\bar{X} = 3.73$ ) and the average score of those whose father does not have a higher education degree ( $\bar{X} = 3.65$ ) [ $t(298) = -1.293, p > 0.05$ ].

In the examination of internationalization variables in terms of students' intercultural effectiveness, being and living in another country, having a close friend from a different culture, and students' nationality (domestic and international students) are included. As findings indicate, there is a significant difference in the intercultural effectiveness level between the students who have previously been to a foreign country and those who have never been to a foreign country before [ $t(298) = -3.873, p < 0.05$ ]. When the average scores of the students are examined, it is seen that the average intercultural effectiveness score of the students who have previously been abroad ( $\bar{X} = 3, 84$ ) is higher than the average score of those who have never been abroad before ( $\bar{X} = 3.60$ ). Similarly, there is a significant difference in the intercultural effectiveness level between the students who have previously lived in a foreign country and those who have never lived in a foreign country before [ $t(298) = 5.122, p < 0.05$ ]. When the average scores of the students are examined, it is seen that the average intercultural effectiveness score of the students who have previously lived abroad ( $\bar{X} = 4, 04$ ) is higher than the average score of those who have never lived abroad before ( $\bar{X} = 3, 63$ ). Lastly, a significant difference was found between the intercultural effectiveness level of the students who have close friends from a different culture and the level of those who do not have any close friends from a different culture [ $t(298) = 5.234, p < 0.05$ ]. When the average scores of the students are examined, it is seen that the average intercultural effectiveness score of the students having close friends from a different culture ( $\bar{X} = 3, 79$ ) is higher than the average score of those having no close friends from a different culture ( $\bar{X} = 3, 43$ ).

**Table 3: Variance Analysis Results Regarding Intercultural Effectiveness of University Students in Terms of Faculty**

Faculty	<i>N</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	Significant difference
Education	47	3.60	.43	3			
Arts and Sciences	88	3.67	.57	296			

Faculty	<i>N</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	Significant difference
Economics and Administrative Sciences	82	3.73	.59	299	.96	.40	–
Engineering and Architecture	83	3.76	.50				

Table 3 shows that there is not any significant difference among the students' average intercultural effectiveness scores in terms of faculty.

A series of *t*-tests and variance analysis conducted to determine the intercultural effectiveness level of students in terms of demographic characteristics showed that Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. To test Hypothesis 2, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the intercultural effectiveness levels of domestic and international students. *t*-Test results regarding intercultural effectiveness of the university students in terms of nationality are given in Table 4.

**Table 4: *t*-Test Results Regarding Intercultural Effectiveness of University Students in Terms of Nationality**

Variable	<i>N</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Nationality	Turkish	242	3.63	.52		
	International	58	3.99	.51	298	-4.65 .00***

\*\*\**p* < .05.

According to Table 4, there is a significant difference in the intercultural effectiveness level between domestic students and international students [*t* (298) = -4.650, *p* < 0.05]. When the students' average scores are examined, it is seen that the average intercultural effectiveness score of international students ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.99) is higher than the average score of domestic students ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.63). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported. To test Hypothesis 3, a stepwise regression analysis was conducted to determine the demographic variables predicting intercultural effectiveness best. Stepwise regression analysis results regarding intercultural effectiveness of the university students in terms of demographic variables are given in Table 5.

**Table 5: Stepwise Regression Analysis Results Regarding Intercultural Effectiveness of University Students in Terms of Demographic Variables**

	Predictor variables	B	$\beta$	t	TV	VIF	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	F	
Intercultural Effectiveness	Model 1	Constant	3.43		57.68						
		Having close friends from a different culture	.36	.29	5.23	1.00	1.00	.29	.08	.08	27.39
	Model 2	Constant	3.42		59.03						
		Having close friends from a different culture	.30	.24	4.42	.96	1.04				
		Having lived in a foreign country	.34	.23	4.29	.96	1.04	.37	.13	.13	23.72
	Model 3	Constant	3.40		59.89						
		Having close friends from a different culture	.25	.20	3.74	.92	1.07				
		Having lived in a foreign country	.33	.23	4.33	.96	1.04	.42	.18	.17	21.65
		Nationality	.28	.20	3.90	.96	1.03				

When Table 5 is analyzed, it is seen that the demographic variable that best predicts intercultural effectiveness alone is “Having close friends from a different culture” ( $R = .290, p < .05$ ). The variable of having close friends from a different culture explains 8% of the change in the level of intercultural effectiveness. In the second stage of the regression analysis, “Having lived in a foreign country” was included in the model ( $R = .371, p < .05$ ). It was determined that the variables of having close friends from a different culture and having lived in a foreign country explain 13% of the intercultural effectiveness level together. In the third stage of the analysis, “Nationality” was added to the model ( $R = .424, p < .05$ ). The model formed by having close friends from different cultures, having lived in a foreign country, and nationality (being an international student) explains 18% of the change in the level of intercultural effectiveness. However, factors such as gender, year of school, parents’ nationality, accommodation (on-campus/off-campus), being in a foreign country for less than three months, and parents’ education level are not significant predictors of intercultural effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the study results, the intercultural effectiveness level of the students does not show any significant difference in terms of gender. Studies with similar results (Akın, 2016; Bekiroğlu & Balcı, 2014; Pedersen, 2010; Simkhovych, 2009; Yılmaz & Göçen, 2013) stated that the variable of gender does not have any significant effect on intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity levels. However, in his study on university students, Gonzales (2017) concluded that male

participants are more emotionally resilient in intercultural communication compared with female participants, and females are able to better empathize culturally than males. Also, there are studies in which the intercultural sensitivity level of female students was found to be higher than that of male students (Margarethe et al., 2012; McMurray, 2007). In this context, it is seen that different results have been reached in the literature on intercultural effectiveness and gender.

It is seen that the variable of the year of school has a significant effect on the level of intercultural effectiveness. Accordingly, the intercultural effectiveness level of the second, third, and fourth year students is higher than that of the first year students. Based on this finding, it can be interpreted that the experiences of students at the university improve their intercultural effectiveness level. As Deardorff (2006) emphasized, higher education shapes students' intercultural effectiveness. Studies with similar results (Akın, 2016; Penbek et al., 2009) showed that students' intercultural sensitivity levels and respect for different cultures increase as they progress to higher school years.

The findings obtained from this study show that the variable of faculty does not have any significant effect on the level of intercultural effectiveness. When the relevant literature is analyzed, it is seen that "faculty" is replaced by "department" in most studies. Similar to the findings of the current study, Onur Sezer, and Bağçeli Kahraman (2016) found that there is not any significant difference between the intercultural sensitivity levels of students studying in different departments. However, Demir and Üstün (2017) concluded that the intercultural sensitivity level of the students of the Department of English Language Teaching is significantly higher than those who receive education in the Departments of Primary School Teaching and Turkish Language and Literature Teaching.

It is seen that whether parents are foreign or not has a significant effect on intercultural effectiveness. The transfer of experience, knowledge, and skills from adults to children is mainly carried out in the family (Biktarigova, 2016). Accordingly, it can be interpreted that parents convey their knowledge, attitudes, and skills regarding different cultures to their children. According to the findings of the current study, it was determined that the intercultural effectiveness level of students whose mother or father is not Turkish is higher than the level of those whose mother or father is Turkish. It can be said that it is an expected result considering the previous studies indicating that the intercultural sensitivity level of international individuals is higher than that of domestic ones (Morales, 2017; Ruiz-Bernardo et al., 2012). However, when the literature is examined, it is seen that there is no related research in which parents' nationality is regarded as a variable.

Any significant difference was not found in the intercultural effectiveness levels of university students in terms of the education level of their parents. Findings obtained from the research conducted by Akın (2016) support this result. According to the findings of the aforementioned study, parents' education level does not have a positive or negative effect on the intercultural sensitivity level of Turkish language teacher candidates.

Any significant difference was not found in the intercultural effectiveness levels of university students in terms of whether they live on the campus or outside the campus. Similarly, in the study conducted by Pedersen (2010), it was concluded

that living with a local family instead of living on the campus does not have any significant effect on the intercultural effectiveness outcomes of international students. However, according to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), the living space within the campus offers students an environment more open to diversity.

In the study, the variable of international travel experience was addressed in two ways: Experience of being abroad (less than three months) and experience of living abroad (three months and more). According to the study of Bekiroğlu and Balcı (2014), there is not any significant difference between the intercultural sensitivity level of students who have never been abroad and that of those who have been abroad at least once. Similarly, some studies (Pedersen, 2010; Vande Berg, 2007) also suggest that just sending students abroad is not enough for generating intercultural effectiveness outcomes for the intended students. However, some studies indicate that the intercultural effectiveness scores of students show a significant difference in favor of students who have been abroad or lived abroad in the previous period of their lives (Demir & Üstün, 2017; Penbek et al., 2009). In his study, Del Villar (2010) concluded that as the number of countries visited and the time spent abroad increases, students' intercultural sensitivity scores also increase. According to the qualitative findings of the same study, the participants who have lived in a foreign country for more than six months stated that this experience gave them the ability to be open-minded and to accept other cultures.

Intercultural effectiveness scores of students show a significant difference in favor of those who have close friends from a different culture. In the literature, it is possible to find other studies supporting this finding (Demir & Üstün, 2017; Onur Sezer & Bağçeli Kahraman, 2016). Also, Del Villar (2010) concluded that as the number of friends from different cultures increases, the intercultural sensitivity scores of students also increase. According to the qualitative findings of the same study, the participants with the highest number of international friends stated that their relations with foreigners made them more social, open-minded, tolerant, and self-confident. When the literature is analyzed, it is seen that there are also studies with different results. In the studies of Pedersen (2010) and Akın (2016), it was stated that making close friends from different countries does not have any significant effect on the intercultural sensitivity levels of university students.

In the study, the intercultural effectiveness level of international students was found to be significantly higher than that of local students. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are other studies having similar results. Wang and Ching (2015), in their study conducted on students from different countries, revealed that the nationality of the participants has a significant effect on the level of intercultural effectiveness. In their study, Del Villar (2010) and Wu (2009) emphasized that international students have a higher level of motivation toward learning a foreign language and are more willing to accept different cultures. The possible explanation for this is that international students might get more exposure to different cultures compared with local students. When they get more experience and acculturation to the culture of the host country, they become more multicultural or at least bicultural. As Thomas et al. (2010) found, "bicultural individuals have more pronounced skills related to intercultural effectiveness than

monocultural ones, including a higher level of cognitive skill called cultural metacognition that directly influences intercultural effectiveness” (p. 315).

The intercultural effectiveness level of university students participating in the study is significantly predicted by having close friends from different cultures, having lived in a foreign country for more than three months, and nationality (being an international student). Studies in the literature support this finding. The study conducted by Choce et al. (2015) showed that the country where students come from and having friends from different cultures significantly predict the level of intercultural sensitivity. Similarly, Wu (2009) stated that being an international student is a significant predictor of the intercultural sensitivity level. It was stated by Pritchard and Skinner (2002) and Tanaka et al. (1997) that making international friends is a significant predictor of the intercultural sensitivity level. Tanaka et al. (1997) emphasized that international students’ making friendship with individuals from the host culture will facilitate their getting used to this new culture. The study of Williams (2005) indicated that friendship or romantic relationship with one from a different culture and interacting with individuals from a different culture are significant predictors of intercultural communication skills. In addition, Del Villar (2010) revealed that the duration of international travel experience (being abroad for more than six months) and the number of international friends (having 11 or more international friends) significantly predict the intercultural sensitivity level.

In conclusion, this study highlights the important effect of the year of school, nationality, parents’ nationality, previous international travel experience, and having friends from different cultural backgrounds on the intercultural effectiveness level of undergraduate students. The findings are significant to demonstrate that international students with their varying background characteristics show a higher level of intercultural effectiveness compared with domestic students. These findings are expected to provide significant insights for future research, for university administrators who deal with intercultural conflicts in their campuses, and policymakers who are in charge of articulating a quality higher education environment for the future of students and the citizens. Specifically, future research should examine the reasons and motivations behind the intercultural effectiveness gap between domestic and international students. University administrators and authorities, who deal with cultural conflicts or who want to increase their quality through diversity, should create a more culturally diverse teaching and learning environment for the students with intercultural competencies. Government authorities, higher education councils, and policymakers should aware of the gap between domestic and international students and consider these insights in designing the future of higher education for students as global citizens.

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