Development of a Scale for Measuring Intercultural Attitudes

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Statement of the Problem

Our goal in developing the ISAS was to measure the changes that take place in the attitudes of undergraduate college students who study internationally. Based on our experience, the attitudes that seem to be most affected by international experience include concepts such as open-mindedness, adventurousness, self-confidence, resilience, and attitudes toward international careers and foreign language study. Of these, only open-mindedness and resilience are measured on a published instrument that we had been using, the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI, Kelley & Meyers, 1992). In addition to the CCAI, we had been using the Six Factor Personality Questionnaire (SFPQ, Jackson, Paunonen, & Tremblay, 2000) to assess personality characteristics that might affect response to study abroad. The SFPQ measures three personality factors that we are interested in, Openness to Experience, Extraversion, and Independence, which is the SFPQ interpretation of the Big Five factor of Emotional Stability or Neuroticism. We also wanted to include attitudes toward international careers and foreign language study in our scale.

Items measuring the above concepts were written and field tested during the summer of 2003, and a 50-item scale was developed for use during fall of 2003 and spring and summer of 2004. A total of 568 undergraduates contributed to the dataset for the first version of the scale. Further item and factor analyses resulted in the current 35-item ISAS. The ISAS measures six factors: New Experiences, International Career, Foreign Language, total score for the ISAS.

Procedures

Due to the intercorrelation of factors, particularly on the CCAI, partial correlations were computed for each factor of the ISAS with each factor of the CCAI and SFPQ in turn so that the influence of the other factors in each scale would be eliminated. Twenty-four partial correlations were evaluated between the CCAI and the ISAS and 30 partial correlations were evaluated for the SFPQ and ISAS. Type I error over multiple comparisons was controlled with a modified Bonferroni method. Significant correlations where \( r > .250 \) are shown above.

Results and Discussion

Results partially confirmed our hypotheses. Even with control for Type I error over multiple comparisons, the large sample provided sufficient power to identify thirteen significant partial correlations. Six correlations with \( r \) values > .250 are shown at left.

T-tests were conducted for each of the 16 factors on all three instruments with previous international travel as the independent variable. These significant differences were found in favor of students with previous travel experience: ISAS: New Experiences, Foreign Language, International Career, total score SFPQ: Extraversion, Openness to Experience.

Our previous research has shown changes in factors on the CCAI and the SFPQ with international educational experience. If the ISAS is sufficiently sensitive to measure change over the course of an international semester or summer session, it may be a useful tool for demonstrating the value of investment in student participation in study abroad programs.