

Received: 9 November 2022, Accepted: 13 July 2023,

Published on-line as Recently Accepted Paper: October 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26529/cepsj.1524>

Intercultural Competence, A Necessity in 21st Century Classrooms: Are Teacher Educators in Tanzania Interculturally Competent?

PATRICK SEVERINE KAVENUKE*¹ AND GRACE EZEKIEL KIHWELE²

Recently, teacher educators have been required to possess strong academic credentials and intercultural competencies to teach successfully. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the extent to which teacher educators possess the skills of intercultural competence. Also, the study examines the factors that influence the intercultural competence of teacher educators. A sample of 300 teacher educators selected from two Tanzanian university colleges is used. The results indicate that teacher educators had higher mean scores in the dimensions of attitude, external outcomes, internal outcomes, and skills but significantly lower mean scores in the dimension of knowledge. Furthermore, factors such as living abroad, duration of staying abroad, level of education, academics' teaching experience, and the faculty from where the academics come are significantly related to at least one dimension of intercultural competence. For instance, academics' level of education is significantly related to the attitude, knowledge, and skills dimensions of intercultural competence. Therefore, the results have far-reaching implications for policy and future research.

Keywords: intercultural competence, internationalisation, Tanzania, teacher educators, 21st century classrooms

1 *Corresponding Author. Dar es Salaam University College of Education, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; patrickkavenuke@gmail.com / patrick.kavenuke@duce.ac.tz.

2 Dar es Salaam University College of Education, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Medkulturalna kompetenca, nujnost v učilnicah 21. stoletja: ali so izobraževalci učiteljev v Tanzaniji medkulturalno kompetentni?

PATRICK SEVERINE KAVENUKE IN GRACE EZEKIEL KIHWELE

☞ V zadnjem času se od izobraževalcev učiteljev pričakuje, da imajo dobre akademske reference in medkulturalne kompetence, da bi lahko uspešno poučevali. Namen te študije je raziskati, v kolikšni meri imajo izobraževalci učiteljev večšine medkulturalne kompetence. Študija prav tako preučuje dejavnike, ki vplivajo na medkulturalno kompetenco izobraževalcev učiteljev. Uporabljen je bil vzorec 300 izobraževalcev učiteljev, izbranih z dveh tanzanijskih fakultet. Izsledki kažejo, da so imeli izobraževalci učiteljev višje povprečne ocene pri dimenzijah odnosa, zunanjih izidov, notranjih izidov in veščin, vendar bistveno nižje povprečne ocene pri dimenziji znanja. Poleg tega so dejavniki, kot so: prebivanje v tujini, trajanje prebivanja v tujini, stopnja izobrazbe, pedagoške izkušnje akademikov in fakulteta, s katere akademiki prihajajo, pomembno povezani z vsaj eno dimenzijo medkulturalne kompetence. Na primer, raven izobrazbe akademikov je pomembno povezana z naslednjimi dimenzijami medkulturalne kompetence: odnos, znanje in veščine. Posledično imajo rezultati daljnosežne posledice za politiko in prihodnje raziskave.

Ključne besede: medkulturalna kompetenca, internacionalizacija, Tanzanija, izobraževalci učiteljev, učilnice 21. stoletja

Introduction

Teaching in the 21st century classroom requires teacher educators to possess intercultural competencies. Intercultural competence is considered a goal of any education (Duvivier, 2017; Miller & Tucker, 2015; Portera, 2020; Portera & Milani, 2021). Intercultural competence has also been considered a result of internationalisation (Deardorff, 2006; Odağ et al., 2016; Salisbury et al., 2013). Nonetheless, it is regrettable that internationalisation has been narrowly limited to discussing issues across nations and borders (Feng, 2016; Garson, 2016; Salisbury et al., 2013; Wang & Kulich, 2015). As a solution, scholars (Garson, 2016; Wang & Kulich, 2015) have emphasised internationalisation or developing intercultural competence at home. This internationalisation operates by incorporating the international and intercultural dimensions into formal and informal curricula for all people within a local learning environment. Despite these efforts, Garson (2016) has asserted that internationalisation at home has been neglected and challenged by increased academic mobility and how it is placed within a market framework.

Intercultural competence has remained emphasised in the 21st century, given that academics travel outside their countries of origin for academic undertakings such as conferences and studies (Vižintin, 2018, 2022). As they go abroad, they are expected to be exposed to foreign languages and possibly submerge themselves in foreign cultural experiences. In these circumstances, academics must use their critical thinking skills to make well-considered decisions in culturally complex environments (Miller & Tucker, 2015). In that respect, critical thinking skills are linked with intercultural competence. Thus, it is not surprising that scholars (Deardorff, 2006; Miller & Tucker, 2015) have documented that critical thinking and intercultural competence overlap. For instance, Deardorff (2006) has observed that skills such as respecting and valuing others' ideas and cultures, being ready and open to learning other people's cultures, and withholding judgment form parts of both intercultural competence and critical thinking.

Literature Review

There is an assumption that people who are well-connected locally find it easy to accommodate themselves in other cultures (Chi & Suthers, 2015). In other words, people with more social and local relations have less difficulty experiencing global acculturation. Numerous studies have examined intercultural competence issues among individuals over the previous three decades

(Deardorff, 2006; Portera, 2020; Portera & Milani, 2021). Many other studies have been conducted to assess the intercultural competence of individuals in different disciplines, such as military force (Miller & Tucker, 2015), education (Duvivier, 2017; Gong et al., 2018; Jackson, 2015; Odağ et al., 2016; Streitwieser & Light, 2018; Peng & Wu, 2016), business (Feng, 2016; Nair-Venugopal, 2015), management (Presbitero & Attar, 2018) and other multidisciplinary fields (Lieberman & Gamst, 2015). Recently, there have been considerable academic and student exchanges across the globe for further education (Portera, 2020; Portera & Milani, 2021; Vögtle & Windzio, 2023). In that respect, teacher educators (whose role is to prepare prospective teachers) should be familiar with intercultural competence skills. Such skills are important in helping teacher educators accommodate academics and students from diverse cultures (Vižintin, 2022). Given the importance of individuals' intercultural competence in this globalised era, teacher educators must familiarise themselves with the factors that influence their intercultural competence.

Factors influencing intercultural competence

This section has reviewed the literature on factors influencing individuals' intercultural competence. It is important to note that we reviewed the literature based on the dimensions of intercultural competence (i.e., attitude, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes, and external outcomes) used in this present study (Deardorff, 2006; Messner, 2015; Odağ et al., 2016; Peng et al., 2009). Sex as one factor influencing intercultural competence was included based on its importance in any study, as it affects many other variables (Morley & Lugg, 2009). Garrote (2016) found that sex and intercultural competence had no significant relationship. Contrary to that observation, Polat and Barka (2014) noted that male pre-service teachers were more competent than female pre-service teachers regarding the dimensions of intercultural competence, such as emotional stability. Assuming that men and women have similar cognitive abilities (Hyde & Linn, 2006), we hypothesised that there would be no significant relationship between sex and intercultural competence.

Also, the relationship between living abroad and intercultural competence has been recognised. Thus, we included living abroad as an independent measure. The assumption is that intercultural competence as an outcome of internationalisation increases due to academics' mobility (Deardorff, 2006; Odağ et al., 2016; Peng & Wu, 2016; Salisbury et al., 2013). Studies (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012; Garrote, 2016; Holland, 2013) have noted no significant relationship between living abroad and intercultural competence. Contrary to that, other studies found that studying abroad significantly positively affected some

dimensions of intercultural competence (Maharaja, 2018; Salisbury et al., 2013). The years of stay abroad may also influence individuals' intercultural competence. However, a study by Behrnd and Porzelt (2012) indicated that the duration of stay had no significant relationship with intercultural competence.

Moreover, a relationship between academics' teaching experience and intercultural competence has been established. Work experience at the local or global level plays a crucial role in improving one's intercultural competence. In support of this argument, studies have observed that work experience can help to develop the intercultural competence of academics (Hudelson et al., 2011; Peng & Wu, 2016). In particular, Hudelson et al. (2011) noted that the intercultural competence scores were higher for participants with work experience. In that respect, the study examined the relationship between work experience and intercultural competence.

Likewise, level of education has been associated with intercultural competence. It has been observed that individuals with higher levels of education are more competent in intercultural competence than those with a lower level of education. For instance, Polat and Barka (2014) found that pre-service teachers in primary education departments in Switzerland and Turkey were more competent in intercultural competence, such as emotional stability, than pre-service teachers in pre-school education. Given that there were some contradicting results in many of the variables reviewed, we considered including these variables in this study to investigate if the examined variables significantly relate to academics' intercultural competence.

Theoretical Framework

Intercultural competence makes an individual fit in any environment, both at the local and global levels. In that case, interculturally competent people hardly find themselves divorced from their environment. Plenty of terms in the literature have described the concept of intercultural competence, including 'intercultural sensitivity', 'global literacy', 'cultural competence', 'intercultural communicative competence', and many more (Deardorff, 2006). Moreover, no consensus on reputable researchers on what constitutes intercultural competence exists (Deardorff, 2006; Rathje, 2007). Rathje (2007) has noted that there is no mutual agreement to any particular account of the concept; instead, there are only varieties of models on several features that describe the term differently. Irrespective of the missing consensus, Rathje (2007) asserted that intercultural scholars have made several efforts to define the term, which intercultural scholars frequently adopt. Thus, intercultural competence is reflected in several dimensions.

Some of these models have conceptualised intercultural competence as communicating effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations (Nadeem et al., 2020). Nonetheless, to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitude are paramount. In particular, scholars have mentioned knowledge, skills, and attitude (Scarino, 2009), awareness, attitude, skills, knowledge, and meta-awareness (Peng et al., 2009), knowledge, motivation, skills, outcomes, and adaptability (Odağ et al., 2016) and attitude, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes and external outcomes (Deardorff, 2006; Streitwieser & Light, 2018) as dimensions of intercultural competence.

Similarly, Messner (2015) used internal outcomes and external outcomes as other dimensions of intercultural competence. It is common for researchers to use different terms to communicate the same matter. For instance, while Nadeem et al. (2020) report individuals' ability to effectively and appropriately communicate with people from other cultures as a dimension of intercultural competence, Deardorff (2006), Messner (2015), and Streitwieser and Light (2018) paraphrase it as external outcomes dimension.

The literature reviewed shows that an individual's intercultural competence starts at the individual level (attitude) and at the interaction level (outcomes). Given that this area of study is under-researched in the Tanzanian context, we adopted the most commonly used dimensions of intercultural competence. Therefore, we picked five dimensions from the studies by Deardorff (2006), Messner (2015), Odağ et al. (2016), Peng et al. (2009), Scarino (2009), and Streitwieser and Light (2018). The dimensions are described hereunder as our theoretical framework.

Attitude

In the context of intercultural competence, Peng et al. (2009) defined attitude as an individual's readiness and willingness to accept information from other cultures. It is one's attitude that influences one's intercultural competence—a concept that is closely related to the idea of global citizenship education (Deardorff, 2006; Trede et al., 2013). In particular, Deardorff (2006) maintained that respecting and valuing others' cultures, being ready and open to learning other cultures, and being curious about new cultural environments are integral parts of intercultural competence.

Knowledge

Peng et al. (2009) conceptualised knowledge as an individual's understanding of one's culture and other people's cultures. For that matter, knowledge,

and comprehension form another dimension of intercultural competence. Culture-specific information, cultural self-awareness, and a thorough understanding of one's culture and others' cultures are prerequisites to possessing the knowledge necessary for intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Peng et al., 2009).

Skills

Skills are another dimension of intercultural competence that individuals need to possess in this era of globalisation and its subsequent feature of internationalisation. Listening, observing, interpreting, analysing, evaluating, negotiating, and relating are important skills for intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012). Peng et al. (2009) added that skills enable an individual to use relevant techniques of relating with people while living in such intercultural contexts.

Internal Outcomes

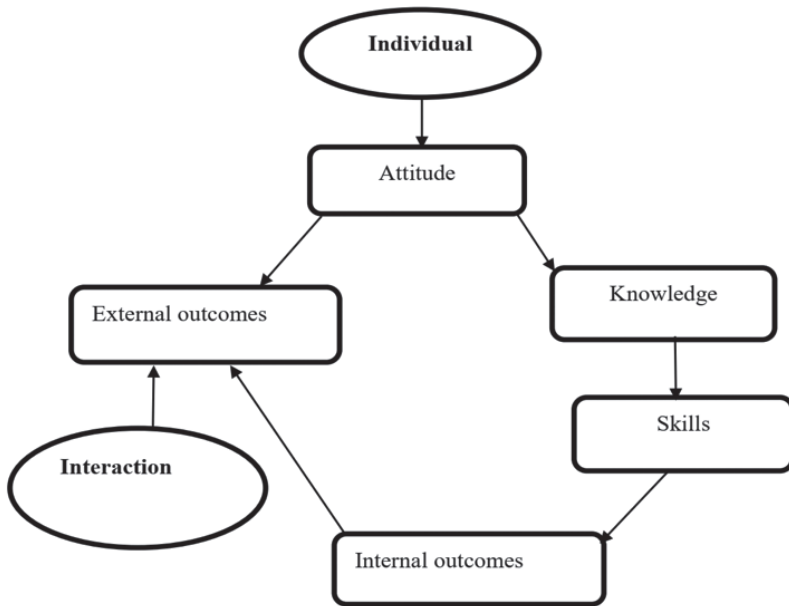
Internal outcomes as a dimension of intercultural competence focus on an individual's adaptability and flexibility (Deardorff, 2006; Odağ et al., 2016). Interculturally competent individuals are expected to be adaptive to diverse communication styles and easily adjust to new cultural environments. In other words, interculturally competent individuals should adapt and appreciate complex cultural differences. Deardorff (2006) also maintained that interculturally competent individuals must be flexible. Their flexibility has been reflected in selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviours.

External Outcomes

The concept of external outcomes as a dimension of intercultural competence is described in terms of the individuals' ability to behave and communicate appropriately and effectively (Deardorff, 2006; Scarino, 2009). It is through interaction that communication can easily be undertaken. For that matter, communication becomes a defining characteristic of intercultural competence. According to Deardorff (2006), these external outcomes are also based on the individual's intercultural attitude, knowledge, skills, and internal outcomes. In other words, to communicate effectively with people from a different culture, they need to be ready and willing to learn and accept the information from that culture. Modified from Deardorff (2006), Figure 1 below illustrates the relationship among these five dimensions of intercultural competence.

Figure 1

A Theoretical Framework adapted from Deardorff (2006)



Research problem and hypothesis

It is unfortunate that, of all the reviewed studies (e.g., Deardorff, 2006; Duvivier, 2017; Feng, 2016; Gong et al., 2018; Jackson, 2015; Lieberman & Gamst, 2015; Miller & Tucker, 2015; Nair-Venugopal, 2015; Odağ et al., 2016; Peng & Wu, 2016; Portera & Milani, 2021; Presbitero & Attar, 2018; Streitwieser & Light, 2018; Vižintin, 2022), no studies have focused on intercultural competence of teacher educators in an African context, specifically Tanzania. Many of the relevant and accessible literature were from outside Africa and Tanzania in particular. Thus, little is known about the extent to which teacher educators in Tanzania possess the required intercultural competence. For that matter, this study aimed to investigate the extent to which teacher educators possess intercultural competence and examine the factors that influence the intercultural competence of academics. In that regard, following the theoretical framework and the reviewed literature, the hypotheses that were developed to guide the study are:

H1: There will be no significant difference among teacher educators' intercultural competence dimensions.

- H2: There will be no significant difference between men and women concerning their intercultural competence.
- H3: There will be a significant relationship between living abroad and academics' intercultural competence.
- H4: There will be a significant relationship between the years of staying abroad and the academics' intercultural competence.
- H5: There will be a significant difference between academics' level of education and intercultural competence.
- H6: Academics with different teaching experiences will differ regarding their intercultural competence.
- H7: Academics from different faculties will have no significant differences in intercultural competence.
- H8: Academics from different colleges will have no significant differences in intercultural competence.

Method

Participants

The study was carried out in two higher learning institutions in Tanzania, specifically university colleges established to train prospective teachers. The study used a sample of 300 teacher educators. The researchers termed the university colleges 'College A' and 'College B' to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of research ethics (Hett & Hett, 2013; Shamim & Qureshi, 2013). At the time of data collection, the population from which the sample was selected was 370 teacher educators; 240 were from College A, and 130 were from College B. The initial plan was to collect data from all teacher educators in both colleges. Following the colleges and the faculties where they came from, we treated these two colleges and their respective faculties as strata.

The questionnaires were divided per the proportion of the population of each college and its respective faculty members. For instance, in College A, which had three faculties, the questionnaires distributed were 55, 70, and 115 for the faculties of science, education, and humanities and social sciences, respectively. Similarly, in College B, which had three faculties named in the same order as above, the questionnaires distributed were 35, 45, and 50, respectively. Finally, 300 questionnaires from both colleges were returned, yielding a response rate of 81.1% distributed across the two colleges (see details in Table 1).

Of the 300 participants, 198 (66%) were men, and 102 (34%) were women. Among these, 212 (70.7%) participants were from College A, and 88 (29.3%) were from College B. Moreover, 86 (28.7%) participants were from the faculty

of science, 90 (30%) were from the faculty of education, and 124 (41.3%) were from the faculty of humanities and social sciences. Before data collection, we obtained an institutional research permit. We prepared a consent form that participants completed to affirm their willingness before participating in the study. The form included research ethical issues such as participants' rights and responsibilities. For instance, participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential.

Moreover, demographic data showed that most participants had a master's degree level of education. Those with doctoral degrees followed the number. A few participants, 34 (11.6%) working as tutorial assistants, had a bachelor's degree. In addition, half of the participants had lived abroad, and half had not studied or lived abroad. Most of those who had studied or lived abroad lived only for less than five years. Only 6 (4.1%) participants had lived abroad for over five years. Regarding teaching experience, 92 (31.9%) had taught at the university colleges for less than five years. Additionally, 92 (31.9%) had taught for over ten years. The remaining 104 (36.1%) participants had taught for five to ten years. Table 1 summarises the demographic data of the study participants.

Table 1
Sample Demographics

Characteristics (<i>n</i> = 300)	<i>N</i>	%
Sex		
Male	198	66
Female	102	34
College		
College A	212	70.7
College B	88	29.3
Faculty		
Education	90	30
Humanities & Social Sciences	124	41.3
Science	86	28.7
Having Studied/Stayed Abroad		
Yes	148	49.7
No	148	49.7
Duration of Staying Abroad		
Below 1 year	34	23
From 1 to 3 years	58	39.2
From 3 to 5 years	50	33.8
5 years and above	6	4.1

Characteristics (<i>n</i> = 300)	<i>N</i>	%
Level of Education		
Bachelor Degree	34	11.6
Master Degree	128	43.5
Doctoral Degree	132	44.9
Teaching Experience		
Below 5 years	92	31.9
From 5 to 10 years	104	36.1
10 years and above	92	31.9

Instruments

Attitude

The attitude dimension was measured using a four-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree) for items measuring the extent of possession of intercultural competence among academics. The dimension was measured using nine items (e.g., 'I willingly interact with people from other cultures'). The items were modified from a study by Peng et al. (2009). After running the reliability test, all nine items were retained. The reliability coefficient in terms of Cronbach's alpha for the dimension was .93. The reliability coefficient in terms of Cronbach's alpha for the dimension in the present study is .77.

Knowledge

Knowledge was measured using a four-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree) for items measuring the extent to which academics possess intercultural competence. Seven items (e.g., 'I know the essential norms and taboos of other people's culture') were used to measure the dimension. Similar to the dimension of attitude, the items were adopted and modified from a study by Peng et al. (2009). Again, after running the reliability test, all seven items were retained. The reliability coefficient in terms of Cronbach's alpha for the dimension was .91. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for the dimension is .78.

Skills

Using a four-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree), we measured 'skills' as a dimension of intercultural competence. Five items (e.g., 'I listen to others who are different from me') were used to measure the dimension. However, one item that led to low reliability was omitted after running a reliability test. Hence, four items were used to measure this dimension. The items were adopted from a study by Peng et al. (2009) and customised to fit

the local study context. The reliability coefficient in terms of Cronbach's alpha for the dimension was .88. In the present study, the reliability coefficient is .70.

Internal outcomes

We measured the internal outcomes dimension of intercultural competence using a four-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree). Four items (e.g., 'I am flexible when I encounter people who are very different from me') were used to measure the dimension. Like the 'skills' dimension, one item was deleted in the internal outcomes dimension. Therefore, the dimension was measured using three items. The items were adopted and modified from a study done by Messner (2015). The reliability coefficient in terms of Cronbach's alpha for the items measuring this dimension was .71. The reliability coefficient for this dimension in this present study is .63.

External outcomes

External outcomes dimension of intercultural competence was measured using a four-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). Four items (e.g., 'I learn through interaction with others') were used to measure this dimension. The items were adopted from a study done by Messner (2015). Then, they were modified to fit the local study context. Also, after running the reliability test, all four items were retained in this dimension. The reliability coefficient in terms of Cronbach's alpha for the items measuring this dimension was .73. The reliability coefficient for this dimension in this present study is .74.

Independent measures

Based on the literature reviewed, we included several independent measures to establish their relationship with the dependent measures. Thus, independent measures such as sex were included. Also, the faculty and college which the academics came from were included. In that regard, academics were asked to indicate their sex (1 = Male, 2 = Female), their faculty (1 = Education, 2 = Humanities and Social Sciences, 3 = Science) as well as their college (1 = College A, 2 = College B). The purpose was to determine if there is a relationship between sex, the faculty and the college where academics came from, and intercultural competence. Moreover, we included the academics' teaching experience as an independent measure. Academics were required to report their years of teaching experience. The purpose was to determine if teaching experience significantly relates to academics' intercultural competence.

Furthermore, living abroad and the duration of staying abroad were considered to be other important independent measures. Thus, academics

were asked to indicate whether or not they have lived abroad by indicating (1 = Yes, 2 = No). Moreover, the participants were asked to indicate the number of years they have studied or lived abroad. The purpose was to find out if academics' intercultural competence increases with the number of years spent abroad. Additionally, the academics were asked to provide their level of education. In Tanzania, it is common for a university academic to start working as a tutorial assistant with a minimum of a bachelor's degree. Thus, a 3-point scale (1 = Bachelor's Degree, 2 = Master's Degree, and 3 = Doctoral Degree) was used. Generally, the decision to include many independent measures adds value to the exploratory nature of this study, given that little research on this theme has been done in the context of Tanzania.

Data analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS version 26. To respond to the hypotheses delineated earlier, we computed several analyses. Firstly, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to calculate the frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Also, we conducted a reliability test to calculate Cronbach's alpha for each dimension measuring intercultural competence. The reliability scores reported in this study represent the consistency among the items for each dimension. We calculated the mean scores and standard deviations for different dimensions to respond to the first research objective. Finally, we computed an Independent Samples *t*-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to respond to the second research objective and subsequent hypotheses.

Results

To reiterate the study purpose, the study aimed to investigate the extent to which teacher educators possess intercultural competence. It also intended to examine the factors that influence the intercultural competence of academics. The results are presented per the research objectives and hypotheses as follows.

The extent to which teacher educators possess the intercultural competence

To respond to this research objective and the subsequent hypothesis, we computed the mean scores and the standard deviation for the dimensions measuring intercultural competence, as illustrated in Table 2. In terms of the order from high to low, the results indicated that academics had higher mean scores in the dimensions of attitude, external outcomes, internal outcomes, skills, and knowledge (see Table 2).

Table 2*Mean scores for dimensions measuring intercultural competence*

	Attitude	Knowledge	Skills	Internal Outcomes	External Outcomes
<i>M</i>	3.3054	3.0045	3.1241	3.1712	3.2568
<i>SD</i>	.3640	.4462	.4652	.4501	.4483

To thoroughly understand how teacher educators scored on the individual items, we analysed the mean scores and standard deviation for individual items (see Table 3). On the one hand, teacher educators scored higher in many items measuring their intercultural competence. On the other hand, the results indicated that teacher educators scored lower in some of the individual items measuring skills and knowledge as dimensions of intercultural competence (Table 3).

Table 3*Mean scores of dimensions and their respective individual items*

	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attitude	1	4	3.3054	.3640
I willingly interact with people from other cultures	1	4	3.53	.587
I communicate in others' language in appropriate ways	1	4	3.15	.700
I learn the culture of other people	1	4	3.07	.695
I respect other people's culture	1	4	3.49	.552
I deal with the emotions and frustrations of my involvement in others' culture	1	4	3.17	.598
I am mindful and able to withhold judgment about different beliefs	1	4	3.23	.593
I reflect on the effect of my decisions and behaviour on other people	1	4	3.34	.578
I am curious and eager to discover cultural differences	1	4	3.31	.616
I am open to learning from other people about different cultural practices	1	4	3.39	.589
Skills	1	4	3.1241	.4652
I understand factors that have shaped other people's culture	1	4	2.81	.729
I use appropriate strategies for coping with others' culture	1	4	3.13	.606
I interpret, analyse, and relate to others in different contexts	1	4	3.18	.594
I listen to others who are different from me	1	4	3.32	.640
Knowledge	1	4	3.0045	.4462
I use suitable strategies for adjusting to my own culture upon returning to my home (region or country)	1	4	3.21	.675
I use a variety of techniques to enhance my learning about others' culture	1	4	3.01	.629
I contrast aspects of the culture of my own and other people	1	4	3.03	.657
I know the essential norms of other people's culture	1	4	2.75	.730
I know how to overcome signs of cultural stress	1	4	2.90	.696

	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I understand the impact of culture on the different contexts involved	1	4	3.12	.595
I know the techniques to maximise the learning of the language and culture of others	1	4	2.75	.817
Internal Outcomes	1	4	3.1712	.4501
I see from others' perspectives and respond as per their desire to be treated	1	4	3.03	.643
I adjust to the new cultural environment	1	4	3.21	.573
I am flexible when I encounter people who are very different from me	1	4	3.29	.559
External Outcomes	1	2	3.2568	.4483
I adapt to different communication and learning styles	1	4	3.23	.591
I learn through interaction with others	1	4	3.42	.594
I adapt my behaviour in line with what I learn about communication in others' culture	1	4	3.13	.628
I tolerate the behaviour demonstrated by people from other cultures	1	4	3.24	.564

Factors influencing teacher educators' intercultural competence

We computed an Independent Samples *t*-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to attempt this research objective. The results indicated that sex and the college where the academics came from had no significant relationship with all the dimensions of intercultural competence (Table 4). Thus, we accept hypotheses (H2 and H8). Moreover, the rest of the independent variables had a significant relationship with at least one dimension of intercultural competence. In particular, the results indicated that living abroad had a significant relationship ($p < .01$) with the internal outcomes dimension only (Table 4). An analysis of mean scores indicated that teacher educators who had lived abroad had a relatively higher mean score ($M = 3.2374$, $SD = .4411$) than those who never lived abroad ($M = 3.1005$, $SD = .4418$). Impliedly, living abroad influences teacher educators in the dimension of internal outcomes only. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis (H3) for this dimension only.

Table 4*T-test and ANOVA for the dimensions of intercultural competence*

	Attitude	Knowledge	Skills	Internal Outcomes	External Outcomes
Sex	.843	.762	.415	.074	.537
Living abroad	.065	.867	.423	.008**	.950
Duration of staying abroad	.017*	.078	.150	.285	.337
Level of education	.000**	.000**	.026*	.196	.103
Teaching experience	.042*	.876	.453	.057	.402
The faculty where the academics came from	.009**	.615	.176	.167	.052
The college where the academics came from	.071	.228	.094	.298	.644

$p < .01^{**}$, $p < .05^{*}$

Furthermore, the results indicated that years of staying abroad significantly ($p < .05$) influence academics' intercultural competence in the dimension of attitude only (Table 4). Descriptive statistics indicated that teacher educators who studied or stayed abroad for more than five years had higher mean scores than those who studied or stayed abroad for less than five years (see Table 5). Therefore, the duration of staying abroad influences academics' intercultural competence only in the attitude dimension. Thus, we accept the hypothesis (H4) for this dimension only.

Table 5*Mean scores for the attitude dimension by the duration of staying abroad*

Duration of staying abroad	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Below 1 year	3.3185	.2255
From 1 to 3 years	3.2356	.4818
From 3 to 5 years	3.4356	.3403
5 years and above	3.6296	.3036

From the findings, we note that teacher educators who had stayed abroad for five years and above had higher mean scores compared with those who stayed for a period below five years (Table 5). Nevertheless, it is surprising that teacher educators who studied or stayed abroad for some months had relatively higher mean scores than those who had studied or stayed abroad for one to three years (see Table 5).

Table 6*Mean scores for attitude, knowledge, and skills dimensions by level of education*

Level of education	Attitude	Knowledge	Skills
Bachelor Degree	$M = 3.4837, SD = .3165$	$M = 3.2653, SD = .4325$	$M = 3.2206, SD = .5565$
Master Degree	$M = 3.1724, SD = .3638$	$M = 2.8439, SD = .4155$	$M = 3.0323, SD = .4382$
Doctoral Degree	$M = 3.3692, SD = .3375$	$M = 3.0813, SD = .4256$	$M = 3.1667, SD = .4517$

Regarding the level of education, the results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the level of education and attitude ($p < .01$), knowledge ($p < .01$), and skills ($p < .05$) only (see Table 4). Surprisingly, descriptive statistics indicated that teacher educators with bachelor's degrees had higher mean scores in all three dimensions. Under normal circumstances, teacher educators with higher levels of education are expected to possess intercultural competence. Unexpectedly, teacher educators with master's degrees demonstrated lower mean scores in all dimensions, with knowledge scoring the lowest (see Table 6). Therefore, we accept hypothesis (H5) in these three dimensions only.

Table 7*Mean scores for the attitude dimension by academics' teaching experience*

Academics' teaching experience	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Below 5 years	3.2646	.3802
From 5 to 10 years	3.2622	.3641
10 years and above	3.3813	.3313

With regard to teaching experience, results indicated that academics' teaching experience was significantly related ($p < .05$) to the dimension of attitude only (see Table 4). After running descriptive statistics, results indicated that teacher educators with a university teaching experience of 10 years and above had higher mean scores than those who had taught for less than ten years (see Table 7). We accept the hypothesis (H6) from the results that academics with different teaching experiences will only differ regarding their intercultural competence in the attitude dimension.

Table 8

Mean scores for the attitude dimension by the faculty where the academics came from

Faculty	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Education	3.3730	.3122
Humanities and Social Sciences	3.3239	.3315
Science	3.2018	.4399

Concerning the faculty from which the academics came, the results indicated that there was a significant relationship ($p < .01$) between the faculty where teacher academics came from and the attitude dimension of intercultural competence (see Table 4). Descriptive statistics showed that teacher educators from the faculty of education had higher mean scores than those from the faculty of humanities and social sciences and the faculty of science (Table 8). Therefore, we nullify the hypothesis (H7) in the attitude dimension and accept the hypothesis (H7) in all other dimensions of intercultural competence.

Discussion

The general purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which teacher educators possess intercultural competence. Also, the study intended to examine the factors that influence the intercultural competence of academics. Descriptive statistics indicated that of all the study participants, 148 (49.7%) had not studied or lived abroad; this implies that many teacher educators lack at least one dimension of intercultural competence. For instance, in this study, results indicated that living abroad influences the dimension of internal outcomes only. On the one hand, the results contradict studies (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012; Garrote, 2016; Holland, 2013), which found no significant relationship between living abroad and intercultural competence. On the other hand, the results support the previous studies (Maharaja, 2018; Salisbury et al., 2013), which have indicated that living abroad significantly relates to some dimensions of intercultural competence.

Since these two universities have small numbers of international academics and students, we assume that this might have been the reason for those who had never lived abroad to score relatively lower mean scores compared with those who had studied or lived abroad. Thus, they lacked internationalisation across nations and borders (Feng, 2016; Garson, 2016; Salisbury et al., 2013; Wang & Kulich, 2015) and internationalisation at home (Garson, 2016;

Wang & Kulich, 2015). As a solution, individuals must continue to familiarise themselves with intercultural competence. Familiarity with intercultural competence might be useful to teacher educators when they go abroad for further education, conferences, and other academic ventures. Both colleges have internationalisation and convocation departments which link the colleges with other international institutions across the globe, search for scholarships to study abroad, and organise exchange programmes for academics and students. Therefore, it is mandatory that teacher educators acquire intercultural competencies for interaction with people from other cultures. Apart from the colleges, the government of Tanzania has also established various bilateral relations with other countries for the purpose of securing scholarships and exchange programmes for academics (Tingting, 2014). Such efforts by colleges and governments respond to the emphasis made in the studies (Maharaja, 2018; Salisbury et al., 2013), which have suggested that individuals' academic mobility and internationalisation experiences improve their intercultural competence.

Furthermore, although the results indicated that teacher educators had significantly low mean scores in the knowledge dimension, generally, teacher educators reported having moderate levels of intercultural competence. The fact that academics scored low in the items measuring the dimension of knowledge is a sign for academics to continue to familiarise themselves with the knowledge dimension of intercultural competence.

With regard to the contradictory results of sex and intercultural competence noted in the previous studies (Garrote, 2016; Hyde & Linn, 2006; Polat & Barka, 2014), the present study indicates that men and women have no significant relationship with any of the intercultural competence. Such contradicting results continue to place sex as an important variable that researchers must consider when conducting intercultural competence studies. Moreover, the results from this study replicate earlier findings (Hudelson et al., 2011; Peng & Wu, 2016) that teaching experience significantly relates to the dimensions of intercultural competence. In this study, teaching experience is significantly only associated with the dimension of attitude. Furthermore, this study replicates the earlier studies (Hudelson et al., 2011; Peng & Wu, 2016), which found that academics with many years of teaching experience had higher mean scores than those with few years of teaching experience.

Our results contradicted the previous study on the duration of living abroad (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012), which indicated that the duration of stay had no significant relationship with intercultural competence. Our results indicated that living abroad significantly relates to at least one dimension of intercultural competence: attitude. Similar to our expectations, the results indicated that

teacher educators who had lived abroad for many years had higher mean scores than those who had studied or lived for a few years. Surprisingly, teacher academics who lived abroad for a period below one year had higher mean scores than those who studied or lived for one to three years.

Polat and Barka (2014) found that pre-service teachers in primary education departments were more competent in intercultural competence than pre-service teachers in preschool education. Such results communicate that the higher the level of education, the more the individual becomes interculturally competent. Similarly, logic also tells us that those with higher levels of education are expected to demonstrate higher mean scores in intercultural competence. This is because those with higher education levels tend to have local and global connections (Chi & Suthers, 2015). In contradiction with these studies, our results indicated that teacher educators with bachelor's degrees had higher mean scores in the dimensions of attitude, knowledge, and skills. They outshone teacher educators with master's and doctoral degrees.

Regarding the faculty from which the academics came, the results indicated that teacher educators from the faculty of education had higher mean scores than those from other faculties. Those from the faculty of science had the lowest mean scores. We assume the programme course content taught by academics from humanities and social sciences, and education might have influenced the results. Those from the faculty of education, and humanities and social sciences teach courses related to intercultural competence, such as internationalisation, globalisation, modernisation, and public relations.

Conclusions

The study concludes that teacher educators possessed much intercultural competence, particularly in attitude, external outcomes, internal outcomes, and skills dimensions. Nevertheless, they have to improve in the dimension of knowledge, which had significantly lower mean scores. Furthermore, the study concludes that factors such as living abroad, duration of staying abroad, level of education, academics' teaching experience, and the faculty where the academics came from significantly influence at least one dimension of intercultural competence. From the study findings, we recommend the following for future research. First, a qualitative study may explore why teacher educators with bachelor's degrees surpassed those with master's and doctoral degrees in possessing intercultural competence. Second, a study may examine why teacher educators who lived abroad for a period below one year had higher mean scores than those who lived abroad for one to three years. Finally, since the

instruments for this study were modified from the Asian and Western studies, it is recommended that a study be conducted to validate the tools for measuring intercultural competence among academics in the context of Tanzania.

Disclosure statement

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

References

- Behrnd, V., & Porzelt, S. (2012). Intercultural competence and training outcomes of students with experiences abroad. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 36(2), 213–223.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.04.005>
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1996). Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis. *Communication Yearbook*, 19(1), 353–383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1996.11678935>
- Chi, R., & Suthers, D. (2015). Assessing intercultural communication competence as a relational construct using social network analysis. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 48, 108–119.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.011>
- Costello, J. (2015). Students' stories of studying abroad: Reflections upon return. *Journal of International Students*, 5(1), 50–59. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v5i1.442>
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241–266.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002>
- Duvivier, R. (2017). Effects of study abroad on graduate student dispositions, knowledge and skills. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 35(2), 15–28. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csaj.2017.0010>
- Feng, J. B. (2016). Improving intercultural competence in the classroom: A reflective development model. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 27(1), 4–22.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08975930.2016.1172540>
- Garrote, M. (2016). Intercultural competence in teaching: Defining the intercultural profile of student teachers. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching & Learning & Literature*, 9(4), 41–58.
<https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/jtl3.670>
- Garson, K. (2016). Reframing internationalization. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 46(2), 19–39. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v46i2.185272>
- Gong, Y., Hu, X., & Lai, C. (2018). Chinese as a second language teachers' cognition in teaching intercultural communicative competence. *System*, 78, 224–233.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.09.009>
- Hett, G., & Hett, J. (2013). Education ethics in intercultural research: Reflections on the challenges of conducting field research in a Syrian context. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International*, 43(4), 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.797753>

- Holland, C. K. (2013). *Classroom intercultural competence in teacher education students, interns, and alumni*. University of North Florida.
- Holmes, P., & O'Neill, G. (2012). Developing and evaluating intercultural competence: Ethnographies of intercultural encounters. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 36(5), 707–718. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2012.04.010>
- Hudelson, P., Perron, N., & Perneger, T. (2011). Self-assessment of intercultural communication skills: A survey of physicians and medical students in Geneva, Switzerland. *BMC Medical Education*, 11(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6920-11-63>
- Jackson, J. (2015). Becoming interculturally competent: Theory to practice in international education. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 48, 91–107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.012>
- Kealey, D. J. (2015). Some strengths and weaknesses of 25 years of research on intercultural communication competence: Personal reflections. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 48, 14–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.005>
- Lieberman, D. A., & Gamst, G. (2015). Intercultural communication competence revisited: Linking the intercultural and multicultural fields. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 48, 17–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.007>
- Maharaja, G. (2018). The impact of study abroad on college students' intercultural competence and personal development. *International Research and Review: Journal of Phi Beta Delta*, 7(2), 18–41. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2019.9.4.6>
- Messner, W. (2015). Measuring existent intercultural effectiveness in global teams. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 8(1), 107–132. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMPB-05-2014-0044>
- Miller, J. W., & Tucker, J. S. (2015). Addressing and assessing critical thinking in intercultural contexts: Investigating the distance learning outcomes of military leaders. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 48, 120–136. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.07.002>
- Morley, L., & Lugg, R. (2009). Mapping meritocracy: Intersecting gender, poverty and higher educational opportunity structures. *Higher Education Policy*, 22(1), 37–60. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/hep.2008.26>
- Nadeem, U. M., Mohammed, R., & Dalib, S. (2020). Retesting integrated model of intercultural communication competence (IMICC) on international students from the Asian context of Malaysia. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 74, 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2019.10.005>
- Nair-Venugopal, S. (2015). Issues of language and competence in intercultural business contexts. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 15(1), 29–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2014.985304>
- Odağ, Ö., Wallin, H. R., & Kedzior, K. K. (2016). Definition of intercultural competence according to undergraduate students at an international university in Germany. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 20(2), 118–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315315587105>
- Peng, H., Lu, W., & Wang, C. (2009). A framework for assessing high school students' intercultural communicative competence in a computer-mediated language learning project. *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*, 20(1), 95–116. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ826784>

- Peng, R., & Wu, W. (2016). Measuring intercultural contact and its effects on intercultural competence: A structural equation modeling approach. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 53, 16–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2016.05.003>
- Polat, S., & Barka, T. O. (2014). Preservice teachers' intercultural competence: A comparative study of teachers in Switzerland and Turkey. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 14(54), 19–38. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/59884#page=21>
- Portera, A. (2020). Intercultural competence in education to foster European identity. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 40(2), 14–27. <https://doi.org/10.35923/jes.2019.2.02>
- Portera, A., & Milani, M. (2021). Intercultural education and competences at school. Results of an exploratory study in Italy. *Profesorado*, 25(3), 49–67. <https://doi.org/10.30827/PROFESORADO.V25I3.21527>
- Presbitero, A., & Attar, H. (2018). Intercultural communication effectiveness, cultural intelligence and knowledge sharing: Extending anxiety-uncertainty management theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 67, 35–43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2018.08.004>
- Rathje, S. (2007). Intercultural competence: The status and future of a controversial concept. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 7(4), 254–266. <https://doi.org/10.2167/laic285.0>
- Salisbury, M. H., An, B. P., & Pascarella, E. T. (2013). The effect of study abroad on intercultural competence among undergraduate college students. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 50(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jsarp-2013-0001>
- Scarino, A. (2009). Assessing intercultural capability in learning languages: Some issues and considerations. *Language Teaching*, 42(1), 67–80. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005417>
- Shamim, F., & Qureshi, R. (2013). Informed consent in educational research in the South: Tensions and accommodations. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 43(4), 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.797729>
- Streitwieser, B. T., & Light, G. J. (2018). Student conceptions of international experience in the study abroad context. *Higher Education*, 75(3), 471–487. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-017-0150-0#>
- Tingting, Y. (2014). Diploma serves diplomacy: China's "donor logic" in educational aid. *China: An International Journal*, 12(2), 87–109. <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/553150>
- Trede, F., Bowles, W., & Bridges, D. (2013). Developing intercultural competence and global citizenship through international experiences: Academics' perceptions. *Intercultural Education*, 24(5), 442–455. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2013.825578>
- Vižintin, M. A. (2018). Developing intercultural education. *Dve Domovini*, 47, 89–106. <https://doi.org/10.3986/dd.2018.1.06>
- Vižintin, M. A. (2022). *The role of teachers in the successful integration and intercultural education of migrant children*. Cambridge Scholars. <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/product/978-1-5275-8780-9>
- Vögtle, E. M., & Windzio, M. (2023). Does academic freedom matter for global student mobility? Results from longitudinal network data 2009–2017. *Higher Education*, 87, 433–452.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01015-x>

Wang, Y., & Kulich, S. J. (2015). Does context count? Developing and assessing intercultural competence through an interview- and model-based domestic course design in China. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 48, 38–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.013>

Biographical note

PATRICK SEVERINE KAVENUKE, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in Educational Foundations, Management and Lifelong Learning department at Dar es Salaam University College of Education, University of Dar es Salaam. His main areas of research are teacher education, critical pedagogy, critical thinking skills in students, teacher-student relationships, international and comparative education, and teacher professional development.

GRACE EZEKIEL KIHWELE is an Assistant Lecturer in Educational Foundations, Management and Lifelong Learning department at Dar es Salaam University College of Education, University of Dar es Salaam. Her main areas of research are equity and equality in education, international and comparative education, gender and education, teacher ethics, teacher-student relationships, and students' discipline.