

A Comparative Analysis of the Appreciation of Diversity in the USA and UAE

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Abstract

Respect for and appreciation of human differences constitutes an essential workplace skill in our rapidly shrinking, global world. This research compared similarities and differences in the acceptance of diversity between college students in the United States and in the United Arab Emirates as indicated on the Waller Diversity Inventory. The purpose of the study was to identify similarities and differences in these two unique cultural melting pots and to discuss the implications of the findings. Relationships between and among the group responses were examined utilizing the Bartlett’s test of Sphericity. The study established required methodological protocols then utilized exploratory factor analysis to formulate underlying factors driving the response for each of the two unique student groups. Resultant analysis found that the student groups were similar in numerous points but were substantially different. Findings are provided as a means of guiding future practice and research.

Introduction

Today's rapidly changing world is being shaped by advances in technology that were unimagined only a few decades ago. Human migration has outstripped previous patterns leading to unparalleled levels of social and cultural interaction. Almost all aspects of life are caught in this paradigm of constant transition and transformation. Rapid adjustment and human exchange have become the norm while adherence to the status quo and cultural isolation have become the exception. At the international, national, regional and local level education, government, business and industry struggle to develop and implement cutting-edge models of operation to interface with shifting demographics holding dynamic new expectations. Cultural understanding and appreciation of diversity are at a premium in this environment (Lumadue & Waller, 2013a).

Competition in the modern global economy often begins at the national level. Countries that embrace multiculturalism find themselves at the forefront of the global race for talent (Ohlrich, 2017). Intercultural competence has become a fundamental workplace competency (Lumadue & Waller, 2013b). New ways of operating and new ways of doing business require the ability to navigate cultural mores and successfully interface with those different from oneself competency (Lumadue & Waller, 2013c).

The Waller Appreciation of Diversity Inventory

Development of the human dimension requires an understanding not only of the goal to be attained but an understanding of the place from which the journey is to begin (Lumadue & Waller, 2013d). For this reason, the establishment of an instrument measuring an individual's appreciation of diversity is of paramount importance. The Waller Appreciation of Diversity Inventory was developed in 2006 for this purpose. The Inventory included three distinct dimensions: 1) self-actualization, 2) cultural awareness, and 3) socialization patterns. These dimensions were established under sub-divisions, and the Inventory was validated in the United Arab Emirates via exploratory factor analysis. Findings of the analysis demonstrated a close parallel to the Inventory design. In short, the Inventory demonstrated (Al Hebsi, A., Aly, F., Al Teneji, A., El Sayed, S., Pettaway, L., & Waller, L., 2016).

Findings in the United Arab Emirates

The analysis conducted in 2016 indicated a total of ten underlying factors driving the responses of the UAE participants. The ten factors explained 75.338% of the variance in the data set. The ten factors were identified as 1) Willingness to examine personal value system at 24.785%, 2) Reality of self-perception at 8.782%, 3) Avoidance of stereotyping at 7.994%, 4) Interaction with those different from self at 7.460%, 5) Perception of the impact of personal experience at 5.728%, 6) Tolerance and handling of differing views at 5.013%, 7) Ethical practice and consistency of standards at 4.463%, 8) Acceptance of responsibility for consequences of own behavior at 3.962%, 9) Self-awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses at 3.775%, and 10) Taking responsibility for personal actions at 3.376% (Al Hebsi, A., Aly, F., Al Teneji, A., El Sayed, S., Pettaway, L., & Waller, L., 2016). The identification of ten underlying factors indicates the complexity and sophistication of cultural interaction and exchange in the UAE (Waller & Lumadue, 2013).

Design

This study proposes to compare responses on the Waller Appreciation of Diversity Inventory as conducted in the US with the findings for the UAE as previously published. Since the UAE study was conducted at an institution of higher learning, the US study was also conducted at an institution of higher learning to maintain the homogeneity of the sample populations.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study. The first question collected the statistical descriptives provided by the respondents. The second question examined relationships between or among the responses. While the third question compared the findings in the US with those in the UAE. The research questions were as follows.

1. What are the responses to the Waller Appreciation of Diversity Inventory conducted at an institution of higher education in the United States of America in Fall 2017?
2. Do relationships exist between or among the responses to the Waller Appreciation of Diversity Inventory conducted at an institution of higher education in the United States of America in Fall 2017?

3. How do the responses to the Waller Appreciation of Diversity Inventory conducted in the United States of America compare to the responses in the United Arab Emirates?

Hypotheses

Research question 1 required only the provision of response descriptives. Research question 2 was guided by the following null and alternate hypotheses.

Ho: No relationships exist between or among the responses to the Waller Appreciation of Diversity Inventory conducted at an institution of higher education in the United States of America in Fall 2017.

Ha: Relationships exist between or among the responses to the Waller Appreciation of Diversity Inventory conducted at an institution of higher education in the United States of America in Fall 2017.

After obtaining institutional review board (IRB) approval, the Inventory was administered in the United States of America in the State of Texas. The findings were tabulated and evaluated.

Methodology

Response reliability was established at a significance of .912 utilizing Cronbach's Alpha. The number of responses, mean and standard deviations were collected for each question in support of research question 1. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was utilized at a significance of 0.05 to examine research question 2. Sample adequacy was established at .811 using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. With the rejection of the null hypothesis, exploratory factor analysis was conducted utilizing a Varimax rotation to determine the underlying factors driving responses on the Inventory. Eigenvalues at 1.0 or higher were deemed significant. Factor loadings at .400 or higher were deemed significant. The findings of the Inventory for the UAE as previously published were compared to the findings in the US in response to research question 3. Significance levels at each stage were deemed appropriate for the statistical methodology utilized (Waller & Lumadue, 2013).

Findings

The Inventory was administered in the US to the student body in Fall 2017. Responses were collected and analyzed. The findings follow.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 examined the responses to the Inventory to ascertain the descriptives of number, mean and standard deviation. The survey garnered a total of 118 responses. Scores ranged from a high of 3.38 on questions 8 and 10 to a low of 2.58 on question 19. The findings for each question on the Inventory are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. *Question responses on the Waller Appreciation of Diversity Inventory Administered in the United States Fall 2017.*

Question	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I am aware of my own strengths and potential areas of growth.	118	3.31	.748
2. I assess my strengths and weaknesses and try to improve myself.	118	3.22	.764
3. I feel comfortable in expressing my ideas even if they are in the minority.	118	3.03	.938
4. I evaluate criticism to determine how it can be useful to me.	118	3.04	.841
5. My success depends on my competence and hard work.	117	3.47	.714
6. The degree to which I am acceptable to others depends on my behavior towards them.	118	2.94	.820
7. I am able to set clear, realistic, and demanding goals for myself.	118	3.20	.791
8. When something goes wrong, I take responsibility for my decisions.	118	3.38	.739

Question	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
9. My behavior is consistent with my belief system.	118	3.20	.791
10. I act in an ethical manner.	118	3.38	.678
11. I practice principles of self-accountability	117	3.29	.766
12. I am patient when working with the problems and concerns of others.	117	3.04	.770
13. I am tolerant and accepting of the feelings of other people.	117	3.30	.812
14. I can disagree with others without being rude or offensive.	118	3.22	.786
15. I think of the impact of my comments and actions before I speak or act.	118	3.04	.851
16. I refrain from repeating rumors that reinforce prejudice and bias.	118	3.10	.810
17. I recognize and avoid using language that reinforces stereotypes.	118	3.05	.876
18. I recognize and respond to the feelings of others.	118	3.33	.796
19. I like to solicit ideas from others.	118	2.58	.964
20. I read opinions contrary to my own to learn what others are thinking.	118	3.06	.830
21. I am committed to respecting the beliefs and opinions of others.	117	3.34	.790
22. I am interested in the ideas of people who don't think as I do.	118	3.17	.860
23. I recognize that I am a product of my background: my way isn't the only way.	118	3.34	.754
24. I am aware of my prejudices and try to control my assumptions about people.	118	3.16	.795
25. I disregard physical characteristics when making decisions about the abilities of others.	118	3.05	.856
26. I avoid generalizing the behavior or attitudes of one individual to an entire group.	118	3.08	.859
27. I recognize that others may stereotype me and try to overcome incorrect assumptions they may make.	118	3.33	.785
28. I take the initiative in making new friends.	118	2.86	.954
29. I interact willingly and cooperatively with people who are different from me.	118	3.19	.805
30. I can communicate with and positively influence people who are different from me.	118	3.28	.783
31. I include people who are different from me in informal networks and events.	118	3.16	.915

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 required examination of a null and alternate research hypotheses established early in the study using the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. Prior to conducting Bartlett's test, the reliability was established at .931 using the Cronbach's Alpha. The Kaiser- Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.439 which falls within an acceptable range. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity returned a significance $< .001$ requiring rejection of H_0 in favor of H_a . Relationships were found to exist between or among the various responses. Factor analysis was then conducted since the number of variables was sufficient to exceed the number of identified factors (Waller & Lumadue, 2013). The results of the factor analysis are provided in the Table 2.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 examined the null and alternate hypotheses using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity which rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternate hypothesis at a significance $< .001$. Relationships were established between or among the participant responses. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted based on the sufficiency of the number of variables (Waller & Lumadue, 2013). The results are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. *Total Variance Explained*

Initial Eigenvalues			
Component	Total	% Variance	% Cumulative
1	9.012	29.072	29.072
2	2.770	8.936	38.007
3	2.080	6.709	44.716
4	1.613	5.203	49.920
5	1.503	4.849	54.769
6	1.205	3.886	58.655
7	1.106	3.567	62.222
8	1.053	3.397	65.619

Note: Extraction Method: Principle Component Analysis

As indicated in Table 2, eight factors were identified with Eigenvalues above 1.0. Cumulatively these eight factors explained 65.619% of the variance in the data set. These eight factors ranged from a high of 9.012 and explained 29.072% of the variance to a low of 1.053 explaining 3.397% of the variance. Factor loadings for the eight factors were extracted using a Varimax rotation with a Kaiser normalization. This served to maximize their differences and make them easier to interpret. The factor loadings converged in 9 iterations. The indicated factor loadings are provided in Appendix 1. Factor loadings with values above .400 were deemed significant. (Waller & Lumadue, 2013).

Analysis of the component matrix led the researchers to name the eight factors as follows: 1) Willingness to examine personal value system at 29.072%, 2) Reality of self-perception at 8.936%, 3) Interaction with those different from self at 6.709%, 4) Self-actualization at 5.203%, 5) Tolerance and handling of differing views at 4.89%, 6) Empathy towards others at 3.886%, 7) Taking responsibility for personal actions at 3.567%, and 8) Self-awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses at 3.397%.

Research Question 3

Ten underlying factors were identified in the UAE while only eight were identified in the US. Comparison of the underlying factors demonstrates that 75.338% of the variance was explained in the UAE study while only 65.619% of the variance was explained in the US study. The UAE results provided for ten underlying factors while the US results indicated only eight. The factors of willingness to examine personal value system, reality of self-perception, interaction with those different from self, self-awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses, and taking responsibility for personal actions were identified in both studies. The UAE study identified three additional underlying factors: 1) perception of the impact of personal experience, 2) ethical practice and consistency of standards, and 3) acceptance of the consequences of own behavior. The US study identified two additional underlying factors: 1) self-actualization and 2) empathy with others.

Conclusions and Recommendations

These two studies indicate that acceptance of diversity is more complex and sophisticated in the UAE than in the US as demonstrated in the number of underlying factors driving the responses. Perhaps it would be of interest to note that while the demographics of the UAE and the US are very diverse, the UAE has a broader range of expatriates coming from a wide range of international environments where diverse ethnicities in the US are more likely to share a similar nationality. These findings do not lessen

the fact both countries are likely to embrace diversity than many of their companion nations. The findings do highlight underlying demographic differences in the UAE and the US. Where the UAE has a 70%+ population of expatriates likely born and raised in a different country, diversity in the US is more often of a different ethnicity sharing a common national experience. Accordingly, responses in the UAE included a focus on personal experience, ethical considerations and the acceptance of consequences for personal behavior. The US responses included a different emphasis on self-actualization and empathy with others.

The findings of the study are recommended as a guide to strengthen training to increase the appreciation of human diversity. The researchers also note the need for further international analysis and study to examine responses in nations less accepting of international demographics. Further research is recommended to expand the generalizability of these findings.

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Appendix A**Rotated Component Matrix**

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Q1	-.040	.091	-.012	.757	-.048	.192	.127	-.004
Q2	.152	.082	.101	.843	-.010	-.011	.128	-.031
Q3	-.119	.226	.158	.787	.072	-.070	-.051	.063
Q4	.160	.388	-.092	.306	.172	.076	.582	-.055
Q5	.587	.309	.105	.023	-.214	.004	.429	.133
Q6	.114	.193	-.064	-.065	.063	.274	-.004	.702
Q7	.202	.587	.125	.474	.048	.106	.037	.218
Q8	.414	.663	.050	.132	.043	.084	.050	.009
Q9	-.002	.730	.019	.181	.083	.225	-.084	-.016
Q10	-.014	.557	.320	.002	.032	.290	.135	.083
Q11	.221	.655	.092	.226	.117	.022	.143	.147
Q12	.244	.000	-.014	.130	.245	.689	.195	.023
Q13	.546	.207	-.061	.002	.442	.331	-.099	.200
Q14	.192	.180	.191	.023	.609	.194	-.152	.142
Q15	.423	.418	.087	-.102	.284	.274	.040	-.216
Q16	-.163	.277	.177	.020	.170	.695	-.054	.220
Q17	.283	.282	.180	.029	.086	.676	.006	.100
Q18	.629	.182	.280	.161	-.034	.407	.073	-.045
Q19	-.165	-.038	.184	.084	.131	.062	.774	.147
Q20	.157	-.015	.303	.122	.149	-.001	.217	.685
Q21	.559	.067	.161	-.019	.357	.267	.236	.210
Q22	.642	.031	.047	.051	.299	-.035	-.039	.429
Q23	.607	.201	.214	-.121	.344	.111	-.055	.059
Q24	.657	.113	.209	.042	.121	-.024	-.144	.036
Q25	.023	.119	.324	.107	.641	.105	.247	.036
Q26	.261	.000	.179	-.042	.711	.176	.227	.072
Q27	.312	.470	.298	-.126	.406	-.094	.017	.084
Q28	.355	.155	.602	.228	.093	.227	-.100	-.066
Q29	.210	.092	.589	.148	.290	.131	.171	.221
Q30	.143	.199	.826	.012	.167	.129	.071	.079
Q31	.105	.022	.860	.064	.166	-.020	.058	.022

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 9 iterations.