



Effect of Tourism Students' Cultural Intelligence on Their Vocation Fit

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Extensive Summary

As they enter upon their career, tourism students, who are set to perform the production of service in the tourism sector and who will be in intensive contact with different cultures, need to have multiple skills to deliver the performance expected from them. Tourism workers appear in multicultural environments need to perceive and interpret the culture of the other person(s) in their business relations and to be able to adapt to this culture behaviorally. At this point, the importance of cultural intelligence emerges. The fact that the students, who will work in the tourism sector and who received tourism education, are able to respond to individual and organizational expectations in working life requires them to have high levels of cultural intelligence. Based on this thought, it is predicted that cultural intelligence has an effect on vocation fit.

Within the scope of the study, an answer was sought for the following question: “Does the individual's cultural intelligence, which is the ability to work effectively in the intercultural field (Randrianasolo et al., 2020, p.2), affect his/her vocation fit that reveals how an individual fits his/her vocation with the responsibilities to be undertaken for the job, the education he/she has, his/her abilities and motivation?”. In the literature review, no study carried out directly in this field was reached. Thanks to this study, it was aimed to fill this gap in the literature and to contribute to the literature in this sense.

The data obtained from 300 tourism student participants were analyzed in SPSS 22.0 program. As a result of the analysis made; by “Gender” variable, in the “behavioral cultural

intelligence dimension”, the “behavioral cultural intelligence scores of female participants” ($x=3,931$) were found to be higher than the “behavioral cultural intelligence scores of male participants” ($x=3,750$) ($t=2,069$; $p=0.039<0.05$). By the “grade level” variable; “metacognitive cultural intelligence scores of the 1st grade students” ($x=3,874$) were found to be higher than “metacognitive cultural intelligence scores of the 2nd grade students” ($x=4,072$) ($t=-1,984$; $p=0.048<0.05$). Again, by the “grade level” variable; in the “cognitive cultural intelligence dimension”; “cognitive cultural intelligence scores of the 1st grade students” ($x=3,070$) were found to be lower than “cognitive cultural intelligence scores of the 2nd grade students” ($x=3,255$) ($t=-2,282$; $p=0.023<0.05$). By the “foreign language level” variable; “cultural intelligence” of those whose “language level was medium and good” was lower than those whose “language level was low”. In line with the finding obtained, it can be said that the language level does not have a direct effect on cultural intelligence. Of the participants, “the vocation fit scores of those who want to work in the sector upon graduation” ($x=4,171$) were found to be higher than “the vocation fit scores of those who do not want to work in the sector upon graduation” ($x=3,319$) ($t=5,183$; $p<0.05$). As a result of the analysis, it was seen that the students’ cultural intelligence scores and vocation fit scores were above the average.

According to the findings of the study that examines the cultural intelligence levels and vocation fit of the participants; it was concluded that there is a positive relationship between cultural intelligence and vocation fit, that the total change in the level of vocation fit can be explained by cultural intelligence at the rate of 25%, and that cultural intelligence increases the level of vocation fit. In the light of the findings obtained, research hypotheses were accepted.

At the point of increasing the cultural intelligence level of the labor force to be employed in the tourism sector and the realization of vocation fit, it should be stated that significant roles fall to organizations of tourism profession and tourism establishments and in particular to educational institutions. It is thought that the training to be provided by all stakeholders for cultural intelligence and vocation fit and the supports through personal development programs will create surplus value for both workers, establishments, and guests.