The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences – empirical research report

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The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences – empirical research report

UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Introduction

Internationalisation is one of the main challenges faced by the Polish higher education. To achieve it, different activities are undertaken by the Ministry of Science and Education, its agendas, and mostly higher educational institutions.

Since 2011, there has been a continuous growth in the number of international students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Poland. The increase is as large as eight to ten thousand a year. According to the statistical data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS), more and more foreigners are interested in studying at Polish HEIs. In the academic year 2019/2020, 82.2 thousand international students studied in Poland (5% more than in the previous year), constituting 6.8% of the total number of students.

One of the most critical issues resulting from the growing influx of international students is the necessity of creating a conducive academic environment aimed at the development of intercultural skills and avoidance of intercultural conflicts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this task is becoming a top priority.

 Therefore, the presented empirical study aimed to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on intercultural conflicts in the University of Social Sciences' academic environment in Warsaw. One of the study's additional utilitarian aims was developing a catalogue of solutions accepted by students, which would promote cross-cultural integration and the avoidance or resolution of intercultural conflicts.

The research was conducted:

- In comparative terms – the situation before and after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic;

- From five perspectives:

  1) Relations between students from different (various) countries (relations of international students with local students, and relations between international students);

  2) Teamwork of students from other (various) countries (relations of international students with local students, and relations between international students);

  3) Contacts of international students with the University's administration staff (e.g. the Dean's Office, Planning Department);

  4) Contacts of international students with academic teachers;

  5) Everyday situations;

- Taking into consideration selected cultural dimensions as well as "sensitive zones" identified in the SOLVINC project

1. Cultural Determinants as a Source of Conflicts in the Academic Environment – Theoretical Introduction

1.1 The Complexity of Culture

Understanding the notion of culture is essential for root cause analysis of intercultural conflicts in the academic environment.

As already mentioned in the introduction, one of the fundamental problems with studies into cultural factors studies is the complexity of the phenomenon of culture and difficulties with its unambiguous definition. The consequence is a large number of theoretical approaches.

The ambiguity of this term was underlined already in the eighteenth century by the German philosopher J.G. Herder, who made a significant contribution to universalisation of the concept of culture. In his work entitled *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, he wrote: "(...) nothing is more indeterminate than the word culture" (Herder, 1962, p. 4).

The most comprehensive analysis of the notion of culture so far and the most extensive set of definitions describing it, formulated by specialists representing various scientific disciplines, can be found in the work by A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn (1952) entitled *Culture. A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*.

The Authors grouped presented definitions of culture into seven main categories:

1) Enumeratively descriptive definitions,

2) Historical definitions,

3) Normative definitions:

   a) Emphasis on rule or way,

   b) Emphasis on ideas or values plus behaviour,

4) Psychological definitions:

   a) Emphasis on adjustment, on culture as a problem-solving device,

   b) Emphasis on learning,

   c) Emphasis on habit,

   d) Purely psychological definitions,

5) Structural definitions,

6) Genetic definitions:

   a) Emphasis on culture as a product or artefact,

   b) Emphasis on ideas,

   c) Emphasis on symbols,

   d) Residual category definitions,

7) Incomplete definitions[1].

Enumeratively descriptive definitions reduce the definition of culture to the enumeration of its components, that is, the domains that make it up. The examples of enumeratively descriptive definitions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Examples of Enumeratively Descriptive Definitions

Author	Title of work	Definition of culture
E.B. Tylor	*Primitive Culture* (in Polish translation – *Cywilizacja pierwotna)*	"(…) ***culture***, or civilisation,….is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1896, p. 15, as cited in Klukhohn & Kroeber, 1952, p. 81)
B. Malinowski	*Szkice z teorii kultury*	"(…) ***culture*** is the integrated whole consisting of tools and consumer goods, constitutional, creative principles of various social groups, human ideas and skills, beliefs and customs" (Malinowski, 1958, p. 29)

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Malinowski, 1958; Tylor, 1896, as cited in Klukhohn & Kroeber, 1952.

Historical definitions underline the role of tradition (heritage) as the element that constitutes culture. In order to define culture, they use expressions like inheritance or heritage.

Examples of historical definitions can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Examples of Historical Definitions

Author	Title of work	Definition of culture
R. Linton	*The Study of Man*	"(…) As a general term, ***culture*** means the total social heredity of mankind, while as a specific terms culture means a particular strain of social heredity" (Linton, 1936, p. 78 as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn,1952, p. 90)
S. Czarnowski	*Kultura*	***Culture*** is a collective good and a collective achievement, the fruit of a creative and processing effort of countless generations (Czarnowski, 1958; 1982)

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Czarnowski 1958, 1982; Linton, 1936, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952.

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1 This type of definitions will not be discussed.

In turn, **normative definitions** emphasise the importance of subordinating human behaviour to certain norms, patterns, and models, which are treated as constitutive elements of culture. Culture is understood as a set of norms binding on members of a given human community that determine its existence. Submission to it is assessed as a cultural behaviour. Examples of normative definitions are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Examples of Normative Definitions

Definition type	Author	Title of work	Definition of culture
Emphasis on rule or way	R. Linton	*Present World Conditions In Cultural Perspective*	"the **culture** of society is the way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation" (Linton, 1945, p. 203, as cited in Kroeber, & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 96)
Emphasis on ideas or values plus behaviour	D. Bidney	*On the Philosophy of Culture in the Social Science*	„(…) **culture** consists of the acquired or cultivated behavior and thought of individuals within a society, as well as of the intellectual, social, and artistic ideals which human societies have professed historically" (Bidney 1942, p. 452, as cited in Kroeber, & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 101)

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Bidney, 1942, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Linton, 1945, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952.

Psychological definitions, take into account psychological mechanisms of the formation of culture such as the learning process, habit formation, imitation, internalisation of norms obligatory in a given community and values recognised by a given community as well as the impact of culture on the shaping of the personality of individuals of this community. This group also includes definitions that define culture as an adaptive apparatus. Examples of psychological definitions are included in Table 4.

Table 4
Examples of Psychological Definitions

Definition type	Author	Title of work	Definition of culture
Emphasis on adjustment, on culture as a problem-solving device	C.S. Ford	*Culture and Human Behavior*	"(…) **culture** consists of traditional ways of solving problems (…) Culture (…) is composed of responses which have been accepted because they have met with success; in brief, culture consists of learned problem-solutions" (Ford, 1942, p. 555, 557, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 107)
Emphasis on learning	E.A. Hoebel	*Man in the Primitive World*	"(…) **culture** is the sum total of learned behavior patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are, therefore, not the result of biological inheritance" (Hoebel 1949, pp. 3-4, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 112)

Emphasis on habit	K. Young	*Introductory Sociology*	"***culture***: forms of habitual behavior common to a group community, or society. It is made up of material and non-material traits " (Young, 1934, p. 592, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 115)
Purely psychological definitions	G. Roheim	*The Riddle of the Sphinx*	"by ***culture*** we shall understand the sum of all sublimations, all substitutes, or reaction formations, in short, everything in society that inhibits impulses or permits their distorted satisfaction" (Roheim 1934, p. 216, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, pp. 116-117)

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Ford, 1942, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Hoebel 1949, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Roheim 1934, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Young, 1934, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952.

Structural definitions emphasise the structure of a specific culture, and so its essential elements, patterns, and organisation. Examples of structural definitions are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Examples of Structural Definitions

Author	Title of work	Definition of culture
R. Linton	*The Cultural Background of Personality (in Polish translation: Kulturowe podstawy osobowości)*	"(…) ***culture*** is the configuration of learned behavior and results of behavior whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society" (the use of the notion of configuration assumes that various behaviors and their results that constitute culture are organised in a certain whole according to a particular pattern) (Linton, 1945 p. 119, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Linton, 2000, pp. 47-48)
Klukhohn & Kelly	*The Science of Man in the World Crisis*	"***culture*** is a historically derived system of explicit and implicit designs for living, which tends to be shared by all or specially designated members of a group" (Klukhohn & Kelly, 1945, p. 98, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p.119)

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Klukhohn & Kelly, 1945, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Linton, 1945 p. as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn; Linton, 2000.

In **genetic definitions**, attention is paid to explaining the origins of culture and its opposition to nature. They also focus on its nature as a product of social coexistence of people, emphasising the social sources of culture. According to genetic definitions, culture is a set of socially acquired values accepted by a society as a whole and transmitted among its members through language and symbols. As a result, culture reflects meanings and habits shared by a society. Examples of genetic definitions are provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Examples of Genetic Definitions

Definition type	Author	Title of work	Definition of culture
Emphasis on culture as a product or artefact	E. Huntington	*Mainsprings of Civilization*	"by ***culture*** we mean every object, habit, idea, institution, and mode of thought or action which man produces or creates and then passes on to others, especially to the next generation" (Huntington, 1945, pp. 7-8, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 127)
Emphasis on ideas	C. Osgood	*Ingalik Material Culture*	"***culture*** consists of all ideas concerning human beings which have been communicated to one's mind and of which one is conscious" (Osgood 1940, p. 25, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 131)
Emphasis on symbols	L.A. White	*Energy and the Evolution of Culture*	"***culture*** is an organisation of phenomena – material objects, bodily acts, ideas, and sentiments – which consists of or is dependent upon the use of symbols" (White, 1943, p. 335, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, p. 137)
Residual category definitions	A. Blumenthal	*Views on Definition of Culture*	"(...) ***culture*** consists of all nongenetically produced means of adjustment" (Blumentahl, 1941, p. 9, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, p. 139)

Source: own elaboration based on Blumentahl, 1941, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Huntington, 1945, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Osgood 1940, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; White, 1943, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952.

It is necessary to underline that it has already been nearly 70 years since the publication of A. Kroeber and C. Klukhohn's book, so new approaches have been suggested and other definitions of culture have been provided. However, the authors' classification of culture definitions is also applicable nowadays and enables us to sort out various approaches to this phenomenon.

For the purposes of the presented study, the definition of culture formulated by A. Kłoskowska will be used. According to this author "(...), culture is a relatively integrated whole that includes people's behaviours following patterns common to the community, developed and assimilated in the course of interactions and containing the products of such behaviours" (Kłoskowska, 1983, p. 40). Since the analyses were conducted at the level of national cultures, it was decided to use the definition of national culture. According to A. Kłoskowska "(...) national culture constitutes a broad and complex system (syndrome) of procedures, norms, values symbols, beliefs, knowledge and symbolic works, which a social community considers its own, granted particularly to it, grown out of its traditions and historical experiences and applicable within it" (Kłoskowska, 1991, p. 5).

1.2 The Use of Cultural Dimensions in Cross-Cultural Analyses

As can be seen from the considerations presented in the previous section, culture is a comprehensive concept that cannot be explicitly defined. This makes it much more challenging to transform the concept of culture into a measurable variable and conduct empirical research. When presenting the impact of culture on intercultural conflicts in HEI academic environments, it becomes necessary to reduce the

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abstract concept of culture to limited elements that meet at least some criteria enabling their empirical verification. In the intercultural research carried out so far, efforts were made to clarify the concept of culture by distinguishing its aspects and then assigning them to two basic components of culture.

According to Triandis these components are (Triandis, 1972; Bhagat, Triandis, & McDevitt, 2013):

- **Objective elements**, which include items that can be seen and touched such as everyday products (e.g. utensils and tools), clothes, food, and architecture (e.g. buildings, roads and bridges);

- **Subjective elements**, which include items that cannot be seen or touched such as social norms, habits, values, opinions, attitudes and behaviours.

There are two main ways to characterise subjective elements, namely, characterising them by domain and by dimension. Domain refers to specific sociopsychological characteristics that are considered meaningful outcomes and constituents of culture including opinions, values, beliefs, norms, behaviours, customs and rituals. Dimension refers to general tendencies that affect behaviour and reflect meaningful aspects of cultural variability (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004). Subjective domains and dimensions of culture exist both socially – that is, across individuals within groups – and individually within each member of a cultural group. Therefore, they can be subjects of two types of analysis: social and individual.

The next step in transforming culture into a measurable variable is the operationalisation of dimensions in the form of indexes enabling the obtaining of specific numerical data.
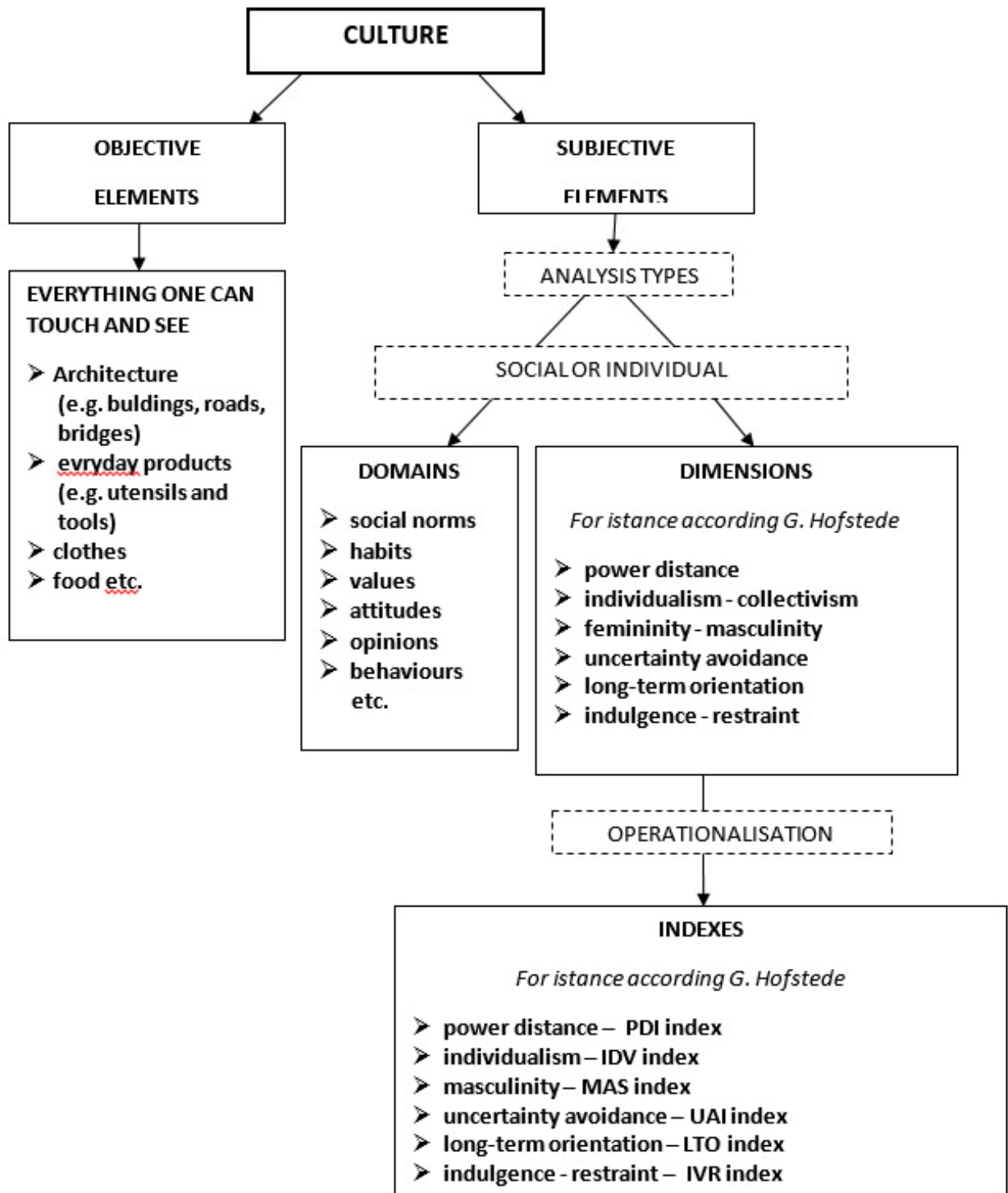
Examples could be indexes discovered in empirical research underpinning the six-dimensional Hofstede 6-D model (Hofstede, 1980, 2000; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2007; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, 2011) including:

a) Power Distance Index – PDI, which scores from 11 for the country with the lowest index (low power distance) to 104 for the country with the highest index (high power distance);

b) Individualism Index – IDV, which scores from 6 for the country with the lowest individualism to 91 for the country with its highest level.

c) Masculinity Index – MAS, which scores from 5 for the country with the lowest masculinity index to 95 for the country with the highest index;

d) Uncertainty Avoidance Index – UAI, which scores from 8 for the country with the lowest uncertainty avoidance index to 112 the country with the highest index;

e) Long-term Orientation Index – LTO, which scores from zero for the country with the lowest index to 118 for the country with the highest index;

f) Indulgence Versus Restraint Index – IVR, which scores from zero for the country with the lowest index to 100 for the country with the highest index.

A graphical illustration of the reduced (simplified) process of culture operationalisation is presented in Chart 1.

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Chart 1
Reduced (Simplified) Process of Culture Operationalisation

CULTURE

OBJECTIVE ELEMENTS

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENTS

ANALYSIS TYPES

SOCIAL OR INDIVIDUAL

EVERYTHING ONE CAN TOUCH AND SEE

➢ Architecture (e.g. buldings, roads, bridges)
➢ evryday products (e.g. utensils and tools)
➢ clothes
➢ food etc.

DOMAINS

➢ social norms
➢ habits
➢ values
➢ attitudes
➢ opinions
➢ behaviours
  etc.

DIMENSIONS

For istance according G. Hofstede

➢ power distance
➢ individualism - collectivism
➢ femininity - masculinity
➢ uncertainty avoidance
➢ long-term orientation
➢ indulgence - restraint

OPERATIONALISATION

INDEXES

For istance according G. Hofstede

➢ power distance – PDI index
➢ individualism – IDV index
➢ masculinity – MAS index
➢ uncertainty avoidance – UAI index
➢ long-term orientation – LTO index
➢ indulgence - restraint – IVR index

Source: A modified chart (Migdał, 2014, p. 142).

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1.3 The Use of Cultural Dimensions in Conflict Analysis in the Academic Environment of the University of Social Sciences From the Perspective of Slected "Sensitive Zones"

"**Sensitive zones**" are the domains likely to trigger misunderstandings, tensions, and conflicts in intercultural interactions. It is important to emphasise that the 'sensitivity' is not inherent in the domain in question (Alves, D., Amorim, J. P., Coimbra, J. L., Ferreira, P., Hoerr, B., Lopes, A., Manarte, J., Menezes, I., Migdał, A.M., Resch, K., Thimm-Netenjakob, I., Varhegyi, V., 2020).

In the case of the presented research, it was decided to focus on issues related to four out of seven sensitive zones identified in the SOLVINC[2] project, namely:

1) Communication,

2) Time perception,

3) Hierarchy,

4) Gender.

The choice was based on the data obtained from the initial qualitative research (semi-structured interviews with eight students of international programmes) and almost ten-year experience of the Author of the study in taking care of international students in Poland.
As the Author of the study is also co-author of a paper devoted to sensitive zones, they will not be described again[3].

Considering the chosen sensitive zones, it was decided to select two typologies of cultural dimensions. The first one is the typology introduced by G. Hofstede and the second one – the typology by E.T. Hall.

In his works, G. Hofstede recognised four main dimensions of culture[4]:

1) **Power distance** (from low to high),

2) **Collectivism versus individualism**,

3) **Femininity versus masculinity**,

4) **Uncertainty avoidance** (from low to high).

In following works, the fifth dimension discovered in the research conducted by **M. Bond**[5], namely, **long-term orientation** (short-term and long-term orientation), was added. Then, it was joined by the sixth dimension of indulgence-restraint discovered in M. Minkov's (2007) research. This way, the 6-D Hofstede's Model has been developed (Hofstede Insights website).

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2 Sensitive zones identified in the SOLVINC project include: diversity, communication, hierarchy, identity, time perception, gender, and colonialism.

3 More in Alves, D., Amorim, J. P., Coimbra, J. L., Ferreira, P., Hoerr, B., Lopes, A., Manarte, J., Menezes, I., Migdał, A.M., Resch, K., Thimm-Netenjakob, I., Varhegyi, V., 2020.

4 Analysis of cultural dimensions for the first 40 countries was presented in 1980 in G. Hofstede's book entitled *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (Hofstede, 1980). An extended study for 50 countries was first presented in 1983 in G. Hofstede's book entitled *Dimensions of National Cultures in Fifty Countries and Three Regions* (Hofstede, 1983).

5 The compilation of the IBM research results coincided with the publication of other research results concerning value systems in different cultures. A group of academic researchers from nine countries of Asia and Pacific conducted the study using the RVS – Rokeach Value Survey's adapted version. (Ng, Akhtar-Hossain, Ball, Bond, Hayashi, Lim, O'Driscoll, Sinha, & Yang, 1982). One of the researchers participating in RVS research, M. Bond, conducted further study. The research was conducted on a sample from 22 countries. After the publication of initial results, data from China were included, and the number of countries covered by the research grew to 23 (Hofstede, & Bond, 1984, 1988).

Power distance illustrates "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 61). *Institutions* are the basic elements of society, such as the family, the school, and the community, while *organisations* are the places where people work. Based on this, one can distinguish low power distance cultures and high power distance cultures.

In **high (large) power distance cultures** inequalities among people are both expected and desired, and hierarchy in organisations reflects existential inequality between higher and lower levels. In low (small) power distance cultures inequalities among people should be minimised and hierarchy in organisations results from the adoption of different roles (inequality of roles), established for convenience (pragmatic reasons), and a drive towards decentralisation. A comparison of characteristics of both culture types is included in Table 7.

Table 7
Characteristic Features of High (Large) Power Distance and Low (Small) Power Distance Cultures

High (Large) Power Distance Cultures	Low (Small) Power Distance Cultures
• Inequalities among people are expected and desired	• Inequalities among people should be minimised
• Status should be balanced with restraint	• Social relationships should be handled with care
• Emphasis on considerable dependence of subordinates on superiors	• Emphasis on limited dependence of subordinates on superiors
• Parents teach children obedience; respect for parents and other elders is considered a basic virtue	• Parents treat children as equals and vice versa
• Students give teachers respect, even outside class	• Students treat teachers as equals
• Teachers should take all initiatives in class	• Teachers expect initiatives from students in class
• Teachers are gurus who transfer personal wisdom	• Teachers are experts who transfer impersonal truths
• Quality of learning depends on excellence of the teacher	• Quality of learning depends on two-way communication and excellence of students.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 72 (in Polish translation: Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2011, s. 83).

The individualism-collectivism dimension defines the approach to the relations between the individual and the group to which he belongs. **Individualism** pertains to cultures in which the good of the individual is more important than the good of the group, ties between individuals are loose, and everyone is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family. Whereas **collectivism** pertains to cultures in which the good of the group is more important than the good of the individual and people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which continue to protect them throughout people's lifetime in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. A comparison of characteristics of collectivistic and individualistic cultures is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Characteristic Features of Collectivistic and Individualistic Cultures

Collectivistic Cultures	Individualistic Cultures
• People are born into extended families or other in-groups that continue protecting them in exchange for loyalty	• Everyone grows up to look after themselves and their immediate (nuclear) family only
• Harmony and consent in society should always be maintained, and direct confrontations avoided	• Self-fulfilment as the most important goal of each individual; speaking one's mind is a characteristic of an honest person
• Collective interests prevail over individual interests	• Individual interests prevail over collective interests
• Opinions are predetermined by group membership	• Everyone is expected to have a private opinion
• Private life is invaded by the group(s)	• Everyone has a right to privacy
• Laws and rights differ by group	• Laws and rights are supposed to be the same for all
• Resources should be shared with relatives	• Individual ownership of resources, even for children
• High-context communication prevails	• Low-context communication prevails
• Shame and "loss of face" both by an individual and the group he belongs to as a result of rule infringement	• Feelings of guilt and loss of self-esteem by an individual as a result of rule infringement
• Interpersonal relations are more important than the implementation of tasks	• The implementation of tasks is more important than interpersonal relations
• Children learn to think in terms of "we"	• Children learn to think in terms of "I"
• Students speak up in class only when sanctioned by the group	• Students are expected to individually speak up in class
• The purpose of education is learning how to do	• The purpose of education is learning how to learn
• Diplomas provide entry to higher status groups	• Diplomas increase economic worth and/or self-respect

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 113 and 124 (in Polish translation Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2011, p. 121 and 123).

Another dimension proposed by G. Hofstede is **masculinity-femininity**. In **masculine cultures**, the social roles of both genders are clearly different. Men are expected to be assertive and tough, and to focus on achieving success in the material sphere. Women are expected to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life.

On the other hand, in **feminine cultures**, the social roles assigned to both genders overlap. Both men and women are expected to be modest, tender, and concerned with life quality. A comparison of features typical of masculine and feminine cultures is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Characteristic Features of Masculine and Feminine Cultures

Masculine Cultures	Feminine Cultures
• Challenge, earnings, and advancement are important	• Relationships and quality of life are important
• Men should be assertive, ambitious and tough	• Both men and women should be modest
• Being responsible, decisive, and ambitious is for men	• Being responsible, decisive, ambitious, caring, and gentle is for women and men alike.
• Being caring and gentle, taking care of relationship, thoughtfulness and gentleness is for women	• Both men and women can be tender and focus on relationships
• In the family, fathers deal with facts, and mothers deal with feelings	• In the family, both fathers and mothers deal with facts and feelings
• Double standards: men are subjects, women objects	• Single standard: both sexes are subjects
• Women's liberation means that women are admitted to positions so far occupied by men.	• Women's liberation means that men and women take equal shares both at home and at work.
• Resolution of conflicts by letting the strongest win	• Resolution of conflicts by compromise and negotiation
• Best student is the norm; praise for excellent students	• Average student is the norm; praise for weak students.
• Competition in class; trying to excel	• Jealousy of those who try to excel
• Failing in school is a disaster	• Failing in school is a minor incident
• Students overrate their own performance: ego-boosting	• Students underrate their own performance: ego-effacement
• Brilliance in teachers (knowledge and competences) is admired	• Friendliness in teachers is appreciated

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 155 (in Polish translation: Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2011, p. 163 and 172).

The next dimension, namely **uncertainty avoidance**, is how the members of a culture feel threatened by new, ambiguous or unknown situations. It characterises the attitude of people towards the upcoming changes and various types of risk. It is expressed, among others, by the feeling of stress when facing a new situation and the need for predictability that can be satisfied by all kinds of legal norms, regulations or customs.

Based on this, high uncertainty avoidance cultures and low uncertainty avoidance cultures can be distinguished. In low uncertainty avoidance cultures, the number of laws and regulations should be kept to the necessary minimum. On the other hand, in high uncertainty avoidance cultures there is a strong emotional need to place everything within the framework of laws and regulations, even if they will not work in practice. A comparison of typical features of high uncertainty avoidance cultures and low uncertainty avoidance cultures is presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Characteristic Features of High Uncertainty Avoidance and Low Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures

High (Strong) Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures	Low (Weak) Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures
• More people feel unhappy	• Fewer people feel unhappy
• The uncertainty inherent in life is a continuous threat that must be fought	• Uncertainty is a normal feature of life, and each day is accepted as it comes
• High stress and high anxiety	• Low stress and low anxiety
• Acceptance of familiar risks; fear of ambiguous situations and of unfamiliar risk	• Comfortable in ambiguous situations and with unfamiliar risks
• Aggression and emotions may at proper times and places be vented	• Aggression and emotions should not be shown
• Time is money	• Time is a framework for orientation
• Need for precision and formalisation	• Tolerance for ambiguity and chaos
• What is different is dangerous	• What is different is curious
• Motivation by security and esteem or	• Motivation by achievement and esteem or belonging
• Belonging	
• Students are comfortable in structured learning situations and concerned with the right answers	• Students are comfortable with open-ended learning situations and concerned with good discussions
• Teachers are supposed to have all the answers	• Teachers may say, "I don't know"
• Results are attributed to circumstances or luck	• Results are attributed to a person's own ability

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 203 and 208 (in Polish translation: Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2011, p. 210 and 214).

As for the next dimension, namely **long-term orientation**, its two poles are distinguished. The first is **long-term orientation**, which means developing virtues that will benefit the future and paying attention to features conducive in particular to the achievement of long-term goals, persistence (stubbornness), and saving. The second pole is **short-term orientation**, which means assigning a high value to features relevant to the past and the present, especially such as respect for tradition, "face-saving", and fulfilment of social obligations. A comparison of typical features of long-term oriented and short-term oriented cultures is presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Characteristic Features of Long-Term Oriented and Short-Term Oriented Cultures

Long-Term Oriented Cultures	Short-Term Oriented Cultures
• Perseverance, sustained efforts toward slow results	• Efforts should produce quick results
• Thrift, being sparing with resources	• Social pressure toward spending
• Respect for circumstances and adaptation of tradition to the present day	• Respect for traditions
• Concern with personal adaptiveness	• Concern with personal stability
• Having a sense of shame	• Concern with "face"
• Humility is for both men and women	• Humility is for women only
• Satisfaction with one's own contributions to daily human relations and to correcting injustice	• Dissatisfaction with one's own contributions to daily human relations and to correcting injustice
• Main work values include learning, honesty, adaptiveness, accountability, and self-discipline	• Main work values include freedom, rights, achievement, and thinking for oneself
• Leisure time is not important	• Leisure time is important
• What is good and evil depends on the circumstances	• There are universal guidelines about what is good and evil
• Children should learn to persevere	• Children should learn tolerance and respect for others
• Students attribute success to effort and failure to lack of it	• Students attribute success and failure to luck

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 243, 251, 275 (in Polish translation Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2011, p. 249, 258, 278).

The last dimension is an **indulgence-restraint**, where indulgence means consent to satisfy the individual's primary and natural desires to enjoy life and play. The other pole – restraint implies the belief that enjoyment should be supervised and strictly regulated by social norms. It is characteristic of indulgent cultures not to attach too much importance to maintaining order in the nation and social control. They also attach little importance to thrift. On the other hand, it is characteristic of restrained cultures to attach high importance to maintaining order in the nation and strong social control. They also attach great importance to thrift. A comparison of the characteristics of indulgent and restrained cultures is presented in Table 12.

Table 12
Characteristic Features of Indulgent and Restrained Cultures

Indulgent Cultures	Restrained Cultures
• Perception of personal life control • Higher importance of leisure • Thrift is not very important • Maintaining order in the nation is not given a high priority • Loosely prescribed gender roles • Freedom of speech is viewed as relatively important	• Perception of helplessness: what happens to me is not my own doing • Lower importance of leisure • Thrift is important • Maintaining order in the nation is considered high priority • Strictly prescribed gender roles • Freedom of speech is not a primary concern

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 291 and 297 (in Polish translation: Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2011, p. 296 and 301).

The second typology that was decided to include in this research is the typology of E.T. Hall (Hall, 2001; Hall, & Hall, 1990a, 1990b). In his works, he proposed two dimensions as the basis for the classification of cultures:

1) **High-context communication and low-context communication** as well as

2) **Monochronic and polychronic time.**

The first division of cultures proposed by E. T. Hall is based on the existence of differences in communication and context. According to Hall, communication is not only limited to the simple exchange of signals between its participants. Its content and course are determined by the general **cultural context** defined by the rules of life. Context plays a significant role in transmitting information by influencing a change in the shades of meaning. A language code not embedded in context is incomplete as it covers only a part of the message (Hall, & Hall, 1990a, 1990b).

The poles of this dimension are **High-Context Communication – HC and Low-Context Communication – LC**). A characteristic feature of **high-context communication or message** is that "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalised in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" (Hall, 1976; Hall, 2001, p. 132).

Therefore, communication relies heavily on constant factors, such as environment, status, power relations, participants' roles, and nonverbal communication aspects. On the other hand, a characteristic feature of **low-context communication or message** is that most of the information is in the direct code. A comparison of features typical for high and low context cultures is presented in table 13.

Table 13

Characteristic Features of High-context and Low-context Cultures

High-context Cultures	Low-context Cultures
• A clear line between "your own" (group members) and "strangers"	• There is no clear division into "your own and strangers"
• Taking personal and actual responsibility by superiors for the actions of their subordinates	• Responsibility for subordinates' actions spread throughout the system
• Mutual responsibility for one's relatives	• Taking full responsibility for one's own actions
• Perception of "losing face" by an individual as a disgrace to the whole group	• Connecting of "losing face" only with the person it concerns
• Most of the information contained in a physical context or internalised in a man	• Most of the information contained in the direct code
• A veiled and ambiguous verbal message	• A clear and precise verbal message
• Numerous digressions, stylistic ornaments and interruptions of speech	• Stylistic economy of expression

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Hall, & Hall, 1990a, pp. 6-10; Hall, & Hall, 1990b, pp. 7-11; Hall, p. 25 et seq.

The second dimension of cultures, whose poles are **monochronic** and **polychronic** time perception, illustrates people's attitude to the phenomenon of time. It is based on the author's introduction of monochronic time (M time) and polychronic time (P time) notions as two variants of time and space use. In **monochronic cultures**, it is preferred to do one thing at a time, which involves planning, segmentation, and accuracy in the performance of planned activities. Monochronic time is felt and used linearly. It is compared to the path that leads from the past to the future. On the other hand, in **polychronic cultures**, time is non-linear and treated as a cycle. It is typical to perform several activities simultaneously. Emphasis is placed on engaging people in action and completing ventures rather than sticking to plans. A comparison of features characteristic of polychronic and monochronic cultures is presented in Table 14.

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Table 14

Characteristic Features of Monochronic and Polychronic Cultures

Monochronic Cultures	Polychronic Cultures
• Doing one thing at a time	• Doing many things at once
• Concentration on the job	• Highly distractible and subject to interruptions
• Taking time commitments (deadlines, schedules) seriously; the importance of punctuality	• Considering time commitments as objectives to be achieved, if possible; interpersonal relationships more important than punctuality
• Commitment to the job	• Commitment to people and human relationships
• Low-context communication	• High-context communication
• Religious adherence to plans	• Plans are changed often and easily
• Accustomed to short-term relationships	• A tendency to build lifetime relationships

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Hall, & Hall, 1990a, pp. 13-22; Hall, & Hall, 1990b, pp. 15-27; Hall, p. 89 et seq.

Considering G. Hofstede's typology of cultural dimensions, Polish culture is a **high power distance culture**. Polish society is a hierarchical society. People accept a hierarchical order in which everyone has their place and need no further justification for this. At the same time, Poles display an ambivalent attitude to authority (power). On the one hand, it manifests itself in that people in power in Poland are not so widely respected as, for example, in the Chinese society, and their opinions are not considered conclusive. On the other hand, the dialogue with authority representatives is not as open as, for instance, in Germany. Power is to be reckoned with, but at the same time, it is easy to question the right to exercise it (Kolman, Noorderhaven, Hofstede, & Dienes, 2003).

When it comes to the dimension of **individualism-collectivism**, Polish culture belongs to individualistic cultures where the individual's interest is more important than the interest of the group. However, it is somewhere in the middle of the scale. Both personal and professional ties play an important role in the Polish culture. It is typical to form groups based on absolute trust and to work together to overcome difficulties (Yanouzas & Boukis, 1993). Individual responsibility is often avoided, and it is shared by unidentified group members. As in several other cases, this can be the remnant of the socialist system and centrally planned economy (Zaleska, 1996, as cited in Kolman, Noorderhaven, Hofstede, & Dienes, 2003).

The Polish culture belongs to **masculine cultures** in which social roles of both genders differ considerably. Men are expected to be assertive and tough, and to focus on achieving success in the material sphere. Women are expected to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

Poland is characterised by a **high uncertainty avoidance level**, which is reflected in Poles' strong feeling of stress when faced with a new situation and their need for predictability. In consequence, all kinds of legal standards and regulations are created, even if it is obvious that they will not be followed. Another manifestation of high uncertainty avoidance is Poles' attitude to power and attaching great importance to legitimacy (right) to exercise authority (Jankowicz & Pettitt, 1993).

Poland belongs to **short-term oriented cultures** in which a significant role is ascribed to elements essential for the past and the present, such as respect for tradition, "saving face", and fulfilling social obligations (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

Poland is also a representative of **restrained cultures**, characterised by substantial control of the society combined with less permission to enjoy life and play, which should be supervised and strictly regulated by social norms (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

A set of cultural dimensions characteristic of the Polish culture according to 6-D Hofstede Model is presented in Table 15.

Table 15
Poland's Cultural Dimensions – G. Hofstede's Typology (6-D Model)

	Power distance (PDI)	Individualism-collectivism (IDV)	Feminity-masculinity (MAS)	Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)	Long-term orientation (LTO)	Restraint-indulgence (IVR)
Poland	high power distance **(68)**	individualism **(60)**	medium masculinity **(64)**	high uncertainty avoidance **(93)**	short-term orientation **(38)**	restraint [low indulgence] **(29)**

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010.

Considering E.T. Hall's typology of cultural dimensions based on the notion of context, Polish culture is located more or less **in the middle of the scale, a little closer to the high context**.

Considering the monochronic – polychronic dimension, Poland is located more or less in the middle of the scale and belongs to **moderately monochronic cultures** (Steers, Sanchez-Runde, & Nardon, 2010). On the one hand, this manifests itself in striving to adhere to schedules and punctuality in business relations. On the other hand, in many situations, interpersonal ties are still valued more than meeting deadlines.

A set of cultural dimensions characteristic to Polish culture according to E.T. Hall typology is presented in Table 16.

Table 16
Poland's Cultural Dimensions – E.T. Hall's Typology

	High-context – Low-context	Polichronic time – Monochronic time
Poland	the medium of scale, closer to high-context	the medium of scale, closer to monochronic time

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Steers, Sanchez-Runde, & Nardon, 2010.

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Analysis of 6-D Hofstede model's dimensions characteristic for the countries of origin of the University of Social Sciences international programmes' students allowed several conclusions to be drawn (see Table 17):

- All the countries, just like Poland, belong to high (large) power distance cultures;

- All the countries, aside from the Czech Republic, unlike Poland, belong to collectivistic cultures;

- Majority of countries, aside from Columbia and Nigeria, just like Poland, belong to restrained cultures.

Table 17

Cultural Dimensions and Indexes for Countries of Origin of the University of Social Sciences International Programmes' Students – Hofstede's Typology (6-D Model)

COUNTRIES	DIMENSIONS AND INDEXES – HOFSTEDE'S 6-D MODEL					
	Power distance (PDI)	Individualism -collectivism (IDV)	Feminity -masculinity (MAS)	Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)	Long-term orientation (LTO)	Restraint -indulgence (IVR)
Azerbaijan	high power distance (85)*	collectivism [low individualism] (22)*	medium masculinity (50)*	high uncertainty avoidance (88)*	long-term orientation (61)*	restraint [low indulgence] (22)*
Belarus	high power distance (95)*	collectivism [low individualism] (25)*	femininity [low masculinity] (20)*	high uncertainty avoidance (95)*	long-term orientation (61)*	restraint [low indulgence] (15)*
Columbia	high power distance (67)	collectivism [low individualism] (13)	masculinity (64)	high uncertainty avoidance (80)	short-term orientation (13)	indulgence (83)
Congo	high power distance **	collectivism [low individualism] **	masculinity **	medium uncertainty avoidance **	long-term orientation **	***
Czech Republic	high power distance (57)	individualism (58)	masculinity (57)	high uncertainty avoidance (74)	long-term orientation (70)	restraint [low indulgence] (29)
Ethiopia	high power distance (70)*	collectivism [low individualism] (20)*	masculinity (65)*	high uncertainty avoidance (88)*	***	medium restraint (46)*
India	high power distance (77)	medium individualism (48)	masculinity (56)	low uncertainty avoidance (40)	medium level of long-term orientation (51)	restraint [low indulgence] (26)
Jordan	high power distance (70)*	collectivism [low individualism] (30)*	femininity [low masculinity] (45)*	high uncertainty avoidance (65)*	short-term orientation (16)*	restraint [low indulgence] (43)*
Kazakhstan	high power distance (88)	collectivism [low individualism] (20)	medium masculinity (50)	high uncertainty avoidance (88)	long-term orientation (85)	restraint [low indulgence] (22)
Kenya	high power distance (70)	collectivism [low individualism] (25)	masculinity (60)	medium uncertainty avoidance (50)	***	***

Country	Power distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty avoidance	Long-term orientation	Indulgence
Namibia	high power distance (65)	collectivism [low individualism] (30)	femininity [low masculinity] (40)	medium uncertainty avoidance (45)	short-term orientation (35)	restraint [low indulgence] **
Nepal	high power distance (65)	collectivism [low individualism] (30)	femininity [low masculinity] (40)	low uncertainty avoidance (40)	medium level of long-term orientation **	restraint [low indulgence] **
Nigeria	high power distance (80)	collectivism [low individualism] (30)	masculinity (60)	medium uncertainty avoidance (55)	short-term orientation (13)	indulgence (84)
Russia	high power distance (93)	collectivism [low individualism] (39)	femininity [low masculinity] (36)	high uncertainty avoidance (95)	long-term orientation (81)	restraint [low indulgence] (20)
Rwanda	***	collectivism [low individualism] **	***	low uncertainty avoidance **	short-term orientation (18)*	restraint [low indulgence] (37)*
Sri Lanka	high power distance (80)	collectivism [low individualism] (35)	femininity [low masculinity] (10)	medium uncertainty avoidance (45)	medium level of long-term orientation (45)	***
Tajikistan	high power distance **	collectivism [low individualism] **	masculinity **	high uncertainty avoidance **	long-term orientation **	***
Thailand	high power distance (64)	collectivism [low individualism] (20)	femininity [low masculinity] (34)	high uncertainty avoidance (64)	short-term orientation (32)	medium indulgence (45)
Turkey	high power distance (66)	collectivism [low individualism] (37)	femininity [low masculinity] (45)	high uncertainty avoidance (85)	medium level of long-term orientation (46)	medium indulgence (49)
Ukraine	high power distance (92)	collectivism [low individualism] (25)	femininity [low masculinity] (27)	high uncertainty avoidance (95)	long-term orientation (86)	restraint [low indulgence] (14)
Uzbekistan	high power distance **	collectivism [low individualism] **	***	high uncertainty avoidance **	***	***
Vietnam	high power distance (70)	collectivism [low individualism] (20)	femininity [low masculinity] (40)	low uncertainty avoidance (30)	long-term orientation (57)	restraint [low indulgence] (35)
Zimbabwe	***	***	***	high uncertainty avoidance **	short term orientation (18)*	restraint [low indulgence] (28)*

Note:

* Estimated.

** Countries not covered by Hofstede's research; estimated data based on the work of other researchers.

*** No data.

Medium scores do not allow to establish preferences for a given dimension.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Aminova, & Jegers, 2014; Daller, 2000; Gygi, & Spyridakis, 2007; Hofstede, 1980, 2000, Hodstede, & Hofstede, 2007; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, 2011; Lemone, 2005; Matondo, J. P. M., 2012;

2. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Intercultural Conflicts in the Academic Environment of the University of Social Sciences – Empirical Research

2.1 Research Aim

The main research aim was to investigate whether, and to what extent, the COVID-19 pandemic and the related to it converting to distance learning resulted in:

1) A change in the intensity of cross-cultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Scenes and

2) A change in the character of those conflicts, e.g. increased conflict intensity resulting from a specific reason.

Four research hypotheses were formulated:

- First hypothesis: the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and related to it converting to distance learning resulted in increased intensity of intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences;

- Second hypothesis: persons with a higher level of adaptation to Polish culture less often experience intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to persons with a lower adaptation level;

- Third hypothesis: persons from high uncertainty avoidance cultures more often experience intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to persons from low uncertainty avoidance cultures;

- Fourth hypothesis: before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic communication was and still is a "sensitive zone" in which students most often experience intercultural conflicts.

2.2 Research Settings

The study was conducted in late November and early December 2020 in the Warsaw branch of the University of Social Sciences.

2.3 Research Sample

The research sample was purposive. A link to the questionnaire was sent to 136 active email addresses of students of international programmes . One hundred filled-in questionnaires were collected, which means a return rate of 73,5% (considering online questionnaires it is a high return rate). The high return rate suggests a great interest of students in the subject of this research.

One hundred international students participated in the quantitative study, including 41 female and 59 male students (see Chart 2).

Chart 2
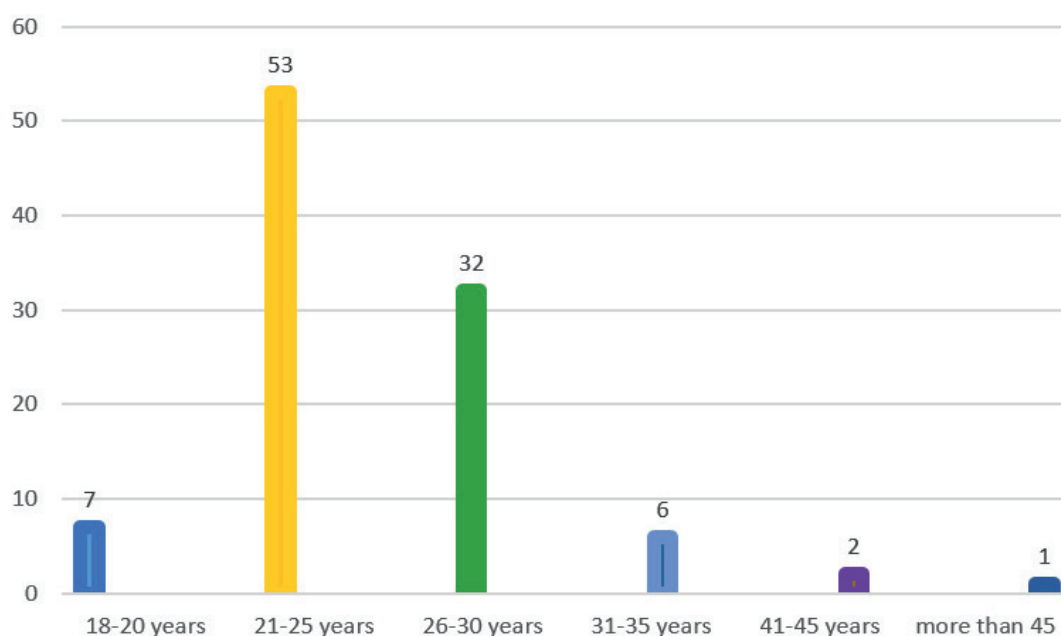**Gender Structure of the Respondents**
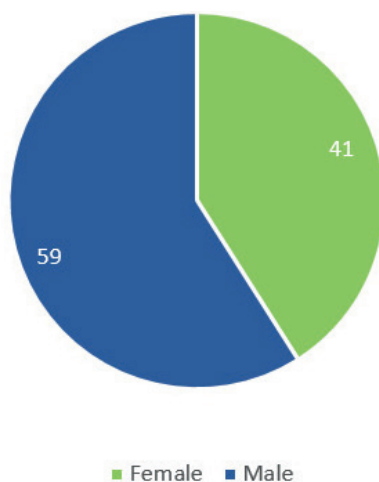
Source: Current study.

Chart 2 illustrates the age distribution of the respondents. Students in the age range from 21 to 25 years constituted the largest group, followed by a group of students aged 26 to 30 years.
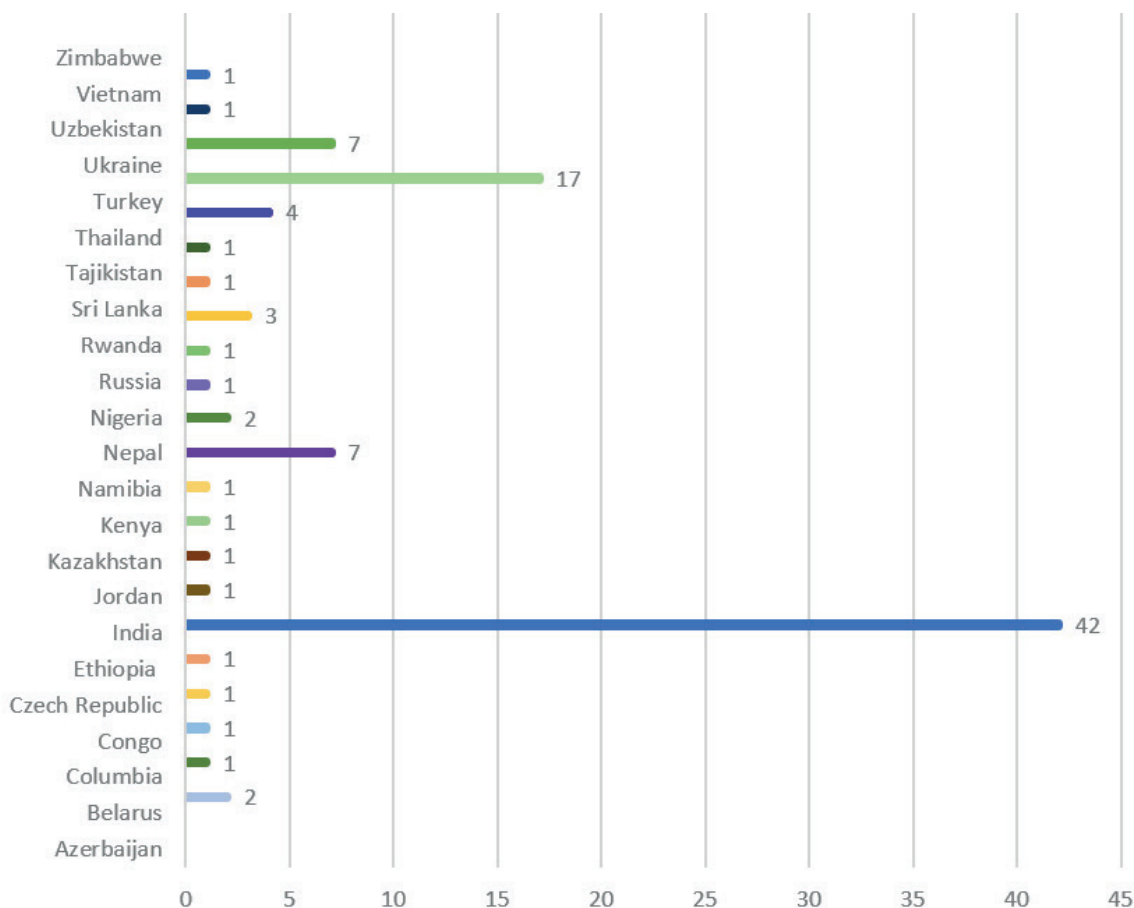
Chart 3
Age Distribution of the Respondents

Source: Current study.

Respondents originated from twenty-three countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America (see Chart 4).

Chart 4
Respondents by Countries

Source: Current study.

2.4 Research Methods

The primary study was quantitative in nature and used a researcher-made questionnaire. It was preceded by preliminary qualitative research in the form of structured in-depth interviews with eight students of international programmes of the University of Social Sciences in Warsaw. The information obtained during interviews, combined with the Author's many years of experience constituted a basis for identifying the major causes of intercultural conflicts in the academic environment. Moreover, the diagnosis of students' interests carried out in this way supplemented with the Author's own experience served as a basis for developing a set of solutions aimed at intercultural integration and the avoidance or resolution of intercultural conflicts.

2.5 Research Tool

The survey was carried out using the researcher-made questionnaire containing ten questions – seven opinion questions and three demographic questions. In the case opinion questions, Likert's 5-item scale was used (see the Appendix).

The questionnaire's introduction explained how to interpret the term "intercultural conflict". An intercultural conflict was defined as a conflict between at least two parties based on cultural differences (even a small situation that causes a person to feel uncomfortable and feel negative emotions because of cultural differences – different values, differences in communication, showing respect, etc.).

2.6 Data Analysis and Findings

Almost half of the respondents (46%) pointed out that in their opinion they had experienced intercultural conflicts less often than before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein twenty-three per cents among them found that they experienced intercultural conflict definitely less often, and the remaining twenty-three per cents – that they experienced them less often. At the same time, almost the same number of respondents (42%) pointed out that they experienced intercultural conflict at the same level as before the pandemic outbreak. Only 12% of people participating in the study found that they experienced intercultural conflict more often than before the pandemic outbreak (see Chart 5). In total, eighty-eight per cents of respondents experienced intercultural conflicts at the same level or less often. It means that the first hypothesis: the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and related to it converting to distance learning resulted in increased intensity of intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences has not been confirmed.

Chart 5
Change in the Intensity of Experiencing Intercultural Conflicts in the Academic Environment of the University of Social Sciences after the COVID-19 Pandemic Outbreak

- definitely less often than before the pandemic
- less often than before the pandemic
- at the same level like before the pandemic
- more often than before the pandemic

Source: Current study.

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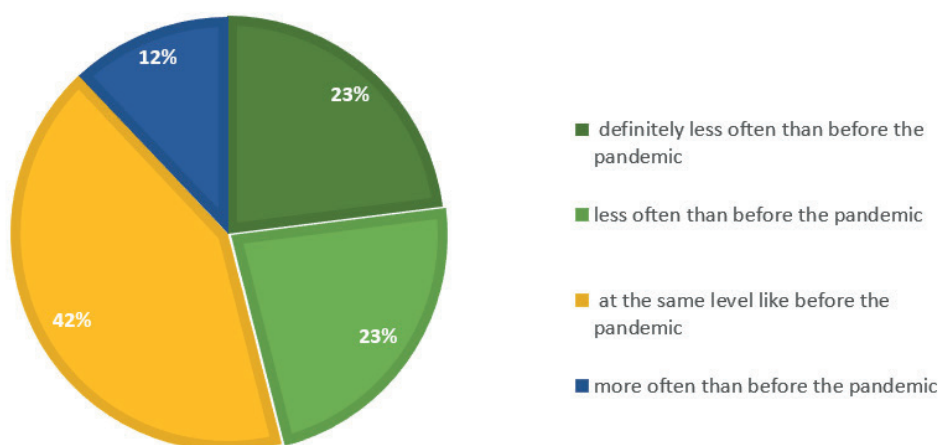
The obtained results are confirmed by the analysis of data on the frequency of experiencing conflicts emerging in various situations. In almost all situations, the respondents more often indicated that since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic they had never experienced intercultural conflicts, and less often they indicated that they had experienced them often and very often (see Table 18).

	in everyday situations (e.g. while shopping, leisure time)	while dealing with official matters	in contacts with the university administrative staff (e.g. the recruitment office, the Dean's office)	in contacts with the teachers during lectures	in contacts with the teachers outside lectures	in daily contacts with local (Polish) students	during teamwork with local (Polish) students	during teamwork with students from other countries
Before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak								
Never	24	32	43	63	74	40	51	46
Very rarely	27	13	19	20	15	27	23	26
Rarely	29	24	21	11	8	23	17	14
Often	18	21	15	3	2	7	6	12
Very often	2	10	2	3	1	3	3	2
After the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak								
Never	31	39	53	66	70	53	55	51
Very rarely	27	22	24	17	15	20	20	24
Rarely	24	20	13	15	14	22	15	20
Often	17	10	9	1	1	3	8	4
Very often	1	9	1	1	0	2	2	1

Table 18

Change in the Intensity of Experiencing Intercultural Conflicts Divided into Situations

Source: Current study.

Considering the level of adaptation to the Polish culture, thirty-five respondents indicated a higher level of adaptation to Polish culture, and sixty-five – a lower level of this adaptation.

A comparison of the results between the two groups of respondents allowed us to establish that persons with a higher level of adaptation to the Polish culture less often faced intercultural conflicts after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic compared with persons with a lower level of adaptation to the Polish culture. In the case of persons with a higher level of adaptation to the Polish culture, thirty-one per cents of the respondents experienced intercultural conflicts definitely less often than before the pandemic outbreak. Whereas, in the case of persons with a lower level of adaptation to the Polish culture, eighteen per cents of the respondents experienced intercultural conflicts definitely less often than before the pandemic outbreak (see Chart 6). It means that the second hypothesis: persons with a higher level of adaptation to the Polish culture less often experience intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences after

the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to persons with a lower adaptation level has been confirmed.

Chart 6
Change in the Intensity of Experiencing Intercultural Conflicts – A Comparison of Answers of Persons with a Higher and a Lower Level of Adaptation to the Polish Culture

Persons with a Higher Level of Adaptation to the Polish Culture
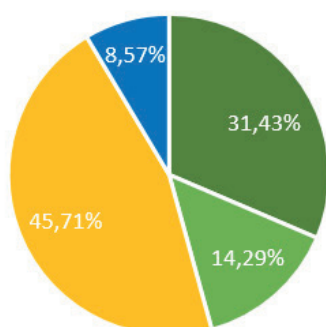
- 8,57%
- 31,43%
- 14,29%
- 45,71%

- definitely less often than before the pandemic
- less often than before the pandemic
- at the same level like before the pandemic
- more often than before the pandemic

Persons with a Lower Level of Adaptation to the Polish Culture
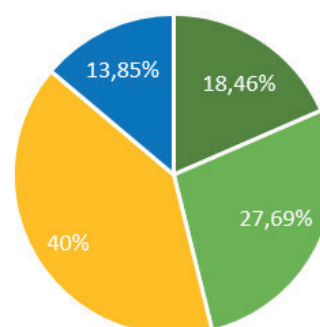
- 13,85%
- 18,46%
- 27,69%
- 40%

- definitely less often than before the pandemic
- less often than before the pandemic
- at the same level like before the pandemic
- more often than before the pandemic

Source: Current study.

The obtained results are confirmed by a detailed analysis of data on the frequency of experiencing conflicts in various situations. In all situations, respondents with a higher level of adaptation to the Polish culture more often indicated that after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, they never experienced intercultural conflicts. Less often, they stated that they experienced them often and very often. The structure of answers for the respondents with a lower level of adaptation to the Polish culture was similar. However, in the case of persons with a high level of adaptation to the Polish culture, a higher percentage of respondents indicated these answers (see Table 19).

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Table 19

Frequency of Choices of the Intensity of Experiencing Intercultural Conflicts – A Comparison of Answers of Persons with a Higher and a Lower Level of Adaptation to the Polish Culture

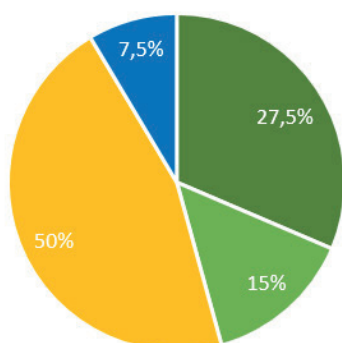|	in everyday situations (e.g. while shopping, leisure time)		while dealing with official matters		in contacts with the university administrative staff (e.g. the recruitment office, the Dean's office)		in contacts with the teachers during lectures		in contacts with the teachers outside lectures		in daily contacts with local (Polish) students		during teamwork with local (Polish) students		during teamwork with students from other countries	
PERSONS WITH HIGHER LEVEL OF ADAPTION TO POLISH CULTURE																
Before COVID-19 Pandemic																
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Never	13	37,14%	19	54,29%	21	60%	30	85,71%	29	82,86%	17	48,57%	22	62,86%	21	60%
Very rarely	12	34,29%	3	8,57%	10	28,57%	3	8,57%	5	14,29%	9	25,71%	6	17,14%	8	22,86%
Rarely	6	17,14%	5	14,29%	3	8,57%	2	5,71%	1	2,86%	6	17,14%	5	5,71%	2	5,71%
Often	4	11,43%	7	20%	1	2,86%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	2	5,71%	1	2,86%	3	8,57%
Very often	0	0,0%	1	2,86%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	2,86%	1	2,86%	1	2,86%
After the COVID-19 Pandemic																
Never	18	51,43%	21	60%	26	72,86%	32	91,43%	31	88,57%	22	62,86%	23	65,71%	24	68,57%
Very rarely	8	22,86%	3	8,57%	7	20%	0	0,0%	2	5,71%	7	20%	6	17,14%	7	20%
Rarely	7	20%	6	17,14%	2	5,71%	3	8,57%	2		5	14,29%	4	11,43%	4	11,43%
Often	2	5,71%	4	11,43%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	2,86%	1	2,86%	0	0,0%
Very often	0	0,0%	1	2,86%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	2,86%	0	0,0%
PERSONS WITH LOWER LEVEL OF ADAPTION TO POLISH CULTURE																
Before the COVID-19 Pandemic																
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Never	11	16,92%	13	20%	21	32,30%	33	50,77%	44	67,70%	23	35,38%	29	44,61%	24	36,92%
Very rarely	15	23,08%	10	15,38%	10	15,38%	17	26,15%	11	16,92%	18	27,69%	17	26,15%	18	27,69%
Rarely	22	33,85%	19	29,23%	18	27,69%	9	13,85%	7	10,77%	17	26,15%	12	18,46%	12	18,46%
Often	15	23,08%	14	21,54%	14	21,54%	3	4,62%	2	3,08%	5	7,69%	5	7,69%	10	15,38%
Very often	2	3,08%	9	13,85%	2	3,08%	3	4,62%	1	1,54%	2	3,08%	2	3,08%	1	1,54%
After the COVID-19 Pandemic																
Never	13	20%	18	27,69%	27	41,54%	33	50,77%	39	60%	31	47,70%	32	49,23%	27	41,54%
Very rarely	19	29,23%	19	29,23%	17	26,15%	17	26,15%	13	20%	13	20%	14	21,54%	17	26,15%
Rarely	17	26,15%	14	21,54%	11	16,92%	13	20%	12	18,46%	17	26,15%	11	16,92%	16	24,62%
Often	15	23,08%	6	9,23%	9	13,85%	1	1,54%	1	1,54%	2	3,08%	7	10,77%	4	6,15%
Very often	1	1,54%	8	12,31%	1	1,54%	1	1,54%	0	0,0%	2	3,08%	1	1,54%	1	1,54%

Source: Current study.

Considering the uncertainty avoidance level, forty respondents came from high uncertainty avoidance countries and sixty – from low (to medium) uncertainty avoidance countries.

Comparing the results between the two groups of respondents allowed us to establish that persons from high uncertainty avoidance cultures less often faced intercultural conflicts after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic compared with persons from low uncertainty avoidance cultures. In the case of people from high uncertainty avoidance cultures, twenty-seven point five per cent of the respondents experienced intercultural conflicts definitely less often than before the pandemic outbreak. Whereas, in the case of people from low uncertainty avoidance cultures, twenty per cent of the respondents experienced intercultural conflicts definitely less often than before the pandemic outbreak (see Chart 7). This means that the third hypothesis: persons from high uncertainty avoidance cultures more often experience intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to persons from low uncertainty avoidance cultures has not been confirmed.
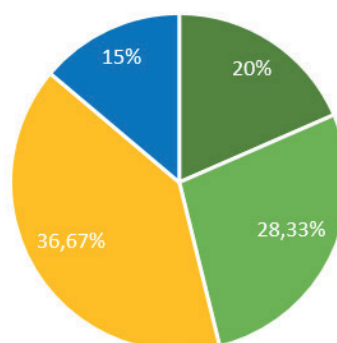
Chart 7
Change in the Intensity of Experiencing Intercultural Conflicts - Comparison of Answers of Persons from High Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures and Low as well as Medium Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures

Source: Current study.

The obtained results are confirmed by a detailed analysis of data on the frequency of experiencing conflicts emerging in various situations (see Table 20).

Table 20

Frequency of Choices of the Intensity of Experiencing Intercultural Conflicts – A Comparison of Answers of Persons from High Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures and Low (to Medium) Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures

	in everyday situations (e.g. while shopping, leisure time)		while dealing with official matters		in contacts with the university administrative staff (e.g. the recruitment office, the Dean's office)		in contacts with the teachers during lectures		in contacts with the teachers outside lectures		in daily contacts with local (Polish) students		during teamwork with local (Polish) students		during teamwork with students from other countries	
PERSONS GROM HIGH UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE CULTURES																
After the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak																
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Never	15	37,5%	18	45%	21	52,5%	28	70%	29	72,5%	21	52,5%	24	60%	23	57,5%
Very rarely	12	30%	4	10%	8	20%	8	20%	8	20%	11	27,5%	10	25%	10	25%
Rarely	10	25%	8	20%	8	20%	3	7,5%	3	7,5%	8	20%	5	12,5%	6	15%
Often	3	7,5%	6	15%	3	7,5%	1	2,5%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	2,5%	1	2,5%
Very often	0	0,0%	4	10%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak																
Never	19	47,5%	19	47,5%	26	65%	30	75%	31	77,5%	29	72,5%	27	67,5%	23	57,5%
Very rarely	14	35%	11	27,5%	8	20%	7	17,5%	7	17,5%	5	12,5%	9	22,5%	10	25%
Rarely	7	17,5%	5	12,5%	4	10%	3	7,5%	2	5%	6	15%	3	7,5%	7	17,5%
Often	0	0,0%	3	7,5%	2		0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	2,5%	0	0,0%
Very often	0	0,0%	2	5%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
PERSONS GROM LOW UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE CULTURES																
Before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak																
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Never	9	15%	14	23,33%	21	35%	35	58,33%	44	73,33%	19	31,67%	27	45%	22	36,67%
Very rarely	15	25%	9	15%	12	20%	12	20%	8	13,33%	16	26,67%	13	21,67%	16	26,67%
Rarely	19	31,67%	16	26,67%	13	21,67%	8	13,33%	5	8,33%	15	25%	12	20%	8	13,33%
Often	15	25%	15	25%	12	20%	2	3,33%	2	3,33%	7	11,67%	5	8,33%	12	
Very often	2	3,33%	6	10%	2	3,33%	3	5%	1	1,67%	3	5%	3	5%	2	3,33%
After the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak																
Never	12	20%	20	33,33%	27	45%	36	60%	39	65%	24	40%	28	46,67%	28	46,67%
Very rarely	13	21,67%	11	18,33%	16	26,67%	10	16,67%	8	13,33%	15	25%	11	18,33%	14	
Rarely	17	28,33%	15	25%	9	15%	12	20%	12	20%	16	26,67%	12	20%	13	21,67%
Often	17	28,33%	7	11,67%	7	11,67%	1	1,67%	1	1,67%	3	5%	7	11,67%	4	10%
Very often	1	1,67%	7	11,67%	1	1,67%	1	1,67%	0	0,0%	2	3,33%	2	3,33%	1	1,67%

Source: Current study.

Almost half of the respondents (47%) indicated that before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, communication problems, specifically, language problems were very often and often the cause of conflict. In turn, thirty-one per cent of respondent agreed that very often and often, the cause of the conflict was the lack of intension understanding. After the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, these two causes continue to be the most common sources of conflict (see table 21). The obtained data confirm the 4th hypothesis: before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, communication was and still is the "sensitive zone" in which students most often experience intercultural conflicts.

Table 21
Frequency of Choices of the Intensity of Experiencing Intercultural Conflicts by Main Their Main Causes

	communication problems - language issues	communication problems - lack of intension understanding	communication problems - raising voice	communication problems - communication	communication problems - lack of understanding of nonverbal communication	communication problems - addressing others	different attitude to time - being late	different attitude to time - keeping deadlines	showing respect	displaying emotions	reactions towards negative comments	engagement in teamwork	attitude towards other gender	lack of respect towards my culture	my lack of understanding of the other sides culture and
Before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak															
Never	13	16	34	31	31	38	32	39	34	39	40	35	55	40	39
Very rarely	14	17	17	22	21	20	30	18	19	23	15	22	18	20	25
Rarely	26	36	28	21	28	17	17	24	22	17	25	28	12	19	21
Often	31	24	18	21	17	21	16	16	16	17	15	13	10	17	9
Very often	16	7	3	5	3	4	5	3	9	4	5	2	5	4	6
After the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak															
Never	24	27	39	36	39	49	43	43	38	38	38	36	55	45	49
Very rarely	19	20	18	22	19	17	22	17	14	19	20	24	16	15	16
Rarely	27	25	22	19	24	17	17	22	21	22	22	21	13	21	16
Often	22	25	16	18	15	12	14	17	17	17	15	14	13	12	13
Very often	8	3	5	5	3	5	4	1	10	4	5	5	3	7	6
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Current study.

Considering the data regarding the evaluation of the proposed solutions aimed at intercultural integration and preventing and solving intercultural conflicts, almost all solutions (18 out of 20) were assessed as good and very good by over 60% of respondents (see chart 8). Only one solution - the care of a local (Polish) student from a higher year was rated as good and very good by fifty-two per cents of respondents, and the second - constant supervision of an expert on cross-cultural differences – fifty-nine per cents. Obtaining by these two solutions the smallest number of good and very good grades may result from the fact that they are of a more individual nature and all students, except one case (Czech Republic), come from collectivist cultures.

According to the author, the diagnosis of students interests was of key importance here as it was the basis for creating a set of these solutions.
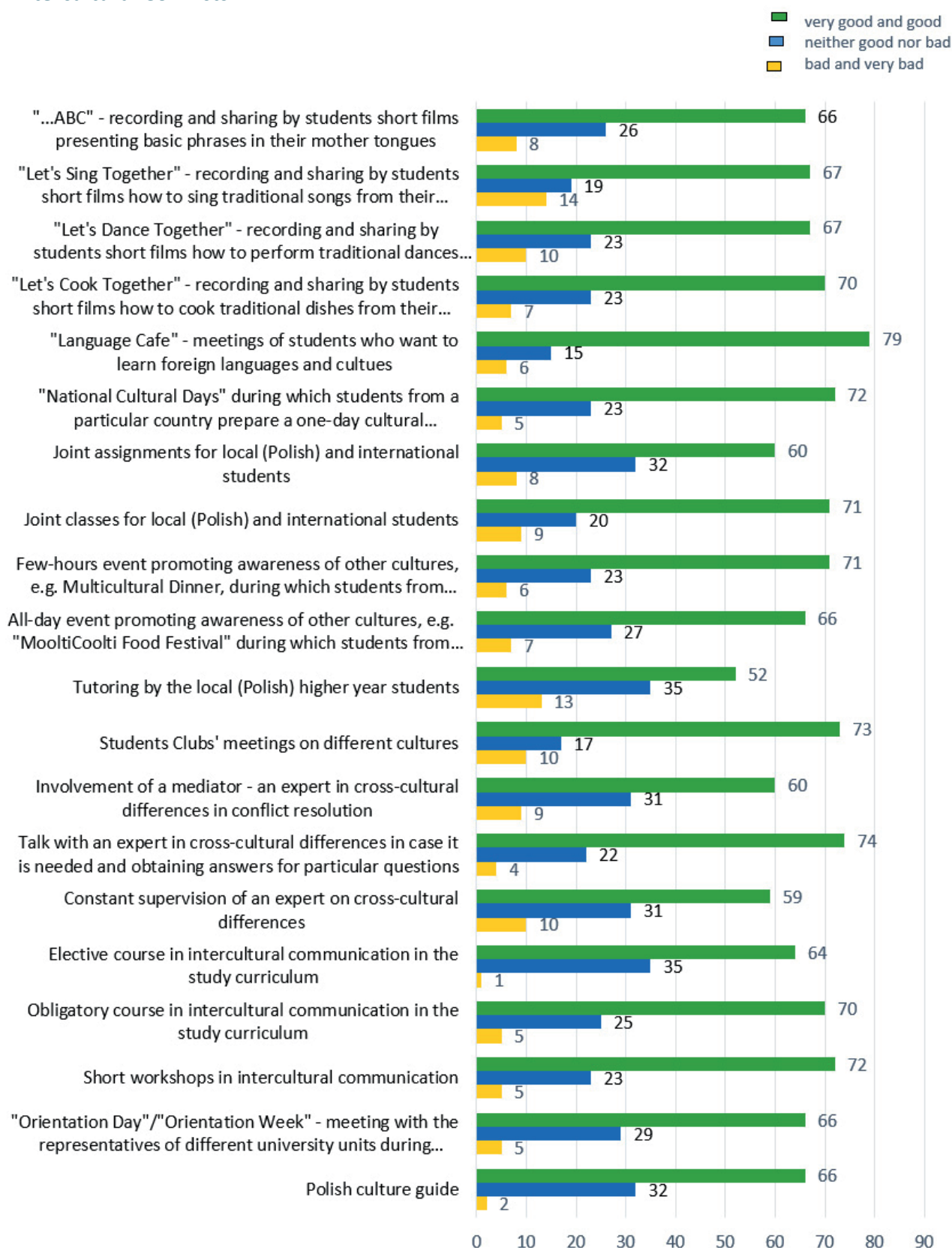
Among the solutions evaluated as very good and good by at least 70 per cent of the respondents, one should enumerate:

- "Language Cafe" – meetings of students who want to learn foreign languages and cultures;

- Talks with an expert on cross-cultural differences in case it is needed and obtaining answers for particular questions;

- Students Clubs' meetings on different cultures;

- "National Cultural Days" during which students from a particular country prepare a one-day cultural programme, organise stands, offer traditional dishes, perform national dances, and deliver presentations on their national culture;

- Short workshops on intercultural communication;

- Joint classes for local (Polish) and international students;

- A few-hours event promoting awareness of other cultures, e.g. Multicultural Dinner during which students from different countries serve national and regional dishes and spend time together eating and sharing knowledge on their national cultures, traditions, and holidays;

- An obligatory course in intercultural communication on curriculum;

- "Let's Cook Together" - recording and sharing by students short films how to cook traditional dishes from their countries of origin.

It should also be emphasised that less than 10% of responses evaluated solutions as bad and very bad. Only in the case of one solution, i.e. "Let's Sing Together" such answers accounted for 14%, perhaps because singing requires some additional skills.

Chart 8

Evaluation of Solutions Aimed at Cross-Cultural Integration as well as Avoidance or Resolution of Intercultural Conflicts

Legend:
- very good and good
- neither good nor bad
- bad and very bad

Solution	very good and good	neither good nor bad	bad and very bad
"...ABC" - recording and sharing by students short films presenting basic phrases in their mother tongues	66	26	8
"Let's Sing Together" - recording and sharing by students short films how to sing traditional songs from their...	67	19	14
"Let's Dance Together" - recording and sharing by students short films how to perform traditional dances...	67	23	10
"Let's Cook Together" - recording and sharing by students short films how to cook traditional dishes from their...	70	23	7
"Language Cafe" - meetings of students who want to learn foreign languages and cultues	79	15	6
"National Cultural Days" during which students from a particular country prepare a one-day cultural...	72	23	5
Joint assignments for local (Polish) and international students	60	32	8
Joint classes for local (Polish) and international students	71	20	9
Few-hours event promoting awareness of other cultures, e.g. Multicultural Dinner, during which students from...	71	23	6
All-day event promoting awareness of other cultures, e.g. "MooltiCoolti Food Festival" during which students from...	66	27	7
Tutoring by the local (Polish) higher year students	52	35	13
Students Clubs' meetings on different cultures	73	17	10
Involvement of a mediator - an expert in cross-cultural differences in conflict resolution	60	31	9
Talk with an expert in cross-cultural differences in case it is needed and obtaining answers for particular questions	74	22	4
Constant supervision of an expert on cross-cultural differences	59	31	10
Elective course in intercultural communication in the study curriculum	64	35	1
Obligatory course in intercultural communication in the study curriculum	70	25	5
Short workshops in intercultural communication	72	23	5
"Orientation Day"/"Orientation Week" - meeting with the representatives of different university units during...	66	29	5
Polish culture guide	66	32	2

Source: Current study.

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3. Conclusions and Recommendations

In the course of the presented research, efforts were made to investigate, whether and to what extent, the COVID-19 pandemic and related to it converting to distance learning resulted in:

1) A change in the intensity of cross-cultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Scenes and

2) A change in the character of those conflicts, e.g. increased conflict intensity resulting from a specific reason.

In the course of the research, two of the formulated hypotheses were confirmed:

• Second hypothesis: persons with a higher level of adaptation to Polish culture less often experience intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to persons with a lower adaptation level;

• Fourth hypothesis: before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic communication was and still is a "sensitive zone" in which students most often experience intercultural conflicts.

However, they did not find confirmation of the hypothesis:

• First hypothesis: the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and related to it converting to distance learning resulted in the increased intensity of intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences as well as

• Third hypothesis: persons from high uncertainty avoidance cultures more often experience intercultural conflicts in the academic environment of the University of Social Sciences after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to persons from low uncertainty avoidance cultures.

It is worth stressing that the presented study is preliminary research, and it is necessary to replicate it on other samples of international students studying at HEIs in Poland. It is also necessary to supplement the research with three further perspectives – the point of view of the administration staff, teachers as well as local (Polish) students.

As one of the study's utilitarian goals was the development of a catalogue of solutions accepted by students which would promote cross-cultural integration and the avoidance or resolution of intercultural conflicts, the proposed solutions were assessed.

This allowed the Author of the study to formulate several recommendations regarding possible solutions aimed at intercultural integration as well as the avoidance and solving intercultural conflicts that can be applied by HEIs.

The main recommendations include:

1) Solutions used should be system solutions, based on a thorough analysis of the situation of a specific HEI and its needs in this regard;

2) Development of the catalogue of solutions used by a given HEI should be preceded by a thorough diagnosis of students' interests; thanks to this, the proposed solutions will meet the needs of a specific group, will be better assessed and, as a result, more students will get involved;

3) Intercultural competences of all internal stakeholders – administration staff, academic teachers, local and international students – should be improved, which will reduce the number of intercultural conflicts (this is proved by an example of the University of Social Sciences where all academic teachers involved in international programmes receive support in this regard);

4) Among the proposed solutions, three main types can be distinguished:

a) Solutions that do not require specialist knowledge, such as:

- Orientation Day"/"Orientation Week" – meetings with representatives of different university units during which students learn how to deal with administrative issues and participate in workshops on the Polish culture;

- Students Clubs' meetings on different cultures;

- Tutoring by the local (Polish) higher year students;

- An all-day event promoting awareness of other cultures, e.g. "MooltiCoolti Food Festival" during which students from different countries prepare national stands, offer the most popular national and regional dishes and deliver presentations on various cultures;

- A few-hour event promoting awareness of other cultures, e.g. Multicultural Dinner, during which students from different countries serve national and regional dishes, spend time together eating and sharing knowledge on their national cultures, traditions, and holidays;

- „National Cultural Days" („Dni kultur narodowych"), w czasie których studenci z określonego kraju przygotowują jednodniowy program kulturalny, stoiska, serwują tradycyjne dania, tańczą narodowe tańce, śpiewają tradycyjne piosenki i prezentują swoją kulturę narodową;

- "National Cultural Days" during which students from a particular country prepare a one-day cultural programme, organise stands, offer traditional dishes, perform national dances and deliver presentations on their national culture;

- "Language Cafe" – meetings of students who want to learn foreign languages and cultures;

- "Let's Cook Together" – students record and share short films how to cook traditional dishes from their countries of origin;

- "Let's Dance Together" – students record and share short films how to perform traditional dances from their countries of origin;

- "Let's Sing Together" – students record and share short films how to sing traditional songs from their countries of origin;

- "…ABC" – students record and share short films presenting basic phrases in their mother tongues.

b) Solutions requiring specialist knowledge in the field of Polish culture and broadly understood cultural differences:

- Polish culture guide (taking into account the intercultural perspective)

- Short workshops on intercultural communication;

- An obligatory course on intercultural communication on the curriculum;

- An elective course on intercultural communication on the curriculum;

- Constant supervision of an expert on cross-cultural differences;

- Talks with an expert on cross-cultural differences whenever necessary to receive answers to particular questions;

c) Solutions requiring specialist knowledge in the field of cultural differences as well as conflicts solving, including mediation:

- Involvement of a mediator – an expert in cross-cultural differences in conflict resolution.

It is necessary to underline that only in the case of three solutions, the formula for their implementation would require modification and adaptation to distance learning. These are:

- An all-day event promoting awareness of other cultures, e.g. "MooltiCoolti Food Festival" during which students from different countries prepare national stands and offer the most popular national and regional dishes and presentations on various cultures are delivered;

- few-hour event promoting awareness of other cultures, e.g. Multicultural Dinner, during which students from different countries serve national and regional dishes, spend time together eating and sharing knowledge on their national cultures, traditions, and holidays;

- "National Cultural Days" during which students from a particular country prepare a one-day cultural programme, organise stands, offer traditional dishes, perform national dances and deliver presentations on their national culture.

The vast majority of solutions can also be used in the case of distance learning.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

Intercultural conflict – a conflict between at least two parties based on cultural differences (even a small situation, that causes you to feel uncomfortable and to feel negative emotions because of cultural differences - different values, differences in communication, showing respect, etc.)

1. How often did you experience intercultural conflicts during your studies before the COVID-19 pandemic?:

		never	very rarely	rarely	often	very often
a)	In everyday situations (e.g. while shopping, in leisure time)					
b)	While dealing with official matters					
c)	In contacts with the university administrative staff (e.g. the recruitment office, the Dean's office)					
d)	In contacts with teachers during lectures					
e)	In contacts with teachers outside lectures					
f)	In daily contacts with local (Polish) students					
g)	During team work with local (Polish) students					
h)	During team work with students from other countries					

2. How often have you experienced intercultural conflicts since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic?

a) definitely less often than before the pandemic
b) less often than before the pandemic
c) at the same level like before the pandemic
d) more often than before the pandemic
e) definitely more often than before the pandemic

3. How often have you experienced intercultural conflicts during your studies since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic?

		never	very rarely	rarely	often	very often
a)	In everyday situations (e.g. while shopping, in leisure time)					
b)	While dealing with official matters					
c)	In contacts with the university administrative staff (e.g. The recruitment office, the dean's office)					
d)	In contacts with the teachers during lectures					
e)	In contacts with the teachers outside lectures					
f)	In daily contacts with local (Polish) students					
g)	During team work with local (Polish) students					
h)	During team work with students from other countries					

4. What were the main causes of intercultural conflicts before the COVID-19 pandemic?

		never	very rearely	rarely	often	very often
a)	Communication problems – language issues					
b)	Communication problems – lack of intension understanding					
c)	Communication problems – raising voice					
d)	Communication problems – lack of understanding of nonverbal communication					
e)	Communication problems – addressing others					
f)	Different attitude to time – being late					
g)	Different attitude to time – not keeping deadlines					
h)	Different attitude to time – focusing on a particular task					
i)	Showing respect					
j)	Displaying emotions					
k)	Reactions towards negative comments					

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l)	Engagement in teamwork				
m)	The attitude towards the other gender				
n)	Lack of respect of my culture				
o)	My lack of understanding of the culture and tradition of the other side				

5. What have been the main causes of intercultural conflicts since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic?

		never	very rearely	rarely	often	very often
a)	Communication problems – language issues					
b)	Communication problems – lack of intension understanding					
c)	Communication problems – raising voice					
d)	Communication problems – lack of understanding of nonverbal communication					
e)	Communication problems – addressing others					
f)	Different attitude to time – being late					
g)	Different attitude to time – not keeping deadlines					
h)	Different attitude to time – focusing on a particular task					
i)	Showing respect					
j)	Displaying emotions					
k)	Reactions towards negative comments					
l)	Engagement in teamwork					
m)	The attitude towards the other gender					
n)	Lack of respect of my culture					
o)	My lack of understanding of the culture and tradition of the other side					

SOLVINC

6. Evaluate various solutions aimed at cross-cultural integration as well as the avoidance or resolution of intercultural conflicts:

		very bad	bad	neither good nor bad	good	very
a)	Polish culture guide					
b)	"Orientation Day"/"Orientation Week" – meetings with representatives of different university units during which students learn how to deal with administrative issues and participate in workshops on the Polish culture					
c)	Short workshops on intercultural communication					
d)	An obligatory course on intercultural communication on the curriculum					
e)	An elective course on intercultural communication on the curriculum					
f)	Constant supervision of an expert on cross-cultural differences					
g)	Talks with an expert on cross-cultural differences whenever necessary to receive answers to particular questions					
h)	Involvement of a mediator - an expert on cross-cultural differences in conflict resolution					
i)	Students Clubs' meetings on different cultures					
j)	Tutoring by the local (Polish) higher year students					
k)	An all-day event promoting awareness of other cultures, e.g. "MooltiCoolti Food Festival" during which students from different countries prepare national stands, offer the most popular national and regional dishes and deliver presentations on various cultures are delivered					
l)	A few-hour event promoting awareness of other cultures, e.g. Multicultural dinner, during which students from different countries serve national and regional dishes and spend time together eating and sharing knowledge on their national cultures, traditions, and holidays					
m)	Joint classes for local (Polish) and international students					

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n)	Joint assignments for local (Polish) and international students				
o)	"National Cultural Days" during which students from a particular country prepare a one-day cultural programme, organise stands, offer traditional dishes, perform national dances, and deliver presentations on their national culture				
p)	"Language Cafe" – meetings of students who want to learn foreign languages and cultures				
r)	"Let's Cook Together" – students record and share short films how to cook traditional dishes from their countries of origin				
s)	"Let's Dance Together" – students record and share short films how to perform traditional dances from their countries of origin				
t)	"Let's Sing Together" – students record and share short films how to sing traditional songs from their countries of origin				
u)	"...ABC" – students record and share short films presenting basic phrases in their mother tongues				

7. To what extent do the following statements apply to you?

		Totally not applicable	Hardly applicable	Moderately applicable	Largely applicable	Completely applicable
a)	I feel comfortable in the Polish culture					
b)	I enjoy learning new cultures					
c)	I prefer to spend time with people from my country					
d)	I like to spend time with people from other countries					
e)	I prefer to cooperate with people from my country					
f)	I feel at home in Poland					
g)	I like to cooperate with people from other countries					
h)	I am familiar with the Polish culture					

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i)	It was easy to learn the Polish culture				
j)	I feel comfortable in the Polish culture				

8. Gender
a) Female
b) Male

9. Age
a) 18-20 years
b) 21-25 years
c) 26-30 years
d) 31-35 years
e) 36-40 years
f) 41-45 years
g) more than 45

10. Country of origin:
a) Azerbaijan
b) Belarus
c) Columbia
d) Congo
e) Czech Republic
f) Ethiopia
g) India
h) Jordan
i) Kazakhstan
j) Kenya
k) Namibia
l) Nepal
m) Nigeria
n) Russia
o) Rwanda
p) Sri Lanka
q) Tajikistan
r) Thailand
s) Turkey
t) Ukraine
u) Uzbekistan
v) Vietnam
w) Zimbabwe