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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Adaptation of the Cultural Difference Perceptions and Intercultural Sensitivity Scale to the Kosovan Culture: Validity and Reliability Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to adapt the Cultural Difference Perceptions a nd Intercultural Sensitivity Scale to the Kosovan cultural context. A total of 325 teachers of Turkish, Albanian, and Bosniak ethnic backgrounds participated in the study. The research included exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and reliability assessments to evaluate the scale's psychometric properties. Findings indicated that the scale comprised 17 items across three subdimensions: Self-Efficacy and Attitudes in Intercultural Interaction, Cultural Sensitivity and Openness, and Intercultural Communication Competence. The results strongly support the scale's structural validity and reliability within the Kosovan cultural framework.

INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism is a concept that defines the coexistence of groups with different ethnic backgrounds, languages, religions, and other cultural diversities within a society. This approach supports individuals in maintaining their own cultural identities while living together in mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation with people from different cultural backgrounds. Multiculturalism aims to view diversity as a source of richness within the social structure and to treat differences as tools for living together rather than elements of division (Morina et al., 2024).

Furthermore, this approach contributes to individuals and communities getting to know each other better and reducing prejudices. The adoption of multiculturalism in fields such as education, art, and media helps strengthen values such as tolerance, equality, and social integration. In such an environment, cultural diversity not only is accepted but also becomes a dynamic element that contributes to social development and innovation (Yıldırım & Açıkalın, 2023). Multiculturalism plays an important role not only in interpersonal relations but also in making political, economic, and social structures more inclusive.

Intercultural sensitivity is a concept that emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding and effective interaction across different cultural contexts. This concept requires individuals to show empathy when communicating with people from different cultures, to rid themselves of prejudices, and to remain open to understanding differences. Intercultural sensitivity studies contribute to social cohesion and cooperation processes by examining how culture shapes individuals' thinking and behavior patterns, as well as how people respond to different cultural norms and values. Therefore, such research plays a vital role in reducing conflicts and enhancing understanding, both in interpersonal relations and at the societal level (Bennett, M. J., 1993). The increase in intercultural sensitivity helps people become more open-minded and tolerant. Intercultural sensitivity is becoming increasingly important in our globalized world. Many people are compelled to work alongside different cultures and must understand and value cultural differences to maintain a successful professional life (Akıner et al., 2010). Another study by Mamur (2012) shows that intercultural interaction is not only an important learning area for understanding multiculturalism, but also a process that strengthens interpersonal bonds and enhances social solidarity. Intercultural interaction allows individuals to question their own habits and prejudices and gain new perspectives. This process encourages understanding differences, creating shared values, and viewing diversity as a richness. In many areas, from education to the business world, and from social life to the deepening of social relationships, these interactions strengthen individuals' personal development and their bonds with society. This approach highlights the importance of seeing individuals not only as learners but also as bridges in intercultural exchanges. Perceptions of cultural differences and intercultural sensitivity are critical in multicultural societies as the foundation of social cohesion and mutual understanding (Bennett, 1993; Deardorff, 2006).

Kosovo, historically a region of diverse cultural interactions and high ethnic diversity, presents a context where intercultural sensitivity studies hold great significance. Therefore, adapting cultural difference perception and intercultural sensitivity scales to the Kosovo context will not only contribute to the development of cultural sensitivity policies in Kosovo but will also serve to test the validity of these scales in different cultural contexts.

METHOD

This research aims to conduct validity and reliability analyses for adapting the "Cultural Difference Perception and Intercultural Sensitivity" scale to the Kosovar culture. The methodology section discusses the use of the forward-backward translation method (Brislin, 1970) and expert opinions from the fields of cultural studies, psychometrics, and linguistics during the scale adaptation process. These experts played a crucial role in assessing the translation accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and psychometric properties of the scale. These methods were chosen to ensure that the scale was appropriately adapted to the target culture and that the meaning validity of the measurement tool was preserved (Hambleton & Kanjee, 1995).

Furthermore, to evaluate the psychometric properties of the scale, such as construct validity, reliability, and criterion-related validity, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) methods will be used, and internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) will be calculated (Byrne, 2016; Tabachnick et al., 2013). These analyses aim to assess the validity and reliability of the scale in the context of Kosovo.

Intercultural sensitivity refers to the ability of individuals to be open to different cultural perspectives and to understand these differences (Hammer et al., 2003). In societies with high ethnic diversity, such as Kosovo, intercultural sensitivity plays an important role in preventing cultural conflicts and ensuring cultural integration (Bennett, 1993). It is expected that this research will contribute both theoretically and practically to future studies on cultural sensitivity, intercultural education programs, and social cohesion policies.

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale developed by Chen and Starosta (2000) was adapted into Turkish by Rengi and Polat (2014). As a result of a comprehensive validity and reliability study, the scale was determined to be a psychometrically robust measurement tool. Translated into Turkish by four graduate students in educational administration and supervision who graduated in English language teaching, the scale consists of 24 items, 20 positive and 4 negative. The scale uses a five-point Likert-type rating, and the confirmatory factor analysis revealed a five-factor structure explaining 56.624% of the total variance.

In the validity analyses of the scale, it was found that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was 0.88, and Bartlett's test was significant (X^2=2636.675, df=276, p<.001). Factor loadings ranged from 0.477 to 0.774, and all item-total correlations were found to be above 0.30. As a result of reliability analyses, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire scale was calculated as 0.87, and for the sub-dimensions, the values were 0.86 for Participation in Intercultural Interaction, 0.81 for Respect for Cultural Differences, 0.75 for Self-Confidence in Intercultural Interaction, 0.65 for Enjoyment of Intercultural Interaction, and 0.73 for Care in Intercultural Interaction.

As part of the validity studies of the scale, necessary revisions were made based on the opinions of a faculty member specializing in educational management and supervision, and a pilot application was conducted with 105 students from the classroom teaching program who were not included in the sample group. This comprehensive validation process showed that the scale is a valid and reliable tool for measuring the intercultural sensitivity levels of classroom teachers in Turkish culture. The alignment of the factor structure with the theoretical framework and the acceptable reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions indicate that the psychometric properties of the scale are at an adequate level.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, a comprehensive data analysis process was carried out to thoroughly examine teachers' perceptions of cultural differences and the psychometric properties of the intercultural sensitivity scale. Initially, the obtained data were randomly divided into two sub-datasets, a step that allowed for the independent validation of the scale's construct validity and reliability analyses.

To determine the construct validity of the scale, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was first applied. Prior to conducting the EFA, the adequacy of the sample size for factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, and whether the data met the assumption of multivariate normal distribution was determined by Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The maximum likelihood method was used to extract factors, and various rotation methods were tested to better define the factor structure. The oblimin rotation method, which provided the most compatible results with the theoretical structure, was accepted as the factor structure.

To test the confirmability of the factor structure obtained from the EFA, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed. In CFA, model fit indices (χ2/df, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR) were analyzed using the maximum likelihood estimation method. The significance of factor loadings, standard error values, and Z statistics were considered in these analyses.

To assess the reliability of the scale, both classical test theory and modern psychometric approaches were used for internal consistency analyses. In this context, in addition to the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the McDonald omega coefficient, which provides a reliability estimate independent of the tau-equivalence assumption, was also calculated. All analyses were performed using the Jamovi (version 2.6.17) statistical software, and the accepted cut-off points in the literature were used to interpret the relevant outputs.

The results of the psychometric analyses support the construct validity and reliability of the scale. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was accepted for all statistical analyses. The findings were systematically presented through tables and discussed in light of related studies in the literature.

FINDINGS

Findings of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and the KMO values were calculated to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 1672$, df = 276, $p < .001$) and the KMO value of 0.759 were obtained. Based on these results, it was determined that the data were suitable for exploratory factor analysis. A four-factor structure emerged from the analysis.

Since several items were grouped under multiple factors, a rotation procedure was applied. Various rotation methods were tested under the 'Maximum likelihood' extraction method. The results obtained using the 'oblimin' rotation method were found to be more interpretable, so these results were accepted. During this process, KMO and Bartlett's test were recalculated. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 1297$, df = 171, $p < .001$) and the KMO value of 0.768 were obtained. Items with factor loadings below 0.35 (items 3, 5, 7, 17, and 23) were removed from the scale. In the final analysis, the number of factors was reduced to three.

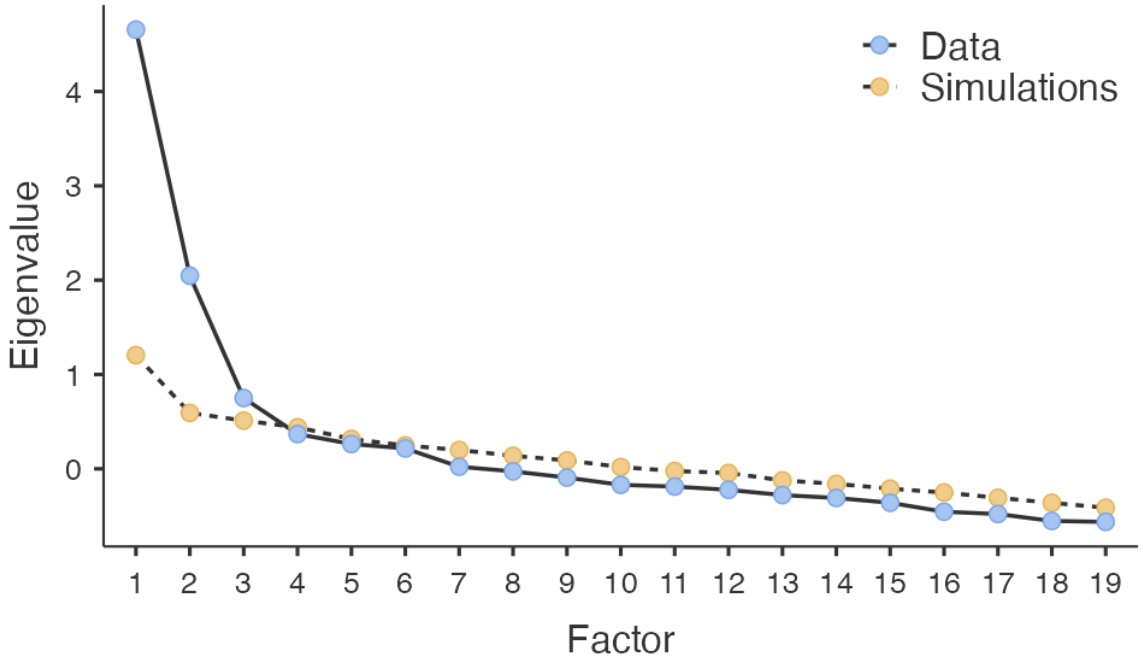

Figure 1: Scree Plot

Table 1: Factor Loadings of the Scale in EFA

Items	Faktor 1	Fakotr 2	Faktor 3	Uniqueness
s9_r	0.752			0.498
s14_r	0.730			0.418
s4_r	0.710			0.450
s21_r	0.650			0.431
s2_r	0.618			0.660

s8_r	0.574			0.661
s19_r	0.490			0.471
s6_r	0.448			0.708
s15		0.766		0.428
s13		0.620		0.559
s20		0.554		0.511
s22		0.510		0.694
s18		0.468		0.636
s1		0.367		0.708
s11			0.715	0.411
s10			0.578	0.628
s12			0.453	0.555
s16			0.424	0.776
s24			0.368	0.777

In this structure, the first factor represents the self-efficacy and attitude dimension of intercultural interaction, consisting of eight items with factor loadings ranging from .448 to .752. The fact that this factor is entirely made up of reverse-coded items supports the conceptual consistency of the structure.

The second factor represents the cultural sensitivity and openness dimension and consists of six items with factor loadings ranging from .367 to .766. The fact that the items clustered under this factor consist of positively worded statements strengthens the theoretical coherence of the structure. Specifically, the items focusing on themes of cultural open-mindedness and respect, which are grouped under this factor, align with Bennett's Intercultural Sensitivity Development Model.

The third factor represents the intercultural communication competence dimension and consists of five items with factor loadings ranging from .368 to .715. This factor's focus on communication competence aligns with the core assumptions of Deardorff's Intercultural Competence Model. The uniqueness values of the items, ranging from .411 to .777, indicate that the unique variance of the scale items is at an acceptable methodological level.

A holistic evaluation of the factor structure reveals that the scale has adequate structural validity for measuring intercultural sensitivity and cultural perceptions of difference. However, the high uniqueness values observed in some items (particularly in items s24 and s16) suggest that these items should be revisited in future revisions. The generally acceptable factor loadings and minimal cross-loadings can be considered additional psychometric indicators supporting the structural integrity of the scale.

Table 2. Explained Variance

Sub-Dimensions	Total Load	% Variance	Total Variance
Self-Efficacy and Attitudes in Intercultural Interaction	3.45	18.2	18.2
Cultural Sensitivity and Openness	2.64	13.9	32
Intercultural Communication Competence	1.93	10.2	42.2

The three-dimensional structure resulting from the factor analysis explains 42.2% of the total variance, providing significant evidence for the structural validity of the scale. In this context, the variance explained by each factor and the cumulative variance values indicate that the theoretical structure of the scale is supported by empirical data.

The Self-Efficacy and Attitudes in Intercultural Interaction dimension, with a total load value of 3.45, explains 18.2% of the variance, highlighting its dominant role within the scale structure. This finding underscores that teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and attitudes in intercultural interactions are the strongest component of intercultural sensitivity.

The Cultural Sensitivity and Openness dimension, with a total load value of 2.64, accounts for 13.9% of the variance, emphasizing its secondary importance within the structure. Together, these two factors explain 32% of the total variance, demonstrating the strong explanatory capacity of the scale's core structural components.

The Intercultural Communication Competence dimension, with a total load value of 1.93, explains 10.2% of the variance, increasing the cumulative variance to 42.2%. This supports the psychometric adequacy of the scale's three-factor structure.

Considering that in the social sciences, total explained variance values in the range of 40%-60% are deemed acceptable for multidimensional scales, the obtained 42.2% total variance meets methodological standards.

Findings On Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The three-factor structure obtained from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). During the CFA process, the fit of the model to the data was examined by calculating fit indices. Initially, the model's fit indices were calculated as follows: $\chi^2/df \approx 2.80$ (417/149), CFI = 0.840, TLI = 0.816, SRMR = 0.0788, RMSEA = 0.093 (confidence interval: 0.0825–0.104). These values indicate that the model's fit indices were insufficient, as the CFI and TLI values were below the expected threshold of 0.90. This suggests that the model does not fit the data well enough and requires improvement.

When the items in the model were examined, it was found that Item 16 had a factor loading of -0.0562 and a p-value of 0.505. These values indicate that Item 16 did not make a significant contribution to the model and even negatively impacted the model's overall fit. For this reason, Item 16 was removed from the scale, and the analysis was re-run without this item. The improvement in the model's fit indices was then evaluated.

After this adjustment, modifications suggested by the software (see Figure 2) were applied to the model. These modifications involved adjustments to relationships to further improve the model's fit. Factor loadings were rechecked, and Item 6 was removed from the scale as its factor loading fell below 0.3.

The recalculated model fit indices after these adjustments were as follows: $\chi^2/df \approx 1.92$ (209/109), CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.921, SRMR = 0.0522, RMSEA = 0.0665 (confidence interval: 0.0528–0.0800). These results indicate that the changes significantly improved the model's fit and that the model now meets acceptable fit criteria.

As a result of these adjustments, significant improvements in the model's fit indices were achieved, and the effects of these improvements on the indices were observed. Specifically, the CFI and TLI values exceeded the threshold of 0.90, while the RMSEA and SRMR values fell within acceptable limits. This indicates that the overall fit of the model is now stronger and better aligned with the data. Additionally, the results obtained after the modifications are more consistent with the theoretical structure of the model, enhancing its validity.

In conclusion, the initially proposed three-factor structure was refined through adjustments and modifications, resulting in a model that is more appropriate and aligned with the data. Throughout this process, the improvements in fit indices and corrections made to the model have significantly contributed to increasing its validity and reliability. Thus, both the theoretical consistency and data-driven validity of the model have been strengthened.

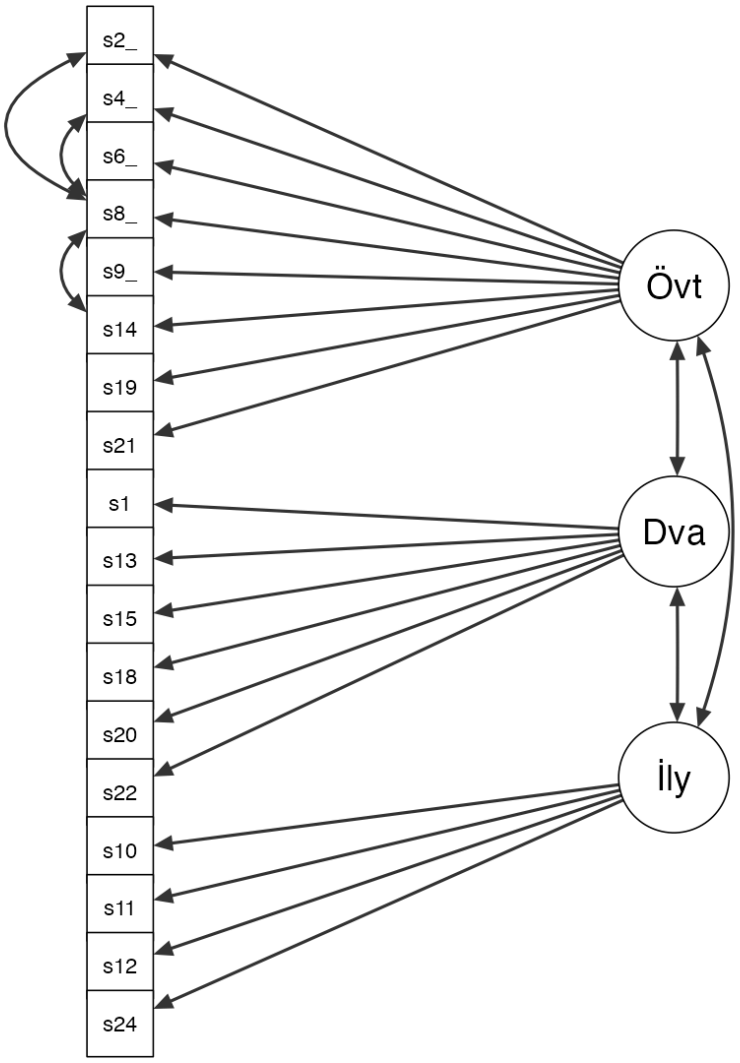

Figure 2. CFA Path Diagram

Table 3. CFA Factor Loadings

Factor	Items	Loading	SH	Z	p
Self-Efficacy and Attitudes in Intercultural Interaction	s2_r	0.387	0.0645	6	<.001
	s4_r	0.482	0.0611	7.88	<.001
	s8_r	0.536	0.0787	6.81	<.001
	s9_r	0.576	0.0704	8.18	<.001
	s14_r	0.967	0.065	14.88	<.001

	s19_r	0.849	0.0806	10.54	<.001
	s21_r	0.95	0.0724	13.12	<.001
Cultural Sensitivity and Openness	s1	0.518	0.0546	9.49	<.001
	s13	0.662	0.0555	11.93	<.001
	s15	0.633	0.0589	10.75	<.001
	s18	0.717	0.0537	13.34	<.001
	s20	0.73	0.0598	12.2	<.001
	s22	0.662	0.0759	8.73	<.001
Intercultural Communication Competence	s10	0.659	0.0622	10.6	<.001
	s11	0.467	0.0523	8.94	<.001
	s12	0.605	0.0422	14.34	<.001
	s24	0.528	0.0623	8.48	<.001

The methodological evaluation of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results provides comprehensive evidence regarding the psychometric robustness of the scale's three-factor structure. The findings of the analysis reveal significant insights that warrant a detailed examination in the context of structural validity and measurement precision.

When examining the psychometric properties of the Self-Efficacy and Attitude in Intercultural Interaction factor, factor loadings range from .387 to .967. Notably, items s14_r (.967), s21_r (.950), and s19_r (.849) exhibit high factor loadings, serving as strong indicators of structural integrity within this factor. The standard error values range between .0645 and .0806, and all Z-values demonstrate statistical significance at the $p < .001$ level, indicating that the measurement precision meets methodological standards.

The Cultural Sensitivity and Openness factor is characterized by factor loadings ranging from .518 to .730. Within this dimension, items s20 (.730) and s18 (.717) display dominant loadings, reinforcing the alignment of the structure with theoretical expectations. The relatively low standard error values (.0537–.0759) and highly significant Z-values indicate strong measurement precision and structural consistency.

The analysis of the Intercultural Communication Competence factor reveals factor loadings ranging from .467 to .659. Items s10 (.659) and s12 (.605) hold prominent positions within the factor structure, reflecting the alignment between theoretical constructs and empirical findings. The low standard error values (.0422–.0623) and significant Z-scores ($p < .001$) further demonstrate satisfactory measurement precision.

From a holistic perspective, the findings strongly support the three-factor structure of the scale through confirmatory factor analysis. Across all three factors, the observed high factor loadings, low standard error values, and statistically significant Z-scores confirm that the scale's structural validity meets methodological criteria. Particularly, the alignment of factor loadings with theoretical expectations and the standard error values remaining within acceptable ranges underscore the psychometric robustness of the scale.

FINDINGS ON RELIABILITY RESULTS

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha and McDonald's Omega Values

Factor	Cronbach's α	McDonald's ω
Self-Efficacy and Attitudes in Intercultural Interaction	0.814	0.838

Cultural Sensitivity and Openness	0.783	0.861
Intercultural Communication Competence	0.682	0.800

Findings on Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis of the scale, utilizing Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega coefficients, provides insights into the psychometric properties from the perspective of internal consistency. Analyzing reliability coefficients by factor offers methodological implications regarding the structural robustness of the scale.

The Self-Efficacy and Attitude in Intercultural Interaction factor demonstrates the highest level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha value of (.814) and a McDonald's omega coefficient of (.838). These values are well above the widely accepted threshold of .70 in psychometric literature. The relatively small difference between the two reliability coefficients (.024) indicates unidimensionality within the factor structure and suggests that the tau-equivalence assumption is met.

For the Cultural Sensitivity and Openness factor, the Cronbach's alpha value (.783) and McDonald's omega coefficient (.861) reveal a more noticeable difference (.078), suggesting some heterogeneity in the factor loadings of the items within this dimension. The higher McDonald's omega coefficient implies deviations from the tau-equivalence assumption and indicates that omega provides a more precise estimation of reliability for this factor.

The Intercultural Communication Competence factor exhibits a Cronbach's alpha value of (.682) and a McDonald's omega coefficient of (.800), with a substantial difference (.118) between the two. This suggests distinct psychometric properties for this factor compared to the others. The Cronbach's alpha value slightly below the threshold is noteworthy within the framework of classical test theory. However, the McDonald's omega coefficient at the acceptable level of .800 indicates that the reliability of the factor structure is satisfactory.

For all three factors, McDonald's omega coefficients exceed Cronbach's alpha values, likely due to variations in the data sets. Since both coefficients fall within acceptable ranges, the scale can be considered reliable.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The "Perceptions of Cultural Differences and Intercultural Sensitivity Scales" were adapted to the cultural context of Kosovo. The study involved a total of 325 teachers from Turkish, Albanian, and Bosniak ethnic backgrounds. Based on the results of EFA, CFA, and reliability analyses, the scale consists of 17 items across three sub-dimensions. It was found to be suitable for the cultural framework of Kosovo.

When the findings regarding the sub-dimensions—Self-Efficacy and Attitude in Intercultural Interaction, Cultural Sensitivity and Openness, and Intercultural Communication Competence—are evaluated holistically, it is evident that the three-factor structure of the scale is strongly supported by confirmatory factor analysis. The high factor loadings, low standard error values, and statistically significant Z-scores observed in all three factors demonstrate that the structural validity of the scale meets methodological criteria. Specifically, the alignment of factor loadings with theoretical expectations and the standard error values remaining within acceptable limits support the psychometric robustness of the scale. This is critically important for validating the construct validity of measurement tools during scale development and adaptation processes (Kline, 2015).

Byrne (2016) highlighted that scales developed with structural equation modeling demonstrate strong alignment between factor loadings and theoretical expectations, thus supporting psychometric robustness. Similarly, Hu and Bentler (1999) emphasized the importance of acceptable

error levels and appropriate distributions of factor loadings for the validity and reliability of scales in structural modeling. Marsh, Hau, and Wen (2004) also noted that alignment between factor loadings and theoretical constructs in scales developed through confirmatory factor analysis is critical for psychometric robustness, particularly in multicultural contexts where reliability findings carry significant importance.

Since this study reflects teachers' perspectives, it is recommended that future research in Kosovo focus on intercultural sensitivity, scale development, or adaptation studies. Given Kosovo's multicultural structure (Albanian, Turkish, Bosniak, etc.), it is crucial to ensure that such studies are based on samples that reflect the existing ethnic and cultural diversity in society. Future studies should also explore how intercultural sensitivity develops in relation to variables such as participation from different ethnic backgrounds, diverse socio-economic levels, and the younger population.

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