

## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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### Abstract

The paper deals with an intercultural communication between Czech students and students from the post-Soviet states in the Czech Technical University in Prague. The aim of this paper is to find out intercultural differences between students from Czech Republic and post-Soviet states and explore what may cause conflicts between them. The paper is also concerned with differences in post-Soviet states cultural standards according to Czech students. In the first part of paper is described theoretical concepts and technical terms, which are necessary part of the research. The methods of research with the categorized group of respondents is in the part of methodology. The last parts of the paper are results with the conclusion where are described conflicts and identify post-Soviet states cultural standards.

**Key words:** intercultural communication, students, intercultural differences

**JEL Code:** I23, M00, Z13

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### Introduction

Nowadays when the globalization is arising, it has influence also on communication, which is an integral part not only of personal but also of working life. There are high expectations of society on individuals to be open agreeable to involve in multicultural, international environments. The mass media have increasing influence on human thinking and behaviour.

This paper deals with the intercultural communication between the Czech and students from the post-Soviet states in the Czech Technical University in Prague. The research was based on primary and secondary research. The secondary data for this research were obtained from various literature sources of scientific literature. The primary research was based on questionnaire, which was distributed to 931 students who study in the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering Czech Technical University in Prague. Questionnaire was created with the usage of the website [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com). The electronic version of the questionnaire was choose because is respondents feel more anonymously, the cost are low for the collection of data and this type is the most common source of obtaining data. One of disadvantage is lower return of

the questionnaires, which is around 30 %. Reliability of this questionnaire is possible to monitor by two methods. It is mainly the method of repeat measurement and half-method. For both methods, the degree of reliability is determined by the degree of consistency between the results of the two questionnaire surveys. In this questionnaire, a recurrent measurement method was used. Which seemed like an unfortunate choice because some students were bothered. In this research, the return of questionnaire was 13,32 % but just 102 questionnaires could be further analysed.

## **1 Intercultural communication**

Lauring (2007) thinks that the style of communication is determined by the culture where the person was born into. He believes that language is not only an interpersonal communication instrument but the expression of one's identity. Another authors Liu, Fang add, that "culture plays a central role in effective communication because it not only represents the sum total of shared experiences but also shapes the life experiences of the individuals who occupy a particular culture as members of that community" (Liu, Fang, 2017, p.26)

Průcha defines intercultural communication as a "process of interaction and communication taking place in a variety of situations where communicating partners are members of linguistically and / or culturally diverse ethnic, nations, racial or religious communities. This communication is determined by the specifics of the languages, cultures, mentality and value systems of communicating partners" (Průcha, 2010, p.16).

Strohmeier, Gradinger, Wagner (2017) believe that "students might want to improve their knowledge, attitudes, or communication skills in an intercultural situation" (p.86). They believe that is not important to define desired internal or external outcomes in terms of an informed frame of reference shift or the effective and appropriate communication in an intercultural situation, but more important is the intercultural learning process, which can be successful when the self-reflection phase is again followed by a forethought phase (Strohmeier, Gradinger, Wagner, 2017)

Dooly, Rubinstein (2018) that this age is in the sign of communication transformation and penetrating globalization, languages and cultures come into contact constantly and many conflicts occurred. Media transfer to public all conflicts from different part of world, which is connected for example with migration. Dooly, Rubinstein wrote "Subsequently more and more individuals find themselves in the role of mediating between diverse languages and cultures in their daily lives: individuals working as interpreters, shopkeepers, teachers,

workers in multinational companies or NGOs; as well as young, multilingual children and youth acting as linguistic and cultural mediators between their family and other members of society – often known as ‘language brokers’” (2018, p.2).

Another authors Croucher et al (2018) investigated the influence of intercultural contact on communication traits. They tried to explore if the people, who are in contact with immigrants, adapt their argumentativeness over time.

Infante, Rancer (1982) defines argumentativeness like “a stable trait which predisposes an individual in communication situation(s) to advocate positions on controversial issues and to attack verbally the positions which other people take on these issues” (p. 72). The same opinion has also Kecskes (2017) who deals with intercultural communication and identify with opinion of other authors “that non-native speakers very often prioritize the compositional meaning of an utterance Abel 2003; Bortfeld, 2002, 2003; Cieslicka, 2004, 2006; House 2002, 2003; Kecskes 2007, 2015a” (Kecskes, 2017, p. 21).

Another author Moran (2011) believes that is important to understand cultural differences through experience. He claims, “Cultural understanding may minimize the impact of culture shock and maximize intercultural experiences, as well as increase professional development and organizational effectiveness (p.25). For achieving of effectiveness across cultures, training must be the focus of the job, while education thought of with reference to the individual, and development reserved for organizational concerns. Whether one is concerned with intercultural training, education, or development, all employees should learn about the influence of culture and be effective cross-cultural communicators if they are to work with minorities within their own society or with foreigners encountered at home or abroad” (p.26).

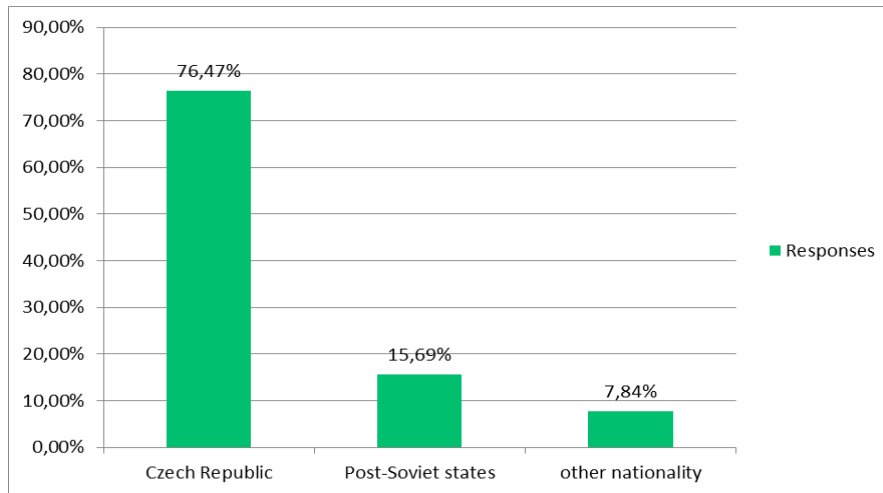
Some of authors believes that by understanding the conflict can be improved intercultural communication (Evans, Suklun, 2017).

Hendrickson found out that “international students have lack of friendship with those from the host country and studies that cite the positive outcomes of such friendship by analysing four contexts in which these relationships potentially manifest; the classroom, housing arrangements, extra-curricular activities, and tutor program participation” (Hendrickson, 2018, p.1).

## 2 Results

Most of respondents were from Czech Republic, as it is possible to see below in the figure 1. There was 23,53 % of students from others countries than Czech Republic.

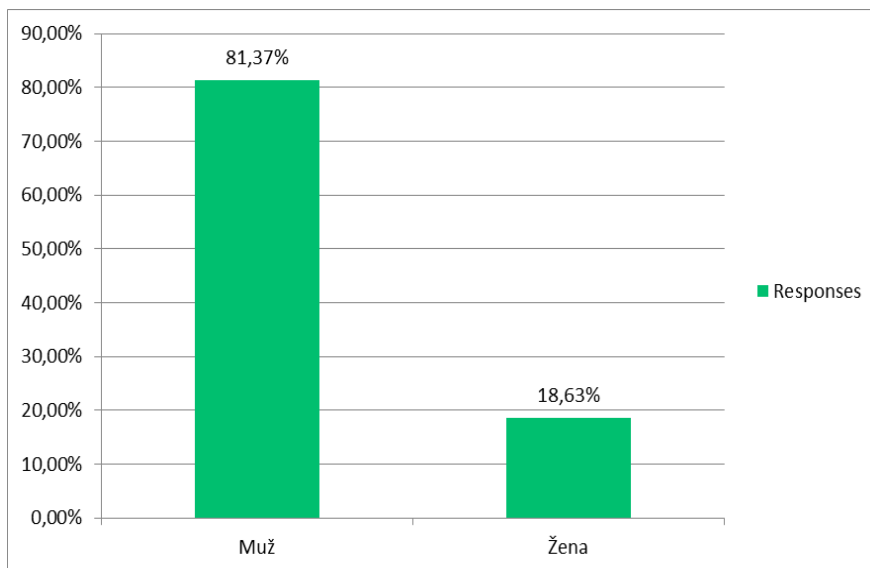
**Fig. 1: Nationality of respondents**



Source: Own research, 2018

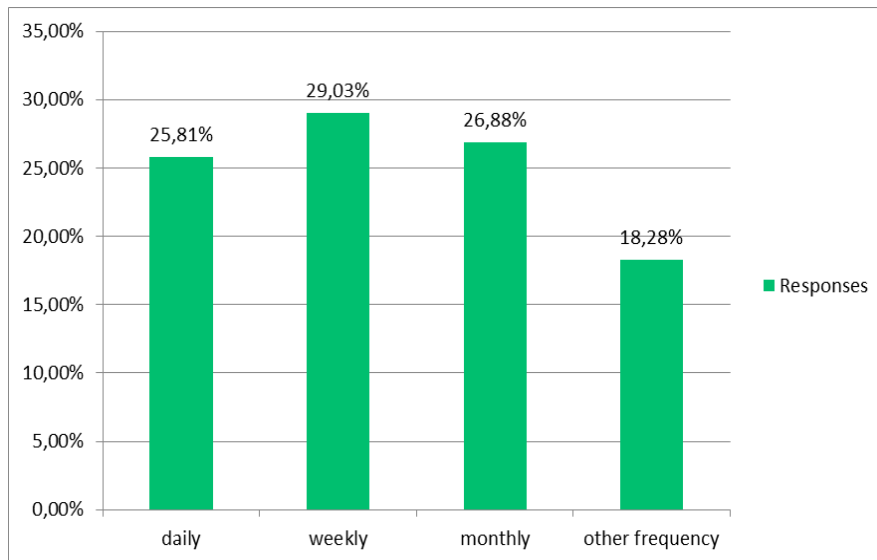
More men participated in this research as it shows the figure 2 below. This arise from the composition of students in Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, because most of the students are men.

**Fig. 2: Sorting respondents by gender**



Source: Own research, 2018

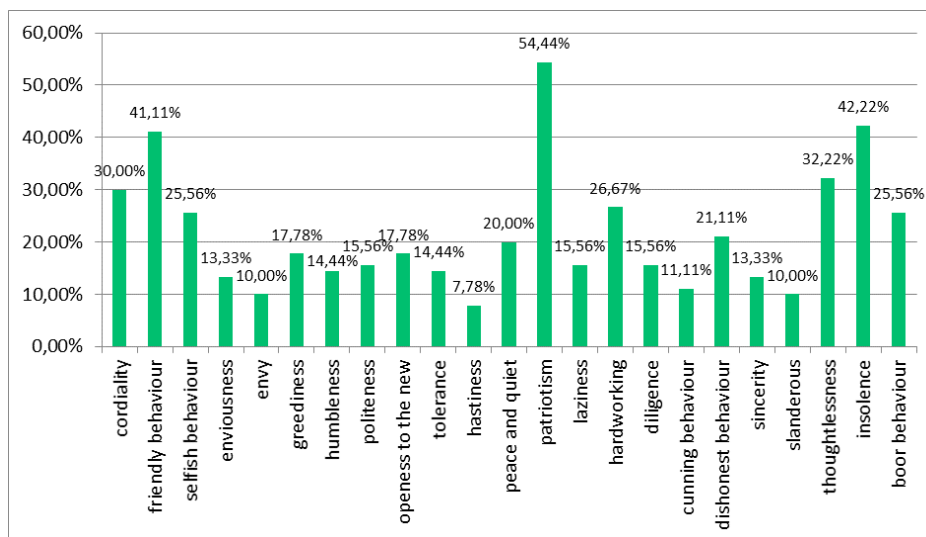
**Fig. 3: Frequency of communication between students of CR and post-Soviet countries**



Source: Own research, 2018

The figure 3 displays the frequency of communication between students who come from Czech Republic and students from post-Soviet countries. Some of respondents expressed that they do not want to communicate with students from post-Soviet countries, some they tried avoid to contact them and between others answers were like one time per year, rarely or that they communicate with them hardly at all.

**Fig. 4: Characteristic of culture in post-Soviet countries**

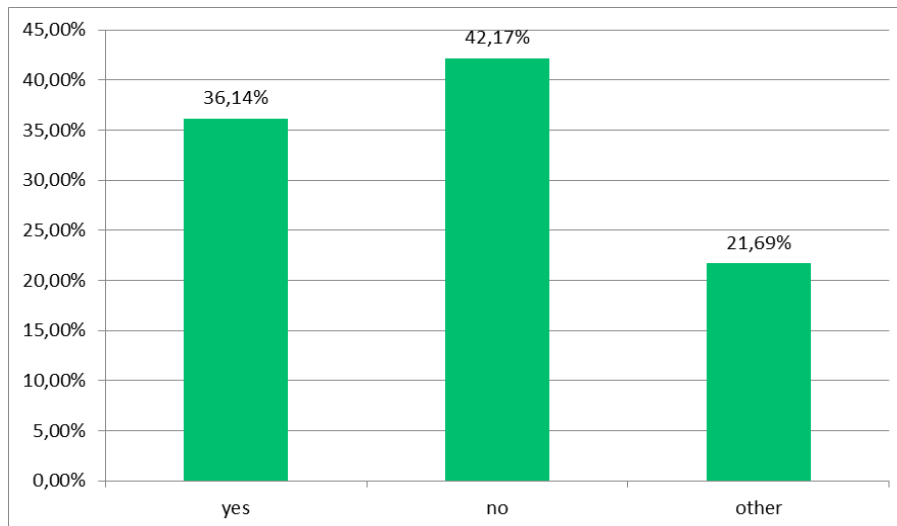


Source: Own research, 2018

The figure 4 displays perception of culture in post-Soviet countries. Most of students believe that people in post-Soviet countries are patriots and they have friendly behaviour.

However, on another hand there were 42, 22 % of respondents who think that people from post-Soviet countries are insolence. The fourth biggest group (32,22 %) described them as thoughtlessness.

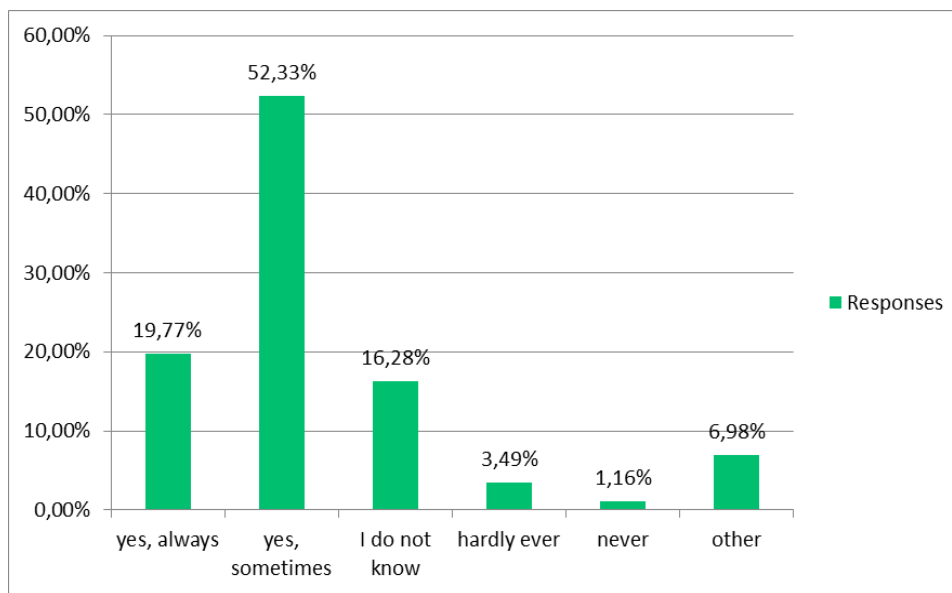
**Fig. 5: Are Czechs more sincere than people from post-Soviet countries in their communication?**



Source: Own research, 2018

The figure 5 displays difference of sincere Czech and people in post-Soviet countries. Most of students believe that Czech are not more sincere than people in post-Soviet countries. Between the others answer (21,69 %) were opinions like that none of them are sincere, or they were not sure about difference of sincere between these two groups, so they could not answer on this question, or say that it depends on each person, that is impossible to apply it on all nation.

**Fig. 6: Intelligibility of communication with people from post-Soviet countries**



Source: Own research, 2018

Figure 6 shows the intelligibility of communication between Czech and people from post-Soviet countries, which did not concern with the language skills. The positive finding was that most of students answered that the intelligibility of communication is between Czech and people from post-Soviet countries. Some of respondents (6,98 %) answer that it depends on the situation. If they talk about the problems, which relate with the exact sciences, they understand each other more, but in more personal situation sometimes arise misunderstanding.

## Conclusion

This research shows that the intercultural communication between the Czech students and students from post-Soviet countries is at a good level. There are some barriers, which occurs in this research, like some of respondents tried to avoid to be in the contact with students from post-Soviet countries and not to communicate with them, but these were just few of them. Most of students 81,72 % communicate with people from post-Soviet countries daily, weekly or monthly. These students do not try to avoid contact with people from post-Soviet countries. The research, besides the other, dealt with the content of the communication between the Czech students and students from post-Soviet countries. It was find out, that the most of communication (52,17 %) is focused on solving problems during theirs study, like a solving projects or working on seminar work. There was 26,09 % of respondents who communicate with students from post-Soviet countries mainly about entertainment. It was suppressing that

15,22% communicate about the literature of 17<sup>th</sup> century, third world or according the situation.

Intercultural culture and investigation of intercultural differences is never ending of understanding in any research. Because every research brings a fractional part of a riddle that can only detention a specific point of view on the problem. It is important to realise, that it is not possible just to receive passively information, because by this it is impossible to understand the culture, culture differences and intercultural communication. This is caused because all information are mediated received.

Familiarity of intercultural dissimilarities is difficult to test with just a simple test. Just by the real experience, it is possible to verify the capability of each single person.

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