Multicultural competence of helping profession students

Many definitions of multicultural competence are joined with efficiency in communication between cultures, ethnicities or races (e.g. Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2007). The model of multicultural competence represents a functional shift of components (individual subcompetencies) into more general units (components). Theoretical basis for our research was Model of the multicultural competence of helping profession students developed in 2014 (Hladik, 2014). The Model has hierarchical structure and consists of five components: multicultural activity (primary determinant), m. knowledge, m. awareness, understandings of terms (middle level) and m. communication skill as a top of the Model.

Methods

The primary objective was to compare the level of multicultural competence of helping professions students in the Czech Republic and Gambia. We compared the level of scores of the components of multicultural competence not only according to nationality but also according to individual universities. We were also interested whether the level of multicultural competence affects the interaction between factors, which are the state and the university.

The sample consisted of students of educational, social and health fields of six universities (three Czech and three Gambian universities). In total, we conducted research with 516 students (Czech students n = 320; Gambian students n = 196). The research tool was the Multicultural Competence Scale of Helping Profession Students (MCSHPS) (see Hladik, 2014).

Results

Czech students achieved higher average scores measured for the overall level of multicultural competence than students from Gambia (Czech Rep. M = 3.530, SD = .548; Gambia M = 3.404, SD = .551, p = .012). We found a significant difference in the level of multicultural competence in three of the five components that MCSHPS examines (m. knowledge, understanding of terms and m. activity). For the items m. awareness and m. communication skills, there is not a significant difference between Czech and Gambian students. The two-way ANOVA showed that the interaction effect of both factors (state and university) is R² = .110; p < .001. If we look at the effect of the two factors separately, it shows that the proportion of both factors on the interaction is not uniform (state n²p = .014; p < .001 and the university n²p = .099; p < .001).

The university must therefore be considered as a more significant factor influencing the level of multicultural competence of students than the state factor.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that two culturally and socially completely different areas (European represented by Czech students and African represented by Gambian students), it turned out that the cultural context in the level of multicultural competence does not play a very significant role. It means that the university is a stronger predictor of the level of multicultural competence of helping profession students.

References


