



# **An investigation into the Intercultural Competence, Self-awareness, and Well-being among Arabic-Speaking Immigrants in Finland**

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**Abstract.** The aim of this study is twofold. First, explore the relationship between intercultural competence, and self-awareness and psychological well-being among the Arabic-speaking immigrant population in Finland; and second, compare the results of this study with a previous one conducted with Syrian refugees in Germany, with exactly the same methodology. The intercultural competence of Arabic-speaking immigrants in Finland were evaluated to uncover the patterns and behaviours they exhibit in a foreign culture. In total, 358 respondents completed the questionnaire, the gender split was 36.6% female (131) and 63.4% male (227). The average age of the respondents was 34 years (Mage = 34.7, SD = 11.6). To assess intercultural competence, the APTOC, a 15-item scale with three main subscales (Openness to Other Cultures, Global Mindset, and Narrow Mindset), was used. The Self-reflection and Insight Scale was used to assess private self-awareness. The Brief Symptom Inventory's three subscales of depression, anxiety, and hostility were used to assess well-being. While Openness to Other Cultures and Global Mindset were found to be positively related to Self-reflection, Narrow Mindset was found to be negatively related to Self-reflection and positively related to Insight, Depression, Anxiety, and Hostility. Additionally, the findings reveal significant differences between this study's results and those of a previous study conducted in Germany, particularly concerning the length of stay in the host country and the effect of Openness to Other Cultures and Anxiety. These differences may inform the creation of programs and interventions aimed at improving intercultural competence and well-being among this population.

**Keywords.** Private Self-awareness, Self-reflection, Insight, Intercultural Competence, Well-being, Arabic-speaking, Immigrants, Finland

## **1. Introduction**

In the year 2015, Europe experienced a significant influx of immigrants because of political and humanitarian crises in the Middle East and North Africa, particularly the ongoing civil conflicts in Syria, Libya, and Yemen. This influx of immigrants has led to a heightened public discourse in Europe. According to Statistics Finland (2022) and the Finnish Immigration Service (2018), there were a total of 94,654 asylum seekers in Finland between 2000 and 2018 with 32,477 arrivals in 2015 alone, which equates to 6.6 asylum seekers per 1,000 members of the Finnish population (OECD, 2017). Arabic speaking immigrants are a diverse group, with varying cultural backgrounds, but they may face many challenges in terms of integration,

acculturation, and mental health. According to Jaakkola (2005), the groups of immigrants that are most accepted in Finland are those of British, Scandinavian, and white American origin, while those that are least accepted include Moroccans, Russians, Arabs, and Somalis. This hierarchy has been found to be directly related to the experiences of immigrants in Finland, as it correlates with reported levels of ethnic discrimination, which are often reported by those lower on the hierarchy (Jaakkola, 2005). As suggested by Martikainen et al. (2013), while instances of ethnic-religious stereotyping, racism, and discrimination towards Arabs and Muslims may not be as prevalent in Finland as in other European nations, their presence still has negative consequences for the integration and labour market experiences of these groups. The difficulties associated with acquiring proficiency in a new language, along with experiences of xenophobia and cultural adjustments can have a significant negative impact on the well-being of immigrants, as highlighted in studies by Close et al. (2016) and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (2022).

This study adds to the existing body of literature by examining the connections between intercultural competence, self-awareness, and the well-being of Arabic-speaking immigrants residing in Finland.

Therefore, the research question is: what is the relationship between intercultural competence (Openness to Other Cultures, Global Mindset, and Narrow Mindedness), and self-awareness (self-reflection, insight), and psychological well-being (anxiety, depression, and aggression) among the Arabic-speaking immigrant population in Finland? Another aim of the study is to compare the results of this study with a previous one conducted with Syrian refugees in Germany, with the same methodology (Al Khuja & Björkqvist, 2020).

### *1.1. Intercultural Competence and Self-awareness*

Intercultural competence is the ability to function effectively in another culture. It is also known as intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, and cultural awareness. This construct has been defined in various ways. Cross (2012) defines it as the ability of professionals to work together effectively in cross-cultural situations. Hammer et al. (2003) describe it as having the capacity to reason and behave appropriately in cross-cultural circumstances. Anget al. (2006) define it as the capability of an individual to effectively handle and navigate circumstances that involve cultural diversity. Thomas et al. (2008) describe it as a system of interconnected knowledge and skills that enables individuals to adjust to and form cultural elements of their surroundings. Additionally, Gelan (2017) outlines four key components of intercultural competence and describes it as the capacity to interact with people from different cultures: knowledge, empathy, self-esteem, and cultural identity.

Intercultural competence can be understood by identifying common conceptual frameworks and models. Four frameworks are discussed, including the Cultural-generic Approach by Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005), the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS), the European multidimensional model by Byram (1997), and the anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) model by Gudykunst (1993). The Culture-generic Approach, developed through interviews, recognises 10 components of intercultural communicative competence. The DMIS, commonly used in North America, combines ethnocentric and ethnorelative stages, including substages of denial, defence, minimisation, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. The European multidimensional model includes five determinants such as attitude, knowledge, and critical cultural awareness. The AUM model suggests that mindfulness can be used to manage anxiety and uncertainty that arises when dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds. The study of self-awareness has been

approached from different perspectives, including therapeutic and philosophical viewpoints (Fenigstein et al., 1975), as well as from the standpoint of social psychology (Argyle, 1973). Fenigstein and colleagues (1975) identify the process of self-focused attention as the connecting factor among these various approaches. This process can involve either excessive self-examination or a lack of self-awareness. According to Silvia and Duval (2001), self-awareness can also be categorised as situational or dispositional. Situational self-awareness involves unconsciously comparing one's actions to internalised standards, whereas dispositional self-awareness refers to an individual's tendency to focus on and contemplate their internal state, emotions, mental processes, and relationships with others (Fenigstein et al., 1975).

Self-awareness is often divided into two categories: private and public. Fenigstein et al. (1975) and Kondrat (1999) note that private self-awareness includes internal experiences such as emotions, physiological sensations, and values, while public self-awareness encompasses visible attributes like behaviour and appearance (Morin, 2006). However, this distinction, according to Wicklund and Gullwitzer (1987), is criticised because there is a discrepancy between theoretical and empirical definitions of private and public self-awareness. Despite this criticism, Carver and Scheier (2012) found that focusing on private or public aspects of self-awareness can lead to different effects such as motivation, cognition, and behaviour. Self-awareness and self-consciousness, according to Morin (2006), do not mean the same thing because they have different outcomes. Also, because it is more conceptual than public self-awareness, private self-awareness is regarded as a higher form of self-awareness (Morin, 2006).

### *1.2. Self-awareness and Cultural Competence in Relation to Well-being*

Cognition plays a role in cross-cultural interaction, but emotional responses also have a significant impact on motivation and the regulation of thought and action (Izard, 2007). Instead of labelling overwhelming experiences as "culture shock," a proactive approach to dealing with emotional overload is needed (Abarbanel, 2009). Emotional control requires skill and practice in recognising heightened emotions in intercultural interactions (ibid.).

A crucial component of cross-cultural competence is emotional needs, which impact motivation, adaptation, and decision-making (Izard, 2007; Mitchell, 2011). According to Garcia and colleagues (2014), psychological well-being is the capacity to adapt to changes in the environment, and according to Sandage and Jankowski (2013), a person's spiritual well-being contributes to their ability to interact successfully across cultural contexts. Hence, intercultural communication skills are a key indicator of wellbeing (Balakrishnan et al., 2021; Ward et al., 2011). Both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being are associated with cultural self-awareness, or how much one engages in self-reflection (Lu & Wan, 2018). Spears (2011) suggests that when someone pays attention to their own cultural experiences, cultural membership becomes more significant. A person's wellbeing increasingly becomes their life's objective the more they identify with a particular culture (Martinez & Dukes, 1997). Similarly, Nguyen et al., (2015) found that there is an association between identification with a particular culture and psychological well-being. According to Lu and Wan's (2018) definition of cultural self-awareness, which is about paying attention to cultural components within oneself as they change, intercultural competence and both self-reflection and wellbeing may be positively associated.

The "self-absorption paradox," discovered by Trapnell and Campbell in 1999, and refers to the association between high levels of self-attentiveness and self-knowledge and psychological distress. They discovered, however, that openness to experience is associated

with reflection while neuroticism is associated with rumination when examining the relationship between self-awareness and the Big Five personality traits. According to Morin (2006), rumination is linked to anxious thoughts about one's self-worth while reflection leads to a more accurate understanding of oneself.

Mead's work on self-theory is cited by Diener and Srull (1979), who claim that self-aware people are more likely to conform to social requirements because they find other people's opinions to be important. This type of self-awareness can be seen as a prerequisite for being open to others and other cultures. Furthermore, Gudykunst (1993) states that when interacting with people from different cultures, one may experience anxiety and uncertainty. Mindfulness can be used to manage these difficulties by being aware of the source of the anxiety and focusing on it.

### *1.3. Adopted Scales*

The *APTOC (Attitudes towards People and Things from Other Cultures)* scale was used to assess intercultural competence. The scale was evaluated with 308 participants after being modified from Cushner's 32-item Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity. The final scale's 15 items were categorised in three subscales, namely Openness to Other Cultures, Global Mindset, and Narrow Mindset. In contrast to Narrow Mindset, which is defined as having an anti-other-cultures attitude, Openness to Other Cultures refers to having an open-minded attitude towards different cultures and acting to embrace them; and Global Mindset is defined as considering oneself a global citizen and having positive attitudes towards other cultures (Al Khuja & Björkqvist, 2020).

The *Self-Reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS)*, developed by Grant et al., (2002), was used to measure the private aspect of self-consciousness. Unlike the Private Self-Consciousness Scale (PrSCS) developed by Fenigstein et al., (1975) which has been criticised for being unidimensional, the SRIS differentiates between self-reflection and insight, which the authors found to be distinct constructs after reviewing over 280 research papers. While Insight is about the clarity with which one understands certain elements such as one's own actions, thoughts, feelings, and internal state, Self-reflection sheds light on the process of paying attention to and evaluating these elements. The SRIS is comprised of two main dimensions: self-reflection (SRIS-SR), which consists of 12 items, and insight (SRIS-IN), which consists of 8 items. Engagement in self-reflection (6 items) and Need for self-reflection (6 items) are the other two determinants of the self-reflection (SRIS-SR) factor.

Three subscales from the *Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)* were used to measure well-being, namely depression, anxiety, and hostility/aggression (Derogatis & Melisaratos, 1983).

## **2. Methods**

### *2.1. Sample*

A convenience sample of 358 Arabic-speaking immigrants in Finland was drawn from Facebook groups. The gender split was 36.6% female (131) and 63.4% male (227).

The average age of the respondents was 34 years ( $M_{\text{age}} = 34.7$ ,  $SD = 11.6$ ). There was no significant age difference between males and females.

A Master's degree was the highest level of education held by 10.3% (37) of the respondents, 45.3% (162) had a Bachelor's degree, whereas 36.9% (132) had a completed high school as their highest degree. Only 7.5% (27) had no education at all.

While more than half of the respondents (56%) were studying, 63% were unemployed. Of the respondents, 57.3% were married, and 26.8% were single; 10.3% were divorced, and 5% were living with a partner.

Approximately 14% of the respondents reported living in Finland for more than 10 years, while 14% and 9% of lived in Finland for 4 and 6 years respectively; and 38.3% (137 individuals) of the respondents lived in Finland for 5 years. 92.2% of the respondents received a residence permit. When asked, "Do you consider yourself to as a religious person?" 36.3% were undecided, 27.4% checked "quite much," followed by 15.9% and 13.4% who said they were neither very nor barely religious, and 7% (25) who said they were deeply religious. The respondents were of 16 different nationalities: Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, UAI and Yemen. Over half of the respondents were from Iraq, followed by ~24% Syrians.

### *2.2. Instrument*

The authors employed a descriptive questionnaire consisting of 67 variables to gather data. The questionnaire was segmented into four parts: "A", "B", "C", and "D". Part "A" consisted of ten variables, which were created by the authors and concerned with demographics. Out of these ten variables, nine were nominal data, while one (variable number 7) was interval data, asking the respondents to provide their responses on a Likert-scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely much).

Part "B" comprised a 20-item scale, "Attitudes Toward People and Things from Other Cultures" (APTOC), which had previously been utilised in a study that involved a sample of Syrians residing in Germany (Al Khuja & Björkqvist, 2020). Following an internal consistency analysis, the scale was reduced to 15 items, with three sub-scales: Openness to Other Cultures (Cronbach's Alpha score .75), Global Mindset (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  score .8) and Narrow Mindset (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  score .62).

Respondents were required to respond to 20 items in Part "C" using a Likert scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). This part focused on the Self-reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS), which was created by Franklin and Langford developed (2002) in an effort to enhance the Private Self-Consciousness Scale (PrSCS) (Fenigstein et al., 1975).

An internal consistency analysis revealed that the Self-reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS), a 20-item scale, consisted of two main subscales in this study: Self-reflection, with 6 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .86$ ), and Insight, with 5 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ).

The Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) by Derogatis and Melisaratos (1983) was divided into three subscales (depression, anxiety, and hostility/aggression) in Part "D," which was the questionnaire's final part. These three subscales each contained 17 variables with Likert scales ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very much). Reliable Cronbach's  $\alpha$  scores were obtained for the three subscales: depression (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ), anxiety (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .92$ ) and hostility/aggression (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .78$ ).

The results of the internal consistency analysis were in line with the results obtained by the authors when conducting a similar study on Syrians residing in Germany (Khuja & Björkqvist, 2020); thus, the same items of each subscale (Openness to Other Cultures, Global Mindset, Narrow Mindset, Self-reflection, Insight, Depression, Anxiety and Aggression) were used in this article.

### *2.3. Procedure*

To gather data, the questionnaire was made available electronically via GoogleDrive and the link was posted on two significant Facebook groups for Arabic-speaking immigrants in Finland. Participation was therefore voluntary and anonymous. Some commenters asked broad questions, to which the author responded with explanations.

#### 2.4. Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to the ethical principles concerning research with human subjects of the World Medical Association (2013). The collected data are stored according to the regulations for the protection of data by the European Commission (2016). Participation was voluntary without any form of economic or other incentive, all participants were adults, and the research was conducted with informed consent and strict confidentiality.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Correlations between the Subscales

The relationships between the included subscales were examined using a Pearson's correlation analysis. The results of the study indicated significant correlations at either a  $p < .01$  level or  $p < .05$  level (Table 1). A positive relationship was found between Self-reflection and Openness to Other Cultures. The study also revealed that Global Mindset had a positive correlation with Self-reflection, and a negative correlation with Hostility. Conversely, Narrow Mindset had a positive correlation with Insight, Depression, Anxiety, and Hostility. Global Mindset and Self-Reflection had the highest positive correlational coefficient ( $r = .33$ ), and Narrow Mindset and Hostility had the highest negative correlational coefficient ( $r = -.16$ ). However, no significant correlation was observed between Openness to Other Cultures and Insight, Depression, Anxiety, and Hostility. The same pattern was observed between Global Mindset and Insight, Depression, and Anxiety.

Table 1  
*Pearson Correlations between the Subscales (N= 358)*

	Self- reflection	Insight	Depression	Anxiety	Hostility
Openness to Other Cultures	.19**	-.02	-.03	-.05	-.07
Global Mindset	.33**	.06	-.07	-.7	-.15**
Narrow Mindset	-.15**	.21*	.18**	.23**	.24**

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ .

#### 3.2. Gender Differences

The subscales (Openness to Other Cultures, Global Mindset, Narrow mindset, Self-reflection, Insight, Depression, Anxiety, and Hostility) were used as dependent variables in a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to compare the means of the male and female groups. It was determined that the multivariate result was significant. According to the univariate results, women performed significantly better on the Narrow Mindset subscale than men did, and there

was a tendency towards a significant difference between the two groups (men and women) on the Anxiety subscale, with women performing better. On the remaining subscales, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups in question (Table 2).

Table 2  
*Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) Results with Gender as the Independent Variable and Eight Subscales as Dependent Variables (N = 358)*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> ≤	$\eta^2$	Gender with higher mean
Gender					
Multivariate Analysis	2.317	8, 349	.020	.050	
Univariate Analysis					
Openness to Other Cultures	2.174	1, 356	.141	.006	
Global Mindset	.773	„	.380	.002	
Narrow Mindset	6.863	„	.009	.019	Female
Self-reflection (SRIS-SR)	.114	„	.736	.000	
Insight (SRIS-IN)	1.815	„	.179	.005	
Depression (BSI)	.378	„	.539	.001	
Anxiety (BSI)	3.781	„	.053	.011	(Female)
Hostility (BSI)	.522	„	.470	.001	

### *3.3. Analyses Based on Dichotomised APTOC Subscales*

Openness to Other Cultures, Global Mindset, and Narrow Mindset were the three subscales that were divided into two groups based on whether a respondent scored above or below the mean for the relevant variable. The SRIS and BSI subscales were used as dependent variables in three multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) to compare the means of the two groups (Above Mean and Below Mean) for self-reflection, insight, depression, anxiety, and hostility. Openness to Other Cultures (dichotomised) served as the independent variable in the first MANOVA (Table 3). The multivariate result was statistically significant. The univariate results demonstrated that the Above Mean group significantly outperformed the Below Mean group on Self-reflection, with a  $M = 19.23$  ( $SD = 4.51$ ) vs.  $M = 17.24$  ( $SD = 5.00$ ) score. There was not a significant difference between the two (Table 3).



Table 3  
*Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) Results with Openness to Other Cultures as an Independent Variable and Five Subscales as Dependent Variables (N = 358)*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> ≤	$\eta p^2$	Group with higher mean
<b>Openness to Other Cultures</b>					
Multivariate Analysis	3.559	5, 352	.004	.048	
Univariate Analysis					
Self-reflection (SRIS-SR)	15.635	1, 356	.001	.042	Above Mean group
Insight (SRIS-IN)	.213	„	.644	.001	
Depression (BSI)	2.059	„	.152	.006	
Anxiety (BSI)	1.014	„	.315	.003	
Hostility (BSI)	.585	„	.445	.002	

The same five subscales were used as dependent variables in a second multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with Global Mindset (dichotomised) as the independent variable (Table 4). The multivariate result was significant ( $p = .001$ ). According to the univariate results, the Above Mean group scored significantly higher on Self-reflection,  $M = 19.53$  ( $SD = 4.28$ ) vs.  $M = 16.86$  ( $SD = 5.07$ ), and similarly the Below Mean Group showed a significant difference on Hostility as opposed to the Above Mean Group,  $M = 4.93$  ( $SD = 4.42$ ) vs.  $M = 3.93$  ( $SD = 3.87$ ). On the remaining subscales, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups (Above Mean and Below Mean) (Table 4).

Table 4  
*Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) Results with Global Mindset as an Independent Variable and Five Scales as Dependent Variables (N=358)*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> ≤	$\eta p^2$	Group with higher mean
<b>Global Mindset</b>					
Multivariate Analysis	7.355	5, 352	.001	.095	
Univariate Analysis					
Self-reflection (SRIS-SR)	29.196	1, 366	.001	.076	Above Mean group
Insight (SRIS-IN)	1.612	„	.205	.005	
Depression (BSI)	1.300	„	.255	.004	

Anxiety (BSI)	.754	„	.386	.002	
Hostility (BSI)	5.200	„	.023	.014	Below Mean group

The same five subscales served as the dependent variables in a third multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) (Table 5). The multivariate result was statistically significant ( $p = .001$ ). According to the univariate findings, the Above Mean group significantly outperformed the other groups on Insight, Depression, Anxiety, and Hostility. On self-reflection, however, there were no notable differences between the groups (Table 5, Figure 1).

Table 5

*Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) Results with Narrow Mindset as Independent Variable and Five Scales as Dependent Variables (N=358)*

	F	df	p ≤	$\eta^2$	Group with higher mean
<b>Narrow Mindset</b>					
Multivariate Analysis	4.147	5.352	.001	.056	
<b>Univariate Analysis</b>					
Self-reflection (SRIS-SR)	1.714	1.356	.191	.005	
Insight (SRIS-IN)	9.762	„	.002	.027	Above Mean group
Depression (BSI)	6.432	„	.012	.018	Above Mean group
Anxiety (BSI)	15.452	„	.001	.042	Above Mean group
Hostility (BSI)	12.389	„	.001	.034	Above Mean group

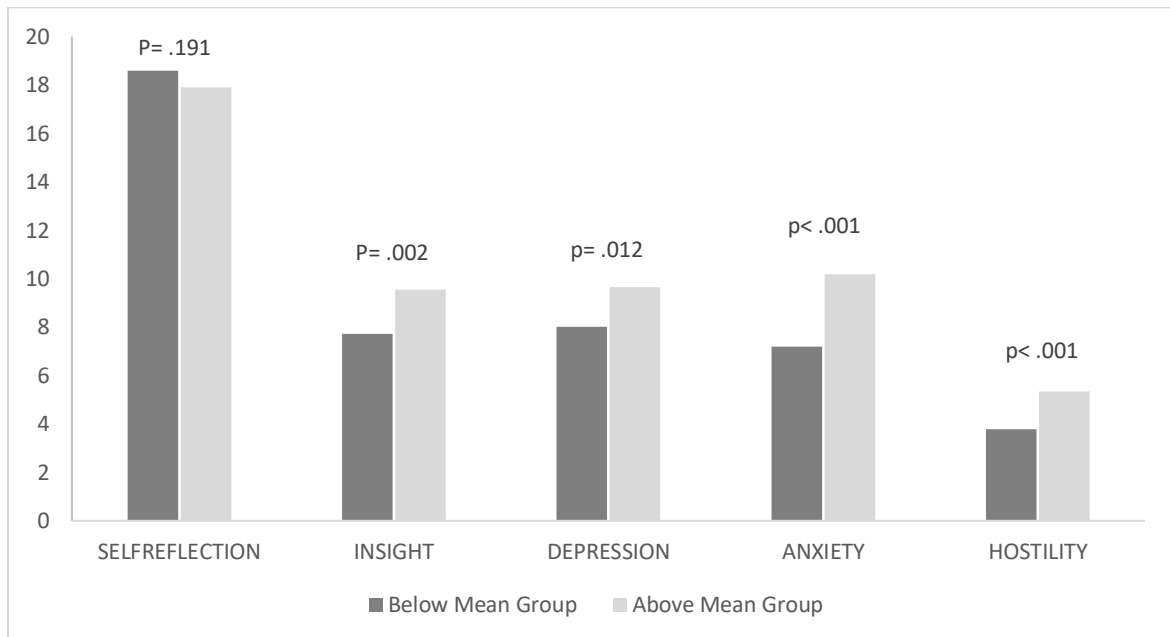


Figure 1. Mean scores of the five subscales in relation to *Narrow Mindset* for Below Mean ( $n = 220$ ) and Above Mean ( $n = 138$ ) groups ( $N = 358$ ).

### 3.4 Comparison between Data from Finland and Data from Germany

Another aim of the study is to compare the results of this study with a previous one conducted with Syrian refugees in Germany, with the same methodology (Al Khuja & Björkqvist, 2020). A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the impact of the length of time respondents had been in the host country and the differences between the German and Finnish samples, as well as between male and female participants. The findings revealed a significant difference between the two samples (Germany and Finland), with immigrants in Finland having stayed much longer,  $F_{1, 662} = 58.406$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .081$ . Also, there was also another significant difference between male and female in Finland,  $F_{1, 662} = 8.896$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .013$ , with females scoring higher than male,  $M = 7.60$  ( $SD = 6.29$ ) vs.  $M = 5.70$  ( $SD = 4.21$ ).

In addition, a two-way covariate multivariate analysis of variance (MANCOVA) was conducted with Sample (Germany and Finland) and Gender as independent variables, length of stay in the host country as a covariate, and the rest of subscales as dependent variables which are Openness to other Culture, Global Mindset, Narrow Mindset, Self-reflection, Insight, Depression, Anxiety and Hostility. The multivariate analysis revealed a significant effect. According to the univariate results, respondents from Finland scored significantly higher on Openness to Other Cultures and Anxiety, with a tendency ( $p < 0.10$ ) towards higher scores on Narrow Mindset and Depression (Table 6).

Table 6  
*Results of a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Length of Stay in the Host Country as a Covariate, Country (Finland and Germany) and Gender as Independent Variables, and eight Scales as Dependent Variables (Finland n=358, Germany n=308, N=666)*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> ≤	$\eta^2$	Sample (Germany vs. Finland)
Length of Stay in the Host Country					
Multivariate Analysis	1.969	8,654	.048	.024	
Univariate Analysis					
Openness to Other Cultures	4.010	1,661	.046	.006	Finland's sample
Global Mindset	1.876	„	.171	.003	
Narrow Mindset	3.126	„	.078	.005	(Finland's sample)
Self-reflection (SRIS-SR)	.725	„	.386	.001	
Insight (SRIS-IN)	2.126	„	.145	.003	
Depression (BSI)	2.748	„	.098	.004	(Finland's sample)
Anxiety (BSI)	4.025	„	.045	.006	Finland's sample
Hostility (BSI)	.621	„	.431	.001	

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4.1. Summary of Findings

The intercultural competence subscales (Openness to Other Cultures, Global Mindset, and Narrow Mindset) and the measures of personal self-awareness (Self-reflection and Insight) and wellbeing (Depression, Anxiety, and Hostility) showed significant correlations. It was found that Self-reflection was positively correlated with Openness to Other Cultures, while Self-reflection and Hostility were negatively correlated with Global Mindset. Narrow Mindset, on the other hand, was found to be positively correlated with insight, depression, anxiety, and hostility and negatively correlated with self-reflection.

It is worth noting that Openness to Other Cultures and Global Mindset did not show significant correlations with Insight, Depression, Anxiety, and Hostility. However, this may be due to limitations of the study, and further research is needed to corroborate these findings.

Additionally, gender differences were also observed in the study, with females scoring significantly higher on Narrow Mindset, and an inclination towards a significant difference between the sexes (males and females) on Anxiety. On the remaining subscales, there were no appreciable differences between males and females.

Furthermore, when three intercultural competence subscales were divided into two groups (those scoring above vs. below the mean), it was discovered that respondents in the Above Mean groups of Openness to Other Cultures and Global Mindset scored significantly higher on Self-reflection, while those in the Above Mean group of Narrow Mindset scored significantly higher on Insight, Depression, Anxiety, and Hostility.

When the data was analysed, additional noteworthy findings were made. First, there were no statistically significant correlations between the subscales in question and the length of stay in Finland. Second, the question "Do you consider yourself to be a religious person" had a positive correlation with Narrow Mindset and a negative correlation with Openness to Other Cultures and Global Mindset. Third and last, there was not a significant difference found between level of education and the subscales concerned.

Finally, the study compared the results of a previous study conducted with Syrian refugees in Germany with the same methodology (Al Khuja & Björkqvist, 2020). The results revealed a significant difference between the two samples, with immigrants in Finland having stayed much longer, and between male and female participants in Finland, where females scored higher. Moreover, respondents living in Finland scored higher on Openness to Other Cultures and Anxiety, which could mean that people who stayed longer in the host country are more open to other cultures and anxious due to, perhaps, homesickness.

These results collectively imply that intercultural competence, particularly Openness to Other Cultures and Global Mindset, may positively affect the private self-awareness and wellbeing of Arabic-speaking immigrants in Finland. However, Narrow-mindedness may have a negative impact on these factors. Also, regarding comparing the results of this study with the previous conducted in Germany, there were significant differences in the length of stay in the host country (Germany and Finland), with immigrants in Finland having stayed much longer, and a significant effect on Openness to Other Culture and Anxiety amongst the respondents from Finland compared to those in Germany. These findings may have implications for the development of interventions and programmes aimed at promoting intercultural competence and well-being among this population.

#### *4.2. Limitations of the Study*

The current study's limitations have to be taken into account when interpreting the results. One drawback of the study's cross-sectional design is that it makes it difficult to demonstrate that the variables are causally related. Additionally, only a particular subset of Arabic-speaking immigrants who reside in Finland made up the sample, limiting the generalisability of the results to other immigrant groups or nations. Additionally, the study's self-reported measures could have response bias.

Future research should include a longitudinal study to look at the development of intercultural competence and well-being over time, as well as the causal relationships between the variables. Additionally, future studies should explore the specific factors that contribute to the development of Global Mindset and Narrow Mindset among Arabic-speaking immigrants in Finland. Finally, it would also be crucial to thoroughly explore the correlation between intercultural competence and well-being. Future research, for instance, could look at whether

programs aimed at enhancing intercultural competence also have a positive impact on mental health outcomes like decreased anxiety, depression, and aggression.

In conclusion, the findings of this study contribute to our understanding of the relationship between intercultural competence, self-awareness, and well-being among Arabic-speaking immigrants in Finland. These results have important implications for policy and practice in the fields of immigration and integration, as well as for future research in this area.

#### 4.3. Funding

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## 5. References

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