



# Conceptual Review on Cultural Intelligence

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## Abstract

In a highly globalized business environment of organization, doing business which is profitable involves crossing the boundaries which is cross cultural business and extending the business internationally become an important element for all types of organization. It can range from small scale business to large organization. This leads to a broad array of global leaders and individuals to find better jobs in abroad. This global leaders formed by globalized business milieu should have the expertise, capability and knowledge to cope with the people of diverse environment. Although there is lot of opportunities created by the globalization, equally there are challenges exposing organizational level as well as at individual level. The challenges were cultural diversity and people from different cultures are likely to behave and interact optimally in a heterogeneous cultural scenario. Some individuals function better compared to others which leads to a question “why some persons perform more efficiently compared to others in a different cultural background.” This leads to the concept of cultural intelligence developed by Earley & Ang (2003). This paper mainly reviews the concept of cultural intelligence by providing an insight on the definition and dimension of cultural intelligence. Also it examines and provides an overview of the factor affecting, potential outcomes of cultural intelligence and scale used for measuring the cultural intelligence. Through review of literature, it facilitates the body of insights especially in the area of cross cultural research both in academic level and managerial level. Also it encourage the individual and global leaders to perform effectively in cross cultural circumstances

## Keywords

Cultural intelligence, Diverse work environment

## 1. Introduction

The movement of professionals across borders has become a common phenomenon in today's globalized world. Until the 1980s, migration was from developed countries to developing countries, but the 21st century saw a reverse trend. Towards late 90s and early 2000s, individuals started moving out of developing countries, for international work assignments allotted by the organization, establishing business, future studies and also to find better jobs.

International assignment remains an important aspect of Multinational Corporation's global strategy. To be successful in setting up a business in a foreign country and further developing it, there requires a need of both local employees and expatriates. The professional acumen of local employees is quite essential in the initial phase of international assignments whereas expatriate service is important in the later stage. The term expatriates refers to those individuals who move out of their home country to a host country for various reasons such as professional needs, better education and for performing international assignments.

Over the years many research studies have come up discussing the diverse factors affecting the adaptation, performance and cross cultural adjustment of the expatriates. One of the major factors found to be affecting the above mentioned problems is the cultural differences between the home and host countries of the expatriates. The performance and the adaptability of the expatriates become quite low due to their poor attention to the new social norms and standards of their host country. The existing studies on this issue suggest that, expatriates should behaviorally adapt to the core aspects of local culture (Morgeson & Campion, 2007). To adopt appropriate behavior and to gain more knowledge about the local culture of host country, cultural intelligence becomes quite important. This study attempts to understand the various aspects of cultural dimensions with special emphasis on the relationship between cultural intelligence, performance and adjustment of expatriates in three different cultural backgrounds.

## 2. Objective of the paper

The objective of the paper is to analyze the concept of cultural intelligence and extend the prevailing knowledge through a systematic review. The systematic review briefly explains the definition of cultural intelligence, dimension and scales of cultural intelligence. Also the paper addresses some of the actors and outcomes of cultural intelligence.

### 3. Review of literature

This paper is particularly organized under the following themes: presenting the theoretical definition of the concept on cultural intelligence, explaining the dimension of the cultural intelligence and factors affecting it, discussing the outcomes of the cultural intelligence.

#### 3.1 Definition of Cultural Intelligence

The term cultural intelligence was first proposed by Early and Ang (2003) in their work: 'Cultural Intelligence: Individual Intelligence across Cultures'. According to them CQ 'is an individual's capacity to adapt effectively to situations of cultural diversity'. Later on many a definitions have come up on CQ, which essentially explained the concept of cultural intelligence along the same line (Peterson, 2004; Brislin, Wortheley and Macnab, 2006; Lee & Sukoo, 2010).

The earlier definitions of the concept of cultural intelligence were predominantly concise with not much reference to the dimensions of CQ. To this end, the first definition of CQ that incorporated these dimension was given by Thomas and Inkson (2005). They defined CQ as a 'multifaceted competency consisting of cultural knowledge, the practice of mindfulness, and the repertoire of behavioral skills. The definitions of CQ soon started to incorporate the dimensions of CQ.

In essence, cultural intelligence can be expressed as an individual's as well as an organization's aptitude to adapt to all types and levels of culture and culturally diverse setting which is through cultural appropriate demonstrated behavior.

#### 3.2. Dimension of Cultural intelligence

As formulated by Earley and Ang (2003) leads to multidimensional construct of cultural intelligence includes four dimension: Metacognitive CQ; Cognitive CQ; Motivational CQ; and Behavioral CQ (Earley & Ang, 2003; Van & Ang, 2008) which is used in most of the research studies conducted upon cultural intelligence.

Metacognitive component is defined as the individual's mental capability to understand and gain cultural knowledge (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Tay, & Chandrashekar, 2007; Earley, Ang, & Tan, 2006). It consists of cognitive strategies that used to acquire and generate coping strategies. Cognitive component refers to individuals overall information and structure of their cultural information regarding the standards, practices and belief about various cultures (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Tay, & Chandrashekar, 2007; Ng & Earley, 2006). Motivational CQ is defined as an individual's intention and desire to adapt to an unfamiliar cultural environment (Frias-Jamilena, Sabiote-Ortiz, Martin-Santana, & Beerli-Palacio, 2017). Behavioral component of CQ is a behavior or action which is defined as the person's ability to exhibit the appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors when interacting with others from a different cultural background (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Tay, & Chandrashekar, 2007).

### 3.3. Scale of Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence scale is widely used in most research a study is a 20 item scale developed by Ang et.al (2007) using a seven point scale. The questionnaire include six items for cognitive aspects of CQ, four items for metacognitive aspects, five items for motivational aspects and five items for behavioral aspects.

Short form measure of cultural intelligence (SFCQ) is another scale used for measuring CQ developed by David C Thomas et.al (2014). The 10 items includes 2 items for measuring the knowledge factor, five items for skill measurement and three item for measuring metacognition factor.

Business cultural intelligence quotient (BCIQ-38) is developed by Allon et.al (2016) is also questionnaire measures cultural intelligence in the context of business scenario. It is a five point likert scale which included 40 self-reported items for evaluating the incidence of behavior, ideas and action that signify the CQ factors. The objective items which are knowledge check consist of 20 items true or false questions.

### 3.4. Antecedents of Cultural Intelligence

#### 3.4.1. Personality

Personality is an important casual factor of cultural intelligence where recent researchers discuss it in the light of the big five personality factors. Based on these factors, researchers could anticipate the behavior of an individual in their work environment in both foreign and domestic assignments. A study upon business undergraduates at a public university in Singapore found a positive relation between conscientiousness and metacognitive CQ, agreeableness and behavioral CQ, extraversion and motivational and behavioral CQ (Ang, Dyne, & Koh, 2006). Extraversion is found to be positively related to all dimension of cultural intelligence (Bernardo & Presbitero, 2018). Remarkably, openness to experience was positively related to four factors of CQ that is cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioral CQ (Bernardo & Presbitero, 2018; Ang, Dyne, & Koh, 2006; Presbitero, 2016). Both extraversion and openness to experience enable the individual to be more social and broadminded while interacting in various cross cultural scenario. Organization citizenship behavior is found to be positively related to CQ. (Ang, Dyne, & Koh, 2006) Amongst the personality factors Altruism, courtesy and civic virtues have a positive influence on CQ and conscientiousness and sportsmanship has negative relationship with CQ Popescu et.al (2017) .Emotional stability is negatively related to Behavioral CQ (Ang, Dyne, & Koh, 2006).

Social cognitive theory defines self-efficacy as the aptitude for a worker to experience confidence in their skills to adjust to the verbal and non-verbal circumstances of distinct cultures (Day, 2017). Self-efficacy acts a major role in CQ because successful intercultural relations are formed through individual sense of efficacy. Individual gain a sense of efficacy by exposing themselves to new and unique cultural settings (Earley & Peterson, 2004) and hence holds strong problem solving skills and use strategic methods to overcome the



hindrance (Locke & Latham, 1990). Expatriates with high self-efficacy are expected to own a strong locus of control, apply constant efforts, make essential alterations to their mental representations and thereby improve their level of Meta -cognitive cultural intelligence (Brislin, Worthely, & Macnab, 2006; Triandis, 2006). Individuals with high efficacy are high in motivational aspects of CQ in terms intercultural communication. They set particular and challenging goals to master culturally awkward situation (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Self-efficacy is positively related to Meta cognitive participant learning CQ, behavioral learning CQ and motivation learning CQ. Cultural intelligence learning is defined as an attempt and interferences intended to advance the intercultural competences of individuals or groups permitting for more active communication in various cultural settings (MacNab & Worthley, 2012). Appropriate selection of individuals for variety of cross cultural job role, improving self-efficacy to adjust and intrinsic motivation are some of the ways to achieve motivational CQ expertise. However, the overuse of extrinsic rewards reduces the performance of the expatriates. Pre cultural training leads to build self-efficacy which helps an individual to learn how to adjust to a new cultural environment (Day, 2017).

### **3.4.2. International experience**

Past studies on cultural intelligence have primarily concentrated on the concept of international experience based on three classes: previous experience, present experience and future experience (Gudykunst, Ting-Tomney, & Chua, 1988). The frequency of visit by individuals to foreign countries had a positive significant relationship with CQ. This enables them to integrate with the new cultural standards which influence their future conduct and attitude (Frias-Jamilena, Sabiote-Ortiz, Martin-Santana, & Beerli-Palacio, 2017). The more number of international experience is positively related to some of the components of CQ such as cognitive (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), motivational and behavioral dimension (Tay, Westerman, & Chia, 2008).

### **3.4.3. Cultural exposure**

Cultural exposure a modified concept in international experience could be defined as the experiences related to a region that aid in developing a familiarity or understanding the norms, values and beliefs of that region (Crowne, 2008). Individuals who stay longer in another country can learn fairly difficult cultures through several signs by noticing others and their response (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Crown (2008) found that there is a positive significant relationship with breadth of exposure, depth of exposure and with cultural intelligence. Contrary to above findings, Moon, Choi & Jung (2012) found that expatriates with various international experience can have cognitive CQ but they may not possess motivational CQ and behavior CQ. Varela & Gatlin-Watts (2014) also concluded that international cultural exposure is not the sufficient factor for enhancing motivational and behavioral aspect of CQ, but for achieving these facets pre cultural training is required.

### 3.5. Outcome of Cultural Intelligence

#### 3.5.1. Performance

The main aim of sending expatriate to a host country for international assignment is to perform as expected by the organization. Campbell (1990) defined performance as a set of behavior that are necessary to achieve organization's goal. Performance is categorized into task performance and contextual performance. Presbitero (2016) showed a significant positive relation between dimension of CQ that is cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioral component with task performance, using midyear evaluation of the respondents from the supervisors in the context of virtual background. Ang et.al (2007) also found a relation between elements of CQ with task performance. Cognitive CQ and Motivational CQ influence the task performance of the expatriates. Cognitive CQ encompasses the problem solving skills and decision making skills of an individual and thereby contributes to their performance. Motivational CQ also influence performance since motivational CQ consist of self-efficacy and intrinsically motivate to perform better (Kim, Kirkman, & Chen, 2006) Contrary to above research findings, Rose et. al (2010) found that none of the dimension of CQ had a correlation with task performance .

In the case of contextual performance, studies find positive relation between expatriate interaction, cultural intelligence and contextual performance. This leads to the understanding that being culturally intelligent enables the expatriate to interact with coworkers which helps to develop good relation with them. (Malek & Budhwar, 2013). Supporting the above research findings, Rose et. al (2010) found a significant positive correlations exist between meta cognitive CQ, behavioral CQ and motivational CQ with contextual and assignment specific performance.

#### 3.5.2. Cultural Adjustment

There has been a proliferation of literature on Expatriate Cross Cultural Adjustments (CCA) since 1970. Cross cultural adjustment is understood as a psychological outcome associated with adaptation. It is defined as the degree to which an individual feel comfortable in the new setting and feels of adjusted to the new job requirements (Black, 1988). Black's model divided the concept of cross cultural adjustment into three dimensions: general adjustment, interaction adjustment and work adjustment.

Malek & Budhwar (2013) analyzed the relation between cultural intelligence and expatriate adjustment where the study concluded that there is a positive relationships between expatriate awareness cultural intelligence and all facets of cultural adjustments. Ang et. al. (2007) found that motivational and behavioral dimension of CQ is positively related to two dimension of cultural adaptation that is cultural adjustment and wellbeing. It supports the argument that motivational dimension of CQ had the capacity to channel energy in the stressful cultural condition and behavioral dimension of CQ had the ability of flexibility to cope with the culturally

diverse situation. Templer et.al (2006) predicted the relationship between motivational CQ and socio cultural adjustments i.e. work adjustment, general living adjustment and host country national adjustment.

Individual who possess high cultural intelligence will be better adjusted to new work environment and non-work environment because highly culturally intelligent people can easily acquire the knowledge on the customs of a new environment. But there is a negative relation exists between expatriate interaction cultural intelligence and expatriate work adjustment Malek & Budhwar (2013).

### **3.5.3. Leadership**

According to the Yukl (2006) leadership is defined as “the practice of influencing other individuals to recognize about the needs to be fulfilled and method of accomplishing the particular needs, by enabling the individual to accomplish the goals”. The study of Eksen, Ozturgut, Craven (2014) focused on the relationship between leadership style and cultural intelligence. The leadership styles used was Authoritarian, democratic and laissez faire. The study found that only democratic leadership have a strong relationship with and cultural intelligence and none of the other leadership styles shows any relationship with cultural intelligence. The another study which focus on another leadership such as empowering and directive leadership styles concludes that there is a strong relationship with cultural intelligence and directive leadership when there is a comparison with empowering leadership (Solomon, Steyn,2017) The study by Aldhaheri(2017) concluded that cultural intelligence impact the leadership style where the study focus on transformational leadership style in various work settings. By conducting a pilot among the schools leaders cultural intelligence shows relationship with transformational leadership style of school leaders. Another study with international school leaders found a positive relationship with cultural intelligence and transformational leadership style and the study concluded cognitive cultural intelligence and behavioral cultural intelligence are the predictive factors of transformational leadership( Keung and Rockinson- Szapkiw,2012).

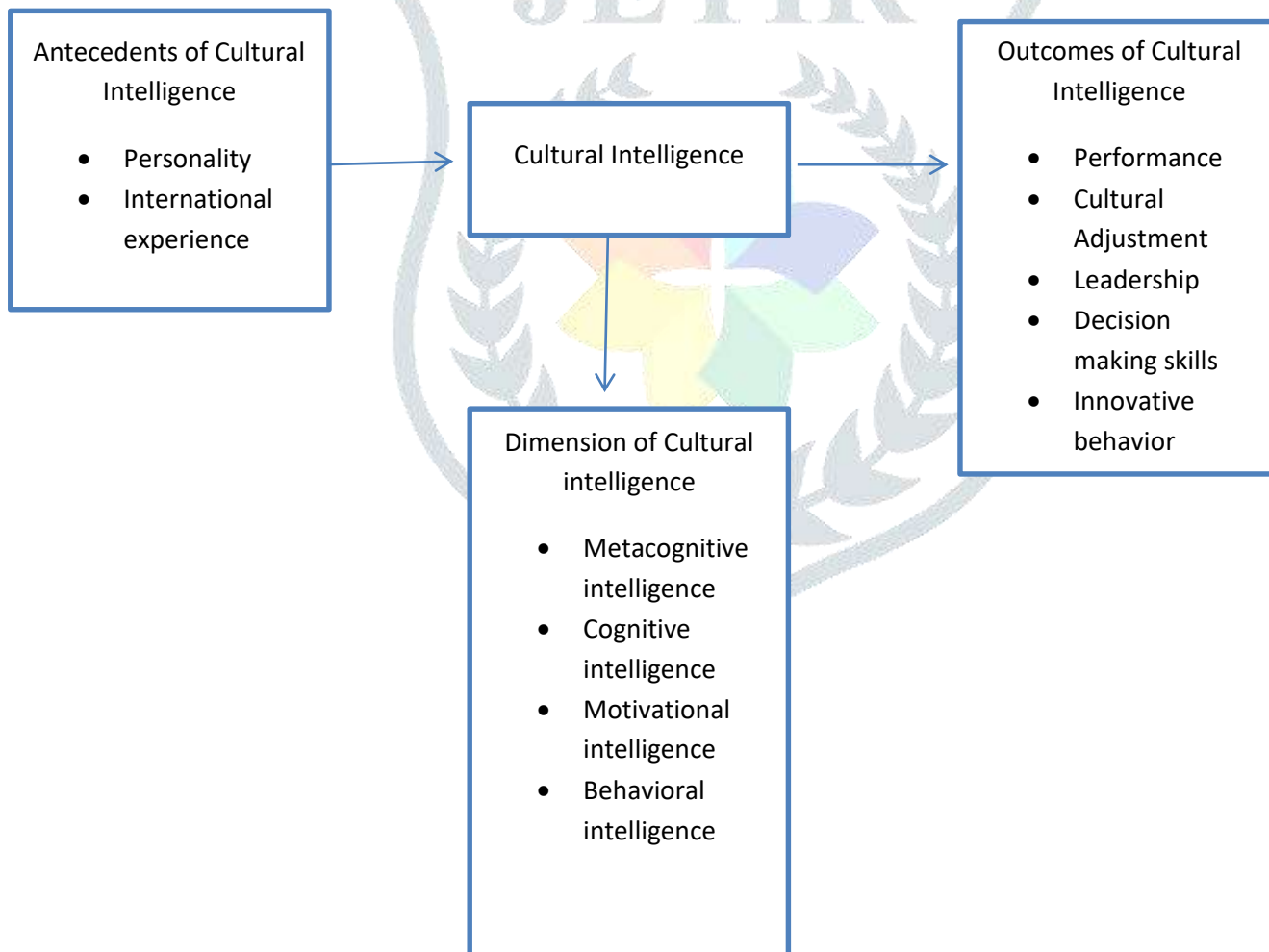
### **3.5.4. Decision making skills**

Judgment and Decision making is defined as the choice of selecting a particular action considering the possible consequence in the future (Strache & Brand,2016 cited in Rockstuhl & van dyne, 2018). In study of Triandis (2006), explained that cultural intelligent individual possess a capability to understand and gather all the information of the current situation appropriate for making a judgment and after collecting all the relevant information they combine it for making final judgment. While examining on international managers and also in the sample of graduates from United States and Singapore, Ang et.al (2007) found a positive relation between metacognitive and cognitive CQ with intercultural judgment and decision making

### 3.5.5. Innovative Behavior

Innovation is modified with behavior and develops into another concept called innovative work behavior which is defined as “the intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization in order to benefit the role performance, the group or the organization” (Janssen, 2000). Korzilius et. al (2017) studied the relationship between cultural intelligence and innovative work behavior for multicultural individuals .It explained the role of CQ as a multidimensional mediator where CQ signify various cross cultural competence and process. Expatriates with high metacognitive and cognitive CQ finds new opportunities for innovative products and employees with high cross cultural competence have the ability to create appropriate innovation by convincing others to identify others and to meet the demands of international market (Lorenz, Ramsey, & Richey Jr, 2018)

## 4. Conceptual Framework





## 5. Methodology

The present study focused on description of the term cultural intelligence through reviewing the articles systematically based on secondary data. The approach of systematic review used in the particular paper started with the methodical exploration in the electronic database such as EBSCO Business Source Complete, Proquest Dissertation, JSTOR and Google scholar Database. The Keyword used for the search is Cultural Intelligence. Also the paper also searched the reference of the articles initially founded to get the additional Cultural intelligence paper.

## 6. Conclusion

In this age of intercultural interaction, the concept of CQ getting more attention since there is an increase in the number of people are moving from one country to another for international assignment and many other factors. This paper combines various international studies in different sectors of organization to get a better conceptual knowledge about the concept of cultural intelligence. Most of the existing research concentrate on personality factors and self-efficacy are factors affecting cultural intelligence and performance, innovation and adjustment as the outcome of the cultural intelligence. The particular concept is giving more opportunity for the researcher to test the concept with various factors. Also it is providing opportunity to researchers to examine the concept in various cultures and to find out how it varies across cultures.

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