

Cultural intelligence among working professionals: Role of age and work experience

Bhawana Bhardwaj¹

Abstract: *Cultural intelligence (CQ) is a relatively new concept that has recently hit the mainstream world Managerial competence and leadership effectiveness to a greater extent is dependent on how the person is able to understand the cultural expectations of his subordinates. Cultural Intelligence is a person's capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity. The present studies have been conducted among a diverse respondent belonging to various profession. The result shows that age and work experience play a role in influencing the Cultural intelligence of respondents.*

Introduction

International expansion of business is significant in the age of globalization (Dutta and Dutta, 2015). However, intercultural element increases the complication of international projects (Crowne, 2008; Robert & Crowne, 2014; Mark & Ettner, 2013). To mitigate the complications of diverse culture in a business an effective communication is required. Within a culture, effective communication is facilitated by shared values. Different cultures have different values set making this communication a challenging assignment. Cultural intelligence has betrothed attention of different researchers especially due to expansion of business at global level. When talking in the global context, organizations are faced with cultural diversity. Cultural diversity at workplace has both positive and negative impacts. Substantiation is varied, depending in part on what kinds of differences constitute the "diversity" in question (Milliken and Martins, 1996, Robin & Thomas, 2001). Cultural intelligence (CQ) can be one of the tools that can cushion and mitigate the negative impacts of cultural diversity (Moon, 2013). Cultural intelligence also smoothen the progress of expatriate performance and success. Current situation in business houses urges importance of cultural intelligence which can further facilitates effective adaptation to new cultural environment.

Recent research pertaining to CQ indicates that CQ is positively and significantly related to all forms of adjustment (Ang, Van Dyne and Koh 2006). Moreover, CQ facilitates cultural judgment and decision-making, well-being and task performance. CQ also alleviates emotional exhaustion and burnout. Cultural intelligence can play a substantial role in the performance of multicultural teams (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). The ability to strategize, persist and perform contributes to the stamina necessary to complete international assignments. It also helps in cross cultural adaptation (Robert & Crowne, 2014). An amalgamation of these findings suggests that CQ influences the outcomes necessary for successful international assignments in which various factors of CQ positively impact adjustment and performance.

¹ Assistant Professor, HPUBS, Himachal Pradesh University.

Corresponding author: Bhawana Bhardwaj can be contacted at: bhawnabhardwaj113@gmail.com
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Literature Review

Culture

Culture is collective programming of the human mind due to which they become different from each other. Spradley and McCurdy (2000) describe it as “the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret their world and generate social behavior”. Culture can be compared with an onion, where the outer layers represent explicit products, the middle layer the values and norms, and the core the assumptions about existence, while Fang (2005) equated it to an ocean, in that the ocean has no boundaries, and its various waters are both separate and shared, both different and today, business is operated at an increasingly global level. The global economy has created a more complex and dynamic environment in which firms must compete effectively to achieve sustainable growth (Caligiuri, 1997). The growing importance of the internet, cross-border trade agreements, and the ease of international travel are both enablers and reflections of the increasing globalization and its resulting complexity and dynamism (Friedman, 2005). Further when we discuss about the culture in other country context, i.e. cross-cultural issues, cultural intelligence or CQ comes in to the picture, which is product of interaction of cultural, social, and individual dynamics that occurs in cross-cultural settings.

Cultural Intelligence

Intelligence has always been explored as a factor and indicator of managerial competence and leadership effectiveness but cultural intelligence is a relatively new theoretical concept that has recently hit the mainstream world. Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to ability of an individual to perform well and efficiently in culturally diverse setting. It essentially includes ability to acquire and use cultural knowledge. Cultural intelligence capability ability to grasp and reason correctly to solve problems. While according to (Earley and Ang, 2003), it is defined as “a multidimensional construct that encompasses an individual’s capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings”. Cultural intelligence constitutes four major components namely metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral (Earley and Ang, 2003). When a person tries to understand and attain cultural knowledge he uses metacognitive component. Cognitive cultural intelligence is individual’s knowledge about cultures and its similarity and differences with own culture (Ang et al., 2007) while the motivational cultural intelligence refers to the application of the magnitude and direction of energy for learning about and functioning in cross-cultural situations.

Knowledge and sensitivity about culture, diversity, and cross-cultural has become a powerful and necessary tool. Identifying the need and significance of culturally intelligent employees is becoming crucial. Businesses prefer those employees who are culturally sensitive. As a result, there is a progressively rising need for companies to give careful consideration to select and develop employees who have the cultural intelligence to effectively function in globalized and multicultural world of businessman. Individual’s cultural intelligence is a capability that can grow up and develop over time depending on several factors and can be enhanced in many ways. A person’s interactions with other cultures, their effort and interest in learning about new cultures, as well as through international experiences can play a vital role in developing their cultural intelligence. It has been identified that cultural intelligence has an impact on cross-cultural adaptation (Ward & Fischer, 2008), task performance (Ang et al., 2007), trust within teams (Rockstuhl & Ng, 2008), group performance (Huber & Lewis, 2010), expatriate performance (Lee & Sukoco, 2010), and global leadership skills (Ng, Van Dyne & Ang,

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2009). Comprised of a set of capabilities and skills, CQ helps one to interpret unfamiliar behaviors or cultural situations as if one was a member of that culture (Van Dyne, Ang, & Livermore, 2010). Individuals with a high level of CQ demonstrate a pronounced interest in unfamiliar and new cultures. They also possess the necessary skills to adapt to changes within intercultural settings .CQ improves the ability to deal with confusion in the interaction with others from different cultures (Brislin, Worth ley, &Macnab, 2006). Individuals reduce their uncertainty by imitating and learning behaviors that are appropriate in the new culture.

Enhancing one's cultural intelligence is decisive for people who interact with co-workers, managers, trade partners, clients, etc. with multicultural background. It is also important for increasing organizational effectiveness in multicultural teams at home. From the above literature few points have been noted-

1. Various studies have been conducted to identify the predictors of cultural intelligence.
2. Previous studies have mostly focused on the factors leading to cultural intelligence.
3. No specific study has been conducted to know the role of age and work experience on cultural intelligence of working professionals.
4. There is dearth of such studies in Indian context.
5. Keeping in view the above mentioned gaps the present study have been conducted with following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess Cultural Intelligence of professionals working in various organizations.
2. To analyze the role of age in Cultural intelligence.
3. To analyze the role of work experience in Cultural intelligence.

Methodology

Drawing upon Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) multi-loci theory of intelligence, Ang and Van Dyne (2008) conceptualized CQ as a four-factor construct that includes metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions. A questionnaire was framed to assess the Cultural Intelligence of the respondents based on these variables. The sample for this study comprised individuals working in different industries. The questionnaires were floated on social media and through email to prospective respondents. 180 respondents reverted by filling up the questionnaires however 120 were found complete and were considered for the study. The sample included professionals employed in managerial positions in various industries like banking sector, education, insurance, telecom etc. a Likert type scale ranging with five-points from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) to is used indicate the extent to which each item describes their capabilities in respective statements. As mentioned in Table 1 Cronbach's alpha for cultural intelligence scale is 0.650.

Table 1: Reliability of Responses

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.650	.665	20

Results and Analysis

The responses of the respondents were coded and tabulated to analyze the impact of age and work experience on cultural intelligence. Table 2 depicts the responses with regard to cultural intelligence variables.

Table 2: Cultural intelligence of Respondents

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Interacting with people from diverse culture.	120	4.5000	.62436	.390
Confidence of socializing with locals in a culture that is strange to me.	120	4.2000	.79830	.637
Dealing with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is novel.	120	3.9667	.88234	.779
Living in cultures that are new.	120	3.6000	.92425	.854
Getting accustomed to the shopping conditions in a diverse culture.	120	3.8000	.95314	.908
Knowledge about the legal and economic systems of other culture.	120	2.7667	.85105	.724
Knowledge about legal and economic systems of other culture.	120	2.7667	.85105	.724
Knowledge about the rules of different languages.	120	2.8333	1.32980	1.768
Knowledge about the cultural values and religious philosophy of other cultures	120	3.1000	1.05284	1.108
Knowledge about the marriage system of other's cultures.	120	2.9000	1.02014	1.041
Knowledge about the arts and crafts of other's culture.	120	2.6333	.80183	.643
Knowledge about the rules for expressing non verbal behaviours in other's cultures.	120	2.8000	.79830	.637
Being conscious of the cultural knowledge while interaction with people with diverse cultural backgrounds.	120	3.6333	.88234	.779
Checking the correctness of cultural knowledge while interacting with people from different backgrounds.	120	3.7000	.78762	.620
Changing verbal behaviour as per cross cultural interaction requirement.	120	3.3000	1.01347	1.027
Changing the rate of my communication if a cross cultural situation requires it.	120	3.5167	.83345	.695
Changing nonverbal behaviour when a cross cultural situation demands it.	120	3.5833	.82937	.688
Changing facial expressions when a cross cultural situation demands it.	120	3.0667	1.10264	1.216
Mean score	60	3.4059	.35980	.129

From the table 2 it can be inferred that most of the respondents agree to enjoy interacting with people from different culture. Respondents strongly agree that they can easily socialize with locals in culture that is unfamiliar. Only few respondents agree that they can deal with the stress of adjusting to an unfamiliar culture and they enjoy in living in unfamiliar culture. Most of the respondents are confident that they can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture. Respondents were average on their legal and economic knowledge, the rules of other languages, cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures. Most of respondents say that they do not know the arts and crafts of other cultures. Respondents may or may not know the rules for expressing nonverbal behaviors in other countries. Most of the respondents are conscious of the cultural knowledge while interacting with people from different cultural

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background; they check the accuracy of their cultural knowledge. Respondents may or may not change their verbal behaviour, vary the rate of their speaking and alter their nonverbal behaviour and facial interaction when cross cultural interaction take place. Thus the population selected for the study has mixed response for various parameters of cultural intelligence. However, looking at the overall response the cultural intelligence is above average for all the respondents.

Role of age in influencing cultural intelligence (ANOVA)

Table 3: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.939	2	117	.117

Table 4: ANOVA (Age and Cultural Intelligence)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.258	2	.314	2.711	.039
Within Groups	6.380	117	.116		
Total	7.638	119			

It can be observed in table no. 3 that $p > .05$. So we can consider the ANOVA for interpretation. Now from the table no. 2, p value is 0.039 (< 0.05). This means that there is significant difference between the responses of age groups. In other words it can be inferred that age plays a role in influencing Cultural Intelligence.

Role of years of services influencing cultural intelligence

Table 4: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.331	2	117	.067

Table 5: ANOVA for Year of Services and Cultural intelligence

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.184	2	.546	5.505	.001
Within Groups	5.454	117	.099		
Total	7.638	119			

From table 4 it can be observed that $p > .05$. So we can consider the ANOVA statistics for interpretation. From Table 5 it is evident that p value is 0.001 (< 0.05). This means that there is significant difference between the responses on the basis of years of service. Therefore, cultural intelligence varies with years of services.

Conclusion and Discussion

The present study has been conducted for a diverse population of professionals working in various industries. The study is based on assessment of cultural intelligence of the respondents and role of Age and Experience (Number of Years of Service). The Findings demonstrate that the population selected for the study has mixed response for various parameters of cultural

intelligence. However, looking at the overall response the cultural intelligence is above average for all the respondents. The study is also intended to identify a role of age and work experience in cultural intelligence. It is been found that age and work experience play a role in influencing cultural intelligence. This study can be practically helpful to the organizations while appointing and promoting people for higher level. Age and experience of the incumbent can be criteria for selection of an employee for culturally diverse organization.

Limitations of the Study

There are few limitations of the present study-

- The sample is limited to 120 however increasing the size could bring accuracy to the result
- The study is based on quantitative method only. Use of qualitative data can bring some new insights

Direction for Future Research

With increased diversity at workplace and globalization, the effective management of human resources demands competence to understand and manage cultural diverse workforce. Cultural intelligence can improve managerial effectiveness in dynamic business environment. The present study has been conducted to understand role of age and work experience in Cultural intelligence. However, future studies can be taken up to understand role of other demographic variables on cultural intelligence. The studies specific to one industry and sector can also be conducted to understand how diversity is being affected by various variables in that particular industry.

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