

Assessing the Impact of Cultural Intelligence on Job Performance: Role of Cross-Cultural Adaptability

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Abstract

Globalisation has made business a challenging proposition. Further, it has led to multicultural organisations where, people belonging to different cultures work under one roof. To manage diverse workforce, organisations need a new generation of managers, who are culturally sensitive. In this context, cultural intelligence is a tool, which increases the manager's ability to effectively interact with people belonging to other cultures. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the impact of cultural intelligence on job performance and explore the role played by cross-cultural adaptability. The data for the study have been collected from 342 managers of Nationalised banks in JandK (India). Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis have been conducted to explore and validate the factors of different constructs. Hypotheses have been tested through structural equation modeling. The study reveals that cultural intelligence significantly affects job performance and cross-cultural adaptability mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and job performance. Implications and limitations of the study have also been discussed.

Keywords: *Cultural Intelligence, Cross Cultural Adaptability, Job Performance and Indian Culture.*

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has made the business a challenging proposition. The global workplaces require managers, who are sensitive to different cultures as they have to interact with people from different cultures and analyse new cultures. New global skills are must for an effective leader. Cultural intelligence (CQ) is a tool, which increases an individual's ability to interact with people outside their culture. It refers to the set of skills and traits that allow one to effectively interact with novel cultural settings (MacNab, Brislin and Worthley, 2012). Culturally intelligent managers can detect, assimilate reason

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and act on cultural cues appropriately in situations characterised by cultural diversity. The poor CQ leads to stereotyping, unnecessary conflicts, delays and unhealthy relationships. Organisations are expressing the need for managers, “who quickly adjust to multiple cultures and work well in multinational teams” (Early and Peterson, 2004,p.100). CQ is a new and growing concept with limited research on this. So, the purpose of the study is to generalise the concept of CQ in Indian context (Tsang and Kwan, 1999) due to its diverse cultures. Further, we will also evaluate its effect on job performance as well as the role played by cross-cultural adaptability (CCA) in between CQ and job performance (JP) relationship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Earley and Ang (2003) introduced the concept of CQ. It refers to an individual's capability to function effectively in situations characterised by cultural diversity (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). Those with higher CQ have the ability to encounter confusing situations, think deeply about what is happening (or not happening) and make appropriate adjustments to how they understand, relate and lead in the context of these different cultures. It is adaptable state that can be developed over time. Ang *et al.*, (2007, p. 337) states that CQ is multidimensional concept comprising of: Metacognitive CQ refers to planning strategy before cross-cultural interactions and adjusting cultural knowledge when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p. 337), Cognitive CQ relates to how an individual makes sense of similarities and difference between cultures (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p. 337). Motivational CQ, reflects one's propensity to commit to adaptive behaviours when thrust into a cultural

unfamiliar setting (Earley and Peterson, 2004) and Behavioural CQ refers to the sense of flexibility for behavioural responses that fit to a variety of culturally diverse situations, and the ability to adapt both verbal and non-verbal behaviour when a cross cultural interaction requires it (Ang, Van Dyne and Koh, 2006).

Cross Cultural Adaptability (CCA)

Adaptation is the process of altering one's behaviour to fit within a new environment and circumstances or positive response to social pressure (Ward, 2001). According to Shaffer *et al.*, (2006) CCA is an effective outcome because it represents subjective assessments with affective implications. Individual when posted out of home culture settings have to adjust in unfamiliar settings to perform better. According to Burke, Pierce and Salas (2006) adaptability can be achieved on three levels: individual, team, and organisation. This study focused on the individual adaptability that represents the solid base for team and organisational adaptability and is directly affected by the willingness of the individual to interact with other employees. CCA is multidimensional construct (Kelley and Meyers, 1995b) comprising of: Emotional resilience, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity and personal autonomy. An individual who is culturally adaptable recovering easily when situations go bad, enjoy the opportunity of being exposed to the different behaviour of other cultures and maintain personal identity when exposed to different cultural values.

Job Performance (JP)

The nature of JP in an organisation depends on the demands of the job, the goals and mission of the organisation and beliefs in the organisation about which behaviours are most valued (Motowidlo and Schmidt, 1999). It is the most significant concepts in the industries and organisations and in most of the

researchers considered as dependent variable (Impelman, 2007). Performance is the function of knowledge, skills. Abilities and motivation directed at role prescribed behaviour, such as a formal job responsibilities (Campbell, 1999). Research has indicated that JP is a multidimensional construct (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993; Campbell, Gasser and Oswald, 1996) consisting of: Task performance, which includes all behaviour and activities of employee that must be done officially in the working process and referred to the knowledge and facts about the principles related to the JP (Bess, 2001). Contextual performance refers to non-job aspects of work, such as relationships forged with the host country nationals (Kraimer and Wayne, 2004), and Assignment specific performance, relates to specific or a particular assignment (Caligiuri, 1997).

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Cultural Intelligence and Job Performance

Performance is a function of knowledge, skills, abilities and motivation directed at the role-prescribed behaviour, such as a formal job responsibilities (Campbell, 1999). This phenomenon has a positive relationship with CQ. An Individual who spend a period of time living and working in a host region confront ambiguous and challenging situations (Fee and Sidney, 2012). They often receive poor performance evaluations when they have a different cultural background. The majority of studies explored the same relations (Ang *et al.*, 2004 and 2007; Lee and Sukoco, 2010; Rose *et al.*, 2010). A person, who is culturally intelligent, will be able to understand and interact with people of other culture as a result this will increase his/her JP. Ang *et al.*, (2007) demonstrated that individuals, who are more aware of their environment (metacognitive CQ) and who are able to adapt their behaviour accordingly

(behavioural CQ) are better at understanding and enacting role expectations that are culturally appropriate. Similarly, motivational and behavioural CQ are positively related to job performance (Kumar, Rose and Subramaniam, 2008; Ng, Van Dyne and Ang, 2012). Individuals who have higher CQ have intrinsic motivation in cross-cultural settings, which enhance their capability to perform their task in different cultural settings. The individuals, who have high behavioural CQ are flexible in their verbal and nonverbal behaviours and are able to meet expectations of others (Kumar, Rose and Subramaniam, 2008).

H₀₁: Cultural intelligence positively influences job performance.

Cultural Intelligence, Cross Cultural Adaptability, Job Performance

According to Ployhart and Bliese (2006) adaptability consists of ability, skills, disposition, willingness to change or to fit along with different tasks, social and environment features. The ability to cope with the stress associated with uncertainty and ambiguity in a new cultural environment will result in a better cultural adaptability. Culturally intelligent managers are able to perform better due to their capability of adapting to a new cultural context (Kumar, Rose and Subramaniam, 2008). A successful adjustment in local culture reduces stress and strain, which in turn may improve their performance (Kraimer, Wayne and Jaworski, 2001; Ramalu *et al.*, 2010; Ramalu, Wei and Rose, 2011). Individual with higher CQ are expected to perform their job better as they are more capable of adapting themselves in a new cultural situation (Tsai and Lawrence, 2011; Ramalu *et al.*, 2012). Motivational CQ helps in cultural adaptation because those with higher motivational CQ have an intrinsic interest in other cultures and expect to be successful in culturally diverse situations (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p. 342).

An individual who is behaviourally more intelligent are capable of varying their behaviour which helps them to adapt to the culturally different environment and they have the sense of fitting in a particular situation (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p. 342) which in turn enhances the performance of the managers (Paulsson, Ivergard and Hunt, 2005; Karaevli and Hall, 2006).

H_{02} : Cultural adaptability mediates the relationship between Cultural intelligence and Job performance.

Conceptual Model

Figure 1 represents the conceptual model and accordingly the hypotheses have been framed. The model shows CQ directly

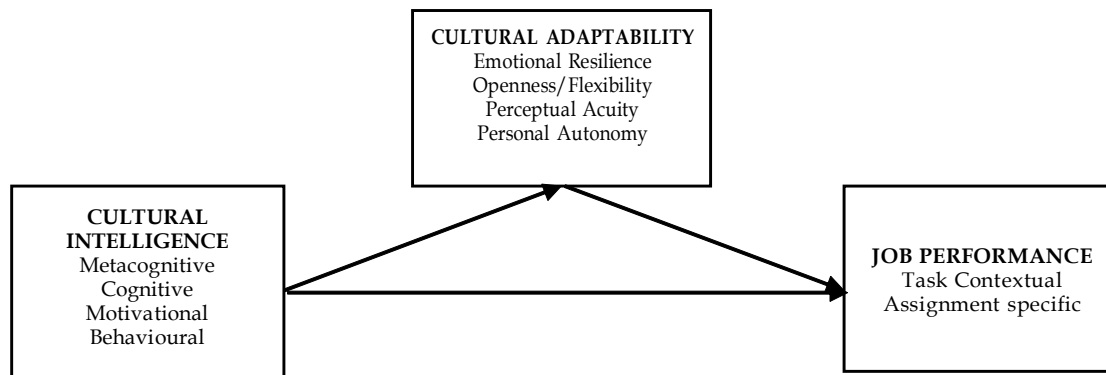


Figure 1

affects JP and CCA mediates the relationship between them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to make the study objective following steps have been taken:

Data Collection

The population for the study consisted of 342 managers working in nationalised banks in Jammu and Kashmir (India). All of them have been contacted for data collection. Structured questionnaire was used as a research tool for collecting the data. In order to reduce the problem of common method variance data have been collected from multiple sources. The data pertaining to CQ and CCA has been collected from branch and assistant managers. Information pertaining to the JP of the assistant managers has been procured from their respective branch managers and information regarding JP of branch managers has been obtained

from respective chief managers (n= 27). All the chief managers in the study have the experience of working outside home state. Performance of more than one managers was procured from chief managers, which can cause the problem of independence of the data (Hofmann, 1997), so in order to check whether the JP rating of various managers is independent or not ANOVA has been applied and the results revealed insignificant difference (F= 1.26, p> 0.05). There are seven respondents, who did not have the experience of working outside their home state and there was statistically significant difference in their CQ and CQ of managers who have the experience of working outside the home state (t = 6.099, p< 0.001). So, they were not included in the study and affective sample used in the study came to 335.

The sample included approximately 70% males and 30% female managers. 73% managers are currently posted outside their home state and 27% managers are

working within their home state. 62% respondents are in the age group 50 years or above and 35% managers have 11-15 years of experience of working outside their home state followed by 6-10 years of experience (27%). Approximately 20% managers can speak up to three languages and 80% managers can speak more than three languages.

Measures

A five point Likert scale has been used for the sake of uniformity in measuring the variables ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). CQ has been measured with the help of 20-items, four factor model of cultural intelligence scale (CQS) developed and validated by Ang *et al.*, (2007). The inventory included four items for meta-cognitive CQ, six for cognitive CQ, five for motivational CQ and five for behavioural CQ. JP has been measured with the help of 15-items, which included 5-items of contextual performance (Motowidlo and Van 1994), 6-items of task performance (Goodman and Svyantek, 1999) and 4-items of assignment specific performance (Caligiuri, 1997). The cultural adaptability scale was selfdeveloped on the basis of the dimensions identified from earlier literature (Kelly and Meyers, 1995b). The inventory included five items each of emotional resilience, openness/flexibility, personal autonomy and perceptual acuity.

Control Variables

Age, gender, language proficiency and experience of working outside home state have been taken as control variables as they may affect the outcome variables, i.e. job performance and cross-cultural adaptability (Ang *et al.*, 2007; Lee and Sukoco, 2010; Ramalu, Wei and Rose, 2011; Ramalu *et al.*, 2012).

RESULTS

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA has been conducted on data of 100 managers to identify the dimensions of different scales used in the present study. Principal component analysis with a varimax rotation has been used. The varimax rotation method has been used as it is considered the best and the most commonly used orthogonal rotation procedure (Stewart, 1981). The test of appropriateness of a factor analysis has been verified through KMO measure of sampling adequacy, where values greater than 0.50 is acceptable (Malhotra, 2002), which indicates its relevance for further analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2007). The CQS consisted of 20 items that were reduced to 15 items, which converged under four factors. Similarly, CCA scale initially consisted of 20 items that got reduced to 17 items and converged under four factors. Lastly, JP scale consisted of 16 items, which were reduced to nine items and converged under three factors. The KMO value of all the constructs is above 0.80 and total variance explained for all the constructs is above sixty percent.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Before using the inferential analysis, we assessed the validity and reliability of the construct with the help of CFA. Two stage procedure has been used to test the theoretical framework (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). In the first phase measurement models were tested to assess the convergent and discriminant validity. In the second stage structural equation modeling has been used for hypotheses testing.

Second order factor models have been designed for all the scales as multiple factors emerged after EFA. Fit indices of all the second order models are within the

Table 1: Model Summary of fit Indices of Second Order Factor Models

Constructs	χ^2/df	RMR	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Cultural Intelligence	1.921	0.024	0.929	0.894	0.908	0.064
Job Performance	2.202	0.023	0.948	0.903	0.928	0.073
Cross-cultural Adaptability	1.748	0.027	0.905	0.869	0.891	0.058

Table 2: Reliability and Validity Analysis

Constructs	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standardised Regression Weight	Average Variance Extracted	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Cultural Intelligence	4.31	0.36		0.74	0.99	0.84
Meta- Cognitive	4.35	0.43	0.82			
Cognitive	4.17	0.49	0.87			
Motivational	4.40	0.41	0.98			
Behavioural	4.30	0.43	0.77			
Job Performance	4.14	0.37		0.67	0.98	0.76
Task Performance	4.25	0.47	0.78			
Contextual Performance	4.17	0.52	0.70			
Assignment Specific Performance	4.00	0.47	0.97			
Cultural Adaptability	4.28	0.31		0.54	0.98	0.75
Emotional Resilience	4.36	0.40	0.72			
Openness/Flexibility	4.03	0.49	0.63			
Perceptual Acuity	4.44	0.37	0.75			
Personal Autonomy	4.31	0.38	0.84			

Table 3: Discriminant Validity and Correlation Analysis

Constructs	Cultural Intelligence	Job Performance	Cultural Adaptability
Cultural Intelligence	0.745		
Job Performance	(0.295) 0.544**	0.676	
Cultural Adaptability	(0.285) 0.534**	(0.298) 0.546**	0.545

Note: Values on the diagonal axis represents the average variance extracted. Values with an asterisk represent correlation and values in the parentheses represent squared correlation. **p< 0.05

prescribed limit (Table 1) i.e. GFI, CFI are greater than 0.90 and RMR, RMSEA is less than 0.05 and 0.08 respectively (Hair *et al.*, 2007). Standardised regression weights (>0.60) and average variance extracted (>0.70) established the convergent validity (Table 2). Further, discriminant validity has also been proved by comparing the variance extracted with squared correlations amongst different constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The average variance extracted for all the constructs is higher than the squared correlation thereby proving discriminant validity (Table 3). Reliability of the constructs has been checked through Cronbach alpha and composite reliability. Alpha values equal to or greater than 0.70 indicate good reliability (Nunnally, 1970; O’Leary-Kelly and Vokurka, 1998). In the present study alpha and composite reliability values for all constructs are greater than 0.70 (Table 2). Thus, the Cronbach’s alpha and composite construct reliability indicate that the scales are quite reliable.

Impact of Cultural Intelligence on Job Performance: Role of Cross Cultural adaptability

Structural equation modeling (SEM) has been used to check various relations proposed. It is a multivariate technique that seeks to explain the relationship among multiple variables (Kaplan, 2000).

In order to test the mediating effect, all the conditions described by Baron and Kenny (1986) have been first satisfied. We used four step procedure through SEM in which we first assessed the impact of predictor i.e. CQ on dependent variable, i.e. JP, which is significant (SRW= 0.76, $p < 0.001$, Figure 2). Hence, the first condition of mediation is accepted as CQ is positively affecting JP. In the second step we studied the impact of CQ on CCA, which is also significant (SRW= 0.73, $p < 0.001$). Further, we examined the impact of mediator (CCA) on the dependent variable (JP) has been assessed, which is significant (SRW= 0.71, $p < 0.001$).

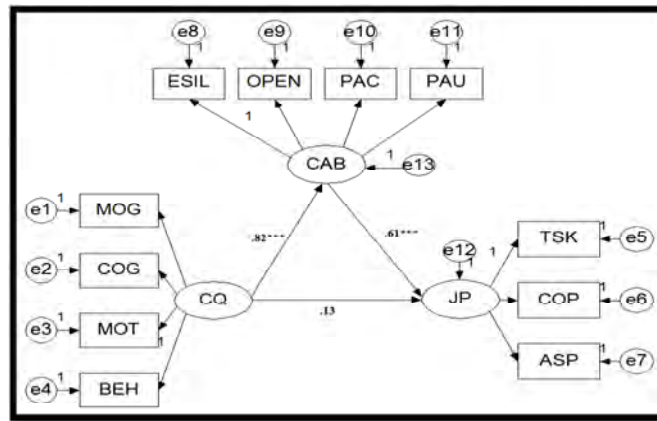


Figure 2: Mediation Model

Key: CQ= Cultural Intelligence, CAB= Cultural Adaptability, JP= Job Performance, MOG= Meta-cognitive, COG= Cognitive Cultural Intelligence, MOT= Motivational Cultural Intelligence, BEH= Behavioural Cultural Intelligence, ESIL= Emotional Resilience, OPEN= Openness, PAC= Perceptual Acuity, PAU= Personal Autonomy, TSK= Task Performance, COP= Contextual Performance, ASP= Assignment Specific Performance.

Furthermore, in order to test the mediating effect, in the last step we added the mediating variable i.e. CCA between CQ and JP. It has been found that with the introduction of CCA as mediator in CQJP equation, the relationship between CQ and JP became insignificant (SRW= 0.13, $p > 0.05$, Figure 2), thereby yielding support for mediation. Further, the Sobel test also revealed significant indirect effect (Sobel Statistics 2.711, $p < 0.05$), so the condition of mediation is fulfilled. Hence, the CCA mediates the relationship between CQ and JP relationship. Further, the control variables are also included in the model, which yielded no change in the previous relationships, so they were not shown in the diagram (Arnold, Turner and Barling, 2007).

CONCLUSION

The paper discusses the impact of CQ on JP and the mediating role played by CCA. The study highlights, the importance of CQ in enhancing JP. The study has explored two issues: i) impact of CQ on JP, ii) and, the mediating role of CCA in between CQ and JP relationship. The results states that CQ positively influence JP, which is consistent with the earlier studies (e.g. Kumar, Rose and Subramaniam, 2008; Ramalu, Wei and Rose, 2011; Nafei, 2013). Further, the results revealed that CCA mediates the relationship between CQ and JP. CQ is positively related to CCA i.e. managers who are culturally intelligent adapt themselves to the culturally different settings (Ang *et al.*, 2007). Culturally intelligent managers have the intrinsic interest in other cultures as well as capability to vary their behaviour which helps them to adapt to an environment which is culturally different which help them to boost their performance (Ang *et al.*, 2007). It is concluded that the managers, who are culturally intelligent positively contribute to JP as they can effectively interact with people belonging

to other cultural backgrounds. Indian managers have to make various adaptations relating to different languages, as India is a multilingual and multi-ethnic country. Therefore, organisations should develop this capability among the managers to increase their overall performance and attain sustainable component of competitive advantage.

IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Implications

The study cements theoretical development of CQ concept by Earley and Ang (2003), within a country context. This study enhances the knowledge about CQ as an effective intercultural competency construct by providing a relationship between CQ and JP. It adds to CQ - JP literature by evaluating the role of CCA in between this relationship. Further, it confirmed the reliability and construct validity of the four factor model of CQS within a diverse cultural country like India, which increased the generalisability of the CQS.

Practical Implications

The theory presented here will be of interest to organisations because CQ serves as an important selection tool. Culturally intelligent managers are able to give their best performance and these people can be sent for foreign/overseas assignments as they are able to interact effectively with people belonging to different cultural backgrounds. Organisations can develop training programs, which increase the manager's CQ capability. These programs will prepare managers to deal with unfamiliar crosscultural situations. Organisations should use the CQS to recruit and select their employees who would be the best fit for out of home state assignments. By using CQS, those who perform well in domestic contexts, but are likely to be

unsuccessful in cross-cultural interactions could be screened out, which would reduce unnecessary costs stemming from failure of international/out of state assignments.

Developing culturally intelligent managers will help organisations have a sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, organisations can use CQ as criteria for evaluation and service compensation.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The paper has certain limitations, which can be overcome in the future. Firstly, the study is cross sectional in nature; in future longitudinal study can be conducted. Secondly, more outcomes of CQ can be taken into consideration in the future for better understanding of the concept. Further, the role of other variables like experience, organisational support and language proficiency can also be explored between CQ and JP.

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