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ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores cultural intelligence assessment research methodologies. Conducting research in a cross-cultural context can be challenging in terms of assuring accuracy, meaningfulness, and generalizability of the conclusions reached. Given the inherent complexity and variety of culture, this study treats a multi-step process of cross cultural research with a focus on cultural intelligence (CQ). The measurement and application of the development of cross cultural knowledge and CQ is increasingly important to firms conducting business worldwide. Global business leaders and expatriates trend toward having high levels of CQ. The assessment of CQ should entail a strong alignment between the methodology and prevailing literature. This topic should provoke interesting debate and activity in the area of cross-cultural research. CQ assessment will be addressed alongside the multi-step research methodology for this field. The research methodology entails identification of the research objective, level of analysis, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. Each step is offered as part of a framework that incorporates theories from several areas interconnecting what is known about differences in CQ levels and associated organizational behaviors across cultures and whether cultural differences play dominantly influential role. The objective is to simplify, and perhaps compartmentalize, the analysis of differences among cultures to provide enhanced training to expatriates, sales and marketing groups and research and development teams. This work sets out to review various methods and approaches toward cultural intelligence analysis – with intent of usefulness in business (and perhaps political) environments.

Keywords: cultural intelligence, cross-cultural research methods, cross-cultural effectiveness, survey methods, research methods

AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF MOTIVATION PATTERNS AND LEARNING STYLES OF BUSINESS STUDENTS FROM INDIA: CONVERGENCE, DIVERGENCE, OR CROSSVERGENCE?

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ABSTRACT

The Indian economy has undergone tremendous economic transformation and growth over the last three decades. It is home to the largest concentration of youth in the world under 25 years of age who are avid consumers of global brands and social media. In this increasingly compressed global world, what would be value systems of Indians (especially those who are 25 and younger) look like? Would their value systems reflect national culture (convergence)? Would their value systems be different enough to reject national culture (rejection)? Or, would it be a fusion of domestic and imported value systems? (crossvergence)?

The present study examines intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, control of beliefs, and selfefficacy of Indian business students. A modified version of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) was used in this study. The modification was done to measure students' perceptions of multiple courses taken during their program of study. The 22 item MSLQ examined four factors: extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, beliefs about learning, selfefficacy, and test anxiety using a 5-point Likert scale where 5=very true of me and 1=not at all true of me.

The surveys were administered in three Chennai based colleges. All students who completed the survey were business majors enrolled in either the undergraduate or graduate programs. A total of 462 usable surveys were collected. A quick summary of the sample profile showed that 65% of respondents were women, average age was 20 years, 62% were Hindu, 67% were undergraduates, 73% indicated their families as financially comfortable, and 91% were full-time students.

The data from the survey was used to validate the modified MSLQ scales. The confirmatory factor analysis of a measurement model was assessed using the structural equation modeling software AMOS 22. Each of the four constructs exhibited acceptable unidimensionality (single-factor Goodness of Fit Index GFIs > .90), reliability (Cronbach's alphas > .70), convergent validity (all item loadings significantly, p < .001) and divergent validity (significant chi-squared difference tests on all possible factor pairs, p < .001). The measurement model indicated acceptable data fit (GFI = .927, Root Mean Square Residual: RMR = .096, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation: RMSEA = .057). The MSLQ scales as modified are considered to be valid and reliable.

A cluster analysis revealed three clusters: C1 (n=167), C2 (n=205), and C3 (n=90). Students in C1 exhibit convergence with lower scores on intrinsic motivation, control, and self-efficacy. Students in C2 and C3 exhibit crossvergence. Scores on intrinsic motivation, control belief, and self-efficacy were high suggesting rejection of national cultural values. But high scores on extrinsic motivation suggest convergence. These results suggest that Indian business students demonstrate both convergence and crossvergence towards national culture in certain values.

STRATEGIC CUSTOMER SERVICE, CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, AND THE BIG 5 IN MEXICO AND FRANCE

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ABSTRACT

Surprisingly, Mexico and France are not as similar as one might expect. While they share high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance, they fall significantly far from each other at individualism, long-term orientation, indulgence, masculinity. Thus, making them slightly different in the business world, especially in strategic customer service. For instance, both countries have a pretty high power distance, meaning that they would both be very respectful towards their clients, but not necessarily offer as good customer service as the United States would. High power distance countries are known as countries that see people differently based on their economic and social status. As from personal experience, Mexico's customer service is not as efficient as France's customer service due to their different product mix. Mexico's good and services might not be as high quality as that in France, so the customer service varies depending on the product quality. On the other hand, it is important to mention that both countries are known to be very conscious and patient, thus providing a good customer service. In regards to Geert Hofstede's studies, Mexican and French culture are very different. One could have guessed that since Europe and Latin America are so far away. Here is how they differ in the most basic terms: Mexico has a higher power distance than France, but not by much. We would say they both have a high power distance. There is higher value on individualism in France. Mexico, unsurprisingly, has a higher masculinity level. Both France and Mexico have relatively high uncertainty avoidance scores. France has a much higher Long-Term orientation score than Mexico. Mexico has about twice the indulgence level than France. Being about as educated in Mexican culture as we can without having been born there or living there, I am confident in these findings. If a company is trying to organize their strategies for customer service in France and Mexico, we would suggest fairly similar strategies. French people have a higher sense of individualism so a more direct, less personable strategy would be more effective. Mexico has a greater indulgence score, signaling that Mexican people have an inclination to not control their desires so they will not want to have a customer service that takes up their time from more desirable activities. Extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and open to experience are the Big Five Personality traits. We believe both countries will have a combination of all of the personalities but France will have more conscientiousness and open to experience than Mexico because Mexicans have more of a group mentality when it comes to living life in general. They're only open to experience if "everyone is doing it" but most people are open to experience. Most Mexican students will study abroad or go to an abroad boarding school between the ages of 12 and 17. Mexicans and French people both seem like they would be leaning mostly towards extroversion, but probably more Mexicans.

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CUSTOMER SERVICE, CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, & THE BIG 5 IN FRANCE, LUXEMBOURG AND THE USA

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ABSTRACT

The Big Five Personality traits help us understand individuals' personality and temperament tendencies, but they do not directly correlate with Geert Hofstede's framework for cultures in various countries. Studies have shown that countries with high individualism trend towards higher rates of extraversion, but these similarities don't always hold true. Luxembourg is a unique country in that it is relatively small, with a population around 5,500,000 people. Out of this population, however, around 45% of the population is comprised of immigrants. These immigrants come from Portugal (16.5%), France (6.8%), along with smaller populations from Italy, Belgium, and Germany. The cultural environment becomes more complicated when analyzing the number of cross-border workers who work in Luxembourg by day and return to France, Belgium, and Germany in the evenings. This is a stark difference to the United States, which is comprised of people from many different cultures, but with a lower percentage of immigrants. When analyzing Luxembourg, Hofstede's dimensions must be differentiated between local Luxembourgers and immigrants. For 16.5% of the population (from Portugal), Hofstede's cultural dimensions for Luxembourg may not be relevant. According to the Big Five Personality factors, nurture and nature play an important role in personality and temperament development. Many of those living in Luxembourg may have a family environment with one language and culture, but live and work in a very different environment. While this kind of comparison also exists in the United States, Luxembourg presents an interesting case study because this is a reality for such a high percentage of their inhabitants. A company must be strategic in providing customer service that relates to a very diverse population. In the United States, this means providing customer service in Spanish and English. In Luxembourg, this might mean providing service in Luxembourgish, English, French, and Portuguese. This could lead to higher costs, but increased customer satisfaction. Luxembourgers have a higher long-term orientation and uncertainty avoidance than people in the United States, so companies should realize that customers may need more time to become acquainted with new products and may not be as willing to jump on a trendy product as many people in the United States are. Based upon Hofstede's 6D model and the Big 5 personality traits as a comparison for the countries of the United States and France, in regards to strategic customer service, it is clear that cultural differences can have an impact on customer service. Taking a look at these countries' scores on the Individualism scale for a more specific analysis, the United States scores much higher than France with a score of 91. The acceptance of individual expression has a soothing effect on the process of customer serviceWhen customer service representatives feel comfortable with themselves and of being exposed to a wide range of individualistic styles, then they feel much more relaxed, composed, and in control when confronted with particularly peculiar requests or customer concerns. On the other hand, France, with a much lower score, is used to and even expects much more traditional requests, which may in part be a factor that contributes to the

infamous bad customer service that they give out. Their much more orthodox approach to customer service can, in this way, be contributed to individualism. Perhaps in what can be attributed as a much more accurate representation on customer service is personality itself, which is what the Big 5 personality traits cover? More specifically it is clear that the United States and France differ in terms of agreeability and openness. Agreeability is identified by prosocial behaviors. Approaching strangers is, to an extent, much more acceptable in the United States than it is with France. Consequently, social interactions that extend beyond and initial approach seem much more likely in the States. It is however frowned upon in France so initial agreeability with strangers is a trait that is culturally rooted, and it can have direct links with customer service. In France, people would most likely tend to themselves not other. Hand in hand with this is the trait of openness. Much in the same manner, the United States tends to be a much more open country where information, and lots of it, is easy to spread. This contributes to a general air of friendliness that not only prevails but is in fact encouraged at the customer service lever of American institutions. This is not the case in France, where a more reserved attitude is held towards social interactions. This of course bleeds into the notions held by customer service representatives in the country. In the end, the idea of not being agreeable with everyone and the general reserved attitude that France has is shown by their customer service.

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CUSTOMER SERVICE, CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, & THE BIG 5 IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Hofstede Comparison of United States and Saudi Arabia: The Unites States of America and Saudi Arabia are two very powerful nations that are similar in almost as many ways as they are different. Looking at the U.S., we see a country that was born on the foundation of freedom, individualism and liberty. These foundations are still seen today in many aspects of American society. Geert Hofstede's six cultural dimensions explore the different parts of a country that make up the nation as a whole. For the U.S., Hofstede has found a society that has an extremely high tendency to err toward the side of individualism. People want to be different and fight for that right every day. Rather than focus on the collective good, more often than not, American culture shows that the individual's well-being and happiness supersedes that of all others. This is a society in which once children turn 18, they are out of their parents' house and seen as independent adults. These newly labeled adults must then set out into the world alone, and from then on, it is all about their individual survival. The U.S. is also a country with a Power Distance rate that is just below the average, landing at 40 out of 100. This characteristic shows a tendency to push equality in all aspects of life, especially in areas in which a hierarchy has been established. This attributes to the democratic government set in place, as well as an environment of open communication in the work place. American citizens have a right to freedom of speech, which they exercise freely and whenever possible. America has a Masculinity score of 62, providing characteristics which are usually ingrained in children from a young age so that it follows them into adulthood and their work life. Everyone wants to be the best in their field and in their passions. Being good is not good enough and people always strive to be better than others and themselves. An Uncertainty Avoidance score of 46 contributes to Americans' openness to new ideas and concepts. Everything does not have to be known immediately and there is room for both improvement and surprises. The Long Term Orientation rating assigned to the U.S. is a "normative" score of 26. This means that there is a balance between accepting new information and customs while still upholding traditional values and beliefs. A large number of Americans have firm viewpoints on subjects such as abortion, drugs and war that are affected by their upbringing, religion and experiences. In the workplace, many people are focused on immediate results rather than the long-term end goal. Lastly, Americans are found by Hofstede to be Indulgent, with a score of 68. This rating shows the slightly uneven balance of the "work hard, play hard" attitude of U.S. citizens, with an emphasis on the "play hard." While people like to exercise control over some aspects of their life, there are other areas in which it is deemed okay by the majority to indulge in luxury. Turning to Saudi Arabia, Hofstede finds that this country contrasts greatly from the U.S. in the areas of Individualism, Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. Scoring 25 in the area of Individualism, Saudi Arabia is labeled a firmly collectivistic society. Family and loyalty mean a great deal to the people in this country and there is an understanding that everyone must pitch in and look out for one another. Relationships

are much more personal, even at work, and shame is a big deterrence when it comes to committing an act of betrayal or showing offence. Despite the collectivistic nature of Saudi Arabia, they score extremely high in Power Distance due to the hierarchy set in place. Saudi Arabia is ruled by a royal family and is run under an absolute monarchy. The King is the final authority and everyone accepts their place in life under him. This attitude bleeds into office politics and there is little room for challenging an authority figure in that environment as well. A high Uncertainty Avoidance score of 80 demonstrates an unwillingness to depart from traditional viewpoints and practices. This desire to remain unchanging may very well have to do with the monarchy that Saudis are still ruled under, as the royal family is reliant on the preservation of those traditional values that allow them to continue to act as rulers today. Saudi Arabia is also similar to the United States in the areas of Masculinity and Long Term Orientation. A score of 60 for Masculinity shows the desire to "live to work" rather than "work to live." There is also a big emphasis on competition and showing results. Both Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are one of the top 10 most powerful countries, according to U.S. News, and this may be because of their similarities in wanting to be the best and achieving quick results. Long Term Orientation is not a big concern for either nation, as Saudi Arabia is rated at 36 for this dimension, just slightly higher than the U.S. When it comes to Indulgence, Hofstede was unable to accurately show a preference for Saudi Arabia, as its score of 52 landed it right on the line between indulgent and restrained. However, it could be seen that this country is once again similar to the U.S. in the way that its citizens seem to find a balance between indulging in luxuries and reigning in their impulses. This could be a result of the restrictive influence of Islam on the culture versus the extravagant lifestyle that is set in place.

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