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Cultural Intelligence:
An Essential Capability for Individuals in Contemporary Organizations

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Cultural Intelligence

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is a person's capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity (Ang, Van Dyne, & Koh, 2005; Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley & Mosakowski, 2005). In today's increasingly global and diverse work settings, this capability is important for employees, managers, and organizations. Cultural intelligence is an individual capability. It is consistent with contemporary conceptualizations of intelligence that recognize intelligence is more than cognitive ability (Sternberg & Detterman, 1986). For example, research recognizes the importance of interpersonal intelligence, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence. Like these other forms of intelligence, CQ complements IQ (cognitive intelligence) by focusing on specific capabilities that are important for high quality personal relationships and effectiveness in culturally diverse settings. Cultural intelligence provides insights about individual capabilities to cope with multi-cultural situations, engage in cross-cultural interactions, and perform in culturally diverse work groups.

This article provides a brief summary of recent empirical research on cultural intelligence and presents a newly developed 20-item scale that measures cultural intelligence. Building on the work of Earley and Ang (2003), we have developed and validated a four-factor measure of Cultural

Intelligence. To date, this work has been presented at numerous national and international conferences in the United States, Europe, and Asia. There are four factors or aspects to CQ: CQ-Strategy, CQ-Knowledge, CQ-Motivation, and CQ-Behavior. We define and discuss each in the next section.

The Four Factors of Cultural Intelligence

CQ-Strategy is how a person makes sense of inter-cultural experiences. It reflects the processes individuals use to acquire and understand cultural knowledge. It occurs when people make judgments about their own thought processes and those of others. This includes strategizing before an inter-cultural encounter, checking assumptions during an encounter, and adjusting mental maps when actual experiences differ from expectations.

CQ-Knowledge is a person's understanding of how cultures are similar and how cultures are different. It reflects general knowledge structures and mental maps about cultures. It includes knowledge about economic and legal systems, norms for social interaction, religious beliefs, aesthetic values, and language in different cultures.

CQ-Motivation is a person's interest in experiencing other cultures and interacting with people from different cultures. Motivational CQ is magnitude and direction of energy applied toward learning about and functioning in cross-cultural situations. It includes the intrinsic value people place on culturally diverse interactions as well as their sense of confidence that they can function effectively in settings characterized by cultural diversity.

CQ-Behavior is a person's capability to adapt verbal and nonverbal behavior so it is appropriate for different cultures. It includes having a flexible repertoire of behavioral responses

that are appropriate in a variety of situations and having the capability to modify both verbal and nonverbal behavior based on those involved in a specific interaction or in a particular setting.

Research Results on Cultural Intelligence

Although empirical research on cultural intelligence is relatively new, the initial results are promising. To date, results demonstrate that CQ predicts cultural judgment and decision-making (CJDM) and task performance. More important, CQ increases our understanding of these performance outcomes over and above demographic characteristics, general cognitive ability, emotional intelligence, and openness to experience. In other words, even after accounting for the effects of these other predictors, CQ further increases our ability to predict and understand decision-making performance. Thus, those who have higher CQ are more effective at making decisions about inter-cultural situations.

Research also demonstrates that CQ predicts adjustment in situations characterized by cultural diversity. As with predictions for CJDM, research shows that CQ adds explanatory power over and above demographic characteristics, general cognitive ability, emotional intelligence, and openness to experience. In sum, higher CQ capabilities are positively related to feeling adjusted in situations characterized by cultural diversity.

Looking at specific factors of CQ enriches our understanding of these relationships. For example, CQ-Strategy and CQ-Behavior predict task performance. Those who have the capability to make sense of inter-cultural experiences (such as making judgments about their own thought processes and those of others) perform at higher levels in multi-cultural work settings. The higher the CQ-Strategy, the higher the performance. Similarly, those who have the capability to adapt their verbal and nonverbal behavior to fit specific cultural settings have a flexible repertoire of behavioral

responses that enhances their task performance in culturally diverse settings. Thus, the higher the CQ-Behavior, the higher the performance.

Finally, CQ-Motivation and CQ-Behavior each predict three different forms of adjustment. Those who are interested in experiencing other cultures and feel confident that they can interact with people who have different cultural backgrounds are better adjusted in culturally diverse situations. Likewise, those who have a broad repertoire of verbal and nonverbal behavioral capabilities feel better adjusted in situations characterized by cultural diversity. This pattern of relationships applies to the three types of adjustment typically included in international research: general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment. In sum, the higher the CQ-Motivation, the higher the adjustment; and the higher the CQ-Behavior, the higher the adjustment.

We encourage others to join us in expanding our understanding of Cultural Intelligence. For that reason, we include the twenty-item scale in the following appendix.

Selected References

Ang, S., Van Dyne, L., & Koh, C. (2005). Personality correlates of the four factor model of cultural intelligence, *Groups and Organization Management, forthcoming*.

Earley, P.C., & Ang, S. (2003). *Cultural intelligence: Individual interactions across cultures*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

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Appendix: The 20 Item Four Factor Cultural Intelligence Scale ¹

Read each statement and select the response that best describes your capabilities.

Select the answer that BEST describes you AS YOU REALLY ARE (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree)

CQ Factor	Questionnaire Items
CQ-Strategy:	
MC1	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.
MC2	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.
MC3	I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.
MC4	I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.
CQ-Knowledge:	
COG1	I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.
COG2	I know the religious beliefs of other cultures.
COG3	I know the marriage systems of other cultures.
COG4	I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.
COG5	I know the rules (e.g., grammar) of other languages.
COG6	I know the rules for expressing non-verbal behaviors in other cultures.
CQ-Motivation:	
MOT1	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
MOT2	I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.
MOT3	I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.
MOT4	I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture.
MOT5	I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.
CQ-Behavior:	
BEH1	I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.
BEH2	I change my non-verbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.
BEH3	I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.
BEH4	I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.
BEH5	I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

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Note. Use of this scale granted to academic researchers for research purposes only.

For information on using the scale for purposes other than academic research

(e.g., consultants and non-academic organizations), please send an email to cquery@culturalq.com.