CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP: APPLYING THE CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE SCALE IN EASTERN EUROPE

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Abstract. *This paper discusses the transferability of the cultural intelligence scale (CQS) in the Eastern European context, focusing on the Ukrainian and Moldovan cases. The cultural intelligence construct is defined as the ability of individuals to function effectively in culturally diverse situations. The authors build upon their earlier research on cultural intelligence in Ukraine and Moldova, and develop a comparative assessment based on the four-factor model of cultural intelligence: (a) cognitive – "an individual's cultural knowledge of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultural settings" (Van Dyne et al., 2008, p.16), (b) metacognitive – "an individual's cultural consciousness and awareness during interactions with those from different cultural backgrounds" (Van Dyne et al., 2008, p.16), (c) motivational – "an individual's capability to direct attention and energy toward cultural differences" (Van Dyne, et al., 2008, p.16), and (d) behavioral – "an individual's capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds" (Van Dyne, et al., 2008, p.16). This has a crucial meaning for leadership in business in our globalizing world and economy, where there is a compelling need to operationalize and understand what type of cultural skills and abilities managers and leaders need in specific organizational and geographical contexts. The study advances the research in the cultural intelligence field by analyzing the cultural realm at the national level in two relatively recently emerged Eastern European countries. The novelty of the study consists in the national approach that it develops, as well as its Eastern European focus. The newly emerged countries in the Eastern European region are striving towards sustainability and economic growth, while at the same time facing major geopolitical and social challenges. In this context, the research of cultural intelligence opens new possibilities for the study of other processes and phenomena linked to cultural adaptation in the region.*

Keywords: *cultural intelligence; leadership; cross-cultural transferability of CQS.*

Introduction

The analysis of intercultural work environments has become a very important focus of organizational management and leadership studies in the private, public and non-profit sectors. It is not sufficient to acknowledge and describe the existence of cultural diversity, the new business patterns require knowledge and the development of certain skills that would enable leaders and managers to operate easily in such environments.

Cultural intelligence represents the "capability of individuals to function effectively across cultures" (Van Dyne, Ang & Livermore, 2010, p.132). Nonetheless, the cultural component can refer here to various layers of culture as well, e.g. national, regional, organizational, etc. And cultural intelligence abilities do not refer to knowledge of approaches, norms, values of a single culture or of a set of cultures but it equips leaders and managers with the ability to understand different cultural settings and enables them to lead more effectively in such environments.

There has been no other testing to date to determine whether the concept of cultural intelligence is transferable to countries in Eastern Europe, except for Johnson's research (2013-2014; 2015), which tested the scale in Ukraine and Moldova. In the national study conducted in Moldova in 2015, 1,250 participants have filled in the adapted questionnaire, and 1,200 participants filled it in in Ukraine in 2013. The authors found significant similarities between the two countries, but also relevant differences. The difference in size and administrative organization was taken into account during the analysis, as well as the presence of political - territorial conflicts, which, as the authors concluded, have impacted the cultural intelligence scores.

By measuring cultural intelligence at the national level in the Republic of Moldova and in Ukraine, the authors have also intended to better understand the cultural intelligence leadership potential in these countries.

Theoretical background

Academics and practitioners alike posit that organizations aiming at integration into the global market must promote managers and leaders that can face cross-cultural situations and issues. Academic research has focused however mainly on Western contexts, and on the individual cultural intelligence assessment within organizational or group settings.

Cultural intelligence defined as "an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings" (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008, p.3) was first introduced in 2003. The concept was thus operationalized into a Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), developed and tested for validity by Eearly and Ang (2003), based on Sternberg's multiple loci of intelligence. The CQS was developed based on four factors and contains 20 items, measuring the four primary factors which represent distinct CQ capabilities: CQ-Drive, CQ-Knowledge, CQ-Strategy, and CQ-Action.

Ang et al. (2007) stated that CQ examines particular aspects in intercultural contexts. This multidimensional construct includes four dimensions of cultural intelligence:

(a) metacognitive – "an individual's cultural consciousness and awareness during interactions with those from different cultural backgrounds" (Van Dyne et al., 2008, p.16), also referred to as CQ-Drive;
(b) cognitive – "an individual's cultural knowledge of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultural settings" (Van Dyne et al., 2008, p.16), also referred to as CQ-Knowledge
(c) motivational – "an individual's capability to direct attention and energy toward cultural differences" (Van Dyne, et al., 2008, p.16), also referred to as CQ-Strategy, and
(d) behavioral – "an individual's capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds" (Van Dyne, et al., 2008, p.16), also known as CQ-Action.

Context and purpose of the research

The research is structured based on the cultural intelligence theory. Cultural intelligence was first introduced in 2003 and is defined as "an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings" (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008, p.3). Delving further into existing literature and research, the authors did not identify at this point literature related to the transferability of the CQS across cultures in Eastern Europe.

In this paper the authors discuss the cross-cultural transferability of the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) in the Eastern European context, looking at the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine examples. On this basis, the authors explore the relevance of the CQS for leadership and management practices and the analysis of this concept in the context of the economic developments and transition processes occurring in the region. The adaptation of CQS in Ukrainian was initiated as part of a research project, which commenced in 2012 as a joint US-Ukraine Project of the Department of Organizational Leadership at Indiana Wesleyan University (Indiana, USA) and the Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv, Ukraine). The Cross-cultural interaction and processes have not been reflected and analyzed in Ukraine through the lenses, terms, and definitions of "cultural intelligence" as defined above. At the same time the "cultural competence" concept, which is understood as a derivative of "cultural education/awareness" and "cultural sensitivity", is widely used by Ukrainian sociologists (Ruchka & Kostenko, 2002, 2008, 2010).

The research was then expanded to the Republic of Moldova in 2015 motivated by the fact that such a research might bring more details, relevant from a leadership and management perspective, to light; these could be considered for future research but also for practical business use, development of specific applications for international companies, universities, and other stakeholders in this Eastern European region in general.

Expanding the application of the Cultural Intelligence Scale to Moldova has allowed an interesting comparison to the Ukrainian study results, as there are many similar factors between the two countries (political heritage, geopolitical factors, similar social structure development in the 20th century, etc.), while at the same time many differences (size of the country, language/culture, economic factors, etc.) that underline the specifics of the region.

In a context of constant economic, cultural and political change but also of limited resources, the need for researching cross-cultural interaction and cultural intelligence potential in the two countries becomes more stringent. Cultural intelligence abilities represent a prerogative for a regional, European and globally competitive entrepreneurial activity in various fields. This includes an understanding of how Moldovans and Ukrainians see the world beyond their borders, and how well equipped they are to successfully interact with other cultures.

Thus one of the purposes of our research was to study / test the understanding of "cultural intelligence" in the two countries, as part of the broader Eastern European region. It is worth mentioning that there has been no other testing to date to determine whether the CQS is transferable to countries in Eastern Europe.

Methodology

The specific objectives of the cultural intelligence research project were aligned to the general goal of understanding the cultural intelligence trends in both Moldova and Ukraine.
The specific objectives were to:
- translate and adapt the CQS scale to Ukrainian and respectively Romanian languages and Ukrainian / Moldovan context;
- identify the precise understanding of the 20 items of the cultural intelligence scale (CQS);
- test the translated instrument in a pilot study;
- measure cultural intelligence in Ukraine and Moldova, applying the cultural intelligence scale to national representative samples.
The study was conducted in three phases: a qualitative exploratory phase, a pilot phase and the final quantitative national study of cultural intelligence in each country.

The purpose of the first qualitative phase of the research was to achieve versions of the English instrument, the cultural intelligence scale, into Ukrainian, Russian and Romanian that are conceptually corresponding in the two countries/culture (Ukraine and Moldova). This means that the instrument should measure the same concept beyond translation. For this purpose, next to the forward translations the researchers have also applied the back translation technique to secure an accurate local version of the instrument. Both forward and back translations were conducted by local expert partners from the two countries. Back translation is a procedure of translating a research instrument by a team of professional translators and experts, who interpret a document which was previously translated into another language back into the original language (van Raaij, 1978).

The adaptation of the instrument phase was continued with the organization of cognitive focus groups, the goal of which was to identify the personal understandings of the instrument's content, but also general cultural patterns that will help define the understanding of cross-cultural interactions. In both countries, the focus groups were organized in urban and rural areas. Thus the authors have ensured that the adaptation and translation of the CQ scale were accurate and adapted to the local cultural and linguistic requirements. The focus groups have allowed the collection of relevant

information on how the local population interprets the main concepts of the study, which has contributed to the adaptation of the instrument in the respective languages.

The second phase of the study included a quantitative pilot study. Following the adaptation of the CQS, the instrument was randomly tested among a student population from the various Moldovan universities in their 1st, 2nd, 3rd (or 4th and 5th) year of studies (BA level), and 1st and 2nd years of master studies. The pilot application of the instrument was based on a random sample, covering 250 respondents. In Ukraine, the second phase has involved the pilot testing of 341 students from Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv, Ukraine. The participants were students ranging from the first to the fifth year of studies, enrolled in a wide range of degree programs. Both versions (Russian and Ukrainian) were randomly distributed, as all students spoke both languages fluently.

The final phase of the research was the national representative measurement of cultural intelligence, applying the adapted CQ scale. The goal of the third phase was to apply the CQS instrument on a nationally representative sample of 1200 people in Moldova and 1800 participants in Ukraine. The makeup of this sample has included a diversity of ages and education, and different language groups, and has observed the gender balance. All the different regions of each country were represented as well. Additional demographic information was gathered as well. Data were collected in face to face interviews based on the CQ scale questionnaire.

Results and national specifics

Though each stage of the research has identified relevant and insightful data about the understanding of cross-cultural interactions in the respective countries, in this paper the authors consider only on the final national results in the two countries, in an attempt to compare the main results. The findings are interpreted in the context of specific country and region realities. Thus first the authors see relevant to provide an overview of the country background and underline relevant political, social and economic aspects of these societies.

In November 2013, the Moldovan Government initialed an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU), advancing the coalition's policy priority of the EU integration (WB, 2013), which was approved by the European Parliament in November 2014. This is the first economic and political agreement with a former Soviet Republic after the Ukrainian crisis started in 2013.

Such positive changes might influence a direct inflow of investment. Moldova thus has become more attractive for foreign capital investment and the business climate has become more favorable (Popa, 2015). However, according to a Moldovan value survey Moldovan citizens believe that membership in the Customs Union (CU) will be more beneficial than EU in terms of employment and economic reforms (Korosteleva, 2010). The World Happiness Study puts Moldova in the 53rd position in its ranking (Ukraine is on 87, Russia on 68). In addition, Moldova has the highest happiness rate among other post-Soviet countries (World Happiness Research, 4).

Migration is a major phenomenon in Moldova and has a profound impact on the country's demographics, social structure, and economy. The Moldovan Intelligence and Security Service (2013) has estimated that 600,000 to one million Moldovan citizens (almost 25% of the population) are working abroad and the number is growing.

Moldova is a small country, however, historically, this Eastern European republic has undergone extensive political and structural societal changes, and due to its geopolitical position the statehood of the country was continuously endangered. The country gained its independence in 1991, after the breakup of the Soviet Union. However, its political and geopolitical course was not always clear. Challenged by a Soviet "frozen conflict" within its borders (Transnistria), Moldova is also challenged by a lack of resources -- although many studies refer to the fact that human resources represent the strongest asset of the country. Due to the current geopolitical crisis in the region (the ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict), Moldova has tried even more to strengthen its position through the Association Agreement signed with the EU. Nonetheless, internal political forces have divided the country, with some supporting a stronger link with Europe, while others advocate for a stronger pro-Russian/ CIS relationship.

Moldova is on the border between East and the West, and cross-cultural research needs to take into consideration the current developments Moldova is facing, including a wave of investments and also increased intercultural ventures at both private and public levels.

Analyzing the averages of all four dimensions of CQS (Metacognitive, Cognitive, Motivational, and Behavioral) in Moldova, the authors have observed that the cognitive dimension has the lowest score among the four dimensions - 3.65 and the motivational dimension has the highest score of 5.07. The CQS scale is measured on a 1 to 7 Likert Scale, 7 being the highest score.

Among the 20 items of the CQS (see annex 1) the lowest scores were registered for item *COG2 I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages*: 3.47 and the highest scores were registered for item *MOT5 I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture*: 5.31. This can be interpreted by a very intense mobility of the Moldova population and migration to the neighboring countries, to Europe as well as to the Russian Federation.

Analyzing each dimension separately, it was observed that within the metacognitive dimension the item describing best the cross-cultural abilities of the respondents is *MC2 I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me*. For the cognitive dimension, the item that has scored the highest in the national study is the *COG1 I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures*.

The motivational item *MOT4 I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me* has scored the highest on the CQ scale, having an average of 4.69, is which substantially different from the other items scores. Reviewing these findings in the context of the current societal changes in Moldova, they can be explained by the extreme migration the country is confronted with.

And finally, the behavioral dimension did not present any substantive differences among the results per items within this dimension, all of them being placed between 4.73 and 4.92 scores.

The collected data in the Republic of Moldova, as well as in Ukraine were representative at the national data. Below is the Moldovan example sample distribution.

Figure 1. Map of Moldova and sampling distribution per regions

GROUP	DISTRICTS	
1	Briceni, Edinet, Ocnita and Donduseni (Northern Moldova)	rural
		urban
2	Soroca, Drochia and Floresti (Northern Moldova)	rural
		urban
3	Mun. Balti, Faleşti, Glodeni and Sangerei (Northern Moldova)	rural
		urban
4	Orhei, Rezina, Soldanesti and Telenesti (Central Moldova)	rural
		urban
5	Chisinau Municipality (Central Moldova)	rural
		urban
6	Anenii Noi, Criuleni, Ialoveni & Straseni (Central Moldova)	rural
		urban
7	Ungheni, Calarasi and Nisporeni (Central Moldova)	rural
		urban
8	Basarabeasca, Hanceşti, Leova & Cimişlia (Central Moldova)	rural
		urban
9	Căuşeni, Stefan Voda (Central Moldova)	rural
		urban
10	UTA Gagauzia (Southern Moldova)	rural
		urban
11	Taraclia, Cahul, Cantemir (Southern Moldova)	rural
		urban

**The Moldovan Eastern region Transnistria was not included in the study due to difficulties in collecting data in the region.*

The cognitive dimension has received the lowest score among the four dimensions, which leads to the conclusion that the cognitive items are describing the least the capabilities of the respondents.

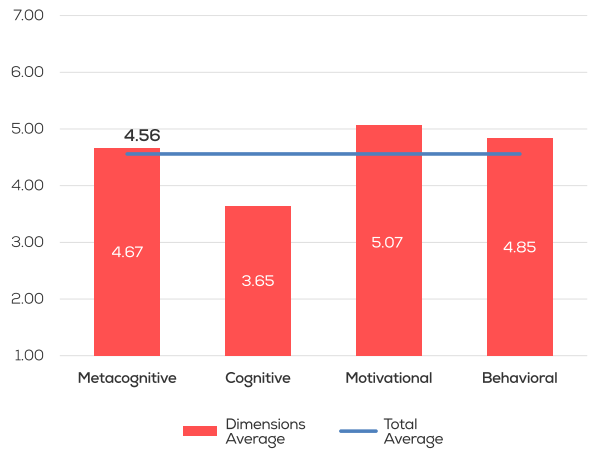

Figure 2. CQ Dimensions average - national CQ measurement in the Republic of Moldova

In a globalizing world, the importance of intercultural competencies becomes more and more relevant and the need for cultural intelligence continues to rise.

Particularly interesting in this sense is another former Soviet republic, Ukraine. As in the case of Moldova, Ukraine too has transitioned from a communist system to a new form of social, political and business leadership, based on the capitalistic model, but not exactly similar to it.

Ukraine has gained its independence after the dissolution of the USSR, in 1991, however, true independence did not occur due to a lack of understanding of how democratic political systems function (Johns & Buko, 2013). Corruption has spread in the political and social systems, spreading to all levels of society, leading the country in 2004 to the *Orange Revolution.* "Social, economic and cultural pattern of Ukraine is changing" (Johns & Buko, 2013).

Ukrainian society, undergoing important political and social changes, and due to political and social restructuring in the light of the Euromaidan Events and Crimean Crisis in 2014, is facing a change of social paradigm. Having the same recent history background as Moldova, Ukraine is different in size, geopolitical options, social structure and economic potential. Though the study was initiated before the Euromaidan events, the potential of signing the Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement but also the dichotomy that has been created within the country concerning geopolitical options, brings to light many aspects concerning intercultural contacts and communication in the current context. These events will allow the country to have a closer cooperation with the EU as a strategic political partner, while the country will have to position itself in the global market and face constructively the communication with Russia.

These events lead to more intercultural exposure, cross-cultural communication and more frequent interaction with other cultures and thus make the study and application of cultural intelligence more relevant for this country.

The CQ research in Ukraine was conducted before the Euromaidan events, a fact which has added an additional complexity to the analysis of the results. In Ukraine, similar to Moldova, the lowest scores were observed in Cognitive CQ. These results, in both countries, could be explained by the historical background; the population of the former Soviet Union has experienced over 50 years of traveling restrictions, information restriction, different information sources, including books, were banned.

The lowest scores related to the Metacognitive CQ suggest that over 30% of the total respondents did not feel they were conscious of their cultural knowledge. In the Behavioral CQ, many (about a third) disagreed that they changed their verbal behavior, as well as non-verbal behavior. These results can be explained by the lack of direct exposure to other cultures.

A more detailed review of the demographic variables the study looked at - gender, age, education, region of residence - in both countries resulted in several findings. One clear finding the results revealed is that gender differences were not statistically significant in both countries, though the expectation was for women to have a higher cultural intelligence than men. Both men and women answered all the questions in relatively similar ways. In the Ukrainian study negative correlation between older participants and the respondents' agreement level with the 20 questions. Thus the older the participants, the less likely they were to demonstrate "cultural intelligence" as measured by the CQS instrument. This finding can be explained by the fact that older Ukrainians have been less exposed to foreign influences during their lifetime, they have had fewer travel opportunities abroad. In Moldova, however, there are no particular differences between the different age groups.

The education variable has shown a positive correlation between the higher level of education and all cultural intelligence items of the scale. The scores were particularly high for the *MOT 4 I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me an* item from the scale. A causal relationship is not automatically implied here, but it does open new avenues of research, looking into why this positive correlation exists.

In the Ukrainian study, considering the specific of the country, respondents were also invited to identify their primary language to use in the questionnaire: Russian or Ukrainian. Relevant differences were identified in the assessment of the responses of the two groups. The Russian language speakers have registered in about two-thirds of the questions high levels (self-reported) of cultural intelligence. Nonetheless, the results show that in the questions that have measured the ability to change verbal and non-verbal behaviors in cross-cultural encounters Ukrainian speakers have had a higher score.

The Ukrainian results were also tested against the four regions in Ukraine: Center, South, East, and West. Although these geographical regions are delimited precisely, relevant differences were identified between the southern part of the country and the other three regions. Generally, the means of the central, eastern and western parts were lower than for the southern region. "As the south region has the highest percentage of Russian speakers, it might be expected that the findings would be similar to the pattern observed in the language results" (Johnson & Buko, 2013).

In the Moldovan study, additional findings were brought to light by the rural - urban testing of the results, which have shown lower CQ in the rural area compared to the urban one, which was explained by other variables as well, e.g. education. However, new research potential was uncovered by the comparison of CQ data between the western and eastern borders of Moldova. The Eastern borders regions have presented a general 90% lower CQ on all items compared to the Western ones.

The findings from this national study in both Moldova and Ukraine demonstrate that cultural intelligence study in the region presents relevant results from a sociological, historical and even psychological perspectives, but also leadership, management, and capacity building ones, which are now further pursued by the authors in a more in-depth analysis of the results.

Conclusions

Cultural intelligence becomes crucial in the selection of individuals for management and leadership purposes. The selection is more often than not based on the technical expertise and other factors as a willingness to relocate (Kim & Van Dyne, 2011).

In this paper, the authors have discussed the cultural intelligence measurement in the context of Eastern Europe, looking at the data stemming from the original research undertaken by the authors in two CQ measurement studies, in Ukraine and Moldova. Cultural intelligence implications for management and leadership are extensively discussed and analyzed in the American and Western European organizational context. However, a national assessment of cultural intelligence and, especially in Eastern Europe, represents a novelty in the field. Initiating the application of the cultural intelligence scale in Eastern Europe has contributed to obtaining results that have real practical management and leadership implications for the training and selection of leaders.

An important result of the analysis represents the differences among the four dimensions, as well as the differences noted within each dimension. This outcome is crucial as cross-cultural, intercultural communication and contact, and cultural intelligence, in general, can represent a practical tool for managers and leaders to apply.

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Appendix. The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)
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

Metacognitive CQ:
MC1 I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.
MC2 I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.
MC3 I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.
MC4 I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.

Cognitive CQ:
COG1 I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.
COG2 I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.
COG3 I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.
COG4 I know the marriage systems of other cultures.
COG5 I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.
COG6 I know the rules for expressing non-verbal behaviors in other cultures.

Motivational CQ:
MOT1 I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
MOT2 I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.
MOT3 I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.
MOT4 I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.
MOT5 I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture.

Behavioral CQ:
BEH1 I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.
BEH2 I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.
BEH3 I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.
BEH4 I change my non-verbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.
BEH5 I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.