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# TEACHING TOURISM STUDENTS WITH CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

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## **Abstract**

There is need to advance cross-cultural educations to better prepare tourism students for the nuances of a modern, multicultural century. This article makes a contribution by proposing an approach to developing students' cultural intelligence that is based on the cultural intelligence (CQ) model and experiential learning theory. The Cultural intelligence index was obtained through the Cultural Intelligence Scale (Ang et al., 2007). This longitudinal research was done by measuring CQ of students who attend cross-cultural tourism and foreign languages course at the beginning of the first year and at the end of the year. Cultural knowledge is incorporated into our classroom teaching styles and methodology. The study involved 143 students from Juraj Dobrila University in Pula studying tourism. The implementations of methods in teaching cross culture result in the improvement of students' CQ and all of its components (metacognition, cognition, motivation and behaviour). We discuss our findings in relation to cultural adjustments and development of culturally intelligent students who will become multiculturally educated and globally engaged citizens.

**Keywords:** tourism, trends, multiculturalism, cultural exchange, education.

*Jel Classification:* A22; M21

## **INTRODUCTION**

Globalisation and the increasingly multicultural characteristic of many countries and societies have placed an acute spotlight on whether nations are able to develop citizens who are multiculturally educated and globally engaged. The influences of globalisation

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on tourism are numerous, but also of tourism on globalisation (encouragement of communications, cultural exchange, presentations and familiarisation with identity, etc.).

As the leading world destination, Europe creates market differentiation by sustainable developmental policies (Tourism 2030 – a SDG2030 partnership) and by regulation of consumer protection (*European tourism policy*). It gravitates towards the improvement of educational policies in the fields of engineering, hospitality and tourism studies, IT practitioners, health and social care (EU document, Education and Training in Europe 2020) and interdisciplinary issues.

Within the tourism study programmes, students often focus on different perspectives, behaviours and competences (Tribe 2002). Specialised knowledge, as an answer to new trends in tourism (especially cultural specialisations) are becoming a modern tourism priority. It is necessary to develop specialisations through educational programmes and through lifelong learning programmes. Furthermore, the problem that can occur in tourism cultural education is related to numerous developmental issues, starting from where a specific destination's tourism wishes to go and whether there is a lack of workforce in certain countries which show a high tourist dependence. However, regardless of whether students are educated in accordance with general, special programmes from the scientific field of tourism, or interdisciplinary studies, cultural intelligence model and experimental learning theory are becoming universal educational models. With this, the tourism study programmes are becoming recognisable and widely market acceptable.

The educational system does not adopt and implement changes at the speed in which tourism market stakeholders do it and frequently cannot adequately support changes, i.e. manage changes in tourism. The paper should help understand the transfer of education in accordance with stakeholders' needs and in line with global trends in tourism, primarily cultural ones. By the research, the level of acquired cultural competencies of students of the study programme of Tourism is analysed. The purpose of the research is to point out the need of developing competencies which improve interpersonal relationships, a better understanding of the information provided about the destination and experience, manifested through experiences, as a part of future tourist perspectives. It is necessary to consider cultural competencies and experiences in educational initiatives and to provide contributions to destinations by means of orientation towards problems and development of so-called "soft skills" by promoting intercultural competence.

## **1. TRENDS AND INNOVATIONS IN TOURISM**

Tourism is associated with the terms of tolerance, multiculturalism, cultural exchange, creation of general good and friendship, (UNWTO 1999). Due to emergence of high international competition, countries turn to a dual destination image. "Cultural tourist arrivals are growing steadily compared to overall international arrivals. They are about 40% of international arrivals and travellers who participate in a cultural visit or activity as part of their stay" (Report on Tourism and Culture Synergies, UNWTO 2015).

Apart from the sun and the sea, cultural contents are offered, which includes also a high level of cultural competencies. Research is intensified related to the possibilities of destination development through the added value of the cultural tourist product, the level of encouragement of cultural tourism initiatives and cross-border cooperation, with the accent on regional tourism development (Richards 2005; McKercher and du Cros 2002; Dwyer 2015).

All of these signals point to the need to improve competencies of the culture and tourism stakeholders through interdisciplinary approach. It is also important to take into account the retrograde process (bottom-up), i.e. stakeholder to national policy, and to again evaluate the importance of specific knowledge in line with the market needs.

According to Koh (1995), Fidgeon (2011), Perman and Mikinac (2014) there is a lack of relevance of tourism curriculum to the tourism industry's needs. Cross-cultural education can be of help in the field of educational issues, with the accent on a more detailed study of the modalities of linking of the tourism practice and science, integrated into the learning process and the quality of the obtained results (creation of networks of knowledge and of creative climate). Students priority of tourism study become *Trends and innovations in tourism* and *Ethical and social responsibilities* with the greater accent on education about Interpersonal skills, Grzinic 2018).

The need for development of competences (especially cross-cultural), which refer to clients and fulfilment of their experiences, will improve future tourism organisations as service/experience providers and destinations, i.e. learning/acquisition of new knowledge (creative and reflective education).

## 2. CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Recently, scholars proposed the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) to better understand and explain differences in cross-cultural effectiveness. Ang, Van Dyne and Tan (2011) describe a confluence of phenomena at the turn of the 21st century that served as the backdrop for the emergence of cultural intelligence as a research construct: globalization on the one hand and the proliferation of ethnic conflicts and tensions around the globe on the other. CQ is a specific form of intelligence focused on the ability to grasp, reason, and behave effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity (Ang et al. 2007; Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2006). This definition of CQ as a capability emphasizes a person's potential to be effective across a wide range of intercultural contexts. Cultural intelligence differs from the capability to function effectively in a specific culture. Furthermore, CQ represents a system of interacting knowledge and skills, linked by cultural metacognition that enables people to adapt to, select, and shape the cultural aspects of their environment (Thomas et al. 2008).

Cultural intelligence is critically important to the operational effectiveness of multinational organizations and has been the topic of interest for many researchers (Ang et al. 2007; Korabik, Oliver, and Kondratuk 2009). Many in the business world and organizational research believe that those who perform well in intercultural settings are displaying cultural intelligence (Earley and Mosakowski 2004; Alon and Higgins 2005).

Cultural intelligence is a meta-competency, which identifies skills that contribute to the ability to effectively interact in often complex cultural environments (Ang et al. 2007). These skills include a desire to understand cultural differences (Brislin et al. 2006) and the acceptance of a certain degree of cross-cultural confusion (Earley and Peterson 2004).

To measure CQ, Earley and Ang (2003) developed the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), which has been used in an increasing number of studies. The cultural intelligence model (Earley and Ang 2003) draws on Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) multiple-loci view of intelligence and comprises four factors:

- metacognitive cultural intelligence, which reflects an individual's mental capability to acquire and understand cultural knowledge;
- cognitive cultural intelligence, which reflects an individual's knowledge about cultures and cultural differences;
- motivational cultural intelligence, which reflects an individual's capability to direct and sustain effort toward functioning in intercultural situations;
- behavioural cultural intelligence, which reflects an individual's capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions when interacting with people from different cultures.

According to Earley and Mosakowski (2004), a key factor in cultural intelligence is self-efficacy, in that people high in cultural intelligence are able to persevere in the face of challenges, particularly as it relates to new environments.

Research investigating antecedents and outcomes of CQ report several interesting findings. Crowne (2008) found that both the type of cultural exposure (vacation vs. education vs. work) and the depth of exposure (number of countries visited) has a positive effect on CQ.

Kim and Van Dyne (2012) showed how CQ serves to mediate the relationship between prior intercultural contact and one's international leadership potential. Templer, Tay, and Chendraseker (2006) reported that motivational CQ was significantly correlated with several aspects of cross-cultural adjustment like work, general and social interaction. Similarly, Imai and Gelfand (2010) revealed a positive correlation between international experience and behavioural CQ in a sample of East-Asian and US students in a US university. Van Dyne et al. (2008) found that self-rated and peer-rated behavioural and motivational CQ predicted interactional adjustment. Tarique and Takeuchi (2008) reported that international nonwork experience significantly improves CQ. Analysing the results of their study Ramalu et al. (2010), concluded that there was a significant correlations between the length of stays abroad and three of the four CQ dimensions (metacognitive, cognitive, and behavioural CQ).

In a business context, a culturally intelligent manager could make better decisions in cross-cultural contexts and could communicate and negotiate more effectively with foreign partners (Imai and Gelfand 2010). CQ has been proposed as an important capacity in cross-cultural management (Earley and Ang 2003). Cross-cultural scholars (e.g., Bhawuk and Brislin 2000) have called for continued advancement toward richer training approaches. Elenkov and Manev (2009) found that trained managers could appropriately motivate employees from various cultures.

Based on experience, education, and personality, different people achieve different levels of CQ; the more advanced one's CQ generally the more effective the person is in new cultural environments (Ang, Van Dyne, and Koh 2006; Earley and Mosakowski 2004). In a study by Chen, Liu, and Portnoy (2011), cultural adjustment and intercultural negotiation skills were linked to those high in motivational CQ. Imai and Gelfand (2010) found that individuals higher in overall CQ were more cooperative and had a greater desire to understand their surroundings compared with individuals who score lower in CQ.

Cultural intelligence represents a promising advancement in the area of cross-cultural training and tourism. Experiential approaches for CQ development have been proposed as highly effective; however, there is a lack of CQ-specific approaches in the tourism literature.

This work overviews the concept of cultural intelligence and its relevance to tourism then highlights an experiential CQ education process and framework. CQ education is the process of developing the competencies and capacities, including cognitive/metacognitive, motivation, and behaviour, required for effective cultural interaction (MacNab 2012). According to Thomas and Inkson (2003), CQ education and development represent an area that has not received enough attention in specifying experiential education approaches. MacNab (2012) stated that most of studies about CQ were about the effect of CQ while the study about how education can increase someone's CQ still limited. We hypothesize that as:

- *Hypothesis 1:* Students will demonstrate statistically increased metacognitive aspects in CQ after the course.
- *Hypothesis 2:* Students will demonstrate statistically increased motivation aspects in CQ after the course.
- *Hypothesis 3:* Students will demonstrate statistically increased behaviour aspects in CQ after the course.
- *Hypothesis 4:* Female students will demonstrate higher aspects in all dimensions of CQ after the course in comparison to male students.

Therefore, this research will try to address the issues about how to increase someone's CQ by conduct cross-cultural and foreign languages courses to tourism students.

### 3. METHODS

This study involved undergraduate students studying at the University in Pula. The students had been attending cross-cultural tourism and foreign languages. Cultural knowledge was incorporated into our classroom teaching styles and cultural tourism and foreign languages course at the beginning of the first year and at the end of the year.

Cultural knowledge was incorporated into our classroom teaching styles and methodology. We combine in our courses different methods: lecturing, reading literature, sharing session, game, role-play, and focus group discussion. At the end of the course, students were given the same questionnaire used at the initial course to measure if there was improvement or not in their CQ after finishing it.

### 3.1. Participants

The study was carried out on 143 subjects. We started the research with a sample of 158 students, who were attending the first year of University studying tourism, but gradually, during the year, the number of students diminished to 143 students. Participation took place during regular class time.

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of respondents

Student demographics	Frequency (N=143)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	61	42,6%
Female	82	57,4%
Total	143	100%

The descriptive characteristics in Table 1. show that the sample consists of 57,4 percent female respondents and 42,6 percent male respondents.

### 3.2. Research instrument

Cultural Intelligence was measured with Cultural Intelligence Scale – CQS (Ang et al. 2007), which consists of 20 items covering the four dimensions of CQ: 4 metacognitive, 6 cognitive, 5 motivational and 5 behavioural.

The Metacognitive CQ scale consists of items such as “I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.” The Cognitive CQ scale consists of items such as “I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages”. The Motivational CQ scale consists of items such as “I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me”. The Behavioural CQ scale consists of items such as “I change my non-verbal behaviour when a cross-cultural interaction requires”. Each subscale is composed of items that measure the construct in a direct way (the highest degree of agreement corresponds to the maximum degree of consensus with the detected perspective). Regarding the scales used in the questionnaires the respondents were asked to express their agreement with a given statement using a five-point, Likert – type scale (from 1 = fully disagree, to 5 = fully agree). Instruments were completed with no personal identification (except sex and code) to insure anonymity and increase the probability of honest responses.

The self-report nature of the scale might be a cause for concern (Ward et al. 2009). However, it has originally been developed as a self-report scale (Ang et al. 2007) and has frequently been used in scholarly research studies (e.g. Engle and Crowne 2014; Koo Moon et al. 2012; Lee et al. 2013; Wood and St Peters 2014).

The reliability of the instrument was assessed by computing Cronbach alpha coefficients for each of the four components mentioned above, which resulted in .77 for metacognitive CQ, .76 for cognitive CQ, .76 for motivation CQ and 0.75 for behaviour CQ. The overall CQ instrument reliability for the study established a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.79.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results from the questionnaires were processed using SPSS for Windows (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and are classified in two groups:

- difference between students' meta-cognitive, cognitive, motivation and behaviour aspects in CQ before the course and after the course;
- differences between students' meta-cognitive, cognitive, motivation and behaviour aspects in CQ based on gender category.

In order to define if there are differences between students' meta-cognitive, cognitive, motivation and behaviour aspects in CQ before the course and after the course, we apply a paired t – test (table 2).

**Table 2.** Pre – and Post Means, Paired t-Test Results

Factors of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	Pre	Post	t	p
	Mean score	Mean score		
Metacognitive	3,80	4,10	-0,21	0,00
Cognitive	3,46	3,68	-0,11	0,00
Motivational	3,78	4,00	-0,12	0,01
Behavioural	3,35	3,61	-0,17	0,00

We found statistically significant differences linked to all *factors of cultural intelligence*. According to the results presented in Table 2, we may conclude that after the treatment metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural aspects experienced significant improvement.

These conclusions are based on the computed t – test of the differences in pre- and post-intervention CQ measurement means (2 – tailed significance levels) shown in above table.

Hypothesis 1 was supported, CQ – metacognitive change after the course ( $t = - 0.21$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ). The mean of students metacognitive CO was quite high ( $M = 3,80$ ) and it became higher after treatment ( $M = 4,10$ ). This result suggests that after the course our students were better in acquiring and understanding cultural knowledge. They were able to strategize before an inter-cultural encounter, to check assumptions during an encounter, and adjust mental maps when actual experiences differ from expectations.

Hypothesis 2 was supported, CQ – cognitive change after the course ( $t = - 0.11$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ). The average of students cognitive aspect in CQ was rather high ( $M = 3,46$ ) and increased after the course ( $M = 3,68$ ). According to the results, we may assume that after the course our students were better in understanding of how cultures are similar and how cultures are different. They were more knowledgeable in the norms, practices, conventions and languages in different cultures.

Hypothesis 3 was supported, CQ – motivation change after the course ( $t = - 0.12$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Before the treatment, the motivational aspect was already high ( $M = 3,78$ ) and after the course it increased ( $M = 4,00$ ) suggesting that after the course our participants were more interested in experiencing other cultures and interacting with people from different cultures. We believe that they applied more energy toward learning about and functioning in cross-cultural situations.

Hypothesis 4 was supported, the behavioural aspect also faces a statistically significant improvement ( $t = -0.17$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ) from before the treatment ( $M = 3,35$ ) and after the treatment ( $M = 3,61$ ). We may assume that after the course our students were better to adapt verbal and nonverbal behaviour so it is appropriate for different cultures. Our findings are in line with findings from MacNab (2012) who found that through experimental education training about cross culture, the participants improved their CQ. The results are similar to those presented by McCrea and Yin (2012). The authors stated that through education, students' CQ underwent an improvement. Some research has also found that higher levels of CQ were related to exposure to other cultures through education and employment abroad (Crowne 2008; Templer et al. 2006). Ang et al. (2011) reported that individual language skills are positively related to levels of cultural intelligence; Some scholars stated that although related to other types of social intelligence, CQ is also unique (Brislin et al. 2006; Earley and Ang 2003; Thomas 2006) and people can be taught these skills (Earley and Ang 2003; MacNab, Worthley, and Brislin 2007). CQ development is viewed as an ongoing commitment, and there are levels of CQ generally ranging from basic to advanced (Earley and Mosakowski 2004; Thomas 2006).

In order to define if there are differences between students' meta-cognitive, cognitive, motivation and behaviour aspects in CQ based on gender category we apply a paired t – test.

**Table 3.** Means by gender, Paired t-Test Results

Factors of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	Male	Female	t	p
	Mean score	Mean score		
Meta-cognitive	3,83	3,92	-0,04	0,62
Cognitive	3,59	3,62	-0,01	0,87
Motivational	3,85	3,93	-0,16	0,51
Behavioural	3,32	3,73	-0,42	0,01

Another aim of the study was to investigate differences on the CQ factors based on gender category. In order to define if there are differences between genders a paired t – test was applied.

Differences occurred among males and females with females scoring higher. There was a statistically significant difference only on Behavioural CQ dimension ( $t = -0,42$ ;  $p = 0,01$ ) suggesting that men and women differ in their levels of cultural intelligence. Females demonstrated a more significant advancement with the behaviour component of CQ.

We believe that female students are more capable to adapt verbal and nonverbal behaviour that is appropriate for different cultures. We think that they have a flexible repertoire of behavioural responses that are appropriate in a variety of situations. Ang et al. (2011) found that those who have a broad repertoire of verbal and nonverbal behavioural capabilities feel better adjusted in situations characterized by cultural diversity.

Our results are in line with findings from MacNab (2012). The author reported that in his research females demonstrated a more significant advancement with the behaviour component of CQ. The findings of our study are similar to those presented by Bucker et al. (2015). The authors stated that female respondents scored higher than male respondents did and it appeared that women are better equipped to develop CQ and succeed in foreign assignments. The authors reported that this result might mean that women are more effective than men in cross-cultural communication because of their higher CQ.



## CONCLUSION

This experimental research overviews the concept of cultural intelligence and its relevance to students then highlights an experiential CQ education process and framework. It was done by measuring CQ of students who attended cross-cultural tourism and foreign languages course at the beginning and at the end of the course. During the course, the students were offered intercultural skills development opportunities, which were integrated into the traditional curricula (lecturing, reading literature, sharing session, game, role-play, and focus group discussion). Empirical findings suggest that the process statistically significant enhanced all areas of participant CQ development.

As stated in the results section, there was a statistically significant difference based on gender category. Although all areas were significantly affected, behaviour areas of CQ development were most significantly influenced with female respondents scoring higher than male respondents.

Cultural intelligence, a theory-based and empirically rigorous construct propounds an ideal framework for promoting intercultural competence. Therefore, teachers are faced with both the chance and challenge to lead and teach with cultural intelligence and develop culturally intelligent students.

Regarding the direction of future research, we highlight the importance of investigating the link between cultural intelligence, cultural dimensions of one's identity and one's language. It seems apparent that an ideal population from which to test these associations would be students studying at our University who declare themselves bilingual. The process established in this article can be replicated in other education environments.

This study contains some limitations. First, we used self-reported CQ measures, which might have influenced our results. We recommend that future research should superior-rated measures to replicate and validate our findings. The another limitation of the study is a small sample size.

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