

Demystifying intercultural competence:

A comparative analysis of assessment methods

In the Winter term 2023 the seminar Current Research in Behavioral International Management of the BIM chair focuses on comparing and contrasting the main measurement approaches that are used to assess intercultural competence (ICC) in international management (IM) research. In the Summer term 2023 we conducted this seminar with the same topic but in the coming Winter term we will focus on different ICC measures.

ICC can be defined as an individual's ability to understand, communicate effectively, and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. In our seminar we will refer to ICC but, in the literature, also other labels are used, such as cross-cultural competence and global competence among others. ICC requires a set of abilities, such as the ability to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect, being aware of one's own cultural biases and values as well as being able to appreciate and understand different cultural perspectives, norms, and behaviors. Effective ICC enables individuals to build positive relationships and effectively work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, which is increasingly important in today's globalized business world. ICC measures are an important in navigating intercultural differences through competence assessment, e.g. in selecting candidates for expatriate positions or identifying leaders for intercultural teams.

ICC can be measured through various survey measures (more than 50 ICC measures or closely related measures are available) that vary in their focus, scope and methods, but all aim to provide a comprehensive picture of an individual's ICC. Some measures use more general questions and statement to assess ICC, while other ICC measure are more criterion specific in their questions and statements. The main goal of the seminar is that each team of students compares and contrast one specific ICC measures with the most commonly used assessment tool, namely the 20-item Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS). Thus, throughout the seminar, students compare and contrast their assigned ICC measure with the CQS benchmark, considering their strengths and weaknesses.

The seminar will begin by defining ICC and its significance in today's globalized world. Then, the students will be introduced to the different ICC measures. The seminar participants will then delve into one specific measure, exploring the theoretical foundations, method of administration, validity, reliability, measurement invariance, the actual content domain of the measure, and the results it produces.

This includes a comprehensive critical review of the definition, conceptualization, and measurement of the ICC measure as well as an overview of the associations of this ICC measure various relevant work-outcomes. The overview of these relationships requires a thorough literature search, coding, and analysis of quantitative studies. If a sufficient number of quantitative empirical studies have examined the relationships between the ICC measure and relevant outcomes, a vote-counting approach should be applied. The vote-counting approach refers to counting the number of studies that support or refute a particular hypothesis on an association (e.g., ICC is positively associated with expatriate job

performance) to provide a quantitative assessment of criterion validity. Finally, the seminar will conclude by exploring the future of ICC assessment and how advancements in research are shaping the field as well as their practical applications and importance in today's international business context.

The main learning objective of the seminar is to conduct a deep dive into ICC assessment approaches to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of ICC and the different measures that can be used to assess ICC. Teams of three students will work together, tackling one specific measure and comparing it with the CQS. The specific ICC measure and team members are assigned in the week before the seminar starts. The first week of the seminar is used to develop an understanding of the actual topic of the project and to build the foundation for the literature search and the analysis on the ICC measure. We offer several Q&A sessions during the Summer term in which the teams have the opportunity to ask questions to clarify open issues. In the elearning forum students can ask their questions at any time and will receive an answer within two working days. Each team will receive starting literature tailored to their specific topic. General readings related to each part of the paper (introduction, theory, method, results, and discussion) will be provided during the project.

At the end of the scientific project each team submits a paper (about 25 to 30 text pages at the end of week 12 of the teaching period) and presents to and discusses their findings with the other teams (15minute presentation and 10-minute discussion in weeks 13 and 14 of the teaching period). The grading of the scientific project will be based on the presentation (15%), participation in the discussion after the presentations (5%), and the final paper (80%).

ICC measures: Same same but different? Join this seminar and let's find out!

Starting literature

We hope that the following literature sparks interest in this topic and the methodology. Please see the references below for landmark papers that summarize the topic.

The CQS – our point of reference:

Ang, S., Van Dyne, L., Koh, C., Ng, K. Y., Templer, K. J., Tay, C., & Chandrasekar, N. A. (2007). Cultural intelligence: Its measurement and effects on cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaptation and task performance. *Management and Organization Review*, 3(3), 335-371.

Valuable literature reviews of how ICC is measured in IM research:

Ang, S., Ng, K. Y., & Rockstuhl, T. (2020). Cultural competence. In Oxford research encyclopedia of psychology. Oxford University Press.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.567>.

Chen, X., & Gabrenya Jr, W. K. (2021). In search of cross-cultural competence: A comprehensive review of five measurement instruments. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 82, 37-55.

Leung, K., Ang, S., & Tan, M. L. (2014). Intercultural competence. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1(1), 489-519.

Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. C. (2013). Assessing cross-cultural competence: A review of available tests. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 44(6), 849-873.

Richter, N. F., Schlaegel, C., Taras, V., Alon, I., & Bird, A. (2023). Reviewing half a century of measuring cross-cultural competence: Aligning theoretical constructs and empirical measures. *International Business Review*, 102122.

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