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# Cultivating Global Entrepreneurship: Integrating Cultural Intelligence into Entrepreneurship Education

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**Questions We Care About - Objectives** In the rapidly globalizing world, entrepreneurship education faces the challenge of preparing future leaders who can navigate the complexities of diverse cultural landscapes. This paper addresses the critical gap in current entrepreneurship programs by integrating Cultural Intelligence (CQ) into the curriculum. The primary objective is to explore how a more profound incorporation of CQ can enhance students' entrepreneurial capabilities, preparing them for success in the international market.

**Approach** The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining a comprehensive literature review, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of course material from the Minor in International Entrepreneurship and Development at TU Delft. The literature review establishes a foundation for understanding the significance of CQ in global entrepreneurship. The semi-structured interviews with students participating in the minor provide insights into their pre-departure preparation and experiences abroad. Course materials are analyzed through the lens of the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) to identify gaps and opportunities for integrating CQ into the curriculum.

**Results** The findings reveal that while students are prepared in CQ Knowledge, there is a significant opportunity to enhance their CQ Strategy, Drive, and Action skills. Interviews indicated that students with previous international experience displayed a higher level of CQ in strategizing and adapting their behaviour in culturally diverse environments. However, the analysis of course material suggests that the current curriculum focuses predominantly on CQ knowledge, with limited activities designed to develop Strategy, Drive, and Action components of CQ.

**Implications** The research highlights the importance of experiential learning in developing CQ among entrepreneurship students. Students can enhance their ability to adapt and innovate across cultural boundaries by engaging in real-world projects in culturally diverse settings. The findings suggest incorporating structured CQ training and experiential learning opportunities into the entrepreneurship curriculum, aiding students' preparedness for global entrepreneurship.

**Originality** This paper contributes to the growing discourse on the necessity of CQ in entrepreneurship education. By integrating CQ into the curriculum, educators can provide students with the tools they need to succeed in the global market. This research offers practical recommendations for curriculum development, emphasizing the role of experiential learning in cultivating cultural intelligence. The unique contribution of this study lies in its comprehensive approach to evaluating and enhancing CQ within an established entrepreneurship program, providing valuable insights for educators and program designers aiming to prepare the next generation of global entrepreneurs.

**Key words:** *Cultural Intelligence (CQ), Entrepreneurship Education, Experiential Learning, Global Entrepreneurship, Curriculum Development*

# I. Introduction

In an era marked by rapid globalization and the increasing interconnectivity of markets, the landscape of entrepreneurship is undergoing a profound transformation. Today's entrepreneurs are no longer confined to their local environments; instead, they navigate a complex global ecosystem, engaging with diverse cultures, markets, and business practices. This shift has underscored the importance of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as an indispensable asset for entrepreneurs seeking to thrive in this new global context. Cultural Intelligence skills, or the ability to cross boundaries and prosper in multiple cultures, have emerged as a critical determinant of success in international business ventures (Helms et al., 2014).

We see it daily in the diversification of domestic workforces (Wu, 2019). These skills help predict and understand intercultural contexts and their outcomes. Examples of those contexts include cultural adaptation, expatriate job performance, global leadership, intercultural negotiation effectiveness, team processes in multicultural teams, and short-term programs abroad such as study abroad (Van Dyne et al., 2012).

Inspiring more young people to follow the route of entrepreneurship and cultural intelligence starts with education. We need more well-designed educational programmes to make a difference and fill the gap (Earley & Peterson, 2004). These programmes are now often found as training programmes for executives or, in a few cases, courses for MBA-level students (Earley & Peterson, 2004) but not at the bachelor level where many entrepreneurial introductory programmes occur.

Despite its recognized importance, the integration of CQ into entrepreneurship education remains insufficiently explored and inadequately implemented while the need for entrepreneurs who are not only skilled in business practices but also adept at navigating cultural differences is more pressing than ever. This paper, inspired by Francesca van Marion's master thesis on "Cultural Intelligence as a Skill Taught in an Entrepreneurial Education Setting," (van Marion, 2024) seeks to bridge this gap by advocating for a more comprehensive approach to incorporating CQ into entrepreneurship education programs.

The core premise of this paper is that entrepreneurship education must evolve to include learning activities on Cultural Intelligence. Understanding, respecting, and adapting to cultural diversity is not an innate talent to most but a skill that can and should be cultivated through targeted educational initiatives. By integrating CQ into the curriculum, educators can equip future entrepreneurs with the tools they need to navigate the complexities of the global market, fostering a generation of leaders who are as culturally savvy as they are entrepreneurially astute. To explore this proposition, the following research question was devised: *How can cultural intelligence be better integrated into entrepreneurial education programmes?*

The paper is structured around two key objectives. First, it examines the synergies between entrepreneurship and Cultural Intelligence, highlighting how the latter enhances the former. Second, the paper reflects on the current state of entrepreneurship education, identifying gaps and opportunities for incorporating CQ training into academic programs.

The added value of this paper comes from the combination of two fields which inevitably meet in real life. It summarises research that has already been done and attempts to further explore the realm through an existing Minor program at the TU Delft. The latter provides a unique opportunity for students to learn about both CQ and entrepreneurship and for researchers to help provide practitioners and educators with new ideas on improving the education of both areas in tandem.

## **II. Research Approach**

### **A. Research Design**

Methodologically, the paper builds on a mixed-methods approach combining literature review, semi-structured interviews, and studying the course material of the Minor in International Entrepreneurship and Development at the TU Delft. The interviews are informed by the EntreComp Framework and the CQ Scale, two proven frameworks for evaluating the level of individuals skills.

The connection between entrepreneurship and CQ in an educational context was further explored in an exploratory manner. Literature was reviewed on educational settings for CQ and entrepreneurship and qualitative data was collected from students who are taking part in the minor International Entrepreneurship and Development. The data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus groups with students.

To select students, first, the students going to Tanzania and Uganda were asked for interviews. The two countries don't lie too far from each other and many student groups were going to these countries, making the individual participants less identifiable. Not all selected students were interested in interviews, so further groups were asked for interviews. Finally, teams going to Tanzania, Uganda and Costa Rica were interviewed. All interviews and focus group sessions were performed online.

The interview questions were based on two well-established frameworks: the EntreComp Framework (European Commission. Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion., 2018; European Commission. Joint Research Centre., 2018) and the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Engle & Crowne, 2014; Helms et al., 2014). Both were used to evaluate the individual's skill level in the respective area. The CQS was fully used, whereas only a few specific competencies were looked into for the EntreComp Framework. In particular, the ones most relevant or linked to Cultural Intelligence: Spotting Opportunities, Valuing Ideas, Ethical & Sustainable Thinking, Self-awareness & Self-efficacy, Motivation & Perseverance, Mobilising Others, Mobilising Resources, Taking Initiative, Working with Others, Coping with Uncertainty & Ambiguity and Learning through Experience.

The interviews were held at two different moments. First, individual interviews were held just before the students had left to go on their fieldwork trip abroad. The interview was intended as a pre-check moment for their awareness and knowledge of the four CQ facets. Then, the follow-up was with the student teams as a whole 2-3 weeks into their stay abroad. The assumption was that the students had time to experiment and reflect on their cultural experiences since starting their project so that they could be discussed in the group setting in the second interview.

### **B. Entrecomp Framework and CQ Scale for interview question deduction and topic definition**

The EntreComp Framework (European Commission. Joint Research Centre., 2018) and the CQ Scale (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008) are two frameworks that can be used to evaluate an individual's skill level. They break down the skill into competencies, which can be assessed individually. These competencies guided the interview questions and helped sort through the data to find topics the interviewees had in common and which differed.

### **C. CQ mapping of current course material**

Course material was also reviewed. Since the two frameworks (EntreComp and CQ) were created to help guide education programs by ensuring all competitions are included, the CQ facets were used to map the minor's course materials and learning objectives. This should shed light on which

aspects of the CQ framework may be missing in the minor curriculum and can be cross-checked with the information and thoughts gathered from the interviews with students.

#### D. Minor International Entrepreneurship and Development (IE&D)

This research focused on the TU Delft Minor International Entrepreneurship and Development (“International Entrepreneurship & Development”, 2023). This Minor programme of 30 ECTS is broken up into two quarters. In the first quarter, the students take three courses intended to prepare them for the second quarter, where they go abroad to do an intercultural research project, usually in the Global South.

They take the following three courses:

- Entrepreneurial Thinking (4 ECTS)
- Preparations for Intercultural Research Project (7 ECTS)
- Beyond Development: Pluriverse for Sustainability & Impact (4 ECTS)

### III. Literature Review

#### A. Introduction to Cultural Intelligence and Its Importance

##### 1. Globalisation as a Trigger for CQ

The world as we know it is becoming a more global place daily. When entrepreneurs used to focus on establishing themselves locally, they now often start building their business plans with an international vision in mind from the beginning (Helms et al., 2014). Working in the interconnected world requires more than IQ and emotional intelligence (EQ) skills.



**Figure 1. The 3 Q's (Wu, 2022)**

The latter has already been extensively documented in the literature concerning entrepreneurship. However, newer social intelligence types such as cultural intelligence (CQ) still require further research (Ang et al., 2020). Wu (2022) gives a deep yet simple overview of IQ, EQ and CQ and how they interact with each other. They conclude that in our modern world, you really need all three. Figure 1 gives an overview of how all three relate.

Emotional Intelligence is one that many leaders score highly in, as it gives them skills to work well together with others (Earley & Peterson, 2004). According to Rockstuhl et al. (2011) Emotional Intelligence predicts leadership success in domestic environments.

Emotional intelligence differs from cultural intelligence in a way that it is easier for managers and leaders to empathise with those more similar to them (Earley & Peterson, 2004) (which also explains how they relate better to those close to their own culture). Emotional intelligence reflects

how the individual performs problem-solving with others and how they can connect with others emotionally. It also explains how the individual is in control of their own reactions and emotions.

On the other hand, cultural intelligence predicts how well leaders or managers do in cross-cultural environments, or more specifically, in their "cross-border leadership effectiveness" (Rockstuhl et al., 2011). Earley and Peterson (2004) refer to cultural intelligence as a capability that allows the manager to adapt across cultural situations. It shows how the individual understands, reflects, interprets and acts on new cultural input.

The leap from high emotional intelligence in a domestic setting to high cultural intelligence in an intercultural setting can be large. Mainly, the difference comes in when we realise that emotional cues in one culture might be expressed differently or also interpreted differently in another culture (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Interpreting this, emotional intelligence skills in some interactions can completely fall flat if the cultural settings are vastly different.

There are many studies on management and leadership in the CQ context (Javidan et al., 2006; Nardon & Steers, 2008); but only a few studies make that connection with entrepreneurship (Helms et al., 2014). This is a gap that needs filling. We need to know more about how CQ skills can help entrepreneurs identify market gaps worldwide (Muzychenko, 2008) and understand the intricacies of entering these markets. This can range from understanding why the legal framework is the way it is in a given country or how to negotiate with potential partners and customers in the target market. Entrepreneurs with high CQ can increase the chance of success of business ventures and become a competitive advantage to the company when they play their cards well (Ang & Inkpen, 2008).

## 2. Defining Culture and Cultural Intelligence

Before continuing to explain cultural intelligence in more detail, we should take a quick look at what culture actually is. As taken from the course material van Andel (2023), Anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1871) defines culture as follows: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". We find culture in behaviour, whether verbal or non-verbal, but also material objects that are common to a group of people or a society.

Then, the concept of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) can be defined as follows:

*Cultural Intelligence, or CQ, is defined as the capability of an individual to function effectively <sup>1</sup>in situations characterised by cultural diversity. (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008)*

In other words, "an individual's capability to detect cultural rules and norms and to create new sets of cultural rules and norms to function effectively in culturally diverse environments" (Wu, 2019).

## 3. Cultural Flexibility

Individuals are not only influenced by their national country culture but also by regional, organisational, functional and even professional culture. This makes it hard to categorise people into simple country boxes. This also refers to how everyone has the same beliefs, values and behaviours in no country. People still differ in their personal needs and characteristics, even if they are different from their typical culture (Nardon & Steers, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup>Function effectively here is defined vaguely. As this study is not attempting to evaluate how effectively individuals work in cross-cultural situations, it can be left and simply acknowledged as vague in this statement.

It is important to remember that culture is complex. This is why we try to categorise people into cultural boxes according to their country and put them in perspective by comparing one culture with another. Mapping a culture is helpful to understanding behaviours, but it will not necessarily serve as a good predictor for all cultural behaviours (Nardon & Steers, 2008).

This is where the idea of cultural flexibility comes in. A term coined by Meyer (2014) in her book on the Culture Map. It is impossible to map a person's culture perfectly before you have met them, based only on their culture. They still have personalities and characters that affect their behaviour. In addition, you might be interacting with someone who is also actively trying to change their behaviour to adapt to yours. It is essential to realise this in all cultural interactions between oneself and another person.

Meyer (2014) describes authentic flexibility as having one foot rooted in your own culture and the other able to move left, right, back and forth to other cultures. It is all about being flexible during and between interactions by showing authentic leadership.

Earley and Mosakowski (2004) gives a very practical guide on how adapting to cultures and showing the effort put into adjusting to local customs can already win over trust. It is a way of proving that one has already, to some extent, entered and accepted their culture. The activity of changing behaviour will come easier to those who have exercised this more often in the past. It might also come easier to those who are in contact with more cultural diversity from their upbringing, maybe from moving around as a child or having more than one nationality in the family. This often comes from the fact that these individuals are likely to be more detached from their own culture, making it easier to adapt to new customs (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004).

#### *4. Challenges in Cultural Adaptation*

Nardon and Steers (2008) clearly show some of the top issues with cultural adaptation, which are also relevant to this study. They outline specifically the following three:

- 1) We don't always know in advance when an intercultural meeting is to happen. They happen on short notice or in the moment, which leaves little to no time to research and prepare in advance.
- 2) It is not always evident which culture we should adjust to.
- 3) Meetings across cultures more and more often happen online instead of in person.

These are challenges that we could face in our daily lives and are likely also issues the students of this minor will encounter.

## **B. Cultural Value Mapping and the Four-Factor Model of CQ**

### *1. Cultural Value Mapping*

Initial studies on CQ focused on mapping cultures based on various dimensions such as power distribution, individualism vs. collectivism, and time orientation. The idea is that an individual can map themselves and compare to a culture that they plan to visit or engage with. These mappings help in understanding and comparing cultural norms but have limitations in their predictive power for individual behaviors.

Nardon and Steers (2009) briefly summarises the existing models and how the models have evolved and overlap. Generally, they span anywhere from 3-9 dimensions, which can be displayed as scales.

The five core cultural dimensions that are most common between the models are:

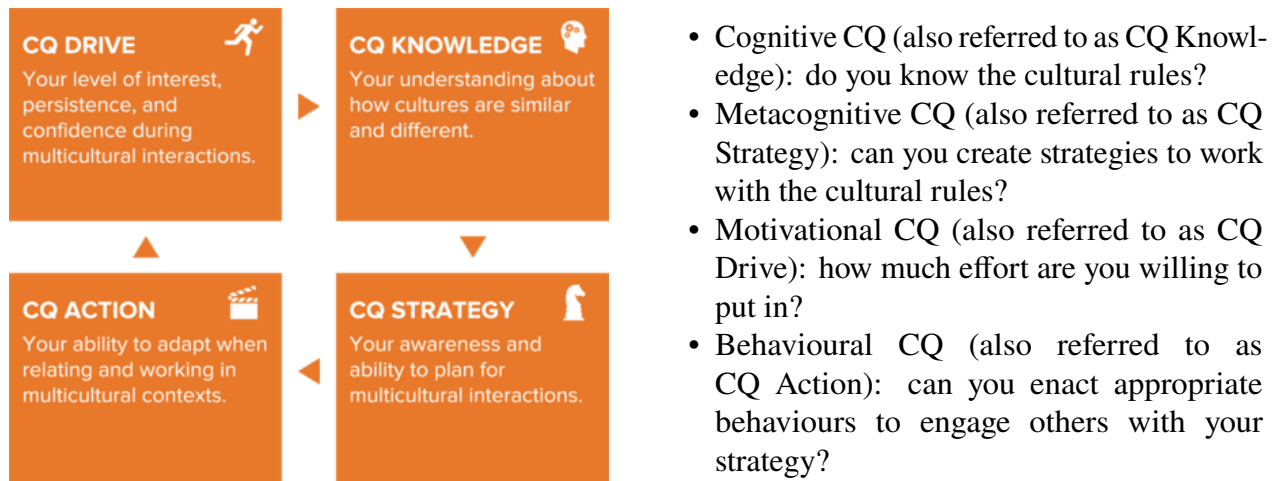
- hierarchy-equality = power organisation in groups and society in general

- individualism-collectivism = how social relationships manifest themselves in individuals and groups
- mastery-harmony = what relationship people have with the natural and social environment
- monochronism-polychronism = how time is used and organised
- universalism-particularism = the importance of relationships vs. rules when it comes to behavioural control

Culture Value Mapping teaches a lot about knowledge of culture, usually very specific. However, it misses the need to discuss and test strategies to improve our actions in foreign cultures. The following section will explain the four-factor model, which attempts to expand on the latter.

## 2. Four-Factor Model of CQ

To break down cultural intelligence and find actionable ways to improve the skill, Van Dyne et al. (2012) write about the four-factor model. It breaks cultural intelligence down into four factors and then further dimensions. First, the four factors are:



**Figure 2. Four Factor Model Cultural Intelligence (Cultural Intelligence Center, 2018)**

**Cognitive CQ or CQ Knowledge** *"The individual's knowledge structures about cultural institutions, norms, practices and conventions in different cultural settings."* (Van Dyne et al., 2012)

It is divided into two subdimensions:

- Culture-general knowledge = knowledge of universal elements that make up a cultural environment
- Culture-specific knowledge = declarative knowledge about manifestations of cultural universals in a specific domain as well as the procedural knowledge required to know how to be effective in that area

The first refers to knowledge that can be either objective or subjective. It allows individuals to categorise information and organise an easy framework for cultural differences and similarities. Objective culture is everything that can be seen, as well as fundamental human needs and relating to others, the universe and the environment. It will include many things like typical roles of males and females, knowledge about economic, legal and political systems, and religious beliefs. Subjective culture is more about the hidden psychological features of cultures. These could be values, beliefs,



norms and assumptions.

Context-specific knowledge can be based on a domain. This is either culture context-specific or the domain might be a particular subculture<sup>2</sup>.

**Metacognitive CQ or CQ Strategy** *"The individual's level of conscious cultural awareness and executive processing during cross-cultural interactions."* (Van Dyne et al., 2012)

It consists of three subdimensions:

- Planning = the act of strategising before entering a culturally diverse situation.
- Awareness = knowledge of self and others in real-time and knowing that cultural thinking exists
- Checking = reviewing assumptions and adapting mental assumptions when actual experiences differ from what the individual expected

During planning, the mind is making action plans. Planning happens in advance when the individual considers the interaction's long-term and short-term goals and consequences.

Awareness is something that happens in an individual in real-time. The individual knows how culture influences the individual's mental processes and behaviours and those of others in the interaction. The individual is also aware of the intercultural situation by reading the room. Awareness also relates to how individuals can make sense of themselves and others in cross-cultural situations.

When the individual is checking, they are checking their own and others' cultural assumptions. These interpretations are also checked after the interaction. This is all part of the adjustment process. It is comparing what we thought would happen to what is happening in reality.

**Motivational CQ or CQ Drive** *"The individual's capability to direct attention and energy towards learning about and functioning in situations characterised by cultural differences."* (Van Dyne et al., 2012)

We find three sub-dimensions:

- Intrinsic interest = because it is inherently satisfying, the individual values the culturally diverse experience in and of itself
- Extrinsic interest = the individual values the tangible, personal benefits that can come from culturally diverse experiences
- Self-efficacy to adjust = task-specific confidence but applied to culturally influenced situations

Intrinsic interest can come from the straightforward enjoyment of working with international people or the interest in working in diverse teams. These intrinsic benefits are generated by oneself and are not dependent on the situation or others.

Extrinsic interest is linked to the benefits one can get from the skill, often professionally—for example, the sense of being more employable because of these multicultural experiences.

Finally, self-efficacy is an essential factor in motivation. The feeling of capability and being able to deal with the stress that comes with adjusting to a new culture contributes to self-efficacy. Overcoming the feeling of failure when communication mishaps arise is a big part of staying motivated to improve CQ skills.

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<sup>2</sup>These could be, for example, diplomats, educators, business managers, engineers or demographic subgroups.

**Behavioural CQ or CQ Action** *"Individual's capability to enact a wide repertoire of verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people from different cultures."* (Van Dyne et al., 2012)

This factor is divided into three important factors:

- Verbal behaviour = flexibility in vocalisation
- Non-verbal behaviour = flexibility in communication that is communicated with gestures, facial expressions, and body language instead of through words
- Speech acts = changes in the manner of communicating specific types of messages: requests, invitations, apologies, gratitude, disagreement, and saying no

Verbal behaviour includes things like accent and tone, the way things are said. The words usually have some of the meaning in them but only sometimes all of it. It also includes speaking faster or slower and louder or softer. Inflection might also be varied, and the conversation partner might use pauses and silences. With these things, it is possible to change the amount of warmth, enthusiasm and formality conveyed.

Nonverbal behaviour includes body language, clothing, and how formal or informal it is based on the situation. Greetings are also a large part of nonverbal communication. Facial expressions and gestures make up a lot of nonverbal behaviour. How close individuals sit and stand next to each other and changing the amount of eye contact are also considered behavioural.

Speech acts are usually quite different depending on where you are. Expressing these things appropriately, depending on where you are, is also highly important.

### **C. CQ Training and Education**

#### *1. Traditional vs. New Approaches*

Training and education in every field change and improve over time. CQ education also has traditional ways of teaching, which have been criticised with recommendations for improvements. Earley and Peterson (2004) and Van Dyne et al. (2012) mention how traditional training for CQ is very focused on context-specific knowledge. The training participants are generally prepared to live in a foreign country by being taught about the culture. However, once they get there, they will likely encounter international people worldwide and have to deal with many cultures simultaneously. Subcultures will also be present, even in an international crowd, and this and the host country's culture will require the skills to adjust quickly to new environments. There should be more focus on learning the range of cultural variations instead.

Ang et al. (2020), Earley and Peterson (2004), and Engle and Crowne (2014) also refer to the problems in current training forms.

Specifically, Earley and Peterson (2004) mentioned that intercultural training is now almost synonymous with cultural value models by authors like Hofstede, Triandis and many more. Also, Erin Meyer (Meyer, 2014) uses the idea of cultural value models to help the reader understand cultural intelligence. Earley and Peterson (2004) argues that this approach has a problem: awareness of cultural values cannot substitute knowledge of interpersonal interactions. The same goes for how values on their own are not very predictive of human behaviour. The link between cultural values and the individual's actions is not very strong, even though there are many decades worth of research on it by, for example, Triandis (2000) and his other texts.

One of the reasons Earley and Peterson (2004) argue their point is because global managers are spending less and less time in a specific country, making it hard to keep teaching only for the target country.

Engle and Crowne (2014) extend this thought process by writing about how international

experience can impact cultural intelligence. They base their research on cultural intelligence theory and contact hypothesis theory. The latter proposes that higher contact in a contextual environment can improve inter-group relations. Their research concludes that they see a significant increase in the four factors of CQ after the short-term experience abroad. There are, of course, also limitations to consider in this research. The honeymoon phase when arriving in a new country can impact the results.

Summary of the inefficiencies of current training (Earley & Peterson, 2004):

- There is an assumption that all individuals need similar amounts of exposure and training.
- Most cultural training is currently based on cognitive or knowledge-based training and awareness of the target culture only. The training is missing the metacognitive aspect.
- Training programs assume a strong link between cultural values/norms and behaviours of the individual with the culture. This is a simplistic way of looking at the culture and behaviour of a person from a particular culture.
- Training relies on analogue learning. There is no discussion on the themes behind the answers for learning activities. There is not enough room for reflection in the simulations. Earley and Peterson (2004) explains it well: "Most people have relatively limited capacity for transferring a concept from an example case to a novel situation unless there is a specific discussion of the metacognitive strategies in the various teaching tools."

Earley and Peterson (2004) recommend that future training includes metacognitive, motivational, and behavioural aspects. It will be a significant change from the current way of training based on a cultural value system.

In addition, Ang et al. (2020) mention experiential learning theory by Kolb (1984) as a perspective that emphasizes the real-life experiences to develop capabilities as complex as CQ. Earley and Peterson (2004) come up with an interesting proposal on how to include more facets into education beyond just learning the knowledge.

Education and training serve as pivotal indicators of an individual's capacity to assimilate, retain, and interpret diverse experiences and information. While emotional intelligence aligns with cultural intelligence to an extent, the latter transcends the former by delving into the realm of adaptive behaviour (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Cultural intelligence (CQ) adds value by enabling individuals to cultivate new behaviours tailored to specific situations, breaking down its training into four distinct facets.

Commencing with metacognitive-cognitive facet training, individuals navigate their self-awareness, mental frameworks, and integration of personal knowledge and experiences with social identities and roles, strategically manoeuvring within these contexts. Mere awareness proves insufficient for ensuring success and adaptability in CQ encounters; individuals must also be willing to relinquish and replace outdated concepts with new ones, as emphasized by Meyer (2014). Metastrategy emerges as a critical component that participants must grasp through reflective practices and collaborative discourse to navigate novel situations effectively.

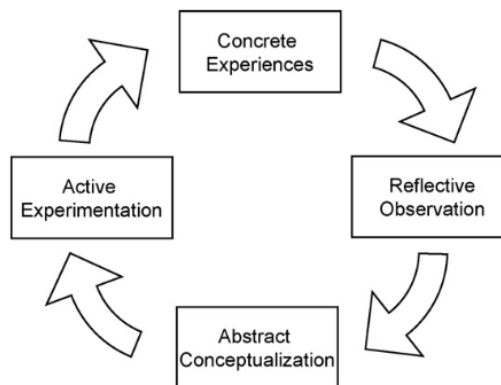
Subsequently, efficacy emerges as a significant influencer of motivational aspects within CQ (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Specifically, self-efficacy reflects individuals' confidence in devising solutions for cultural challenges, with low efficacy expectations predisposing individuals to quick abandonment in the face of communication failures. Conversely, individuals possessing high CQ and a robust sense of efficacy tend to work smartly and persistently to enhance their cultural competence (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Moreover, goal setting plays a crucial role, with even small

achievements serving as motivational milestones that propel individuals towards larger cultural integration objectives. Norms and values also shape motivational CQ, influencing individuals' preferred activities and their willingness to adapt their values to foster cross-cultural collaboration (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Understanding these dynamics fosters flexibility, particularly in diverse international team settings.

## 2. *Experiential Learning*

Engle and Crowne (2014) says that international experience and exposure increase the general level of CQ. Following this train of thought a little bit deeper, we see that Carlson and Widaman (1988) and Salisbury et al. (2009) make similar discoveries.

Carlson and Widaman (1988) find out that students who went abroad for one year of their study programme showed higher cross-cultural interest, levels of international political concern and cultural cosmopolitanism. The group also had more positive and critical viewpoints about their home country, in this case, the USA. This makes sense because it takes leaving one's own culture behind to look back on it critically and realise how one is different from others (Van Dyne et al., 2012).



**Figure 3. The Experiential Learning Process (Nardon & Steers, 2008)**

This brings us to how experiential learning can help build new and more efficient ways of training culture, for example, in an entrepreneurial setting. Experiential learning is a term coined by Kolb (1984), who sees learning as a process rather than a series of outcomes. Experience plays a central role in the learning cycle, as already shown in Figure 3.

Individual learning is related to the experiential learning theory. Nardon and Steers (2008) break it down into four stages: concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. The learning process might begin in any of the four stages shown in Figure 3.

Concrete experiences will give the individual a feeling that they have acted incorrectly. Those feelings will prompt the individual to try and understand what is happening through reflection. The individual will find the disconnect and see how what is happening differs from the expectation. Then, the individual will try to guess why the person reacted the way they did and make sense of that situation. During abstract conceptualisation, the individual will develop a theory of what is going on and find a plausible explanation for the solution to the problem. Finally, the solution is tested, and the results are observed, restarting the learning cycle.

The key elements to this cycle are grasping experiences and transforming them as needed.

Nardon and Steers (2008) additionally write about moving from individual learning (which we can see as related to traditional culture-specific learning in the classroom) to interdependent learning (which gives access to relying on others to learn together through discussion or role-plays in CQ). It means the participants can also rely on learning together and from each other as a group, seeing the learning process as a social activity.

Managers and entrepreneurs must "learn how to learn" about dealing with different cultures and novel situations in varied environments (Nardon & Steers, 2008).

Finally, one of the most interesting findings from Ng et al. (2009) is how a low level of CQ in an individual can even halt the experiential learning cycle. This study aims to explore this phenomenon and see if it is observed among student groups on projects abroad.

#### **D. Cultural Intelligence in an Entrepreneurial Context**

##### *1. What is Entrepreneurship?*

Entrepreneurs are often characterised by their competencies such as creativity, innovative thinking and risk-taking attitudes. The ability to meet objectives through planning and managing large projects is often also considered in Entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2012). This again shows how entrepreneurship is not limited to the activity of starting a company. Its competencies are also important in teams within companies or projects at university.

Another feature of Entrepreneurship is that it can, to some extent, be taught. Henry et al. (2005a, 2005b) talk about how there is a science part and an art part to entrepreneurship education. The science part is what is teachable, whereas the art part is what is mostly agreed on to be not teachable. Helms et al. (2014) also backs up the teachability of entrepreneurship. They also reiterate how risk-taking and opportunity-seeing have become key competencies for entrepreneurs.

Finally, and most importantly to this study, Helms et al. (2014) explicitly mentions that there is a growing need for entrepreneurs with a global mindset able to identify business opportunities beyond the borders of their home countries. Internationalisation strategy is becoming a core pillar from the start of the startup journey to market and, therefore, needs to be considered from day one.

##### *2. When Entrepreneurship meets Culture*

Entrepreneurship and Cultural Intelligence have notions in common, which Helms et al. (2014) explores extensively in their paper. They argue that EQ and entrepreneurship have been extensively studied. The same applies to entrepreneurial characteristics in undergraduate students: open-mindedness, need for achievement, pragmatism, tolerance of ambiguity, vision, risk-taking and internal locus control (Helms et al., 2014).

However, there is not much literature connecting CQ and Entrepreneurship, although there is seemingly a connection, making it important for entrepreneurs and their business success. Helms et al. (2014) list many references connecting entrepreneurship and cultural intelligence. Most importantly, they establish that "entrepreneurs capable of understanding, functioning and managing within global settings (possessing high CQ) create a competitive advantage by being valuable, rare, non-substitutable and inimitable (Ang & Inkpen, 2008; Helms et al., 2014). Their literature review concludes that "entrepreneurs high in CQ will be better able to function within a global setting and as such should be committed to increasing CQ as a supplement to enhancing entrepreneurial capabilities through commitment to entrepreneurial education".

The most meaningful connection that has been found between CQ and Entrepreneurship is that of self-efficacy, which is required for both successful entrepreneurship and cultural intelligence competencies. Self-efficacy is a term coined and deeply researched by (Bandura, 2012). It refers to how an individual is confident in their ability to succeed, which motivates them.

Self-efficacy improves the persistence that individuals engage in education (Zimmerman, 1995), and self-efficacy is also related to entrepreneurial intentions (Wilson et al., 2007). The individual needs to believe that they can gather funding and make their dream happen; the simple knowledge of how to start a business is not enough (Helms et al., 2014). The same goes for motivational CQ

where the individual needs self-efficacy to stay motivated even after they fail in an intercultural situation (Earley & Peterson, 2004; Ng et al., 2009). They give an example saying that an individual can love the country and empathise with the people, but this does not mean they are motivated to face the challenges that will inevitably exist upon arrival in the host country. Other facets are also affected by self-efficacy, meaning the motivated individual is more likely to solve challenges and, therefore will likely also engage in more strategic thinking and reflection (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Earley and Peterson (2004) also explicitly state in their paper that "self-efficacy is a key to effective intercultural training". Ng et al. (2009) also reiterate the importance of self-efficacy in the effort to persist when tasks are challenging, also emotionally. They also make the connection with Bandura (2012)'s research.

This means that self-efficacy is also a required component for successful entrepreneurial behaviours related to high CQ.

This information clarifies that integrating CQ efficiently into entrepreneurial education programs is possible and encourages opportunity in a globalising world.

Finally, Şahin and Gürbüz (2020) also writes about how entrepreneurial orientation and international performance might be moderated by cultural intelligence. The study is part of the few studies that connect CQ and Entrepreneurship along with Helms et al. (2014).

### *3. The CQ Scale and the EntreComp Framework*

Developed by Ang and Van Dyne (2008), the CQS measures an individual's level of cultural intelligence across four facets: CQ Knowledge, CQ Strategy, CQ Drive, and CQ Action, through a 20-item scale. This tool can assess how individuals adapt to and function in diverse cultural settings, which is essential in global management and international projects. The scale has been utilized in various research settings, from interviews with global managers (Janssens & Cappellen, 2013) to evaluations of student groups in international settings (Engle & Crowne, 2014).

The EntreComp Framework (European Commission. Joint Research Centre., 2018) delineates 15 competencies crucial for entrepreneurship, structured into three categories: Ideas and Opportunities, Resources, and Into Action. These competencies encompass a wide range of skills from spotting opportunities and ethical thinking to self-awareness and coping with uncertainty. This framework is versatile, finding application in educational programs and professional assessments, and is tailored to meet specific contextual needs.

## **IV. Results**

### **A. Student Interview Results**

#### *1. Individual Interviews Pre-departure*

The 14 individual interviews intended as a pre-check moment at the end of Q1 (Quarter 1 of the academic year for students) before departure found and confirmed a few interesting points from the literature<sup>3</sup>.

Students' experience abroad and language ability varied. None of them mastered the language of the host country. All students' strongest languages were Dutch and English. The amount of time students had previous experience abroad is what set their answers apart the most. This is where some of the students' answers are differentiated in the different CQ categories. The findings on CQ Strategy and CQ Action explain this in more detail.

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<sup>3</sup>Only a few quotes from the original thesis are included in this paper for illustration purposes and to save space.

Starting with CQ Knowledge, the students were all relatively well prepared. They were all able to answer questions about Knowledge of the country they were visiting, and they had thoroughly prepared this before leaving through desk study and interviews with experts on the local culture.

CQ Drive was similar in the pre-check interviews. Motivations came extrinsically (extra activity completed while at university, academic growth beyond what the student would usually learn in everyday lectures) and intrinsically (learning by doing valued for its practicality, passion for travel abroad and interaction with new people) from the students demonstrated that they felt they were ready and up to the challenge of completing their research abroad.

The answers varied far more in the CQ Strategy and CQ Action components regarding the depth and reflectiveness used to respond. Students who had more experience abroad were defined as those who had spent three weeks or more abroad travelling, on exchange, or working on a project without parental guidance.

For CQ Strategy the students with less experience had the following to say, showing their thought rested mostly with the knowledge they had learned, not extending it to a strategy yet.

*'And trying to have communication of trust first. So maybe just get to know people before.'*

*'And we wrote down [in the report], [...], mostly just know all the information and tried to prepare ourselves. [...], so you already know what can happen.'*

The students with more experience came up with strategies that they would try as they are aware that they might run into issues. They were prepared beyond knowledge.

*'I think so, because there's just so much you can read online and I think. Only by just speaking to people it can really change a lot. So I think so. And it's also important to be adaptive because if I'm only doing what I think is right, it will never work. My way's not the best way to do it I think.'*

*'And then when we want to discuss business, first ask if they want to discuss business now or if they want to do it later. So that will be our technique, I think here.'*

Three students mentioned active listening as a specific strategy they would use.

*'Keep asking questions and maybe there I was a bit more silent at some moments when they are we're talking just not completely interacting immediately, but try to listen carefully and therefore let them talk more.'*

The CQ Action component had variations in answers, as CQ Strategy did.

The students with less experience abroad came up with ideas based on more tip-of-the-iceberg cultural knowledge, such as how in certain countries one should watch out for clothing and communication styles.

*'Adapted to the situation because we were in their culture and they always covered our hair, so we did it and yeah.'*

With more experience abroad, the students created elaborate stories and used reflective thinking to improve their problem-solving skills. This example shows how the student was reflecting on someone else's Action and trying to understand why the person did this.

*'But there's also like a cultural difference of what you can and can't say to a person. So for instance, the daughters of our neighbour, they come by regularly. And yesterday I told Andrew if he could ask her to leave because I was working on school and I had to focus for a little bit and I would play with her later. And that's like exactly what I said to him. And then he said to her in Swahili, he said, oh, she's gonna go to sleep now because they don't understand that when people work, they need to be alone to be able to focus. Apparently, like, everybody needs more of a shared culture. So he explained to me that that's what he said. But he also explained that she wouldn't have understood if he would have translated exactly. So that's also another thing that adds up to that, which is interesting.'*

From the point of view of managing their project and preparing for the challenge itself in advance, the students experience mild communication issues with their project providers abroad while communicating with them online, but nothing noticeably large got in the way of their preparation for going abroad.

## *2. Team Interviews 3-4 weeks into their stay abroad*

The issues discussed per team were each very individual, depending on the troubles the students had already experienced while abroad. Two teams stood out in their answers, as they seemed to have gotten stuck in their learning process; as can be seen in this quote.

*'I just think we cannot really trust her because she's lying to us. Yeah. And was also really different. What she said in the first period and we could interview the workers as much as we want, which was not the case. So that was a bit. Yeah. Irritating for us? Yeah, that we needed to adapt our plans multiple times, but I think at the end we have now planned that will work out for us. Yeah, I hope if the meetings work out that we have plans right now and she is not lying about that, they arrange I think's gonna be fine. But it's just it takes a lot of energy.'*

And then they decided to take a far more brute force way through their troubles.

*' Yeah. Also with yesterday, I think it was about that we were just like, no, we're not gonna accept it. Yeah, we're just being direct and we work first because we're just a little bit over it, I think.'*

This result could demonstrate the breakdown of the learning cycle that is discussed in the literature review. More on what this might mean for educational implications is explained in the discussion section.

Other than this prominent finding during the interviews, it was seen that the students needed more time and experience abroad to keep exploring their thoughts, processes and actions. The timing of the interviewing was quite early in their term abroad. Until now, the students have mostly experienced language barriers, frustration, excitement and exploring what might not be working. Not all of their strategies have been tested yet.



## **B. CQ Mapping Results**

The researcher thoroughly examined the course material to propose educational enhancements. The Entrepreneurial Thinking course, structured around the EntreComp Framework, is designed with its competencies in mind. This framework serves as a blueprint for course development, ensuring that various competencies are addressed throughout lectures and learning objectives. Similarly, recommendations for improving the minor's cultural intelligence (CQ) aspect can follow this approach by aligning the four CQ facets (Knowledge, Strategy, Drive, and Action) with the current components of the minor while identifying areas for additional tasks or assessments to bridge any gaps.

The findings highlight areas where the cultural part of the education programme intersects with CQ facets, indicating strengths and potential areas for improvement. The analysis suggests that while the minor effectively imparts cultural knowledge (through tasking the students to perform cultural maps and interviewing experts on the culture for the country they visit), further support is needed for CQ Action, with opportunities to bolster CQ Strategy and Drive. This insight concludes that while CQ knowledge is well-addressed, additional educational activities are warranted to enhance CQ Action, Strategy, and Drive within the program.

## **V. Discussion**

This research's value lies largely in the literature review and mapping of the CQ skills to the course material. The student interviews were used to explore what areas they might need more support in.

From the literature review, it is found that while this minor already acknowledges that CQ has a place in international entrepreneurship education, it should be included more to achieve better collaboration in a global world. Self-efficacy may have been found as a connecting factor, but that doesn't mean that CQ and Entrepreneurship have the same way of teaching. It is important to learn how to teach them in conjunction and appreciate each for their own while encouraging a future of worldwide collaboration.

In addition, the fact that students have the opportunity to explore and experience abroad is already a way for them to grow. However, it is important that this time abroad happens in a setting that is less touristy, or by implementing ways to challenge the students to further explore their CQ Strategy and CQ Action skills. The students who had already had more past experience as a non-tourist showed that this helped them reflect further.

More importantly, the literature review introduced how the experiential learning cycle can be cut short if the individual starts with a level of CQ too low to continue. There is no definition here of too low; however, the focus group interviews showed evidence of how two out of four interviewed groups got stuck in their process. They were lacking CQ Drive to move through the challenge in a way that was not brute force. However, they were interviewed at one-third of their time abroad, so this hurdle might have to be overcome still in the weeks to come.

After analysing and mapping out the CQ facets to the course material, it was visible that CQ Knowledge is well supported leading up to the project abroad, but CQ Strategy, CQ Drive and CQ Action need more support. In the case of the minor, this is in line with the move from the traditional to new ways of teaching CQ mentioned in the literature.

Furthermore, upon discussion with a professional working across cultures daily and a teacher in the field, the realisation that the students may not be fully prepared from an EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) point of view came up. It is important that the students are able to strategise their

next moves from a place where they are aware of their own biases and have been able to explore them in a safe space. It is also key that the recommendations given to education programmes also include options where there is no need to increase the budget or staff. Creativity in this can be key to getting the right point across.

The section on Educational Implications below will shed light on ideas on how to include more of the CQ components in the right areas of education based on the findings discussed above.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

A significant limitation of this study is its longitudinality. Data was only gathered before and while the students were away around 3-4 weeks into their approximately three-month stay abroad, meaning they had only completed a third of their time there. It was impossible to gather data on the students after their experience abroad, as the thesis period during which this research was conducted did not last long enough. There was no validation or further expansion of the findings based on information from students after their return. Follow-up interviews could shed more light on how students deal with the entrepreneurial, intercultural environment, something currently lacking in the literature.

It is also thought that in future research, teachers and project providers should be interviewed to gather insights from them and explore the gap between students and teaching staff. Beyond this, future student teams could fill in surveys to research whether the newly implemented recommendations are making a difference.

The Minor at TU Delft is an ideal setting for studying CQ and entrepreneurship due to its travel component and real-life experiences. Students have to apply for this selection minor by making a motivational video through which they self-select in terms of drive to learn more about operating in different cultural settings.

## **VI. Recommendations for Educational Implications**

So how can cultural intelligence be better integrated into entrepreneurial education programmes? Keeping in mind that CQ is not necessarily learned just by going abroad but also requires the individual to challenge themselves, here are recommendations based on the findings from the results and discussion.

- 1) Include case studies in the lecture pre-departure. The students practice cultural problem-solving skills before they leave. These case studies can be in the form of videos where the class sees perspectives from two different people and tries to propose a way to resolve the conflict, which may have cross-cultural barriers. It can help the students practice their CQ Strategy and develop ideas for CQ Action in a safe classroom space. This will also encourage more interdependent learning through sharing.
- 2) Offer additional coaching specific to the cultural aspect of doing a project abroad. This could, for example, be done by certifying one or more of the coaches in CQ facilitation and training. The Cultural Intelligence Center offers these types of certifications <sup>4</sup>. This type of extra coaching may help boost the student's productivity abroad by assisting them to resolve cultural issues faster while boosting their CQ Drive by offering a listening ear, guidance and empathy.
- 3) Coaching to help students overcome hurdles as they move through the experiential learning

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<sup>4</sup><https://culturalq.com/>

cycle, but by another student. This allows the team to chat with a student who understands their struggles. It is suggested that this student has taken part in such a project abroad before. This recommendation supports the CQ Strategy by helping to keep the students aware and build new strategies together. It also supports CQ Action by encouraging students to pay attention to their actions in the next encounter and change them if needed. Finally, CQ Drive can be boosted, giving them hope to overcome the hurdle. They have someone compassionate with them but outside their situation and can take a more objective stance.

- 4) To expand the depth of the final report that the students submit upon return from their time abroad, it is suggested to include skill training challenges that they should complete while away and report on upon return. The proposed skill training challenges:
  - Go to two local events or conferences (it could be a professional conference event where business cards are exchanged or the local market where you have to negotiate for your produce or a local festival) and have two interactions with attendees outside your team per event. Report on these interactions in your final report. This will encourage students' CQ Drive, as they need to get out there to chat with individuals culturally different from them. It will also build awareness and boost their CQ strategy in future interactions.
  - Make two friends outside your team while abroad. Report who they are, how this friendship came about and your favourite experience with them. This can again encourage CQ drive in the students and CQ Action, as they might have to keep adjusting their actions as they have multiple encounters over time with this individual. It might also become a person they trust enough to quiz on the host country's culture to learn more about how they act and think.
  - As a group, organise an activity with the people who support your project. This activity should occur outside of the work environment and have little to no connection with your work. It should be a fun activity to help you get to know your local co-workers and project providers. Report about the activity you organised in your final report. This activity encourages students to take action and build relationships with their local partners. It will also increase their CQ drive and their motivation for the project if they have a better relationship with their co-workers.

## VII. Conclusion

This paper argues that understanding and navigating diverse cultural landscapes is essential for entrepreneurs aiming to succeed in the global market. The research underscores the synergy between entrepreneurship and CQ, highlighting the role of experiential learning in boosting students' CQ. By embedding CQ within the curriculum, the study suggests that entrepreneurship education can foster reflective learning, improving students' ability to undertake entrepreneurial activities abroad.

The findings emphasize that both entrepreneurial and cultural intelligence skills are teachable, associated with self-awareness, self-efficacy, and perseverance. Integrating CQ into entrepreneurship education not only enhances the learning process but also supports students in their international endeavors. Recommendations include curriculum enhancements informed by the EntreComp Framework and the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), advocating for an experiential learning approach to equip future entrepreneurs with necessary skills for success in diverse cultural environments.

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