Chapter 2
Developing Students' Cross-Cultural Competence Through Academic Programs:
Analytical Review of Empirical Findings

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ABSTRACT

Realizing the increased demand and need for equipping graduates with cross-cultural competencies, universities have been offering a growing array of academic courses aimed at increasing students' cultural competence. This research review chapter addresses the question of what do empirical studies tell us about the impact of academic educational interventions on students' cultural competence. Among the various competences, this review pays special attention to cultural intelligence (CQ). Covering diverse educational interventions, ranging from short intensive training-like courses to full-term courses to study abroad visits, the chapter concludes that several academic interventions, both traditional and virtual, were effective in increasing cultural competencies. This chapter would be of interest for academics contemplating course design in international management, for business school program directors who wish to promote students' cultural competencies, and for university staff involved in managing various international exchange programs.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid increase of globalization processes in many aspects of social and work life in the last two decades of the 20th century resulted in record numbers of individuals who, on a daily basis, interact and work with individuals who have been socialized in significantly different cultures. This situation created an acute need to understand the role of national culture in management and organisational dynamics and has led to an urgent need for employees, managers and, indeed, organizations, to become cross-culturally competent.

There is a broad agreement among practitioners and academics alike that for today's international managers, cross-cultural competence and skills are not only desirable, but rather necessary (Chao & Moon, 2005; Ng et al., 2009). Several studies demonstrated that cross-cultural experiences and cross-cultural competence are either direct predictors or mediators of managerial performance while working overseas or when working extensively with culturally diverse populations (e.g., Earley & Peterson, 2004; Jyoti & Kour, 2015; Kim & Van Dyne, 2012).

The acute necessity of having cross-cultural management competencies in the workplace is vividly reflected in the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation process. In its publication *Eligibility Procedures and Accreditation Standards* (2009), the AACSB stated, "Complex demands on management and accounting education mirror the demands on organizations and managers" (p. 4) and listed four main challenges. Two of these challenges are directly related to *Cross-Cultural Management Education*: 'Differences in organizational and cultural values' and 'cultural diversity among employees and customers'. Thus, the AACSB explicitly expects that, as part of an accredited business university program, these challenges should be addressed through programmatic elements in undergraduate and graduate business degree programs.

The importance of effective cross-cultural interactions has encouraged researchers to identify relevant competencies in the disciplines of cross-cultural psychology (e.g., Smith & Bond, 1999), cross-cultural communication (e.g., Ting-Toomey, 1999) and, more recently, international management and HRM (e.g., Thomas & Fitzsimmons, 2008).

The growing emphasis on managers' international competencies and demand for cross cultural skilled employees led to a marked growth in academic-based courses as well as in non-academic training courses that sought to enhance their participants' cultural skills and abilities. While the number and variety of cross-cultural management courses offered by academia and industry grew dramatically, little systematic research exists on the effects of specific academic programs on students' cross-cultural competence. The present study aims to contribute to the debate on the effects of educational interventions on students' cultural competencies, namely, the effect of university management courses on four Cultural Intelligence (CQ) dimensions.

In the next sections author review and describe the CQ concept and its four dimensions. Then describe the several types of academic cross-cultural training approaches and the characteristics of university courses that aim to increase students' knowledge of cross-cultural issues in management. Conclusion presents with an integrative framework that summarises what we learnt on the current state of research in this area.

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE: NATURE AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

In the last decade, research on cross-cultural competencies became more sophisticated as the concept of Cultural Intelligence (often known as CQ) gained increased interest among management researchers (Ott & Michailova, 2016). Earley and Ang in 2003, and Thomas and Inkson in 2004, respectively described in their book, Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is a construct that seeks to integrate several existing concepts and frameworks revolving around person's abilities and skills to effectively manage him/herself and to interact with others in cross cultural situations and environments. CQ has been defined as individual's capabilities to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings (Early & Ang, 2003).

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