

## The relationship between cultural intelligence and the performance of seminary management center employees

Fatemeh Kermani<sup>1</sup>, Jafar Rahmani,<sup>2\*</sup> & Mohsen Shafie Nikabadi<sup>3</sup>

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Corresponding author's Email: 0384459@yahoo.com

### Abstract

**Background and aim:** The world is becoming more and more interconnected, and organizations are becoming more and more multinational and culturally diverse. So people must have knowledge and skills to effectively face the challenges and requirements of a global society. In this regard, the present research has been carried out to investigate the relationship between cultural intelligence and the performance of the management center of seminaries as an institution operating at the international level. **Methodology:** The current research was a descriptive correlation type, and the data were collected from 86 employees of the management center of seminaries using a questionnaire. In order to measure cultural intelligence, the questions of the standard questionnaire provided by Ang were used, and to measure the performance, the questions that were developed based on the review of the existing literature in the field of performance were used; both sets of questions were provided to the professors in the form of a questionnaire, and its validity was confirmed, and its reliability was obtained using the Cronbach's alpha method of 0.953. SPSS-22 software and Spearman's correlation coefficient were used for data analysis. **Results:** The results obtained from the Spearman correlation test showed a relationship between cultural intelligence and performance, dimensions of cultural intelligence (metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, behavioral), and performance. **Conclusion:** Based on the results obtained from the average test of a statistical population, cultural intelligence, metacognitive cultural intelligence, cognitive cultural intelligence, motivational cultural intelligence, behavioral cultural intelligence, and the performance of the seminary management center staff were at an optimal level.

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1. Master's degree, Department of Public Administration, Naraq Branch, Islamic Azad University, Naraq, Iran  
2. \*Corresponding author: Associate Professor, Department of Educational Management, Qom Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qom, Iran.

3. Department of Industrial Management, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran

## **Introduction**

A prominent feature of globalization that profoundly affects today's organizations is the major trend toward greater cultural diversity. Globalization involves processes of social interaction on a global scale in which people of many nationalities are connected and work in a culturally different environment, both inside and outside their organizations. Organizations are increasingly involved in interactions among diverse sets of cultures and perspectives (Thomas, 2006). This fact has caused great dynamics of relations in multicultural environments. In such a way, differences in language, ethnicity, policies, and many other characteristics can emerge as sources of potential conflict and make it challenging to develop appropriate working relationships (Dean, 2007).

For a long time, many organizations have expanded the scope of their activities. This scope of activity is not limited to commercial and economic organizations but also includes political, social, scientific, sports, cultural and religious organizations (Zahedi, 2000).

In other words, this wide range of activities has caused organizations to face cultural diversity both in their workforce and in those who refer to them as customers and clients. In fact, diversity is a fact of life today, and no organization can ignore it. Organizations deal with employees and clients who have different cultural and functional backgrounds and also have assumptions about how to communicate and how to make decisions (Zahedi, 2000).

Among the required capabilities of the 21st century, the ability to continuously adapt to people from different cultures and to manage intercultural communication are important. The global work environment needs people familiar with different cultures and can communicate appropriately with people from other cultures. For this purpose, people need cultural intelligence. A person's ability to adapt to values, traditions and customs different from what he is used to and to work in a different cultural environment is an indicator of cultural intelligence (Jan Nesar, Ahmadi, and Fayazi, 2006).

To create effective relationships and overcome the problems caused by cultural diversity, people need special abilities in communicating and interacting simultaneously with people from different cultures. One of these abilities is cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence refers to a person's ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures. Cultural intelligence is the most important tool that can be used to deal with multicultural situations. Cultural intelligence helps to understand the various cultural components correctly and quickly and show a behavior appropriate to each of them (Abbasali Zadeh and Naeiji, 2007/2016).

Cultural intelligence helps people to be sensitive to different cultures, to be able to communicate appropriately with people from different cultures and to be able to analyze new cultures that they encounter. According to Eng and Early, cultural intelligence includes

four metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions. Each dimension explains certain aspects of cultural intelligence (Imai, 2007).

Ang et al. (2004) presented a four-dimensional model of cultural intelligence including cognition, metacognition, motivation, and behavior. The four dimensions of cultural intelligence are qualitatively different aspects of comprehensive abilities to operate and manage effectively and efficiently in culturally different environments. Cognitive, cultural intelligence refers to acquired knowledge about a specific culture (Imai, 2007). Metacognitive cultural intelligence reflects the mental processes people use to acquire and understand cultural knowledge, including recognizing and controlling people's mental processes related to culture (Ang et al., 2007). Motivational cultural intelligence is defined as the degree and level at that people are confident in their abilities to engage in intercultural interactions and the extent to which they feel inner satisfaction from these interactions (Logo, 2007). Finally, the behavioral component of cultural intelligence reflects an ability to express and display appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions when interacting with people from different cultures. Behaviors are outward manifestations or overt actions that a person takes, although they are separate from what they think (Dean, 2007).

Organizations must reach group goals through employees, so employees work effectively to achieve goals. As a result, reviewing and identifying how human resources work and developing the necessary programs to improve performance is an important part of the organization's management functions. This is important through the process of evaluating the performance of human resources (Zarei, 2019). Performance evaluation is one of the important approaches for managers to achieve success. Rapid environmental changes, intensifying the competitive environment, increasing society's expectations, etc., have made the need for performance evaluation management inevitable (Yadollahi Farsi, 2005). Since organizations are looking to increase performance and optimize things, in the first stage, they should increase the performance of employees. Performance is a set of actions and activities carried out by employees to achieve the predetermined goals of the organization. Considering that performance is also a function of knowledge, skills, abilities and motivation, and considering that cultural intelligence is an important ability and capability in the current conditions of organizations, which has significant behavioral and motivational manifestations; moreover, since the management center of seminaries, which is one of the important centers of science and knowledge with the important task of deepening, expanding, expanding and teaching Islamic sciences, and is one of the most important influential centers in the formation, growth and development of Islamic and Iranian culture and civilization; in addition to the fact that its employees interact and communicate with people from different cultures, this research aims to answer this question:

Is there a relationship between cultural intelligence and the performance of seminary management center employees?

### **Methodology**

The current research is a descriptive (non-experimental) type of research, and in terms of its purpose, it is applied. The statistical population in this research is the employees of the management center of seminaries; the number of these employees was 547. This institution has been chosen because it interacts with many people from different countries and cultures. The sample size was obtained using Cochran's formula of 86 people, and available sampling method was used for sampling. The research tool included a researcher-made questionnaire, and SPSS version 22 software and Spearman's correlation test were used for data analysis.

### **Materials**

**1- Researcher-made questionnaire.** In order to measure cultural intelligence, the questions of the standard questionnaire provided by Ang were used, and to measure the performance, the questions that were formulated based on the review of the existing literature in the field of performance were used, and both categories of questions were formulated in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains 40 questions. In the design of this section, we have tried to make the questions of the questionnaire as understandable as possible. For the design of this section, the five-choice Likert spectrum was used, which is considered one of the most common measurement scales. At the end of the questionnaire, an open question was also presented. In order to check the validity of the identified dimensions and components, a questionnaire was designed in this field with the help of respected professors and advisors, and it was made available to a group of professors and experts, and necessary amendments were made using the opinions of respected professors. In this research, in order to evaluate the final questionnaire, a sample of 30 questionnaires was distributed among the statistical community, and Cronbach's alpha was measured using SPSS software. Considering that Cronbach's alpha was 0.953 in this research, the end of the questionnaire was also confirmed.

### **Results**

In terms of demographic characteristics, 14% of the sample population were less than 30 years old, 22% were 30-35 years old, 29% were 40-36 years old, 19% were 41-45 years old, 10% were 46-50 years old, and 6% were 50 years old. Among them, 12 people (14%) had a diploma, 18 people (21%) had an associate degree, 47 people (55%) had a bachelor's degree, and 9 people (10%) had a master's degree. Also, 77 people (91%) were married, and 9 people (9%) were single.

**Table 1: Status of the average and standard deviation of the variables**

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Metacognitive cultural intelligence	86	3/8459	0/69469
Cognitive cultural intelligence	86	3/5136	0/81217

Motivational cultural intelligence	86	4/0791	0/66388
Behavioral cultural intelligence	86	3/9233	0/79538
Cultural intelligence	86	3/8238	0/66189
Performance	86	3/5279	0/49209

Table (1) above shows the research variables' mean and standard deviation and cultural intelligence dimensions.

**Table 2: The table for checking the normality of the research variables**

Variable	N	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Sig
Metacognitive cultural intelligence	86	1/445	0/031
Cognitive cultural intelligence	86	0/995	0/275
Motivational cultural intelligence	86	1/398	0/040
Behavioral cultural intelligence	86	1/229	0/098
Cultural intelligence	86	1/346	0/053
Performance	86	1/016	0/253

This test was used to check the normality of the research variables. Since the significance level obtained from the test for all variables is greater than (0.01). As a result, all variables follow the normal distribution.

**Table 3: The results of Spearman's correlation test for the dimensions of cultural intelligence and performance**

Spearman Test		Performance
Metacognitive cultural intelligence	Correlation's Coefficient	0/793
	Significance	0/000
	N	86
Cognitive cultural intelligence	Correlation's Coefficient	0/538
	Significance	0/000
	N	86
Motivational cultural intelligence	Correlation's Coefficient	0/434
	Significance	0/000
	N	86
Behavioral cultural intelligence	Correlation's Coefficient	0/528
	Significance	0/000
	N	86
Cultural intelligence	Correlation's Coefficient	0/633
	Significance	0/000
	N	86

As can be seen in the above table and according to the significance level of Spearman's test for all dimensions of cultural intelligence as well as general cultural intelligence, the dimensions of cultural intelligence and general cultural intelligence have a positive correlation with relationship performance. That is, the higher the level of cultural intelligence and its dimensions, the higher the level of performance.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The present study was conducted to investigate the relationship between cultural intelligence and the performance of the management center of seminaries.

The results of the analysis of statistical findings show that there is a positive correlation between cultural intelligence and all its dimensions with employee performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that high cultural intelligence can indicate employees' high performance, and the high performance of employees can also express their high cultural intelligence. According to the results obtained from this research, to increase cognitive, cultural intelligence in long-term educational programs, knowledge, and cognition can be created in people, which will strengthen the multi-perspective view and can see the issues in intercultural interactions with an open perspective. These pieces of training can be in the form of reading books about other cultures or in the form of language training, counseling and case studies, examining cultural scenarios, and criticizing and presenting appropriate work solutions. Also, role-playing programs and simulated situations can be used to increase people's cultural and behavioral intelligence. In this way, people face situations that require them to show appropriate behaviors. In addition, in order to motivate people, managers can extrinsically motivate employees. Research has proven that people are motivated to behave in a certain way or learn new skills if they believe that these behaviors and skills will help them in the future. Therefore, in the employees' minds, the officials should communicate between creating and improving cultural intelligence and success in their future career paths, emphasizing the benefits of learning from different cultures. Another solution for employees to pay attention to cultural intelligence and strive to improve it is to include this type of intelligence in employee performance evaluations.

One of the weaknesses that unfortunately exists in our country is that scientific research is not highly valued; therefore, organizations or university researchers do not cooperate in providing information or filling out questionnaires. In this research, as in many other studies, the researcher has faced this problem, and in this context, it is suggested that the officials and executive bodies of the high levels of society use appropriate training programs in this field to create the necessary culture and value and clarify the importance of scientific research for organizations and their employees and cultivate a culture of participation and cooperation in this field.

### **Ethics**

This research observed ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Also, while completing the questionnaires while emphasizing completing all the questions, the participants were free to withdraw from the research at any time and provide individual information. They were assured that the information would remain confidential, which was strictly adhered to.

### **Acknowledgement**

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### **Conflict of Interest**

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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