THÈSE POUR OBTENIR LE GRADE DE DOCTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTPELLIER

En Sciences de Gestion

École doctorale d'Economie et de Gestion (EDEG)

Unité de recherche MRM – Montpellier Research in Management

Cultural Intelligence – A key competence in intercultural sales ? A study across three cultural contexts (France, India & England)

L'intelligence culturelle - une compétence clé dans la vente interculturelle ? Une étude à travers trois contextes culturels (France, Inde et Angleterre)

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Le 13 décembre 2022

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“If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?”

- Albert Einstein

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Doing a PhD is an adventure. It has been long years filled with doubts, uncertainties but also meeting great new people and exchanging really interesting ideas. Above all, these have been years during which I have learned a great deal. So, I would like to use this section to thank the people who have contributed to this work and supported me from near and from afar.

First of all, I naturally want to thank the people who made this PhD possible and who have mentored me for the last four years. A big thank you to my PhD supervisor, Professor Christophe Fournier, who listened to me with an open mind from the beginning and gave me the opportunity to come to Montpellier and work on my topic here. I also will always be grateful for the push I got from him to connect and collaborate outside of the laboratory. In addition, I would like to thank my co-supervisor, Hanene Oueslati, for believing in me since my master's and for putting me in contact with Montpellier. Thank you also for all support especially during the most difficult phases of this PhD.

Next, I would like to thank all the members of my jury. Many thanks to Professor Ulrike Mayrhofer, who always had an open ear and was available to answer any questions I had about the intercultural aspects of my work. I would also like to express a big thank you to Professor John Rudd for the time he dedicated to me at a moment when I needed guidance to specify my topic. I will always cherish the good memories of my visit to Warwick. A big thank you also to Professor Fanny Poujol, who has been there since I started at Montpellier, whether for my annual presentations or any other questions beyond that. And finally, of course, I would like to thank Professor Béatrice Siadou-Martin. As the person in charge of our research group, she was of great help also beyond purely thematic aspects of my doctoral thesis, in particular with regard to administrative and technical aspects.

Of course, I would also like to thank all the other members of the MRM Marketing research group. Many thanks here especially to Anne-Sophie Cases, who has also accompanied me in my annual dissertation supervisory committee over the years. A big thank you also to Andréa Gourmelen and Krista Duniach for giving me the opportunity to get to know the teaching profession a little better. And to all the other people of the group who have helped me with their feedback as well: Thank you!

And on the laboratory side, there are of course also people who have contributed a lot to making these four years easier, especially on the administrative side. So a big thank you to Marie-Laure Weber, Karen Berthoud, and Radia Kelai.

And finally, there is one last group of people within the lab without whom these last years would have been quite lonely. Many thanks to all my fellow PhD students! Erick Suarez and Narjiss Araba - thank you for a great start to this adventure and our shared suffering in the building 19. Thanks also to Véronique Achmet, Michel Klein and all the other PhD students who made my work a bit easier with their help. And especially an extremely big thank you to Sara Laurent, without her help I would still be despairing of many things. She really helped me a lot, especially in terms of data analysis, editing the manuscript and organizing the defense.

During the last year of my PhD, I also got the opportunity to get to know the side of a business school better. And in this context, several colleagues have helped me a lot, be it with discussions about my topic or social support. So here I would like to thank especially Elsa Kassardjian and Jonathan Luffarelli as well as my PhD colleagues Bing Bai, Alexandre Benzari, Théo Justy, Rémi Le Goff and Bharath Rayudu.

Of course, I would also like to thank all the other colleagues who have always given me advice and with whom I hope to continue to work in some way: Renaud Defiebre, Nick Lee, Johannes Habel, Christine Lai-Bennejean, Deva Rangarajan and Vishag Badrinarayanan.

But in addition to all these colleagues who have above all made my work easier, there is of course another group of people who play a very important role in my life and have helped me to persevere. This is where I would like to start by thanking all my friends who have made my life just that little bit nicer. Be it game nights, archery, hiking, going out to eat or even long conversations about our problems, without these people my life would have been a lot drearier. Many thanks therefore to Johnny El Beyrouthy, Antoine Gademer and Ludmila Lopez (and of course Mei and Alma!), Paul Oublon and Marine Juvénal, Rodolphe Vaillon, Sébastien Peillon, Christophe Rodiet, Jinane Elias and Hassan El Badawi, Lucas Gavotto, Etienne Juif and all the others I did not mention.

But this work would not have been possible without my parents, Gertrud and Egon Fischer. I am eternally grateful to them for teaching me how to persevere. That they were always patient with me, believed in me and also supported me when I moved to another country. The last few years have been anything but easy but they have always been there when I needed them.

As I said, the last few years have not been easy, on the work level, but also on the personal level. So a big thank you also to my extended family - Fanny and Lucie Politi, Raphael Navarre and Denis Politi. We have mastered this time together! And in this sense, a big shot-out also to my cousin, Nicole Häffner, who helped me in establishing my survey questionnaire but also just on a social level.

And lastly, I would like to thank the one person who has really lived these four years up close and personal with me: My fiancé Bastien Politi. We had a lot to go through during this time - some lows but luckily also quite a few highs. He has had to go through a lot and I can only be grateful to him again and again for always being there for me. That I can talk to him about all my problems and he always manages to pull me out of the deepest holes. I am so proud of where we are today together. Two doctors in the family, that is truly an accomplishment! We have managed to go through this adventure together and I am looking forward to all the new adventures that await us now.

Surely, I have forgotten some people and of course I would like to thank you, too! Once again, a big thanks to all, you have made this work possible!

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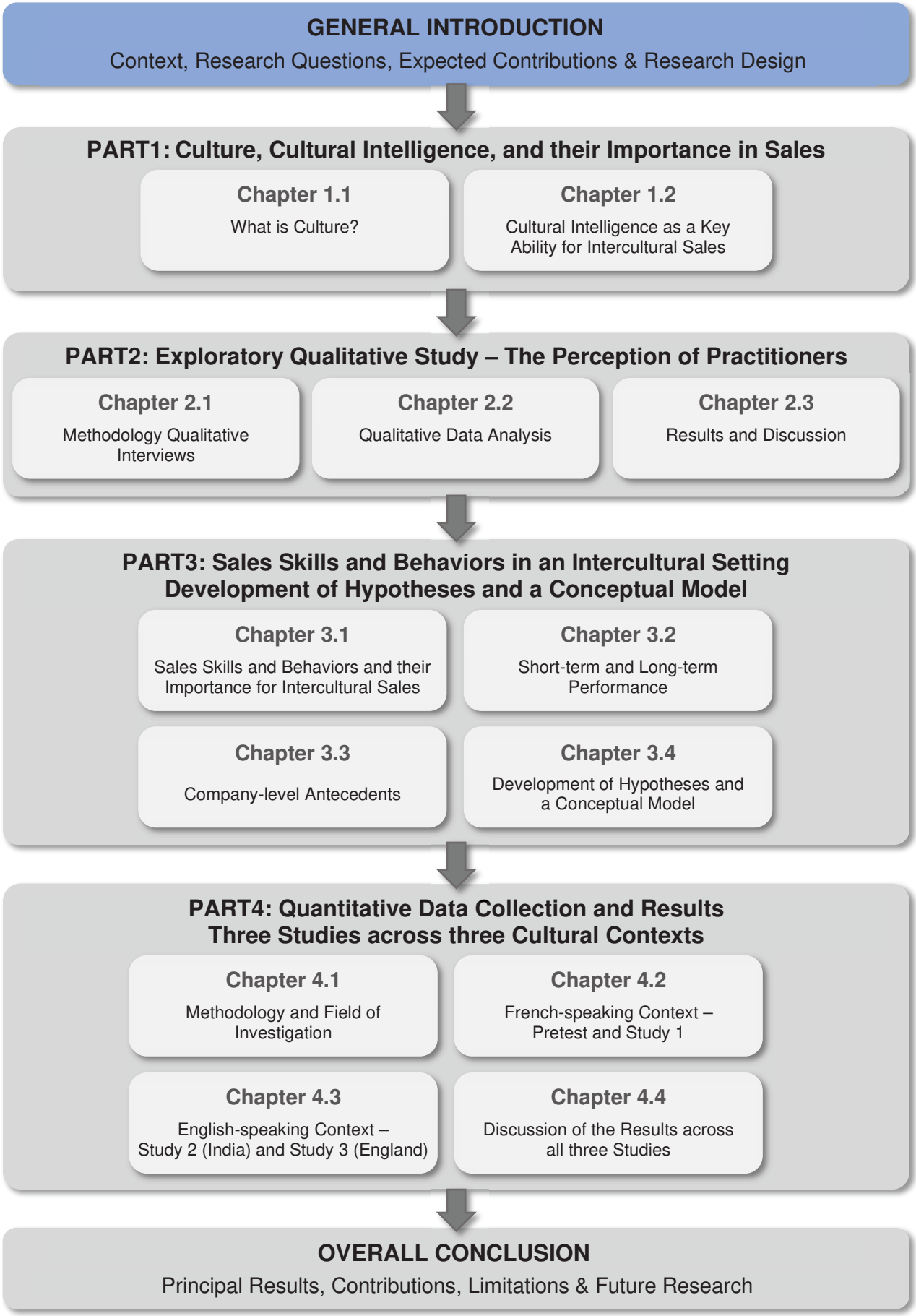
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Context of this Research

Nowadays, businesses opened up more and more and international commerce represents a large percentage of global trade (Lewin and Johnston, 1997; Simintiras and Thomas, 1998; Eisenberg et al., 2013; Alexandra, 2018). Over the last few years, all big economies in the world have been multiplying their exports and imports and therefore connect more and more (World Trade Organization, 2019). Globalization tendencies have been accelerated remarkably due to the creation of the European Union and the formation of the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) as well as the WTO (World Trade Organization). Over the last few decades, China has joined the WTO, the NAFTA has expanded including now not only north but also Central and South America. Furthermore, the Euro has been introduced as a single European currency and the European Union is still growing (Johnson et al., 2006). All these developments are the reasons why economies opened up more and more and, consequently, pushed companies to expand globally.

Although some deglobalization tendencies have been found over the last years (James, 2018; Witt, 2019), businesses still are very much selling globally. For example, S&P Dow Jones Indices explains that the 500 leading American companies have produced and sold 42.90% of their products and services outside the U.S. (S&P Dow Jones Indices, 2019). Besides, technical advances like the internet for example have let to even more interconnectedness worldwide. Western and eastern economies have been linked to create interconnected global supply chains (Friedman, 2006).

These networks have, of course, witnessed some disruptions due to the latest crisis like the Covid-crisis or the Ukrainian war. However, this has not changed the fact that salespeople still need to interact with buyers in different geographic markets to ensure business continuity (Sharma et al., 2020).

But not only are companies selling more and more globally, also immigration has increased over the last decades. Already in 2014, the EU immigrant population reached 55 million people (Eurostat, 2016). This has a broad impact on economy and requires a certain adaptation to different cultural backgrounds, even in the home markets.

This changing global environment represents a big challenge for companies in general having to adapt to a complex working context with intercultural differences (Earley and Peterson, 2004). Many companies that are working in international markets have experienced some sort of failure related to this. These failures are costly to a company, on a monetary and social level. As explained in earlier research, expatriates failure rates are predicted at 40 to 50%, leading to a monetary cost from $250,000 to $1 million, based on the grade of the management and the urge for replacement. (Johnson et al., 2006). Besides, other types of costs can be associated with such global failures including lost opportunities, damaged relationships and reduced productivity which can hurt the company even more in the long run. But the costs are even higher when not only taking early returns of expatriates into account but also demotivated managers that leave the company within months or years after their return. Such a fluctuation in the management increases the cost of hiring and training new employees due to the loss of experienced and trained managers (Johnson et al., 2006).

Consequently, it can be concluded that many companies do not put enough effort in preparing and training people for this intercultural work context. Not all of these failures can be attributed to cultural factors, there are also other reasons like external influences emerging from legal practices or politics for example or contextual influences. But the lack of intercultural and cross-cultural competencies and problems that arise from cultural differences seem to be a major factor (Johnson et al., 2006).

For all these reasons mentioned above, earlier research considers concepts like Intercultural Competence, Cross-Cultural Competence or Cultural Intelligence as some of the most important factors for successful business relations and performance outside the domestic market (Messner, 2015). Intercultural research demonstrates an increasing urge for

companies to employ people that have the capacity to function well in a globalized environment (Rattrie and Kittler, 2014). And intercultural competences seem to be essential for people that either live abroad and are therefore submerged in another culture or are working from their home culture with people from different cultures. Research in this stream has gained visibility and prominence in the past decades accompanying the interest in global leader development (Van Bakel et al., 2014). Even global organizations as PISA[1] and UNESCO[2] have acknowledged the importance of the concepts. UNESCO has published a report on this matter in 2013 (UNESCO, 2013) and PISA has introduced a global competence worldwide measure in 2018.

The sales field is particularly impacted by this intercultural challenge. Sales jobs and the daily routine of salespeople have changed tremendously affecting not only the salespeople themselves but also the whole sales department (Marshall et al., 2012). Furthermore, salespeople's behaviors have been demonstrated to be more and more important for overall organizational performance over the past few decades. The sales organization and individual salespeople's performance are becoming even more central to the company's success and even the survival of a firm (Marshall et al., 2012).

Scientific literature in sales has shown many different reasons for failure or success in the sales field. One of the key variables over the last years is the personal interactions between a salesperson and a customer (Stros et al., 2017). In this sense, the relational dimension is becoming crucial in sales today. The sales profession is becoming more customers centered over the last few decades meaning that salespeople are forced to focus more on the customers' needs than on mere profit making (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006). Buyers search for salespeople that are capable of proposing them solutions that effectively address their

[1] **PISA — Program for International Student Assessment**: A study conducted by the Organization for European Economic Cooperation since the early 2000s to assess the level of 15-year-old students and thus measure the performance of the education systems of the organization's 34 member countries
[2] **UNESCO — United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**: A specialized United Nations agency with the mission to promote international cooperation in education, science, culture, and communication

every need (Huntley, 2006). Furthermore, customers nowadays have higher requirements than before and even want to be treated as a partner (Beverland, 2001).

Unfortunately, some sales literature has shown that many salespeople lack the engagement, competence, and experience for backing their clients' wishes and needs. They tend to talk more than actually doing something for their clients (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006) which make it that more difficult to build fruitful relationships. Thus, salespeople are in urge to direct more of their energy to develop customer relationships and retain these clients (Marshall et al., 2012). In today's industrial context, it is even more difficult to build and maintain relationships because of the complexity of the customers' problems that need to be resolved. Salespeople need to effectively understand the customers and propose the best solution for their problems (Marshall et al., 2012).

In general, it has been shown that a firm's relationship marketing strategy can only be successful if the sales representatives of a company behave properly and create strong relationships with the clients (Kaski et al., 2018). Salespeople and especially the field sales force have always been key for the success of a company due to their function as a link between the firm and its customers. Salespeople are the face of the company towards their clients and take therefore an important role crucial for the company's success (Beverland, 2001).

Furthermore, salespeople are often costly to a company, especially in training and withholding. The sales literature has shown salespeople to be expensive resources and they should know how to manage their time in order to make important calls on the right prospects or maintain existing relationships (Moncrief and Marshall, 2005). Therefore, an urge of identifying and selecting effective and well-skilled salespeople is emerging in today's globalized context (Borg and Johnston, 2013; Novell et al., 2016). More and more firms have found that maximizing salesperson effectiveness is an important matter in such a globalized market context. In 2015, Manpower Group has published a Talent Shortage Survey that already showed sales to be the second most difficult position to fill when hiring in a global context (Stros et al., 2017).

In today's intercultural sales context, all this pushes sellers to create relationships with buyers from another culture (Mintu-Wimsatt and Gassenheimer, 1996). Because of language problems, different cultural heritage or geographical barriers, creating and maintaining such a relationship between seller and buyer can be very complex (Lewin and Johnston, 1997). The biggest task for a seller in such a situation is not only to identify existing cultural differences but to overcome them and adapt to the buyer's culture in order to minimize their impact. Thus, it can be quite challenging for salespeople to understand what international customers want or need because they do not necessarily use the same way to express themselves.

Consequently, it is key for a company to know if a salesperson is competent in this intercultural field to choose the right personnel for this particular context. But looking at the sales research, Panagopoulos et al. (2011) as well as Dugan et al. (2020) stated that very few research is devoted to international or intercultural sales, in fact, less than 10 percent of total sales research. There is a growing urge to better understand the intercultural sales context as well as how salespeople work and what makes them effective in this context.

An interesting concept in order to explain which salesperson might better be suited for such contexts is Cultural Intelligence, a concept that has been mostly used previously in Human Resource or International Management research. This concept refers to a person's abilities and skills to adapt and interact effectively in an intercultural context (Earley and Ang 2003; Earley and Peterson 2004; Thomas et al. 2008; Hansen et al. 2011; Eisenberg et al. 2013; Ang and Van Dyne 2015; Alexandra 2018) and can be used to explain why some people seem to be better able to cope with intercultural diversity (Ang and Van Dyne 2015).

This thesis is looking at the impact of Cultural Intelligence on important variables of intercultural sales and, thus, how this concept is key in this particular context.

Research Problem and Questions

Thus, this research aims to answer some questions. First of all, the general aim of this research is to explain differences in sales performance in intercultural contexts using the concept of Cultural Intelligence. Therefore, the most important question that this research is asking is:

Why, how and to what extent does salespeople's Cultural Intelligence impact their performance?

In a second step, to be able to answer this general question, some second-order questions are asked including:

- ***Can Cultural Intelligence be used to explain differences in sales performance (short-term and long-term)?***
- ***Are some of the most important intercultural sales skills influenced by Cultural Intelligence?***
- ***What company-level facilitators can help to build Cultural Intelligence?***

The final managerial goal of this research is to evaluate if Cultural Intelligence is a valid criterion for selecting sales personnel for intercultural contexts. To do this, it is important to understand the impact of Cultural Intelligence on the most important skills in intercultural contexts and, secondly, on short-term as well as long-term performance outcomes. Finally, this thesis is looking at what a company can do in order to improve the Cultural Intelligence levels of their salespeople.

Expected Contributions

This research therefore aims to advance knowledge in the area of intercultural sales, as asked for by Panagopoulos et al. (2011) or Dugan et al. (2020). By introducing the concept of Cultural Intelligence in a sales context, this work intends to better understand the importance of this

concept in this particular working context. To do this, this research therefore looks at the link of Cultural Intelligence and a multitude of different sales skills and performance outcomes.

Thus, on a theoretical standpoint, this work aims to contribute to the understanding and building of theory around Cultural Intelligence in an intercultural sales context by linking it to sales-related theories like the adaptive selling framework. Furthermore, by looking at company-level antecedents of Cultural Intelligence, this research tries to better understand how this concept can be developed in addition to intercultural training.

With regards to methodology, this research aims to add to existing research by using a mixed-method approach. The use of an exploratory qualitative study with salespeople and managers in this area helps make sure that the concepts used in the quantitative studies really are key for the practitioners in this field. Secondly, the back-translation process that has been done for all scales used in the quantitative studies aims to lay foundations for future research in other cultural contexts—in this case French-speaking ones.

Finally, on a managerial standpoint, this research gives recommendations to companies on how they need to select salespeople for this particular working context. In addition, this work investigates how companies need to be structured and what they need to provide for their intercultural sales force for them to be effective.

Research Design

In order to answer the questions stated above, a hypothetico-deductive approach based on a mixed-method design has been chosen.

First, a literature review of the concepts of culture and Cultural Intelligence has been done to get a first overview of the topic and lay the basis of this research. Secondly, an exploratory qualitative study has been conducted with sales managers working and having worked directly in an intercultural sales context. Six semi-directive interviews have been done. The interviews were held either face-to-face or by video conference. The duration of the interviews ranged from 50 minutes for the shortest to 2h30 for the longest interview. The main contribution of this

study was to identify the principal competencies needed in an intercultural sales context as well as understanding their importance in this particular work environment. Furthermore, this study has highlighted the importance of certain company characteristics like company support and diversity climate to overcome obstacles in intercultural work contexts. After this exploratory study, the literature about the key sales skills and behaviors as well as sales outcomes mentioned by the interviewees is exposed. During this step, the links between these variables and the concept of Cultural Intelligence is also examined.

This structure is following the chronological reasoning of this PhD. It is therefore a fully conscious and assumed choice to structure the manuscript this way and not necessarily in a classical Literature Review—Interviews—Hypothesis structure.

After these first steps of literature review and an exploratory qualitative study, three quantitative studies have been conducted using a survey approach. The aim of this multi-study design was to check if the effects found in the first study also apply in other cultural contexts. Moreover, some additional variables have been added in each study in order to better understand the full picture of how Cultural Intelligence works in an intercultural sales context. And finally, some methodological problems with some scales showed the necessity to test them not only in a translated, French version but also in their original, English one. Thus, translation problems could be ruled out.

The first study is therefore looking at what will be called the ‘baseline model’ which includes Cultural Intelligence, different sales skills and behaviors like authenticity, adaptive selling, and active listening, as well as performance outcomes. Here, the goal was to establish which sales skills are impacted by Cultural Intelligence and how this impacts short-term sales and long-term relationship performance. This first study is tested with a sample of French sales professionals.

The second study adds more complexity to the model by focusing on company characteristics and looking at how company support and diversity climate can improve the Cultural Intelligence levels of salespeople. Therefore, these two variables are added as antecedents to the baseline

model of study 1. Responses from Indian salespeople have been collected to test the different hypothesis in this study.

Finally, the third and last study is including a new trait that has not been looked at in the first two studies, empathy. This concept is more culture-bound but has been talked about in the qualitative study. This is therefore an interesting variable to add in order to see how empathy works in an intercultural context and how it affects Cultural Intelligence. This last study therefore tests all hypotheses from the first and second studies and adds a moderation hypothesis of empathy. This last study is tested with an English sample.

With regards to the analysis conducted for the quantitative part, a pretest of the French, translated version of the different scales has been done in order to check their reliability and validity. For this, an exploratory factor analysis has been conducted. Then, each of the three studies assessed the measurement model reliability and validity with a confirmatory factor analysis using a principal component analysis. Finally, the hypotheses have been verified in each study by testing the structural model via covariance-based structural equation modeling using the maximum likelihood method.

The overall view of the research design of this manuscript is presented in Figure 1**.**

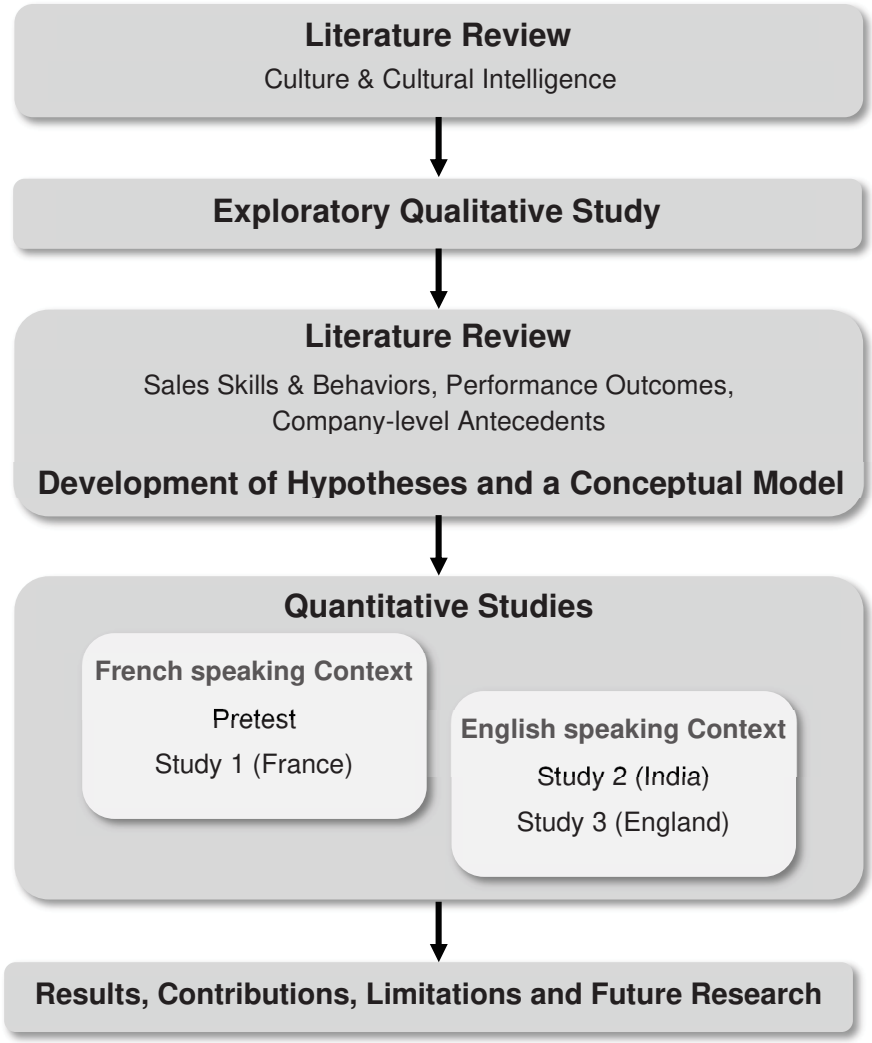
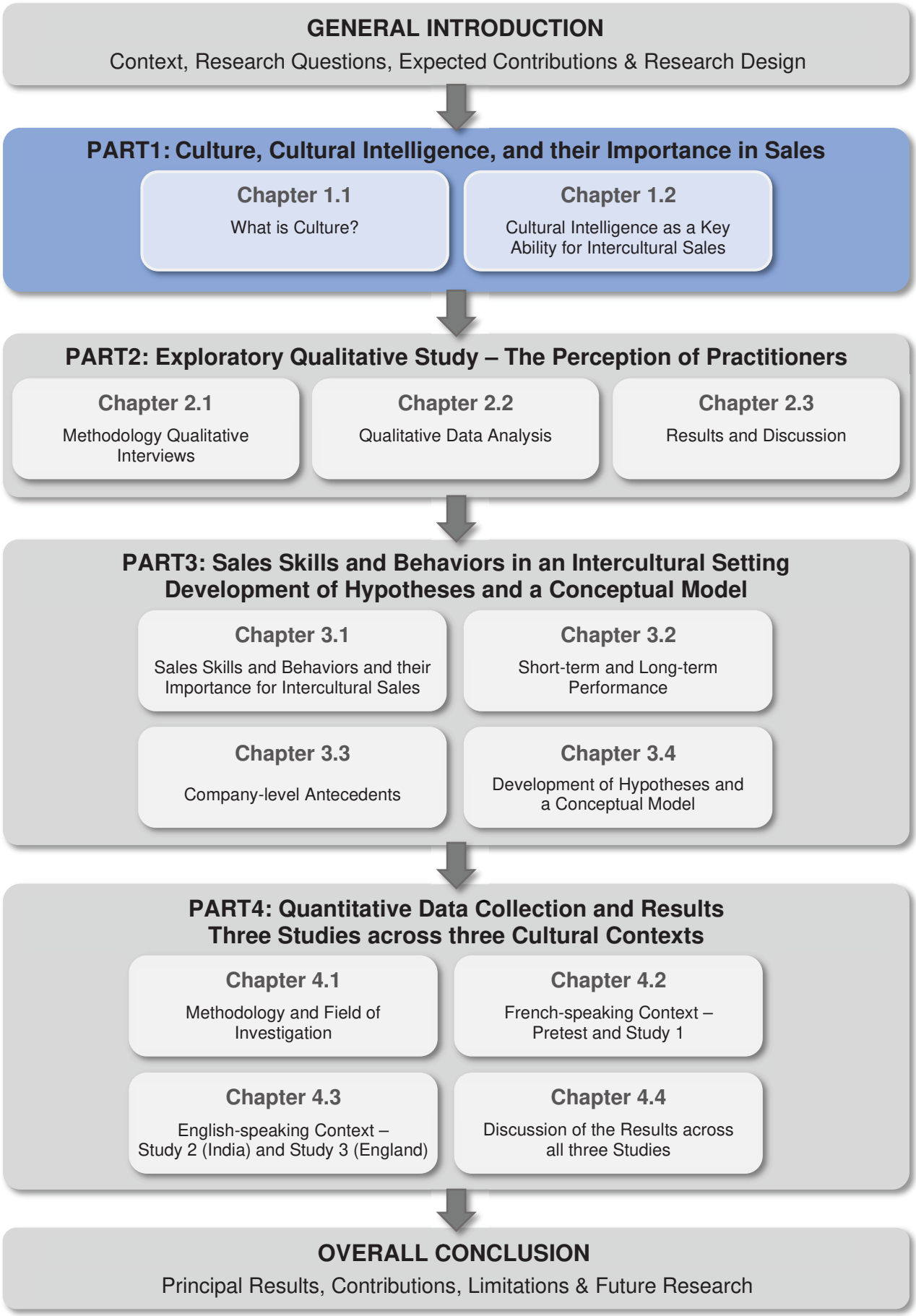


Figure 1: Research structure overall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As explained beforehand, the first part of this manuscript is a literature review on the foundations of this research, Culture and Cultural Intelligence.

In this part, the notion of Culture is explored, and different existing definitions examined. In this chapter, literature about different perceptions of culture is reviewed. This includes the distinction of different levels of culture as well as cultural dimensions as distinguished by earlier research. This chapter then leads to a definition of Culture used as foundation for this research.

Secondly, the concept of Cultural Intelligence is looked at. In addition to the explanation of different definitions, this concept is delimited from other, similar concepts like Intercultural Communication Competencies or Social and Emotional Intelligence. Finally, the last part of this chapter exposes research on antecedents and outcomes of this concept that have been linked in prior Human Resource and Management literature but also in the Sales literature.

These concepts are therefore laying the theoretical foundation for the rest of the research and lead to some research questions that remain to be answered with multiple studies.

1.1 What is Culture?

To start this literature section, the notion of culture is looked at because this is the foundation of this research. Culture has been defined in many ways leading to a lack of consensus to define this concept.

1.1.1 Cultural Concepts

First of all, three different basic cultural concepts can be distinguished in the literature (Lüsebrink, 2012):

- intellectual-aesthetic concept of culture
- material concept of culture
- anthropological concept of culture.

As defined by Lüsebrink (2012), the first cultural concept, intellectual-aesthetic, is closely linked to notions like ‘education’ or ‘art’ and distinguishes culture as an educational and elite culture from a mass or popular culture.

Secondly, the material concept of culture sees culture as an industrial one. This understanding goes back to the original meaning of culture as ‘agriculture’ and includes concepts like artisan culture, engineering culture or gastronomic culture, for example.

The third and last culture concept is the anthropological concept of culture. It is the most commonly used concept and understands culture as the totality of collective patterns of thought, perception and action of a society (Lüsebrink, 2012). One of the best known and most used definitions of this concept of culture is the one provided by Hofstede (1980) who defines it as a “*collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category from people of another*” (Hofstede 2001, p.9). This concept is the one that is mostly used as a basis for intercultural research.

1.1.2 Cultural Levels

But even when talking about anthropological culture, there are a lot of different things that are included. Culture can for example be defined on many different levels including (Steenkamp, 2001; Steel and Taras, 2010; Balogh et al., 2011):

- individual
- organizational
- national

In previous research, culture is mostly examined at organizational levels, societal levels or national levels. These seem to be the definitions of culture that most people have in mind when talking about culture (Samaha et al., 2014). Additionally, intercultural management research considers culture most of the time at a national level (Hofstede, 1980; Steel and Taras, 2010; Samaha et al., 2014; Minkov, 2018).

For this research, only definitions that describe culture on a national level and not an individual or organizational level will be considered. This choice follows trends in international and intercultural marketing research (Steenkamp, 2001) and limits the vast literature to review for the culture concept. Even if there is some criticism to be found whether it makes sense to determine cultures based on geographical boundaries (Steel and Taras, 2010), national cultures are facilitating categorization and therefore make it easier to compare between cultures (Steenkamp, 2001). Furthermore, different researchers (e.g., Hofstede, 1980) have shown that there is indeed a variation on a multitude of dimensions on the national-cultural level. Thus, there seems to be a certain degree of cultural homogeneity within countries whilst there also exists a certain diversity between them. Thus, national culture can be used in order to simplify the definition of this concept and will therefore also be the basis of this research.

When looking at national culture definitions, it becomes apparent that there are different dimensions of national culture, more or less visible. The deeper levels of cultures are for example values that are not directly visible but lived. There are also more observable levels like artifacts and behaviors. These levels differ from one culture to another and are more or less easily assimilated by people who do not belong to this particular culture (Drake, 1995; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2011; Messner, 2015). Therefore, culture is sometimes compared to an onion. The deeper down to the core, the less visible and the further outward, the more visible and detectable the cultural traits are (Crowne, 2008; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2011). Consequently, in the sales context, it is not enough to limit oneself to speaking the partner's language, since language is only one part of the culture (Honeycutt Jr and Ford, 1996).

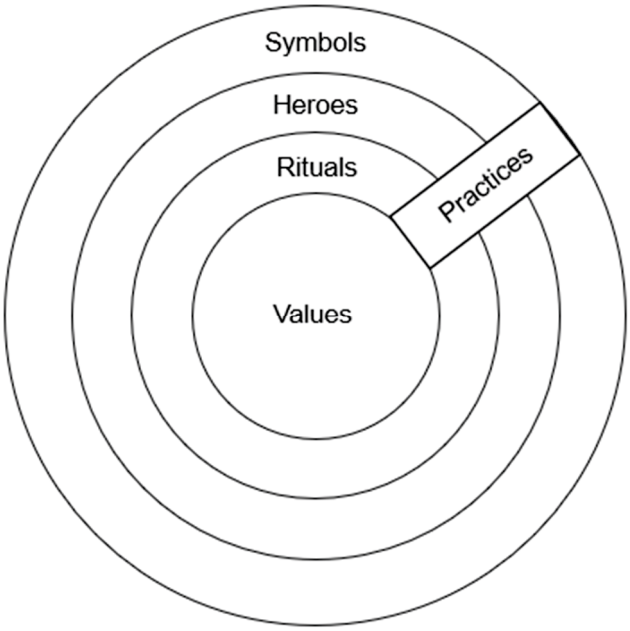


Figure 2: Culture as an onion (adapted from Lüsebrink, 2012)

In order to better understand national culture, it is now important to look at different conceptualizations of this concept.

1.1.3 Cultural Dimensions as defined by Hofstede

One of the most well-known researchers in the area of national culture is G. Hofstede. He has been qualified as being "*one of the most-cited authors in social science*" (Minkov and Hofstede 2017, p.11) and is known well beyond the cross-cultural research (Minkov and Hofstede, 2017). Hofstede has created a model including different cultural dimensions for national culture distinctions. This model allows us to form a better picture of what cultural traits can be expected in one country. At its publication, this model has been entirely novel because culture has, until then, been considered as a single variable. Hofstede's model has shown a way of creating different dimensions of culture and therefore demystifying the fear of this complex concept of culture (Minkov and Hofstede, 2017).

Initially, four dimensions have been distinguished based on one data collection with employees of IBM in 72 nations. Continuing his research, Hofstede later added a fifth dimension. These five dimensions are (Hofstede, 1980; Minkov and Hofstede, 2017):

- individualism
- long-term orientation
- masculinity
- power distance
- uncertainty avoidance.

Hofstede's cultural framework has since been criticized heavily because it is based on a relatively ancient data collection from the late 1960s and early 1970s from only one single company. Therefore, the data cannot necessarily be generalized and, at the same time, could be outdated (Peterson, 2003; Panagopoulos et al., 2011). Furthermore, some criticism has been raised about the link between the survey items and the dimensions as being unintuitive (Peterson, 2003).

Some newer research about Hofstede's cultural model has shown that some of the original dimensions like individualism, for example, are robust ones. However, other ones like

uncertainty avoidance or masculinity lack coherence or internal reliability. Furthermore, power distance seems to be more of a sub-dimension of individualism. Long-term orientation becomes, after some restructuration of the dimensions, applicable and more coherent (Minkov, 2018).

1.1.4 Other Culture Definitions

In addition to this predominant framework of culture, other definitions must also be looked at for this research. Another well-known researcher who advanced theory building about the concept of culture is E. T. Hall. He also defines culture as a sort of programming that drives people to behave in a certain way (Hall and Hall, 1990). In one of his earlier works, he defined culture through communication (Hall, 1959), which is a very interesting contribution for this research. In the sales context, positive or negative impressions are mostly generated by communication. Hall, as Hofstede, distinguishes a multitude of different cultural dimensions, and adds the role of context and time to those mentioned by Hofstede.

There is another definition of culture to consider for this research. Rohner (1984, p.119f) defines culture as "*the totality of equivalent and complementary learned meanings maintained by a human population, or by identifiable segments of a population, and transmitted from one generation to the next*". This definition is interesting for this research because it includes the possibility that culture can be learned by people. This idea is also shared by other cultural definitions explaining that people living in different places have different cultures due to the learning aspect and the differing environment that shapes one's own culture (Kour, 2017). So, from this definition, it can be concluded that intercultural training could help to better understand different cultures and adapt more easily to them. This also means that people who have learned to understand different cultures could be more able to adapt to other, non-learned cultures.

In addition to all these frameworks and definitions of culture, another well-known framework exists that is called GLOBE. This research project is more recent and broader in scope than

the one by Hofstede, for example. This project involves a multitude of researchers all over the world who work together in order to better understand the impact of different cultural values on leadership and organizational processes. The different cultural dimensions distinguished in the GLOBE project are (House et al., 2002):

- uncertainty avoidance
- power distance
- collectivism I: societal collectivism
- collectivism II: in-group collectivism
- gender egalitarianism
- assertiveness
- future orientation
- performance orientation
- humane orientation

All these different definitions and frameworks show that culture is clearly a complex concept that cannot be measured easily. In addition, culture seems to be homogenous for one group of people but distinguishes them from another group. And finally, culture is something that is transmitted and taught from people to others.

To conclude, culture is a complex concept that has a lot of different conceptualizations like intellectual-aesthetic, material, or **anthropological concept of culture**.

Furthermore, culture can be looked at on different levels like individual, organizational or **national culture**.

As national culture is the dominant level to have been researched especially in the intercultural marketing literature, we are also looking at this level predominantly.

For this research, we are therefore adopting a definition that includes the different definitions of national culture mentioned above and we define it as

learned meanings and behaviors that distinguish people from one group to another.

Now that the concept of culture is defined for this research, it is necessary to understand how it is possible to distinguish people that are able to work effectively with people from different cultures. In order to do this, the focus of the next chapter is on the concept of Cultural Intelligence.

1.2 Cultural Intelligence as a Key Ability for Intercultural Sales

The following chapter is presenting the key concept of this research, Cultural Intelligence. To start, different definitions of this notion is examined. Secondly, this concept is delimited from other, similar concepts of intercultural competence in order to understand important differences and why this concept and not one of the other ones is used for this research. Finally, a review of existing research about Cultural Intelligence and other, linked concepts in HR and management research and especially sales research will conclude this chapter.

1.2.1 Conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Cultural Intelligence is a relatively new concept that has been developed at the beginning of the 2000s by Earley and Ang (2003). It has gained increasing interest especially in intercultural management literature (Van Dyne et al., 2012). This concept refers to **a person's abilities and skills to adapt and interact effectively in an intercultural context** (Earley and Ang, 2003; Earley and Peterson, 2004; Thomas et al., 2008; Hansen et al., 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2013; Alexandra, 2018). It can, in consequence, be used to explain why some people seem to be able to cope with intercultural diversity better than others (Ang and Van Dyne, 2015). Furthermore, this concept also illustrates differences in the adaptation to new cultural contexts (Kour, 2017). Thus, it has even been considered as "*the key competence of the twenty-first century*" (Kour 2017, p.123).

Cultural Intelligence is a culture-general concept that is not particular to any culture and must be distinguished from other concepts of intelligence like Emotional Intelligence or Social Intelligence that are very culture-specific (Earley and Ang, 2003; Thomas et al., 2008; Fang et al., 2018). Further information about the distinction of these concepts can be found in Chapter 1.2.3 Differences from other Intelligence Concepts.

Cultural Intelligence is an individual capability that has been identified to predict performance outcomes in various intercultural situations (Ang and Van Dyne, 2015). At the same time, it is

a malleable capability, not innate, and can consequently be developed over time, for example by traveling, intercultural training or doing international assignments (Van Dyne et al., 2012; Kour, 2017). The focus of this concept is not only on knowing how to behave in an intercultural context but also about the capacity to learn this behavioral repertoire (Earley and Ang, 2003; Johnson et al., 2006).

People with high Cultural Intelligence are able to cope better with confusing situations, think more deeply about the different situational cues and adjust better their thoughts to these different cultural contexts (Kour, 2017).

As explained, the concept of Cultural Intelligence has first been introduced by Earley and Ang (2003). Based on Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) framework of the multiple loci of intelligence, Cultural Intelligence is defined as an aggregate multidimensional concept (Earley and Ang, 2003; Ang and Van Dyne, 2015). Multiple loci of intelligence mean that intelligence has different forms within one person including mental capabilities, such as cognition for example, as well as behavioral capabilities (Ang and Van Dyne, 2015). In this sense, Sternberg and Detterman (1986) distinguish four different dimensions of individual-level intelligence—metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral. While the first three dimensions (metacognitive, cognitive and motivational) have been developed as mental capabilities, behavioral intelligence includes the more tangible actions and motor skills (Van Dyne et al., 2012).

For their conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence, Earley and Ang initially distinguish three different dimensions of Cultural Intelligence (see Figure 3). The initial three dimensions are cognitive, motivational, and behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

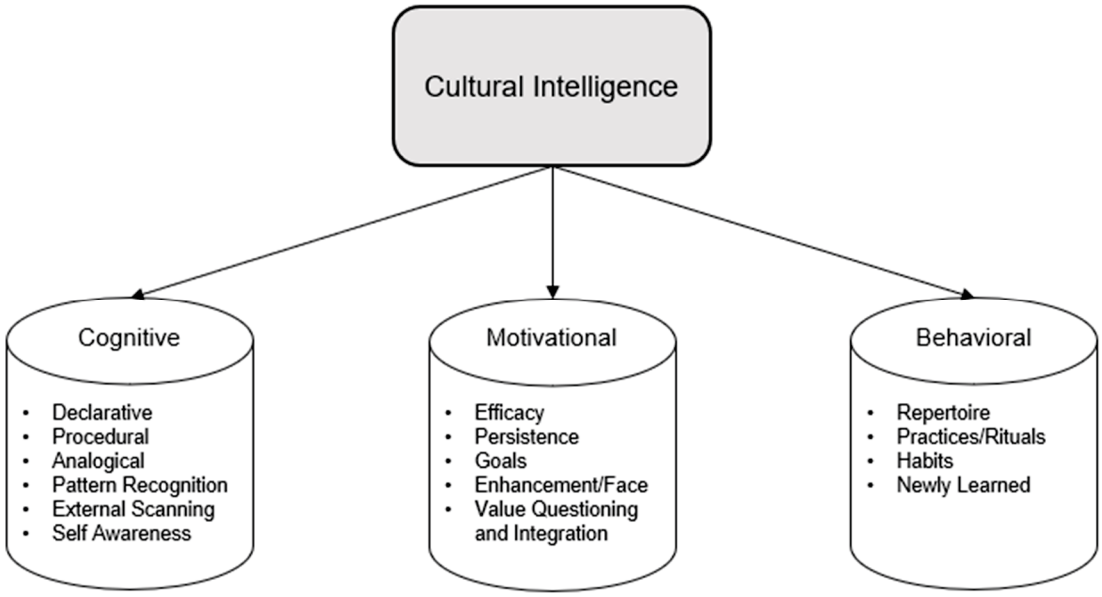


Figure 3: Dimensions of Cultural Intelligence (Source: Earley and Ang 2003, p. 67)

The 'cognitive' dimension of this conceptualization consists of the knowledge structures of a person and therefore concrete cognitive information about cultural beliefs, behaviors, and other information. Therefore, it has also been called 'CQ-Knowledge' (Kour, 2017). This first dimension explains differences in the understanding of cultural similarities and differences. Furthermore, a person with high cognitive Cultural Intelligence is said to understand better the differences between their own and other, foreign cultural backgrounds (Ang et al., 2007; Kour, 2017).

Later on, Earley and colleagues decided to split the initial cognitive dimension into two distinct new dimensions: 'cognitive' and 'metacognitive'. The definition of 'cognitive Cultural Intelligence' is kept the same whether 'metacognitive Cultural Intelligence' is defined as the "*processes individuals use to acquire and understand knowledge*" (Ang et al. 2007, p.337). This dimension has also been called 'CQ-Strategy' and includes all the strategic actions of planning before cross-cultural interactions and adjusting existing knowledge structures of cultures when observing people during these encounters (Kour, 2017). Persons with high metacognitive Cultural Intelligence have therefore a distinct awareness of cultural differences and efficient ways of acquiring and assimilating information about the different cultures.

The second initial dimension, 'motivational Cultural Intelligence', is composed of "*the mental capacity to direct and sustain energy on a particular task or situation*" (Ang et al. 2007, p. 337). Therefore, a person with high motivational Cultural Intelligence has an intrinsic interest to learn cultural differences. A high motivational Cultural Intelligence also stands for confidence in his or her own cross-cultural effectiveness (Ang et al., 2007).

Finally, 'behavioral Cultural Intelligence' is the explicit behavior and outward manifestations of actions. Consequently, appropriate, and pertinent verbal and non-verbal actions and behaviors are a sign of high behavioral Cultural Intelligence. This dimension is based on verbal and non-verbal capabilities of a person. Everybody is used to certain gestures and facial expressions. Sometimes, people are physically not capable of certain gestures or need at least a lot of training. Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is the most visible of the three initial dimensions of Cultural Intelligence (Ang et al., 2007).

Following this conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence, research has shown that people with high Cultural Intelligence are able to overcome new, challenging social contexts by using metacognitive strategies. Furthermore, they are always looking for new information outside their own cultural background and knowledge. And finally, these people are also able to persevere despite challenges and obstacles (Johnson et al., 2006).

This four-dimensional model of cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioral Cultural Intelligence is widely adopted in today's research about this concept (Fang et al., 2018). Based on this conceptualization, a more narrow and finer understanding of this concept has been developed (Van Dyne et al., 2012).

In their paper on the sub-dimensions of the four-factor model of Cultural Intelligence, Van Dyne et al. (2012) identified eleven sub-dimensions. The metacognitive Cultural Intelligence therefore is divided into three—planning, awareness and checking while for cognitive Cultural Intelligence, culture-general knowledge is differentiated from context-specific knowledge, therefore forming two subdimensions. Drawing on motivational theories, three different dimensions are determined: intrinsic and extrinsic interest as well as self-efficacy. And finally,

verbal behavior, non-verbal behavior and speech acts constitute the three dimensions of behavioral Cultural Intelligence (Van Dyne et al., 2012) (see Figure 4).

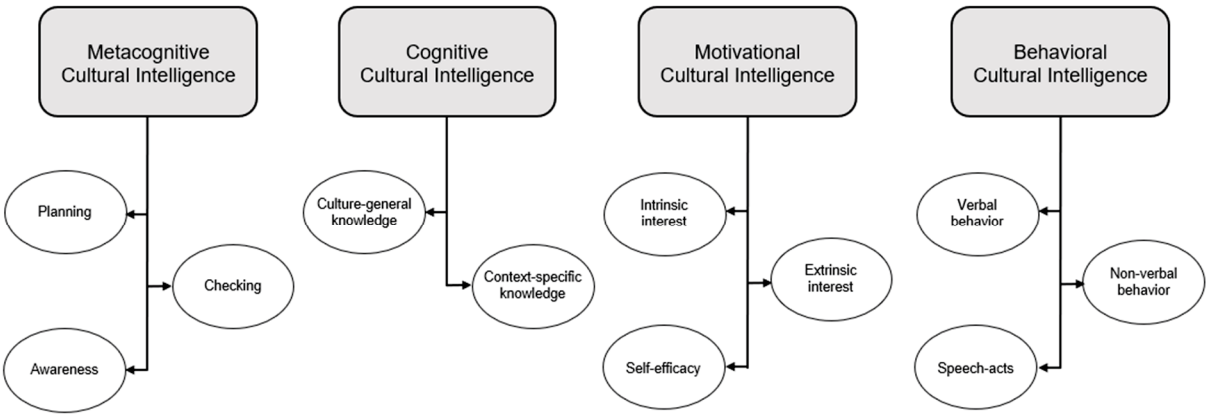


Figure 4: Sub-dimensions of the four-factor model of Cultural Intelligence

(adapted from Van Dyne et al., 2021)

However, in addition to this first understanding and definition of Cultural Intelligence, a second well-known conceptualization was introduced by Thomas et al. (2008). They define Cultural Intelligence as a "*system of interacting knowledge and skills, linked by cultural metacognition that allows people to adapt to, select, and shape the cultural aspects of their environment*" (Thomas et al. 2008, p. 126).

In their conceptualization, Cultural Intelligence consists of three dimensions: cultural knowledge and skills, cultural metacognition, and culturally intelligent behavior (see Figure 5). In contrast to Earley and Ang's conceptualization, Thomas et al. (2008) explain that the different facets of Cultural Intelligence cannot be separated but interact.

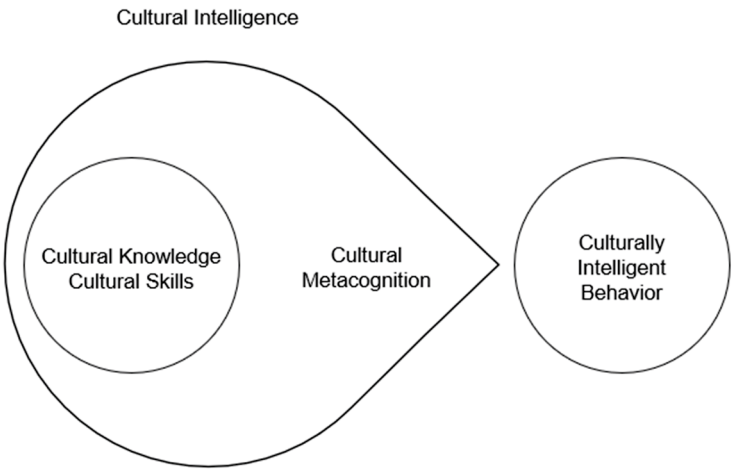


Figure 5: Cultural Intelligence conceptualization (Source: Thomas et al. 2008, p.128)

The biggest difference between these two conceptualizations is, first, the number and type of the subdimensions and the link between them. Earley and Ang (2003) distinguish four dimensions that can be investigated separately whether Thomas et al. (2008) only mention three dimensions that are intertwined in a way that they cannot be separated. Furthermore, there is no motivational facet in Thomas et al.'s conceptualization. According to them, motivation and intelligence are linked, but motivation does not appear as a component of intelligence, reason why they excluded this dimension from their conceptualization (Thomas et al., 2015).

For this research, we have decided to opt for the categorization of Earley and Ang (2003), especially due to the fact that this categorization has been the only one adopted in sales research (e.g., Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022). For more information about how Cultural Intelligence has been studied in sales see 1.2.4.2 Cultural Intelligence in Sales Research. Furthermore, to facilitate data collection and follow most of the research about this concept, we chose to stick with the traditional, four-factor model and not use the newer model with eleven sub-dimensions.

To sum up, Cultural Intelligence, for this research, is defined as ***a person's abilities and skills to adapt and interact effectively in an intercultural context.***

Moreover, Cultural Intelligence is a culture-general concept and an individual capability which distinguishes people that know how to work with others from different cultural backgrounds effectively.

Following the most widely used conceptualization of this variable, four sub-dimensions of Cultural Intelligence can be distinguished (Earley and Ang 2003):

- Metacognitive
- Cognitive
- Motivational
- Behavioral

These four dimensions are used for further research and looked at separately in order to determine differences between them in a sales context.

After defining this concept, it is now necessary to differentiate it from other intercultural competence concepts.

1.2.2 Differences from other Cross-Cultural Competency Concepts

To better understand the concept of Cultural Intelligence, it is important to contrast it with similar concepts like Cross-Cultural Competence or Intercultural Competence. There has been a lot of research about these kinds of concepts, especially in intercultural business research over the last few decades (Van Bakel et al., 2014).

The international business research has looked at all the different competence concepts excessively. Nevertheless, there is a lack of consensus on the definitions of these different notions (Deardorff, 2015; Li, 2020). Therefore, a more general review of these concepts including different definitions is presented. In the end, the common points that these definitions have are compared to the four-factor model of Cultural Intelligence presented above.

Actually, all of these concepts are based on the notion of competence which has been arising in the linguistic research stream in the 1960s. It has been developed to explain the concept of communication competence as the ability to learn a language through education. Later in the 1990s, this concept of competence has been studied for the first time in an intercultural context and added some value there (Van Bakel et al., 2014). Communicative competence in intercultural situations explains that every person has a particular native communicative competence (CC1). When in interaction with another person, this CC1 is contrasted to the interlocutors own native communication competence (CC2). If the first person having CC1 decides now to learn the second CC2, they develop therefore an intercultural competence (Fantini, 2009).

In order to understand the differences between Cultural Intelligence and the other competence concepts, they will first be defined. To do this, Cross-Cultural Competence is introduced as the first concept before going into more details about Intercultural Communication Competence.

1.2.2.1 Cross-Cultural Competence

The first concept that has been introduced in the intercultural business research stream was the concept of Cross-Cultural Competence. But still until today, there is no consensus on the different components that this concept consists of, even if there are a lot of studies attempting to better understand it (Li, 2020).

One of the earliest studies about the concept of Cross-Cultural Competence was the research of Gertsen (1990, p.346) who defined Cross-Cultural Competence as "*the ability to function effectively in another culture*. This study looked at Cross-Cultural Competence and expatriates and distinguished three interdependent dimensions of this concept: affective, cognitive and communicative or behavioral. The affective dimension includes attitudes and personality traits whether the cognitive dimension consists of the cognitive cultural knowledge structures and how individuals acquire this knowledge. The communicative and behavioral dimension explains the necessity of being an efficient communicator limiting problems and misunderstandings (Johnson et al., 2006).

Later research in this area explained that Cross-Cultural Competence must be looked at under the KSAO framework which includes "*Knowledge, Skills, Ability, and Other, where Other includes both interests and personality constructs*" (Leiba-O'sullivan 1999, p.711). In general, international business research explains that Cultural Competence requires multiple factors including attitude, skills and knowledge (Johnson et al., 2006).

A general definition of Cross-Cultural Competence has been proposed by Johnson, Lenartowicz, and Apud in 2006: *"Cross-cultural competence in international business is an individual's effectiveness in drawing upon a set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad."* (p. 530). For these researchers, Cross-Cultural Competence is the *"result of behavioral adaptation"* (Johnson, Lenartowicz, and Apud 2006, p. 530). They also explain that this adaptation can take place either in the home culture of a person or another, alien culture (Johnson et al., 2006). Thus, it seems that the focal point of the concept of Cross-Cultural

Competence is the performance dimension that results from successfully working with and adapting to people from different cultural backgrounds than your own.

Moreover, a model for Cross-Cultural Competence has been proposed in the international business research including three different dimensions: knowledge, skills and personal attributes (Johnson et al., 2006). But unfortunately, due to the multitude of definitions that exist of Cross-Cultural Competence, there remains a certain challenge to differentiate its core characteristics, antecedents and outcomes as well as finding a way to measure it (Chiu et al., 2013).

1.2.2.2 Intercultural Communication Competence

In addition to this first concept of cross-cultural competency, it is important to look also at the notion of Intercultural Communication Competence. This concept is also studied under the name of 'Intercultural Competence' and has equally been defined in many different ways leading to a certain ambiguity of the term (Deardorff, 2015). Similar to the first concept presented, there is "*no consensus yet as to exactly which subcomponents are part of intercultural competence*" (Van Bakel, Gerritsen, and Van Oudenhoven 2014, p. 2051).

One of the leading scholars in cultural research, Hofstede, has looked at this particular concept and proposes a definition including awareness, knowledge and skills (Hofstede, 2001). Overall, most of the research about this concept includes knowledge, skills and attitudes that an individual need in order to be interculturally competent in their definitions (Deardorff, 2015). At the same time, it has been shown that Intercultural Competence can never be fully achieved due to the fact that it consists of a lifelong learning process (Deardorff, 2015). Theoretical support for this developmental nature of Intercultural or Cross-Cultural Competence is established by Culture Learning Theory (Chiu et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2013).

This developmental nature of Intercultural Competence has also been accentuated by the research of Bennet (1986) who posited a framework for this concept called the Developmental

Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). This model focuses on the process of becoming more interculturally competent by moving from ethnocentric to ethnorelative orientations. Ethnocentric means that a person is experiencing his culture as the only real center of interest (Hammer et al., 2003). This dimension can be divided into three sub-dimensions of denial, defense, and minimization. In contrast, an ethnorelative orientation is experiencing cultures in the context of other cultures. For this dimension, three other dimensions called acceptance, adaptation and integration can be distinguished (Li, 2020). Figure 6 is showing the DMIS process as a whole.

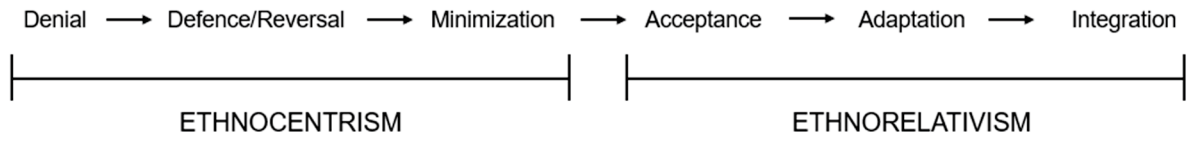


Figure 6: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

(Source: Hammer et al., 2003, p.424)

Furthermore, another research that focalizes on the development nature of Intercultural Competence is the research of Bhawuk (1998) who distinguishes four different but progressive levels of this concept: unconscious incompetence; conscious incompetence; conscious competence; and unconscious competence.

Some research tried to clarify core characteristics of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) since there is still a lot of discussion about its key dimensions (Chiu et al., 2013). In this research, Deardorff (2006) invited experts in order to reach a consensus on a common definition. Even if she still found a lot of variation among the expert's views and definitions, most of the agreement was on the focus of this concept on effective communication based on an individual's knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Finally, when talking about the assessment of this concept, it is important to keep in mind that such an assessment needs to consist of multiple tools in order to ensure a complete picture of

the level of Intercultural Competence and also the developmental nature of this concept (Deardorff, 2015).

1.2.2.3 Differences between Cross-Cultural Competence, Intercultural Competence and Cultural Intelligence

To better understand the differences between all these concepts, it is important to look at the different dimensions proposed in all the definitions. As stated by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) *"The theories and models display both considerable similarity in their broad brushstrokes (e.g. motivation, knowledge, skills, context, outcomes) and yet extensive diversity at the level of specific conceptual subcomponents"* (p. 35).

When considering the four dimensions of Cultural Intelligence, it becomes clear that this concept goes one step further than other, associated concepts by not only including knowledge and awareness (metacognitive and cognitive dimension) as well as skills (behavioral dimension), but also a motivational facet (Earley and Ang, 2003). This motivation to adapt and to efficiently use the acquired knowledge is a point that is not included in any of the other related concepts (Johnson et al., 2006). Furthermore, Cultural Intelligence has no personality or personal attributes dimension. This could be explained by the fact that Cultural Intelligence is seen as a malleable state that can be developed over time (Jyoti and Kour, 2017a), which is not the case for most definitions of personality. Personality has been shown to be linked as an antecedent of Cultural Intelligence but is not a part of the definition of the concept (Ang et al., 2006).

Furthermore, newer research has shown that Cultural Intelligence is not the same as Intercultural Competence but seems to be related to it in some way (Li, 2020). Both concepts try to explain what makes a person more effective in cross-cultural encounters. When looking at the DMIS model, Li (2020) argued that the three higher stages (ethnorelative orientation) will be positively related whether the lower three stages (ethnocentric orientation) will more likely be negatively related to Cultural Intelligence.

Moreover, it has been explained in the literature that the fundamental paradigms between Cultural Intelligence and Intercultural Competence seem to differ (Li, 2020). Cultural Intelligence is based on a CAB (Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral) paradigm which tries to identify the different characteristics that make individuals more competent in cross-cultural encounters. However, Intercultural Competence seems to focus more on the developmental nature of the concept and is, consequently, based on a developmental paradigm highlighting the stages that an individual goes through in order to be more culturally competent. This is also shown by the different models like the DMIS that dominate the research stream about the concept of Intercultural Competence (Li, 2020).

But it is important to keep in mind that research in intercultural business is debating about the developmental nature of intercultural competencies by asking the question whether some part of this might be innate (Van Bakel et al., 2014). Some research is looking at different competence levels including stable and dynamic competences. This research also explains that stable competencies like personality traits seem to act as a foundation on which dynamic competences are added (Leiba-O'sullivan, 1999). Nevertheless, to date, no correct answer seems to be found to this question, explaining again the multitude of similar concepts like Cross-Cultural Competence, Intercultural Competence or Cultural Intelligence.

In conclusion, Cultural Intelligence needs to be distinguished from concepts like Intercultural Competence or Cross-Cultural Competence. In general, there are a lot of similarities between all these concepts, especially in the general conceptualization. But with regards to the details, Cultural Intelligence is different than these other concepts.

Firstly, **Cultural Intelligence goes beyond** these other concepts by not only looking at cognition and behavior, but also by adding a **motivational facet.** In addition to this, Cultural Intelligence has **no personality or personal attributes dimension,** but some personality traits have been shown to function as antecedents of Cultural Intelligence. Therefore, the dimensions that these concepts are looking at are different.

Secondly, **Cultural Intelligence has a different focus** than these other concepts. Here, the focus is not on the learning process itself but on the **capability of one person at a given moment in time**.

In addition to other intercultural competence concepts, Cultural Intelligence also needs to be distinguished from other types of intelligence like Emotional or Social Intelligence. The next chapter is therefore looking at these differences.

1.2.3 Differences from other Intelligence Concepts

To fully understand the concept of Cultural Intelligence, it is important to delimit this concept from other intelligence concepts. This subchapter is therefore looking at similarities and differences between Cultural Intelligence and Social Intelligence as well as Emotional Intelligence. All of these forms of intelligence have been characterized as 'real world intelligence' (Lin et al., 2012) and are relatively similar in focus but still need to be distinguished.

1.2.3.1 Social Intelligence

First of all, Social Intelligence has been defined as "*the ability to understand others and to act wisely in social situations*" (Walker and Foley 1973, p.393). Thus, the focus of this form of intelligence is clearly on the social interactions and interpersonal encounters. Social Intelligence is therefore a form of interaction intelligence (Brislin et al., 2006).

This form of intelligence is looking at the knowledge of an individual about the social world and his ability to interact with it. Individuals high in Social Intelligence therefore have good abilities and skills that allow them to communicate and connect with the people around them (Brislin et al., 2006). In contrast to General Intelligence, this is therefore a form of intelligence that is difficult to measure with tests (Walker and Foley, 1973).

But when looking at intercultural encounters, it becomes clear that social norms vary within different cultures and a person high in Social Intelligence within one culture does not necessarily know how to interact with people from another culture (Van Dyne et al., 2012). Culture especially impacts the value systems and ways of encoding a message (Samaha et al., 2014), making it very difficult to understand and interact with people from different cultures.

1.2.3.2 Emotional Intelligence

The concept of Emotional Intelligence has been developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as a form of Social Intelligence *"that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions."* (Salovey and Mayer 1990, p.190). In addition to Salovey and Mayer's definition, Goleman (1995) has also popularized this concept and added a second conceptualization of it. He explained that high Emotional Intelligence consists of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Goleman, 1995).

In addition to this four-factor model of Emotional Intelligence, other research proposes four other dimensions of this concept (Lin et al., 2012):

- Self-Emotions Appraisal (SEA)
- Others-Emotions Appraisal (OEA)
- Regulation of Emotion (ROE)
- Use of Emotion (UOE)

The first dimension, SEA, relates to the ability to understand one's deep emotions and express them naturally. In contrast, OEA focuses more on the emotions of others and the perception and understanding of how others feel around us. Furthermore, the third dimension, ROE refers to the ability of an individual to assess and even adjust one's own emotions. Finally, UOE is the capacity of an individual to use effectively his emotions in a positive way to be more performant (Lin et al., 2012).

Finally, other definitions of this type of intelligence also include, among others, skills and abilities like self-awareness, impulse control, self-efficacy, empathy, and social deftness (Brislin et al., 2006).

But as for social encounters, the perception of emotions of others and the appropriate reaction to it is heavily influenced by culture (Brislin et al., 2006). Thus, Emotional Intelligence is important in interactions with culturally similar individuals but an individual high in this form of intelligence does not necessarily know how to respond to certain emotional reactions in different cultures (Moon, 2010a). In this sense, earlier research explains that certain parts of Emotional Intelligence like empathy or social deftness are culture-bound and culture-sensitive (Brislin et al., 2006).

1.2.3.3 Correlations and Differences between Social, Emotional and Cultural Intelligence

When looking at correlations between all of these intelligence concepts, research has found Emotional Intelligence to be strongly correlated with Cultural Intelligence while General Intelligence was not (Li, 2020). Research has argued that in cross-cultural encounters, it is important to have both, Cultural and Emotional Intelligence in order to be really effective (Kour, 2017). In this sense, Moon (2010) for example examined the relationships between the four factors of Cultural Intelligence and the four factors of Emotional Intelligence and found that specific factors of both were related. Other authors have proposed conceptual models that present Cultural Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence as distinct but related constructs and subsets of Social Intelligence (Crowne, 2009).

But in general, there is a consensus that all these different forms of intelligence are complementary in some way (Van Dyne et al., 2012). In this sense, multiple intelligence theory explains that "*the intellect should be described as a set of semi- autonomous computational mechanisms to process information*" (Crowne 2009, p.149). Thus, these different forms of intelligence have shown to be interacting and are not isolated (Crowne, 2009). Rockstuhl and Seiler (2011) for example found in their study about leadership effectiveness that Cultural Intelligence positively impacted cross-border but not general leadership effectiveness while Emotional Intelligence impacted general but nor cross-border leadership effectiveness. Consequently, both of them are needed together in this case (Rockstuhl and Seiler, 2011).

It still is important to look at the differences between all these forms of intelligence. In this case, we are especially looking at differences to distinguish Cultural Intelligence from the other intelligence concepts. Studies in this area have shown that the perspective of Cultural Intelligence and these other concepts is different. Cultural Intelligence is representing a more etic perspective of intelligence which is looking at behaviors from outside the system and investigates specific contextual factors in different cultures. In contrast, the other cultural concepts reflect a more emic perspective that studies the factors that compose intelligence within a particular culture and their relations with other variables within this one culture (Kour, 2017). Here, we can also talk about the differences of a culture-general versus a culture-specific approach. Cultural Intelligence can be categorized as being culture-general based on the assumption that individuals high in this type of intelligence have skills, knowledge and other internal resources that are not only related to one particular culture. These individuals can therefore use these resources in a multitude of cultures and are able to manage effectively intercultural encounters. In contrast, General Intelligence, Social Intelligence or Emotional Intelligence can be characterized as being culture-specific meaning that an individual high in these intelligences demonstrate these only in one given culture and not necessarily also in other cultures (Matsumoto and Hwang, 2013).

Besides this difference cultural specificity, Cultural Intelligence also differs from these other concepts due to the capabilities that it concentrates on. For example, cognitive knowledge about how to greet individuals in a particular culture or their legal and economic systems does not need any emotional response. In contrast, Emotional Intelligence for example includes not only interpersonal skills but also intrapersonal ones like self-awareness or self-management. This intrapersonal part is dealing with one's internal processes and likely not affected by Cultural Intelligence in any way (Moon, 2010a). Furthermore, Cultural Intelligence focuses more on adaptation across cultures and metacognition, which is something that is not included in Emotional Intelligence. At the same time, Cultural Intelligence does not look at an individual's understanding, change and effective use of his own emotions (Kour, 2017).

To conclude, Emotional, Social and Cultural Intelligence are concepts that are **somewhat linked** but still different in focus and look at different parts of intelligence within multiple intelligence theory.

While Emotional and Social Intelligence are **emic and culture-specific**, Cultural Intelligence is more **etic and culture-general**. This means that a person can have a high Social or Emotional Intelligence in one cultural context but not at all in another one whilst the Cultural Intelligence of a person does not change at all with the cultural context.

Furthermore, the **focus of the capabilities between these forms of intelligence is different**. For example, Cultural Intelligence focuses more on cultural adaptation and metacognition while Emotional Intelligence also includes intrapersonal processes like self-management.

After the definition and conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence as well as the delimitation of this concept from other cross-cultural concepts and intelligence concepts, the next subchapter is now looking at earlier research about this variable.

1.2.4 Cultural Intelligence in Previous Research

Finally, this last subchapter is looking at antecedents and outcomes of Cultural Intelligence and the research related to this concept. To start, an overview of the existing literature in the different fields is given before focusing on sales research that included this concept.

1.2.4.1 General Research about Cultural Intelligence

By looking at the existing research in general using the concept of Cultural Intelligence, it is apparent that the dominant definition used in the literature is the conceptualization of Earley and Ang (2003) (see Hansen et al., 2011; Solomon and Steyn, 2017). This conceptualization is well established, especially in the Management and Human Resources literature and has been used to evaluate for example expatriate performance in different contexts (Malek and Budhwar, 2013; Huff et al., 2014).

The concept of Cultural Intelligence has been introduced due to an increasing need to understand how people cope with difficulties from cross-cultural encounters including national cultures. But today, researchers believe that such a concept is becoming more and more important also to other differences within one country like gender culture or generation culture for example (Kour, 2017).

Different research streams can be distinguished about this concept in Management and Human Resource literature. First of all, some studies have looked at the relationship between antecedents like different Big Five personality traits for example in order to better understand how Cultural Intelligence is developed and what characteristics it is based on (Balogh et al., 2011). Following this idea, openness to experience is the only trait of the Big Five that has been proven to impact all four of the dimensions of Cultural Intelligence (Ang et al., 2006).

Furthermore, it has also been shown that Cultural Intelligence can be significantly improved by living in other countries. International assignments in multicultural environments for example have been proven to be effective in enhancing Cultural Intelligence (Şahin et al., 2014). In this

same vein, Chao et al. (2017) found that social adjustment as part of international experience is positively related to motivational and behavioral Cultural Intelligence. In their study, they also detected that general and academic adjustment did not produce any significant effects. This suggests that Cultural Intelligence can be influenced especially by social factors, highlighting the interactive side of this concept (Chao et al., 2017).

In addition, there is a second research stream around Cultural Intelligence that looks at different outcomes of the concept. Thus, Cultural Intelligence has been shown to have, among others, positive relationships with:

- Adaptation (e.g., Presbitero 2016; Templer, Tay, and Chandrasekar 2006),
- Job Performance (e.g., Chen et al. 2010; Jyoti and Kour 2017b),
- Cross-cultural adjustment (e.g., Lin, Chen, and Song 2012; Shu, McAbee, and Ayman 2017),
- Ethnocentrism (e.g., Young, Ha, and Corsun 2017).

In addition to all these individual variables that can be impacted by Cultural Intelligence, working in teams, especially multicultural ones, has also been shown to become easier with higher levels of Cultural Intelligence within the team (Moon, 2013; Iskhakova and Ott, 2020). Finally, not only the relationship between equals but also at different levels of the hierarchy can be influenced by this variable. In a study about transformational leadership for example, Dogra and Dixit (2019) have confirmed that the leader's Cultural Intelligence has a direct positive impact on his transformational leadership capability.

To conclude this part, Cultural Intelligence has been shown to help employees in a lot of different situations like communication and negotiation, decision-making or leadership across cultures (Kour, 2017). Thus, it can be expected to have a big impact in intercultural sales and needs to be investigated also in this particular context.

1.2.4.2 Cultural Intelligence in Sales Research

On the other hand, this second part will now look in more details at the research that exist about Cultural Intelligence in sales literature. Only a handful of studies exist about this concept in the sales literature and solely Earley and Ang's conceptualization has been used in this research stream (e.g., Delpechitre and Baker 2017; Hansen et al. 2011).

Firstly, there have been some studies looking at the impact of Cultural Intelligence on different negotiation outcomes. In a study on motivational Cultural Intelligence for example, it has been shown that higher motivational Cultural Intelligence is related to a strong intercultural communication motive and therefore the capacity to overcome barriers of intercultural negotiation (Chen et al., 2012). But not only motivational Cultural Intelligence has been proven to increase negotiation effectiveness, all four of the dimensions seem to impact in some way how intercultural negotiations function (Imai and Gelfand, 2010). Intercultural negotiation is therefore a topic that has gained increased attention and quite a few studies can be found linking Cultural Intelligence to this particular sales topic (e.g., Caputo et al. 2019; Groves, Feyerherm, and Gu 2015; Imai and Gelfand 2010)

But sales is not only negotiation. However, to date, very few studies exist linking this concept to other, sales-related concepts. The following Table 1 is showing the articles that have been studying Cultural Intelligence in a sales setting. The first paper talking about Cultural Intelligence in a sales setting and proposing different relationships with sales-related concepts is the research of Hansen et al. (2011). It is a conceptual paper and a research agenda proposing different research paths of Cultural Intelligence in sales. This paper can therefore be used to find topics that have not been explored before in this research stream, making it critical for this research.

Regarding antecedents of Cultural Intelligence, sales research to date has especially focused on training. Baker and Delpechitre (2016) for example looked at innovative ways to include Cultural Intelligence training in personnel selling programs. But this research remains to this

date one of the only ones looking at how Cultural Intelligence develops in a sales context and what variables are impacting this development.

With regards to outcomes, sales research has been focusing on the relationship of Cultural Intelligence with:

- Cultural sales (Chen et al., 2012)
- Sales role-play performance (Delpechitre and Baker, 2017)
- International sales performance (Charoensukmongkol, 2020)
- Sales self-efficacy (Charoensukmongkol and Pandey, 2020)
- Adaptive selling behavior (Delpechitre and Baker, 2017; Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022)

In a study of motivational Cultural Intelligence for example, Chen, Liu, and Portnoy (2012) found that this particular facet of Cultural Intelligence is positively related to cultural sales. Furthermore, Delpechitre and Baker (2017) found in their study that all four of the dimensions of Cultural Intelligence enhanced in some way the ability of sales students to alter their behaviors during intercultural sales interactions, resulting in the end of a better final performance during role-play presentations. But not only the student's performance has been shown to be improved by higher levels of Cultural Intelligence. In a study with salespeople at trade shown in foreign countries, Charoensukmongkol (2020) investigated the link between Cultural Intelligence, adaptive selling and international sales performance and found that salespeople with higher Cultural Intelligence levels seem to exhibit higher adaptive selling behaviors and, in a second step, international sales performance. However, in this study, Cultural Intelligence was not directly linked to sales performance.

Source	Conceptual/ Empirical	Sample	Context	Key Findings		
				Antecedents of CQ	***Consequences of CQ***	***Mediators/Moderators***
Hansen et al. (2011)	Conceptual			Cultural Adaptation as Antecedent of CQ, Organizational Ethnocentrism and Cultural Distance as Antecedent of motivational CQ	Cultural Adaptation, Performance	Cultural Distance moderates the influence of Cultural Adaptation on Performance
Chen, Liu, and Portnoy (2012)	Empirical	305 real estate agents	Employed at 26 real estate firms in the United States		Individual Cultural Sales	Firm Motivational CQ and Firm Diversity Climate moderate the influence of Individual motivational CQ on Individual Cultural Sales
Baker and Delpechitre (2016)	Empirical	79 sales students	Registered in an advanced personal selling course at a public university in the southern region of the U.S.	CQ Training		
Delpechitre and Baker (2017)	Empirical	143 sales students	Registered in an advanced personal selling course at a public university in the southern region of the U.S.	CQ Training	Adaptive Selling, Sales Role-play performance	

Charoensukmongkol (2020)	Empirical	365 Thai salespeople	Sent by their company as sales representatives to present products and to acquire prospective customers at trade shows in foreign countries	Adaptive Selling, International sales performance	Trait Mindfulness moderates the influence of CQ on Adaptive Selling
Charoensukmongkol & Pandey (2020)	Empirical	282 salespeople	Work at international trade shows in Japan, India and Vietnam	Sales Self-efficacy, Cross-cultural Sales Presentations	Challenge Orientation moderates the influence of CQ on Sales Self-efficacy and Cross-cultural Sales Presentations
Kimber, Guesalaga and Dickman (2022)	Empirical	310 U.S.-based international sales executives (ISE)	International business travelers working in sales who travel from their home country to serve their customers at a different country, for short periods of time.	Adaptive Selling	Cultural Distance and Intrinsic Motivation moderate the influence of CQ on Adaptive Selling
Zhou and Charoensukmongkol (2022)	Empirical	966 Chinese export salespeople	Export salespeople registered on the FOB Business Forum website	Adaptive Selling	Customer Qualification skills mediate the influence of CQ on Adaptive Selling. Gender moderates the influence of CQ on Customer Qualification skills

Table 1: Articles Cultural Intelligence in Sales

To conclude, there is very few research about the way Cultural Intelligence impacts sales performance outcomes (e.g., Delpechitre and Baker, 2017; Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Most of the time, Cultural Intelligence has been linked to adaptive selling behaviors or sales performance (e.g., Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022). But to date, it is not really understood how these relationships work.

With regards to moderators or mediators on the Cultural Intelligence—adaptive selling relationship, mostly salesperson characteristics and traits like gender (Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022), intrinsic motivation (Kimber et al., 2022), challenge orientation (Charoensukmongkol and Pandey, 2020) or trait mindfulness (Charoensukmongkol, 2020) have been introduced. But there is still room for research there, especially introducing other, sales-related skills and behaviors. In this sense, recent articles are calling for more research on this matter by asking for research on the link of Cultural Intelligence with listening skills for example (Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022). This research is answering this call and looking at different sales-related skills including adaptive selling or active listening, for example.

In conclusion, Cultural Intelligence has extensively been studied especially in Human Resource and Management literature. With regards to antecedents, two different factors have been looked at the most: **personality traits and intercultural experience**. Regarding consequences, there are a multitude of concepts that have been shown to be impacted by Cultural Intelligence. However, most of the time, Cultural Intelligence has been linked to **adaptation and performance** in some way.

When looking at sales research, we can see that there is a lack of research in this area. Very few studies exist that introduce Cultural Intelligence in a sales context. **Negotiation** is the most researched area of sales using this concept but apart from that, very little research exists. Even though a new research stream is emerging recently looking at Cultural Intelligence and **adaptive selling**. But there is still some research needed to understand the intercultural sales context better and recent articles are calling for more research in this area.

This last subchapter has reviewed the existing literature on the concept of Cultural Intelligence, in human resources and management research but also particularly in sales research.

Before looking at the exploratory qualitative research that has been done to understand the practitioners' point of view of the topic, this first part of the manuscript is now summarized, and research questions are asked which this research will try to answer.

Synthesis and Research Questions

This first chapter laid the foundation for the studies that will follow. By reviewing the literature on Culture and Cultural Intelligence, the theoretical framework has been established which runs through the entire thesis.

As a recall, this research looks at the concept of Culture from a national perspective. Organizational or individual culture for example will not be completely excluded but the predominant focus of this project is on national culture and therefore the cultural differences between countries. This cultural viewpoint is based on the anthropological concept of culture, leading to the following definition: ***Culture is learned meanings and behaviors that distinguish people from one group to another.***

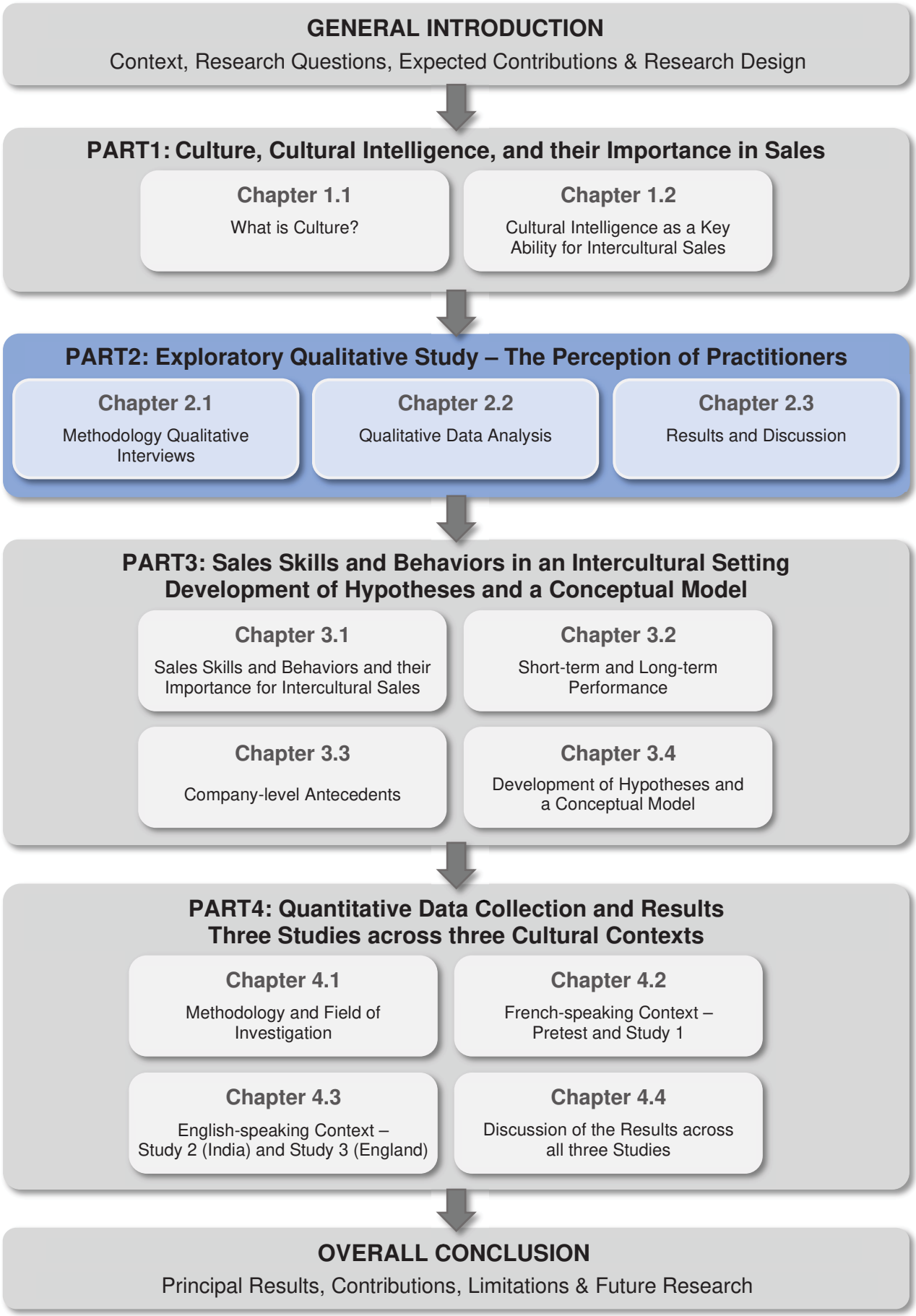
Based on this definition of culture, it has been decided to look at Cultural Intelligence—a concept that allows to distinguish people that can work effectively in different cultural contexts. In this sense, ***Cultural Intelligence has been defined as a person's abilities and skills to adapt and interact effectively in an intercultural context*** (Earley and Ang, 2003; Earley and Peterson, 2004; Thomas et al., 2008; Hansen et al., 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2013; Alexandra, 2018). As explained, this concept has been shown to have positive results especially in Human Resources and Management literature by studying the impact on expatriate performance in different contexts (Malek and Budhwar, 2013; Huff et al., 2014).

In a sales context, the research on Cultural Intelligence is scarce and has primarily looked at negotiation outcomes (e.g., Caputo et al. 2019; Groves, Feyerherm, and Gu 2015; Imai and Gelfand 2010). Still, a few studies can be found linking Cultural Intelligence to different performance outcomes, sales self-efficacy or adaptive selling behavior (Delpechitre and Baker, 2017; Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Charoensukmongkol and Pandey, 2020; Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022).

But still, this research topic has not been explored enough. It is still not clear **how important Cultural Intelligence really is for sales research**, especially in an international context. There are some questions yet to be answered like:

- → **Which sales skills and behaviors are impacted by Cultural Intelligence?**
- → **What impact does this concept have for sales performance and relationship-building efforts?**
- → **What situational company-level factors can help establish Cultural Intelligence in sales?**
- → **Do differences in the cultural contexts change the importance of this concept for sales (for example eastern vs. western cultures)?**

In order to answer these research questions, the first step is to conduct an exploratory qualitative study. The aim of this study is to understand the importance of intercultural sales for practitioners and get a first idea of which sales skills and behaviors are key in intercultural sales and therefore likely to be impacted by Cultural Intelligence. The following chapter is illustrating this work.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An exploratory qualitative study has been conducted to understand how the concepts mentioned beforehand are perceived by practitioners. The most important goal of this qualitative study is to understand the intercultural sales context better, given the fact that there is only little research about this matter today. As explained before, the intercultural sales context is important because of the globalization tendencies of today's companies. More and more sales personnel work with customers from different cultures, even within the same country. But to date, the sales research has not sufficiently looked at this matter. This is the reason why it has been opted to do exploratory qualitative research before the establishment and testing of a theoretical model. This qualitative research complements the literature review presented in the previous part and helps with the formalization of the conceptual model explained in the next part.

The following section looks at the methodological aspect of the exploratory qualitative study. Thereafter, the analysis and the results are presented.

2.1 Methodology Qualitative Interviews

For this first empirical part of the thesis, it has been opted to use a qualitative method. The focus of this research is on the understanding as opposed to testing and verification of hypotheses in the intercultural sales context (Ghauri et al., 2020). The intention of this exploratory research was to get a more subjective side and the personal opinion of practitioners that are working or have been working in such a particular intercultural context. Consequently, qualitative research using interviews with experts in this field seemed to be the most suitable at this stage of the thesis.

As defined by Rowley (2012, p.260), interviews will here be seen as "*verbal exchanges in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to acquire information from and gain an understanding of another person, the interviewee*".

However, there is no consensus on a classification of interview types in today's research (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018). Most of the time, a categorization of different interview types is done based on the number of interviewees that are interviewed at the same time (individual interview vs. focus group interview) and the level of structuring of the interview (unstructured vs. semi-structured vs. structured interviews). The latter distinction is characterized by increasing degrees of in-depth exploration of the interviewees' opinions and representations and, as a result, by decreasing degrees of intervention by the interviewer (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018).

For this present study, it has been decided to do **semi-structured, individual interviews** due to the aim of this study that is the collection of personal opinions of practitioners in different companies that know this particular working context very well and are experts in the field.

	Number of interviewees		
Level of structuring		Low	High
	Low	Individual Unstructured	Focus group Unstructured
	Medium	***Individual Semi-structured***	Focus group Semi-structured
	High	Individual Structured	Focus group Structured

Figure 7: Types of interviews (adapted from Gavard-Perret et al. 2018)

The following subchapters will further elaborate the objective of the study. Secondly, the type of interviews used is explained in more details. After this, the sample is described before finishing with the explication of the interview guide.

2.1.1 Objective of the Study

As explained before, the general goal of this study is to **understand the intercultural sales context better**. In order to do that, it is important to understand the pitfalls and obstacles that one can encounter when working in such environments.

Moreover, this study aims to give some insights into this particular work context and shed light on the competencies that a salesperson needs to have in order to be efficient in such an environment. Are there any key competencies that stand out from other sales contexts? Are some of the classic key competencies for sales even more important in this intercultural environment?

Furthermore, this exploratory study also focuses on the organizational context of intercultural salespeople. Is there anything that a company can do to help a salesperson to be more efficient in this context? Which types of training are needed in order to prepare a salesperson for this work context and which training is actually proposed in the different companies?

In conclusion, this study aims to **understand better what makes a salesperson effective in an intercultural context**, both on a personal level including competencies and personality of the salesperson and on a company-level including the support and training within a company.

2.1.2 Type of Study

It has been decided for this thesis to opt for **individual interviews**. The aim of the interviews is to understand the personal point of view of practitioners in the intercultural sales context. Individual interviews have been shown to be the most appropriate in order to explore individual complex processes (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018).

Furthermore, it has been decided to conduct **semi-structured interviews** due to the relative flexibility in adapting the order of the questions to the answers of the interviewee. At the same time, the interview guide needed for this type of interview helps to ensure that all the key subjects will be addressed and result in a better comparability and ease for a thematic analysis (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018).

2.1.3 Interviewees Characteristics

Six semi-structured interviews have been conducted (one in English and five in French) using an interview guide with open follow-up questions. This small sample is due to the exploratory nature of the study (Evrard et al., 2003). Furthermore, some research has shown that a small number of interviews may be sufficient to achieve a good understanding (Hennink et al., 2017). As explained in the literature, the minimum sample size in qualitative research depends on different factors like the nature of the topic, the scope of the study or the quality of the data (Morse, 2000). In this study, the topic is clear and didn't need any further explanation from the interviewer side. Furthermore, the information was easily obtained. Regarding the scope of the study, the topic is precise, needing therefore a lower sample size. And finally, the interviewees can all be considered experts on this topic and have a lot of experience with it.

Therefore, the data obtained was very rich from the start, which explains again the low sample size. Finally, the homogeneity of the interviewees as well as the structuration of the interviews also have an impact on the minimum sample size (Young and Casey, 2019). In this research, a very homogenous population, international sales managers, has been interviewed using an interview guide.

Some research has shown that semantic saturation in some situations can start from six interviews (Boddy, 2016), especially when the duration of the interviews is around one hour (Rowley, 2012). In this case, the duration of the interviews was ranging from 50 minutes for the shortest to 2h30 for the longest interview. In conclusion, the six interviews conducted in this research met these minimum criteria for saturation.

In addition to these criteria from literature, this small sample is also because the profile of the interview is a very specific one. In order to make sure that the salespeople interviewed have experience on this topic, it has been opted for a **purposive sampling** as the sampling method. In qualitative research, purposive sampling means selecting a diverse and information-rich group of people to interview that represent different key points of the research subject (Ghauri et al., 2020). In this type of sampling, participants are selected based on key criteria that are important to the study topic (Rowley, 2012). Consequently, interviewees for this study have been chosen due to their experience in the intercultural sales context. Thereupon, the sample consists of managers that are currently working or having worked directly or indirectly in intercultural sales. Access to these managers is quite difficult since it is a very small population. In addition, it is strenuous to find these people who are also accepting interviews with the duration of 1h approximately.

All the interviewees are men which represents the male domination of the sales profession. According to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, women are underrepresented in most sales professions including sales manager positions with only 30.9% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Consequently, it is not surprising that the sample of this study consists exclusively of men.

With respect to the age of the interviewees, most of them were over 50 years old. This is because the sample consists of managers that have already some experiences in the intercultural sales context. Only two interviewees were younger, 35 and 31 years old.

It has been aimed to also have a certain disparity with regard to the seniority within the company. The interviewees have been working in their current companies between half a year and thirty-one years. This is interesting because people that just started to work in a company do perhaps know the training systems for new employees better than people that already work there for multiple years. But at the same time, people that work longer in the same company can give some insights about what is working and what isn't when looking at the sales support structures and the company climate, for example.

Regarding the industries and areas of work, a certain disparity was aimed in order to see if there are differences in their points of view and company situations. Therefore, the six interviewees work in very different industries ranging from IT to office furnishings, via the distribution of products for artists or the oil and gas industry, for example. Further information about the industries can be found in Table 2.

Finally, it has been opted to focus this qualitative research on mostly B2B companies. This decision has been taken because B2B sales requires more relationship building and a longer rapport with clients than B2C selling. Therefore, the adaptation to a client's culture is even more important in a B2B working context. A salesperson working in this area needs to have some key competencies in order to build a functioning relationship with clients that are not necessarily needed in the same amount in a B2C context.

Name	Sex	Age	Seniority in the company (in years)	Industry sector	Type of sales	Job Position	Language of the interview	Specialized region
A	male	35	4	Computer Science	B2B & B2C	Manager Southern Europe and Data Protection	French	Southern Europe
B	male	50	23	Petroleum Sector	B2B	Managing Director of the West African region	French	Western Africa
C	male	60	1.5	Artist products	B2B & B2C	Business owner	French	Asia
D	male	61	0.5	Quality control machinery	B2B	Global Manager	English	United States & Latin America
E	male	58	31	Office furniture	B2B	Sales Trainer	French	Northern Africa & Europe
F	male	31	1	Online sales	B2B	Manager International Accounts	French	Middle East & Northern Africa

Table 2: Qualitative sample – respondents characteristics

2.1.3 Interview Process

Since it has been opted for a semi-structured interview, an interview guide has been established (see Appendix 1 Interview Guide). This interview guide helps keep the interviewees on track of the subjects that the researcher is looking answers for. It is also an assurance that all the topics that are necessary for this research are covered. The language of the interview has been freely chosen by the participants between English and French.

With regards to the formulation of the questions, following the recommendations of Rowley (2012), only open-ended questions have been employed in order to ensure the collection of a maximum of information. Furthermore, they have been formulated in a neutral manner and are not leading or making implicit assumptions.

Looking at the structure of the interview guide, different phases can be distinguished. First, an introductory phase is explaining in simple words the goal and the subject of this study. This phase also lays the ground rules of the interview by assuring confidentiality as well as

anonymity to the interviewees. Furthermore, the consent of the interviewees with regards to an audio recording of the conversation is validated.

Following this putting at ease, **five topics** are discussed based on the scientific literature exposed in Part 1 of this thesis. The interview guide is constructed in a funnel structure from general questions to the most specific ones. The questions in this guide are all open-ended questions and phrased to encourage respondents to talk about their experiences. The questions have treated as follow-up questions, meaning that they only have been asked if the interviewee didn't talk about this subject himself.

Company and Job Context The first main topic is used as an entry point to get to know the company and its salesforce better. Therefore, questions about the job of the interviewee, the functioning of the sales department as well as typical tasks of a salesperson in this company were asked.

Intercultural Obstacles The second topic is about pitfalls and obstacles in an intercultural sales context. Interviewees have been asked about examples in their own lives or from colleagues about what can go wrong in an intercultural context and where misunderstandings can occur.

Intercultural Devices After that, the measures put in place by the company to overcome the obstacles mentioned above are discussed. This part includes questions about any devices proposed by the company that are helpful in this particular working context.

Intercultural Sales Competencies Following is a section about the key competencies a salesperson must have to be successful in an intercultural sales context. Here, the interviewees are asked to state any competences that are needed to work as an intercultural salesperson and to explain why these competencies are needed in this environment.

Intercultural Training Finally, the fifth and last section of the interviews is about intercultural training and other devices the companies propose to their salesforce. This last part aims to understand how companies prepare their salesforce for this intercultural work environment.

Consequently, interviewees are invited to explain which kind of training, if any, their company, or companies that they have been working in before, are proposing to their intercultural salesforce.

With permission of the interviewees, all interviews have been recorded and transcribed as well as anonymized afterwards.

The next step in the process of qualitative studies is the data analysis which is presented in the following chapter.

2.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process that requires a great deal of rigor but also some creativity on the part of the researcher (Gauthy-Sinéchal and Vandercammen, 2005). It is a structured reading of the collected information looking for key themes mentioned by the interviewees (Rowley, 2012). During the analysis process, several steps must be taken that include the organizing of the collected data, getting acquainted with it, classifying and coding the data and interpreting it before presenting the results (Rowley, 2012). This analysis process is shown in Figure 8.

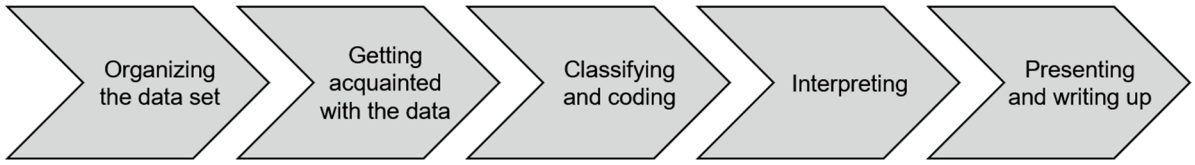


Figure 8: The Qualitative analysis process (adapted from Rowley, 2012)

This following chapter will focus on the third part of the analysis process which is the coding process. The interpretation and presentation of the results will follow in the next chapter.

2.2.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis refers to a group of methods for analyzing data that can be structured as follows (Evrard et al., 2003):

- *Syntactic analysis* which is looking at the structure of the discussion by analyzing for example the verb tense
- *Lexical analysis* which is concerned with the vocabulary employed for example by counting the frequency of the apparition of certain terms
- *Thematic analysis* which is focused on a thematic breakdown of the information by establishing different themes and subthemes

For this research, it has been decided to do a **thematic analysis** due to the goal of this study which is the understanding of the intercultural sales context from the point of view of the practitioners. The aim of this analysis is therefore to understand the underlying concepts and how they are perceived by the interviewees which can be achieved with a thematic analysis. This thematic analysis, in addition to the literature, also lays the foundation of the hypothesis formulation for the second part of this research, the quantitative studies.

Thematic analysis itself has two different approaches (Giannelloni and Vernette, 2001):

- Vertical analysis
- Horizontal analysis

Vertical analysis is looking at each interview separately in its entirety and focuses on the way that the interviewee has responded to all the questions and the themes of the interview. This analysis seeks out the most important information per interviewee.

In contrast, horizontal analysis is looking at all the interviews in a cross-sectional way by focusing on transversal codes. For every code identified, multiple themes and even more subthemes can emerge which consist of different verbatims (see Figure 9).

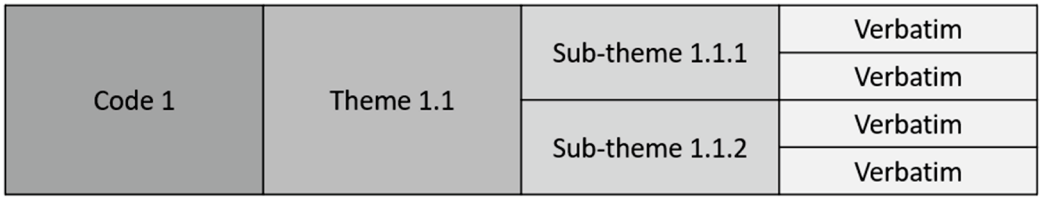


Figure 9: Code structure content analysis

This research has focused on a **horizontal analysis** due to the exploratory nature of the study. The final goal of this study was to find common themes amongst multiple interviews in order to understand the underlying processes in the field of intercultural sales. A horizontal analysis has therefore been chosen.

For this horizontal, thematic analysis of the interviews, a rigorous process has been followed (see Figure 10).

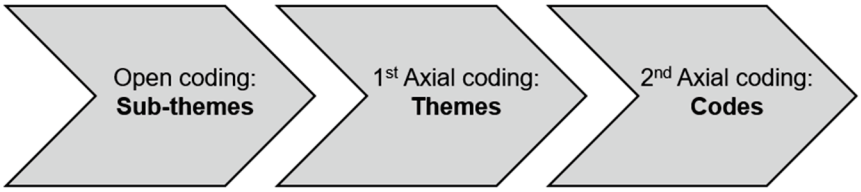


Figure 10: Horizontal and thematic coding process

First, the verbatims have been coded into sub-themes that are directly derived from the text. In this step, it was important to do an open coding by remaining close to the actual verbatims of the interviewees but still creating a first structure and provisional categories. After this establishment of subthemes, a more abstract and theoretical coding has been done. Consequently, this step was an evolution from open coding to a more axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Ghauri et al., 2020). An iterative logic was used to go back and forth between the data and the literature. As a result, a set of themes that reflected our data was created based on existing theoretical notions. Finally, in order to continue the process of abstraction of the data, further axial coding was conducted (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This new step made the different levels that the interviewees were talking about evident. Thus, these are reflected in the codes.

A table of the whole coding structure can be found in Appendix 2 Coding Structure Qualitative Study. More details about the different codes and themes are explained in the following chapter that presents in detail the results of this exploratory qualitative study.

The coding process has been done using NVivo. This computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program was used to facilitate the coding process and helped especially in keeping track of the different levels of the codes, themes, and sub-themes. This software also allows for matrix analysis which can be used to explain links between the different themes, for example.

2.2.2 Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research

In order to be sure of a high-quality data analysis, reliability and validity criteria must be respected.

Reliability

With regards to the reliability aspect, two different forms need to be distinguished in content analysis (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018):

- Stability or intra-judge reliability
- Reproducibility or inter-judge reliability

First, a certain stability of the analysis must be respected. This form of reliability has also been called **intra-judge reliability** and can be defined as *"the extent to which the analysis is immutable, referring to the re-coding of data by the same coder or 'judge' at different points in time."* (Harwood and Garry 2003, p.485). This intra-judge form represents the weakest form of reliability. In the case of this study, the data has been analyzed a first time directly after the collection in 2019 in order to get a first impression of the data. It has then been put aside and analyzed in more details at the beginning of 2022. The first-order themes have been compared and found to match.

The second form of reliability needs multiple coders on the same text to lead to the same results (Harwood and Garry, 2003). This **reproducibility** is often quite difficult to check. In this PhD work, the initial coding has been done by only one person, but the coding structure has afterwards been discussed by the whole group.

Validity

The second criterion that needs to be considered in every research study is the validity. This is the extend of possibility to generalize the results to the research population. As for reliability, validity also consists of two different types (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018):

- Internal validity
- External validity

The first form, **internal validity**, or 'face' validity represents the relevance and coherence of the results. In contrast, external validity is concerned about the generalization of the results.

With regards to satisfying internal validity, reformulation techniques have been used during the interviews to ensure the correct understanding of the thoughts that have been expressed. Furthermore, there has been an iterative process of literature review which assured the relevance of the results.

External validity, on the other hand, is the weak point of all qualitative research due to the limited sample size. In general, qualitative studies don't aim for statistical representativeness but a sociological one (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018). In this study, it has been chosen to search for a certain disparity of the interviewee profiles to assure at least a minimum external validity or sociological representativeness, even if this small sample size is, of course, a big limitation for the generalizability of the results.

2.3 Results and Discussion

After the explication of the methodology and the sample of this qualitative exploratory study, this following chapter is now looking at the results. The chapter is structured in four different parts which represent four different levels that the interviewees talked about during the interviews:

- Culture
- Company
- Manager
- Salesperson

These are equivalent to the four codes that have emerged during the analysis. In the following section, the different subcodes are explained for each code, highlighted with verbatims from the interviewees.

2.3.1 First Level: Culture

All interviewees agreed that intercultural skills are crucial in today's sales environment. They explained that culture is a very important factor due to the human interaction dimension of the sales profession.

> *So, the cultural aspect is for me very, very fundamental because even if commercial trust tries to become... we'll say dehumanized, standardized, processive, at the end of the day, it's still men and women interacting to... uh... to make a deal. And to consider that the cultural aspect should not be taken into account seems to me to be a commercial error, an error of judgment. And I have many cases where this cultural aspect is quite present and needs to be aligned. - B*

But to understand what the interviewees are really talking about; it is important to figure out what 'culture' really means to them. The following parts will explain in more details the culture definition that the interviewees give as well as where obstacles can arise in their opinion.

Culture Levels

During the interviews, the participants acknowledged that culture can be seen on different levels and consists of different cultural dimensions that need to be respected.

When looking at the different cultural levels that the interviewees talked about, most of the interviewees talked about **national cultures**. They explained that often, this level of culture is used to structure the company that they are working in and, consequently, also the salesforce.

> *I do believe that a company that is lucky enough to have employees from different countries, from different cultures, is a richer company somewhere. – C*

> *We have people with different languages specialized also in… in countries. Responsible for countries. (…) We divided in French and Francophone countries, in German language countries, so Germany, Switzerland, not German really but with all these types of languages. You know, the Netherlands. Austria, of course. And then the English… English languages which is Canada, the United States, UK. The other cultures completely different are South-East countries, Asia and South-East countries. - D*

The second level that the interviewees talked about is the **corporate culture**. They explained that, beyond national differences, salespeople also must be able to detect differences between the companies and treat them accordingly.

> *In fact, each client has its own culture. Why? Because each client has its own corporate culture, beyond the individual. Often, it is brought by the CEO, but it is relayed by his employees. And each client has its own culture. – A*

Every customer is a... is a culture. Every customer is a different company. Every company has its own way of operating, has its own vision, has its own organization. That's the whole cultural dimension they have to understand. And if you're hired internationally, there's an added international dimension. It's inevitably stronger. - E

Furthermore, another cultural dimension has been mentioned by the interviewees is **intergenerational culture**. Interviewee E for example explained that this level of culture is important especially for the acceptance of certain products and services and consequently needs to be considered in a sales context.

And then, at the same time, we mix with other intercultural effects, because there are oriental cultures, but there are also cultures... I don't know how to say it... but everything that happens in the intergenerational cultures. Because that is also very strong, eh? Age is also a very, very strong criterion in the acceptance of... the arrangements and the organization of work. – E

And finally, the last cultural level that the participants talked about relating directly to the salesperson him- or herself. When talking about cultures, it is not only important to look at other people and companies but also at yourself and your own **personal culture**. According to the interviewees, this personal culture must be accepted in the company for a salesperson to feel free and be effective.

And it allows people to defend their convictions, their cultural side too, to be able to share it with others. And this is allowed in the company, which is not bad. (…) No, I want people in fact to have access to be able if you want to cultivate their culture, to be able to assume it on their workplace. That's very important. And it comes down to everything... everything that it can encompass. That they can live it in the workplace but that it's not dictated by their company, I think. - B

Intercultural Obstacles

Another important topic in these interviews was the explanation of problems and misunderstandings in intercultural situations. According to the interviewees, intercultural obstacles can arise on several levels and because of multiple reasons. It is beyond the focus of this research to list all obstacles the participants talked about. Therefore, only the most cited ones by multiple interviewees are presented.

One of the most important points where problems can arise is **communication problems and misunderstandings**. The interviewees explain that communication is one of the most important factors that can create misunderstandings especially due to language barriers or lacking knowledge about the communication style of the culture that you are working with.

> *I've said it before, communication is very important. To be able to... to be clear. Uh, to be able to understand each other, to talk to each other. It sounds basic but it's... it's very important. When you have very, very strong cultural differences with uh... with big difficulties in the language of communication uh it can create... quidproquos. It can be negative for the company. So, the first thing is communication. – B*

> *I'll tell you the story of a friend of mine who is French and who works in a large microcomputer company. And she told me a story like that. She had a new colleague in her team, I think. And this colleague is French. And when she arrived, I think uh.... At first, she was still French in her head, you know. And then, when she arrived in the team, I think she started kissing on the cheek to say hello. And here, we don't kiss. She starts kissing and then there's... there's one who was so embarrassed. Especially when you are American. Americans, the kiss for them... You see and there was an American who was so embarrassed, she didn't even try to understand. And there is a real problem in terms of intercultural communication. That is to say that the French woman didn't understand that... Uh... We don't kiss in the United States. - F*

Misunderstandings also can arise due to certain **cultural bans or prohibitions**. As explained by the interviewees, it is important to know these kinds of cultural specificities and ways of working in order to approach the clients the right way.

> *There are some cultures where, a priori, people of a certain sex will not be considered on the same level as a person of another sex. And even if we.... uh... ... our cultural point of view at the level of our society is for a total egalitarianism, of a commercial point of view, we are obliged to have a certain prudence. And so to make sure that we put in front of our clients a profile that corresponds to their cultural environment. So that's... we'll say... that's one of the stereotypes. – B*

> *For example, Chinese people, they… they at the same time they don't want to say no, they feel that they can do things to help you. They think that they helped you but maybe not following the norms. And you know, for European countries, norms are important. But they don't follow it. So, sometimes, they just didn't respect the norms and then you have to face a bad situation. Because norms must be followed but they don't do it. So, they say okay, they are angry because of that and what can we change there. Then they… they don't know exactly why you are so angry. Because they they were… they were trying to support you, to help you doing what they considered the better. But not following the norms. And then sometimes you have this kind of misunderstanding. Once, you know, you don't want to offend them of course. But they feel like offended. So, then you have to find a middle way through… through this water, you know. – D*

Finally, the interviewees also mentioned **integration problems**, especially for expatriates. To ensure that working in an intercultural context is a success and not a failure, the salesperson must therefore be able to integrate in this new country, this new working context.

> *You can say anything but when you are a foreigner in a country, there are always more difficulties in fact. Because you don't master the system. You don't have your own network. – F*

The barrier...one of the hardest barriers is...uh...it's on two fronts. It's the social network and it's uh... it's the language. So, the social network, that is, when you've lived in a place for a while, you have... you're used to it. You know where the bakery or the butcher or the doctor is. We have identified those... uh... the interactors of the social life with whom we are always in contact compared to others. So, we have... we are relatively established. When you arrive in a new country, well, you have to develop, redevelop, this social network very quickly and therefore it requires a strong open mind and to create very quickly... uh... well to get in touch with people who will be able to help us uh... to explain to us who does what and who is who and how the things are organized. – B

To summarize, the interviewees focused on multiple levels of culture that are important in an intercultural sales context:

- National culture
- Corporate culture
- Intergenerational culture
- Personal culture

All of these levels impact the work of the salesperson in some way, and it is important to consider them when talking to clients from different cultural backgrounds. However, most of the interviewees used the word 'culture' interchangeably with national culture. This is the reason why the word culture in this research is used to design national cultures.

Furthermore, intercultural obstacles arise due to multiple reasons that include communication due to language problems for example, cultural prohibitions linked to the way of working for example as well as integration problems for expatriates.

The next chapter is now looking at the opinions of the interviewees about what companies can do to avoid these problems.

2.3.2 Second Level: Company

In addition to information about the concept of culture, the interviewees also talked about multiple variables that are key on a company level.

Recruitment

First of all, the interviewees explained that a company needs to make sure that they **recruit the right personnel** for these kinds of jobs. The people need to be well selected and represent a multitude of different profiles. They will also directly need to be able to work in different cultural contexts and adapt to them.

> *I would say... when a company decides to work internationally, they have to make the right choice of recruitment, of course, for the people who are going to take their products to the international markets. – C*

> *My company, generally speaking, will recruit wherever we work. So we are in over 86 countries and we have over 100 different nationalities in the company. We're going to say that on a recruitment pool in a particular country, we're going to... uh... we're going to say... we're going to say that on a dozen people who have been recruited in a country, we're going to keep a third of them in the country to develop and start their career in the country. A third of them we will send to work in the region. So if it's in Africa, if it's in Senegal for example, the salesperson would work in one of the other countries in Africa. And there's a third that we're going to send outside the region that they're from. So if we recruit Senegalese, he could go work in Russia, for example.- B*

Training

Directly linked to the recruitment is also the training of the newly hired employees. The interviewees pointed out that **initial training** is important to explain to the new salespeople how the work in this company is organized and what they need to expect.

> *On the other hand, when you arrive in the company, in all cases, you have at least, I think it's 3 weeks that we call "new hire training". And during this new hire training, you will see a lot of things. The life of the site, obviously the product portfolio or the tools we use or the managers you can work with etc. – A*

> *This... this general introduction is actually done during the first week of employment in the company. Uh... our employees who join the company are going to have a full week of induction, of training, and it's within that framework where we explain to our employees that they're going to be working in a multicultural environment and that there's a certain line of conduct and a certain attitude that we expect from our employees. And so that's...to me, that's where the first exposure is. – B*

In addition to this initial training right after the recruitment, the interviewees stated that it is important to get to know a culture before living there. Thus, especially for expatriates, a certain **intercultural training** is necessary.

> *In most of the countries that are more... let's say... culturally sensitive, we would organize, with the management team, let's say uh... a mini introduction to the culture, the do's and don'ts uh... to make sure that... the... to make sure that the employee is able to match... doesn't make any obvious missteps and get stuck. (...) These are trainings that are done generally upon the person's arrival at the location by our... human resources team. – B*

> *Then, you have to train people. That is, at least inform them about what the context is. What is... What is accepted? What is not? What is confusing? What is open to interpretation? What are the right words to use? What words should be avoided? - E*

However, the interviewees also explained that there is not enough training in their companies for these kinds of jobs. This **lack of training** can have negative repercussions like salespeople that are leaving because they are frustrated, for example.

> *When you join, you have no training. When you join the company. Basically, if you're selected to come in, you come in the first week, you're... You're doing your job. So... Well, at least for my position. To me, they assume, that is, in their head, this person, they're already prepared. So we're not going to teach them communication. – F*

> *But basically, it is important. Because we have seen that there are so many other sales representatives that came to the company, and they didn't learn. So, they went out. They left the company because they were frustrated. So, we have learned in the company, in the meetings we have with our management, that there is a subject that needs to be worked on in our company and it's the training. – D*

Finally, the interviewees stated that intercultural training will not necessarily change the way salespeople behave in another culture but at least give them a code of conduct. This can help them to not get confused or even offended and has therefore at least an indirect **effect**, even though not everything seems to be able to be learned before.

> *So, I don't... I don't think it changes behavior. But it at least has an importance... it at least... it allows you to have a minimum of reference. It means that when you arrive in a new country, in a new culture, you have absolutely no... uh... you are really lost. You don't know at all how things are done. You can be very, very quickly surprised by the way people behave uh... towards you. And without really knowing why. - B*

> *Certainly, you can't learn everything before you join. And then, you're always going to discover, you know. You're always going to be discovering new... new cultures. Uh... You can't work with every culture. - F*

Experience

Thus, not only training is important in an intercultural context, but also the **experience** of working with people from different cultural contexts that can help a salesperson in this particular job. As explained before, not everything can be taught, some things just need to be experienced and lived to understand the cultural differences completely.

> *Our employees have to be, our salespeople have to be completely versatile and able to interact with any culture. And that... that's what goes into their training through experience and exposure early in their career. – B*
>
> *And it is normal that this sensitivity is not innate in you or that you do not acquire it the first time you move. It's by dint of contact, by dint of habit. So this is experience that comes in. – C*
>
> *But you have to learn it. Sometimes, you learn it by experience in life but sometimes you learn it because someone tells you about this. – D*
>
> *So, it's understanding cultural differences... And cultural differences are understood with experience. - F*

Diversity Climate

In addition to these devices that companies can propose to help salespeople understand intercultural differences, a **diverse corporate culture** is needed, too. According to one of the interviewees, a company should install a certain corporate culture where diversity is embraced and therefore helps the salespeople and all the other employees to get used to different cultural backgrounds, even within the company.

> *Uh it's one of the uh... one of the cultural pillars of the company, the diversity. And one might ask why. Why there is this need for diversity. It's because this need for diversity also brings a lot of innovation. In fact, it's through diversity that we learn, uh, that we*

learn a lot of things. We absorb it. At the same time, we give, and at the same time we absorb. – A

Intercultural salespeople are always exposed to a certain diversity, **internal and external** to the company that they are working in. On the one hand, an intercultural salesperson is always in contact with clients from different cultural backgrounds and needs to be prepared from the company for this. On the other hand, a salesperson also needs to work closely together with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. According to the interviewees, this mix of cultures in-house is a real asset for the company and allows the salesperson to be better prepared for these cross-cultural issues.

That's the whole idea. It's that... we have a sales team that is culturally diverse and uh... that's going to uh... have to interact with a majority of national customers or uh... of uh... yes, national customers. But within our... our customers, they themselves also have some national diversity uh... that is far from ours. – B

With regard to what you said, I do believe that a company that is lucky enough to have employees from different countries, from different cultures, is a richer company in some ways. - C

Furthermore, the interviewees explained that this diversity climate, especially the internal part, needs to be formalized in an **ethical code**. This code of conduct needs to also protect minorities and allow a free expression of oneself.

Now, as I was saying, today, my company uh... internally has a uh... very, very strong ethical culture. And uh... any employee that you can run into here of the 1000 jobs that you can see... what could I take? If it could be differences in dress or tattoos or uh... anything that would bring in any culture is tolerated here. And even beyond that, for everything that is going to be the risk that may exist, uh... That exists in our societies, so we say that it must exist obviously in the company. It's the protection of uh... minorities. Or of... cultures. – A

So yes, I was telling you about the cultural aspect but not only. Even on discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, marital status. And these companies, there is a pact here in the United States that they sign. It's called Equal Opportunity Employers. All the big companies, they have signed it. It means that even a company should not base a hiring decision on marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation and cultural and religious affiliation. So, this is very, very important here. - F

Company Support

In addition to this diversity climate, the interviewees also stated that company support is genuinely important when working in different cultural backgrounds. Colleagues must be able to support the salesperson when they need any information and be able to help. **Collaborations and teamwork** are key in the sales profession, and even more in an intercultural context, in order to make sure that the best solution for a customer can be found. **Support and back-up** from the company side are therefore crucial for a good performance also in the sales side.

And we're going to include it in a lot of... team development projects. So the... the team development is big spaces, more or less divided for some individual reflection in pairs or threes and brainstorming spaces. But we're going to ask most of the people in the company to work in teams in a collaborative way. That is to say, to share knowledge and experience as soon as possible so that the company... at all levels, can benefit from it. - E

Support is essential. In our business, in our organization, a salesperson alone can't do anything. He is... he is there to uh... find the opportunities, i.e. the markets that are in the process of... of evolving and that are... that are in the process of evolving in the sense that he foresees the company. He then refers them to the internal teams. And then he gets help from the research and development teams, the marketing teams, the sales teams, of course, but even the logistics teams. He's a sort of orchestra conductor.

He's going to put... he's going to put in music uh... or in score everything that has to make the music. So, it's really a team effort and a company effort. – E

In conclusion, a company must be careful whom they are recruiting for these kinds of jobs. Then, once the employees have been chosen, the company needs to accompany them correctly and provide them different types of training. These trainings, as well as the experience of working with people from different cultural backgrounds will enhance the performance in an intercultural context. In addition to this process, a certain company culture that promotes diversity needs to be installed. And finally, salespeople are not working alone but necessitate strong support from their colleagues and the company itself.

The next part is now looking at the manager level and explains how the manager can help the salesperson in an intercultural context.

2.3.3 Third Level: Manager

With regards to the level of the manager, there has not been too much information in these interviews. Nevertheless, the interviewees talked especially about one topic that is linked to company support.

Supervisor Support

The interviewees explained that not only need salespeople help from the rest of his team and even other services within the company, but they also need a good understanding and support from their managers. According to the interviewees, the managers must be **good leaders** that not only sees the objective of the company side but also all the constraints and issues and support everybody. They also need to be able to **trust** the salespeople.

The manager, for me, he... it's... it's... you know... it's really the aspect of... I'm very interested in the aspects of... communication, leadership and so on. Because, if you want, he's... he's the one who has to... who has to both give you ownership when you're a salesman. And I do everything to... to cultivate that. But at the same time, he has to be there for all the problems or even anticipate them, of course, that the team may encounter. – A

Now, the manager, we could also say the leader, must be able to understand from a personal point of view the requests, the points that do not fit and the constraints of each person and therefore of each culture. - B

The managers who work with a team especially a remote team, there are people who are...uh...who are not visible. They have to trust them. That is, the manager must not doubt that his collaborator, that his collaborators, when he is not there, are working. And he must avoid any... interrogations such as: Where are you? What are you doing? What are you doing? – E

In conclusion, on a macrolevel perspective, it is not enough that a company installs a certain corporate climate. Salespeople also require the support of their managers. The managers therefore need to understand and trust their employees in order to give the salespeople a certain freedom to work.

Finally, the next and last chapter of this results part is looking from a more micro-perspective at the level of the salespeople themselves. This part therefore focuses on the characteristics, skills, and behaviors that the interviewees have identified as crucial to be effective in an intercultural sales context.

2.3.4 Fourth Level: Salesperson

The main focus of these interviews was on the salesperson level. The interviewees explained in detail how the sales profession is organized in an intercultural context, how this affects sales performance as well as the relationship with the customers and finally, what skills and behaviors are needed in order to be affective in an intercultural context.

Sales Profession

With regards to the sales profession, the interviewees first specified that there are different types of sales jobs. According to them, there needs to be a certain teamwork between the **field salespeople and the sales back office** for example that work together for the same client.

> *I mean, we have a sales department, commercial activities developed by sales responsibles but they have a back office, sales back office. So, both of them make a team, commercial team. One, the back office, are responsible for making the first picture of the market. To support the activity of the… of the…. let's say of the commercial person who will face the customer directly. – D*

In some cases, the interviewees explained that their companies are working with **local partners** to sell their products in the local markets. In this case, the salesforce within the company needs to work hand in hand with these people that are often from different cultures, too.

> *There are in fact two sales forces that help each other. One has a very strong knowledge of the local context but will only see things from its monocultural and local side. Now, uh... for a multinational company, for a global company, we may be asked, for example, to go and do a project in a country with which we have not yet worked. And where we'll have to explain to the local dealers what the client's intentions are, so that he will get this commercial business. - E*

In addition, they explained that there is a certain difference between **B2B and B2C** sales. In B2B sales, the focus is more on the establishment of relationships which is key especially in an intercultural context.

> *Because in B to B, you need uh... In fact, the sales skill is going to be around the concept of relationship building. - F*

> *And when they are partners, from time to time, I give them a call. Just to talk, to see how the business is going. I don't even try to sell, you know. Once, twice, three times. And then you know them. You know their names. You talk about a lot of things. And one day, you need to sell actually. You call them up and explain the technical side of it. You're not like adopting sales techniques like B to C, you know? Where you' re going to play on the more emotional aspects. No, it's going to be more technical and your relationship with this man. – F*

Linked to this last point, the interviewees also explained that the **knowledge of the products** is necessary, but **not sufficient** in intercultural sales. Other aspects like the relationship building also come into play.

> *So, they're very, very qualified salespeople who are developed for this type of... for this type of business. Because they don't have to have only product knowledge. Product knowledge is actually quite... quite unimportant. They have to know the products, right. But it's not essential at all compared to the rest. - E*

Customer Relationship

Following this theme, all interviewees agreed that the human dimension is key in today's sales. Therefore, a **good relationship with the customer** must be the priority of any salesperson, intercultural or not.

> *And, you know, from time to time, then it begins a relationship more… more friendly. And this is very important. That the customer feels that on the other side is a friend and*

not just someone on the table who has a name. That they know each other better. So, it helps a lot. - D

Because our job is to build relationships and then sell. What we call upselling. Upselling is... It's about having a relationship and as you go along, just pick up the phone and call your partners. – F

To be able to build these relationships, a multitude of characteristics and skills are needed from an intercultural salesperson. The different aspects mentioned by the interviewees on this point is explained in the following paragraphs.

Personality

First of all, the interviewees stated that an intercultural salesperson needs to have a personality type that includes a certain **humility** when working with clients from different cultures.

So, in general, it's best to keep a low profile. Or humble. Accept criticism, uh... accept feedback, okay? And not constantly say our product this, our product that. That means asking questions. What do you think of our product? – C

But these are things you have to... You have to stay humble. - F

A second personality trait that has been mentioned by almost all of the interviewees is an **open-mindedness** for other cultures. Intercultural salespeople must be able to accept differences and not be offended by them.

I think it's open-minded skills too. People who are... who have an ability to accept the other person's point of view, that's very important. – E

One skill that will be required in this kind of job is uh... Just being very open minded. – F

Cultural Intelligence

In addition to these personality aspects, the interviewees also mentioned a necessity for intercultural salespeople to have a certain **cognitive understanding** of the cultures that they are working in, which also includes, but nor exclusively, the **language**.

> *So yes, languages I find that... I find that it is an immense richness, and it allows to see life in different ways too. – A*
>
> *The advantage we have here is that... the language... the language of business is English. On the other hand, there are some countries where not speaking the local language can be a problem from a personal point of view. France is one of them. (laughs) – B*
>
> *So, obviously, in international relations, what will play a role is the language. So most of the time, it's in English. But in business, it's better to practice the language of the country where the business will be done. – E*
>
> *And that even if people seem to speak the same language, they are not the same. A Canadian is not French. Uh... A Cameroonian is not French. A Moroccan is not French. Etc. etc. So that's... we can speak the same language, it's not enough to share the... share the same basis. - E*

This understanding of the cultures is necessary to be able to create good relationship based on trust with the customer.

> *Finally understanding... Understanding the culture. I would say first of all, understanding the culture to avoid misunderstandings. If you understand the culture, you will be a good communicator. After that, if you are a good communicator, you will build good relationships. So it goes together. - F*

Moreover, a successful international salesperson must, according to the interviewees, be **tolerant and respectful** about their client's cultural habits, even if it is something they are not used to.

But in the end, the barrier can be very personal, not for the company. And this barrier will be linked to the tolerance of other cultures. And uh... and that's why when you have the chance to evolve in multicultural companies, like that too, you have to... you have to have that, that very... very benevolent, and very, very new look on the people you meet. I think that's important. – A

And respect, you have to know when you're doing cross-cultural research, there may be disagreements or there may be... between the ways in which things are done in relation to... to the... to the employee's social frame of reference. And then when we talk to our employees about becoming a defender of a certain ideology, we ask them to respect. And if... if the values they are confronted with are too distant or completely unsuited to their sociological frame of reference, under those conditions, it is better for them and for the company to transfer them to another place that will be more acceptable. – B

Mostly, mostly don't... Basically, it's like not being judgmental. That is to say, you have to lock the attitude of judgment in you. It's that all cultures can at some point come up with something that for you, maybe because of your past, is not normal. But, quite simply, it is normal in this culture. Uh... In this culture with which you communicate. - F

According to the interviewees, intercultural salespeople also need a certain **willingness to learn** in general. This includes not only learning about the product that they are selling and the specificities of their own company but also cultural differences. It is therefore a certain **intrinsic motivation** to understand all these things.

But basically, it is important. Because we have seen that there are so many other sales representatives that came to the company, and they didn't learn. So, they went out. They left the company because they were frustrated. - D

So, that's understanding the cultural differences... And cultural differences are understood with experience. Also with socializing, even outside. On a personal and friendship level. From people who come from different cultures. If you're in Paris, if

you're in Seattle, it's so cosmopolitan that you get a chance to go out and have a drink with people from all over. And you... you observe. You see what the culture is like. And you talk and you learn. - F

Finally, the interviewees explained that intercultural salespeople also need a certain **curiosity** which is directly linked to the motivation to understand cultural differences.

So, the specific characteristics are, first of all, curiosity and respect. Curiosity, because you have to be interested in the local culture from a personal point of view. – B

They have to be curious. We will ask them to be curious, that means to be interested in... in a very, very sincere and very deep way in the others around them, in their work. So that's their personal work, the work of the people around them. - E

These points represent a certain **Cultural Intelligence**, which includes, on the one hand, the cognitive understanding of cultural differences, but, on the other hand, also the motivation and metacognitive capacity to learn about them.

Active Listening

In order to know how to approach their intercultural clients correctly, the interviewees explained that salespeople need to be able to **listen carefully** to what the clients are saying or even try to read between the lines.

Because talking to a client is good, but the most important thing is to understand your client, to listen to them. This one I like to say. The number one skill of a salesperson is listening. – A

You have to be open, to listen. It's one of the many things you have to do. Not to talk and to convince. Just to listen first. – D

Besides, this listening capacity of salespeople is directly linked to their capability to adapt to their clients and help to **propose an adequate solution** to the clients' problems.

Yes, I think the number one quality of a really good salesperson is, uh... it's that ability to listen. Number one. Because it's always much easier to respond to a customer's needs when you've understood the need very well, but also when you've understood the need that is not expressed. - A

And with experience you're going to... You're going to learn how to just uh... Talk to someone for five-ten minutes and you'll see pretty much what kind of personality to adapt your communication style to. – F

Adaptive Selling

Directly linked to the listening capacity of a salesperson is therefore the **adaptability**. The interviewees emphasized this point as crucial in any sales context and even more in intercultural sales. In this context, international salespeople must be able to adapt to the client's culture even if it's far from their own cultural background.

After that, the salesperson must constantly try to adapt to the context he or she encounters when seeing a customer. – E

Of course, when you're in sales, you always have to adapt. (laughs). Because you're the winner in the end. So, it's your strong point to... to adapt. – F

In fact, what is more complex in terms of sales or in terms of creating international relationships, it's mainly... It's adapting to different cultures, actually. - F

Authenticity

Nevertheless, the interviewees stated that sometimes, it is better not to adapt to the culture of the client. On the contrary, sometimes, another point of view is very welcomed by the client. One of the interviewees explained that in some cases, companies want to work with another company because of their cultural differences and strengths and therefore, it is important to be

authentic. Some **inauthenticity** would in this case be **harmful** to the relationship between salesperson and customer.

> *But I come back to the story of the French aspect, we also come back to that. Maybe the fact that I am different, as soon as I arrive French in another country, even when I meet clients, I can bring something else maybe. – A*

> *But you have to stay yourself because... you will never be more Japanese than the Japanese. And trying to mimic them, it can be... it can quickly become ridiculous. And this can lead to a quid pro quo. - C*

> *So, you have to adapt to the culture without losing your own, of course. Because they are… they're talking with a Spanish company. So, they need… they need to feel the Spanish in that. It's… We're Spanish people. So, we don't have to lose what we are but adapting, of course, to… to make them comfortable with that. – D*

Empathy

And finally, the last sales-related capacity that the interviewees mentioned is empathy. The **understanding of the underlying emotions** goes beyond the simple understanding of the culture itself. These emotions can, in turn, be decisive if a client wants to work with a salesperson or not. They need to be understood to propose the right solution that will be accepted in the end by the customer.

> *The first thing is the empathy. People who can put themselves in the position of the customer. - D*

> *You know, to have the empathy, to understand what they, what the customer… what the person on the other side of the phone wants to transmit to them. - D*

> *Because if you have more empathy, then you can understand perfectly the customer, but you will never take the decision to offer nothing. – D*

In conclusion, the intercultural sales context is a complex one that involves multiple types of salespeople including field salespeople, sales back office and even local partners. Especially in the B2B context, the pure knowledge of the product is not enough to sell. Salespeople need to also consider the human dimension of sales and build good relationships with the customers.

This relationship building is even more challenging in an intercultural context and the salespeople need to have a certain personality that combines humility and open-mindedness. In addition, a good Cultural Intelligence is required that consists of a cognitive understanding of cultural differences, a certain tolerance and respect for the different cultures as well as a curiosity and willingness to learn more about it.

Furthermore, in order to propose an adequate solution to the customer's needs, a salesperson must be able to listen carefully. But not only listening is important, a certain empathy and understanding of the underlying emotions is also required. Once the problem and the situation of the customer is understood, the salesperson must then be able to adapt to the client and treat them accordingly.

But in intercultural situations, sometimes customer don't want the salespeople to adapt to their cultural background because their point of view could add value to the table. Thus, in these situations, salespeople should stay authentic to themselves and be genuine, in order to create effective relationships.

Conclusion Part 2 Exploratory Qualitative Study

To sum up, this exploratory qualitative study has been done to understand the practitioner's point of view of the intercultural sales context. What does 'culture' mean to them? Where can problems and misunderstandings arise? What can companies do to help the salespeople overcome these problems? And finally, what characteristics and skills are needed from a salesperson to be effective in this particular working context.

As the results of this study have shown, 'culture' is comprised of different levels like national, corporate, or personal culture. But in this intercultural research context, culture is often used interchangeably with national culture. Multiple intercultural obstacles can arise due to communication or integration problems or even cultural laws and prohibitions. These intercultural obstacles must be overcome by the salesperson in order to work effectively with clients from different cultures.

To help the salespeople to overcome these obstacles, a company can implement a multitude of measures. These measures start with the recruitment of the right personnel for these jobs and continue by proposing different types of training. Finally, a company also can install a certain corporate culture that is based on mutual support of the different services and advocates diversity.

The support is not only needed from other services but also from the sales managers themselves. Salespeople need direct support from their managers to make the right decisions and be confident in their own work.

And finally, these interviews have shown that intercultural salespeople need a multitude of different characteristics and skills. In order to work with clients from different cultural backgrounds, salespeople are required to have a certain open-mindedness, for example. They need to have some cognitive knowledge about different cultures and be open and motivated to learn about them. Furthermore, being a good listener is key to understand the situation of your client and adapt accordingly. But in the end, adaptation is not always wanted. Another culture and another point of view can also add value to the customer-salesperson exchange.

This qualitative study has shown the key aspects of this intercultural sales context and explained some interesting variables. Figure 11 recapitulates all themes by code that emerged from the qualitative data analysis.

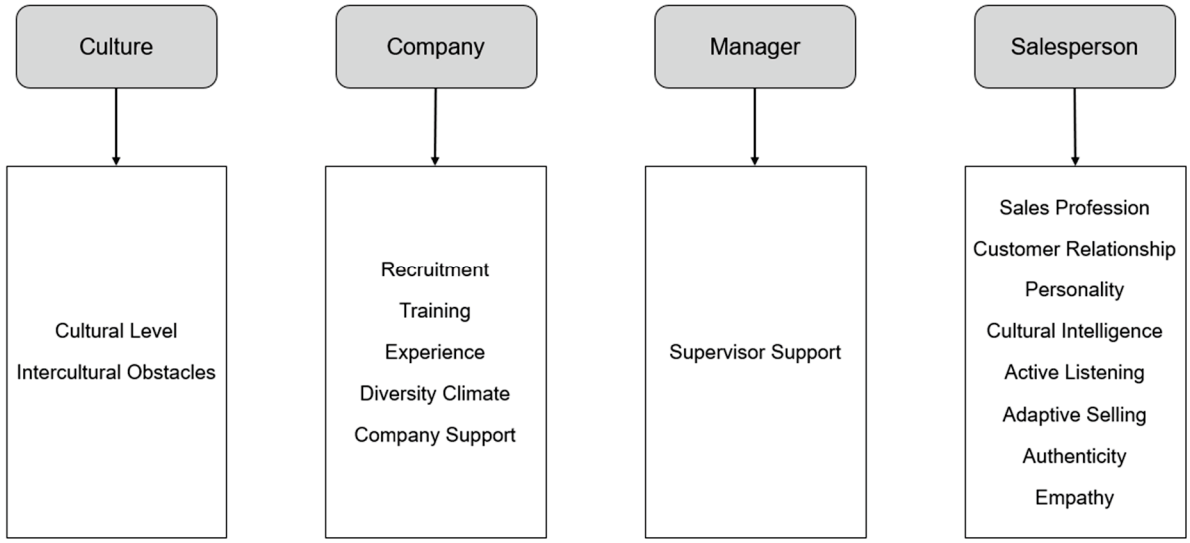
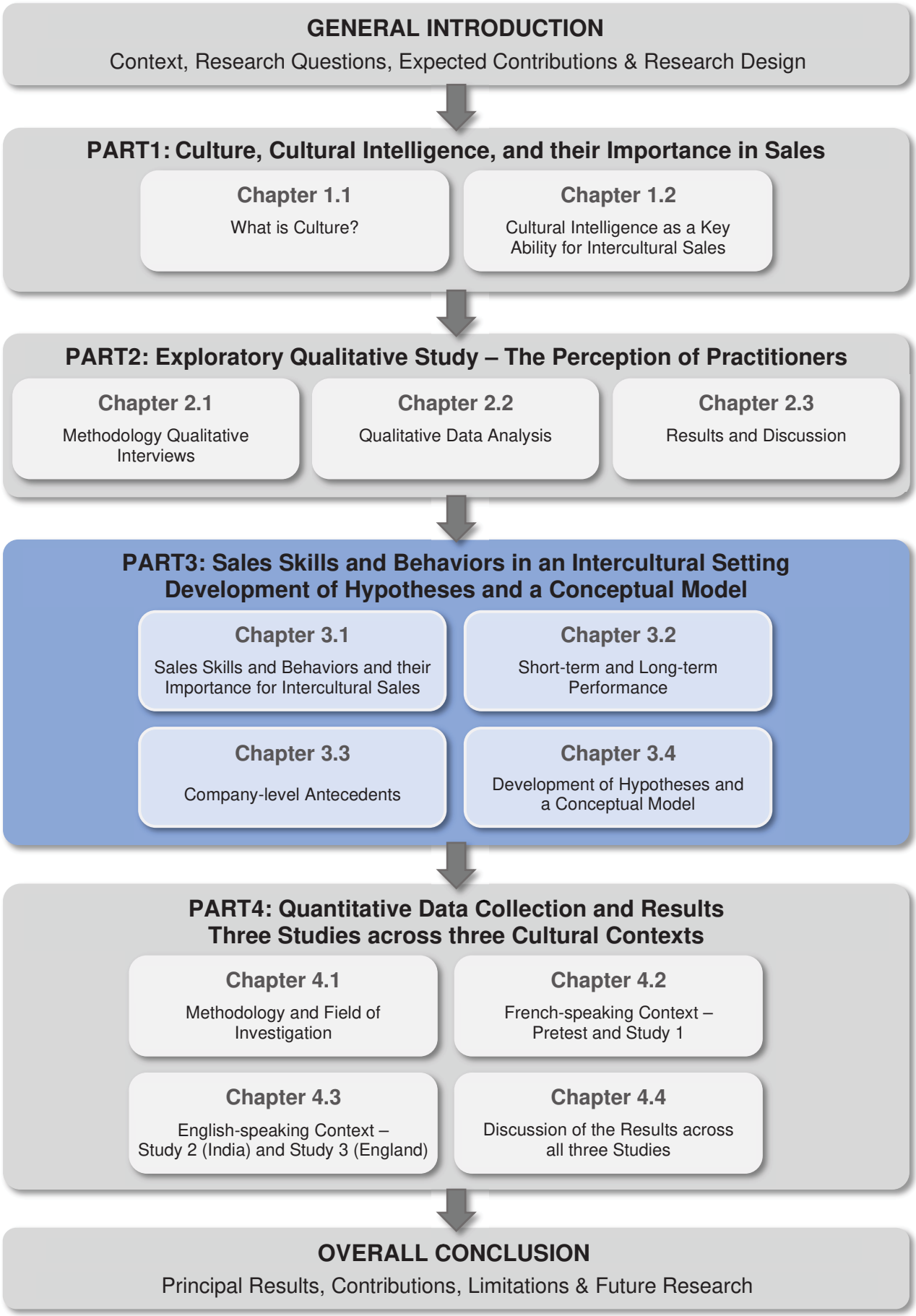


Figure 11: Themes by code as resulted from the qualitative analysis

The next step for this research is therefore to check how these variables play together. For this, different hypotheses are formulated, and a conceptual model is established.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After establishing the theoretical framework of this research as well as looking at the exploratory qualitative study, this third part is now reviewing literature again. Over the next chapters, some of the key skills, behaviors, outcomes, and organizational factors mentioned by the interviewees are presented. The concepts detailed in this chapter have been characterized as key in intercultural sales situations by the interviewees and therefore be chosen to be looked at in more detail also from a theoretical point of view. In addition to their definition based on literature, their relationship with the concept of Cultural Intelligence is hypothesized.

The first chapter of this part is therefore looking at different sales skills that have been judged to be key in intercultural sales: Adaptive Selling, Active Listening, Authenticity and Empathy. After a literature review on these concepts, the second chapter then reviews the literature about two performance outcomes, Sales Performance on a short-term level and Relationship Performance for a more long-term view. Thirdly, as we have seen in the exploratory qualitative study, it is not enough to only look at the salesperson level. Some organizational factors also need to be united to facilitate the work of the salespeople. Thus, the third subchapter of this part exposes the literature about two important organizational factors: Organizational Support and Diversity Climate. Finally, all these concepts are linked to the broad theoretical framework of Cultural Intelligence. In this last subchapter, hypotheses are argued, and a conceptual model developed.

3.1 Sales Skills and Behaviors and their Importance for Intercultural Sales

Looking at the sales research, it is apparent that there are several sales activities that take place during transactions. Some of these sales activities are in direct contact with a client like customer appointments, delivery of the product or service, installation, or technical support. Others are more internal, organizational activities like internal meetings, prequalification or coordination (Barber and Tietje, 2008; Arndt and Harkins, 2013). All these activities need different skills from a salesperson, reason why it is difficult to define exactly what skills salespeople need in order to be successful in their job.

When talking about sales skills in the context of this research, we are talking about "***learned proficiency at performing necessary tasks for the sales job***" (Rentz et al. 2002, p.13). Rentz et al.'s categorization is one of the best-known categorizations of sales skills. They distinguish three types of sales skills needed in all sales activities:

- Interpersonal skills
- Salesmanship skills
- Technical skills

'Interpersonal skills' include knowing how to interact with customers as well as how to cope with and resolve problems that might arise. Thus, the focus is here on the interaction part between two people. Secondly, 'salesmanship skills' are concentrating on the sales part of the interaction including knowing how to do a good sales presentation as well as close a deal. Finally, 'technical skills' encompass the knowledge of the products and services as well as company structures. They often also include engineering skills, especially for technically complex products and services. Consequently, technical skills are highly dependent on the industry a salesperson is working in (Rentz et al., 2002). Since this research is not looking at one particular industry type but at intercultural sales in general, we are focusing on interpersonal and salesmanship skills for the rest of this research. This is in line with the key skills mentioned by the interviewees during the exploratory study.

During sales encounters, salespeople interact with their clients directly. Interpersonal interactions in general have been shown to be built on perceptions of the other actor's feelings and emotions which are transmitted by vocal clues, body language and the formulating of phrases. In a sales context, salespeople must therefore be able to correctly understand these actions and behaviors and answer accurately with their own body language, voice and phrasing. Salespeople must also take care of any possible opportunities of misunderstandings and align every single behavioral element in order to ensure the right perception on behalf of the customer (Stros et al., 2017). In general, salespeople are accustomed to the use of small talk to collect information about the customer. After this first step of small talk, they formulate questions in order to manifest their interest in the customer's needs. This also shows that they listen to and understand the customer. And lastly, salespeople offer stories about themselves to show proximity and shared emotional stance and experience with the customer (Kaski et al., 2018).

To establish a good relationship between customer and salesperson and, thus, have a good sales performance, salespeople need to have a certain sensitivity to observe cues that customers omit. Furthermore, they need to adapt their behaviors accordingly (Kaski et al., 2018).

To resume all the information above, salespeople therefore need to adapt to their clients, have good listening and communication skills, show empathy and be authentic as much as possible, especially in intercultural settings when working with customers from different cultural backgrounds. Following this logic, the first subchapter of this part is looking at Adaptive Selling and related research on this topic. Secondly, research on Active Listening is reviewed in order to look at the listening and communication skills needed by intercultural salespeople. Thereafter, the third subchapter is exposing more details about the concept of Authenticity. Finally, Empathy as a more culture-specific concept is presented.

3.1.1 Adaptive Selling

Following the exploratory interviews, the first key behavior on a salesperson level needed for this intercultural context is 'Adaptive Selling'. This subchapter is reviewing existing literature on this concept to define it more clearly for the rest of this research.

Adaptive selling is a behavior that has received a lot of attention in sales literature after its introduction in the 1980-90's. It has been defined in one of the earliest articles as "***the altering of sales behaviors during a customer interaction or across interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation***" (Weitz *et al.*, 1986, p. 175).

Adaptive selling is therefore an interactive approach based on the perception of a sales situation (Spiro and Weitz, 1990). A salesperson high in adaptive selling is using different sales strategies and presentations when talking to different clients and makes adjustments directly during an encounter (Spiro and Weitz, 1990). Adaptive selling is therefore opposed to using a single, uniform sales presentation for every customer (Román and Martín, 2014). It is a reaction to different signals from a customer like verbal or non-verbal cues and adapting the sales presentation and strategy accordingly (Weitz et al., 1986; Spiro and Weitz, 1990).

As explained by McFarland (2019), adaptive selling can be looked at on a micro- or a macrolevel. Most of the studies in sales have been using a microlevel approach based on Weitz *et al.* (1986) definition of the concept, treating it as a single and global concept. Our research wants to advance this microlevel adaptive selling theory and looks at different factors that can impact adaptive selling in an international context.

Following this research stream, Alavi *et al.* (2019) explain that salespeople change their behaviors (adapted behaviors) based on their perceptions of different customer attributes (bases of adaptation). These perceptions are even more important in intercultural sales settings due to cultural differences between customers and salespeople. The following Figure 12 is an adaptation of the adaptive selling process proposed by Alavi *et al.* (2019) in an intercultural setting.

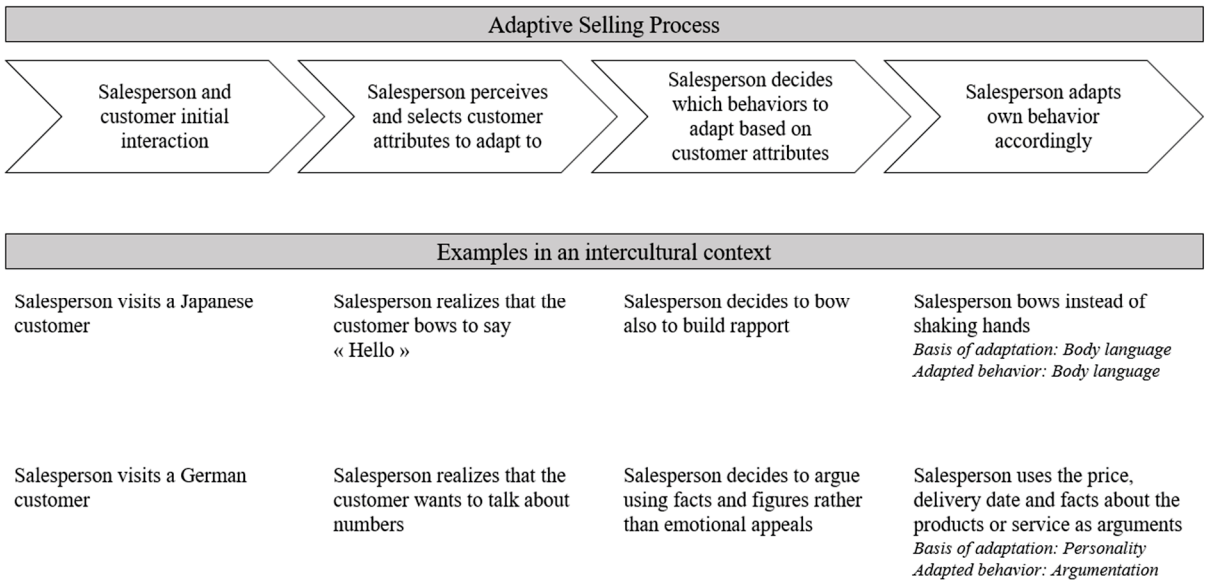


Figure 12: Adaptive selling process in an intercultural context (adapted from Alavi, Habel, and Linsenmayer, 2019)

Regarding antecedents and predictors of adaptive selling, a research stream has looked for example at demographic characteristics of salespeople like age, gender or education (Levy and Sharma, 1994). Even though there seems to be some interaction effects between these variables, they do not seem to have a direct impact on adaptive selling (Levy and Sharma, 1994; Franke and Park, 2006).

Additionally, previous research has also looked at sales experience as a significant predictor of adaptive selling. In this case, it has been shown that higher experience leads to the development of diverse sales strategies and thus, higher performance (Robinson et al., 2002; Franke and Park, 2006; Giacobbe et al., 2006).

Moreover, sales research has also focused on various traits or skills as antecedents of salespeople's adaptive selling. Simintiras *et al.*, (2013) for example found that selling skills are highly connected to adaptive selling behaviors. People with higher sales skills seem to have more knowledge about different sales situations and are therefore more performant in adapting their sales approaches (Simintiras et al., 2013). Additionally, self-leadership, self-monitoring, self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation have been shown to be significant antecedents of adaptive

selling (Jaramillo et al., 2007; Román and Iacobucci, 2010; Singh et al., 2017; Alnakhli et al., 2020).

Especially in the post-2000 period, the concept of adaptive selling has been introduced to the international sales and sales management literature, highlighting the importance to adapt salesperson communication strategies to different cultures and backgrounds (Schrock et al., 2018).

Up to date, there are a few studies connecting the concepts of Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling (e.g., Charoensukmongkol 2020; Kimber, Guesalaga, and Dickmann 2022). These studies are discussed in more details in Chapter 1.2.4 Cultural Intelligence in Previous Research.

However, these studies also express the need to continue research in this area by introducing other mediator or moderator variables like personal characteristics, traits, or competencies of salespeople. They also highlight the necessity of studying these concepts in different cultural contexts in order to advance our knowledge about the role of Cultural Intelligence in cross-cultural selling across various situations (Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Kimber et al., 2022).

In conclusion, adaptive selling has been a key variable for sales research since its introduction. It has been defined as "**the altering of sales behaviors during a customer interaction or across interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation**" (Weitz *et al.*, 1986, p. 175).

Following this definition, two points are key for adaptive selling (Alavi, Habel, and Linsenmayer, 2019):

- **bases of adaptation**—the perception of different customer attributes
- **adapted behaviors**—the altering of the behavior of the salesperson

Adaptive selling has been researched a lot with a multitude of salesperson characteristics, attitudes, skills and behaviors and it has been found that people with higher sales skills seem to have more knowledge about different sales situations and are therefore more performant in adapting their sales approaches.

Finally, this concept has been introduced in intercultural sales literature highlighting the **importance to adapt salesperson communication strategies to different cultures and backgrounds**.

After the definition of the first concept mentioned by the interviewee, Adaptive Selling, the next subchapter is exposing prior research on 'Active Listening'.

3.1.2 Active Listening

The main purpose of listening and communication skills of a salesperson is to show genuine interest in the customer and his preoccupations in order to create a positive and trusting atmosphere (Kaski et al., 2018). In earlier research, effective communication has been linked not only to trust but also to commitment due to the creation and alignment of common goals among the people that interact (Samaha et al., 2014). In this sense, interpersonal communication between sellers and customers has been shown to be a key competence for successful sales (Comer and Drollinger, 1999). Castleberry and Shepherd (1993) for example advocate that effective listening creates better communication because the speaker feels heard and wants to share his information. Additionally, a good listener not only evaluates the message that he receives but he even accurately adds meaning to it and, in the last step, provides a proper response (Shepherd et al., 1997).

Looking at listening and communication skills, it is important to keep in mind that communication is not only verbal (Stros et al., 2017). Non-verbal behavior like body language, for example, plays an important role in any face-to-face communication. Some research like Mehrabian (1971) even suggests that the non-verbal behavior and tonality account for more than 90 percent of communication but these figures have been questioned in newer research. Nowadays, research on communication in the sales process shows that non-verbal communication behaviors are more than half of communication in such a context (Borg and Johnston, 2013). It is also indisputable that non-verbal communication is extremely important in a cross-cultural context (Hall, 1959). Consequently, only looking at the words that salespeople used to sell their products is not sufficient and non-verbal behavior must also be included in any study of the listening ability of salespeople.

In general, it is important for any salesperson, independent from the industry or the context that they are working in, to be able to identify, and in a second step analyze the customer's needs. As a consequence, they must provide customers with a solution to their problems. (Reday et al., 2009). Therefore, a salesperson needs to be able to listen carefully to what a

customer is saying and how the customer is acting, in verbal and non-verbal behavior. These clues serve the salesperson to understand their customers' business environments and business needs and help to present and suggest appropriate products and solutions in response to explicit needs of the customer (Beverland, 2001). Thus, listening skills are key in the sales process in order to understand the customer better (Comer and Drollinger, 1999).

In the sales research, an interesting concept has been introduced that links perceiving verbal and non-verbal behaviors as well as responding to them: Active listening. This concept can be defined as **focusing on customer responsiveness that includes body language, but also sensing, evaluating and responding to these behavioral cues omitted by the customer** (Comer and Drollinger, 1999). Active listening has been shown to be a multi-stage process including not only the reception of but also the response to messages (Itani et al., 2019). In the literature, three different dimensions have been defined—even if the terms might differ from one study to another (Drollinger et al., 2006). One of the first models of active listening has been developed by Comer and Drollinger (1999) who distinguish the following three dimensions:

- Sensing
- Processing
- Responding

'Sensing' in this context is the most basic aspect and includes the hearing of the words or the non-verbal behavior. It can be defined as the actual receiving of the message. The second dimension, 'processing', consists of the cognitive processes used to decode a message in order to understand the meaning, interpret the intention and importance and remember it. Finally, 'responding' can be seen as the assuring that the message has been received and includes some type of verbal and non-verbal response (Comer and Drollinger, 1999). This last stage also includes further questioning in order to receive more detailed information or clarify what has been stated before (Román, 2014).

Active listening has been shown to have positive impacts on customers' judgments for example (Kaski et al., 2018). Furthermore, research on this skill has established a direct and indirect link on diverse sales outcomes (Itani et al., 2019). Listening has been found to positively impact customer trust, satisfaction and retention which is essential for long-term relationship building (Drollinger and Comer, 2013; Itani et al., 2019). These skills have also been shown to allow a salesperson to direct his efforts in a smarter way, leading to higher sales performance ultimately (Sujan, Weitz and Kumar, 1994).

Following the argumentation of Román (2014), this research is not looking at all three stages of active listening but rather focusing on the last one, responding. An accurate response can only occur if the salesperson already has sensed and processed all verbal and non-verbal cues effectively beforehand, meaning that the active listening process as a whole already took place. Thus, a good responding is an indicator of a good active listening in general.

To conclude, interpersonal communication between sellers and customers has been shown to be a **key competence** for successful sales. Due to the **high importance of non-verbal behavior** in any face-to-face communication, it is therefore not enough to only look at verbal exchanges but it is key to also include this part of communication.

Listening to these different behavioral cues help a salesperson to **better understand the customer** which, in turn, helps to present the most appropriate products or services.

To go one step further, active listening has been introduced in the sales literature. This concept can be defined as **focusing on customer responsiveness that includes body language, but also sensing, evaluating and responding to these behavioral cues omitted by the customer** (Comer and Drollinger, 1999). It therefore links the perception of messages as well as the accurate response to them.

Active Listening has been introduced as a multi-stage process including three different dimensions:

- **Sensing**
- **Processing**
- **Responding**

Since an accurate response can only occur if the salesperson already has sensed and processed all verbal and non-verbal cues effectively beforehand, this study **focuses on the responding part** of active listening.

After defining in more details the concept of Active Listening, the next subchapter is exposing the literature about the concept of ‘Authenticity’.

3.1.3 Authenticity

The next sales skill that this research is looking at is ‘authenticity’. This concept is used for research in different fields like marketing or sociology where it refers to the behavior of a person congruent with his or her ‘true self’ (Moulard et al., 2015). Over the last few years, authenticity has gained interest not only in the broader management literature (Lehman et al., 2019) but also in sales (Stros et al., 2017, 2020; Yoo and Arnold, 2019). In sales research, authenticity still has not been studied a lot, the reason why it is even more important to look at this variable in a particular setting that is intercultural sales. Marketing and sales managers have the urge to understand the antecedents and impact of salesperson authenticity considered that this is a highly demanded skill by the customer (Stros et al., 2017).

According to Schafer and Pettijohn (2006, p.26), salesperson authenticity can be defined as “***behavior that is experienced by the salesperson as being the freely chosen, self-determined, natural, genuine, unmasked, and unpretentious expression of a salesperson’s internal experience***”. It requires acting according to one’s own latent traits and is therefore an internally caused and self-authored behavior (Sheldon et al., 1997; Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006). The proposed definition of Schaefer and Pettijohn (2006) includes three key specifics of salesperson authenticity. First, the behavior and communication need to be genuine. Secondly, it has to be freely chosen and subjectively experienced. And lastly, the salesperson mustn’t pretend nor mask with his behavioral cues and therefore operate without any pretense. Consequently, salesperson authenticity is a controllable factor that is personal at the same time and contributes among others to positive customer impressions (Stros et al., 2017).

Perceptions of authenticity are judged to be influenced by consumer characteristics like age or gender (Moulard et al., 2015). Authenticity is a skill that is highly worshipped especially by younger customers and people who have learned to distinguish authentic or real from faked behavior (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006). In these cases, inauthentic behavior can be

counterproductive and even harm the relationship between the salesperson and the customer (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006).

In first-time encounters, factors like facial expressions, gestures or the vocal tone have been proven to be important when assessing authenticity (Moulard et al., 2015). Thus, especially behaviors and cognition like the spoken words are impacting customers' perception of salesperson authenticity levels (Stros et al., 2020). Salespeople communicate a lot with their customers, via words and body language like gesture or facial expressions. They also display emotions via these channels and deliver know-how. If a customer perceives these expressions and behaviors as authentic, positive impressions and trust are achieved resulting in positive sales performance outcomes but inauthentic behaviors will undermine all these efforts (Stros et al., 2017).

Furthermore, authenticity levels have been found to vary depending on the situation, roles or domains (Sheldon et al., 1997). In some studies, it has been demonstrated that authenticity levels can be dependent on the age of the salesperson. In a study from Schaefer and Pettijohn (2006), older salespeople reported significantly higher authenticity levels than younger ones. They explained this difference due to the career stages framework with younger individuals that are in the explorer stage and therefore more focused on finding an appropriate job. They are not sure if they want to stay in sales and try out different techniques during sales encounters (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006).

As a result of inauthentic behavior, cognitive dissonance can occur. When the actions of salespeople are inconsistent with their inner beliefs and feelings, they are arising this cognitive dissonance. Such inauthentic behavior feels unnatural to the salespeople and is inconsistent with their self-perception. Consequently, they are eager to stress. The negative aspects of adaptation can drain attention and mental resources of the employees which makes them unable to perform complex tasks and ultimately negatively affect their performance. This stress can also negatively impact the ability to process social cues (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006). Finally, these negative consequences may result in burnout or even quitting the occupation

(Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006). Surface acting as one type of inauthentic behavior has been shown to enhance this negative effect of cognitive dissonance by adding an emotional dissonance. Emotional dissonance occurs when outward expressions of emotions and inner feelings of the same person mismatch. This emotional dissonance increase therefore the emotional stress and exhaustion of a salesperson (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006; Kraak and Holmqvist, 2017; Stros et al., 2017). As a consequence, allowing employees to act according to their own beliefs not only benefits the employee due to stress reduction but also results in a more authentic and therefore successful customer experience (Kraak and Holmqvist, 2017).

Regarding antecedents, role identification has been observed to have a positive relationship with authenticity. People that act according to the role expectations seem to feel more authentic (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006; Charles-Pauvers et al., 2007). Employees that identify strongly with their occupation and are professionally committed feel more authentic when performing actions that are in line with those occupational roles and have also positive feelings for them (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006).

Authenticity, like one's true self, beliefs, and motivations, is unobservable by other people at 100 percent. Thus, it is important to consider how people determine self-perceived authenticity and how another's authenticity is perceived. Customers make assessments about salespeople's authenticity levels but are unable to know with absolute certainty if they really are authentic (Moulard et al., 2015).

In this study, it has been decided to focus on how a salesperson is feeling as opposed to the perception of a salesperson's authenticity by the customer. Very few studies have looked at authenticity from a salesperson's perspective (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006). But in the context of this research, the focus is on how a salesperson is behaving and feeling, making it more coherent to study self-perceived authenticity as a negative outcome of Cultural Intelligence.

In conclusion, the concept of authenticity has gained a lot of interest over the last few years. It is key not only to build relationships based on trust but also to favor positive impressions in first-time encounters.

In sales research, authenticity has been defined as "**behavior that is experienced by the salesperson as being the freely chosen, self-determined, natural, genuine, unmasked, and unpretentious expression of a salesperson's internal experience**" (Schaefer and Pettijohn 2006, p.26). Thus, this definition includes three key specifics of a salesperson's behavior:

- Genuine
- Freely chosen
- Unpretentious

If a customer perceives a salesperson as being authentic, positive impressions and trust are achieved resulting in positive sales performance outcomes. Conversely, inauthentic behavior can lead to negative outcomes like cognitive and emotional dissonance. This, in turn provokes stress that can even result in burnout.

As a consequence, allowing employees to act according to their own beliefs not only benefits the employee due to **stress reduction** but also results in a more authentic and therefore **successful customer experience**.

Finally, the next subchapter reviews the literature about the last salesperson-level concept that is the concept of 'Empathy'.

3.1.4 Empathy

Empathy is a concept that first emerged in the psychology literature. One of the earliest definitions of this concept is by Rogers (1959) who defines empathy as the ability "*to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy, and with the emotional components and meanings...as if one were the other person, but without ever losing the 'as if condition*" (Rogers 1959, p. 210). In the same direction is the definition of Hogan (1969) who defines this concept as "***the intellectual or imaginative apprehension of another's condition or state of mind without actually experiencing that person's feelings***" (Hogan 1969, p. 308).

In line with this literature, empathy has been shown to have two different dimensions: a cognitive and an affective one (Comer and Drollinger, 1999; Delpechitre et al., 2019). The cognitive dimension covers the ability to understand another person's view. It is defined as the intellectual understanding on an objective level (Comer and Drollinger, 1999; Aggarwal et al., 2005). For salespeople, this means that they can look at their customers' perspective objectively and therefore anticipate what their customers probably think. The cognitive dimension is thus a 'perspective taking' or a 'cognitive role taking' (Comer and Drollinger, 1999). The second dimension, affective, plays on another level than the first one. It is a person's ability to connect with another person not only on an objective level but also on an emotional one. Intuition plays an important role for this dimension and helps a person to better understand but also relate to another person (Aggarwal et al., 2005). Consequently, the focus of this dimension is not on the objective understanding but on the internal emotional reaction of the empathic person that creates a bond on the emotional level and facilitate therefore the understanding of emotional states of the customer. In a sales setting, this dimension means that salespeople can use their intuition in order to sense information that is not expressively stated but important for the understanding of the customer's needs. The affective dimension of empathy can thus be defined as an 'empathic concern' for another person (Comer and Drollinger, 1999).

Most of the time, empathy has been defined as a trait. Empathy as a trait means that it is seen as a disposition that is permanent and changes from one person to another (Comer and Drollinger, 1999). It is a durable attribute of a person and manifested in certain behaviors (Aggarwal et al., 2005). Thus, some people are considered more empathetic than others in general. Sales literature is also building on that idea of empathy and defining it as an 'emotional trait' (Agnihotri and Krush, 2015).

In the marketing and sales literature, empathy has been defined as "***salesperson's demonstration of interest and concern for the welfare of the customers***" (Ahearne, Jelinek, and Jones 2007, p.606). This definition not only mentions the perception of emotions but especially focuses on the understanding and listening to the customer. It is therefore focusing on the capability of a salesperson to understand others as well as being concerned about their well-being (Ahearne et al., 2007; Agnihotri and Krush, 2015).

As Mayer and Greenberg stated, empathy is "*the important central ability to feel as another person does in order to be able to sell him or her a product or service*" (Mayer and Greenberg 2006, p.119f.). Thus, empathy is key for salesperson success (Lamont and Lundstrom, 1977; Comer and Drollinger, 1999; Aggarwal et al., 2005). A salesperson that has a high empathy can therefore respond according to the clients wishes and demands and meet their expectations effectively (Aggarwal et al., 2005). Empathy creates an atmosphere that facilitates information sharing and accordingly, promote greater trust. This also reduces uncertainty in what the customer wants and needs, enhances positive feelings like satisfaction, and helps build a good relationship in the long run (Aggarwal et al., 2005). Finally, empathy has been shown to be related to other important salesperson characteristics like adaptability for example (Aggarwal et al., 2005).

Empathy has been looked at in the sales literature for a long period of time and over the years, it has been validated as one of the most important success variables in sales (Aggarwal et al., 2005). In this context, it has especially been shown to be crucial for forming and nurturing relationships with customers (Agnihotri and Krush, 2015). In a sales setting, it is important to

understand the customers' needs and desires. This understanding can be quite challenging, especially in an intercultural context where contextual cues and body language might be different than what salespeople are used to. Empathy favors the understanding of customers and help the salespeople to communicate effectively and create a good long-term relationship (Agnihotri and Krush, 2015).

To conclude, empathy is a concept that originated in **psychology literature**. In this context, empathy has been shown to have two different dimensions:

- a **cognitive** and
- an **affective** one.

The cognitive dimension therefore covers the ability to cognitively understand another person's view whilst the affective dimensions adds an emotional level to that by trying to create an emotional bond.

In the sales context, empathy has been researched a lot and shown to be crucial in order to understand better the customer. It has been defined as a "**salesperson's demonstration of interest and concern for the welfare of the customers**" (Ahearne, Jelinek, and Jones 2007, p.606), accentuating the importance of a salesperson's concern for the customer. Empathy in a sales setting has been shown to impact trust and satisfaction as well as help to build a long-term relationship with the customer.

3.2 Short-term and Long-term Performance Outcomes

After looking at the different shills and behaviors needed in intercultural sales and reviewing the existing literature about four concepts—adaptive selling, active listening, authenticity and empathy—this following subchapter is now looking at the concept of performance as a potential outcome.

However, in the literature, performance has been defined in many ways and is often used as if everybody knows what is meant by this concept. A common definition of performance is therefore not existent (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Charles-Pauvers et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, some models of work performance have been proposed (e.g., Campbell 1990). In Campbell's model, work performance is composed of the following competences:

- Job-specific skills
- Non job-specific skills (e.g., adaptability skills)
- Written and oral communication
- Efforts at work (e.g., commitment or motivation)
- Maintaining self-discipline
- Facilitating team and colleague performance
- Supervision
- Management and administration

The eight behavioral dimensions of work performance found in Campbell's model are at the same time universal, generic and independent. Universal in this context means that they can be found in every company. Generic because they can be adapted to the constraints of a particular organization especially in terms of particularities of the jobs, internal organization of the company, etc. And lastly, independent means that they do not suit all together every job of the company (Charles-Pauvers et al., 2007). In general, each of the listed competencies is important in different situations at work but not every person needs all of them at the same time.

This model is especially interesting for identifying key psychological factors that determine work performance. On the one hand, it can be concluded that personality traits can influence the link between the employee, his work, and his organization. And on the other hand, the perception of the relationship created by the company, like organizational support (see Chapter 3.3.1 Organizational Support), seem to impact work performance also (Charles-Pauvers et al., 2007).

This research is now looking at two different types of work performance:

- sales performance as a more short-term and objective outcome
- relationship performance as a more long-term and subjective one

Thus, the first subchapter is going into more details about sales performance. After this, the second subchapter is reviewing the literature about relationship performance.

3.2.1 Short-term Sales Performance

For this research, it is important to define what sales performance means being a more specialized type of performance. Furthermore, it is necessary to look at the different dimensions of this concept. In sales research, sales performance is one of the most widely researched topics due to the obvious relationship between salesperson performance and overall organizational success (MacKenzie et al., 1998).

According to Parissier et al. (2005) or Jaramillo et al. (2005), sales job performance is defined as **behaviors consistent with the organization that contribute to the achievement of the general goals of the company**. It is often measured by outcomes like sales volume, profitability or percentage of quotas and other positive changes for the company (Jaramillo et al., 2005; Samaha et al., 2014). But there are different dimensions of salespeople's performance that can be distinguished from the sales literature.

First of all, objective and subjective performance can be differentiated. Objective performance is a type of performance measurable by the results and the achievement of clear, objective goals that a salesperson achieves. This type of job performance is mostly represented as the comparison of the sales results with a previously defined goal or the achievement of quotas.

On the other hand, there is a more subjective, and behavioral performance. This performance includes the measurement of the behavior of the salesperson that contributes to finalizing a sale before and during the sales process. It is based on more subjective evaluations of a salesperson's performance that can be obtained from managers or colleagues especially (Jaramillo et al., 2005; Parissier et al., 2005; Fournier, 2016).

A second distinction from the literature is between performance in-role and extra-role. These two performance categories are only indirectly linked to the conclusion of sales contracts but contribute nevertheless to the goals of the company and are therefore included in definitions of sales performance.

In-role performance is defined as the tasks and activities of the salesperson that are included in his or her job description but do not directly contribute to the conclusion of new contracts. They are behaviors that are typically included in the roles of salespeople within a company and influence nevertheless the overall performance of the company. An example of such in-role performance is schedule organization or sales support services (Jaramillo et al., 2005; Parissier et al., 2005; Marshall et al., 2012).

In contrast, extra-role performance consists of behaviors that are not officially part of a salesperson's job but contribute to the work climate and therefore to the survival and effective functioning of the organization. They are noncompulsory, not objectively related to a salesperson's 'formal' role within a company from an evaluation perspective and therefore not directly compensated by the reward system of an organization. The best-known type of this sort of performance is Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Jaramillo et al., 2005; Parissier et al., 2005; Marshall et al., 2012).

OCBs include three different types of behavior:

- Sportsmanship
- Civic virtue
- Helping behavior

'Sportsmanship' is the ability to tolerate circumstances that are not ideal or even bad without any complaint. 'Civic virtue' is the concern about and active participation in the life of the company. Attending meetings and helping to improve the functioning of the company are examples of this. Finally, 'helping behavior' includes attitudes like altruism, courtesy, peacekeeping and cheerleading. It consists therefore of leading a helping hand to coworkers and avoid problems related to work. An example of helping behavior could be the training of a less experienced colleague (Jaramillo et al., 2005; Marshall et al., 2012). Sometimes, a fourth dimension of OCBs is added: conscience. An example of this behavior is punctuality (Parissier et al., 2005).

Some studies have investigated the antecedents of sales performance. According to an early study of Walker Jr, Churchill Jr, and Ford (1977), there are three basic factors that determine sales performance: motivation, aptitude or ability and perceptions about how the salesperson's role should be performed. They also explained that several antecedent variables like personal characteristics, characteristics of the company and factors of the broader economic environment influence these three factors. Some of these variables can be controlled by the salesperson or the company itself but others like the environmental factors are beyond their control (Walker Jr et al., 1977).

For this research, we define sales performance as ***objective, more short-term oriented performance behaviors that are directly linked to the conclusion of a sales contract***.

This performance definition facilitates the measurement of the variable and makes it easier to use the proposed research model in future studies. It also helps establish a clear distinction between short-term sales performance and more long-term oriented relationship quality.

To sum up, sales performance is a widely researched concept in sales and can be defined as behaviors consistent with the organization that contribute to the achievement of the general goals of the company.

Different types of sales performance can be distinguished from the literature like **objective vs. subjective** or **intra-role vs. extra-role performance**. These conceptualizations include therefore behaviors that are directly related to the sales job as well as other, more indirectly related ones.

This research is focusing on the intra-role and objective sales performance that can be measured by quotas or sales volume in dollars, for example. This definition therefore emphasizes the short-term character of the concept and distinguishes it clearly from other long-term focused concepts like relationship performance.

Thus, we define sales performance as ***objective, more short-term oriented performance behaviors that are directly linked to the conclusion of a sales contract.***

In addition to this short-term performance outcome, it is also important to look at the more long-term point of view and review the literature about relationship performance. The next subchapter is therefore looking at this concept.

3.2.2 Long-term Relationship Performance

Relationship performance is a concept that has been used excessively in the sales literature, as sales performance, but often without a common definition. Consequently, there is a lack of systematic theory construction on this matter (Huntley, 2006). Nevertheless, relationship marketing especially has gained increasing interest due to its power to create a differential advantage for a company, also in intercultural research (Samaha et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, even with the lack of consensus on a common definition for relationship quality, some definitions still can be found, for example: the "*overall assessment of the strength of a relationship, conceptualized as a composite or multi-dimensional construct capturing the different but related facets of a relationship*" (Palmatier et al. 2006, p.138). A second definition has been made by Henning-Thurau and Klee (1997) who showcase relationship quality as the extent to which a relationship is effective to satisfy the requirements of the customer.

Furthermore, relationship quality has been defined in a sales context as "***the degree to which buyers are satisfied over time with the overall relationship as manifested in product quality, service quality, and price paid for the value received and the degree to which the relationship functions as a partnership***" (Huntley 2006, p.706).

In sales literature, a second concept has been used when talking about relationship quality: the concept of rapport. Rapport has been defined as "*a harmonious relationship between participants; it involves a mutual connection and understanding or a perceived similarity to one another*" (Kaski, Niemi, and Pullins 2018, p. 235). Rapport is related to trust and therefore the confidence that a salesperson serves the long-term interest of a customer. It also creates shared positive feelings by applying responsive and collaborative actions (Kaski et al., 2018). Consequently, it is an important starting point for a high qualitative long-term relationship between the salesperson and the customer (Kaski et al., 2018).

With regards to outcomes of this concept, relationship quality has been shown to be related to willingness to recommend and purchase intention. In general, when the quality of a relationship

is high, customers tend to purchase more from a salesperson and recommend the offer (Huntley, 2006).

High relationship quality suggests that the customer can trust the integrity of the salesperson and has confidence in the salesperson's future performance. This assessment is made based on the consistency of past performance of the salesperson (Crosby et al., 1990). Thus, relationship quality implies three different things on the side of the customer (Smith, 1998; Mullins et al., 2014):

- Trust
- Satisfaction
- Commitment

As a consequence, a positive relationship between customer and salesperson strengthen the trust and support the intention to continue the relationship (Beverland, 2001). Thus, trust, loyalty and relationship quality create a positive cycle reinforcing each other. Conversely, if a salesperson fails to propose accurate solutions to customers' problems and is unable to add something to the customer's turn, the salesperson looses credibility which harms the relationship (Kaski et al., 2018).

Furthermore, honesty and accurate communication, and therefore high ethical standards, have proven to be key for core relationship elements and, in turn, a high-quality relationship (Huntley, 2006). But as shown in the sales literature, relationships need time to develop. Customers need more than one successful transaction in order to trust a salesperson and to want to invest in a long-term relationship. It has even been argued that concepts like credibility and empathy become even more and more important as the relationship endures and matures (Aggarwal et al., 2005).

All the information above illustrate that relationships need two different parties: the customer and the salesperson. Thus, Mullins et al. (2014) explain that there are two different perceptions that can be taken into account, the customer's and the salesperson's. In the case of this

research, we are focusing on the salesperson's point of view and his perception about how much energy he is directing towards relationship-building efforts. This choice has been made to be able to stay within the same level of analysis and keep the viewpoint of the salesperson directly.

In conclusion, relationship quality is a concept that has a multitude of different definitions. In a sales context, this concept has been defined as "***the degree to which buyers are satisfied over time with the overall relationship as manifested in product quality, service quality, and price paid for the value received and the degree to which the relationship functions as a partnership***" (Huntley 2006, p.706).

Furthermore, three different boundary conditions must be met in order for a relationship to work: a customer must **trust** the salesperson, be **satisfied** with the work of the latter and be **committed** to the relationship. Once these conditions are met, a positive cycle will be created where all of these variables reinforce each other.

For this research, we are now focusing on the **salesperson's perception** of his efforts towards relationship building in order to stay within the same level of analysis (salesperson level).

3.3 Company-level Antecedents

In order to understand how a person works within a company setting, earlier research has accentuated the relevance of including not only individual characteristics but also contextual factors. This allows adopting an interactional view explaining the role of an individual in this particular organizational context (Chen et al., 2012).

When looking at the selling context, it is not enough that the seller is competent to have a successful sale. At the company level, too, certain conditions must be met to support the salesperson. In one of the earlier studies on this matter, Weitz and Bradford (1999, p.24) explain that "*an individual salesperson does not possess the knowledge or intrafirm influence to propose and implement a program that has the potential for building a competitive advantage for the buyer-seller dyad*".

This is the reason why this chapter is now looking at some facilitators on a company level that allow salespeople to be more efficient in an intercultural sales context. The first company-level concept that this chapter is looking at is 'Organizational Support'. Salespeople need support from other parts within the company to be able to help customers and create value for them. Secondly, this chapter is looking at 'Diversity Climate'. Salespeople that are more in contact with a diverse set of colleagues within their own company can deal with differences more easily which is important for intercultural sales. Both concepts that have been chosen for this research have been mentioned as key factors by the interviewees during the first exploratory qualitative study.

Following this, the first subchapter is therefore reviewing existing research about the concept of Organizational Support whilst the second one is going into more details about Diversity Climate.

3.3.1 Organizational Support

As explained before, an individual salesperson does not have all the information at hand to be able to build all the solutions necessary for a customer. Thus, salespeople need the support of other people in the company in order to meet customer needs (Weitz and Bradford, 1999).

Some companies have implemented this idea by introducing sales teams opposed to individual selling. But especially for medium and small sized companies, sales teams might not be possible. In these cases, salespeople still are selling individually but need to feel the support of all other members of the organization (Beverland, 2001). In small and medium size organizations, where teams may be inappropriate, salespeople need to feel that they can call on all members of the organization to help improve their relationship with the customer (Beverland, 2001).

In this sense, a company must allow their salespeople to ask for help from different colleagues, not only on their own level but also in higher or lower levels in the company. Especially for building and maintaining a relationship with the customer, the salesperson must be provided with information from colleagues within the sales division but, more importantly, from other divisions, too (Beverland, 2001). Salespeople therefore need to feel the support from inside the sales force but also from other groups, for example the back office or the finance department. Therefore, colleagues inside and outside of the sales department have to be open to help also with sales activities (Arndt and Harkins, 2013).

In a study of sales support, Arndt and Harkins (2013) develop a framework in order to know when to ask whom for help within the company. In total, they distinguish three different sales-support categories (Arndt and Harkins, 2013):

- self-support
- core team support
- external support

‘Self-support’ means that salespeople are responsible for the sales activities by themselves. Salespeople become in this case generalists and can help customers with every step of the sales process. They do not receive any help or support from colleagues external to the sales department. In some situations, this can be a very efficient way of support, especially for less complicated products (Arndt and Harkins, 2013).

For ‘core team support’, employees are divided into cross-functional selling teams with one sales manager responsible for this team. Such teams are often comprised of a salesperson who prospects and sells to the customers. Furthermore, there are technical specialists in this team who are delivering and installing the order. And finally, coordinators organize and manage the team, especially concerning schedules and any additional, external support that might be needed. This type of support is especially interesting for relatively big companies that sell technically complex products (Arndt and Harkins, 2013).

The last type of support distinguished by Arndt and Harkins (2013) is ‘external support’. In this case, external departments provide support for the salesperson and the whole sales division. These are centralized departments and units that are completely outside the sales division and the salespeople or managers have no control over them. These departments usually have little or even no contact with the salespeople directly. This type of support is interesting especially for products or services with a high workload but low customization (Arndt and Harkins, 2013).

In general, Arndt and Harkins (2013) conclude that it would be most efficient to use different support for different activities within one sale. For example, it can be interesting if the prospecting is done by the salesperson in self-support, the technical support activities might be better done with core support and finally, the accounting part could be allocated to an external support structure (Arndt and Harkins, 2013). This means that the salesperson must relate to different people within a company and know that they are going to support him whenever it is needed.

But organizational support as perceived by an employee goes even beyond knowing that colleagues will help if needed. In the literature, perceived organizational support has been

defined as "*perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being*" (Eisenberger and Huntington 1986, p. 501). This organizational support theory explains that employees generally tend to personify organizations meaning that they view favorable or unfavorable treatment within the organization as if the organization favors or disfavors them (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). This, in turn has then an impact on various performance outcomes like extra-role and in-role performance as well as turnover (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). In this sense, it has been demonstrated in prior studies that organizational support has positive effects on organizational commitment and work performance (Charles-Pauvers et al., 2007).

In a study that applies this organizational support theory to a sales context, Deconinck and Johnson (2009) defines perceived organizational support as involving "***the degree to which the organization is willing to compensate employees for their efforts, provide them with interesting work assignments, and provide adequate working conditions***" (Deconinck and Johnson 2009, p. 335). This definition therefore includes both perspectives:

- the caring about the well-being by providing interesting work assignments and compensation for good work
- as well as the help that is needed for sales support by providing adequate work conditions.

Thus, this definition will also be used for this work.

To conclude, organizational support in a sales setting includes two important parts.

First, sales support structures are important, meaning that **salespeople need to have help** from people within the sales division, but also other divisions to be able to build suitable solutions to the customers' problems.

Secondly, organizational support theory also adds a certain caring aspect that includes the perception of employees of **how much the organization cares about their well-being**. This then leads to more performant employees that are committed to their job.

To include both of these points, the following definition of organizational support has been selected: ***the degree to which the organization is willing to compensate employees for their efforts, provide them with interesting work assignments, and provide adequate working conditions*** (Deconinck and Johnson 2009, p. 335).

After defining organizational support, the second subchapter will now look at diversity climate in more details.

3.3.2 Diversity Climate

The second company-level variable that this research is looking at is diversity climate. Firm diversity climate has been a point of interest in research over the last decades and can be defined as **employees' shared perceptions about the value that a company places on diversity by introducing fair practices and social integration of all personnel**, especially underrepresented employees (McKay et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2012). This construct is presented in earlier studies as a group-level construct and refers to a cognitive dimension of employees' perceptions in contrast to actual implemented policies (McKay et al., 2008).

Diversity climate has been shown to have two dimensions: personal and organizational. The personal dimension is the individuals' point of view and attitudes towards people different from themselves that affect behaviors against others within the company. Secondly, the organizational dimension includes managements' policies in treating minorities differently. An example of this could be discrimination or preferential hiring of women (Barak et al., 1998). In general, the better these two dimensions are perceived within a company, the more accepting the organizational climate is and the better for success in an intercultural context (Barak et al., 1998).

A well-perceived company culture that promotes diversity helps employees to be more sensible when it comes to working with people from different cultural backgrounds. Such a diversity climate seems to be beneficial for success in intercultural business (Chen et al., 2012). Research in this area is proposing a link between cultural diversity and effective people management, stating that managing diversity is key in order to improve productivity (Kour, 2017). Furthermore, it has been shown that companies with a good organizational diversity climate are achieving high sales growth and good customer satisfaction (Chen et al., 2012) which, in turn can lead to a competitive advantage (Kour, 2017).

When looking at the diversity climate research, it can be stated that there seem to be a relationship between how employees treat customers and how they are treated within their own company (Chen et al., 2012). Chen et al. (2012) compare this relationship with a 'social

contagion' when working with customers from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, employees' perceptions of the firm diversity management may affect and change their way of working with external customers from different cultures, especially in sales (Chen et al., 2012).

Additionally, diversity climate has been linked to social identity theory and intergroup theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Barak et al., 1998). This theory is based on the idea that people categorize others and place them into social groups based on race, sex, age, religion and other similar characteristics (McKay et al., 2008). This is interesting also for intercultural research due to the distinction of cultural differences and similarities.

Furthermore, employees that are working in a company that displays a strong diversity climate identify therefore more easily with the organization and their cultural group as well (Hofhuis et al., 2012). They feel responsible for the company's fate and therefore try to help it succeed by performing actions that are good for the whole organization (McKay et al., 2008). In this sense Kour (2017) showed that a company culture promoting diversity can benefit the whole organization. In addition, McKay et al. (2008) explained that this works by exposing the employees to a lot of different points of view within the company and making them find similarities and differences between them.

In conclusion, diversity climate is about the **perception of employees about the value that a company places on diversity**.

This perceived diversity climate has been proven to be important for success in intercultural business via successful management, high sales growth, and high customer satisfaction. Furthermore, **social contagion theory** supposes that employees tend to externalize the treatment they receive within the company to their clients, making a high perceived diversity climate a competitive advantage there. Finally, **social identity theory and intergroup theory** explain that people tend to categorize others based on perceived differences and similarities. A diverse workplace gives therefore room to learn about these kinds of differences that can be individual but also cultural.

After reviewing the existing literature on the sales skills, behaviors, performance outcomes and company-level antecedents of Cultural Intelligence and the definition of all these, the next chapter is now looking at the relationships between all these concepts. Thus, a conceptual model and hypotheses are established based on existing literature and the exploratory study.

3.4 Development of a Conceptual Model and Formulation of Hypotheses

As explained beforehand, in a sales context, Cultural Intelligence has almost only been linked to the negotiation literature (Imai and Gelfand, 2010; Groves et al., 2015; Caputo et al., 2019). Following some new research on this matter, this research is therefore taking Cultural Intelligence out of the negotiation context and looking at the impact that this concept has within the adaptive selling framework (Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022)

Metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral Cultural Intelligence are all expected to impact in some way how salespeople understand and react to messages emitted from the customer. Therefore, all four of the dimensions of Earley and Ang's definition of Cultural Intelligence are expected to have some direct impact on adaptive selling behavior. Furthermore, in sales research, sales skills like adaptive selling are shown as key predictors of sales performance (Rentz et al., 2002; Franke and Park, 2006). Thus, a link between adaptive selling and performance outcomes can be expected.

In order to be able to adapt the selling approaches accordingly, a salesperson need to understand the customer. Thus, active listening skills are important in this context. They allow a salesperson to understand the customer more easily by paying attention to all the verbal and non-verbal cues emitted by the customer. In this sense, listening has been found to increase adaptive selling behaviors (Itani et al., 2019).

In addition, empathy is a trait that has been shown to help a salesperson to better understand the customer and create effective relationships. It has been shown to also be a predictor of adaptive selling (Spiro and Weitz, 1990; Limbu et al., 2016). Thus, it can be deduced that empathy also plays some role in increasing adaptive selling behaviors.

To check the downside of Cultural Intelligence, the negative relationship between this variable and authenticity is also included in this research. Since Cultural Intelligence implies an adaptation to cultural differences (Earley and Ang, 2003), a salesperson high in Cultural

Intelligence is not focusing on his own personal beliefs and values but on the customer. Thus, he is not necessarily being authentic to himself. Conversely, authenticity has been shown to impact positively customer impressions, trust but also sales performance (Stros et al., 2017). Thus, a positive link between authenticity and performance outcomes can also be expected.

Finally, organizational support and diversity climate already accustom the salesperson to different cultures within the company itself. Thus, this lays the basis of a high Cultural Intelligence level already by interacting with the colleagues. During these interactions, cultural problems can arise, and salespeople get to know more about these differences, leading therefore to higher Cultural Intelligence.

The following chapter is now looking at the literature explaining these links between the different variables and hypothesizing these relationships. The first subchapter is arguing the direct relationships while the second one is introducing mediation and moderation hypotheses and therefore indirect links.

3.4.1 Hypotheses related to the Direct Effects

The following chapter is now arguing the different hypotheses tested in the quantitative studies. For this first part of the chapter, the direct hypotheses are exposed:

1. The positive link between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.
2. The positive link between Adaptive Selling and Performance Outcomes.
3. The negative link between Cultural Intelligence and Authenticity.
4. The positive link between Authenticity and Performance Outcomes.
5. The positive link between Cultural Intelligence and Active Listening.
6. The positive link between Active Listening and Adaptive Selling.
7. The positive link between Organizational Support and Cultural Intelligence.
8. The positive link between Diversity Climate and Cultural Intelligence.

The following Figure 13 shows graphically the direct hypotheses of this research (H1 to H8).

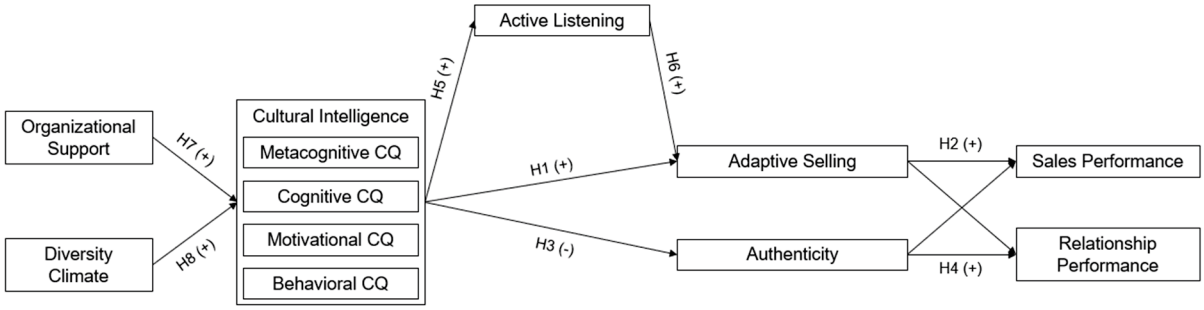


Figure 13: Conceptual model including direct hypotheses

3.4.1.1 Cultural Intelligence positively influences Adaptive Selling

Salespeople with higher Cultural Intelligence can be expected to better adapt their sales presentation and approach accordingly to the customer that they are dealing with, especially in an intercultural context (Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Kimber et al., 2022).

In this sense, some research has been looking at the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and psychological and sociocultural adaptation, for example. Here, a positive relationship between these concepts has been found (Presbitero, 2017). Furthermore, Cultural Intelligence has also been linked to cultural adaptability (Jyoti et al., 2015; Kimber et al., 2022), cultural or marketing adaptation (Ang et al., 2007; Hansen et al., 2011; Magnusson et al., 2013) or cross-cultural adjustment (Koo Moon et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2012; Huff et al., 2014; Jyoti and Kour, 2015). This evidence from earlier research on outcomes of Cultural Intelligence in other areas than sales is therefore a first support for the hypothesis of a positive relationship between this concept and adaptive selling in an intercultural sales context.

In the literature about antecedents of adaptive selling, motivation, knowledge structures but also the capability to alter the behavior have, among others, been shown to have some impact on this concept (Ang et al., 2007; McFarland, 2019). The ability to categorize situations, also called declarative knowledge and the capacity to choose what to do in each situation, procedure knowledge, has been proven to lead to a more effective adaptation of sales behaviors (Weitz et al., 1986; McFarland, 2019).

This plays into the idea of categorization theory which has been used in sales research before in order to analyze why some salespeople use adaptive selling strategies (Sharma and Levy, 1995; Charoensukmongkol, 2020). As explained in earlier research on this theory, people tend to simplify complex situations in order to cope with these situations better (Román and Iacobucci, 2010). The sales process is complex due to the amount of information that a salesperson needs to process during different encounters with clients. Therefore, salespeople need to be able to create customer typologies in order to predict future behaviors and choose

the right sales approach for certain customers (Román and Iacobucci, 2010; Charoensukmongkol, 2020).

In an intercultural context, salespeople with high Cultural Intelligence are expected to have further knowledge about cultural similarities, differences as well as appropriate behaviors in these cultures (Earley and Ang, 2003). Consequently, a higher Cultural Intelligence can be expected to help salespeople to create customer typologies in an intercultural sales setting. This, in turn will lead to a better and more effective adaptation to these kinds of customers.

Looking at the results of the exploratory qualitative study, the interviewees explained that Cultural Intelligence and thus the understanding of cultural differences and capability to adapt to them helps to understand the problems of the customer better. This, in turn, helps to adapt the selling behaviors and propose adequate solutions. In this sense, interviewee D stated: *If you're open to accept or to adapt to other cultures. To understand them, yes. (…) Yes, to be open to understand. It's more or less the same characteristics as every sales guy. You are open to understand customers.* Therefore, an adaptation to the cultural backgrounds also makes salespeople better able to adapt the selling behaviors as well.

As such, we hypothesize that:

H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

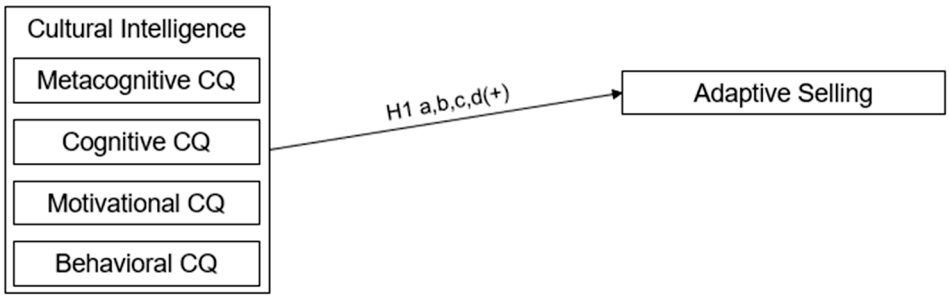


Figure 14: The impact of Cultural Intelligence on Adaptive Selling (H1)

Adaptive selling, in turn, has been shown to be key for different performance outcomes. The following subchapter is therefore looking at the link between adaptive selling, sales performance as well as relationship performance.

3.4.1.2 Adaptive Selling leading to positive Performance Outcomes

Adaptive selling has been studied extensively in the sales literature and shown to be related to performance outcomes in various settings (Franke and Park, 2006; Román and Iacobucci, 2010; McFarland, 2019). Although some mixed results about the relationship between adaptive selling and sales performance can be found in the literature (Robinson et al., 2002; Park and Holloway, 2003), it has been proven to be correlated mostly to self-ratings but also to manager-rated or objective sales performance (Franke and Park, 2006). Following this evidence, it is interesting to look at the link between adaptive selling and sales performance also in different cultural contexts.

Secondly, for a more long-term view, adaptive selling has been linked for example to customer satisfaction (Román and Martín, 2014), which, in turn, increases customer retention (Román and Iacobucci, 2010). Due to the adaptation of not only the content of the sales presentation, but also the sales tactics to match the communication style of the buyer, problems that may arise can be addressed more rapidly. This, in turn, influences the satisfaction of a customer with the interaction with the salesperson (Román and Iacobucci, 2010). Since relationship performance is directly linked to customer satisfaction, adaptive selling is therefore expected

to directly impact relationship performance, too. Furthermore, more recent research has shown that salespeople who are able to alter their selling approaches in order to match customers build better relationships with them (Itani et al., 2019).

Finally, it has been proven that customers are more likely to purchase something from a person that they feel similar to and with whom they share the same values and goals (Huntley, 2006). In this sense, similarity theory states that people prefer to work with similar others. This is due to a tendency to weigh the costs and rewards of a relationship. If the costs are considered to be higher than the rewards, the relationship will not survive. Costs are created because people are obliged to behave differently than they are used to (Tett and Guterman, 2000; Kaski et al., 2018). Thus, if a salesperson is adapting to a customer, the latter doesn't need to be different than they really are, leading to fewer costs for this short-term interaction as well as long-term relationship.

In addition to these insights from literature, the exploratory qualitative study has shown that adaptive selling is key for selling as well as relationship building. They explained that it is key to build relationships with the customers by adapting to them. This also increases short-term selling. In this sense, interviewee D stated: *And, you know, from time to time, then it begins a relationship more… more friendly. And this is very important. That the customer feels that on the other side is a friend and not just someone on the table who has a name. That they know each other better. So, it helps a lot.* In this same vein, interviewee E stated: *In fact, what is more complex in terms of sales or in terms of creating international relationships, it's mainly... It's adapting to different cultures, actually. – F.* Thus, it can be concluded that adaptive selling is needed in order to develop relationships and sell internationally.

Taking all of the above into consideration, we hypothesize that:

H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.

H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance.

H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.

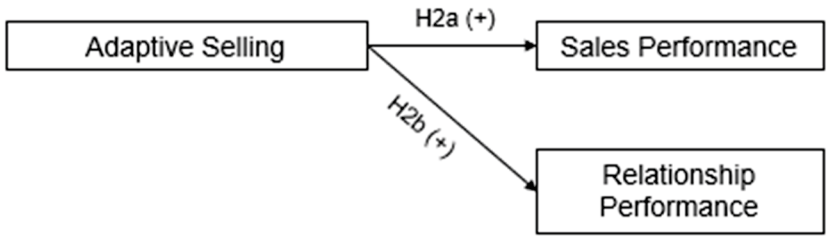


Figure 15: The impact of Adaptive Selling on Performance Outcomes (H2)

In addition to this positive link of Cultural Intelligence with adaptive selling behaviors and, in turn, performance outcomes, the exploratory qualitative interviews suggested that a constant adaptation to the customers' cultural backgrounds is not always helpful. Thus, the next subchapter is looking at the link between salespeople authenticity and their Cultural Intelligence levels.

3.4.1.3 Cultural Intelligence negatively influences Authenticity

The sales context is a particular one for assessing authenticity levels because of the demanded adaptation to the values of the customer and, at the same time, the need to exhibit the values of the company the salesperson is working in (Beverland, 2001). Therefore, it is difficult to be authentic given all these external and internal obligations. In sales, employees tend to behave according to common expectations like display rules in order to meet customer expectations about appropriate reactions. Some salespeople, especially unexperienced ones, tend therefore to fake emotions or attitudes in order to get the customer to like them (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006). Besides, externally motivated behavior like behavior due to peer pressure or

punishment is often deemed to be inherently inauthentic and therefore harmful to the customer-salesperson relationship (Moulard et al., 2015).

As explained in Part 1, Cultural Intelligence can be defined as a person's abilities and skills to adapt and interact effectively in an intercultural context. Thus, this concept includes the idea of adapting to a person during interpersonal encounters. Consequently, it contrasts with the idea of authenticity and only acting according to one's internal beliefs and values. A person high in Cultural Intelligence is not focusing on behaving according to his own personal beliefs and values but on the client's ones. Thus, he is more likely to not be completely authentic.

With regards to authenticity, the interviewees in the qualitative study explained that adapting all the time to the culture of the client is not good and can even be harmful to the relationship. As stated by interviewee E: *You see, um... people don't necessarily want to transform themselves to fit completely into the local context. So the people who host them may not necessarily want them to do that either.* Thus, the constant adaptation demanded from the concept of Cultural Intelligence is not always wanted—neither by the salespeople not by the customers. And this constant adaptation can therefore also lead to lower authenticity levels because salespeople feel that they act according to moral standards that are not their own.

In this sense, we are hypothesizing that:

H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

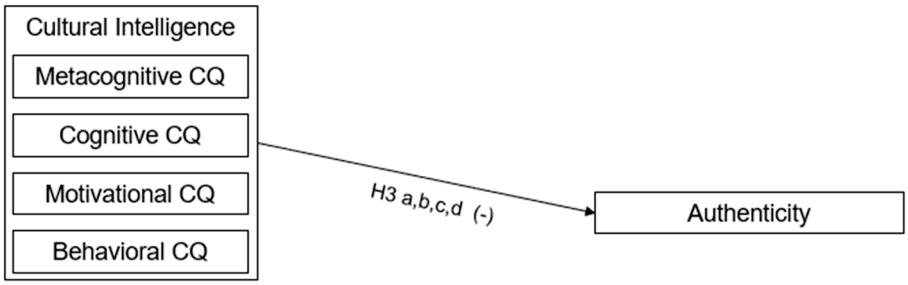


Figure 16: The impact of Cultural Intelligence on Authenticity (H3)

With regards to the consequences of authenticity, it has been shown that authenticity actually is wanted by the customer and helps therefore in the selling process. The next subchapter is now looking at the link between salespeople's authenticity levels and the two selected performance outcomes.

3.4.1.4 Authenticity leading to positive Performance Outcomes

As explained before, today's customers demand more authentic personnel, especially salespeople, in order to establish a trust-based relationship (Moulard et al., 2015). Thus, it is key especially for sales contexts that require high levels of trust like the B2B context (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006). It promotes positive customer impressions and, in a second step, sales performance and success (Stros et al., 2017). If a customer detect any disingenuous behavior, this would certainly harm the relationship by undermining the trust developed beforehand (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006).

Earlier research about this concept has shown that authenticity positively impacts different outcomes like satisfaction or positive customer-employee rapport for example (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006; Moulard et al., 2015). Authenticity has also been linked to positive performance results via the facilitation of a personal equilibrium in others (Stros et al., 2017). This positive relationship between authenticity and performance has also been explained by other positive cognitive, affective and behavioral consequences of the concept that are directly

linked to performance (Moulard et al., 2015). Thus, authenticity seems to be important in both, short-term encounters as well as long-term relationship building.

In addition to the results from literature, the interviewees in the exploratory factor analysis suggested that inauthentic behavior actually can be harmful. For example, interviewee C stated: *But you have to stay yourself because... you will never be more Japanese than the Japanese. And trying to mimic them, it can be... it can quickly become ridiculous. And this can lead to a quid pro quo.* Thus, higher authenticity levels should therefore build trust with the customers and increase short-term sales performance as well as long-term relationship building.

Consequently, we are hypothesizing that:

H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.

H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance.

H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.

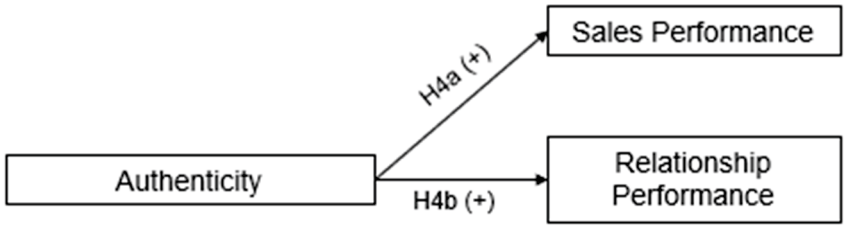


Figure 17: The impact of Authenticity on Performance Outcomes (H4)

Next, the interviewees from the exploratory qualitative study especially talked about one other key skill needed in the intercultural sales context: Listening. The next subchapter will therefore look at the link between Cultural Intelligence and Active Listening.

3.4.1.5 Cultural Intelligence positively influences Active Listening

In addition to the two key sales behaviors mentioned before—adaptive selling and authenticity—the question remains what exactly Cultural Intelligence is impacting in order to be able to increase sales performance. What are additional skills directly related to the sales encounters that allow salespeople to better adapt to their clients and therefore better sell to them?

As explained beforehand, a good listening skill is key in sales since it allows the salesperson to better understand the customer and, in turn provide more adequate solutions to occurring problems (Comer and Drollinger, 1999; Beverland, 2001).

In an intercultural sales context, cultural differences make it even harder to create relationships with buyers from different cultural backgrounds and understand their underlying problems (Mintu-Wimsatt and Gassenheimer, 1996; Lewin and Johnston, 1997). Thus, salespeople need to have some knowledge of these differences in order to be able to better listen and also receive non-verbal clues. In this sense, studies from linguistics research have highlighted the importance of background knowledge for listening (Sadighi and Zare, 2006; Rafie et al., 2016) These studies also explain that an understanding can only occur if the listener is able to understand the context of what is said.

Cultural Intelligence includes this kind of cognitive knowledge as well as the willingness to learn about differences, the amount of effort to learn about them and the appropriate behavioral response (Earley and Ang, 2003). In addition to the positive effect of cognitive knowledge on listening, metacognitive and behavioral Cultural Intelligence have been shown to include also a certain openness to listen in order to understand how other people communicate and think (Adair et al., 2013). Finally, motivational Cultural Intelligence implies a willingness to adapt and shows therefore interest in cultural differences (Rafie et al., 2016). In a sales context, all these dimensions can therefore be expected to directly impact the way salespeople listen to their clients and respond accordingly.

As explained by the interviewees in the exploratory qualitative study, you need to have a certain knowledge in order to be able to communicate, and therefore also listen, effectively. For example, interviewee A explained: *To be able to... to be clear. Er, to be able to understand each other, to talk to each other. That sounds basic but it's... it's very important. When you have very, very strong cultural differences with, um... with major difficulties in the language of communication, it can create... quid pro quos. It can be negative for the company.* In this same vein, interviewee F stated: *And to have some experience in communicating with people from different backgrounds, different cultures and from all over.* Thus, a certain knowledge about cultural differences and how to adapt to them is needed in order to communicate and listen effectively.

As such, we hypothesize that:

H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

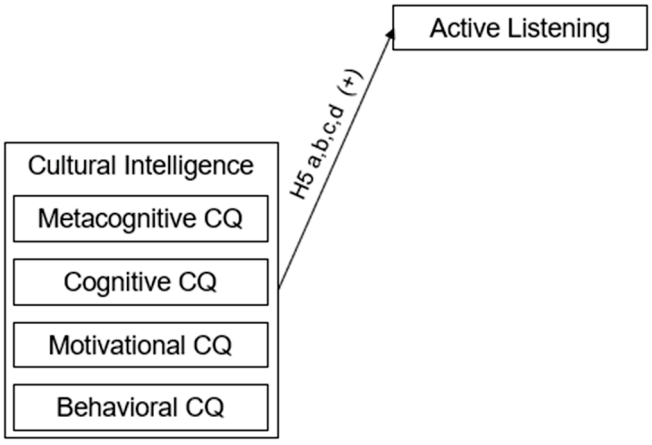


Figure 18: The impact of Cultural Intelligence on Active Listening (H5)

With regards to the effect of active listening, the interviewees during the exploratory qualitative study suggested that listening helps a better understanding and therefore a better adaptation to the customer's needs. Thus, the next subchapter is exploring the link between active listening and adaptive selling.

3.4.1.6 Active Listening leading to higher Adaptive Selling

In sales literature, it has been shown that adaptive selling behaviors are impacted by sales skills in general (Weitz et al., 1986; Simintiras et al., 2013). One part of these sales skills are interpersonal skills which include for example verbal and non-verbal communication proficiency (Rentz et al., 2002). Salespeople therefore need active listening skills in order to make appropriate adjustments in their sales presentations, depending on which verbal and non-verbal signals were perceived from the customers (Alavi et al., 2019; Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Consequently, effective listening helps salespeople to adapt not only to the customer but also different sales situations. This attributes therefore to a good working climate and personal selling exchange between customer and salesperson (Shepherd et al., 1997).

In a recent meta-analysis on the topic, listening has been found to increase adaptive selling behaviors and, in turn performance outcomes (Itani et al., 2019). This result has been explained because listening is a way for salespeople to express that they care about their customers which helps in adapting sales behaviors (Itani et al., 2019).

In addition to the literature, the interviewees in the exploratory study clearly expressed the importance of listening in order to understand the customers and, in a second step, adapt to them. In this sense, interviewee F stated: *And with experience you're going to... You're going to learn how to just uh... Talk to someone for five-ten minutes and you'll see pretty much what kind of personality to adapt your communication style to.* Thus, listening has been shown by the interviewees to be key in order to better understand the wants and needs of a customer,

especially if they are not explicitly stated. As stated by interviewee A: *Yes, I think the number one quality of a really good salesperson is, uh... it's that ability to listen. Number one. Because it's always much easier to respond to a customer's needs when you've understood the need very well, but also when you've understood the need that is not expressed. And uh... that's very hard. But when you succeed, first of all, you achieve customer satisfaction which is... which is exceptional because the customer really has solutions in line with his expectations. And that's what we're looking for.*

Taking all the information above into consideration, we are hypothesizing that:

H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

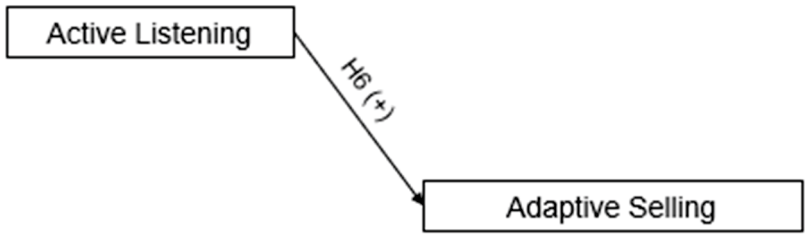


Figure 19: The impact of Active Listening on Adaptive Selling (H6)

Finally, the last part of this chapter is looking at company-level antecedents of Cultural Intelligence. As suggested by the exploratory qualitative study, organizational support and diversity climate are key in this particular selling context. The link between these two variables and how they can be expected to increase Cultural Intelligence of salespeople is therefore detailed in the next subchapter.

3.4.1.7 Organizational Support and Diversity Climate as Company-level Antecedents of Cultural Intelligence

Organizational support and diversity climate are two factors that have been highlighted during the exploratory qualitative study. Some research has shown that when a well-perceived diversity climate is present in a company, strong organizational support is needed in order to develop cultural competencies (Johnson, Lenartowicz, and Apud 2006). This is explaining why it is important to look at both variables at the same time.

In addition, both of these variables have been shown to increase in some way organizational commitment (Charles-Pauvers et al., 2007; McKay et al., 2011). Supportive and culturally diverse organizations have therefore a positive effect on employees' attitudes as well as behaviors and facilitate performance outcomes (McKay et al., 2011). This social contagion theory explains that cognitive and affective states are directly impacted by such a diverse and supportive environment. This means that these concepts not only change the way an employee thinks and feels about a company but also how much the person is motivated to work for this company (McKay et al., 2011).

Translated to an intercultural sales context, this means that salespeople that find themselves in a supportive and diverse working climate feel more motivated to work with the client in the best way possible. At the same time, they are exposed to more differences in the workspace which make them learn about differences and know how to behave correctly in order to avoid conflict. In addition, the mental categories built by the salespeople, as explained by intergroup theory will help them to know how to react and have fewer misunderstandings (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Barak et al., 1998).

Furthermore, Cultural Intelligence has been shown to be enhanced by international work assignments during which employees are in constant contact with people from different cultures (Şahin et al., 2014). In the case of a diverse working climate, salespeople are in constant contact with people from diverse backgrounds and their Cultural Intelligence levels should therefore also be improved by this multicultural daily life inside the company.

Finally, if a company is well organized and supports their salespeople accordingly, the employees are also more connected within the company (Beverland, 2001; Arndt and Harkins, 2013). This means that intercultural salespeople have more opportunities to work with people from different divisions within the company and thus more possibilities to be in contact with people from different cultural backgrounds also on the inside—especially in a culturally diverse climate.

Furthermore, the interviewees in the exploratory qualitative interviews stated that organizational support is key for salespeople to be able to work effectively: *Support is essential. In our business, in our organization, a salesperson alone can't do anything. (Interviewee E).* This, by being interconnected within the company, salespeople actually learn a lot about cultural differences.

Therefore, we are hypothesizing that:

H7: Organizational support is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.

H7a: Organizational support is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H7b: Organizational support is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H7c: Organizational support is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.

H7d: Organizational support is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

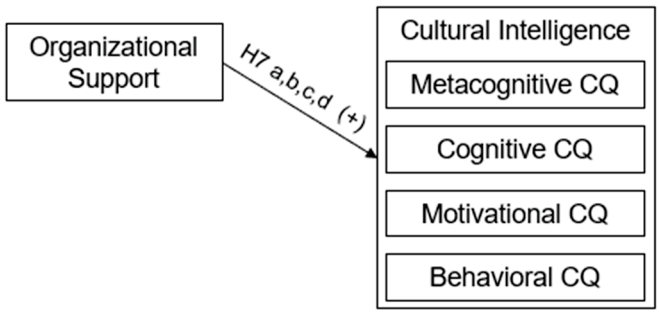


Figure 20: The impact of Organizational Support on Cultural Intelligence (H7)

But as explained before, this effect is even greater if there is good organizational support and, at the same time, the employees that the salespeople are working with actually come from different cultures. Thus, diversity climate also helps in developing Cultural Intelligence.

In this sense, the exploratory qualitative study also highlighted the importance of Diversity climate: *In fact, it's through diversity that we learn, uh, that we learn a lot of things. (interviewee A).* The interviewees explained that by interacting with people from different nationalities within a company, salespeople learn about these differences and therefore are expected to better able to overcome problems and misunderstandings and adapt effectively.

Consequently, we also hypothesize that:

H8: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.

H8a: Diversity climate is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H8b: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H8c: Diversity climate is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.

H8d: Diversity climate is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

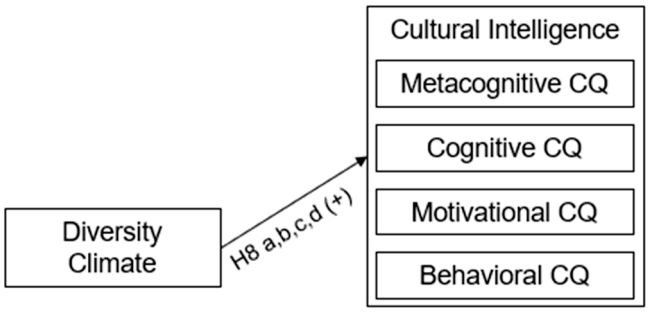


Figure 21: The impact of Diversity Climate on Cultural Intelligence (H8)

In addition to all these direct effects, this research also looks at mediation and moderation effects. These are detailed in the following chapter.

3.4.2 Hypotheses related to the Mediating and Moderating Effects

After looking at the direct relationships hypothesized in the research model, a few indirect relationships also need to be specified. For this, the following relationships are explored:

1. Indirect relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling via Active Listening.
2. The effect of Empathy on the Cultural Intelligence—Adaptive Selling relationship.

The following Figure 22 shows graphically the indirect hypotheses of this research (H9 & H10).

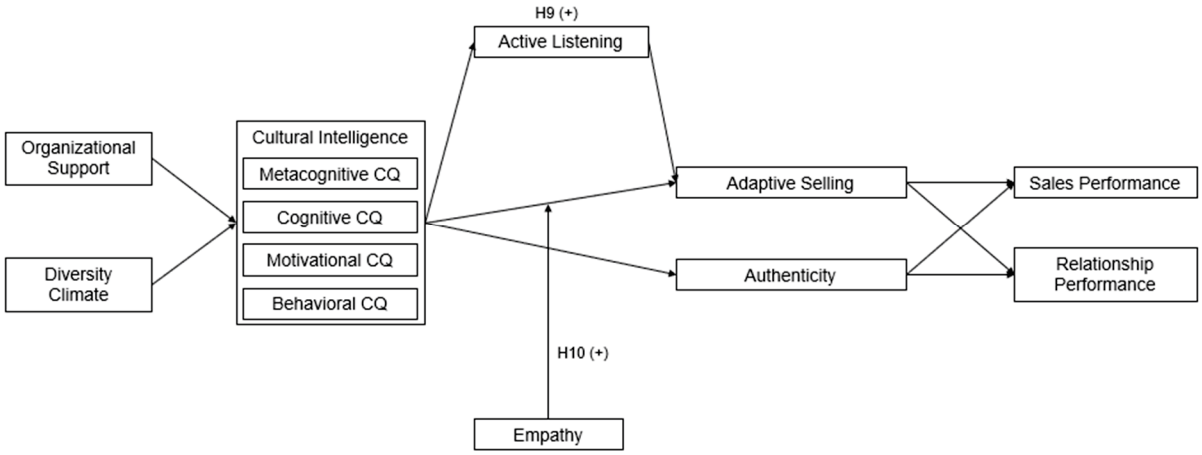


Figure 22: Conceptual model including indirect hypotheses

3.4.2.1 Active Listening as a positive Mediator between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling

As explained before, some researchers have expressed the need for studying the way that Cultural Intelligence impacts adaptation and adjustment (Ott and Michailova, 2018; Kimber et al., 2022). This research is therefore deepening our understanding of the Cultural Intelligence—adaptive selling relationship by introducing active listening as a mediator.

As shown by Itani, Goad, and Jaramillo (2019) in their meta-analysis, active listening can be expected to be an antecedent of adaptive selling behaviors since it allows salespeople to better understand the customer and, in turn, express their will to find appropriate solutions adapted to the customer's needs.

In intercultural sales, the listening to different customers can become even more difficult due to cultural differences. High Cultural Intelligence levels therefore facilitate the understanding and perception of verbal and non-verbal cues emitted by the customer. Thus, in order to be able to categorize customers correctly according to categorization theory mentioned beforehand, salespeople must perceive these different cues omitted by the customer in order to be able to listen actively and respond accordingly. This is then helping to alter sales behaviors and presentations effectively. Therefore, in a sales relationship, a high Cultural

Intelligence level improves the salesperson's ability to adapt to and respond to buyers' needs and problems. But this can only be the case if the seller is able to perceive all the underlying problems via active listening skills.

With regards to the exploratory qualitative study, the interviewees stated that a certain cultural knowledge is needed to be able to communicate effectively which also includes listening to the clients. Furthermore, they explain that this effective communication leads to better relationships building. In this sense, one interviewee stated: *I would say first of all, understanding the culture to avoid misunderstandings. If you understand the culture, you will be a good communicator. After that, if you are a good communicator, you will build good relationships. So, it goes together. (Interviewee F).* Thus, listening and communication skills can be situated between cultural knowledge and effective adaptive selling behaviors in order to build good relationships, according to the interviewees.

Consequently, we hypothesize that:

H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

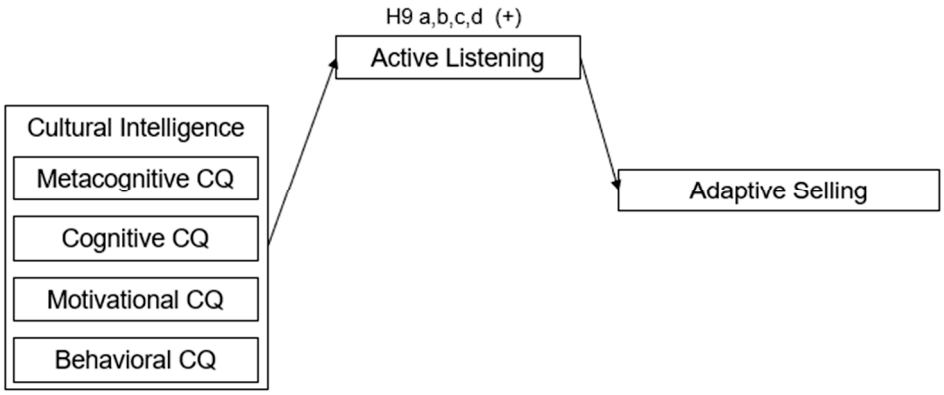


Figure 23: The Mediation effect of Active Listening between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling (H9)

In addition to the mediating effect of active listening, this research is also looking at the role of empathy in this intercultural sales context. The following subchapter therefore looks at the moderating role of empathy on the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling.

3.4.2.1 Empathy as a positive Moderator of the Cultural Intelligence—Adaptive Selling Relationship

Empathy, as explained before, is a trait that has been shown to be crucial in sales, especially to better understand the customer and create effective relationships. In this sense, empathy has been shown to be a predictor of adaptive selling (Spiro and Weitz, 1990; Limbu et al., 2016; Anaza et al., 2018). An empathetic salesperson therefore is better able to perceive and understand the situation that a customer is in as well as his wants and needs. Thus, empathy enables the salesperson to take the perspective of a customer and engage in behaviors that best serve them (Locander et al., 2020).

In addition, empathy has been exposed to be an integral part of Emotional Intelligence. It is part of the third dimension of Emotional Intelligence that is social awareness (Moon, 2010a). This is especially interesting for the present research since Emotional Intelligence has been shown to act as a moderator on the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment. Lin, Chen, and Song (2012) stated that the higher a person scored in the Emotional Intelligence—and therefore the more empathetic the person was—the stronger the impact of Cultural Intelligence was on cross-cultural adjustment. Cross-cultural adjustment in this case was the adaptation of the interrogated people to a new living and working context (Lin et al., 2012).

This finding can be translated into a sales context, meaning that empathy could play an important role in enhancing a salesperson's adaptive behavior and therefore impact the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling.

Empathy is a concept that has also been highlighted during the interviews for the exploratory qualitative study. The interviewees explained that this trait is needed in order to understand the customer better. And a better understanding of the customer leads then to better adaptation. One interviewee stated: *Because if you have more empathy, then you can understand perfectly the customer (Interviewee D).* Thus, empathy, in addition to high Cultural Intelligence, can be expected to increase adaptive selling behaviors.

Consequently, we hypothesize that:

H10: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H10a: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H10b: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H10c: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H10d: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

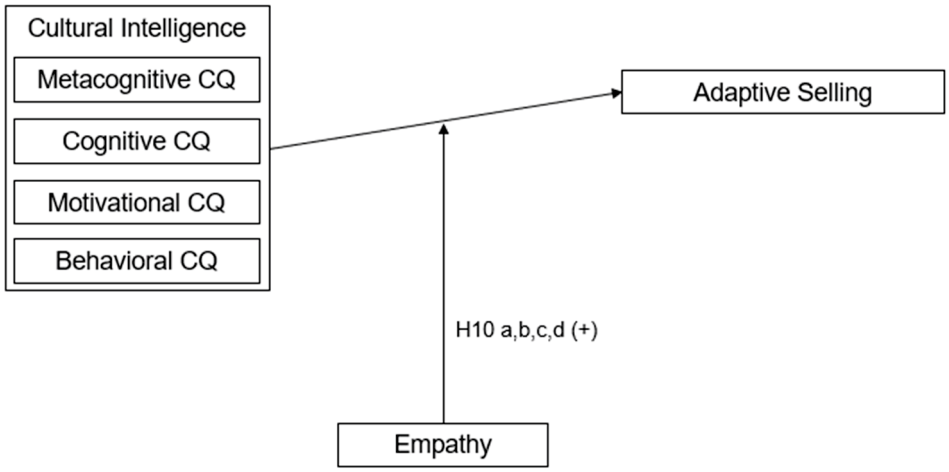


Figure 24: The Moderating effect of Empathy on the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling (H10)

Conclusion Part 3 Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

This chapter has been looking at the literature about different sales skills and behaviors that have been emerged from the interviews as being key for intercultural sales. Thus, it has been decided to focus on adaptive selling, active listening, authenticity, and empathy for this research. In addition, literature about two different performance outcomes has been reviewed, including short-term sales and long-term relationship performance. Finally, two organizational factors have been explained, organizational support and diversity climate, due to their importance in building Cultural Intelligence.

Moreover, based on literature, links between these concepts have been hypothesized. Table 3 is recapitulating the different direct as well as indirect hypotheses.

Direct Effects
H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.
H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.
H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.
H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.
H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.
H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.
H7: Organizational support is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.
H8: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.
Indirect Effects
H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.
H10: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

Table 3: Summary of the hypotheses

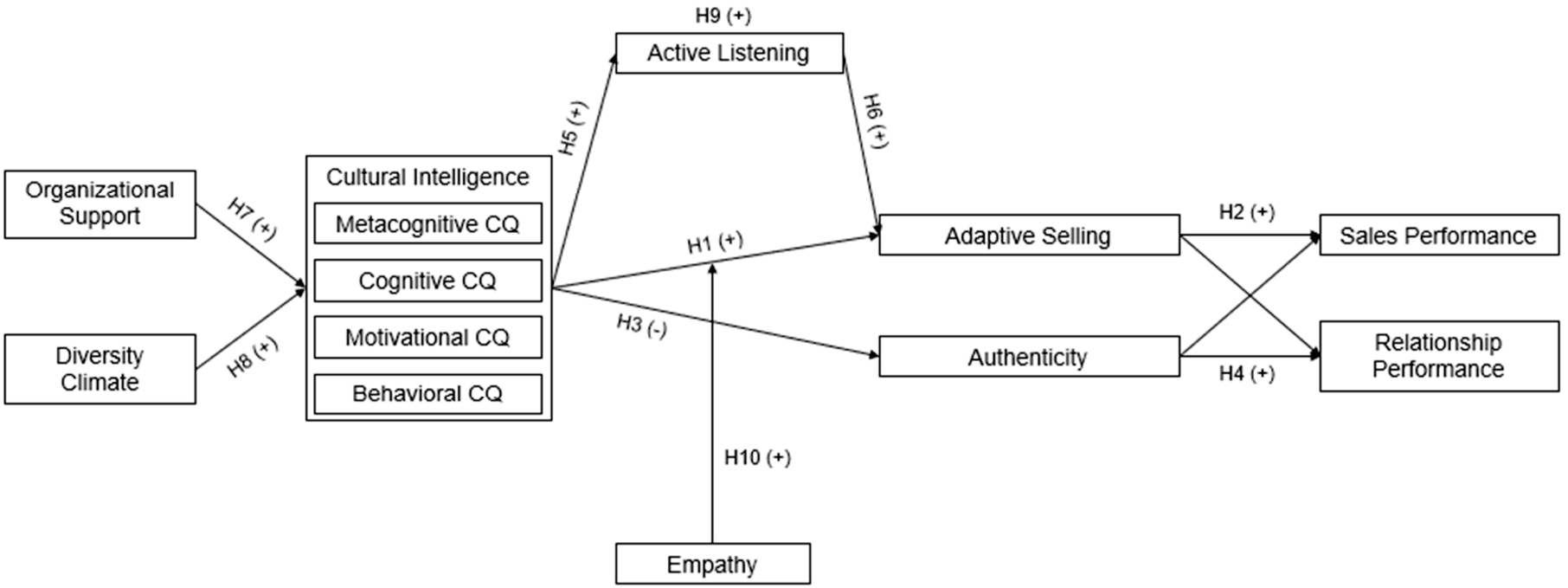
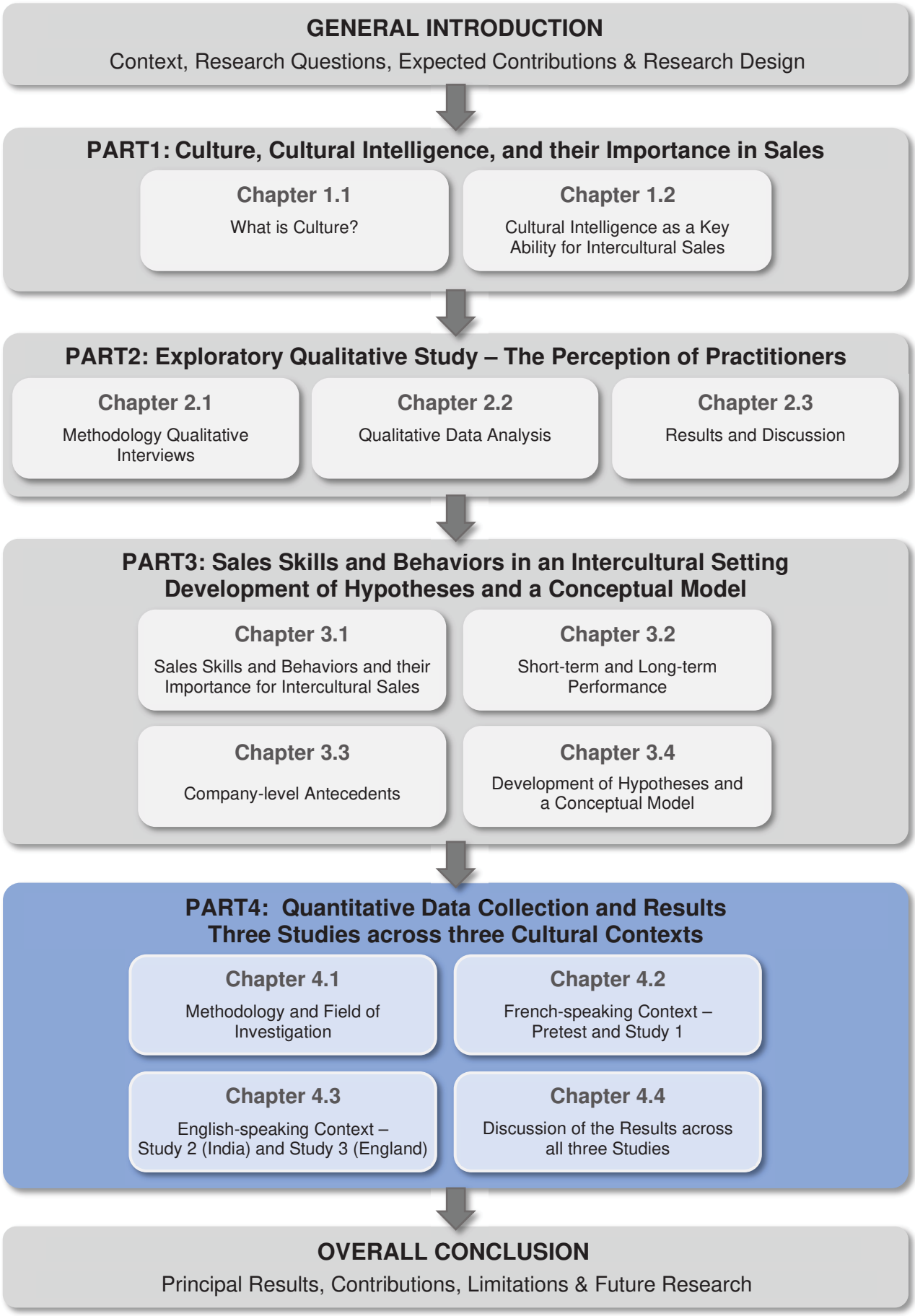


Figure 25: Conceptual model including all hypotheses

Based on these hypotheses, a conceptual model has been developed (see Figure 25). The next step of this research is therefore to test the different hypothesized links with a quantitative methodology.

The following part of this manuscript is therefore exposing the work that has been done with regards to this quantitative part of the research.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Chapter 1.2
Cultural Intelligence as a Key Ability for Intercultural Sales
PART2: Exploratory Qualitative Study – The Perception of Practitioners
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This following last part of the research exposes the work that has been done for these quantitative studies. In order to test the hypotheses, it has been decided to opt for a three-study design. The three different studies have been done to build up gradually a more and more complex research model whilst testing the baseline model also in different cultural contexts.

The first chapter of this part explains from a theoretical standpoint the methodology as well as the analysis process. Secondly, the work that has been done with regards to the French cultural context is exposed in detail. For this, first the exploratory factor analysis for the different scales within the scope of a pretest of the French questionnaire is illustrated. Once the scales validated for the French version, the second part of this chapter looks at the confirmatory factor analysis and hypotheses testing via structural equation modeling that has been done in the context of the first quantitative study with French sales professionals. The third chapter passes then from the French cultural context to the English one and exposes the analysis work that has been done in study 2 (India) and 3 (England) with regards to confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling as well. Finally, the last chapter of this part discusses the results of all three studies together.

4.1 Methodology and Field of Investigation

This first chapter is explaining the methodology for the quantitative part of this research. To start, the data collection process is demonstrated including a broad explanation of the analysis during the different steps of the research. Secondly, the questionnaire and the different scales used to measure the variables are clarified. Finally, some general information about the respondents and field of investigation is exposed.

4.1.1 Quantitative method and Type of analysis

In order to test the hypotheses statistically, it has been decided to do a multi-study quantitative methodology. Whilst qualitative research in general is focusing on the understanding of the reasons and thought processes of the interviewees, quantitative research concentrates on testing and verifying hypotheses based on theory. Thus, quantitative methods are based on numbers and numerical information that can be analyzed with different statistical tests (Ghauri et al., 2020). This chapter is therefore presenting the different steps that have been done during the quantitative part of this research.

Pretest

The first step in this quantitative part was to test the different scales. It has been decided to do only a pretest of the French questionnaire with French dual students that study and work at the same time. This pretest of the French version of the questionnaire has been done to verify the reliability and validity of the different scales in their translated version. All scales have already been used in their English versions in the literature and shown sufficient reliability and validity levels; thus there was no need to test them again in English for this study. The detailed process and results of the pretest can be found in chapter 4.2.1 Pretest of the French Questionnaire – Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Multi-study research design

After the validation of the scales for the French version of the questionnaire, a first study in a French cultural context has been done. After this first study, two other studies have been done in different cultural contexts (Indian and English). The first reason for this specific research design is to check for eventual problems in the different studies by replicating them in other contexts. This also adds to the external validity of the results and shows that at least some of the findings are generalizable to other cultural contexts and situations. Furthermore, a multi-study design also gives the possibility to gradually assemble a more and more complex model by building on the hypotheses that have been validated.

In this sense, the first study is testing a model that is the baseline for all three studies. This model is focusing on different mediators, Active Listening, Authenticity and Adaptive Selling of the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and performance outcomes. In this sense, this model is introducing Sales Performance and Relationship Performance as short-term as well as long-term outcomes of Adaptive Selling and Authenticity. The second study is building on the first one but testing the model and the scales in their initial language, English. Furthermore, antecedents of Cultural Intelligence are added - Diversity Climate and Organizational Support. Finally, the third and last study is again building on the first two and going into more details of how Cultural Intelligence works in an intercultural sales context by adding a moderator variable, Empathy. All three models are specified in more details in the respective chapters about each study.

As explained, this multi-study design gives the opportunity to test the baseline model in different cultural contexts. Research that exists about the impact of Cultural Intelligence on adaptive selling has only been testing these relationships in either an American, U.S. context (Kimber et al., 2022) or an Asian, Chinese one (Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022). But to date, no research has been looking at different cultural contexts and tested therefore the generalizability of the importance of Cultural Intelligence in a multitude of different cultural backgrounds within the same work. For this research, the first study has been conducted using

a French sample, the second an Indian and the last an English one. The first, French sample has been chosen to extend the existing research outside the American cultural context. Europe is doing a lot of trade around the globe with a total of 4 299 442 million € worth of exports and imports (Eurostat, 2022) but still very few research is dedicated to this area, especially in intercultural sales. Therefore, the European cultural context that is represented in the French culture seemed appropriate for this first study. Due to methodological problems with regards to some scales in their French versions, study 2 needed to test the original, English version of the scales. In addition, to diversify the cultural contexts of this work, it has been decided to test the model in a developing context, as asked for by Sharma et al. (2020). India is a developing country where English is very well spoken and seemed therefore suitable for this second study. Finally, the persistence of problems with the scales made a test of the model with native English speakers necessary. To continue studying different cultural contexts, it has therefore been decided to choose an English sample instead of an American one for the last study. Thus, study 1 and 3 are looking at European and developed context (France and England) whilst study 2 is looking at an Asian and developing context (India).

For each of the studies, a confirmatory factor analysis has been done in order to test the model fit and the reliability and validity of the different scales. Finally, structural equation modeling has been conducted to test the different hypotheses using SPSS AMOS Version 26. More information about the confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling can be found in chapter 4.1.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling – Theoretical Explanation.

Figure 26 is recapitulating the whole analysis process overall.

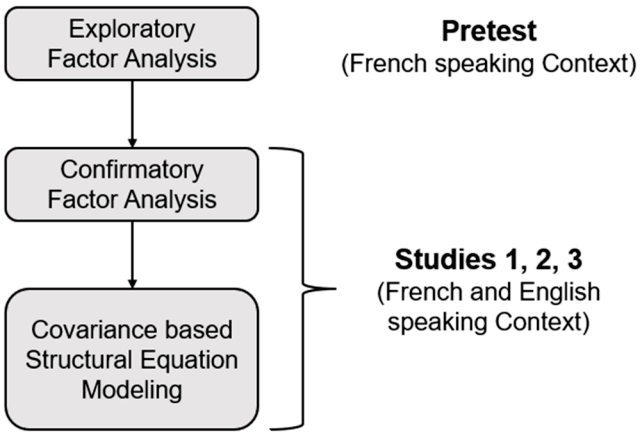


Figure 26: Analysis process quantitative studies

4.1.2 Survey Questionnaire

In order to conduct the different analyses described before, it has been opted to collect primary data using a survey approach with a structured questionnaire. This following part is focusing on the scales that have been used to measure the different variables. Furthermore, the back-translation process to establish the French version of the questionnaire is exposed in more details.

Questionnaire establishment and scales used

Questionnaire surveys are used in order to obtain data that allows the researcher to test the hypotheses that have been issued. Thus, it is necessary to think about how the different variables can be measured beforehand (Ghauri et al., 2020). Since the goal of this quantitative part of the research is to test the hypothesized links between the variables, the questionnaire is only composed of closed questions as opposed to more explorative, open ones (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018). Therefore, it has been decided to use already established scales from sales, marketing, and international management literature. All scales used for the three different questionnaires have been published in ranked journals and shown good reliability and

validity scores in their respective papers. All scales have been measured on 7-point Likert scales to keep a certain consistency, but the labeling of the points was adapted to the scale used. More information about the different scales can be found in Chapter 4.2.1 Pretest of the French Questionnaire – .

Measurement equivalence and back-translation

In intercultural research, it is important to consider measurement equivalence across the different cultural backgrounds and languages (Malhotra et al., 1996; Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998; Pourmasoudi et al., 2022). Since French people do not necessarily speak English fluently, administering a French questionnaire to them seemed more appropriate. It has therefore been decided to translate the questionnaire into French for the first study using a back-translation process. Back-translation is the most commonly used process to translate surveys that enables the researcher to detect any problems in translation (Douglas and Craig, 2007). For an effective back-translation, two bilinguals are translating the questionnaire, one from the original language to the target language and the other one from the target to the original one. The second translator therefore hasn't seen the original questionnaire and can give a second version in the original language. The researcher must then look for discrepancies between the two versions and, in collaboration with the two translators, rework the translated version of the questionnaire (Brislin, 1970; Douglas and Craig, 2007). The scales in both languages can be found in Chapter 4.2.1 Pretest of the French Questionnaire – .

Survey flow

With regards to the survey flow, the questionnaire starts in all three studies with an introduction text that explains the goal of the study as well as the context that it is conducted in. After this first part, some screening questions are raised to make sure to only interview salespeople from the selected culture. More information about the requested profile of the respondents can be

found in Chapter 4.1.3 Field of Investigation and Respondents. After passing the screening questions, the respondents are exposed to the different scales. Every scale represents one concept and is introduced with a heading in order to create a psychological separation between the different measured variables, since this has been proposed to limit common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Furthermore, a random rotation of the items in every variable but also the variables among themselves has been installed. This reduces the contamination effect and avoid biased responses due to the answering of other, previous questions (Evrard et al., 2003). Additionally, some of the survey items have been reverse-coded to reduce the halo effect and avoid respondents answering always the same way (Evrard et al., 2003). Finally, the last part of the questionnaire consists of additional information about the respondents like age, sex, industry and experience. An example of the questionnaire as a whole can be found in Appendix 3 Survey Questionnaire – Example Questionnaire Study 3.

Figure 27 is recapitulating the survey flow for all three studies.

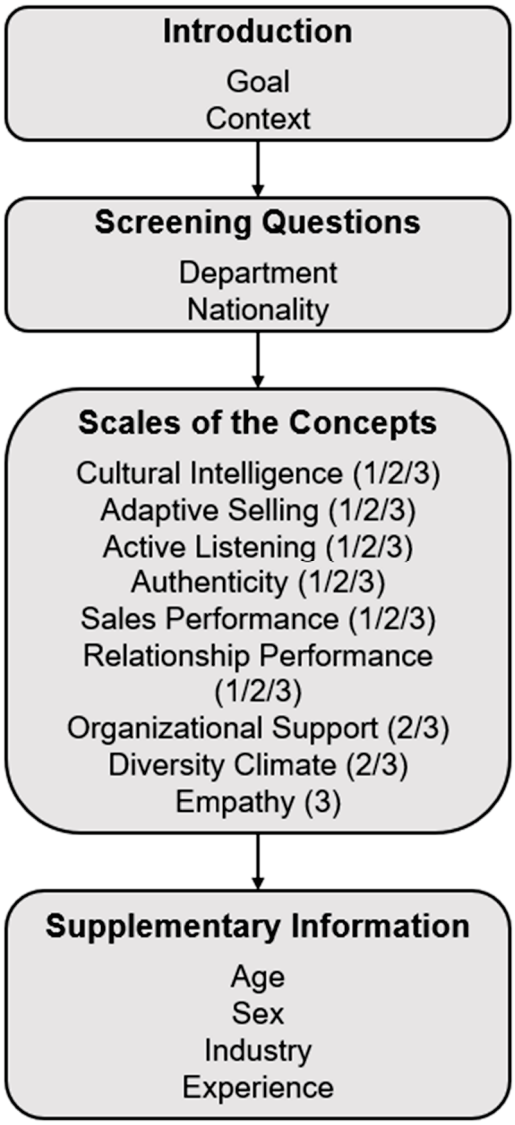


Figure 27: Survey flow

4.1.3 Field of Investigation and Respondents

As explained beforehand, this research is aiming to test the importance of Cultural Intelligence in an intercultural sales context by linking this concept to different sales concepts like adaptive selling and sales performance. Therefore, it was important to carefully think about the field of investigation for all three studies and decide on a particular type of respondents to aim for as well as a desired sample size. This chapter is explaining different general criteria with regards to the sample of all three studies.

Respondent type

The focus of this research is on the intercultural sales context. Furthermore, it has been decided to look at the perceptions of the salespeople themselves about the different concepts mentioned before. Consequently, the respondents targeted with this quantitative research were salespeople who work with people across cultural backgrounds. As explained before, the three different samples represent different cultural backgrounds – French, Indian and English. These backgrounds have been chosen to extend the existing research and go beyond the mostly American focus of studies in intercultural sales. Thus, two different European cultures have been chosen as well as an Asian one to create some variance of cultures. In addition, some scale problems have made it necessary to choose cultural contexts where English is fluently spoken in order to test the original, English version of the questionnaire. This is the reason why, next to the French cultural context, India has been chosen as a second cultural context and England as the third one.

No other restrictions have been given regarding industry or type of sales. This sampling has been chosen firstly to ensure a certain generalizability of the findings. A reduction on one type of sales would have restricted the applicability of the results to other industries. Secondly, further restrictions would have complicated access to sufficient data in terms of sample size and risked a small sample to test a relatively big model.

Thus, a **purposive sampling** (Carricano et al., 2010; Ghauri et al., 2020) has been chosen for this research using the **profession and nationality** as exclusion criteria.

Sample size

In order to establish a minimum sample size for quantitative studies, different rules exist in the literature. Three of these rules are explained thereafter, ranging from more general to more model-specific ones:

- **Absolute minimum:** In general, as explained by Hair et al. (2019) in order to do statistical tests like multiple regression for example, a minimum sample of 50 (preferably 100) for a power of .80 is necessary.
- **Ratio between observed variables and respondents:** The first rule is an extremely general one, not taking into account the model and number of variables to be included in the statistical tests. Therefore, a second rule has been formulated that is focusing on the number of observed variables in the model. In this regard, research has explained that there should be a 5:1 ratio between the number of respondents and the number of observed variables. This means that for each variable in the model, a minimum of 5 observations is needed. For better generalizability, 15 to 20 observations per observed variable are often aimed for (Hair et al., 2019).
- **Statistical power:** Even though the second rule is already adapting the sample size to the model, it still is not precise enough. Therefore, research papers are often talking about statistical power to establish the perfect sample size for a given research project. Statistical power increases with, on the one hand, the model size and therefore the degrees of freedom of the model and, on the other hand, the sample size. But there is also a risk for over rejection of ‘correct’ models when big samples are used to test large models due to the higher statistical power that has not been anticipated by the researcher (McQuitty, 2004).

Following all three of these rules, it has been made sure that the three samples for the confirmatory analysis **exceed 150 respondents** but are not too excessively big to limit over rejection problems. More information about the different samples as well as descriptive statistics can be found in the respective Chapters 4.2.2 Study 1 – Baseline model, 4.3.1 Study 2 – Company-level Antecedents and 4.3.2 Study 3 – Empathy as a positive Moderator.

4.1.4 Reliability and Validity

One important point in quantitative studies is to make sure that the scales used really measure what they are supposed to and this in a consistent manner. Thus, the validity and reliability of the scales need to be assessed. This chapter is looking therefore exposing some general details about reliability and validity issues in quantitative research.

In general, it has been shown that multi-item scales allow measurement error to cancel out each other (Churchill Jr, 1979; Peter, 1979). Furthermore, complex constructs have been shown not to be adequately measured by one-item scales. Research indicated that a minimum of three items is necessary in order to accurately reflect the complexity of a construct and allowing the analysis of the validity and reliability of this way of measuring (Churchill Jr, 1979). This therefore makes a strong case for multi-item scales as the ones used for this research.

Validity

Before being able to test the hypotheses, it is therefore necessary to assess the validity, thus the "*degree to which a measure accurately represents what it is supposed to*" (Hair et al. 2019, p.13). Quantitative research focuses especially on the assessment of **construct validity** that focuses on the "*extent to which a sets of measured items accurately reflect the theoretical latent constructs they are designed to measure*" (Hair et al. 2019, p.675). Structural validity, a type of construct validity, can be demonstrated by confirming the underlying latent factor structure of the scales. In order to test this, both exploratory factor analysis as well as

confirmatory factor analysis are suited (Matsumoto and Hwang, 2013). More information about the assessment of construct validity in this research can be found in Chapter4.1.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling.

Reliability

The second important factor to look at is the reliability of the scales. A scale is reliable if it measures always the same within the same boundary conditions and thus, the same results are achieved. This means that the measure is consistent and free from error. Reliability has been shown to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for the validity of measures (Peter, 1979). Often, the **internal consistency reliability** is assessed measured by Cronbach's Alpha (Ghauri et al., 2020). More information about Cronbach's Alpha can be found in Chapter 4.1.5 Exploratory Factor Analysis – Theoretical Explanation.

To sum up, this research is looking at internal consistency reliability during both, the exploratory as well as the confirmatory stage. Furthermore, the construct validity is assessed during the confirmatory stage.

The following chapter is now looking at the first part of this research process, the exploratory analysis and detailing the analysis process based on literature.

4.1.5 Exploratory Factor Analysis – Theoretical Explanation

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) gives the opportunity to test the different scales and to reveal dimensions within the scales (Churchill Jr, 1979). As explained by Hair et al. (2019, p.124), EFA is an "*interdependence technique (…) whose primary purpose is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis*". This chapter is going into more details about how exploratory factor analysis is done and what choices have been made in this regard for this research.

Due to limitations of single-item measures, multi-item scales are often used to capture the different dimensions of the same underlying construct (Churchill Jr, 1979). EFA is therefore used in scale development because it can help reduce the number of items within a scale. Furthermore, it is qualified as a preliminary analysis in order to detect underlying relations and dimensions within one construct (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). Therefore, EFA helps to verify that the scale accurately and exclusively assesses the construct it is supposed to measure. Consequently, when the construct is unidimensional, this analysis will bring out a single factor, and conversely for multidimensional constructs (Carricano et al., 2010).

4.1.5.1 Data Adequacy

Before conducting EFA, it is necessary to make sure of the adequacy of the collected data for this type of analysis. Thus, the researcher needs to check if the data is 'factorable'. This means that the collected data actually forms a structure sufficiently cohesive to make it possible to check for common, meaningful dimensions that are not only the result of statistical hazard (Evrard et al., 2003). In order to test this data adequacy for exploratory factor analysis, tests need to look at the intercorrelations among the different variables (Stewart, 1981; Hair et al., 2019).

Thus, two major types of measures have been proposed to test this adequacy (Evrard et al., 2003):

- **Bartlett's test of sphericity**: This test is looking at the whole correlation matrix and searching for statistical significance of the correlations within different variables (Hair et al., 2019) Factor analysis can be performed on the data if the null hypothesis is rejected (Delacroix et al., 2021). However, there is one big problem with this test: the sensitivity related to the sample size. This test is more inclined to find correlations between the different variables when the sample size is larger and a bigger number of variables are involved in the testing (Stewart, 1981; Evrard et al., 2003; Hair et al., 2019). Thus, a second test is necessary, especially for bigger samples.

- **Measure of sampling adequacy/ Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO)**: This particular test is not looking at the correlation matrix as a whole but at partial correlations meaning the correlation that exists between two variables when the effect of other variables is removed (Delacroix et al., 2021). For this test, the researcher is not looking at the significance level but at an index ranging from 0 to 1 and approaching 1 when there is no error by other variables (Hair et al., 2019). As explained by Kaiser and Rice (1974, p.112), different thresholds exist for this index:

    - In the .90 marvelous
    - In the .80 meritorious
    - In the .70 middling
    - In the .60 mediocre
    - In the .50 miserable
    - Below .50 unacceptable

  Consequently, in order to continue factor analysis, an overall KMO value of .50 is necessary (Hair et al., 2019). In general, this test needs to be conducted for every variable separately, before looking at all variables together (Carricano et al., 2010)

4.1.5.2 Factor Extraction Method – Principal Component Analysis

Once the data adequacy verified, there are two different types of factor analysis that a researcher must choose from (Hair et al., 2019; Delacroix et al., 2021):

- **Principal component analysis:** This method "*considers the total variance and derives factors that contain small proportions of unique variance and, in some instances, error variance*" (Hair et al. 2019, p.139). In contrast, the second method, Common factor analysis, does not consider the total variance but only focuses on the common or shared variance (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, principal component analysis is used if a researcher is seeking to predict subjects' scores on factors, calculate indices, reduce the set of variables, or explain the variance of variables (Delacroix et al., 2021).
- **Common factor analysis:** Contrarily, common factor analysis is often used for theory and scale development purposes. Furthermore, this method has shown to have multiple shortcomings, especially factor indeterminacy. This means that sometimes, not one single and unique solution is found but several different ones, even if the differences are mostly not substantial (Hair et al., 2019).

Since the focus of this research is not on theory development but on the testing of already existing scales but in another context, it has therefore been decided to use Principal component analysis for this research. In addition, this method is the most widely used in marketing research (Carricano et al., 2010).

4.1.5.3 Number of Factors to extract

The first goal of PCA is to determine the number of factors to consider for further analysis (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018; Ghauri et al., 2020). In order to determine this, there is no absolute rule how to determine the number of underlying factors, different methods exist. In general, of all these tests are searching for factors that explain most of the variance in the variables and chose them for further consideration. Problems might arise if these different methods indicate

different numbers to consider. In this case, research suggests applying a principle of parsimony, meaning that the smallest number of factors should be chosen, based on theoretical explainability (Delacroix et al., 2021). Two of the most widely used criteria are the following:

- **Latent Root Criterion/ Kaiser Rule**: This test is following the rationale that every individual factor detected should at least account for the variance of one single variable (Hair et al., 2019). Since every variable contributes a value of 1 in principal component analysis, only factors that have latent roots or eigenvalues greater than 1 are retained (Hair et al., 2019; Delacroix et al., 2021)

- **Scree Test Criterion/ Cattell Test**: Conversely to the first test, this one is not proposing any number as a threshold to consider a factor for further analysis. It is looking at the graphic of the scree test and determining visually the threshold where the amount of unique variance is dominating the common variance structure (Hair et al., 2019). As explained by Hair et al. (2019, p.142) *"the scree test is derived by plotting the latent roots against the number of factors in their order of extraction, and the shape of the resulting curve is used to evaluate the cut-off point."* Consequently, the components preceding the bend in the curve are chosen, in preference to the later ones that represent low levels of explained variance (Delacroix et al., 2021).

Since the latent root criterion is the simpler one and most commonly used in different software (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2019; Delacroix et al., 2021), it has been decided to first look at this criterion. If there is a discrepancy between the theory and the results of this test, the scree test is also looked at for this research.

In addition to these two tests, it is necessary to look at a third factor: the **cumulative variance extracted** by the number of factors. The purpose of this is to ensure that a factor explains a significant amount of variance (Carricano et al., 2010). Following research in social sciences, a factor solution that accounts for 60% of the total variance is accepted (Hair et al., 2019), sometimes even 50% are still tolerated (Ghauri et al., 2020).

4.1.5.4 Purification of the Scales

Once the number of factors within a scale is determined, the purification of the scale is done in two steps (Carricano et al., 2010).

First, it is important to look at the different **factor loadings**. Dependent on the sample size, a different level of factor loadings is needed in order to reach statistical significance (see Table 4).

Factor Loading	Sample size needed
.30	350
.40	200
.50	120
.60	**85**
.70	60

Table 4: Significant factor loadings based on sample size (adapted from Hair et al. 2019)

For multidimensional scales, items are deleted that have factor loadings superior to .30 on multiple factors since this shows that they cannot be assigned to one factor only. Furthermore, items are also deleted if they don't have a minimum factor loading on one factor of .50 since this means that they are too weakly bound to the factors (Carricano et al., 2010).

Secondly, the **communalities** of the variables need to be assessed. The communality is representing the "*amount of variance accounted for by the factor solution for each variable"* (Hair et al. 2019, p.155). Communalities that are superior to .40 are considered average, over a threshold of .65 good and over .80 excellent (Carricano et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2019).

4.1.5.5 Rotation for Multidimensional Scales

In the case of multidimensional scales, it is often difficult to interpret the factor solution. To facilitate this interpretation, a rotation is often done to modify the orientation of the axes and thus factors to increase or decrease the factor loadings so that the variables are more clearly attributed to one of the factors (Delacroix et al., 2021). Two different types of rotation exist (Carricano et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2019):

- **Orthogonal**: This is the simplest form of rotation that is retaining the referent axes at a 90-degree angle (Hair et al., 2019).
- **Oblique**: Conversely, oblique factor rotations are not maintaining this 90-degree angle. This rotation method is therefore less constraining (Hair et al., 2019).

Both of these methods have been found to have different results, meaning that it is important to choose the right rotation method for a particular research. Since orthogonal rotation methods are keeping the factors independent, this solution is used if theory and literature are indicating that the factors should be independent (Carricano et al., 2010; Delacroix et al., 2021). Orthogonal rotations are simplifying factor structures and already delivering factor loadings that can be used for further analysis afterwards. Finally, this rotation method helps establish a typology as well as a graphical representation of the different factors and limits multicollinearity problems in later analysis (Carricano et al., 2010; Delacroix et al., 2021). For all these reasons, it has been chosen for this research to do orthogonal rotation in case of multidimensional scales.

With regards to orthogonal rotations, three different types exist that differ in the final goal of the rotation (Hair et al., 2019):

- **Varimax**: This rotation method is the most widely used in research (Hair et al., 2019). It aims at simplifying the columns of the factor matrix by obtaining factor loadings that are near either 0 or 1 – The nearer a factor loading to 1, the higher the link of the item with the factor and vice versa (Delacroix et al., 2021).

- **Quartimax**: Conversely to the first rotation method, Quartimax rotation is not focusing on simplifying the columns but the rows of the factor matrix (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, this method aims at minimizing the factors that explain every variable by maximizing the gaps between saturations (Delacroix et al., 2021). In some cases, this rotation method has not proven successful because it tends to produce clusters of variables and a general factor on which most variables have a high loading on (Hair et al., 2019).
- **Equimax**: This last rotation method is a mix between the first two (Delacroix et al., 2021). It does neither focus on simplifying the columns nor the rows of the factor matrix but tries to achieve a mix of both. This method is only used in very scarce situations and has not widely spread in business research (Hair et al., 2019).

Since Varimax rotation is the most widely used and has produced satisfying results in business research, this rotation method is also used for the analysis of multidimensional scales in this research (Hair et al., 2019).

4.1.5.6 Reliability in Exploratory Analysis

Once the factor solution specified and the scales purified, it is necessary to check on the reliability of the resulting scale. Reliability is often tested by looking at the internal consistency of the factors and the correlations of the underlying variables (Ghauri et al., 2020). Typically, **Cronbach's Alpha** is used as a measure of internal consistency (Peterson, 1994). For this, an index is created ranging from 0 to 1 with a threshold of .60 for acceptable values and .70 as good ones. Factors that are under this threshold should not be used for further analysis (Ghauri et al., 2020).

4.1.5.7 Conclusion and Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis

In conclusion, EFA is needed in order to determine the underlying factor structure for multi-item measures. It is a multi-stage process and helps purify the scales for further factor analysis. Table 5 is recapitulating this process as well as the retained thresholds for this research.

As explained beforehand, Principal Component Analysis has been chosen as the analysis method with, in case of multidimensional scales, orthogonal rotation (Varimax).

Stage	Indicator	Threshold	References (e.g.)
1. Data adequacy	Bartlett's test of sphericity	Statistical significance	(Delacroix et al., 2021)
	KMO	>.50 acceptable	(Kaiser and Rice, 1974)
2. Number of factors	Eigenvalues	>1	(Delacroix et al., 2021)
	% of cumulated variance	>60% >50% tolerated	(Hair et al., 2019) (Ghauri et al., 2020)
3. Scale purification	Factor loadings	>.60	(Hair et al., 2019)
	Communalities	>.40 medium >.65 good >.80 excellent	(Carricano et al., 2010)
4. Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	>.60 acceptable	(Ghauri et al., 2020)

Table 5: Process, Indicators and Thresholds for Exploratory Factor Analysis

4.1.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling – Theoretical Explanation

The following chapter is exposing in detail the second step of this research, the confirmatory analysis process from a theoretical standpoint. This chapter therefore explains therefore confirmatory factor analysis as well as structural equation modeling.

As explained beforehand, structural equation modeling is used for hypotheses testing for this research. This method for data analysis is commonly used by marketing researchers because it allows analyzing causal relationships between multiple variables in one model based on regression analysis (Delacroix et al., 2021). Structural equation modeling is the most appropriate technique in case that research includes multiple constructs that are each measured with different items or variables (Hair et al., 2019). It therefore allows testing relationships among **latent variables** which are variables that are not directly observable and need therefore multiple, directly observable items in order to be measured correctly (Evrard et al., 2003). For graphical representation, latent, non-observable variables are designed as ellipses whilst observable variables are shown as rectangles (Delacroix et al., 2021).

Furthermore, it is important for structural equation modeling to distinguish between **exogenous versus endogenous variables**. Exogenous variables are equivalent to independent variables but as latent, multi-item variables. Endogenous variables, on the other hand, are also latent variables but equivalent to dependent ones. In this sense, exogenous variables don't have any path or single-headed arrow going into it unlike endogenous variables (Hair et al., 2019). To sum up, exogenous variables are influencing one or more endogenous variables in structural equation models. But since endogenous variables are normally not explained perfectly by the one or multiple exogenous variables of the model, it is important to add also error terms to these (Delacroix et al., 2021).

Structural equation modeling is quite similar to multiple regression analysis since every relationship tested can be expressed in a regression equation. But one big difference in this

method is that a variable that acts as an independent variable in one relationship can act as a dependent one in another relationship. Furthermore, all of these relationships are then estimated at the same time and account for error terms (Hair et al., 2019).

The most widely used method for structural equation modeling is **Maximum Likelihood (ML)** and almost all major software use this as the default estimation method (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). However, the collected data needs to follow a normal distribution for this method to function correctly (Delacroix et al., 2021). If the data follows this normal distribution and the sample size is sufficient, "*ML provides parameter estimates and standard errors that are asymptotically unbiased, consistent, and efficient*" (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, and Müller 2003, p.26).

To better understand structural equation modeling, it is necessary to look at the process for this kind of analysis. As explained by Hair et al. (2019), this method consists of multiple steps. First, the individual constructs included in the models need to be specified and defined. This step includes a literature review and choosing the right scales to measure particular concepts. Secondly, the **measurement model** needs to be specified. A measurement model indicates how exogenous or endogenous variables are composed of their indicators or items and therefore expose the scale structures (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018; Delacroix et al., 2021). After designing a study in order to collect data, the final stages of analysis can be started. Thus, the measurement model first needs to be tested for validity to be sure that the data that has been collected really represents the different variables in the model. Once the validity tests passed, the **structural model** can be specified and tested. In contrast to the measurement model where only the relationships between latent constructs and their measures are specified, the structural model also indicates the links between the different latent constructs. This model determines therefore which variables are exogenous and which endogenous (Hair et al., 2019). The following Figure 28 is a graphical representation of the different stages of the structural equation process.

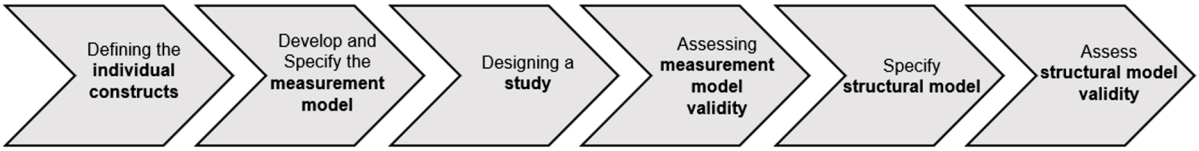


Figure 28: Structural equation modeling process (adapted from Hair et al. 2019)

For this research, exploratory factor analysis has been used to define the different constructs for the models. Confirmatory factor analysis using the final data collections for the different studies is then used to assess measurement model validity. Finally, the hypotheses are tested by testing the structural models.

The following sub-chapters are looking at two particular stages from the SEM process explained beforehand:

1. Assessing measurement model validity
2. Testing structural model

The first phase of assessing the measurement model validity consists of tests to make sure that the scales used for the measurement of the different concepts are working well and there is no problem in the data. More details about the different steps for this can be found in chapter 4.1.6.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Assessing Measurement Model Validity.

Secondly, the testing of the structural model comprises the testing of the hypotheses that have been established before. More details about structural equation modeling and the process used for this research can be found in chapter 4.1.6.2 Covariance based Structural Equation Modeling – Testing the Structural Model.

4.1.6.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Assessing Measurement Model Validity

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is fundamentally different from Exploratory Factor Analysis in that it needs specification of the factor structure and which items are expected to load on which factor beforehand, based on theory. It is therefore *"a way of testing how well a prespecified measurement theory composed of measured variables and factors fits reality as captured by data"* (Hair et al. 2019, p.660). Consequently, this method is used in order to test the measurement model and the link between the items and the respective underlying latent variables (Delacroix et al., 2021). In this sense, this analysis also provides evidence of construct validity (Hair et al., 2019; Delacroix et al., 2021). This chapter is now looking at the different indices used for confirmatory factor analysis.

4.1.6.1.1 Normalization of Data

As explained beforehand, maximum likelihood as an estimation technique of SEM needs normalized data in order to function well. Thus, it has first to be made sure that the collected data is indeed following a normalized distribution. In order to check for this particular distribution, two factors must be looked at (Hair et al., 2019; Delacroix et al., 2021):

- **Skewness**: This measure is looking at the symmetry and balance of the distribution. Whilst a positive coefficient shows a shift to the left and a negative one to the right, a zero is indicating a centered and symmetrical distribution.
- **Kurtosis**: This second coefficient is evaluating the 'flatness' of the distribution in comparison to a normal distribution. Zero is indicating a normal distribution whilst a negative coefficient indicates a stretched distribution. Conversely, a positive coefficient suggests a strong concentration around one peak.

The most common threshold for a .05 error level for both of these measures is ± 1.96 (Hair et al., 2019). This threshold has therefore been applied also to this research and the data has been qualified as following a normal distribution within these borders.

In case this threshold is exceeded, bootstrapping can be used to test the model's robustness. This is used especially in case that there is excessive kurtosis observed in the data and helps to reduce the risks associated with the absence of multi-normality and the overestimation of parameters (Bollen and Stine, 1992). For this procedure, the hypothesized model is tested in a specified number of bootstraps in order to determine if it fits better, equally well or worse. The p-value then determines if the null hypothesis (The model is robust) is rejected or not.

4.1.6.1.2 Measurement Model Fit

In order to test the measurement model validity, it is necessary in a second step to look at the model fit. As explained by Davvetas et al. (2020, p.258) *"model fit captures the degree to which the data used to estimate the model (i.e., the sample covariance matrix S) resembles the form that the data should have had if the hypothesized model were true in reality (i.e., the implied covariance matrix)."* In order to estimate model fit, two covariance matrices are compared: the estimated covariance matrix based on theory and the covariance matrix based on the actual, observed data. The higher the resemblance between these two matrices and the closer the values are to each other, the better the model is said to fit (Hair et al., 2019; Davvetas et al., 2020). Over the years, different types of indices have been proposed in the literature that can be categorized into three different categories(Hu and Bentler, 1998; Hair et al., 2019):

- **Absolute fit indices:** This first category of indices, absolute fit indices, is directly measuring of how well the specified model reproduces the actual collected data.
- **Incremental fit indices:** In contrast to the first category, incremental fit indices are evaluation the fit of the specified model relative to an alternate baseline model.
- **Parsimony fit indices:** Finally, this last category of indices is comparing multiple, competing models and evaluate which one of these models is best by looking at the fit relative to the complexity of the different models.

In each of the different categories, a multitude of indicators and measures can be found. The following Table 6 is presenting a non-exhaustive overview of the most widely used ones.

Category	Indicator	Threshold	References (e.g.)
1. Absolute fit indices	GFI/AGFI	≥.90	(Bagozzi, 1980)
	SRMR	≤.08	(Hu and Bentler, 1998)
	χ^2	No threshold (only informative)	(Hu and Bentler, 1998)
	RMSEA	<.01 excellent <.05 correct <.08 acceptable <.10 poor	(Hu and Bentler, 1998)
2. Incremental fit indices	TLI	≥.90	(Hu and Bentler, 1998)
	CFI	≥.90	(Bentler, 1990)
	NFI	≥.90	(Hu and Bentler, 1998)
3. Parsimony fit indices	CMIN/df	≤1	(Hu and Bentler, 1998)
	χ^2/df	≤2.5	(Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003)

Table 6: Model fit indices by categories

Since every fit index has certain shortcomings, literature suggest basing the evaluation of model fit not on one index alone but on multiple ones (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Hair et al., 2019; Davvetas et al., 2020). Furthermore, it has been proposed to use at least one index per category (Hu and Bentler, 1998). As explained by Davvetas et al. (2020, p.259) *"a value in one fit index that falls slightly short of conventional thresholds does not render a model automatically invalid if other fit indices show satisfactory values."*

In order to choose which fit indices are the most meaningful for this research, it has also been looked at the ones that have been used in a sales context. Thus, the following indices have been used in this literature stream: χ^2/df, SRMR, CFI and RMSEA (Homburg et al., 2014).

In line with sales research as well as the recommendations of Delacroix et al. (2021), the following indices have been chosen for this research:

- Absolute fit indices: SRMR, RMSEA
- Incremental fit indices: CFI, TLI
- Parsimony fit indices: χ^2/df

The first absolute fit index chosen for this research is the **Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR)**. This index is analyzing the residuals created by the errors when predicting covariances (Hair et al., 2019). SRMR is used a lot in research since it is *"relatively less sensitive than other indices to problems of violation of the multi-normality assumption"* (Delacroix et al., 2021). Secondly, the **Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)** is the second absolute fit index selected. This measure is focusing on the fit of a model with regards to a population, not only the given sample and corrects for model complexity as well as sample size in its calculation (Hair et al., 2019). However, it is therefore also more sensitive to the sample size and tends to reject correct models when the sample is too small (Delacroix et al., 2021). SRMR and RMSEA are both indices that have been labeled ‚badness-of-fit' since higher values indicate poor model fit (Hair et al., 2019). Due to their respective shortcomings, it is interesting to look at them both in order to determine absolute model fit.

With regards to the second category of fit indices, incremental fit indices, it has been decided to focus firstly on the **Comparative Fit Index (CFI).** This index is *"an improved version of the normed fit index (NFI)"* (Hair et al. 2019, p.639) and compares the specified model to a 'null model' (model based on the assumption that all variables are uncorrelated). It is relatively insensitive to model complexity and has therefore become widely used in research (Hair et al., 2019). The second incremental fit index chosen for this research is the **Tucker Lewis Index**

(TLI). Conceptually related to the NFI, this index is focusing on the normed chi-square values and compares these values of the specified model and the null model. It takes into account model complexity but is not normed (Hair et al., 2019). As for the absolute fit indices, both of these indices have shortcomings and need to be looked at together in order to determine comparative model fit.

Finally, the parsimony fit index used for this research is **Chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom** (χ^2/df). The degrees of freedom have been defined as *"the amount of mathematical information available"* (Hair et al. 2019, p.636). In SEM, the degrees of freedom are based on the size of the covariance matrix and not on the sample size as in other multivariate techniques (Hair et al., 2019). Secondly, the Chi-square measure checks the difference in the observed and estimated covariance matrices. It is the *"fundamental statistical measure in SEM"* (Hair et al. 2019, p.636). Thus, this index also needs to be included in this research.

4.1.6.1.3 Reliability and Validity in Confirmatory Analysis

In line with exploratory factor analysis, this analysis method also needs the assessment of the reliability of the different scales. Thus, **Cronbach's alpha** will again be used for validating the reliability of the scales since this is the most used measure for reliability assessment in general (Ghauri et al., 2020). Since Cronbach's alpha sometime may understate reliability, a second factor is commonly looked at in association with structural equation modeling: **construct reliability (CR).** This estimate is based on the calculation of the squared sum of factor loadings as well as the sum of the error variance terms for a particular construct. The common threshold for this value is $\geq |.70|$ meaning that the higher this value is, the better the internal consistency of the measure (Hair et al., 2019).

With regards to validity, SEM and Confirmatory Analysis are especially looking at **construct validity**. This type of validity is evaluating the degree of accuracy that the scales used actually reflect the latent theoretical constructs that they are supposed to measure (Hair et al., 2019). Poor model fit indices like the ones explained beforehand are the first indicators of poor construct validity.

In addition to this first fit validity assessment, further components of construct validity must be looked at (Hair et al., 2019; Delacroix et al., 2021):

- **Convergent validity**: This type of validity is looking at the common or shared variance of the different items that are measuring the same construct. Items measuring the same construct should converge or at least share a high percentage of variance. The first way to assess convergent validity is by looking at the **factor loadings**. In order to explain more variance than lies within the error variance, the factor loadings need to be higher than .70 (Hair et al., 2019).

  Convergent validity can also be assessed by looking at the **average variance extracted (AVE)**. AVE is based on the standardized factor loadings and calculated by summing up all squared standardized factor loadings and dividing this sum by the number of items used for a particular concept. Since an AVE of less than .50 indicates that more error remains in the items than the variance that they have in common with the latent factor, this value is often used as a threshold (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019).

- **Discriminant validity**: This second type of construct validity is not only focusing on one latent variable but the extent to what this construct or variable is really different from another one. A high value of discriminant validity therefore means that the construct truly is different and unique and captures something else than other measures. Discriminant validity is assured if the convergent validity (AVE) is greater than the square of the correlations (**RootAVE**) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

4.1.6.1.4 Method Effect and Bias

Finally, one last point is specified before passing to the testing of the hypotheses: It needs to be made sure that there is no problem of common method bias in the data since the data was collected from a single source (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Firstly, some key points have already been undertaken preventatively in order to limit social desirability bias as a form of common method bias. These steps have been initiated already while designing the questionnaire:

1. It has been stated upfront in the introduction of the survey that there are **no right or wrong answers** to the questions.
2. Furthermore, **anonymity and confidentiality** have been promised to the respondents also in the introduction of the survey.
3. In order to create a **psychological separation** between the different concepts, they have all been introduced with respective titles.

In addition to these preventive steps, two measures can be done to check for common method bias:

- **Harman's single factor test** (EFA): This test checks whether the majority of the variance can be accounted for by one general factor. If this is not the case, common method bias is not likely to be a problem (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986).
- **Single method factor** (CFA): This test looks at the different model fit indices mentioned beforehand and examines if they are inferior when all of the items are loaded on to a single method factor (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In addition, it has been stated that the presence of minimal method bias is unlikely to affect the validity of research findings (Fuller et al., 2016). This indicates that, if the data passes these tests, common method bias is unlikely to cause problems for this research.

4.1.6.1.5 Conclusion and Summary of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In conclusion, CFA is testing the validity of the measurement model. In this sense, this analysis is looking at how well the different scales are really capturing the unobserved, latent variables.

To assess the validity of the measurement model, a series of stages need to be done. Table 7 is recapitulating the whole process of CFA including the respective thresholds and rules.

Stage	Indicator	Threshold/Rules	References (e.g.)
1. Normalization	Skewness Kurtosis	±1.96	(Hair et al., 2019)
2. Fit indices	SRMR	≤.08	(Hu and Bentler, 1998)
	RMSEA	<.01 excellent <.05 correct <.08 acceptable <.10 poor	(Hu and Bentler, 1998)
	CFI	≥.90	(Bentler, 1990)
	TLI	≥.90	(Hu and Bentler, 1998)
	χ^2/df	≤2.5	(Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003)
3. Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	>.60 acceptable	(Ghauri et al., 2020)
	Construct reliability (CR)	≥ |.70|	(Hair et al., 2019)
4. Convergent Validity	Factor Loadings	≥.70	(Hair et al., 2019)
	Average variance extracted (AVE)	≥.50	(Fornell and Larcker, 1981)
5. Discriminant Validity	RootAVE	AVE > square of correlations	(Fornell and Larcker, 1981)

6. Method Bias	Harman's single factor test	One general factor accounts for less than half of total variance explained	(Podsakoff and Organ, 1986)
	Single method factor	Fit indices inferior when all items loaded on to one single factor	(Podsakoff et al., 2003)

Table 7: Process, indicators and thresholds for Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The next step after assessing the validity of the measurement model is then to test the different links that have been hypothesized between the latent variables. Thus, the structural model needs to be tested.

4.1.6.2 Covariance based Structural Equation Modeling – Testing the Structural Model

As explained beforehand, it has been decided to test the hypotheses of this research with structural equation modeling as opposed to classical regression analysis. This method is better suited for complex models including multiple mediators (Preacher and Hayes, 2004).

4.1.6.2.1 Different Types of Structural Equation Modeling

In general, there are two types of structural equation modeling that can be distinguished (Hair et al., 2019):

- **Covariance-based (CB) SEM**
- **Partial Least Square (PLS) SEM**

To choose which type of structural equation modeling fits better the aim of this study, it is necessary to look at the different scopes and goals of both techniques. With regards to the

basic elements, both techniques have been shown to be comparable. Nevertheless, they are fundamentally different due to their primary statistical objective (Hair et al., 2019):

- **CB-SEM** is aiming at **confirming theory** by comparing the observed covariance matrix and an estimated one based on the equations that represent the proposed theoretical model.
- In contrast, **PLS-SEM**'s primary focus is on **theory prediction** by trying to maximize the explained variance in the dependent variables.

Research has shown that the statistical power of PLS is either equal or most of the times larger than CB-SEM. In addition, this technique needs smaller sample sizes in order to achieve good statistical power. However, research has shown that PLS estimates "*must be expected to be inaccurate by roughly 25%"* (Reinartz, Haenlein, and Henseler 2009, p.341). In addition, PLS-SEM has been criticized a lot and especially over the last year. These criticism papers make a case for PLS aligning more with constructivist theory building than with scientific realism (Cadogan and Lee, 2022a, 2022b).

The aim of this research is to test an already specified model and therefore confirming theory development. Thus, it has been decided for this research to use the more classical approach to structural equation modeling that is Covariance-based structural equation modeling using SPSS AMOS version 26. This approach is therefore used to assess the direct effects hypothesized in Chapter 3.4.1 Hypotheses related to the Direct Effects.

4.1.6.2.2 Mediation Analysis

With regards to the direct, mediation effects, research has recommended using structural equation modeling also - due to the possibility to control for measurement errors (Preacher and Hayes, 2004). Furthermore, in structural equation modeling, the direct and indirect paths are fit simultaneously. In order to test the mediation effect, different paths must therefore be looked at (Iacobucci et al., 2007; Preacher et al., 2007):

1. The direct effects between the independent variable and the mediator as well as the mediator and the dependent variable. If both are significant, the mediation analysis can continue. If not, there is no mediation, and the hypotheses must be rejected.
2. The indirect path going from the independent variable via the mediator to the dependent variable needs to be significant. If this is not the case, there is no mediation. On the other hand, if this indirect effect is significant, there are two possibilities:
    - The direct effect between independent variable and dependent variable is nonsignificant. Thus, there is a full mediation.
    - The direct effect is still significant. In this case, there is a partial mediation.

Following these recommendations, mediation analysis has been done whilst testing hypotheses with SPSS AMOS Version 26. The different direct and indirect paths have been looked at whilst testing the whole structural model.

4.1.6.2.3 Moderation Analysis

In order to determine moderation effects, structural equation modeling can also be used. Moderation is said to occur when a variance in a moderator variable impacts the relationship between independent and dependent variable (Preacher et al., 2007). To test this, the following relationships must be tested:

1. the independent variable and the dependent variable,
2. the moderator and the dependent variable,
3. the interaction effect (moderator*independent variable) and the dependent variable.

If all these relationships are significant, there is indeed a moderation effect present.

After the explanation of all the analysis process in theory, the next subchapter is now applying this process.

4.2 French-speaking Context – Pretest and Study 1

The second part of this chapter is dedicated to the French version of the questionnaire. As explained, the English scales from the literature have been translated with a back-translation process to check the importance of Cultural Intelligence in another cultural background than the American or Asian one. To be sure that the scales are working in French language, a first exploratory factor analysis has been done based on a data collection with French dual students. The first part of this subchapter is therefore explaining the different scales and analysis that has been done to purify the scales in their French version. After this, the second part of this subchapter is testing the baseline model as established beforehand. This first study is based on data from French sales professionals. With regards to analysis, confirmatory factor analysis as well as covariance-based structural equation modeling has been done for this study.

4.2.1 Pretest of the French Questionnaire – Exploratory Factor Analysis

As explained beforehand, the first quantitative data collection with French dual students has been done in order to test the translated questionnaire with the scales in French language (Carricano et al., 2010). This pretest was the occasion to conduct an exploratory factor analysis that helped purify the scales and discover the dimensional structures within the variables.

4.2.1.1 Sample Presentation

As explained beforehand, the sample of this pretest consists of French dual students that are studying and working at the same time. Thus, they are native French speakers which was important for the testing of the scales in French language. Furthermore, all these students are in a sales specialization and therefore qualified to answer this survey. The questionnaire has been sent out by mail during sales classes and received 96 completed answers. The guidelines for the questionnaire explained beforehand have also been followed here. During the

introduction of the questionnaire, anonymity and confidentiality have been assured and the goal of this study has been explained. All the scales of all variables that are used in the three different studies are included in this data collection.

With regards to the sample distribution, 53.7% of the respondents are identifying as female whilst 46.3% identify as male. This distribution is following new trends in sales that show that women in the sales profession are becoming more and more important and performant (Wilson et al., 2020; Zoltners et al., 2020). With regards to their age, the respondents are between 19 and 47 years old with almost 90% of the respondents between 20 and 25 years old. Furthermore, most of the respondents were currently in their Master's (84.4%). They therefore have already some experiences in sales and did not just start their higher education. Finally, more than half of the respondents (64.6%) currently work in B2B sales or both (B2B and B2C).

4.2.1.2 Results Exploratory Factor Analysis for French Scales

Following the procedure mentioned in Chapter 4.1.5 Exploratory Factor Analysis – Theoretical Explanation, this chapter is now presenting the different results of the exploratory factor analysis per variable. Thus, the different scales that have been used to measure the concepts are explained as well as the analysis results of the PCA conducted via IBM SPSS Statistics 26. For clarification purposes, it has been decided to follow an editorial rule with regards to the factor loadings: Variables are linked to a factor if they have a minimum factor loading between .30 to .45 (Delacroix et al., 2021). In this thesis, the threshold of .45 is chosen, meaning that only factor loadings above .45 are presented.

As explained beforehand, all scales have been translated using a back-translation process. Both, the English, and the French wording of the items are presented in the different tables.

Cultural Intelligence scale

With regards to the key concept of this research, the Cultural Intelligence Scale developed by Ang et al. (2007) has been used to measure this concept. This scale consists of 20 items on the four presented dimensions – metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral. This scale already has gone through an extensive validation process (Van Dyne et al., 2012) and can therefore be expected to hold also in this sample as a multidimensional scale. In addition, research has shown that self-report and other-report measures of this concept are strongly correlated (Bücker et al., 2015), suggesting that method bias is likely to affect less this scale.

Coding	English wording	French wording
	Please indicate to which point you strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (7) with the following statements regarding intercultural situations:	*Veuillez indiquer à quel point vous n'êtes pas du tout d'accord (1) ou tout à fait d'accord (7) avec les énoncés suivants concernant des situations interculturelles :*
MCogCQ1	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.	Je suis conscient(e) des connaissances culturelles sur lesquelles je m'appuie lors de mes échanges interculturels.
MCogCQ2	I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.	J'adapte mes connaissances culturelles lors d'un échange avec des gens issus d'une culture qui ne m'est pas familière.
MCogCQ3	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.	Je sais quelle connaissance culturelle serait appropriée lors de chaque échange interculturel.
MCogCQ4	I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.	Je cherche à utiliser des connaissances culturelles exactes lors de mes échanges avec des gens ayant des origines différentes.
CogCQ1	I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.	Je connais les systèmes juridiques et économiques d'autres cultures/pays.
CogCQ2	I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.	J'ai connaissance de la grammaire et du vocabulaire d'une ou de plusieurs langues étrangères.
CogCQ3	I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.	Je connais les valeurs culturelles et les croyances religieuses d'autres cultures.

CogCQ4	I know the marriage systems of other cultures.	Je connais le système matrimonial d'autres cultures.
CogCQ5	I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.	Je connais les arts et les artisanats d'autres cultures.
CogCQ6	I know the rules for expressing nonverbal behaviors in other cultures.	Je connais les règles de comportement non verbal d'autres cultures.
MotCQ1	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	J'aime échanger avec des gens issus de cultures différentes.
MotCQ2	I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.	Je suis sûr(e) de pouvoir échanger avec les représentants d'une culture qui m'est inconnue.
MotCQ3	I am sure I can deal with the stress of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.	Je suis sûr(e) de pouvoir gérer le stress lié à l'adaptation à une nouvelle culture.
MotCQ4	I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.	Je prends plaisir à vivre dans des cultures qui me sont inconnues.
MotCQ5	I am confident that I can get accustomed to shopping conditions in a different culture.	Je suis sûr(e) de pouvoir m'habituer aux modes de consommation dans une culture différente de la mienne.
BehCQ1	I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	J'adapte mon comportement verbal (par exemple mon accent, mon ton) lorsqu'un échange interculturel l'exige.
BehCQ2	I use pause and silence differently to suit cross-cultural situations.	Lorsque je parle, j'emploie des pauses et des silences différemment suivant les situations interculturelles.
BehCQ3	I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	J'adapte mon débit de parole en fonction des exigences des échanges interculturels.
BehCQ4	I change my nonverbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	J'adapte mon comportement non verbal lorsqu'une situation interculturelle l'exige.
BehCQ5	I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	J'adapte mes expressions faciales lorsqu'une situation interculturelle l'exige.

Table 8: Items of the Cultural Intelligence Scale

The items are factorable (KMO =.830 and Bartlett significant p ≤ .000), and Cultural Intelligence is indeed a four-dimensional factor as the literature suggests. The twenty items, divided into four dimensions, metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral, explain 64,636% of the total variance in the analysis. To understand the underlying structuring, a varimax rotation

of the component matrix was performed. The results are presented in Table 9 and show that the items contribute well to their respective dimensions.

For each of the dimensions, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients are satisfactory with the respective results of .777 for metacognitive, .822 for cognitive, .864 for motivational and .868 for behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings (rotation)				α without item	α of the factor
		Motivational	Cognitive	Behavioral	Metacognitive		
MCogCQ1	.588				.625	.707	.777
MCogCQ2	.670				.760	.730	
MCogCQ3	.585				.512	.741	
MCogCQ4	.692				.766	.715	
CogCQ1	.741		.818			.770	.822
CogCQ2	.478		**.440**			**.838**	
CogCQ3	.611		.704			.794	
CogCQ4	.585		.640			.800	
CogCQ5	.561		.696			.784	
CogCQ6	.681		.771			.769	
MotCQ1	.724	.791				.842	.864
MotCQ2	.556	.647				.851	
MotCQ3	.720	.795				.826	
MotCQ4	.724	.818				.820	
MotCQ5	.608	.750				.840	
BehCQ1	.651			.705		.848	.868
BehCQ2	.586			.741		.853	
BehCQ3	.743			.814		.819	
BehCQ4	.723			.801		.829	
BehCQ5	.700			.787		.851	
Eigenvalue of the factor		7,036	2,377	2,179	1,335		
Explained variance		35,181%	47,066%	57,961%	64,636%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000					KMO	.830

Table 9: Results EFA for the Cultural Intelligence Scale

By following the thresholds from Table 5, CogCQ2 has a factor loading that is under .60 (.440). Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha increases slightly if this item is deleted. But since all the other indicators are still over the respective thresholds, Cronbach's Alpha is at a good level and this item has been taken from a validated scale from the literature, we decided to keep this item for the final data collections. Thus, the twenty-item scale divided in four dimensions is used for the first study as well.

Adaptive Selling scale

Adaptive selling has been measured using a short version of the ADAPTS Scale. The original scale has been developed by Spiro and Weitz (1990). The 5-item short version of this scale (ADAPTS-SV) that has been used in this research is taken from Robinson et al. (2002).

Coding	English wording	French wording
	Please indicate to which point you strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (7) with the following statements:	*Veuillez indiquer à quel point vous n'êtes pas du tout d'accord (1) ou tout à fait d'accord (7) avec les énoncés suivants :*
ADAPT1	When I feel that my sales approach is not working, I can easily change to another approach.	Lorsque je sens que ma démarche commerciale ne fonctionne pas, je peux facilement passer à une autre démarche.
ADAPT2	I like to experiment with different sales approaches.	J'aime expérimenter différentes démarches de vente.
ADAPT3	I am very flexible in the selling approach I use.	Je suis très souple dans la démarche de vente que j'utilise.
ADAPT4	I can easily use a variety of selling approaches.	Je peux facilement utiliser une variété de démarches de vente.
ADAPT5	I try to understand how one customer differs from another.	J'essaie de comprendre en quoi un client diffère d'un autre.

Table 10: Items of the Adaptive Selling Scale

Exploratory factor analysis conducted on the collected data shows that all proposed items are factorable (KMO =.767 and Bartlett significant p ≤ .000). Furthermore, this analysis confirms that adaptive selling is indeed a unidimensional factor. The five items explain together 62,609% of the total variance in the analysis. The reliability coefficient is satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha amounting to .847. The results are presented in Table 11.

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings	α without item	α of the scale
ADAPT1	.689	.830	.806	
ADAPT2	.651	.807	.810	
ADAPT3	.565	.751	.828	.847
ADAPT4	.771	.878	.780	
ADAPT5	.455	.675	**.851**	
Eigenvalue of the factor		3,130		
Explained variance		62,609%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000		KMO	.767

Table 11: Results EFA for the Adaptive Selling Scale

For this short version of the adaptive selling scale, deleting item ADAPT5 increases slightly Cronbach's alpha. But this is only a slight increase, and the alpha value of the overall scale is still satisfactory with this item included. Thus, following the same logic as before, this item has also been included in the final data collections resulting in a five-item scale for adaptive selling.

Active Listening scale

In order to measure Active Listening, the Interpersonal Listening in Personal Selling scale from Castleberry, Shepherd, and Ridnour (1999) has been used as a basis. In order to keep the questionnaire simple and since the responding facet can be seen as a result of the two previous stages (sensing and processing), only this facet has been used to measure Active Listening as a whole (Román, 2014). Thus, five items have been used to measure this concept.

Coding	English wording	French wording
	The statements below describe various ways you may act with your customer. For each statement, indicate to what extent you behave that way…	*Les énoncés ci-dessous décrivent différentes façons de vous comporter avec vos clients. Pour chaque déclaration, indiquez dans quelle mesure vous vous comportez de cette manière...*
LIST1	I ask probing questions.	Je pose des questions d'approfondissement.
LIST2	I ask continuing questions like "Could you tell me more?"	Je pose des questions de relance comme "Pourriez-vous m'en dire plus ?".
LIST3	I ask clarifying questions like "I am not sure I know what you mean."	Je pose des questions de clarification comme "Je ne suis pas sûr de savoir ce que vous voulez dire".
LIST4	I restate what the buyer has stated or asked.	Je reformule ce que l'acheteur a déclaré ou demandé.
LIST5	I summarize what the buyer has said.	Je résume ce que l'acheteur a dit.

Table 12: Items of the Active Listening Scale

All proposed items are factorable (KMO =.834 and Bartlett significant p ≤ .000). Furthermore, active listening is indeed a unidimensional factor as suggested by literature. The five items explain together 63,005% of the total variance in the analysis. The reliability coefficient is satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha amounting to .848. The results are presented in Table 13.

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings	α without item	α of the scale
LIST1	.623	.789	.819	
LIST2	.629	.793	.816	
LIST3	.483	.695	**.849**	.848
LIST4	.704	.839	.799	
LIST5	.711	.843	.798	
Eigenvalue of the factor		3,150		
Explained variance		63,005%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000		KMO	.834

Table 13: Results EFA for the Active Listening Scale

In the same way as for the two previous scales, it has been decided to keep LIST3, even though the removal of the item would result in a slight increase of Cronbach's Alpha. Thus, active listening will be measured with five items for the final data collections.

Authenticity scale

Authenticity has been measured using a scale from Schaefer and Pettijohn (2006). This scale is unidimensional and comprises of 10 items. The scale has been used as shown in the literature, meaning that all of the items are reverse coded except item 2.

Coding	English wording	French wording
	When interacting with customers in my sales position, I often feel that I am …	*Lorsque j'interagis avec des clients dans une situation de vente, j'ai souvent l'impression de ...*
AUTH1	Masking my true thoughts and feelings. (R)	Masquer mes véritables pensées et sentiments. (R)
AUTH2	I am being the real me.	Etre véritablement moi-même.
AUTH3	Pretending nothing is wrong when I am upset. (R)	Prétendre que tout va bien quand je suis contrarié(e). (R)
AUTH4	Avoiding confrontation with customers who have lied to me. (R)	Eviter la confrontation avec les clients qui m'ont menti. (R)
AUTH5	Making small talk about topics I do not care about. (R)	Faire la conversation sur des sujets qui ne m'intéressent pas. (R)
AUTH6	Complimenting customers who do not deserve it. (R)	Faire des compliments à des clients qui ne le méritent pas. (R)
AUTH7	Feeling tense and pressured in this part of my life. (R)	Me sentir tendu(e) et sous pression dans cette partie de ma vie. (R)
AUTH8	Acting interested in customer's hobbies when I am not. (R)	Faire semblant d'être intéressé(e) par les loisirs des clients alors que je ne le suis pas. (R)
AUTH9	Simply playing a role. (R)	Simplement jouer un rôle. (R)
AUTH10	Pretending to agree with customers. (R)	Prétendre être d'accord avec les clients. (R)

Table 14: Items of the Authenticity Scale

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings		α without item	α of the scale
AUTH1	.553	.636	.386	.832	
AUTH2	.565		**.746**	**.863**	
AUTH3	.445	.664		.844	
AUTH4	.591	.739		.850	
AUTH5	.683	.439	.701	.832	.853
AUTH6	.469	.646		.839	
AUTH7	.426	.601		.840	
AUTH8	.617	.582	.527	.828	
AUTH9	.568	.575	.487	.831	
AUTH10	.593	.711		.830	
Eigenvalue of the factor		4,419	1,092		
Explained variance		44,190 %	55,108 %		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000			KMO	.845

Table 15: Results EFA for the Authenticity Scale

The exploratory factor analysis for this ten-item scale is showing a few problems. First, literature indicates that this scale is a unidimensional scale, but this analysis is suggestion a two-dimensional structure. Since the scale has been written in a way that all the items are reverse coded except for item AUTH2 and this item clearly loads on the second factor, it has been decided to delete this item and conduct a second analysis with only the nine other items. Furthermore, the deletion of this item also improves the Cronbach's alpha of the scale. This suppression helps to ensure that there is no method bias due to the reverse coding of every but one item. Results of this new analysis can be found in Table 16.

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings		α without item	α of the scale
AUTH1	.572	.522	.547	.845	
AUTH3	.649		**.783**	.857	
AUTH4	.605		**.768**	.862	
AUTH5	.779	.883		.846	
AUTH6	.479	.631		.850	.863
AUTH7	.423	.539		.853	
AUTH8	.692	.812		.840	
AUTH9	.563	.677		.844	
AUTH10	.590	.596	.485	.841	
Eigenvalue of the factor		4,349	1,003		
Explained variance		48,318 %	59,464 %		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000			KMO	.841

Table 16: Results EFA for the Authenticity Scale - Nine items

This nine-item scale is still quite weak and still loads on two different factors. Thus, it has been decided to also delete the items AUTH3 and AUTH4 that are clearly loading on another factor that the other items. The results of the exploratory factor analysis for the seven-item scale can be found in Table 17.

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings	α without item	α of the scale
AUTH1	.518	.720	.843	
AUTH5	.621	.788	.831	
AUTH6	.486	.697	.846	
AUTH7	.421	.649	.853	.859
AUTH8	.638	.799	.829	
AUTH9	.569	.755	.837	
AUTH10	.568	.754	.837	
Eigenvalue of the factor		3,823		
Explained variance		54,616%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000		KMO	.862

Table 17: Results EFA for the Authenticity Scale - Seven items

This seven-item version of the scale is now unidimensional as proposed by the literature. All the items explain together 54,616% of the total variance in the analysis. The reliability coefficient is satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha amounting to .859. Consequently, it has been decided to use these seven items for the final data collection for study 1.

Empathy scale

To measure the concept of empathy, two different scales have been used complementarily. Thus, four items have been taken from the scale of Agnihotri and Krush (2015). Furthermore, this scale has been supplemented by one last item taken from Ahearne, Jelinek, and Jones (2007). Consequently, the final scale used to measure this concept consists of five items.

Coding	English wording	French wording
	Please indicate to which point you strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (7) with the following statements regarding yourself:	*Veuillez indiquer à quel point vous n'êtes pas du tout d'accord (1) ou tout à fait d'accord (7) avec les énoncés suivants :*
EMPA1	I always demonstrate a caring attitude toward other people.	Je démontre toujours une attitude attentionnée envers les autres personnes.
EMPA2	I compliment others when they have done something well.	Je complimente les autres quand ils ont fait quelque chose de bien.
EMPA3	I want to help when others encounter problems.	Je souhaite aider lorsque d'autres personnes rencontrent des problèmes.
EMPA4	When I am upset with someone, I usually try to 'put myself in their shoes' for some while.	Quand je suis en colère contre quelqu'un, j'essaie généralement de me "mettre à sa place" pendant un certain temps.
EMPA5	I always demonstrate a sincere interest in people.	Je fais toujours preuve d'un intérêt sincère vis-à-vis des gens.

Table 18: Items of the Empathy Scale

The exploratory factor analysis conducted shows that all proposed items are factorable (KMO =.802 and Bartlett significant p ≤ .000). Furthermore, empathy is confirmed as a unidimensional factor. The five items explain together 59,526% of the total variance in the analysis. The reliability coefficient is satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha amounting to .791. The results are presented in Table 19.

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings	α without item	α of the scale
EMPA1	.769	.877	.700	
EMPA2	.679	.824	.730	
EMPA3	.748	.865	.713	.791
EMPA4	**.108**	**.329**	**.873**	
EMPA5	.672	.820	.718	
Eigenvalue of the factor		2,976		
Explained variance		59,526%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000		KMO	.802

Table 19: Results EFA for the Empathy Scale

In this five-item scale, the item EMPA4 does not work well. The values of the communalities as well as the factor loading are well under the respective thresholds of .40 (.108) and .60 (.329). Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha increases quite a bit if this item is deleted (from .791 to .873). Consequently, this item has been deleted and a new exploratory analysis has been done with a restricted, four-item scale (see Table 20).

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings	α without item	α of the scale
EMPA1	.777	.881	.817	
EMPA2	.691	.831	.850	.873
EMPA3	.765	.875	.823	
EMPA5	.669	.818	.856	
Eigenvalue of the factor		2,902		
Explained variance		72,544%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000		KMO	.796

Table 20: Results EFA for the Empathy Scale - Four items

This new exploratory factor analysis is showing good results. All items are factorable (KMO =.796 and Bartlett significant p ≤ .000). The four items explain together 72,544% of the total variance in the analysis. The reliability coefficient is satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha amounting to .873. Consequently, this four-item scale has been used for the final data collections.

Sales Performance scale

The concept of sales performance has generated much discussion on how to measure this variable. There are many different ways to measure this, as managerial ratings, objective quantitative data or as self-report (see for example Sharma, Rich, and Levy 2004). Nevertheless, research has recommended using self-report evaluations when, among others, responses can be confidential or when multicompany samples are used (AlDosiry et al., 2016). Furthermore, a reliable scale has been developed in the literature by Behrman and Perreault Jr (1982). Thus, it has been decided to facilitate data collection and stick with self-report measures of sales performance based on this existing scale. Since earlier sales research has used a short version of this scale, it has been opted for a six-item version based on the research of Castleberry, Shepherd, and Ridnour (1999).

Coding	English wording	French wording
	On a scale of 1 (my performance could be improved substantially) to 7 (my performance needs no improvement), how would you rate your performance on the following aspects:	*Sur une échelle de 1 (ma performance pourrait être considérablement améliorée) à 7 (ma performance n'a pas besoin d'être améliorée), comment évalueriez-vous votre performance sur les aspects suivants :*
SPERF1	Closing sales	Conclusion de contrats de vente
SPERF2	Handling sales objections	Gestion des objections à la vente
SPERF3	Overall performance as a salesperson	Performance globale en tant que vendeur
SPERF4	Overall dollar volume of sales	Volume global des ventes en euros
SPERF5	Quality of sales presentations	Qualité des présentations de vente
SPERF6	Converting new prospects into new customers	Convertir de nouveaux prospects en nouveaux clients

Table 21: Items of the Sales Performance Scale

All six proposed items are factorable (KMO =.834 and Bartlett significant p ≤ .000). Furthermore, sales performance is indeed a unidimensional factor as suggested by literature. The six items explain together 64,317% of the total variance in the analysis. The reliability coefficient is satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha amounting to .887. The results are presented in Table 13.

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings	α without item	α of the scale
SPERF1	.662	.813	.865	.887
SPERF2	.537	.733	.880	
SPERF3	.767	.876	.853	
SPERF4	.727	.853	.856	
SPERF5	.603	.777	.873	
SPERF6	.562	.750	.878	
Eigenvalue of the factor		3,859		
Explained variance		64,317%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000		KMO	.859

Table 22: Results EFA for the Sales Performance Scale

Relationship Performance scale

With regards to the second performance outcome, relationship performance, it has been decided to measure the salesperson's perception of the amount of work he puts in to build and maintain relationships. This is following the research of Hunter and Perreault (2007). But it has been decided to leave out one item that measures the listening ability of salespeople as part of relationship performance. In order to keep the concepts, separate and since active listening is a distinct concept in the model, it has been decided to delete this one item but keep the others. Thus, relationship performance is measures with a four-item scale.

Coding	English wording	French wording
	On a scale of 1 (never) to 7 (always), how would you rate your efforts on the following aspects: *I am...*	*Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), comment évalueriez-vous vos efforts sur les aspects suivants :*
RELPERF1	Building my customer's business with our products.	Construire l'activité de mon client avec nos produits.
RELPERF2	Working out solutions to a customer's questions or objections.	Elaborer des solutions aux demandes ou aux objections d'un client.
RELPERF3	Working with customers to help them improve their profitability.	Travailler avec les clients pour les aider à améliorer leur rentabilité.
RELPERF4	Working with buyers to develop a partnership that's profitable to both firms.	Travailler avec les acheteurs pour développer un partenariat qui soit profitable aux deux entreprises.

Table 23: Items of the Relationship Performance Scale

All proposed items of the relationship performance scale are factorable (KMO =.775 and Bartlett significant $p \leq .000$). Furthermore, relationship performance is indeed a unidimensional factor as suggested by literature. The four items explain together 63,595% of the total variance in the analysis. The reliability coefficient is satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha amounting to .808. The results are presented in Table 24 down below.

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings	α without item	α of the scale
RELPERF1	.638	.799	.759	.808
RELPERF2	.507	.712	.804	
RELPERF3	.704	.839	.728	
RELPERF4	.695	.834	.734	
Eigenvalue of the factor		2,544		
Explained variance		63,595%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000		KMO	.775

Table 24: Results EFA for the Relationship Performance Scale

Organizational Support scale

This firm-level variable has been also measured as the perception that a salesperson has from the company. For this concept, a scale from Deconinck and Johnson (2009) is used, measuring organizational support with four different items.

Coding	English wording	French wording
	On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), how would you rate your company on the following aspects:	*Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), comment évalueriez-vous votre entreprise sur les aspects suivants :*
ORGSUP1	My organization takes great pride in my accomplishments.	Mon entreprise tire une grande fierté de mes réalisations.
ORGSUP2	My organization really cares about my well-being.	Mon entreprise se soucie vraiment de mon bien-être.
ORGSUP3	My organization strongly considers my goals and values.	Mon entreprise tient vraiment compte de mes objectifs et de mes valeurs.
ORGSUP4	My organization is willing to help me if I need help.	Mon entreprise est disposée à m'aider si j'ai besoin d'aide.

Table 25: Items of the Organizational Support Scale

The exploratory factor analysis conducted shows that all proposed items are factorable (KMO =.842 and Bartlett significant p ≤ .000). Furthermore, organizational support is confirmed as a unidimensional factor. The four items explain together 77,752% of the total variance in the analysis. The reliability coefficient is satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha amounting to .904. The results are presented in Table 26.

Items	**Communalities**	**Factor loadings**	**α without item**	**α of the scale**
ORGSUP1	.761	.873	.881	.904
ORGSUP2	.791	.890	.872	
ORGSUP3	.795	.892	.870	
ORGSUP4	.762	.873	.881	
Eigenvalue of the factor		3,110		
Explained variance		77,752%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000		KMO	.842

Table 26: Results EFA for the Organizational Support Scale

Diversity Climate scale

Finally, this last company-level variable, diversity climate, is also measured as a salesperson's perception of the diversity climate within the company. Thus, a four-item scale from McKay, Avery, and Morris (2008) is applied to measure this concept.

Coding	English wording	French wording
	On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), how would you rate your company on the following aspects:	*Sur une échelle de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 7 (tout à fait d'accord), comment évalueriez-vous votre entreprise sur les aspects suivants :*
DIV1	I trust my company to treat me fairly.	Je fais confiance à mon entreprise pour me traiter équitablement.
DIV2	My company maintains a diversity-friendly work environment.	Mon entreprise maintient un environnement de travail favorable à la diversité.
DIV3	My company respects the view of people like me.	Mon entreprise respecte le point de vue des gens comme moi.
DIV4	Top leaders demonstrate a visible commitment to diversity.	Les hauts dirigeants font preuve d'un engagement visible en faveur de la diversité.

Table 27: Items of the Diversity Climate Scale

The exploratory factor analysis conducted shows that all four proposed items are factorable (KMO =.809 and Bartlett significant p ≤ .000). Furthermore, diversity climate is confirmed as a unidimensional factor as suggested by literature. The four items explain together 72,805% of the total variance in the analysis. The reliability coefficient is satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha amounting to .874. The results are presented in Table 28.

Items	Communalities	Factor loadings	α without item	α of the scale
DIV1	.741	.861	.834	.874
DIV2	.761	.873	.829	
DIV3	.740	.861	.834	
DIV4	.669	.818	.859	
Eigenvalue of the factor		2,912		
Explained variance		72,805%		
Bartlett's test	p ≤ .000		KMO	.809

Table 28: Results EFA for the Diversity Climate Scale

Conclusion Pretest of the French Questionnaire

To conclude, this last chapter explained the choice of scales used to measure the different concepts for the quantitative data collection (see Table 29 for a recap of the different scales used).

Variable	Coding	Scales used
Cultural Intelligence	CQ	CQS - *Ang et al. (2007)* – 20 items on 4 dimensions: • Metacognitive CQ: 4 items • Cognitive CQ: 6 items • Motivational CQ: 5 items • Behavioral CQ: 5 items
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT	ADAPTS-SV - *Robinson et al. (2002) adapted from Spiro and Weitz (1990)* – 5 items
Active Listening	LIST	ILPS – Responding facet - *Román (2014) adapted from Castleberry, Shepherd, and Ridnour (1999)* – 5 items
Authenticity	AUTH	*Schaefer and Pettijohn (2006)* – 10 items (7 items retained)
Empathy	EMPA	*Agnihotri and Krush (2015) & Ahearne, Jelinek, and Jones (2007)* – 5 items (4 items retained)
Sales Performance	SPERF	*Castleberry, Shepherd, and Ridnour (1999) adapted from Behrman and Perreault Jr (1982)* – 6 items
Relationship Performance	RELPERF	*Hunter and Perreault (2007)* minus listening ability – 4 items
Organizational Support	ORGSUP	*Deconinck and Johnson (2009)* – 4 items
Diversity Climate	DIV	*McKay, Avery, and Morris (2008)* – 4 items

Table 29: Recap scales used overall

The pretest and the exploratory factor analysis conducted with the collected data have helped to purify and validate the scales used for the final data collection. Most scales are used in their entirety also for the French version of the questionnaire, with only two exceptions. Firstly, the empathy scale is used as a four-item scale instead of five initial items (EMPA4 deleted).

And secondly, the authenticity scale is used as a seven-item scale instead of ten items (AUTH2, AUTH3 and AUTH4 deleted).

After the purification of the scales, the next step for this research is now the final data collections. Based on this final data, confirmatory factor analysis is done to confirm the factor structures. And finally, the hypotheses are tested using covariance-based structural equation modeling. The next chapter goes into more details about these steps.

4.2.2 Study 1 – Baseline model

The first study of this research aims at establishing a baseline model that looks at the concept of Cultural Intelligence in an intercultural sales context. As explained beforehand, this first study is working with a sample of French sales professionals and testing the French version of the questionnaire following the first pretest.

4.2.2.1 Model to be tested

This first study is therefore testing the baseline model and looking at positive and negative outcomes of Cultural Intelligence in an intercultural sales context. Thus, it is examining the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and performance via active listening and adaptive selling as positive outcomes, on the one hand, and authenticity as a negative outcome, on the other hand. Figure 29 is showing visually the structural model to be tested in this first study.

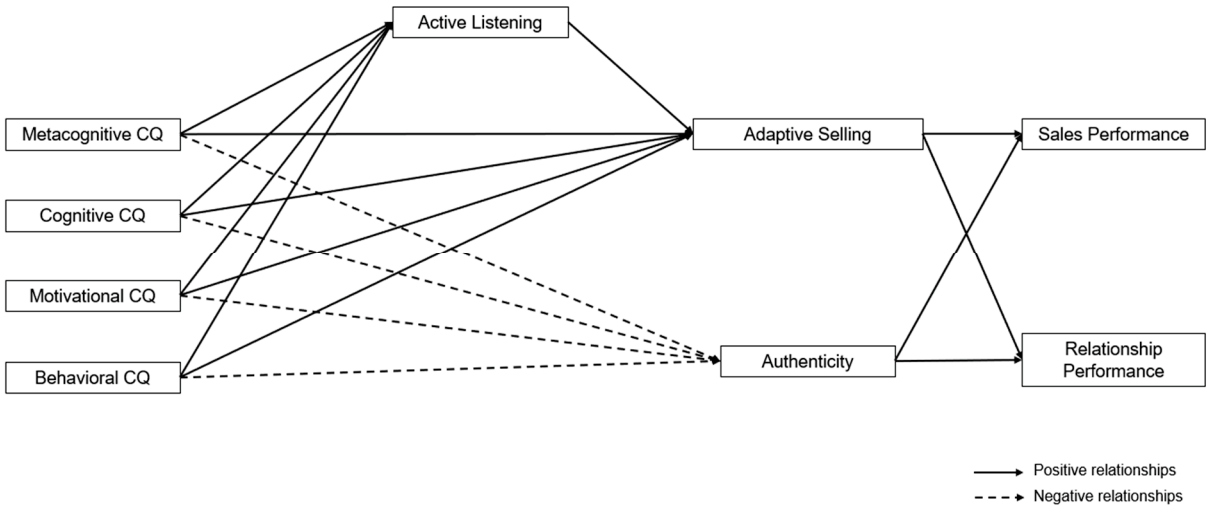


Figure 29: Model to be tested - Study 1

In this first study, multiple hypotheses are tested (see Table 30):

Direct Effects	
H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling. H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling. H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling. H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.
H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance. H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.
H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity. H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity. H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity. H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.
H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance. H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.
H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening. H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening. H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening. H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening.
H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	

Indirect Effects	
H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

Table 30: Hypotheses Study 1

4.2.2.2 Respondent's Characteristics

To collect the data for this first study, the services of Qualtrics, an online panel company, has been employed. The employment of a panel company already assures a minimum of data quality due to the removal of poor-quality data by the project manager of the company. This first data collection resulted in 245 completed questionnaires. A supplemental visual examination of the distribution of observations allowed the identification of outliers (succession of minimum or maximum values) and led to the removal of 47 additional respondents due to data quality problems (Delacroix et al., 2021). The final sample of this first study is composed of **198 French sales professionals**.

The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to over 64 with a mean age of 39 years. 40.9% of the respondents identify as male and 59.1% as female. Table 31 is summarizing some additional key features of this study's sample.

Age	Between 18 and 34 years	41.41%
	Between 35 and 54 years	44.45%
	Over 55 years	14.14%
Size of the company	1 to 9 employees	22.22%
	10 to 49 employees	19.19%
	50 to 249 employees	17.68%
	250 to 4999 employees	26.26%
	More than 5000 employees	14.65%
Industry Type	B2B	33.84%
	B2C	18.69%
	Both	47.47%
Regionality of the company	Local	27.27%
	National	37.37%
	International	27.27%
	Global	8.09%

Table 31: Sample Description Study 1

Furthermore, the main industry types represented in this sample are for the B2B sector: 24.22% Food, 11.18% Business Services, 7.45% Business Supplies and 6.83% each Health, Household and Technology. And for the B2C sector, the main industry types are: 25.19% Food, 16.03% Clothing, 14.5% Services and 6.87% Household.

In addition, the education level of the respondents is as follows: 17.17% less than high school, 35.86% high school, 21.72% some college, 15.15% four-year college (Bachelor) and 10.10% graduate school (Master and beyond).

Finally, the experience of the respondents in the sales function but also in their respective companies has been analyzed. The respondents' experience in the sales function ranges from 1 to 42 years with a mean experience of 13.5 years. With regards to the respondents' experience in their company, they have from 0 to 50 years of experience in their respective companies with a mean of 8.88 years.

4.2.2.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Measurement Model

Following the exploratory factor analysis, some items have already been removed and will not be included in the following confirmatory analysis.

As explained in Chapter 4.1.6.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Assessing Measurement Model Validity, the first step to do for confirmatory factor analysis is to check if the data is following a normalized distribution. Secondly, the measurement model needs to be tested. For this, the model fit indices of the measurement model need to be looked at as well as the factor loadings. In this step, some items need to be deleted if they do not explain sufficient variance in the variables. In addition to the model fit, the validity and reliability of the different scales also need to be assessed. Finally, it is necessary to test eventual method bias to know if there is a need to control for these during the hypotheses testing. These tests have been done using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and SPSS AMOS Version 26.

4.2.2.3.1 Normality of the data

As explained beforehand, the first step for confirmatory factor analysis is to check for the normalized distribution of the data by looking at the skewness and kurtosis values. The results can be found in Appendix 4 Normality of Data for all three Studies. All of the values are under the threshold of ±1.96 (Hair et al., 2019), meaning that the data can be assumed to be normally distributed.

4.2.2.3.2 Measurement Model Fit

Overall, the results of the confirmatory factor analysis confirm the overall adequacy of the measurement model to the data and yielded acceptable fit indices: $Chi^2/998 = .78$, Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) = .06, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .87, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .86, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .06. The following Table 32 is recapitulating these indices.

Model fit indices	
SRMR	.06
RMSEA	.06
CFI	.87
TLI	.86
χ^2/df	1778.2/998 (1.78)

Table 32: Model fit indices Measurement model - Study 1

With regards to the factor loadings, the standardized λ, some of them are under the threshold of .70, meaning that the constructs explain less than 50% of the variance in their respective variables. As shown in Table 33, the following items did not exceed this threshold: BehCQ1, LIST3, LIST5, AUTH1, AUTH5, AUTH7, AUTH9 & RELPERF3. Thus, these items have been excluded for the further analysis.

Variables	Items	Standardized λ (Factor Loadings)
Metacognitive CQ	MCogCQ1	.90
	MCogCQ2	.82
	MCogCQ3	.77
	MCogCQ4	.81
Cognitive CQ	CogCQ1	.76
	CogCQ2	.75
	CogCQ3	.87
	CogCQ4	.85
	CogCQ5	.77
	CogCQ6	.82
Motivational CQ	MotCQ1	.80
	MotCQ2	.83
	MotCQ3	.71
	MotCQ4	.84
	MotCQ5	.72
Behavioral CQ	BehCQ1	**.67**
	BehCQ2	.75
	BehCQ3	.73
	BehCQ4	.86
	BehCQ5	.74
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT1	.87
	ADAPT2	.81

	ADAPT3	.74
	ADAPT4	.83
	ADAPT5	.79
Active Listening	LIST1	.80
	LIST2	.72
	LIST3	**.55**
	LIST4	.75
	LIST5	**.66**
Authenticity	AUTH1	**.69**
	AUTH5	**.61**
	AUTH6	.72
	AUTH7	**.39**
	AUTH8	.76
	AUTH9	**.61**
	AUTH10	.71
Sales Performance	SPERF1	.79
	SPERF2	.76
	SPERF3	.80
	SPERF4	.75
	SPERF5	.74
	SPERF6	.72
Relationship Performance	RELPERF1	.83
	RELPERF2	**.66**
	RELPERF3	.83
	RELPERF4	.80

Table 33: Factor loadings Measurement model - Study 1

The confirmatory analysis of the new measurement model with these items excluded is showing even better model fit: $Chi^2/666 = 1.78$, Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) = .06, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .90, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .89, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .05 (see Table 34).

Model fit indices	
SRMR	.05
RMSEA	.06
CFI	.90
TLI	.89
χ^2/df	1186.1/666 (1.78)

Table 34: Model fit indices final measurement model - Study 1

4.2.2.3.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and Convergent Validity

With regards to construct validity and reliability of the measures, all constructs demonstrated high convergent validity with average variance extracted values ranging from .54 to .68 and thus exceeding the threshold of .50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In addition, they also display high reliability with construct reliabilities between .86 and .95 and Cronbach's alpha values between .78 and .92 – both exceeding the thresholds of .70 (Hair et al., 2019). Table 35 is summarizing these results.

Variables	Codes	AVE	Construct Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Metacognitive CQ	MCogCQ	.68	.94	.89
Cognitive CQ	CogCQ	.65	.95	.92
Motivational CQ	MotCQ	.61	.93	.88
Behavioral CQ	BehCQ	.59	.86	.88
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT	.65	.94	.90
Active Listening	LIST	.57	.87	.79
Authenticity	AUTH	.54	.86	.78
Sales Performance	SPERF	.58	.94	.89
Relationship Performance	RELPERF	.58	.88	.79

Table 35: Convergent validity and Reliability - Study 1

Discriminant Validity

With regards to discriminant validity, the RootAVE values of almost all variables is greater than the square of the correlations of the paired constructs. The only breach in this is the correlation between metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and motivational Intelligence that exceeds the RootAVE of motivational Cultural Intelligence (see Table 36). But since the values remain close to each other, it has been decided to still continue with the analysis.

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 MCogCQ	***.82***								
2 CogCQ	.74***	***.81***							
3 MotCQ	.80***	.72***	***.78***						
4 BehCQ	.76***	.60***	.65***	***.77***					
5 ADAPT	.71***	.44***	.58***	.69***	***.81***				
6 LIST	.69***	.41***	.57***	.66***	.68***	***.75***			
7 AUTH	-.31***	-.31***	-.26**	-.21*	-.21*	-.22*	***.74***		
8 SPERF	.44***	.45***	.35***	.40***	.45***	.25**	-.21*	***.76***	
9 RELPERF	.67***	.51***	.60***	.56***	.76***	.68***	-.24*	.43***	***.76***

RootAVE values are presented on the diagonal and are in bold italics.

The squares of the correlations between constructs are presented in the lower triangle.

** for p <.05, ** for p <.01, *** for p <.001*

Table 36: Discriminant validity and Squares of correlations - Study 1

4.2.2.3.4 Method Effect and Bias

As explained beforehand, two tests are used in order to evaluate the method effect: Harman single factor test as well as the common method factor test.

With regards to Harman's single factor test, a single factor explains 33.87% of cumulated variance which is under the threshold of 50%. Therefore, these results tend to show an absence of method effect.

Conversely, the modeling of a common method factor showed an extracted variance for the common method factor of 25%, which is over the average variance due to the method effect in marketing, estimated at 15.8% (Cote and Buckley, 1987). Thus, it can be concluded that there could be some method bias affecting this data set. To correct for this bias, the common factor has been included in hypothesis testing also in the structural model.

To conclude the confirmatory factor analysis and the measurement model testing of study 1, some items (BehCQ1, LIST3, LIST5, AUTH1, AUTH5, AUTH7, AUTH9 & RELPERF3) have been deleted for the rest of the analysis since they did not explain sufficient variance in the latent constructs. Furthermore, a common factor is included during the structural model testing to correct for method bias. The next chapter is now looking at the testing of the hypotheses by testing the structural model as specified in Chapter 4.2.2.1 Model to be tested.

4.2.2.4 Hypotheses Testing – Structural Model

In order to test the different hypotheses in this study, the structural model needs to be tested. Thus, the theoretical structural model is compared with the reality of the collected data. The structural model as specified beforehand has been tested as a whole via structural equations that allow for the simultaneous examination of several hypothesized causal relationships. Maximum likelihood method has been used to test the structural model with all the specified hypotheses at once.

4.2.2.4.1 Structural Model Fit

Before looking at the significance of the hypotheses, the model fit of the structural model needs to be validated. For this study, the structural model yields good fit indices: $Chi^2/678 = 1.78$, Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) = .06, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .90, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .89, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .06 (see Table 37).

Model fit indices	
SRMR	.06
RMSEA	.06
CFI	.90
TLI	.89
χ^2/df	1209.381/678 (1.78)

Table 37: Model Fit Structural model - Study 1

For the rest of the analysis, the research hypotheses are accepted when the hypothesis testing is statistically significant, meaning that the p-value ≤ .05. Furthermore, the standardized lambda coefficients or standardized factor loadings are looked at in order to determine the direction and importance of the relationships between the constructs.

4.2.2.4.2 Direct Effects

This first part of the hypotheses testing is looking at the direct effects that have been hypothesized before.

Cultural Intelligence positively influences Adaptive Selling

The first hypothesized direct effect is the positive influence of Cultural Intelligence on Adaptive selling:

H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

With regards to H1a, the results indicate that metacognitive Cultural Intelligence has a significant and positive influence on a salesperson's adaptive selling behavior (β= .421; p=.007). This result suggests that the higher salespeople's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence, the better they adapt their sales behaviors. Thus, hypothesis H1a is supported.

Secondly, cognitive Cultural Intelligence does not have a significant influence on adaptive selling (β=-.153; p=.136). The results show that cognitive Cultural Intelligence does not directly impact adaptive selling behaviors. Hypothesis H1b is therefore rejected.

The third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational, does also not have a significant influence on adaptive selling (β=-.029; p=.795). Contrary to what has been postulated, the results show that motivational Cultural Intelligence does not directly influence adaptive selling behaviors. Consequently, hypothesis H1c is rejected.

Finally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence as the fourth dimension significantly and positively influences a salesperson's adaptive selling behavior (β=.241; p=.044). This result signifies that the better salespeople know to behave in intercultural encounters (verbally and nonverbally), the better they adapt their selling behaviors to their clients. Hypothesis H1c is therefore supported.

Adaptive Selling leading to positive Performance Outcomes

The second hypothesis with regards to direct effects tested in this study is the positive influence of adaptive selling on two different sales outcomes, sales performance, and relationship performance. Thus, it has been hypothesized that:

H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.

H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance.

H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.

The results of the structural model testing show that adaptive selling actually has a positive and significant impact on short-term sales performance (β=.215; p=.050). This result indicates that the better salespeople adapt their selling behaviors during encounters with their clients, the better their short-term sales performance and the more chance they have to close the deal. Thus, hypothesis H2a is supported.

Furthermore, the results indicate that adaptive selling not only impacts short-term performance but also has a significant and positive impact on long-term relationship performance (β=.644; p <.001). Consequently, adaptive selling behaviors not only impacts if salespeople are able to sell in a short-term perspective. The better they adapt their selling behaviors, the better their relationships are becoming in the long run. Hypothesis H2b is therefore supported.

Cultural Intelligence negatively influences Authenticity

But as mentioned before, Cultural Intelligence is not necessarily always positive for salespeople. In this sense, a negative direct effect from Cultural Intelligence to authenticity has been hypothesized:

H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

With regards to H3a, metacognitive Cultural Intelligence does not have a significant effect on salesperson authenticity (β=-.338; p=.087). Contrary to what has been postulated, the results show that a salesperson's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence does not directly affect their authenticity levels. Thus, hypothesis H3a is rejected.

Furthermore, the same result also holds for cognitive Cultural Intelligence. This second dimension of Cultural Intelligence also does not have a significant effect on authenticity in this study (β=-.261; p=.055). Therefore, cognitive Cultural Intelligence seems not to affect salesperson authenticity directly. Hypothesis H3b is also rejected.

The third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational, also follows these results and does not have a significant effect on salesperson authenticity (β=.006; p=.968). Consequently, it can be deduced that motivational Cultural Intelligence also does not directly influence authenticity levels of salespeople in this study. Hypothesis H3c is therefore rejected.

Finally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence as the last dimension equally has no significant effect on salesperson authenticity (β=-.062; p=.673). Unlike hypothesized, the behavioral side of

Cultural Intelligence does not seem to have a direct effect on salesperson authenticity levels. Consequently, hypothesis H3d is also rejected.

Authenticity leading to positive Performance Outcomes

With regards to salesperson authenticity, it has also been hypothesized that authenticity positively influences different performance outcomes, in a short-term and a long-term perspective:

H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.

H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance.

H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.

Authenticity has a significant, but negative, impact on sales performance (β=-.343; p=.003). Contrary to what hypothesis H4a suggests, the results indicate that higher salesperson authenticity actually reduces short-term sales performance. Thus, hypothesis H4a is rejected.

With regards to the long-term relationship performance of salespeople, authenticity also impacts these in a significant negative way (β=-.214; p=.016). This result is also opposed to the original hypothesis and shows that higher authenticity levels worsen relationship performance outcomes. Hypothesis H4b is also rejected.

Cultural Intelligence positively influences Active Listening

In addition, Active Listening has also been hypothesized to be a positive outcome of Cultural Intelligence:

H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

First, metacognitive Cultural Intelligence indeed has a significant positive effect on active listening (β=.563; p <.001). This result reveals that the higher the metacognitive Cultural Intelligence of salespeople, the better they listen to their clients. Therefore, hypothesis H5a is supported.

With regards to the second dimension of Cultural Intelligence, cognitive, the structural model testing indicates that this dimension has a significant but negative impact on active listening (β=-.320; p=.005). As opposed to the original hypothesis, the more knowledge salespeople have about different cultures, the less they listen to their clients actively. Hypothesis H5b is rejected.

The third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational Cultural Intelligence has no significant effect on active listening (β=.104; p=.433). Consequently, it can be deduced that motivational Cultural Intelligence does not directly influence the listening level of salespeople in this study. Thus, hypothesis H5c is also rejected.

Additionally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence has a significant positive effect on active listening (β=.301; p=.029). As hypothesized before, salespeople with high behavioral Cultural Intelligence also listen better to the needs of their clients. Consequently, hypothesis H5d is supported.

Active Listening leading to higher Adaptive Selling

Finally, the last direct effect that is tested in this study is the positive effect from active listening to adaptive selling:

H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

As hypothesized, active listening significantly and positively influences adaptive selling behaviors (β=.259; p=.014). This result indicates that the better salespeople listen to their customers, the better they can adapt their sales behaviors afterwards according to their needs. Hypothesis H6 is therefore supported.

The following Table 38 recapitulates the results of the structural model testing for all the hypothesized direct effects.

				β	t	p
Cultural Intelligence – Adaptive Selling						
H1a	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	.421	2.686	.007
H1b	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	-.153	-1.490	.136
H1c	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	-.029	.260	.795
H1d	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	.241	2.014	.044
Adaptive Selling – Performance Outcomes						
H2a	Adaptive Selling	→	Sales Performance	.215	1.962	.050
H2b	Adaptive Selling	→	Relationship Performance	.644	6.307	.000
Cultural Intelligence - Authenticity						
H3a	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-.338	-1.711	.087
H3b	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-.261	-1.917	.055
H3c	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	.006	.040	.968
H3d	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-.062	-.422	.673
Authenticity – Performance Outcomes						
H4a	Authenticity	→	Sales Performance	-.343	-2.954	.003
H4b	Authenticity	→	Relationship Performance	-.214	-2.411	.016
Cultural Intelligence – Active Listening						
H5a	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	.563	3.365	.000
H5b	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	-.320	-2.801	.005
H5c	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	.104	.784	.433
H5d	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	.301	2.177	.029
Active Listening – Adaptive Selling						
H6	Active Listening	→	Adaptive Selling	.259	2.467	.014

Table 38: Hypothesis Results Direct Effects - Study 1

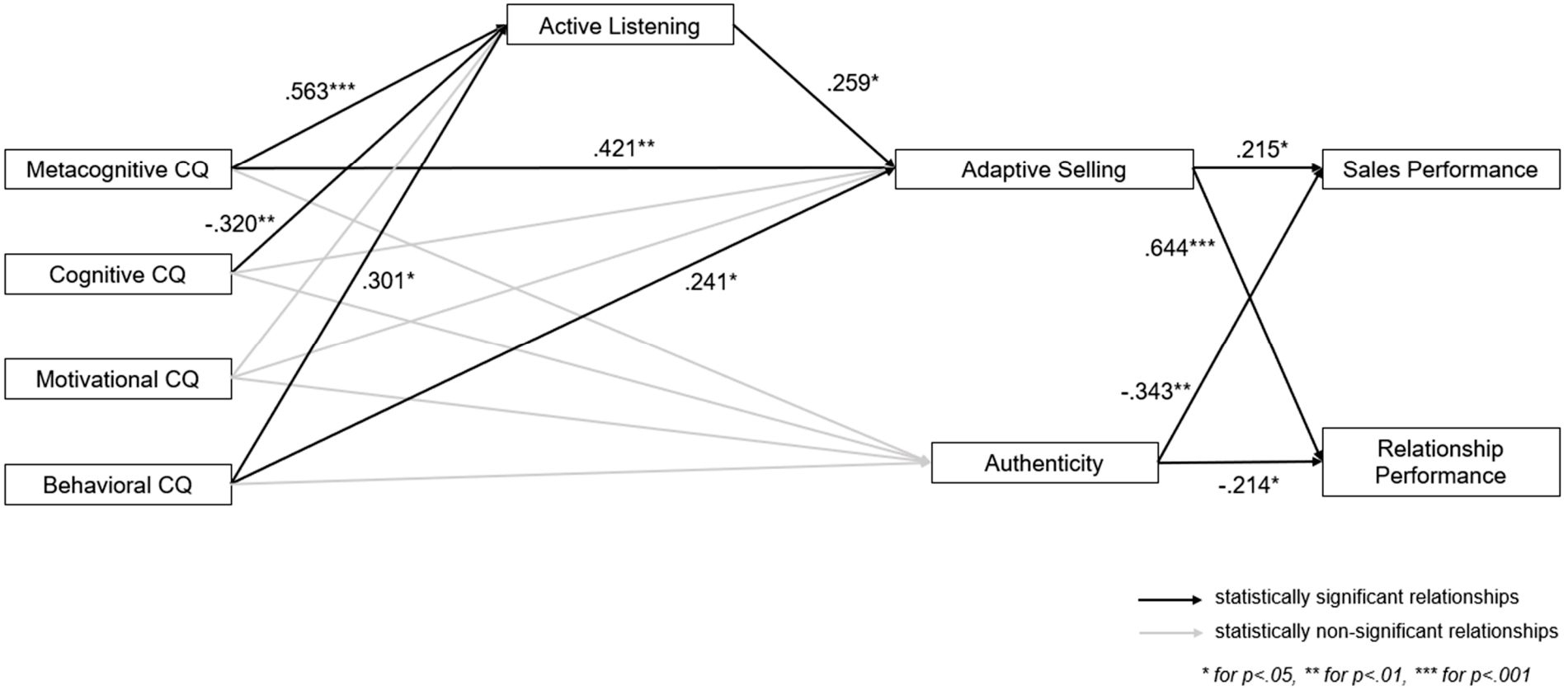


Figure 30: Results Structural model - Study 1

4.2.2.4.3 Mediation Analysis – Active Listening

This second part of the hypotheses testing is looking at the mediation hypotheses of active listening:

H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

Since the relationship between motivational Cultural Intelligence and active listening (the mediator) is not significant (see Table 38), it can be concluded that there is no mediation effect of active listening between motivational Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling. Thus, the indirect effect has not been tested and hypothesis H9c is rejected.

For the three remaining dimensions of Cultural Intelligence (metacognitive, cognitive and behavioral), both direct effects have been significant. Thus, the Bootstrapping method via SPSS AMOS Version 26 has been used in order to test the mediation effect (indirect effect), following the recommendation of Preacher and Hayes (2004).

With regards to the first dimension, the indirect effect from metacognitive Cultural Intelligence to adaptive selling via active listening is not significant (β=.145; p=.064). Consequently, active listening does not act as a mediator in the relationship between metacognitive Cultural

Intelligence and adaptive selling. Thus, the impact of metacognitive Cultural Intelligence to adaptive selling is not necessarily explained by better listening to the clients. Hypothesis H9a is rejected.

For the second dimension of Cultural Intelligence, cognitive, the results show that there is indeed a significant indirect effect (β=-.083; p=.045). Since the direct effect of cognitive Cultural Intelligence to adaptive selling without mediation effect is significant and negative (β=-.238; p=.018), and the presence of the mediator makes this link insignificant, there is a full mediation present. Therefore, the more cognitive knowledge salespeople possess about cultures and cultural differences, the less they are inclined to listen to their customers therefore worsening their adaptive selling behaviors. This is opposite to what has been hypothesized; thus hypothesis H9b is rejected.

Finally, the results show that the indirect effect from behavioral Cultural Intelligence to adaptive selling via active listening is significant (β=.078; p=.040). Considering that the direct effect in presence of the mediator still is significant, active listening is acting as a partial mediator on this relationship. Consequently, the better salespeople know how to behave in intercultural encounters, the more they listen to their clients and the better they adapt afterwards their sales behaviors. Therefore, hypothesis H9d is supported.

Conclusion Study 1

This first study has been the occasion to test the baseline model in a French context with the French translation of the scales. In order to do this, a sample of 198 French sales professionals has been surveyed and their responses analyzed. Table 39 recapitulates the results of the structural model and hypotheses testing.

Direct effects		
H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**
	H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**
H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance.	**Supported**
	H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.	**Supported**
H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected
	H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected
	H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected
	H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected
H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance.	Rejected
	H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.	Rejected

H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	**Supported**
	H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	Rejected
	H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	Rejected
	H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	**Supported**
H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.		**Supported**
Indirect effects		
H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**

Table 39: Summary Hypotheses Results - Study 1

As a result of this study, it can be concluded that metacognitive and behavioral Cultural Intelligence seem to be the most important dimensions in an intercultural sales context. They indeed influence positively adaptive selling behaviors. In addition, the results indicate that active listening is very important in this relationship since behavioral Cultural Intelligence influence positively adaptive selling via active listening. Thus, active listening is indeed a positive mediator for this dimension. Furthermore, adaptive selling is in this context shown to be important not only for short-term sales performance but also for long-term relationship

building since the results indicate that it impacts positively and sales performance and relationship performance.

With regards to the more negative side of Cultural Intelligence, the results indicate that all four dimensions of Cultural Intelligence have no significant impact on the authenticity level of a salesperson. But contrarily to what has been hypothesized, the results show that salesperson authenticity negatively impacts both short-term sales and long-term relationship performance. But when looking at these results, it is necessary to bear in mind that the scale used for assessing salesperson authenticity showed a lot of problems during the different stages of analysis (EFA and CFA) and only three of the ten items from the initial scale have been included in the final testing of the structural model.

Consequently, it has been decided to test this baseline model again but keeping the scales in their original language, English. This also allows for testing of the model in another cultural context. Finally, some company-level variables as antecedents of Cultural Intelligence have been included for the second study in order to better understand how Cultural Intelligence can be developed for intercultural sales.

4.3 English-speaking Context – Study 2 (India) and Study 3 (England)

The third part of this chapter is dedicated to the English and therefore original version of the questionnaire. As explained, the English scales all have already been tested in the literature and shown good reliability and validity values in the respective articles. It has therefore been decided that no exploratory factor analysis is needed for this language. As explained in the results of study 1, it has been decided to test the English version of the questionnaire in order to see if this version works better especially for the authenticity scale. Secondly, this also gives the opportunity to test the baseline model in another cultural context.

The first part of this subchapter is therefore testing the English questionnaire in an Indian context. This also allows checking for eventual differences between developed cultures like France and developing ones like India. In addition, this second study gives the opportunity to test two company-level antecedents to better understand how Cultural Intelligence can be developed in an intercultural sales context.

After this, the second part of this subchapter is testing the English questionnaire with English salespeople. This makes sure that all questions have been understood as they were meant to and that there are no language problems present. Moreover, for this third and last study, empathy has been added as a moderator variable to understand in even more detail how cultural Intelligence impacts adaptive selling behaviors and under what conditions. With regards to analysis, confirmatory factor analysis as well as covariance-based structural equation modeling has been done for both studies.

4.3.1 Study 2 – Company-level Antecedents of Cultural Intelligence

The second study of this research aims at testing the established baseline model in another cultural context. Additionally, this study also looks at how Cultural Intelligence can be developed by adding eventual antecedents. As explained beforehand, this second study is working with a sample of Indian sales professionals and testing the English version of the questionnaire.

4.3.1.1 Model to be tested

This second study is therefore testing the baseline model again. It is a second time looking at positive and negative outcomes of Cultural Intelligence in an intercultural sales context but with a sample from another cultural context. Thus, it is also examining the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and performance via active listening and adaptive selling as positive outcomes, on the one hand, and authenticity as a negative outcome, on the other hand. In addition to this, this second study adds organizational support and diversity climate as two company-level antecedents of Cultural Intelligence and explores if these two variables actually help in developing Cultural Intelligence levels of salespeople. Figure 31 is showing visually the structural model to be tested in this second study.

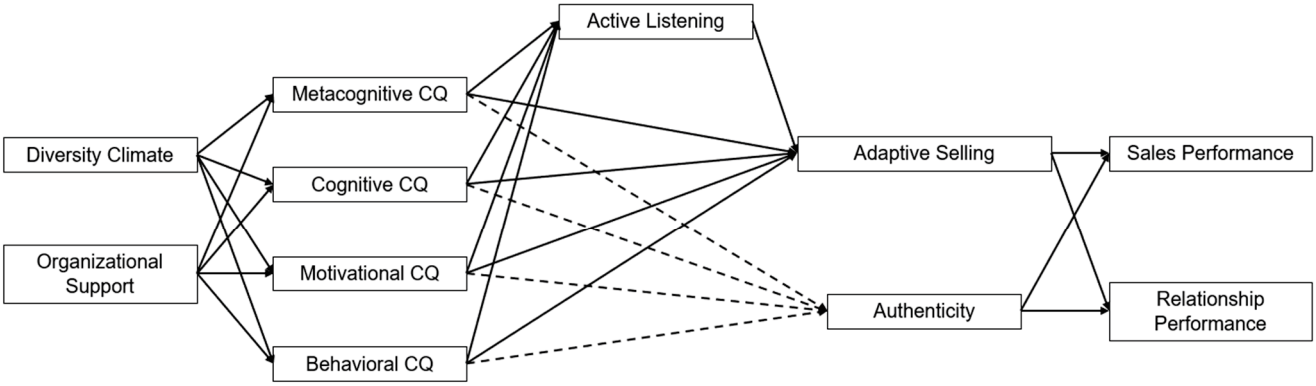


Figure 31: Model to be tested - Study 2

In this second study, the same hypotheses as study 1 plus two new ones with regards to antecedents of Cultural Intelligence are tested (see Table 40):

Direct Effects	
H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling. H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling. H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling. H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.
H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance. H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.
H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity. H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity. H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity. H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.
H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance. H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.
H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening. H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening. H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening. H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening.
H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	

H7: Organizational support is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H7a: Organizational support is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence. H7b: Organizational support is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence. H7c: Organizational support is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence. H7d: Organizational support is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.
H8: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H8a: Diversity climate is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence. H8b: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence. H8c: Diversity climate is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence. H8d: Diversity climate is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.
Indirect Effects	
H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

Table 40: Hypotheses - Study 2

4.3.1.2 Respondent's Characteristics

To collect the data for this second study, students have been recruited to collect data with Indian salespeople. This data collection has been part of a sales class project. The students have been given the established questionnaire and required to talk to different sales professionals in order to collect the data for this study. This data collection resulted in 185 completed questionnaires. A visual examination of the distribution of observations allowed the identification of outliers (succession of minimum or maximum values) and led to the removal of 11 additional respondents due to data quality problems (Delacroix et al., 2021). The final sample of this study is composed of **174 Indian sales professionals**.

The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 57 with a mean age of 34 years. 84.5% of the respondents identify as male and 15.5% as female. Table 41 is summarizing some additional key features of this study's sample.

Age	Between 18 and 34 years	59.20%
	Between 35 and 54 years	37.35%
	Over 55 years	3.45%
Size of the company	1 to 9 employees	1.15%
	10 to 49 employees	5.75%
	50 to 249 employees	24.71%
	250 to 4999 employees	33.91%
	More than 5000 employees	34.48%
Industry Type	B2B	62.07%
	B2C	4.02%
	Both	33.91%
Regionality of the company	Local	2.30%
	National	24.71%
	International	37.36%
	Global	35.63%

Table 41: Sample Description - Study 2

Furthermore, the main industry types represented in this sample are for the B2B sector: 25.90% Technology, 10.84% Business Services, 8.43% Health and 7.23% Financial. And for the B2C sector, the main industry types are: 16.67% Technology, 10.61% Financial and 9.09% each Services and Food.

In addition, the education level of the respondents is as follows: 2.30% some college, 25.86% four-year college (Bachelor) and 71.84% graduate school (Master and beyond).

Finally, the experience of the respondents in the sales function but also in their respective companies has been analyzed. The respondents' experience in the sales function ranges from 1 to 35 years with a mean experience of 9.09 years. With regards to the respondents' experience in their company, they have from 0 to 30 years of experience in their respective companies with a mean of 5.56 years.

4.3.1.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Measurement Model

As explained in Chapter 4.1.6.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Assessing Measurement Model Validity, the first step to do for confirmatory factor analysis is to check if the data is following a normalized distribution. Secondly, the measurement model needs to be tested. For this, the model fit indices of the measurement model need to be looked at as well as the factor loadings. In this step, some items need to be deleted if they do not explain sufficient variance in the variables. In addition to the model fit, the validity and reliability of the different scales also need to be assessed. Finally, it is necessary to test eventual method bias to know if there is a need to control for these during the hypotheses testing.

4.3.1.3.1 Normality of the data

As explained beforehand and done in the first study, the first step for confirmatory factor analysis is to check for the normalized distribution of the data by looking at the skewness and kurtosis values. The results can be found in Appendix 4 Normality of Data for all three Studies. All the skewness values are under the threshold of ±1.96 but some of the kurtosis values are not (Hair et al., 2019), meaning that several variables therefore show a breach of normality.

In order to reduce any problems related to multi-normality issues and the overestimation of parameters, a Bollen-Stine bootstrap procedure has been applied (Bollen and Stine, 1992). This procedure helps to test the robustness of the model and decide whether the model needs to be dismissed or not. For this dataset, a Bollen-Stine bootstrap test based on the creation of 200 bootstrap samples has been performed. The proposed model fit better in 135 and worse in 65 cases, leading to a p-value of .328. Considering the conventional threshold value of .05 for significance levels, the null hypothesis and therefore the model is not rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that the model is robust and shown a good adequacy for the collected data.

4.3.1.3.2 Measurement Model Fit

Overall, the results of the confirmatory factor analysis confirm the overall adequacy of the measurement model to the data and yielded acceptable fit indices: $Chi^2/1540 = 1.44$, Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) = .05, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .87, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .86, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .07. The following Table 42 is recapitulating these indices.

Model fit indices	
SRMR	.07
RMSEA	.05
CFI	.87
TLI	.86
χ^2/df	2219.51/1540 (1.44)

Table 42: Model fit indices Measurement model - Study 2

With regards to the factor loadings, the standardized λ, some of them are under the threshold of .70, meaning that the constructs explain less than 50% of the variance in their respective variables. As shown in Table 43, quite a few items did not exceed this threshold: MCogCQ4, CogCQ4, BehCQ1, ADAPT5, LIST1, LIST2, LIST3, AUTH1, AUTH2, AUTH3, AUTH4, AUTH5, AUTH7, AUTH9, AUTH10, SPERF5, RELPERF3, DIV4. Thus, these items have been excluded for the further analysis.

Variables	**Items**	**Standardized λ (Factor Loadings)**
Metacognitive CQ	MCogCQ1	.83
	MCogCQ2	.71
	MCogCQ3	.87
	MCogCQ4	**.68**
Cognitive CQ	CogCQ1	.77
	CogCQ2	.78
	CogCQ3	.82
	CogCQ4	**.69**
	CogCQ5	.79
	CogCQ6	.73
Motivational CQ	MotCQ1	.74
	MotCQ2	.73
	MotCQ3	.77
	MotCQ4	.72
	MotCQ5	.75
Behavioral CQ	BehCQ1	**.60**
	BehCQ2	.74
	BehCQ3	.72
	BehCQ4	.79
	BehCQ5	.79
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT1	.75
	ADAPT2	.72
	ADAPT3	.76
	ADAPT4	.81
	ADAPT5	**.66**
Active Listening	LIST1	**.54**
	LIST2	**.62**
	LIST3	**.57**
	LIST4	.73
	LIST5	.73

Authenticity	AUTH1	**.61**
	AUTH2	**.25**
	AUTH3	**.67**
	AUTH4	**.42**
	AUTH5	**.58**
	AUTH6	.72
	AUTH7	**.42**
	AUTH8	.73
	AUTH9	**.58**
	AUTH10	**.63**
Sales Performance	SPERF1	.71
	SPERF2	.70
	SPERF3	.87
	SPERF4	.75
	SPERF5	**.68**
	SPERF6	.72
Relationship Performance	RELPERF1	.73
	RELPERF2	.76
	RELPERF3	**.66**
	RELPERF4	.72
Organizational Support	ORGSUP1	.81
	ORGSUP2	.86
	ORGSUP3	.81
	ORGSUP4	.81
Diversity Climate	DIV1	.89
	DIV2	.73
	DIV3	.79
	DIV4	**.63**

Table 43: Factor loadings Measurement model - Study 2

The confirmatory analysis of the new measurement model with these items excluded is showing even better model fit: $Chi^2/685 = 1.43$, Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) = .05, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .92, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .91 and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .05 (see Table 44).

Model fit indices	
SRMR	.05
RMSEA	.05
CFI	.92
TLI	.91
χ^2/df	977.03/685 (1.43)

Table 44: Model fit indices final measurement model - Study 2

4.3.1.3.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and Convergent Validity

With regards to construct validity and reliability of the measures, all constructs demonstrated high convergent validity with average variance extracted values ranging from .55 to .68 and thus exceeding the threshold of .50. In addition, they also display high reliability with construct reliabilities between .73 and .89 and Cronbach's alpha values between .69 and .89. Table 45 is summarizing these results.

Variables	Codes	AVE	Construct Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Metacognitive CQ	MCogCQ	.65	.85	.84
Cognitive CQ	CogCQ	.60	.88	.88
Motivational CQ	MotCQ	.55	.86	.85
Behavioral CQ	BehCQ	.59	.85	.85
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT	.58	.85	.85
Active Listening	LIST	.59	.74	.73
Authenticity	AUTH	.59	.73	.69
Sales Performance	SPERF	.57	.87	.86
Relationship Performance	RELPERF	.53	.77	.77
Organizational Support	ORGSUP	.68	.89	.89
Diversity Climate	DIV	.65	.85	.84

Table 45: Convergent validity and Reliability - Study 2

Discriminant Validity

With regards to discriminant validity, the RootAVE values of all variables are greater than the square of the correlations of the paired constructs (see Table 46). Therefore, all constructs demonstrated high discriminant validity.

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 MCogCQ	***.81***										
2 CogCQ	.56***	***.78***									
3 MotCQ	.57***	.55***	***.74***								
4 BehCQ	.51***	.51***	.40***	***.77***							
5 ADAPT	.41***	.34***	.58***	.28*	***.77***						
6 LIST	.31*	.27*	.33*	.38***	.56***	***.77***					
7 AUTH	-.19 (n.s.)	-.03 (n.s.)	-.04 (n.s.)	-.25*	-.06 (n.s.)	-.08 (n.s.)	***.77***				
8 SPERF	.38***	.26*	.30*	.15 (n.s.)	.41***	.23*	-.08 (n.s.)	***.75***			
9 RELPERF	.43***	.33***	.51***	.36***	.65***	.36*	-.16 (n.s.)	.41***	***.73***		
10 ORGSUP	.34***	.32***	.40***	.15 (n.s.)	.48***	.24*	-.07 (n.s.)	.40***	.55***	***.82***	
11 DIV	.26*	.26*	.40***	.10 (n.s.)	.46***	.22*	.03 (n.s.)	.24*	.58***	.75***	***.81***

RootAVE values are presented on the diagonal and are in bold italics.
The squares of the correlations between constructs are presented in the lower triangle.
*(n.s.) for non-significant and thus p>.05; * for p<.05, ** for p<.01, *** for p<.001*

Table 46: Discriminant validity and Squares of correlations - Study 2

4.3.1.3.4 Method Effect and Bias

As has been done in study 1, two tests are used in order to evaluate the method effect: Harman single factor test as well as the common method factor test.

With regards to Harman's single factor test, a single factor explains 27.5% of cumulated variance which is under the threshold of 50%. Therefore, these results tend to show an absence of method effect.

Conversely, the modeling of a common method factor showed an extracted variance for the common method factor of 18.5%, which is over the average variance due to the method effect in marketing, estimated at 15.8% (Cote and Buckley, 1987). Thus, it can be concluded that there could be some method bias affecting this data set. In order to correct for this bias, the common factor has been included in hypothesis testing also in the structural model.

To conclude the confirmatory factor analysis and the measurement model testing of study 2, quite a few items have been deleted for the rest of the analysis since they did not explain sufficient variance in the latent constructs. Additionally, a common factor is included during the structural model testing in order to correct for method bias. The next chapter is now looking at the testing of the hypotheses by testing the structural model as specified in 4.3.1.1 Model to be tested.

4.3.1.4 Hypotheses Testing – Structural Model

As for study 1, the structural model as specified beforehand has been tested as a whole via structural equation modeling.

4.3.1.4.1 Structural Model Fit

Before looking at the significance of the hypotheses, the model fit of the structural model needs to be validated. For this study, the structural model yields acceptable fit indices: $Chi^2/713$ = 1.46, Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) = .05, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .91, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .90, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .09 (see Table 47).

Model fit indices	
SRMR	.09
RMSEA	.05
CFI	.91
TLI	.90
χ^2/df	1037.26/713 (1.46)

Table 47: Model fit Structural model - Study 2

As for study 1, for the rest of the analysis, the research hypotheses are accepted when the hypothesis testing is statistically significant, meaning that the p-value ≤ .05. Furthermore, the standardized lambda coefficients or standardized factor loadings are looked at in order to determine the direction and importance of the relationships between the constructs.

4.3.1.4.2 Direct Effects

This first part of the hypotheses testing is looking at the direct effects that have been hypothesized before.

Cultural Intelligence positively influences Adaptive Selling

The first hypothesized direct effect is the positive influence of Cultural Intelligence on Adaptive selling:

H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

With regards to H1a, the results indicate that metacognitive Cultural Intelligence does not have a significant influence on a salesperson's adaptive selling behavior (β=-.041; p=.689). This result indicates that salespeople's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence does not seem to impact their adaptive selling behavior directly. Thus, hypothesis H1a is rejected.

Secondly, cognitive Cultural Intelligence does also not have a significant influence on adaptive selling (β=-.120; p=.234). The results therefore show that cognitive Cultural Intelligence also does not directly impact adaptive selling behaviors. Hypothesis H1b is therefore rejected.

The third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational, does also not have a significant influence on adaptive selling (β=.194; p=.075). Contrary to what has been postulated, the results therefore show that motivational Cultural Intelligence does not directly influence adaptive selling behaviors. Consequently, hypothesis H1c is rejected.

Finally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence as the fourth dimension also does not significantly influence a salesperson's adaptive selling behavior (β=-.185; p=.079). This result signifies that the behavioral dimension of Cultural Intelligence does not directly influence their adaptive selling behaviors. Hypothesis H1c is therefore also rejected.

Adaptive Selling leading to positive Performance Outcomes

The second hypothesis with regards to direct effects tested in this study is the positive influence of adaptive selling on two different sales outcomes, sales performance, and relationship performance. Thus, it has been hypothesized that:

H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.

H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance.

H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.

The results of the structural model testing show that adaptive selling actually does not have any significant impact on short-term sales performance (β=.121; p=.242), unlike hypothesized. This result indicates that the short-term sales performance is not directly impacted by the way salespeople adapt to their clients. Thus, hypothesis H2a is rejected.

Furthermore, the results indicate that adaptive selling actually has a significant and positive impact on long-term relationship performance (β=.264; p=.050). Consequently, the better salespeople adapt their selling behaviors, the better their relationships are becoming in the long run. Hypothesis H2b is therefore supported.

Cultural Intelligence negatively influences Authenticity

But as mentioned before, Cultural Intelligence is not necessarily always positive for salespeople. In this sense, a negative direct effect from Cultural Intelligence to authenticity has been hypothesized:

H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

With regards to H3a, the results indicate that metacognitive Cultural Intelligence has a significant and negative influence on salesperson authenticity (β=-.247; p=.046). This result indicates that the higher salespeople's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence, worse their authenticity levels. Thus, hypothesis H3a is supported.

With regards to cognitive Cultural Intelligence, this second dimension of Cultural Intelligence does not have a significant effect on authenticity in this study (β=-.029; p=.755). Therefore, cognitive Cultural Intelligence seems not to affect salesperson authenticity directly. Hypothesis H3b is rejected.

The third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational, also follows this result and does not have a significant effect on salesperson authenticity (β=-.031; p=.758). Consequently, it can be deduced that motivational Cultural Intelligence also does not directly influence authenticity levels of salespeople in this study. Hypothesis H3c is therefore rejected.

Finally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence as the last dimension equally has no significant effect on salesperson authenticity (β=-.197; p=.081). Unlike hypothesized, the behavioral side of Cultural Intelligence does not seem to have a direct effect on salesperson authenticity levels in this study. Consequently, hypothesis H3d is also rejected.

Authenticity leading to positive Performance Outcomes

With regards to salesperson authenticity, it has also been hypothesized that authenticity positively influences different sales outcomes, in a short-term and a long-term perspective:

H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.

H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance.

H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.

Authenticity does not have a significant impact on sales performance (β=-.021; p=.816). Contrary to what hypothesis H4a suggests, the results indicate that the authenticity level of a salesperson actually does not directly impact their short-term sales performance levels in this study. Thus, hypothesis H4a is rejected.

With regards to the long-term relationship performance of salespeople, authenticity also does not impact these in a significant way (β=-.117; p=.297). This result is also contrary to the original hypothesis and shows that higher authenticity levels do not directly impact the relationship outcomes in this context. Hypothesis H4b is also rejected.

Cultural Intelligence positively influences Active Listening

In addition, Active Listening has also been hypothesized to be a positive outcome of Cultural Intelligence:

H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

First, metacognitive Cultural Intelligence in this study does not have any significant effect on active listening (β=-.059; p=.584). This result reveals that the level of metacognitive Cultural Intelligence of salespeople does not impact directly how they listen to their clients. Therefore, hypothesis H5a is rejected.

The same result also holds for the second dimension of Cultural Intelligence. Cognitive Cultural Intelligence therefore has no significant effect on active listening in this study (β=-.080; p=.449). As opposed to the original hypothesis, there is no direct effect from the amount of cognitive knowledge that salespeople have about cultural differences on the way they listen actively to their clients. Hypothesis H5b is rejected.

The third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational Cultural Intelligence also follows these results and has no significant effect on active listening (β=-.006; p=.961). Consequently, it can be deduced that motivational Cultural Intelligence does not directly influence the listening level of salespeople in this study. Thus, hypothesis H5c is also rejected.

Unlike all three other dimensions, behavioral Cultural Intelligence actually has a significant positive effect on active listening (β=.224; p=.043). As hypothesized, salespeople with high

behavioral Cultural Intelligence also listen better to the needs of their clients. Consequently, hypothesis H5d is supported.

Active Listening leading to higher Adaptive Selling

The last direct effect of the baseline model tested in this study is the positive effect from active listening to adaptive selling:

H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

As hypothesized, active listening significantly and positively influences adaptive selling behaviors (β=.395; p=.002). This result indicates that the better salespeople listen to their customers, the better they can adapt their sales behaviors afterwards according to their needs. Hypothesis H6 is therefore supported.

Organizational Support as Company-level Antecedent of Cultural Intelligence

With regards to the hypothesized antecedents of Cultural Intelligence, first the impact of organizational support on Cultural Intelligence is looked at:

H7: Organizational support is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.

H7a: Organizational support is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H7b: Organizational support is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H7c: Organizational support is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.

H7d: Organizational support is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

With regards to H7a, the results indicate that organizational support does not have a significant influence on a salesperson's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence level (β=.027; p=.836). This result indicates that, in contrast to the hypothesis, the amount of support within a company does not seem to directly impact salespeople's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence. Thus, hypothesis H7a is rejected.

Secondly, this variable does also not have a significant influence on the second dimension, cognitive Cultural Intelligence (β=.029; p=.825). The results therefore show that organizational support also does not directly impact the amount of cognitive knowledge salespeople have about different cultures. Hypothesis H7b is therefore also rejected.

This result also holds for the third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational. For this variable, organizational support also does not have a significant influence on it (β=-.033; p=.817). Contrary to what has been postulated, the results therefore show that organizational support does not directly influence how motivated salespeople are to learn about cultural differences. Consequently, hypothesis H7c is rejected.

Finally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence as the fourth dimension is also not significantly influenced by organizational support (β=-.103; p=.431). This result signifies that the amount of support from the company does not impact directly how salespeople behave verbally and nonverbally during intercultural encounters. Hypothesis H7d is therefore also rejected.

Diversity Climate as Company-level Antecedent of Cultural Intelligence

Finally, the last direct effect that is tested in this second study is the impact of diversity climate on Cultural Intelligence:

H8: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.

H8a: Diversity climate is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H8b: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H8c: Diversity climate is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.

H8d: Diversity climate is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

Diversity climate has a significant, but negative, impact on metacognitive Cultural Intelligence in this study (β=-.291; p=.034). Contrary to what hypothesis H8a suggests, the results indicate that a more diverse climate in a company actually reduces salespeople's way of acquiring knowledge during intercultural encounters. Thus, hypothesis H8a is rejected.

However, the results indicate that diversity climate does not impact significantly cognitive Cultural Intelligence (β=-.259; p=.054). Consequently, it can be deduced that the diversity climate within a company does not directly influence the cognitive dimension of Cultural Intelligence in this study. Thus, hypothesis H8b is also rejected.

The same result also holds for the third dimension of Cultural Intelligence. Motivational Cultural Intelligence therefore is not significantly impacted by diversity climate in this study (β=-.106;

p=.464). As opposed to the original hypothesis, there is no direct effect from the diversity climate to the amount of motivational Cultural Intelligence. Hypothesis H8c is therefore rejected.

With regards to the behavioral dimension of Cultural Intelligence, diversity climate also impacts these in a significant negative way (β=-.273; p=.044). This result is also opposed to the original hypothesis and shows that a more diverse climate actually worsens the behavioral dimension of Cultural Intelligence of salespeople. Hypothesis H8d is also rejected.

The following Table 48 recapitulates the results of the structural model testing for all the hypothesized direct effects.

				β	t	p
Cultural Intelligence – Adaptive Selling						
H1a	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	-.041	.400	.689
H1b	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	-.120	-1.190	.234
H1c	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	.194	1.779	.075
H1d	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	-.185	-1.758	.079
Adaptive Selling – Performance Outcomes						
H2a	Adaptive Selling	→	Sales Performance	.121	1.171	.242
H2b	Adaptive Selling	→	Relationship Performance	.264	1.964	.050
Cultural Intelligence - Authenticity						
H3a	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-.247	-1.999	.046
H3b	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-.029	.312	.755
H3c	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-.031	-.308	.758
H3d	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-.197	-1.748	.081
Authenticity – Performance Outcomes						
H4a	Authenticity	→	Sales Performance	-.021	-.232	.816
H4b	Authenticity	→	Relationship Performance	-.117	-1.043	.297

Cultural Intelligence – Active Listening						
H5a	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	-.059	-.547	.584
H5b	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	-.080	-.758	.449
H5c	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	-.006	-.049	.961
H5d	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	.224	2.022	.043
Active Listening – Adaptive Selling						
H6	Active Listening	→	Adaptive Selling	.395	3.040	.002
Organizational support – Cultural Intelligence						
H7a	Organizational support	→	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	.027	.207	.836
H7b	Organizational support	→	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	.029	.222	.825
H7c	Organizational support	→	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	-.033	-.232	.817
H7d	Organizational support	→	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	-.103	-.787	.431
Diversity climate – Cultural Intelligence						
H8a	Diversity climate	→	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	-.291	-2.116	.034
H8b	Diversity climate	→	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	-.259	-1.927	.054
H8c	Diversity climate	→	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	-.106	-.733	.464
H8d	Diversity climate	→	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	-.273	-2.017	.044

Table 48: Hypothesis Results Direct Effects - Study 2

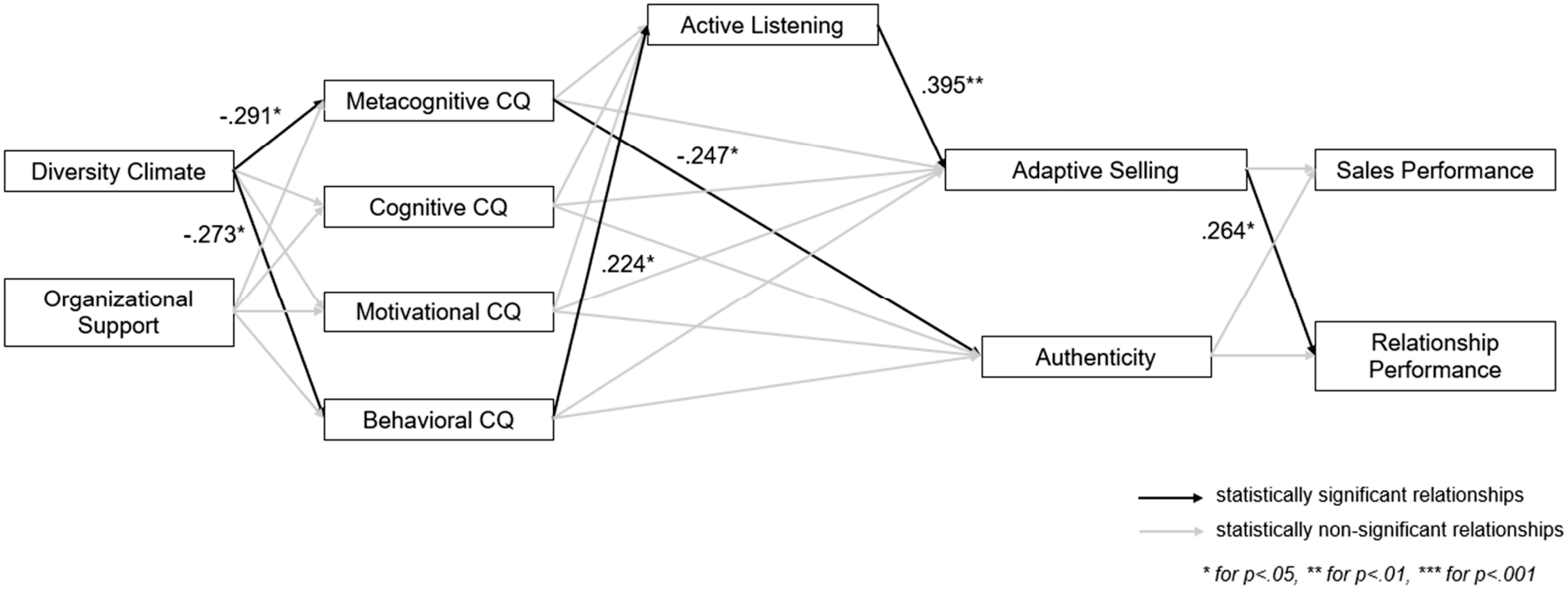


Figure 32: Results Structural model - Study 2

4.3.1.4.3 Mediation Analysis – Active Listening

This second part of the hypotheses testing is looking at the mediation hypotheses of active listening:

H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

Since the relationship between metacognitive, cognitive, and motivational Cultural Intelligence and active listening (the mediator) is not significant, it can be concluded that there is no mediation effect of active listening between these three dimensions of Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling in this study. Thus, the indirect effect has not been tested and the hypotheses H9a, H9b and H9c are rejected.

For the remaining dimension of Cultural Intelligence (behavioral), both direct effects have been significant. Thus, the Bootstrapping method via SPSS AMOS Version 26 has been used in order to test the mediation effect (indirect effect), following the recommendation of Preacher and Hayes (2004).

With regards to this last dimension, the indirect effect from behavioral Cultural Intelligence to adaptive selling via active listening is not significant (β=.088; p=.063). The results therefore show that active listening does not act as a mediator in the relationship between behavioral Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling. Consequently, hypothesis H9d is also rejected.

Conclusion Study 2

This second study has been the occasion to test the baseline model again in an Indian context with the original, English version of the questionnaire. In addition, this study has given the opportunity to also test some company-level antecedents to better understand how Cultural Intelligence of salespeople is developed. In order to do this, a sample of 174 Indian sales professionals has been surveyed and their responses analyzed. Table 49 recapitulates the results of the structural model and hypotheses testing.

Direct Effects		
H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance.	Rejected
	H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.	**Supported**
H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	**Supported**
	H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected
	H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected
	H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected

H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance.	Rejected
	H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.	Rejected
H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	Rejected
	H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	Rejected
	H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	Rejected
	H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	**Supported**
H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.		**Supported**
H7: Organizational support is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H7a: Organizational support is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
	H7b: Organizational support is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
	H7c: Organizational support is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
	H7d: Organizational support is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
H8: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H8a: Diversity climate is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
	H8b: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
	H8c: Diversity climate is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
	H8d: Diversity climate is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected

Indirect Effects		
H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected

Table 49: Summary Hypotheses Results - Study 2

As a result of this study, it can be concluded that behavioral Cultural Intelligence seems to be the most important dimension in an intercultural sales context in this cultural context. It is the only dimension that showed a significant positive effect on active listening which, in turn, influences positively adaptive selling behaviors. All three other dimensions of Cultural Intelligence did not show any significant effect neither on active listening, not on adaptive selling directly.

In addition, adaptive selling is in this context shown to be important especially for long-term relationship building since the results indicate that it impacts positively relationship performance outcomes. No significant effect has been found on short-term sales performance in this context.

With regards to the more negative side of Cultural Intelligence, the results indicate that all four dimensions of Cultural Intelligence have no significant impact on the authenticity level of a salesperson. But as for study 1, it is necessary to bear in mind that the scale used for assessing salesperson authenticity showed a lot of problems during the analysis also in this study. Only two of the ten items from the initial scale have been included in the final testing of the structural model.

In addition to problems with this scale, the data in general showed some problems during this study. Besides normality issues, there have also been some issues with quite some items who did not load well enough on their respective factors and therefore did not explain enough variance in them. A total of 18 items have been deleted for the structural model testing.

Because of all these data problems, it has been decided to test this English version of the questionnaire with English natives. This therefore makes sure that all questions have been understood as intended and there are no language problems. Furthermore, some bias could also be introduced by the way the data has been collected. Since students have collected the data, there is a possibility that this direct collection of data introduced some bias with regards to the type of salespeople asked to respond to the questionnaire. In addition, the students filled the questionnaire out with the salespeople together, introducing perhaps some social desirability bias. Consequently, it has been decided to use the services of Qualtrics as an online panel company again for the third study.

4.3.2 Study 3 – Empathy as a positive Moderator

The third study of this research aims at testing the established model of study 2 in another cultural context using the original language that the scales were developed in, English, with native speakers. Additionally, this study also looks at how and under what circumstances Cultural Intelligence impacts adaptive selling by introducing empathy as a moderator variable. As explained beforehand, this third study is working with a sample of English sales professionals and testing the English version of the questionnaire.

4.3.2.1 Model to be tested

This third study is therefore testing the baseline model a third time. It is again looking at positive and negative outcomes of Cultural Intelligence in an intercultural sales context but with a sample from another cultural context and native speakers. Thus, it is also examining the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and performance via active listening and adaptive selling as positive outcomes, on the one hand, and authenticity as a negative outcome, on the other hand. As added by study 2, this third study also examines organizational support and diversity climate as two company-level antecedents of Cultural Intelligence and explores if these two variables actually help in developing Cultural Intelligence levels of salespeople in an English context. Finally, this study adds empathy as a moderator of the relationship between Cultural intelligence and adaptive selling to better understand under which circumstances Cultural Intelligence is important for intercultural sales. Figure 33 is showing visually the structural model to be tested in this study.

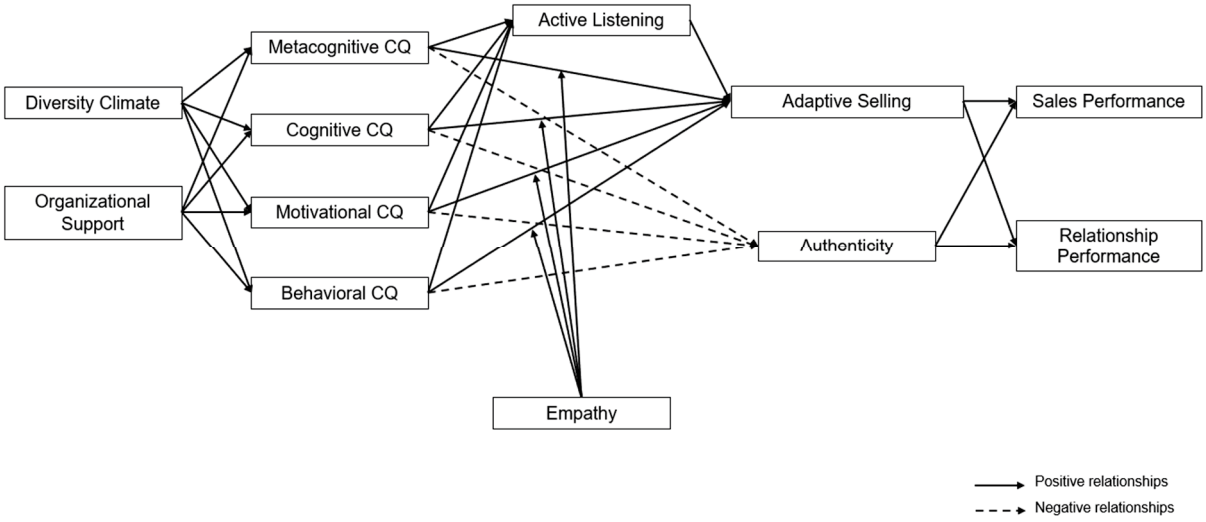


Figure 33: Model to be tested - Study 3

In this third study, the same hypotheses as studies 1 and 2 plus a new moderation hypothesis are tested (see Table 50):

Direct Effects	
H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling. H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling. H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling. H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.
H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance. H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.

H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity. H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity. H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity. H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.
H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance. H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.
H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening. H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening. H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening. H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Active Listening.
H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	
H7: Organizational support is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H7a: Organizational support is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence. H7b: Organizational support is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence. H7c: Organizational support is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence. H7d: Organizational support is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

H8: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H8a: Diversity climate is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence. H8b: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence. H8c: Diversity climate is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence. H8d: Diversity climate is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.
Indirect Effects	
H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.
H10: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H10a: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H10b: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H10c: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling. H10d: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

Table 50: Hypotheses - Study 3

4.3.2.2 Respondent's Characteristics

To collect the data for this third study, the services of Qualtrics, an online panel company, has been employed again – like for the first study. Again, the project manager of the company already assured a minimum of data quality due to the removal of poor-quality data. This third data collection resulted in 217 completed questionnaires. A supplemental visual examination of the distribution of observations allowed the identification of outliers (succession of minimum or maximum values) and led to the removal of 10 additional respondents due to data quality problems (Delacroix et al., 2021). The final sample of this third study is composed of **207 English sales professionals**.

The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 72 with a mean age of 41 years. 32.37% of the respondents identify as male and 67.63% as female. Table 51 is summarizing some additional key features of this study's sample.

Age	Between 18 and 34 years	38.16%
	Between 35 and 54 years	43.00%
	Over 55 years	18.84%
Size of the company	1 to 9 employees	8.21%
	10 to 49 employees	14.97%
	50 to 249 employees	18.36%
	250 to 4999 employees	26.09%
	More than 5000 employees	32.37%
Industry Type	B2B	28.02%
	B2C	20.29%
	Both	51.69%
Regionality of the company	Local	22.70%
	National	39.13%
	International	19.81%
	Global	18.36%

Table 51: Sample Description - Study 3

Furthermore, the main industry types represented in this sample are for the B2B sector: 19.39% Food, 10.30% Business Services, 9.70% Technology and 9.09% Health. And for the B2C sector, the main industry types are: 17.45% Food, 10.74% each Clothing and Services and 8.05% Technology.

In addition, the education level of the respondents is as follows: 5.31% less than high school, 29.95% high school, 31.4% some college, 22.22% four-year college (Bachelor) and 11.11% graduate school (Master and beyond).

Finally, the experience of the respondents in the sales function but also in their respective companies has been analyzed. The respondents' experience in the sales function ranges from 1 to 50 years with a mean experience of 14.10 years. With regards to the respondents' experience in their company, they have from 1 to 47 years of experience in their respective companies with a mean of 6.33 years.

4.3.2.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Measurement Model

As explained in Chapter 4.1.6.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Assessing Measurement Model Validity, the first step to do for confirmatory factor analysis is to check if the data is following a normalized distribution. Secondly, the measurement model needs to be tested. For this, the model fit indices of the measurement model need to be looked at as well as the factor loadings. In this step, some items need to be deleted if they do not explain sufficient variance in the variables. In addition to the model fit, the validity and reliability of the different scales also need to be assessed. Finally, it is necessary to test eventual method bias to know if there is a need to control for these during the hypotheses testing.

4.3.2.3.1 Normality of the data

As explained beforehand and done in the first study, the first step for confirmatory factor analysis is to check for the normalized distribution of the data by looking at the skewness and kurtosis values. The results can be found in Appendix 4 Normality of Data for all three Studies. All of the values are under the threshold of ±1.96 (Hair et al., 2019), meaning that the data can be assumed to be normally distributed.

4.3.2.3.2 Measurement Model Fit

Overall, the results of the confirmatory factor analysis confirm the overall adequacy of the measurement model to the data and yielded acceptable fit indices: $Chi^2/1824 = 1.57$, Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) = .05, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .90, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .89, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .07. The following Table 52 is recapitulating these indices.

Model fit indices	
SRMR	.07
RMSEA	.05
CFI	.90
TLI	.89
χ^2/df	2855.96/1824 (1.57)

Table 52: Model fit indices Measurement model - Study 3

With regards to the factor loadings, the standardized λ, some of them are under the threshold of .70, meaning that the constructs explain less than 50% of the variance in their respective variables. As shown in Table 53, the following items did not exceed this threshold: LIST1, LIST3, AUTH1, AUTH2, AUTH3, AUTH4, AUTH5, AUTH7, AUTH9 & RELPERF2. Thus, these items have been excluded for the further analysis.

Variables	Items	Standardized λ (Factor Loadings)
Metacognitive CQ	MCogCQ1	.86
	MCogCQ2	.83
	MCogCQ3	.83
	MCogCQ4	.83
Cognitive CQ	CogCQ1	.87
	CogCQ2	.84
	CogCQ3	.86
	CogCQ4	.86
	CogCQ5	.87
	CogCQ6	.87
Motivational CQ	MotCQ1	.74
	MotCQ2	.87
	MotCQ3	.88
	MotCQ4	.79
	MotCQ5	.84
Behavioral CQ	BehCQ1	.76
	BehCQ2	.86
	BehCQ3	.71
	BehCQ4	.85
	BehCQ5	.83
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT1	.82
	ADAPT2	.79
	ADAPT3	.86
	ADAPT4	.84
	ADAPT5	.75
Active Listening	LIST1	**.63**
	LIST2	.74
	LIST3	**.63**
	LIST4	.76
	LIST5	.79

Authenticity	AUTH1	**.57**
	AUTH2	**.20**
	AUTH3	**.64**
	AUTH4	**.55**
	AUTH5	**.69**
	AUTH6	.77
	AUTH7	**.55**
	AUTH8	.73
	AUTH9	**.61**
	AUTH10	.78
Sales Performance	SPERF1	.79
	SPERF2	.82
	SPERF3	.77
	SPERF4	.79
	SPERF5	.82
	SPERF6	.81
Relationship Performance	RELPERF1	.81
	RELPERF2	**.64**
	RELPERF3	.92
	RELPERF4	.82
Organizational Support	ORGSUP1	.91
	ORGSUP2	.93
	ORGSUP3	.88
	ORGSUP4	.87
Diversity Climate	DIV1	.89
	DIV2	.84
	DIV3	.85
	DIV4	.74
Empathy	EMPA1	.87
	EMPA2	.80
	EMPA3	.83
	EMPA4	**.63**
	EMPA5	.84

Table 53: Factor loadings Measurement model - Study 3

The confirmatory analysis of the new measurement model with these items excluded is showing even better model fit: $Chi^2/1208 = 1.55$, Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) = .05, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .92, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .91 and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .05 (see Table 54).

Model fit indices	
SRMR	.05
RMSEA	.05
CFI	.92
TLI	.91
χ^2/df	1868.82/1208 (1.55)

Table 54: Model fit indices final measurement model - Study 3

4.3.2.3.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and Convergent Validity

With regards to construct validity and reliability of the measures, all constructs demonstrated high convergent validity with average variance extracted values ranging from .59 to .74 and thus exceeding the threshold of .50. In addition, they also display high reliability with construct reliabilities between .81 and .94 and Cronbach's alpha values between .81 and .94 – both exceeding the thresholds of .70. Table 55 is summarizing these results.

Variables	Codes	AVE	Construct Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Metacognitive CQ	MCogCQ	.70	.90	.90
Cognitive CQ	CogCQ	.74	.94	.94
Motivational CQ	MotCQ	.68	.91	.91
Behavioral CQ	BehCQ	.65	.90	.90
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT	.66	.90	.90
Active Listening	LIST	.60	.81	.81
Authenticity	AUTH	.59	.81	.81
Sales Performance	SPERF	.64	.91	.91
Relationship Performance	RELPERF	.73	.89	.90
Organizational Support	ORGSUP	.81	.94	.94
Diversity Climate	DIV	.69	.90	.90
Empathy	EMPA	.70	.90	.90

Table 55: Convergent validity and Reliability - Study 3

Discriminant Validity

With regards to discriminant validity, the RootAVE values of all variables are greater than the square of the correlations of the paired constructs (see Table 56). Therefore, all constructs demonstrated high discriminant validity.

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 MCogCQ	***.84***											
2 CogCQ	.42***	***.86***										
3 MotCQ	.63***	.64***	***.83***									
4 BehCQ	.50***	.58***	.61***	***.81***								
5 ADAPT	.49***	.42***	.51***	.52***	***.81***							
6 LIST	.49***	.24*	.46***	.57***	.58***	***.77***						
7 AUTH	-.34***	-.24*	-.29***	-.51***	-.39***	-.46***	***.77***					
8 SPERF	.33***	.39***	.37***	.27***	.54***	.41***	-.20*	***.80***				
9 RELPERF	.32***	.40**	.41***	.33***	.54***	.45***	-.20*	.35***	***.86***			
10 ORGSUP	.29***	.38***	.42***	.24*	.49***	.28***	-.06 (n.s.)	.32***	.52***	***.90***		
11 DIV	.43***	.30***	.53***	.25*	.45***	.33***	-.09 (n.s.)	.36***	.36***	.80***	***.83***	
12 EMPA	.58***	.22*	.53***	.46***	.60***	.61***	-.31***	.31***	.35***	.41***	.50***	***.83***

RootAVE values are presented on the diagonal and are in bold italics.
The squares of the correlations between constructs are presented in the lower triangle.
*(n.s.) for non-significant and thus p>.05; * for p<.05, ** for p<.01, *** for p<.001*

Table 56: Discriminant validity and Squares of correlations - Study 3

4.3.2.3.4 Method Effect and Bias

As has been done in studies 1 and 2, two tests are used to evaluate the method effect: Harman single factor test as well as the common method factor test.

With regards to Harman's single factor test, a single factor explains 33.33% of cumulated variance which is under the threshold of 50%. Therefore, these results tend to show an absence of method effect.

Conversely, the modeling of a common method factor showed an extracted variance for the common method factor of 29.16%, which is over the average variance due to the method effect in marketing, estimated at 15.8% (Cote and Buckley, 1987). Thus, it can be concluded that there could be some method bias affecting this data set. To correct for this bias, the common factor has been included in hypothesis testing also in the structural model.

To conclude the confirmatory factor analysis and the measurement model testing of study 3, some few items have been deleted for the rest of the analysis since they did not explain sufficient variance in the latent constructs. Additionally, a common factor is included during the structural model testing in order to correct for method bias. The next chapter is now looking at the testing of the hypotheses by testing the structural model as specified in 4.3.2.1 Model to be tested.

4.3.2.4 Hypotheses Testing – Structural Model

As for studies 1 and 2, the structural model as specified beforehand has been tested as a whole except for the moderation effect. With regards to the moderation effect, a separate model has then been specified that included the direct as well as the interaction effects and allowed the testing of the significance of the different links.

4.3.2.4.1 Structural Model Fit

Before looking at the significance of the hypotheses, the model fit of the structural model needs to be validated. For this study, the structural model yields acceptable fit indices: $Chi^2/1053$ = 1.71, Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) = .06, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .90, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .90, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .09 (see Table 57).

Model fit indices	
SRMR	.09
RMSEA	.06
CFI	.90
TLI	.90
χ^2/df	1802.03/1053 (1.71)

Table 57: Model fit Structural model - Study 3

As for studies 1 and 2, for the rest of the analysis, the research hypotheses are accepted when the hypothesis testing is statistically significant, meaning that the p-value ≤ .05. Furthermore, the standardized lambda coefficients or standardized factor loadings are looked at in order to determine the direction and importance of the relationships between the constructs.

4.3.2.4.2 Direct Effects

This first part of the hypotheses testing is looking at the direct effects that have been hypothesized before.

Cultural Intelligence positively influences Adaptive Selling

The first hypothesized direct effect is the positive influence of Cultural Intelligence on Adaptive selling:

H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

With regards to H1a, the results indicate that metacognitive Cultural Intelligence has a significant and positive influence on a salesperson's adaptive selling behavior (β= .158; p=.022). This result suggests that the higher salespeople's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence, the better they adapt their sales behaviors. Thus, hypothesis H1a is supported.

Secondly, cognitive Cultural Intelligence also has a significant and positive influence on adaptive selling in this study (β=.189; p=.004). The results therefore show that salespeople who have more cognitive knowledge of cultural differences adapt better their sales behaviors. Hypothesis H1b is therefore supported as well.

The third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational, does not have a significant influence on adaptive selling (β=.089; p=.162). Contrary to what has been postulated, the results therefore show that motivational Cultural Intelligence does not directly influence adaptive selling behaviors. Consequently, hypothesis H1c is rejected.

Finally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence as the fourth dimension also does not significantly influence a salesperson's adaptive selling behavior (β=.067; p=.363). This result signifies that the behavioral dimension of Cultural Intelligence does not directly influence the adaptive selling behaviors of salespeople. Hypothesis H1c is therefore also rejected.

Adaptive Selling leading to positive Performance Outcomes

The second hypothesis with regards to direct effects tested in this study is the positive influence of adaptive selling on two different sales outcomes, sales performance, and relationship performance. Thus, it has been hypothesized that:

H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.

H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance.

H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.

The results of the structural model testing show that adaptive selling actually has a positive and significant impact on short-term sales performance (β=.688; p<.001). This result indicates that the better salespeople adapt their selling behaviors during encounters with their clients, the better their short-term sales performance and the more chance they have to close the deal. Thus, hypothesis H2a is supported.

Furthermore, the results indicate that adaptive selling not only impacts short-term performance but also has a significant and positive impact on long-term relationship performance (β=.516; p<.001). Consequently, adaptive selling behaviors not only impacts if salespeople are able to sell in a short-term perspective. The better they adapt their selling behaviors, the better their relationships are becoming in the long run. Hypothesis H2b is therefore supported.

Cultural Intelligence negatively influences Authenticity

But as mentioned before, Cultural Intelligence is not necessarily always positive for salespeople. In this sense, a negative direct effect from Cultural Intelligence to authenticity has been hypothesized:

H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.

The results indicate that metacognitive Cultural Intelligence indeed has a significant and negative influence on salesperson authenticity (β=-1.411; $p<.001$). This result indicates that the higher salespeople's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence, worse their authenticity levels. Thus, hypothesis H3a is supported.

With regards to cognitive Cultural Intelligence, this second dimension of Cultural Intelligence also does have a significant and negative effect on authenticity in this study (β=-.746; $p<.001$). Therefore, the higher the cognitive Cultural Intelligence of salespeople, the less they feel actually authentic when interacting with clients. Hypothesis H3b is therefore also supported.

The third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational, also follows this result and does have a significant ad negative effect on salesperson authenticity (β=-1.172; $p<.001$). Consequently, it can be deduced that the more motivated salespeople are to learn about cultural differences and the more effort they invest in learning about them, the less they feel authentic in their interactions. Hypothesis H3c is also supported.

Finally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence as the last dimension equally has a significant and negative effect on salesperson authenticity (β=-1.412; p<.001). As hypothesized, the behavioral side of Cultural Intelligence also decreases the felt authenticity levels in this study. Consequently, hypothesis H3d is also supported.

Authenticity leading to positive Performance Outcomes

With regards to salesperson authenticity, it has also been hypothesized that authenticity positively influences different sales outcomes, in a short-term and a long-term perspective:

H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.

H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance.

H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.

The testing of the structural model shows that authenticity has a significant and positive impact on short-term sales performance (β=.188; p=.002). As hypothesis H4a suggests, the results indicate that the higher the felt authenticity level of salespeople, the higher their short-term sales performance levels in this study. Thus, hypothesis H4a is supported.

With regards to the long-term relationship performance of salespeople, authenticity does not impact these in a significant way (β=.022; p=.709). This result is contrary to the original hypothesis and shows that higher authenticity levels do not directly impact the relationship outcomes in this context. Hypothesis H4b is therefore rejected.

Cultural Intelligence positively influences Active Listening

In addition, Active Listening has also been hypothesized to be a positive outcome of Cultural Intelligence:

H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

- H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.
- H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.
- H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.
- H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.

First, metacognitive Cultural Intelligence indeed has a significant positive effect on active listening (β=.319; p<.001). This result reveals that the higher the metacognitive Cultural Intelligence of salespeople, the better they actually listen to their clients. Therefore, hypothesis H5a is supported.

Secondly, the results indicate that cognitive Cultural Intelligence has no significant effect on active listening in this study (β=-.131; p=.055). As opposed to the original hypothesis, there is no direct effect from the amount of cognitive knowledge that salespeople have about cultural differences on the way they listen actively to their clients. Hypothesis H5b is rejected.

The third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational Cultural Intelligence, has a significant and positive effect on active listening (β=.143; p=.039). Consequently, it can be deduced that the more salespeople are motivated to learn about cultural differences, the better they actually listen to their clients in this study. Thus, hypothesis H5c is supported.

Additionally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence also has a significant positive effect on active listening (β=.413; p<.001). As hypothesized before, salespeople with high behavioral Cultural Intelligence who know how to behave verbally and nonverbally also listen better to the needs of their clients. Consequently, hypothesis H5d is supported.

Active Listening leading to higher Adaptive Selling

The last direct effect of the baseline model tested in this study is the positive effect from active listening to adaptive selling:

H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.

As hypothesized, active listening significantly and positively influences adaptive selling behaviors (β=.482; p<.001). This result indicates that the better salespeople listen to their customers, the better they can adapt their sales behaviors afterwards according to their needs. Hypothesis H6 is therefore supported.

Organizational Support as Company-level Antecedent of Cultural Intelligence

With regards to the hypothesized antecedents of Cultural Intelligence, first the impact of organizational support on Cultural Intelligence is looked at in this study, too:

H7: Organizational support is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.

- H7a: Organizational support is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.
- H7b: Organizational support is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.
- H7c: Organizational support is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.
- H7d: Organizational support is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

With regards to H7a, the results indicate that organizational support has a significant but negative influence on a salesperson's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence level (β=-.262; p=.034). Contrary to what hypothesis H7a suggests, the amount of support within a company does seem to impact but negatively salespeople's metacognitive Cultural Intelligence. Thus, hypothesis H7a is rejected.

Secondly, organizational support does have a significant and positive influence on the second dimension, cognitive Cultural Intelligence (β=.430; p<.001). The results therefore show that organizational support directly impacts the amount of cognitive knowledge salespeople have about different cultures. Hypothesis H7b is therefore supported.

The results of the structural model show that for the third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational, organizational support does not have a significant influence on it (β=-.090; p=.475). Contrary to what has been postulated, the results therefore show that organizational support does not directly influence how motivated salespeople are to learn about cultural differences. Consequently, hypothesis H7c is rejected.

Finally, behavioral Cultural Intelligence as the fourth dimension is also not significantly influenced by organizational support (β=.107; p=.400). This result signifies that the amount of support from the company does not impact directly how salespeople behave verbally and nonverbally during intercultural encounters. Hypothesis H7d is therefore also rejected.

Diversity Climate as Company-level Antecedent of Cultural Intelligence

Finally, the last direct effect that is tested in this study is the impact of diversity climate on Cultural Intelligence:

H8: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.

H8a: Diversity climate is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H8b: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.

H8c: Diversity climate is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.

H8d: Diversity climate is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

First, diversity climate indeed has a significant positive effect on metacognitive Cultural Intelligence in this study (β=.426; p=.002). This result reveals that the more diverse a company, the higher the metacognitive Cultural Intelligence of their salespeople. Therefore, hypothesis H5a is supported.

However, the results indicate that diversity climate has a significant, but negative, impact on cognitive Cultural Intelligence (β=-.345; p=.007). Contrary to what hypothesis H8b suggests, the results indicate that a more diverse climate in a company actually reduces salespeople's cognitive knowledge about cultural differences. Thus, hypothesis H8b is rejected.

Furthermore, diversity climate also impacts positively motivational Cultural Intelligence in this study (β=.359; p=.009). As hypothesized, a more diverse climate within the company increases the amount of effort that salespeople are willing to put in to learn about cultural differences. Hypothesis H8c is therefore accepted.

With regards to the behavioral dimension of Cultural Intelligence, diversity climate has no significant effect on this last dimension (β=-.173; p=.183). This result is opposed to the original hypothesis and shows that a more diverse climate actually does not have a direct impact on the behavioral dimension of Cultural Intelligence of salespeople. Hypothesis H8d is rejected.

The following Table 58 recapitulates the results of the structural model testing for all the hypothesized direct effects.

				β	t	p
Cultural Intelligence – Adaptive Selling						
H1a	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	.158	2.298	.022
H1b	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	.189	2.890	.004
H1c	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	.089	1.400	.162
H1d	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	→	Adaptive Selling	.067	.910	.363
Adaptive Selling – Performance Outcomes						
H2a	Adaptive Selling	→	Sales Performance	.688	8.388	.000
H2b	Adaptive Selling	→	Relationship Performance	.516	6.984	.000
Cultural Intelligence - Authenticity						
H3a	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-1.411	-4.860	.000
H3b	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-.746	-3.990	.000
H3c	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-1.172	-4.209	.000
H3d	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	→	Authenticity	-1.412	-5.497	.000
Authenticity – Performance Outcomes						
H4a	Authenticity	→	Sales Performance	.188	3.109	.002
H4b	Authenticity	→	Relationship Performance	.022	.373	.709

Cultural Intelligence – Active Listening						
H5a	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	.319	4.526	.000
H5b	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	-.131	-1.915	.055
H5c	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	.143	2.065	.039
H5d	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	→	Active Listening	.413	5.535	.000
Active Listening – Adaptive Selling						
H6	Active Listening	→	Adaptive Selling	.482	5.042	.000
Organizational support – Cultural Intelligence						
H7a	Organizational support	→	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	-.262	-2.124	.034
H7b	Organizational support	→	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	.430	3.390	.000
H7c	Organizational support	→	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	-.090	-.715	.475
H7d	Organizational support	→	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	.107	.841	.400
Diversity climate – Cultural Intelligence						
H8a	Diversity climate	→	Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence	.426	3.152	.002
H8b	Diversity climate	→	Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	-.345	-2.678	.007
H8c	Diversity climate	→	Motivational Cultural Intelligence	.359	2.631	.009
H8d	Diversity climate	→	Behavioral Cultural Intelligence	-.173	-1.331	.183

Table 58: Hypothesis Results Direct Effects - Study 3

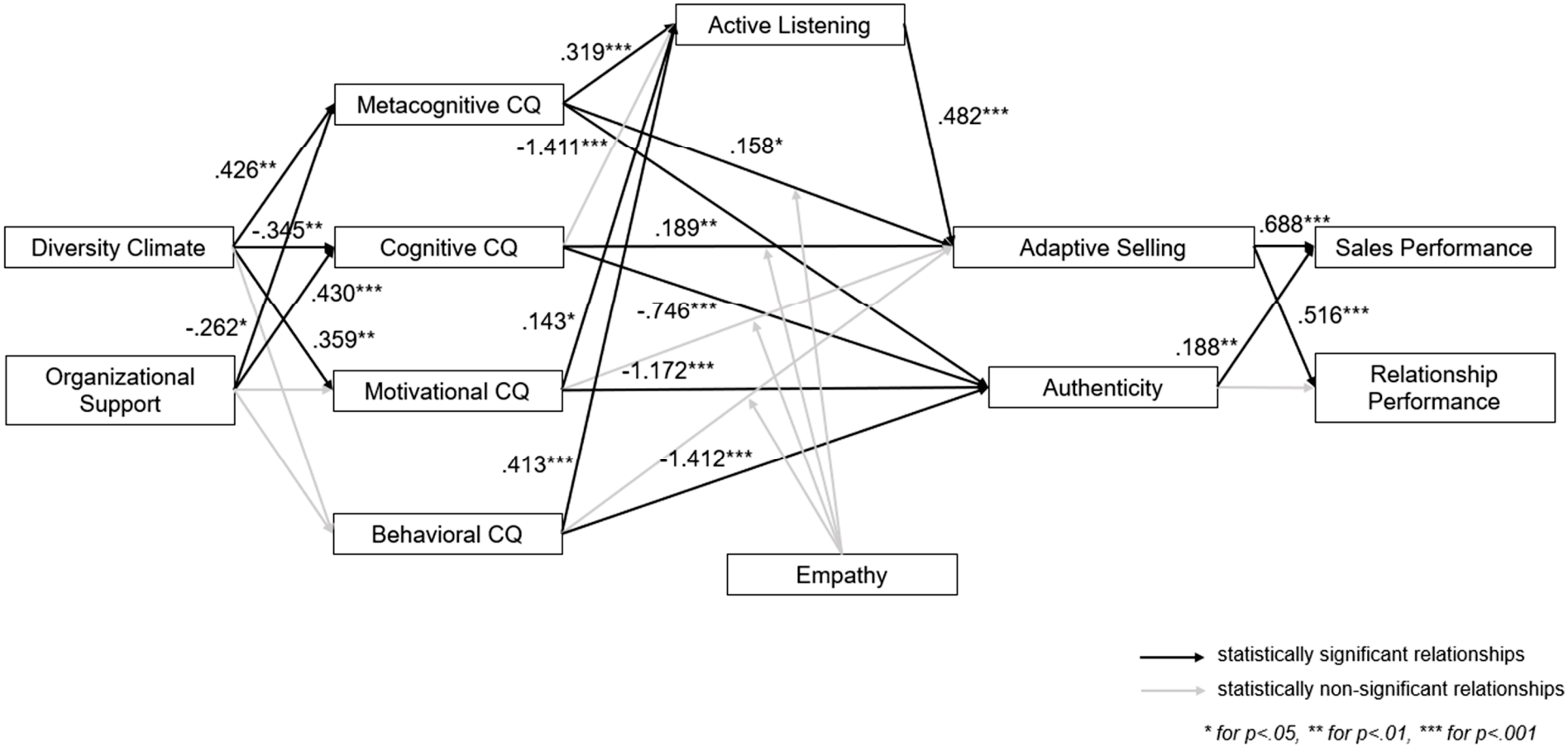


Figure 34: Results Structural model - Study 3

4.3.2.4.3 Mediation Analysis - Active Listening

This second part of the hypotheses testing is looking at the mediation hypotheses of active listening:

H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

Since the relationship between cognitive Cultural Intelligence and active listening (the mediator) is not significant (see Table 58), it can be concluded that there is no mediation effect of active listening between cognitive Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling. Thus, the indirect effect has not been tested and hypothesis H9b is rejected.

For the three remaining dimensions of Cultural Intelligence (metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral), both direct effects have been significant. Thus, the Bootstrapping method via SPSS AMOS Version 26 has been used in order to test the mediation effect (indirect effect), following the recommendation of Preacher and Hayes (2004).

With regards to the first dimension, the indirect effect from metacognitive Cultural Intelligence to adaptive selling via active listening is indeed significant (β=.154; p=.013). Considering that the direct effect in presence of the mediator still is significant, active listening is acting as a partial mediator on this relationship. The higher the metacognitive Cultural Intelligence of salespeople and the better they know how to acquire knowledge during intercultural encounters, the better they actively listen to their clients and the better they adapt their sales behaviors. Thus, hypothesis H9a is supported.

For the third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, the indirect effect from motivational Cultural Intelligence to adaptive selling via active listening is not significant (β=.069; p=.087). The results therefore show that active listening does not act as a mediator in the relationship between motivational Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling. Consequently, hypothesis H9c is rejected.

Finally, the results show that the indirect effect from behavioral Cultural Intelligence to adaptive selling via active listening is significant (β=.199; p=.002). Since the direct effect of behavioral Cultural Intelligence to adaptive selling without mediation effect is significant and positive (β=.261; p<.001), and the presence of the mediator makes this link insignificant, there is a full mediation present. Consequently, the better salespeople know how to behave in intercultural encounters, the more they listen to their clients and the better they adapt afterwards their sales behaviors. Therefore, hypothesis H9d is supported.

4.3.2.4.4 Moderation Analysis - Empathy

In addition to all these hypotheses that have also been tested in studies 1 and 2, this third and last study also tests a moderation hypothesis:

H10: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H10a: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H10b: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H10c: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

H10d: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.

For the moderating effect to be true, the relationship between the endogenous variable and the interaction effect (product of the exogenous variable and the moderator) must be significant and in the direction expected in the hypothesis.

In this case, the moderating effect of empathy on the relationship between metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling is not significant (β=-.111; p=.061). Thus, empathy does not act as a moderator in this case. Hypothesis H10a is therefore rejected.

The same result also holds for the second dimension, cognitive Cultural Intelligence. The moderating effect of empathy on the relationship between cognitive Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling is also not significant (β=-.056; p=.319). Empathy also does not act as a moderator in this case and hypothesis H10b is rejected.

With regards to the third dimension of Cultural Intelligence, the moderating effect of empathy on the relationship between motivational Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling is also not significant (β=-.074; p=.210). Thus, hypothesis H10c is also rejected, and empathy does not act as a moderator here.

Finally, the moderating effect of empathy on the relationship between behavioral Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling is also not significant, as for the three other dimensions (β=-.056; p=.332). Empathy also does not act as a moderator for this last dimension and hypothesis H10d is rejected.

Conclusion Study 3

This third study has been the opportunity to test the baseline model plus the antecedent hypotheses again in an English context with the original, English version of the questionnaire. In addition, this study has also tested empathy as a moderator in under to understand the boundary conditions better when Cultural Intelligence is important in intercultural sales. In order to do this, a sample of 207 English sales professionals has been surveyed and their responses analyzed. Table 59 recapitulates the results of the structural model and hypotheses testing.

Direct effects		
H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**
	H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**
	H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance.	**Supported**
	H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.	**Supported**
H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	**Supported**
	H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	**Supported**
	H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	**Supported**
	H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	**Supported**

H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance.	**Supported**
	H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.	Rejected
H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	**Supported**
	H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	Rejected
	H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	**Supported**
	H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	**Supported**
H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.		**Supported**
H7: Organizational support is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H7a: Organizational support is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
	H7b: Organizational support is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.	**Supported**
	H7c: Organizational support is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
	H7d: Organizational support is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
H8: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H8a: Diversity climate is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.	**Supported**
	H8b: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected
	H8c: Diversity climate is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.	**Supported**
	H8d: Diversity climate is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.	Rejected

Indirect effects		
H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**
	H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**
H10: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H10a: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H10b: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H10c: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected
	H10d: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected

Table 59: Summary Hypotheses Results - Study 3

As a result of this study, it can be concluded that all dimensions of Cultural Intelligence are important in this cultural context. All four dimensions have some positive influence on adaptive selling behaviors in this study. In addition, active listening acts as a partial mediator between metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling and even as a full mediator between behavioral Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling.

In addition, adaptive selling is in this context shown to be important for both, short-term sales performance as well as long-term relationship building. The results indicate that this variable positively impacts both performance outcomes.

With regards to the more negative side of Cultural Intelligence, the results indicate that all four dimensions of Cultural Intelligence have a significant, negative impact on the authenticity level of a salesperson as hypothesized. Furthermore, authenticity is shown to impact positively short-term sales performance. This leads to the conclusion that authenticity indeed is important, at least in some cases, and salespeople with higher authenticity levels seem to be able to better sell in the short term. But as for studies 1 and 2, the scale used for assessing salesperson authenticity showed a lot of problems during the analysis also in this last study. Only three of the ten items from the initial scale have been included in the final testing of the structural model.

Moreover, the results with regards to the hypothesized antecedents of Cultural Intelligence are a bit more mixed. Diversity climate impacts two of the four dimensions (metacognitive and motivational) positively but also one negatively (cognitive). It has no significant impact on behavioral Cultural Intelligence in this study. With regards to organizational support, the results are even more unclear. This variable only impacts significantly two of the four dimensions, one in a positive (metacognitive) and one in a negative way (cognitive). There is no significant impact found on motivational or behavioral Cultural Intelligence. To conclude, both variables impact especially metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and therefore the way how salespeople learn about cultural differences. They both do not impact the verbal and non-verbal behaviors of salespeople in intercultural encounters.

Finally, with regards to the moderator, this study shows that empathy, on the contrary to what has been hypothesized based on the qualitative study and the literature, does not act as a moderator on the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling. The interaction effect is not significant for all the four dimensions. Therefore, it can be concluded that empathy really is culture-bound and a higher empathy level in one's own culture does not really impact the sales behavior in an intercultural context.

4.4 Discussion of the Results across all three Studies

The last subchapter of this quantitative part of this research is now discussing the results of the hypotheses testing across all three quantitative studies. This part therefore starts with the positive impact found of the four dimensions of Cultural Intelligence on active listening, adaptive selling, and in a second step, both performance outcomes (sales and relationship performance). The second part of this subchapter revises the relationship found between Cultural Intelligence and authenticity. This therefore looks at the more negative or dark side of Cultural Intelligence. After having looked at different outcomes of Cultural Intelligence in a sales setting, the third part is then looking at antecedents of this concept and therefore discusses the relationships found between organizational support as well as diversity climate and Cultural Intelligence. The next part then looks at the results found with regards to empathy as a culture-specific moderator on the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling. Finally, some additional results are presented.

4.4.1 Positive Impact of Cultural Intelligence

Across all three quantitative studies, it has been shown that especially behavioral Cultural Intelligence seems to be key in intercultural sales. This dimension has shown to impact in all three of these studies active listening and adaptive selling which, in turn impacts positively performance. This research has therefore shown that especially the outward manifestations of verbal and non-verbal behaviors are important in an intercultural sales context. This behavior has been shown to impact directly how salespeople listen to their clients which influences positively the way salespeople adapt their sales presentations and other sales behaviors. Therefore, it has been shown throughout all these three studies that behavioral Cultural Intelligence impacts positively short-term and long-term performance outcomes via good listening skills and effective adaptation.

In addition, in two of the three studies (study 1 - France and study 3 - England), metacognitive Cultural Intelligence has also been shown to impact positively adaptive selling behaviors. Thus,

the capability to learn about cultural differences and adjusting the cultural knowledge during encounters also seems to be important for intercultural sales across different cultural backgrounds. Study 1 and 3 show that this way of acquiring cultural knowledge indeed is important to adapt the sales behaviors according to the client's needs and finally impacts the investigated performance outcomes.

With regards to cognitive Cultural Intelligence, only study 3 has found a positive impact of this dimension directly on adaptive selling, without passing via active listening. In studies 1 and 2, this dimension did not show any significant effect. Thus, it can be concluded that this dimension is probably more culture-bound than the other two and can be more important for some cultural contexts than others. This can be linked to the cultural background and the importance that is placed in this culture on preparation before sales encounters. Thus, this dimension still is important in intercultural sales, but it is key to assess beforehand if efforts in this area really are necessary for salespeople based on their cultural backgrounds.

Finally, with regards to the fourth dimension of Cultural Intelligence, motivational, no significant impact has been found for this dimension on adaptive selling directly. Nevertheless, study 3 has found a significant and positive impact of motivational Cultural Intelligence on active listening. This suggests that at least in this cultural context, the willingness and motivation to learn about cultural differences actually drive the listening capability of salespeople.

In conclusion, across all three studies, all four dimensions of Cultural Intelligence have found to impact in some way adaptive selling and active listening, which in turn leads to better sales and relationship performance. But there are indeed differences in the importance of the dimensions across different cultural contexts. In general, this work shows that Cultural Intelligence really is key in the intercultural sales context and drives different performance outcomes via adaptive selling behaviors and active listening.

These results are consistent with findings from earlier research. Cultural Intelligence has been found to have positive impacts on cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation in various settings (e.g., Malek and Budhwar, 2013; Huff et al., 2014; Jyoti and Kour, 2015). In a study with

expatriates in Malaysia for example, Malek and Budhwar (2013) found that the Cultural Intelligence levels of these employees positively influenced interaction and work adjustments which, in turn, increased task and contextual performance. This study therefore validates these findings by testing them in a sales setting and showing that Cultural Intelligence indeed impacts positively active listening and adaptive selling and, in turn, relationship and sales performance.

Thus, this work is also validating earlier research on the impact of Cultural Intelligence on adaptive selling behaviors. (e.g., Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022). Whilst the direct effect of Cultural Intelligence on adaptive selling behaviors has been established in these studies, it remained unclear which one of the four dimensions of Cultural Intelligence is the most important one across multiple cultural contexts and if there are other mechanisms in play through which the link between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling can be explained. In their study, Zhou and Charoensukmongkol (2022) interrogated export salespeople in China and found that customer qualification skills mediate the positive relationship between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling. In addition to this, Kimber et al. (2022) found that there is indeed a difference between the impacts of the four different dimensions on adaptive selling. In their study with US-based international salespeople, they showed that only three (metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral) of the four facets have a positive relationship with adaptive selling behaviors.

Thus, this research is, on the one hand, consistent with earlier research by showing that the link between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling holds also for other cultural contexts – in this case France, India and England. On the other hand, it is going beyond the existing research by showing that especially the behavioral dimension of Cultural Intelligence is important across multiple cultural contexts and has a positive impact on adaptive selling behaviors in all three studies. Furthermore, this work also adds to the literature by showing that active listening acts as a mediator in this relationship.

4.4.2 Negative Impact of Cultural Intelligence

With regards to authenticity, this research has shown that Cultural Intelligence really does impact authenticity negatively. The last study found that all four of the dimensions of Cultural Intelligence really are negatively impacting the felt authenticity of a salesperson. The second study showed that at least metacognitive Cultural Intelligence negatively impacts this variable. Thus, it can be concluded that Cultural Intelligence is not always a positive thing that is absolutely needed in intercultural sales. On the contrary, Cultural Intelligence can even decrease sales performance outcomes due to a negative impact on authenticity.

To conclude, a high Cultural Intelligence level does mean that salespeople are adapting and not being true to themselves and their own beliefs and values. Consequently, they show a lower authenticity level which can be harmful for sales performance. Throughout the studies, Cultural Intelligence has been shown to decrease the felt authenticity of salespeople, therefore having a negative impact in intercultural sales.

This result is following more critical research about more negative outcomes of Cultural Intelligence (e.g., Blasco et al., 2012). In this vein, Fang et al. (2018) expresses the need for more research about potential dark sides of this concept, something that has been quite neglected in earlier research. Only very few articles exist that look at potential negative outcomes of Cultural Intelligence. In this sense, Ramsey et al. (2011) found that Cultural Intelligence increases international travelers stress levels and Lorenz et al. (2020) showed that metacognitive and cognitive Cultural Intelligence increase opportunistic behaviors. Thus, this research is consistent with these findings in the way that Cultural Intelligence indeed also has a dark side to it. This study shows that not only positive outcomes come from Cultural Intelligence but also a certain felt inauthenticity which, in turn, negatively impacts performance outcomes.

4.4.3 Company-level Antecedents of Cultural Intelligence

The second and third study also looked at different company-level antecedents of Cultural Intelligence, organizational support, and diversity climate. The results throughout both studies have not been conclusive, and more research is needed in general on how to improve salespeople's Cultural Intelligence. Whilst in study two organizational support did not have any significant impact, it has been shown to have a negative impact on metacognitive and a positive one on cognitive Cultural Intelligence in study three. Some mixed results can also be found for diversity climate. In the Indian sample of study 2, this variable only negatively impacted two of the four dimensions – metacognitive and behavioral Cultural Intelligence. But in study 3, diversity climate is shown to impact positively metacognitive and motivational Cultural Intelligence whilst also impacting cognitive Cultural Intelligence negatively. Thus, no conclusion can be drawn from these two studies alone and more research is needed on this matter.

Research showed that multi-level studies that include multiple levels of analysis already find more modest effects in general (Stoermer et al., 2021). Thus, a few problems with the data could have a big impact in making relationships insignificant. This could explain why the results are not as strong and clear as expected.

A second explanation can lie in the variables themselves. Earlier research about Cultural Intelligence has found that the depth of exposure has a positive effect on this concept meaning that the deeper a person is immersed in the culture, the higher their Cultural Intelligence levels (Crowne, 2008). The two variables chosen for this research imply that salespeople actually stay in their own cultural background and only are in contact with their colleagues during short interactions. Thus, the impact of these short encounters with different cultural backgrounds actually have less impact on Cultural Intelligence levels than expected.

4.4.4 Empathy as a Culture-specific Moderator

Finally, empathy has been tested as a moderator in the last study and it has been found to have no impact on the link between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that empathy, a very culture-specific skill, does not seem to be important in an intercultural sales context. Other characteristics seem to take over in this context and the understanding of the underlying emotions of the clients seems not to be important in the end. This result needs to be tested also in other cultural contexts. In other cultures that are perhaps more based on emotion sharing, empathy still could be important. But this work indicates that, at least in an English cultural context, empathy does not seem important in intercultural sales encounters.

This finding is consistent with earlier research about empathy. Whilst most of the studies about this concept have found positive relationships of empathy with customer-oriented behaviors or satisfaction with the salesperson (e.g., Gerlach et al., 2016; Delpechitre et al., 2019), other research claims that empathy actually is not that important in sales and does not have a direct impact on sales performance (Dawson et al., 1992).

In addition to this, the insignificance of the moderation effect could also be explained by the concept itself. It has been decided to look at salesperson empathy as a culture-specific concept that has been used in earlier sales research. But in an intercultural context, it seems that another concept would have been more suited – the concept of intercultural empathy. This concept has been defined by Zhu (2011, p.117) as “a mirror of one’s competence reflecting his understanding of the emotional states of people in the target culture”. This concept therefore already includes the intercultural perspective that is needed in an intercultural sales context. More research needs to be done to see if this concept actually is key in an intercultural sales context.

4.4.5 Additional Results

In addition to this hypotheses testing, some further results can be deduced from these studies. In the survey for all three studies, a question has been included to measure if salespeople receive intercultural training to prepare them for this intercultural workplace. Across all three studies, less than one third of all respondents actually received intercultural training (28% yes – 72% no). This is following the results of the qualitative study which showed that there is a lack of preparation in this area. Therefore, this only confirmed by these three quantitative studies as well. Following earlier research on intercultural training effects on Cultural Intelligence, a positive impact of this variable on Cultural Intelligence could be hypothesized (e.g., Baker and Delpechitre, 2016; Delpechitre and Baker, 2017). Further analysis of this effect could have been interesting for this research, too. But since less than one third of the overall sample received intercultural training leading to a very small sample, a comparison between the two groups (with and without training) was not considered appropriate.

Finally, study 3 also included a measure of how salespeople would rate the importance of interculturality in sales. From the 207 English salespeople in this sample, more than 70% rate interculturality as important (73.9% answered 5, 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 - very unimportant to 7 – very important). Consequently, this shows that salespeople are well aware of the importance of this topic.

Conclusion Part 4 Quantitative Studies

To conclude, this fourth chapter has given the opportunity to test the different hypothesis and research models across multiple studies. The first step that has been taken for this quantitative part of the research was the back-translation and testing of the different scales in French.

To do this, a pretest has been done in order to test the different scales via an exploratory factor analysis. For this pretest, data has been collected from 96 French dual sales students who study and work at the same time. This pretest and the analysis done have shown that most of the scales performed very well in their translated versions, except for the authenticity scale. A few items needed to be deleted for this scale and have not been included in the further research (with the French questionnaire).

The second step was then to collect data for the first study with French natives. Thus, the first study of this quantitative part tested the established baseline model by collecting data via Qualtrics from 198 French sales professionals. This model therefore tests the importance of Cultural Intelligence in an intercultural sales context by linking this concept to key sales skills and behaviors like active listening, adaptive selling but also authenticity (as a negative outcome). Finally, these skills and behaviors are linked to two performance outcomes: sales performance and relationship performance. The results of this first study show that Cultural Intelligence indeed is important in this context since three of the four dimensions impact active listening and adaptive selling. In addition, adaptive selling is shown to be important for both, short-term and long-term performance. With regards to authenticity, the results were less clear since there was no significant effect found from Cultural Intelligence to authenticity. Furthermore, contrarily to the hypotheses, authenticity negatively impacts sales performance and relationship performance in this study. These results can be explained since the authenticity scale showed again major problems during the confirmatory factor analysis. Only three of the ten initial items were included in the structural model testing.

Since there have been problems with the authenticity scale, it has then been decided to test the original scales in the language that they have been developed in, English. Moreover, this second study has been the opportunity to test the important of Cultural Intelligence in another cultural background. It has therefore been decided to test the second model in a developing context. The data has been collected in collaboration with Indian students and resulted in a sample of 174 Indian sales professionals. This second study tested the baseline model again and added two antecedents of Cultural Intelligence, organizational support and diversity climate. The results of this second study were much less evident than for the first study. The only dimension of Cultural Intelligence that had an impact on active listening and adaptive selling in this study was behavioral Cultural Intelligence. All the other links were not significant. Furthermore, adaptive selling only impacted positively relationship performance in this context and no significant impact was found on short-term sales performance. With regards to authenticity, only metacognitive Cultural Intelligence negatively impacted this variable. In turn, authenticity had no significant impact on any of the performance outcome variables. With regards to the antecedents, no positive impact has been found. On the contrary, since diversity climate negatively impacted metacognitive and behavioral Cultural Intelligence in this study. These mixed results can be explained by a few problems that have been detected during the analysis. As for the first study, the authenticity scale showed again a lot of problems and only two of the ten initial items have been included in the structural model testing. Furthermore, some problems of non-normal distribution of the data have been detected during the confirmatory factor analysis. Furthermore, the way of collecting the data (with students) could have introduced some bias. And finally, English is not the mother tongue of Indian salespeople, even if they speak the language very well. Thus, there could have been some misunderstanding of the wording of the questions.

Therefore, a third study has been done by collecting data from English natives. This third study used the services of Qualtrics again and collected data from 207 English sales professionals. The baseline model has been tested again in this study as well as the antecedents added in study 2. In addition, empathy has been tested as a moderator between Cultural Intelligence

and adaptive selling. The results of this last study highlight again the importance of Cultural Intelligence in intercultural sales. All four dimensions impact in some way how salespeople adapt to their clients and how they listen to them. Moreover, as in study 1, adaptive selling is shown to impact positively short-term as well as long-term performance outcomes. With regards to authenticity, this study shows that all four dimensions of Cultural Intelligence impact negatively the felt authenticity of salespeople. But authenticity positively influences short-term sales performance. Thus, inauthentic behavior really is a negative outcome of Cultural Intelligence and the constant adaptation that this implies. With regards to the antecedents, the results are more mixed since positive and negative impacts can be found for both hypothesized antecedents. Diversity climate positively impacts metacognitive and motivational Cultural Intelligence, but it also impacts cognitive Cultural Intelligence negatively. Organizational support positively impacts metacognitive Cultural Intelligence as well whilst also impacting negatively cognitive Cultural Intelligence in this study. Finally, empathy does not act as a moderator in this context.

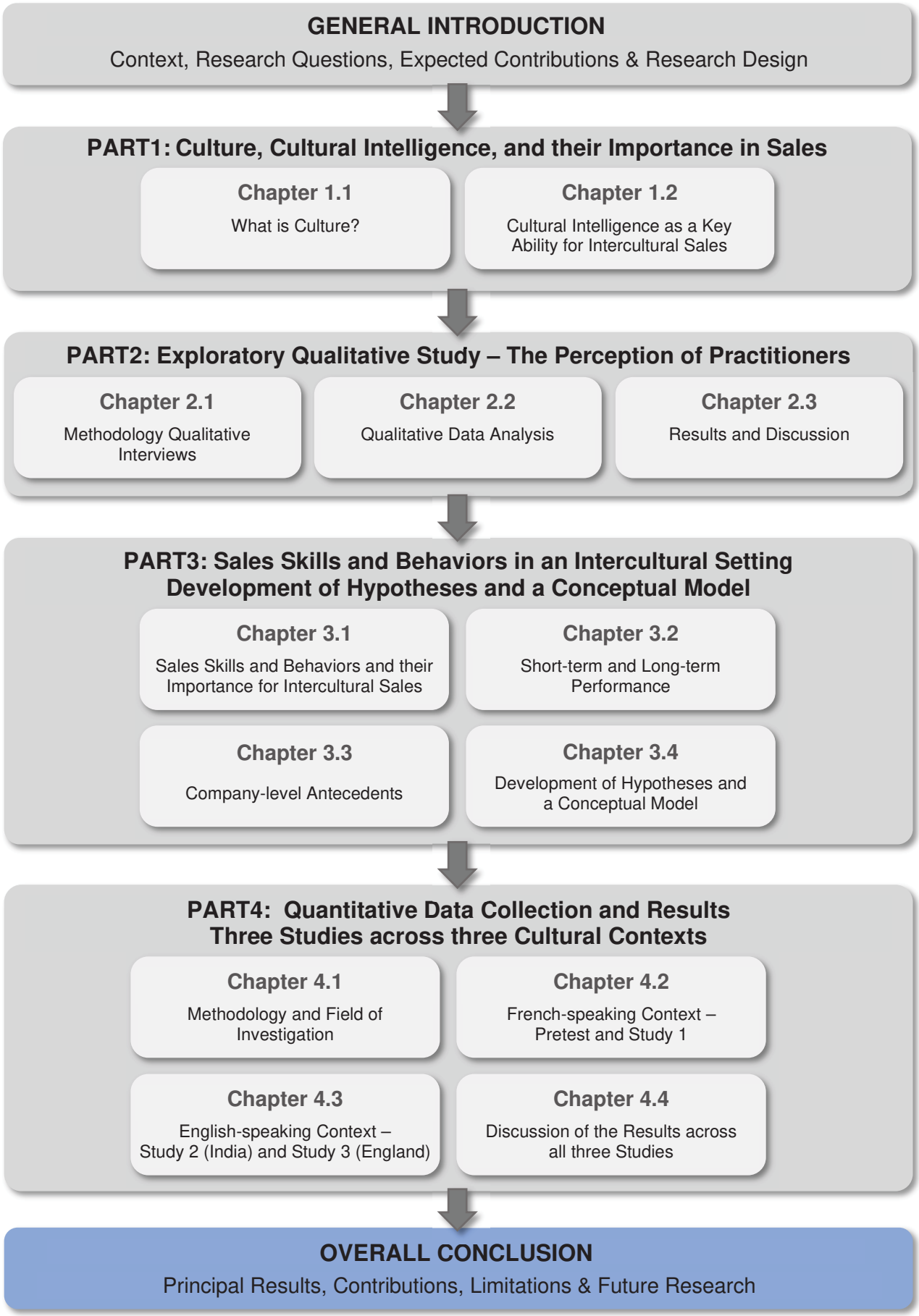
Since the different studies showed different problems regarding the data, it has been decided not to do any additional statistical analysis with regards to the comparison of the results.

A summary of all the hypotheses and their validation or rejection in the respective studies can be found in Table 60.

		Study 1 (France)	Study 2 (India)	Study 3 (England)
Direct effects				
H1: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	H1a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**	Rejected	**Supported**
	H1b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected	Rejected	**Supported**
	H1c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
	H1d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**	Rejected	Rejected
H2: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H2a: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Sales Performance.	**Supported**	Rejected	**Supported**
	H2b: Adaptive Selling is positively linked to Relationship Performance.	**Supported**	**Supported**	**Supported**
H3: Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	H3a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected	**Supported**	**Supported**
	H3b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected	Rejected	**Supported**
	H3c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected	Rejected	**Supported**
	H3d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is negatively linked to Authenticity.	Rejected	Rejected	**Supported**
H4: Authenticity is positively linked to Performance Outcomes.	H4a: Authenticity is positively linked to Sales Performance.	Rejected	Rejected	**Supported**
	H4b: Authenticity is positively linked to Relationship Performance.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
H5: Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	H5a: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	**Supported**	Rejected	**Supported**
	H5b: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
	H5c: Motivational Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	Rejected	Rejected	**Supported**
	H5d: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is positively linked to Active Listening.	**Supported**	**Supported**	**Supported**
H6: Active Listening is positively linked to Adaptive Selling.		**Supported**	**Supported**	**Supported**

H7: Organizational support is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H7a: Organizational support is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.	/	Rejected	Rejected
	H7b: Organizational support is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.	/	Rejected	**Supported**
	H7c: Organizational support is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.	/	Rejected	Rejected
	H7d: Organizational support is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.	/	Rejected	Rejected
H8: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cultural Intelligence.	H8a: Diversity climate is positively linked to Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence.	/	Rejected	**Supported**
	H8b: Diversity climate is positively linked to Cognitive Cultural Intelligence.	/	Rejected	Rejected
	H8c: Diversity climate is positively linked to Motivational Cultural Intelligence.	/	Rejected	**Supported**
	H8d: Diversity climate is positively linked to Behavioral Cultural Intelligence.	/	Rejected	Rejected
Indirect effects				
H9: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H9a: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected	Rejected	**Supported**
	H9b: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
	H9c: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
	H9d: Active Listening positively mediates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	**Supported**	Rejected	**Supported**
H10: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	H10a: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	/	/	Rejected
	H10b: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Cognitive Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	/	/	Rejected
	H10c: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	/	/	Rejected
	H10d: Empathy positively moderates the relationship between Behavioral Cultural Intelligence and Adaptive Selling.	/	/	Rejected

Table 60: Summary Hypotheses Results across all three studies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OVERALL CONCLUSION

This last part of the manuscript is exposing the main results of this research and present the theoretical, methodological, and managerial contributions as well as the limitations and research perspectives.

The first chapter is therefore focusing on the general results obtained from the different studies. Thus, in the first place, the results from the exploratory qualitative study are discussed briefly. Then, the results from the three quantitative studies are summarized.

The theoretical and methodological implications of this research are then detailed before examining the managerial point of view. Finally, this research concludes with a discussion of the different limitations and opens up avenues for future research.

Principal Results of this Research

This research aimed to shed some light on the intercultural sales context since there is still a lack of research there (Panagopoulos et al., 2011; Dugan et al., 2020). To do this, Cultural Intelligence - a variable from Human Resource and International Management - has been looked at in a sales context. The main research question of this thesis therefore was:

Why, how and to what extent does salespeople's Cultural Intelligence impact their performance?

In order to answer this research question, first an exploratory qualitative study has been done in addition to the literature review. The interviews with sales practitioners showed clearly that intercultural sales is key in today's globalized work context and salespeople need to have some particular skills in order to succeed.

Some of the most important skills mentioned by the practitioners can be found in the concept of Cultural Intelligence – cognitive knowledge about different cultures, an eagerness to learn about the differences as well as an open-mindedness and capability to behave accordingly. In addition to Cultural Intelligence, the interviewees also talked about good listening skills that

lead to a good adaptation to the customer. Furthermore, empathy has also been mentioned as being key in order to understand the needs of the customer better. But some of the interviewees also explained that adaptation is not always wanted from all customers, some of them prefer the salespeople to be themselves and to be authentic and genuine. This authenticity can therefore add another perspective and lead to a win-win situation for both sides.

In addition to these key skills, the interviewees also explained that some organizational and managerial factors are needed for salespeople to succeed in intercultural sales. First, they expressed the necessity to choose the right personnel directly when recruiting. Moreover, once the salespeople have been assigned to these jobs, they also require adequate training – something that is lacking at the moment, according to the interviewees. They explained that in very few cases only cognitive training is proposed to the employees. On top of these two requirements, the interviewees also stated that companies must install a company climate that promotes diversity and supports the salespeople whenever they need it. This support can come from colleagues, managers, or the organization itself.

Following this exploratory qualitative study as well as a literature review on the different concepts mentioned by the interviewees, hypotheses have been stated and a conceptual model has been established.

With regards to the quantitative part of this research, it has been decided to opt for a multi-study design. Thus, three studies have been done in three cultural contexts (France, India and England). This design helped test the external validity and thus generalizability of the findings across multiple cultural contexts. In addition, this gave the opportunity to gradually build a more and more complex model while validating the key relationships in all three studies.

In this sense, the baseline model has been tested throughout all three studies. This model introduces Cultural Intelligence in a selling context and looks at the impact of this concept on some of the key skills mentioned beforehand. It therefore examines the positive relationship between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling via active listening. Secondly, the negative

relationship between Cultural Intelligence and authenticity is also examined. In the second part of the model, the impact of adaptive selling and authenticity on short-term sales performance and long-term relationship performance is examined. This therefore tests the importance of Cultural Intelligence on different performance outcomes. The second model that has been tested as of study 2 added to this baseline model two company-level antecedents (organizational support and diversity climate) to examine how Cultural Intelligence can be developed. Finally, the third and last study expands on our approach by examining empathy as a potential moderating variable in the relationship between cultural intelligence and adaptive selling.

These three quantitative studies have shown that Cultural Intelligence really is important in intercultural sales and impacts positively long-term and short-term sales performance. Across all three studies, behavioral Cultural Intelligence has impacted positively sales performance and relationship performance via a good listening capability (active listening) and a good adaptation of sales behaviors (adaptive selling). Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence has shown to have positive impacts in two of the three studies whilst cognitive and motivational Cultural Intelligence only show significant positive impacts in the last study.

Furthermore, these studies have shed some light on a more negative side of Cultural Intelligence that is the negative impact of this concept on salespeople's authenticity levels. Study two and three showed that Cultural intelligence negatively impacts the felt authenticity of salespeople. Whilst in study 2, only metacognitive Cultural Intelligence showed a significant impact, in study three all four dimensions display this negative effect via a significant negative relationship between all dimensions and authenticity.

With regards to the examined company-level antecedents, some mixed results have been found across studies 2 and 3. Whilst in study 2 organizational support did not have any significant impact, it has been shown to have a negative impact on metacognitive and a positive one on cognitive Cultural Intelligence in study 3. Furthermore, in the Indian sample of study 2, diversity climate only negatively impacted two of the four dimensions – metacognitive and

behavioral Cultural Intelligence. But in study 3, it is shown to impact positively metacognitive and motivational Cultural Intelligence whilst also impacting cognitive Cultural Intelligence negatively. More research is therefore needed in order to draw robust conclusions on this matter.

Finally, the moderating effect of empathy was examined in study 3, unsuccessfully. This can be linked to the nature of the variable itself. But it could also mean that empathy and the understanding of the customers on a more emotional level are just not that important in an intercultural sales context. As for organizational support and diversity climate, more research is needed.

To conclude, this work has shown across one exploratory qualitative and three quantitative studies that Cultural Intelligence indeed is key in an intercultural sales context. This variable has a positive impact on salespeople's short-term sales performance and long-term relationship performance. This relationship passes through a good listening ability and better adaptation of sales behaviors. Conversely, Cultural Intelligence also has a dark side since it impacts negatively the felt authenticity of salespeople. Thus, this concept needs to be considered for the intercultural sales context, but adjustments are required to be made according to the preference of the customers – Do they want adaptation or authenticity?

Theoretical Contributions

The work that has been done for this research has several inputs, first of all, on a theoretical level. This subchapter is exposing the different points on this level.

One of the theoretical contributions of this research is to contribute to the literature on intercultural and international sales as asked for by Dugan et al. (2020) and Panagopoulos et al. (2011). Often, intercultural sales research is focusing on comparing different cultural contexts but not necessarily looking at culture general concepts (Dugan et al., 2020). Consequently, the research that is done in intercultural sales only holds for the particular cultural contexts that have been studied. Consequently, this research is contributing to

intercultural sales by looking at a concept that is developed for every cultural context, Cultural Intelligence. Across an exploratory qualitative study and three quantitative studies, the importance of Cultural Intelligence in three different cultural backgrounds has been demonstrated, highlighting the statement from Earley and Ang (2003) that this concept is culture general and not culture-bound like Social or Emotional Intelligence.

Furthermore, this research goes beyond earlier research about Cultural Intelligence in sales (Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022) and therefore adds to the knowledge of this concept in this particular working context. This research continues in the same vein as the study of Kimber et al. (2022) and looks at the different dimensions of Cultural Intelligence separately. Whilst Kimber et al. (2022) studied the American cultural context by interrogating US-based salespeople, this work follows the recommendations of Sharma (2016) and Dugan et al. (2020) who ask for more theory development in the intercultural sales context also outside the American context. Thus, this research examined if there is a different with regards to the different dimensions of Cultural Intelligence across three different cultural backgrounds (France and England as European contexts and India as an Asian one).

Moreover, this work also contributes to the theory building around the concept of Cultural Intelligence especially in a sales context by testing different sales characteristics, skills and behaviors like empathy and active listening as mediators and moderators on the established link between Cultural Intelligence and adaptive selling as asked for by Zhou and Charoensukmongkol (2022) for example. Furthermore, relationship performance as a more long-term performance outcome is looked at in this research, whilst earlier research in this area only included a more short-term perspective to performance by investigating international sales performance (Charoensukmongkol, 2020) or sales role-play performance (Baker and Delpechitre, 2016)

In addition to examining different mediation and moderation effects as well as the impact on long-term relationship performance, this research further advances the knowledge about a

potential dark side of Cultural Intelligence by investigating the link between this concept and salesperson authenticity levels. As explained in the discussion of the quantitative results, there is not a lot of research about a more negative impact of Cultural Intelligence and more research on this side has been asked for (Fang et al., 2018). Thus, this research contributes to the understanding of this dark side of Cultural Intelligence by showing that this concept is not always positive and can sometimes even reduce performance levels by decreasing the felt authenticity of salespeople.

The final contribution with regards to the theoretical framework of Cultural Intelligence lies in the examination of company-level antecedents like organizational support and diversity climate. Earlier research about the development of Cultural Intelligence has especially looked at intercultural training (e.g., Baker and Delpechitre, 2016) but other variables have been neglected. Although more research is needed on this topic and the results were not conclusive across studies 2 and 3, this work does contribute by showing that these variables can have different impacts on different dimensions of Cultural Intelligence.

In addition to advancing the understanding of the Cultural Intelligence framework by implementing it in an intercultural sales context, this research also contributes to the adaptive selling framework. By looking at active listening as a mediator variable between Cultural intelligence and adaptive selling, the understanding of how salespeople develop their adaptive selling behaviors is broadened. Moreover, all three quantitative studies show clearly that adaptive selling is especially important for the relationship building with the clients. This is following research that established a positive link between adaptive selling behaviors and customer satisfaction (Román and Martín, 2014). Furthermore, the literature review paper from Itani et al. (2019) proposed that adaptive selling behaviors help in building and maintaining good relationships. This research therefore tests this hypothesis empirically and advances the knowledge of antecedents and outcomes of a key behavior in sales in that is adaptive selling.

Besides these theoretical inputs, this research also provides contributions on a methodological level.

Methodological Contributions

This research has followed a hypothetico-deductive, mixed-method approach by first doing an exploratory qualitative study that led, coupled with a literature review, to the writing up of hypotheses. These hypotheses have then been tested in three different quantitative studies. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been shown to allow compensating for respective weaknesses (Kelle, 2006). With regards to quantitative studies, they lack in cultural and context-specific knowledge most of the time. Hypotheses can be far from the actual expectations and necessities of the studied population. Consequently, it is interesting to talk to these people first in order to make sure that their concerns and insights are included in further studies. By following this mixed design of qualitative and quantitative studies, this research has therefore made sure to follow the practitioner's points of view and to integrate the variables that sales personnel judged as key for an intercultural sales context. Consequently, this research design has opened up an interesting point that has not been looked at before: the possibility of negative consequences of Cultural Intelligence in sales. The negative influence of Cultural Intelligence on authenticity has been brought on the table by the interviewees. This therefore showed that it is indeed important to talk to practitioners first before establishing research hypotheses since research sometimes tends to overlook key topics from practice.

Thus, a sequential qualitative-quantitative design as done in this research contributes to research and practitioners alike. The quantitative part of this method helps to ensure a certain transferability and generalizability of the results from the studied population to other people in the same situations (Kelle, 2006). In the case of this research, this is even more true since three different studies have been done in three different cultural contexts. This testing of the different hypotheses across multiple studies is interesting for two main reasons:

1. The scales have been tested and analyzed with confirmatory analysis in three different cultural backgrounds and two languages. Thus, they show that the scales (except for authenticity) indeed work across multiple cultural backgrounds.

2. The replication and testing of the baseline model allows comparing the results and look for similarities and differences across all three studies. Furthermore, this also allows checking for the generalizability of the results which is especially interesting for a culture general concept like Cultural Intelligence.

A second methodological implication of this research is the back-translation and testing of all scales in French language. Thus, this back-translation as well as the exploratory factor analysis helped to establish scales that can be used to continue research about the different concepts of this research also in a French cultural context. Most of today's research about sales in general and even more about intercultural sales is done in an American context (e.g., Kimber et al., 2022), making it even more important to look also outside this geographical area. This geographic broadening of targeted samples is following recommendations from literature (Panagopoulos et al., 2011; Sharma, 2016; Dugan et al., 2020). In this sense, Europe is doing a lot of trade around the globe with a total of 4 299 442 million € worth of exports and imports (Eurostat, 2022) but still very few research is dedicated to this area, especially in intercultural sales.

Finally, as explained beforehand, the concept of Cultural Intelligence has often been used as a second-order construct in earlier research on this matter (Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022). This present research has decided to split the concept into its four different dimensions following the definition of Earley and Ang (2003). This is not only interesting on a theoretical standpoint as explained beforehand but also on a methodological one. Testing four different independent variables together allows showing eventual differences in the importance of the four dimensions for sales research and help to see where to focus on for further research. This therefore follows research by Kimber et al. (2022) who found variations in the importance of the different dimensions of Cultural Intelligence for US-based international salespeople.

Managerial Contributions

In addition to the inputs for sales research (theoretical and methodological), this research also has some contributions for sales practitioners, sales managers, and companies in general.

Input on sales recruitment

The first managerial implication of this research is focusing on the sales recruitment process. When looking at the results of the qualitative study, it becomes clear that it is key to select the right personnel for the intercultural sales context. Some interviewees explained that some cultural prohibitions make it quite difficult for example for females to work in specific cultures. Interviewee B stated: "*There are some cultures where, a priori, people of a certain sex will not be considered on the same level as a person of another sex. And even if we.... uh... ... our cultural point of view at the level of our society is for a total egalitarianism, of a commercial point of view, we are obliged to have a certain prudence. And so, to make sure that we put in front of our clients a profile that corresponds to their cultural environment."* Thus, this research highlights again the importance of careful selection of the salespeople before sending them to work with international clients. This follows findings from earlier studies on the sales recruitment process in an international context. For example, Rouzièz et al. (2003) found in their study about the impact of culture on sales staffing decisions across multiple European cultures that three managerial decision criteria are key in this situation: the potential of the salespeople, having a certain international openness as well as different skills. This can be concluded from the qualitative exploratory study of this research as well.

Besides these criteria, this research also shows that salespeople should be tested especially on a behavioral standpoint before employing them in an intercultural sales context. As the three quantitative studies have shown, the most important dimension of Cultural Intelligence for the sales context is the behavioral one. Thus, before sending salespeople to work internationally and interculturally, they need to be tested and examined with regards to their verbal and non-verbal behaviors. Do they really know how to behave with people from different

cultural backgrounds? In addition to this behavioral dimension, the quantitative studies have also shown that metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and thus the way of acquiring information is also key and impacts positively adaptive selling and sales outcomes. Thus, in addition to behavioral tests, salespeople also need to be tested on how they actually acquire their information during intercultural encounters. In this sense, Kimber et al. (2022) for example proposed based on their study that candidates for intercultural sales jobs should be asked to fill out a questionnaire including the CQS scale. They also suggest that especially the behavioral dimension of Cultural Intelligence could be included in assessment center tests by incorporating role-plays, simulations, or interviews. The same suggestions can be made following the results of this research.

Input on sales training

But even if the salespeople selected for the intercultural sales jobs do not have all the characteristics needed, there is still a possibility for companies to train them. Cultural Intelligence has been shown to be malleable and can be developed with intercultural training (e.g., Rehg et al., 2012; Baker and Delpechitre, 2016). Salespeople in general could have high levels of certain dimensions of Cultural Intelligence but lack of others. This research therefore also has some input on what type of sales training should be proposed in an intercultural context.

Unfortunately, the qualitative study as well as the quantitative studies have shown that there clearly is a lack of intercultural training of salespeople. As interviewee F stated: "*When you join, you have no training. When you join the company. Basically, if you're selected to come in, you come in the first week, you're... You're doing your job. So... Well, at least for my position. To me, they assume, that is, in their head, this person, they're already prepared."* The quantitative study also supports this finding and shows that most of the salespeople indeed did not receive any intercultural training.

Conversely, the qualitative interviews have shown that in some rare cases, companies do train their salespeople for intercultural assignments. But most of the time, the training consists of short introductions of the targeted culture and plays into the cognitive knowledge of cultural differences: "*In most of the countries that are more... let's say... culturally sensitive, we would organize, with the management team, let's say uh... a mini introduction to the culture, the do's and don'ts uh... to make sure that... the... to make sure that the employee is able to match... doesn't make any obvious missteps and get stuck. (...) These are trainings that are done generally upon the person's arrival at the location by our... human resources team." (Interviewee B).* This type of training actually has been shown to impact Cultural Intelligence in a positive way, especially the cognitive dimension of it (Rehg et al., 2012). Thus, this is already a first step in the right direction and an option for companies who do not have the budget to go even further in the sales training process.

But as shown by the quantitative studies, across all three studies behavioral Cultural Intelligence has been more important than cognitive Cultural Intelligence. Consequently, there is a mismatch between the training needed for intercultural sales and the actual training provided at the moment by the companies. As discussed by Earley and Peterson (2004), more experiential forms of training can go beyond increasing inly cognitive Cultural Intelligence and impact also positively metacognitive, motivational and behavioral Cultural Intelligence.

Thus, this research suggests that in general, more intercultural training should be offered to salespeople that are working with intercultural clients. In addition, the training provided should not merely focus on increasing the cognitive knowledge about one target culture but also include behavioral exercises. Thus, role-plays that involve actually dealing with and talking to people from different cultural backgrounds would be very beneficial (Baker and Delpechitre, 2016). After the role-play exercises have been done, it is important to debrief with the salespeople and explain to them which behavior actually was correct and where they could have done better. These role-play exercises can also be used in order to enhance their way of acquiring knowledge about intercultural differences (metacognitive Cultural Intelligence) by pinpointing afterwards specificities in the behavior of the other person that exhibits cultural

differences. Thus, role-play exercises and especially letting the salespeople do practical exercises with people from different cultural backgrounds can enhance all four dimensions of Cultural Intelligence.

Input on internal and external connections

With regards to organizational support, research has suggested that workplace isolation is negative for salespeople and they need to be connected with colleagues within their company in order to be more performant (Marshall et al., 2007; Nowlin et al., 2018).

This research also has an implication on what characteristics are important for salespeople for these internal connections within the company to be effective. In that vein, the qualitative study has shown that intercultural field salespeople do not work alone. They need to be connected within the company and work with a multitude of divisions and especially the back office. In addition to this, some companies decide to work with local partners and the sales department within the firm needs to work with these locals, too: "*There are in fact two sales forces that help each other. One has a very strong knowledge of the local context but will only see things from its monocultural and local side. Now, uh... for a multinational company, for a global company, we may be asked, for example, to go and do a project in a country with which we have not yet worked. And where we'll have to explain to the local dealers what the client's intentions are, so that he will get this commercial business."* (Interviewee E).

Thus, this research suggests that Cultural Intelligence is important for salespeople even if they are not directly in contact with intercultural clients. The way of how companies are connected with their local partners also means that salespeople that are not traditionally labeled as intercultural still are in contact with people from different cultural backgrounds. This can be within the company, for example when people from other cultures are working in the back office or other divisions. But this can also be because these salespeople need to work with local partners sometimes. To work efficiently with all these different people, this research therefore suggests that salespeople in general need to have a certain Cultural Intelligence, no matter if

they are directly working with intercultural clients or not. They still can be in contact with people from other cultural backgrounds and need to be prepared for this. Thus, even 'traditional' salespeople should be tested on their Cultural Intelligence levels and, if needed, trained.

Input on internal marketing and communication

In research about internal marketing, it has been shown that there can be a gap between how an employee thinks a company should be run and organized and the way they perceive that it is actually being run and organized. This gap between expectations and perceived reality can be harmful since it leads to dissatisfaction and frustration of the employees. Conversely, a good internal marketing strategy can help narrow this gap (Wasmer and Bruner, 1991).

With regards to the development of Cultural Intelligence, some company-level factors have been looked at during this research – following the suggestions of the qualitative analysis. Even if the results of the quantitative studies have not been consistent across both studies 2 and 3, organizational support and diversity climate still show potential. Especially diversity climate is something that a company should consider installing to prepare their salespeople for cultural differences.

But both factors can only work in enhancing Cultural Intelligence if salespeople know that they are there and if their expectations about these concepts match their perceptions. In the quantitative studies of this research, only the perception of salespeople about these two concepts has been measured. Thus, this research is suggesting that companies also need to work on their internal communication and marketing strategy. Salespeople need to know about the efforts that the company is doing in order to install a company culture that promotes cultural diversity and where salespeople are supported by their colleagues. Only then can these efforts really be beneficial for the intercultural sales context.

Input on sales management

In sales research, it has been shown that sales managers or supervisors are often perceived by the salespeople as representatives of a company. Salespeople therefore tend to judge the company based on the behavior of the managers (Marshall et al., 2007). This coupled with the finding mentioned above that salespeople have sometimes a gap between expectation and perceptions leads to the conclusion that sales managers should more actively advocate the efforts of a company in terms of organizational support and diversity climate.

Moreover, this research also shows that sales managers should actively encourage adaptive selling behaviors. According to prior studies, managerial interventions like active coaching are crucial for increasing salespeople's willingness to engage in adaptive selling (Cron et al., 2005). Salespeople who receive effective coaching can increase their knowledge structures and improve their way of adapting their sales behaviors (Badrinarayanan et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2019).

Across the three quantitative studies, adaptive selling behaviors have been shown to have a positive impact on short-term sales performance which is the more directly related to sales turnover and the closing of deals. But these behaviors have also shown to impact positively more long-term relationship performance outcomes. As suggested by the qualitative study, salespeople that have good relationships with their partners also have better chances for upselling, meaning that their clients are more inclined to buy other, new products or services from the company, too. Interviewee F stated in this regard: "*Because our job is to build relationships and then sell. What we call upselling. Upselling is... It's... It's about having a relationship and as you go along, just pick up the phone and call your partners."* Consequently, adaptive selling behaviors should be encouraged within the company since they are beneficial in the short and in the long run.

In this sense, sales managers should focus their coaching efforts not only on how to generate turnover in the short run. They should also focus on how to adapt the sales presentations and behaviors in a way to improve long-term relationships and keep customers satisfied long-term.

Input on client segmentation

Finally, this research also has some input on the way companies segment their customer base. As shown by this research, the constant adaptation that is suggested by Cultural Intelligence is not wanted by all clients. In this sense, interviewee A explained that being from another culture actually can bring some added value: "*Maybe the fact that I am different, as soon as I arrive French in another country, even when I meet clients, I can bring something else maybe."*

In this vein, the three quantitative studies showed that Cultural Intelligence negatively impacts the felt authenticity of a salesperson. At the same time authenticity positively impacts short-term sales performance in two of the three studies and long-term relationship performance in study 1. This therefore seems to be important for intercultural sales.

Consequently, this research suggests that companies need to look at the situation that their clients are in, their cultural backgrounds, the needs that they stated they have and brief the salespeople accordingly. Do these particular clients come from a culture where adaptation is highly worshipped? Or could they look for a diverse point of view and perhaps some creative solution to their problems and needs? Thus, the salespeople should be briefed before working with clients if adaptation or authenticity should be focused on during the encounters.

This result plays into the concept of client segmentation (Maier and Saunders, 1990) and categorization theory (Román and Iacobucci, 2010; Charoensukmongkol, 2020) that predict the grouping of customers into segments or categories based on their shared values. These categories therefore are said to be homogeneous in some points which allow the salespeople to adapt their resources to each group of clients differently and not evaluate for everyone. Thus, it has been shown that sales effectiveness can be improved by helping salespeople to effectively classify their customers and choose matching sales behaviors with the customer segment (Maier and Saunders, 1990). This research therefore suggests that companies should look at a potential preference for adaptation or authenticity so that salespeople can adjust their sales behaviors accordingly in an intercultural context.

Limitations and Future Research

Every research has its limitations and this one is certainly no exception. But all limitations also open possibilities for further research and studies. Therefore, this last part of the manuscript exposes in more details the different limitations of this research and how these could be addressed in future studies.

The first limitation of this research lies in the way of collecting the data for the quantitative studies. This research mainly relies on self-reported data by salespeople themselves, but dyadic or even triadic data would have been better in this case. Thus, further research should also include managerial rating or objective measures of short-term sales performance, for example. In addition, research should include the customer's point of view by collecting their opinion about the relationship quality as well as the authenticity levels of salespeople.

Secondly, in all three quantitative studies, data was collected from salespeople across different industries to aim for higher generalizability of the results. Further studies should look at one particular context, one particular industry or even one particular company in order to control for company and industry effects. Focusing on one industry also gives the opportunity to check for eventual differences across industries and allows determining in which context Cultural Intelligence is the most important.

On top of that, the second quantitative study administered an English questionnaire to Indian people. Since English is not the mother tongue of Indians, it can be expected that not all questions have been understood exactly as they were meant to be. Conversely, for the first study, the questionnaire actually was translated into the mother tongue of the respondents, French. Further research should be aware of these language problems and translate the different scales into the mother tongue of the respondents using a back-translation process. During this process, it is important to make sure that there is a measurement equivalence, and the scales are actually understood the way they meant to. Only then, results can be compared across different cultural backgrounds.

With regards to the scales, most of them worked quite well across all three studies and showed good reliability and validity values. But there still are some limits there, too. In particular, the authenticity scale was excessively reduced in all three studies following the confirmatory factor analysis. This scale only included two or three of the ten initial items in the final structural model testing. Due to the good validity and reliability of the purified scale, it has been decided to still keep the scale in the studies. The essence of the construct seemed to still be measured despite the deletion of several items. This therefore opens new research opportunities: How can salespeople's authenticity actually be measured? The first exploratory factor analysis even showed that the French version of the scale is bi-dimensional, leading to new ways of defining salespeople's authenticity. Is this concept only measuring how salespeople perceive their own authenticity level or also how their authenticity is perceived by their clients or their colleagues? Work on authenticity in psychology suggests that this concept actually is bi-dimensional with an intrapersonal dimension (focus on how a person feels) and an interpersonal one (what is expected in society when interacting with people) (Ménard and Brunet, 2012). Thus, more work is needed on this authenticity concept, not only in an intercultural sales context but in sales research in general.

With regards to the proposed antecedents of Cultural Intelligence, the results of studies 2 and 3 have not been conclusive. Only study 3 has found some significant impact of both antecedents. But further research still is needed on how to develop Cultural Intelligence of salespeople. At the moment, only intercultural training has been studied in this context (Baker and Delpechitre, 2016). But the question remains what else a company can do in order to develop the Cultural Intelligence levels of their sales personnel. In the same vein, only company-level antecedents have been studied here. Some additional, managerial-level variables like managerial support (Deconinck and Johnson, 2009) could also be looked at in future research.

Moreover, empathy has shown not to have a significant effect and therefore does not work as a moderator as hypothesized. Further research should investigate other eventual moderators in order to understand how Cultural Intelligence impacts adaptive selling and under what

conditions. In this sense, personality traits like open-mindedness (van Woerkom and de Reuver, 2009) could be looked at on an individual level. In addition, future research could also focus on company-level or managerial-level variables as moderators like company Cultural Intelligence (Moon, 2010b), capability control systems (Miao and Evans, 2013) or managerial sales coaching (Nguyen et al., 2019).

Finally, this study has looked at the four different dimensions of Cultural Intelligence as established by Earley and Ang (2003). Whilst this already is going into more details than earlier research that only has looked at Cultural Intelligence as a second-order construct (Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022), there still is some room for future research there. The conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence of Van Dyne et al. (2012) distinguished eleven sub-dimensions of this concept, based on the four initial dimensions. There has also been a scale developed for the assessment of the different sub-dimensions: the Expanded Cultural Intelligence Scale (E-CQS) (Kour, 2017). By using this more detailed conceptualization, an even deeper understanding of Cultural Intelligence in intercultural sales can be achieved. Consequently, this also can provide better feedback for training and coaching by exactly pinpointing the areas of Cultural Intelligence that are key in intercultural sales.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Interview Guide

1 - Introduction

Hello.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on an international sales force. The purpose of this interview is to describe in detail your expertise on the obstacles to be encountered in an intercultural context as well as the measures put in place by your company to overcome these obstacles. To facilitate our work, this interview is recorded. Do you agree with that? (waiting for acknowledgement).

The purpose of this interview is to get to know your opinion and experience in relation to the salesperson's profession in an international context. In particular, I would like to understand how you see the impact of different cultures on the salesperson's job and the mechanisms that you think are useful to help salespeople in their work in an intercultural context. All aspects interest me, and there are no bad or good things to say, the idea is to get to know your personal experience and your opinion on the subject. All right?

2 - *Company and Job context*

Before we start, can you give me some information about your job and the activities you do?

What are the typical tasks of a salesperson in your company?

To what extent are the salespeople in contact with people from different cultures (in your company or in general)?

3 - Intercultural obstacles

Have you ever lived abroad and if so, can you tell me about your experience? Also about obstacles you had to overcome?

What are the obstacles in general when working in an intercultural context?

Do you have any anecdotes where you or one of your colleagues has handled an intercultural situation particularly well? Or particularly poorly managed?

4 - Intercultural devices

What devices are proposed by your company to overcome these obstacles?

And what would you like to have as a device in your company?

What are the impacts of these devices on the different tasks of the salesperson?

5 - Intercultural sales competencies

What distinguishes an interculturally skilled salesperson for you?

How do you think such intercultural competence can be developed?

What affects this intercultural performance? What skills are required for an intercultural sales context? (Customer relations? negotiations? ...)

6 - Intercultural training

What training is available for the sales force in your company? And what training do you want to have in the company?

Do these trainings change anything in the behavior of salespeople (in relation to customers, colleagues, managers, the company)?

In your opinion, to what extent these trainings (or other measures put in place by your company) do or do not increase the performance of salespeople?

7 - Information about the respondent and invitation to recontact

Clarify certain elements at the end of the interview (if not stated before):

- Age
- Sex
- Status in the company
- Seniority in the company (in years)
- Business in B2B or B2C
- Industry sector

Appendix 2 Coding Structure Qualitative Study

Code	Theme	Sub-Theme
Culture	Cultural Level	National Culture
		Corporate Culture
		Intergenerational Culture
		Individual Culture
	Intercultural Obstacles	Communication Problems and Misunderstandings
		Cultural Bans or Prohibitions
		Integration Problems
Company	Recruitment	Reruit the Right Personnel
	Training	Initial Training
		Intercultural Training
		Lack of Training
		Training Effect
	Experience	Intercultural Experience
	Diversity Climate	Diverse Corporate Culture
		Internal Diversity
		External Diversity
		Ethical Code
	Company Support	Collaborations and Team Work
		Support and Back-up
Manager	Supervisor Support	Good Leaders
		Trust

Salesperson	Sales Profession	Field Salespeople vs. Sales Back Office
		Local Partners
		B2B and B2C
		Insufficient Knowledge of the Products
	Customer Relationship	Good Relationship with Customer
	Personality	Humility
		Open-Mindedness
	Cultural Intelligence	Cognitive Understanding
		Language
		Tolerance and Respect
		Willingness to Learn
		Intrinsic Motivation
		Curiosity
	Active Listening	Careful Listening
		Proposing Adequate Solutions
	Adaptive Selling	Adaptability
	Authenticity	Harmful Inauthentic Behavior
	Empathy	Understanding of the Underlying Emotions

Appendix 3 Survey Questionnaire – Example Questionnaire Study 3

Hello,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

The purpose of this survey is to better understand the intercultural sales context to be more efficient and increase performance in such particular situations.

There are no right or wrong answers, only your spontaneous and honest opinion counts.

This survey is non-commercial and the answers given will only be used for research purposes.

Responses are completely anonymous and on a voluntary basis.

This survey will take about 20 minutes of your time to respond.

Thank you!

Nadine FISCHER (University of Montpellier)

Nationality

What is your nationality?

French

English

American

German

Other _____

Job

What department are you working in ?

Sales

Marketing

Finance

Administration

Other _____

Diversity

On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), how would you rate your company on the following aspects:

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
I trust my company to treat me fairly.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My company maintains a diversity-friendly work environment.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My company respects the view of people like me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Top leaders demonstrate a visible commitment to diversity.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Org Support

On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), how would you rate your company on the following aspects:

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
My organization takes great pride in my accomplishments.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My organization really cares about my well-being.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My organization strongly considers my goals and values.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My organization is willing to help me if I need help.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Cultural competence 1

Please indicate to which point you strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (7) with the following statements regarding intercultural situations:

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Cultural competence 2

Please indicate to which point you strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (7) with the following statements regarding intercultural situations:

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know the rules (e.g. vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know the marriage systems of other cultures.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know the rules for expressing nonverbal behaviors in other cultures.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Cultural competence 3

Please indicate to which point you strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (7) with the following statements regarding intercultural situations:

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am sure I can deal with the stress of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am confident that I can get accustomed to shopping conditions in a different culture.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Cultural competence 4

Please indicate to which point you strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (7) with the following statements regarding intercultural situations:

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
I change my verbal behavior (e.g. accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I use pause and silence differently to suit cross-cultural situations.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I change my nonverbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Communication

The statements below describe various ways you may act with your customer. For each statement, indicate to what extent you behave that way…

	1 - Never	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Always
I ask probing questions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I ask continuing questions like "Could you tell me more?"	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I ask clarifying questions like "I am not sure I know what you mean."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I restate what the buyer has stated or asked.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I summarize what the buyer has said.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Adapting

Please indicate to which point you strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (7) with the following statements:

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
When I feel that my sales approach is not working, I can easily change to another approach.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like to experiment with different sales approaches.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am very flexible in the selling approach I use.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can easily use a variety of selling approaches.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I try to understand how one customer differs from another.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Feelings

When interacting with customers in my sales position, I often feel that I am …

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
Masking my true thoughts and feelings.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am being the real me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pretending nothing is wrong when I am upset.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Avoiding confrontation with customers who have lied to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Making small talk about topics I do not care about.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Complimenting customers who do not deserve it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Feeling tense and pressured in this part of my life.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Acting interested in customer's hobbies when I am not.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Simply playing a role.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pretending to agree with customers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Performance

On a scale of 1 (my performance could be improved substantially) to 7 (my performance needs no improvement), how would you rate your performance on the following aspects:

	1 - My performance could be improved substantially	2	3	4	5	6	7 - My performance needs no improvement
Closing sales	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Handling sales objections	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Overall performance as a salesperson	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Overall pound volume of sales	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Quality of sales presentations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Converting new prospects into new customers	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Relationship

On a scale of 1 (never) to 7 (always), how would you rate your efforts on the following aspects:

I am...

	1 - Never	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Always
Building your customer's business with your products.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Working out solutions to a customer's questions or objections.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Working with customers to help them improve their profitability.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Working with buyers to develop a partnership that's profitable to both firms.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Caring

Please indicate to which point you strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (7) with the following statements regarding yourself:

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
I always demonstrate a caring attitude toward other people.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I compliment others when they have done something well.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I want to help when others encounter problems.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I am upset with someone, I usually try to 'put myself in their shoes' for some while.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I always demonstrate a sincere interest in people	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Supplementary information

Sex

Your sex

Male

Female

Age

What age are you?

Education

What is your education level?

Less than high school

High school (Abitur)

Some college

Four-year college (Bachelor)

Graduate school (Master and beyond)

Job

What is your profession?

Sales Representative

Sales Manager

Other _____

Job Title

Specify if you wish your job title.

Industry

Your activity is mainly...

B2B

B2C

Both

Industry (B2B)

Display This Question:

If Your activity is mainly... = B2B

Or Your activity is mainly... = Both

Your industry (B2B)

Auto

Business Services

Business Supplies

Financial

Food

Health

Household

Raw Materials

Technology

Other _____

Industry (B2C)

Display This Question:

If Your activity is mainly... = B2C

Or Your activity is mainly... = Both

Your industry (B2C)

Athletic

Auto

Beauty

Clothing

Financial

Food

Health

Household

Services

Technology

Other _____

Company size

The size of your company (approximate number of employees)

Experience

How much experience do you have in ... (years)

- Sales _____
- Your current firm _____
- Your current position _____

Regionality

Your company is working...

regionally

nationally

internationally

globally

Interculturality

The part of interculturality in your work is…

More than 75%

50% - 75%

25% - 50%

Below 25%

Expat experience

Have you lived more than 6 months in another country than your country of origin?

Yes

No

Number countries

Display This Question:

If Have you lived more than 6 months in another country than your country of origin? = Yes

How many countries have you lived in?

Intercult. training

Did you receive any intercultural training?

Yes

No

Rating training

Display This Question:

If Did you receive any intercultural training? = Yes

Using the scale below, how would you rate the intercultural training you received?

1 - Very poor

2

3

4

5

6

7 - Very good

Expatriate

Are you an expatriate at the moment?

Yes

No

Interculturality

How would you rate the importance of intercultural skills for the sales job in general?

1 - Completely unimportant

2

3

4

5

6

7 - Highly important

Appendix 4 Normality of Data for all three Studies

Variables	Items	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
Metacognitive CQ	MCogCQ1	-.27	.17	-.14	.34
	MCogCQ2	-.48	.17	.11	.34
	MCogCQ3	-.12	.17	-.44	.34
	MCogCQ4	-.50	.17	-.06	.34
Cognitive CQ	CogCQ1	.26	.17	-.83	.34
	CogCQ2	-.24	.17	-.72	.34
	CogCQ3	-.23	.17	-.66	.34
	CogCQ4	.14	.17	-.91	.34
	CogCQ5	-.05	.17	-.72	.34
	CogCQ6	-.05	.17	-.69	.34
Motivational CQ	MotCQ1	-.78	.17	.13	.34
	MotCQ2	-.47	.17	-.07	.34
	MotCQ3	-.47	.17	-.22	.34
	MotCQ4	-.59	.17	-.01	.34
	MotCQ5	-.31	.17	-.41	.34
Behavioral CQ	BehCQ1	-.70	.17	-.04	.34
	BehCQ2	-.52	.17	.27	.34
	BehCQ3	-.67	.17	.49	.34
	BehCQ4	-.58	.17	.31	.34
	BehCQ5	-.53	.17	-.04	.34
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT1	-.66	.17	.39	.34
	ADAPT2	-.63	.17	.35	.34
	ADAPT3	-.71	.17	.66	.34
	ADAPT4	-.37	.17	-.19	.34
	ADAPT5	-.81	.17	.86	.34
Active Listening	LIST1	-.72	.17	.16	.34
	LIST2	-.70	.17	.16	.34
	LIST3	-.57	.17	-.05	.34
	LIST4	-.72	.17	.15	.34
	LIST5	-.65	.17	.35	.34
Authenticity	AUTH1	.56	.17	-.40	.34
	AUTH5	.49	.17	-.30	.34
	AUTH6	.25	.17	-.61	.34
	AUTH7	.07	.17	-.88	.34
	AUTH8	.50	.17	-.48	.34
	AUTH9	.24	.17	-.82	.34
	AUTH10	.30	.17	-.19	.34

	SPERF1	-.30	.17	-.11	.34
	SPERF2	-.58	.17	.28	.34
Sales	SPERF3	-.57	.17	.16	.34
Performance	SPERF4	-.40	.17	.29	.34
	SPERF5	-.39	.17	-.28	.34
	SPERF6	-.34	.17	-.25	.34
	RELPERF1	-.79	.17	.51	.34
Relationship	RELPERF2	-.57	.17	-.15	.34
Performance	RELPERF3	-.62	.17	-.09	.34
	RELPERF4	-.64	.17	-.49	.34

Table 61: Normality of the observed variables - Study 1

Variables	Items	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
Metacognitive CQ	MCogCQ1	-1.22	.18	1.84	.37
	MCogCQ2	-.92	.18	1.77	.37
	MCogCQ3	-1.05	.18	1.26	.37
	MCogCQ4	-1.09	.18	**1.98**	.37
Cognitive CQ	CogCQ1	-.46	.18	.06	.37
	CogCQ2	-.27	.18	-.76	.37
	CogCQ3	-.42	.18	.08	.37
	CogCQ4	-.41	.18	-.27	.37
	CogCQ5	-.24	.18	-.35	.37
	CogCQ6	-.16	.18	-.67	.37
Motivational CQ	MotCQ1	-1.23	.18	**3.80**	.37
	MotCQ2	-.79	.18	1.27	.37
	MotCQ3	-.82	.18	1.10	.37
	MotCQ4	-.70	.18	.27	.37
	MotCQ5	-1.00	.18	1.49	.37
Behavioral CQ	BehCQ1	-.53	.18	-.42	.37
	BehCQ2	-.78	.18	.69	.37
	BehCQ3	-.89	.18	1.33	.37
	BehCQ4	-.77	.18	.60	.37
	BehCQ5	-.74	.18	.14	.37
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT1	-.69	.18	.14	.37
	ADAPT2	-.70	.18	.06	.37
	ADAPT3	-.60	.18	.02	.37
	ADAPT4	-.73	.18	.37	.37
	ADAPT5	-1.03	.18	1.01	.37

Active Listening	LIST1	-.90	.18	.73	.37
	LIST2	-.87	.18	.37	.37
	LIST3	-.93	.18	.34	.37
	LIST4	-.87	.18	.56	.37
	LIST5	-1.01	.18	1.03	.37
Authenticity	AUTH1	.45	.18	-.54	.37
	AUTH2	-.36	.18	-.45	.37
	AUTH3	.41	.18	-.54	.37
	AUTH4	.22	.18	-.84	.37
	AUTH5	.41	.18	-.74	.37
	AUTH6	.23	.18	-.58	.37
	AUTH7	-.15	.18	-1.07	.37
	AUTH8	.50	.18	-.55	.37
	AUTH9	.30	.18	-.99	.37
	AUTH10	.41	.18	-.28	.37
Sales Performance	SPERF1	-.70	.18	.24	.37
	SPERF2	-.53	.18	.20	.37
	SPERF3	-1.16	.18	1.77	.37
	SPERF4	-.67	.18	.56	.37
	SPERF5	-1.06	.18	1.41	.37
	SPERF6	-1.04	.18	1.25	.37
Relationship Performance	RELPERF1	-.85	.18	.21	.37
	RELPERF2	-1.30	.18	**2.61**	.37
	RELPERF3	-.76	.18	.34	.37
	RELPERF4	-.80	.18	.15	.37
Organizational Support	ORGSUP1	-1.02	.18	1.23	.37
	ORGSUP2	-1.20	.18	**2.05**	.37
	ORGSUP3	-1.26	.18	**2.23**	.37
	ORGSUP4	-.90	.18	.63	.37
Diversity Climate	DIV1	-1.10	.18	1.15	.37
	DIV2	-1.04	.18	1.07	.37
	DIV3	-.96	.18	1.27	.37
	DIV4	-1.07	.18	**1.97**	.37

Table 62: Normality of the observed variables - Study 2

Variables	Items	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
Metacognitive CQ	MCogCQ1	-.10	.17	-.41	.34
	MCogCQ2	-.28	.17	-.32	.34
	MCogCQ3	.03	.17	-.76	.34
	MCogCQ4	-.40	.17	.19	.34
Cognitive CQ	CogCQ1	.04	.17	-.73	.34
	CogCQ2	-.07	.17	-.68	.34
	CogCQ3	-.47	.17	-.35	.34
	CogCQ4	-.07	.17	-.72	.34
	CogCQ5	-.10	.17	-.52	.34
	CogCQ6	-.27	.17	-.54	.34
Motivational CQ	MotCQ1	-.67	.17	.46	.34
	MotCQ2	-.40	.17	-.29	.34
	MotCQ3	-.50	.17	-.02	.34
	MotCQ4	-.32	.17	-.47	.34
	MotCQ5	-.50	.17	.20	.34
Behavioral CQ	BehCQ1	-.44	.17	-.54	.34
	BehCQ2	-.47	.17	-.31	.34
	BehCQ3	-.45	.17	-.05	.34
	BehCQ4	-.39	.17	-.18	.34
	BehCQ5	-.34	.17	-.55	.34
Adaptive Selling	ADAPT1	-.40	.17	-.09	.34
	ADAPT2	-.38	.17	-.28	.34
	ADAPT3	-.57	.17	-.05	.34
	ADAPT4	-.73	.17	.48	.34
	ADAPT5	-.76	.17	.04	.34
Active Listening	LIST1	-.55	.17	-.02	.34
	LIST2	-.42	.17	-.06	.34
	LIST3	-.32	.17	-.10	.34
	LIST4	-.52	.17	.43	.34
	LIST5	-.51	.17	.22	.34

Authenticity	AUTH1	.30	.17	-.59	.34
	AUTH2	-.54	.17	-.41	.34
	AUTH3	.46	.17	-.39	.34
	AUTH4	.30	.17	-.45	.34
	AUTH5	.33	.17	-.34	.34
	AUTH6	.25	.17	-.48	.34
	AUTH7	.26	.17	-.63	.34
	AUTH8	.52	.17	-.10	.34
	AUTH9	.43	.17	-.25	.34
	AUTH10	.43	.17	-.22	.34
Sales Performance	SPERF1	-.62	.17	.13	.34
	SPERF2	-.72	.17	.65	.34
	SPERF3	-.53	.17	.32	.34
	SPERF4	-.29	.17	-.36	.34
	SPERF5	-.58	.17	.11	.34
	SPERF6	-.37	.17	-.06	.34
Relationship Performance	RELPERF1	-.89	.17	.50	.34
	RELPERF2	-.86	.17	1.01	.34
	RELPERF3	-.72	.17	-.02	.34
	RELPERF4	-.63	.17	-.40	.34
Organizational Support	ORGSUP1	-.64	.17	.12	.34
	ORGSUP2	-.57	.17	-.19	.34
	ORGSUP3	-.62	.17	-.09	.34
	ORGSUP4	-.73	.17	.03	.34
Diversity Climate	DIV1	-.55	.17	-.33	.34
	DIV2	-.51	.17	-.41	.34
	DIV3	-.43	.17	-.66	.34
	DIV4	-.35	.17	-.60	.34
Empathy	EMPA1	-.81	.17	.21	.34
	EMPA2	-.95	.17	.56	.34
	EMPA3	-.52	.17	-.44	.34
	EMPA4	-.20	.17	-.83	.34
	EMPA5	-.70	.17	.10	.34

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Résumé

L’intelligence culturelle – une compétence clé dans la vente interculturelle ?

Une étude à travers trois contextes culturels (France, Inde et Angleterre)

Au cours des dernières décennies, les entreprises se sont ouvertes de plus en plus en raison de la mondialisation. Ces développements ont engendré de multiples défis pour les entreprises, notamment en ce qui concerne le choix et la formation de personnes devant travailler dans des contextes interculturels. La fonction commerciale est particulièrement touchée par ces défis en raison de la dimension humaine de la vente. Les commerciaux œuvrant à l’international sont en contact et doivent établir des relations avec une multitude de clients issus de milieux culturels différents. Or, la recherche dans le domaine de la vente n'a pas suffisamment étudié ce contexte et il manque de la connaissance sur les indicateurs de performance dans la vente interculturelle.

Cette thèse enrichit la littérature sur la vente interculturelle en examinant l'importance de l'intelligence culturelle - la capacité et la compétence d'une personne à s'adapter et à interagir efficacement dans un contexte interculturel - dans un contexte commercial. Pour ce faire, une méthodologie mixte est utilisée.

Tout d'abord, une étude qualitative exploratoire est réalisée pour comprendre le point de vue des praticiens qui travaillent dans ce contexte particulier. Cette étude souligne l’impact des compétences et des comportements clés nécessaires aux vendeurs pour être performant dans des contextes interculturels et met en évidence les actions que les entreprises peuvent faire pour les aider à réussir.

Cette étude qualitative confrontée à la revue de la littérature permet de proposer dans un premier temps des hypothèses reliant l'intelligence culturelle à de multiples compétences et comportements de vente tels que par exemple la vente adaptative, l'écoute active, l'authenticité ou l'empathie. Dans un deuxième temps, l’impact de ces compétences et comportements sur la performance de vente à court terme et la performance relationnelle à long terme est étudié. Enfin, cette thèse examine également l’impact de différents dispositifs au niveau de l’entreprise – soutien de l’entreprise et climat de diversité – sur le développement de l’intelligence culturelle des commerciaux.

À travers trois études, menées auprès de commerciaux de France, d'Inde et d'Angleterre, ce travail met en exergue l'importance de l'intelligence culturelle des vendeurs. La première étude menée sur échantillon de 198 vendeurs français souligne l’impact de l'intelligence culturelle sur l'écoute active et les comportements de vente adaptatifs qui, à leur tour, se répercutent sur les ventes et la performance relationnelle. La deuxième étude menée auprès de 174 vendeurs indiens permet d’enrichir le modèle initial en considérant des antécédents de l'intelligence culturelle au niveau de l'entreprise. Les résultats montrent le revers de la médaille de l'intelligence culturelle, cette variable ayant un impact négatif sur l'authenticité perçue des vendeurs. Enfin, la troisième étude (207 vendeurs anglais) s'appuie sur les deux premières et étudie l’empathie comme variable modératrice de la relation « intelligence culturelle et vente adaptative ». Cette dernière étude confirme les résultats des deux premières. Cependant, l'empathie n'a pas d'effet de modération significatif dans cette étude. Des implications managériales, limites et futures voies de recherche sont alors proposées.

Keywords

Vente interculturelle, Intelligence culturelle, Vente adaptative, Authenticité, Performance commerciale et relationnelle, Conception multi-études

Abstract

Cultural Intelligence – a key competence in intercultural sales?

A study across three cultural contexts (France, India & England)

Over the last decades, businesses have been opening up more and more due to globalization tendencies. These developments introduced multiple challenges for companies, especially with regards to choosing and training people to work in intercultural contexts. The sales field is particularly impacted by these challenges because of the human dimension of sales. Intercultural salespeople are in contact with and have to establish relationships with a multitude of customers from different cultural backgrounds. However, research in the field of sales has not sufficiently studied this context and there is a lack of knowledge about performance indicators in intercultural selling.

This thesis thesis adds to the literature on intercultural sales by examining the importance of Cultural Intelligence – a person's abilities and skills to adapt and interact effectively in an intercultural context – in a sales setting. To do this, a mixed methodology is used.

First, an exploratory qualitative study is conducted to understand the views of practitioners working in this particular context. This study highlights the impact of key skills and behaviors needed by salespeople to perform well in intercultural contexts and suggests actions that companies can take to help them succeed.

This qualitative study, together with the literature review, allows to propose hypotheses linking cultural intelligence to multiple sales skills and behaviors such as adaptive selling, active listening, authenticity or empathy. Secondly, the impact of these skills and behaviors on short-term sales performance and long-term relationship performance is investigated. Finally, this thesis also examines the impact of different company-level variables - company support and diversity climate - on the development of Cultural Intelligence of salespeople.

Through three studies, conducted with salespeople in France, India and England, this work highlights the importance of salespeople's cultural intelligence. The first study, based on a sample of 198 French salespeople, highlights the impact of cultural intelligence on active listening and adaptive selling behaviors which, in turn, impact sales and relationship performance. The second study of 174 Indian salespeople extends the initial model by considering antecedents of cultural intelligence at the company level. The results show the downside of cultural intelligence, as this variable negatively impacts the perceived authenticity of salespeople. Finally, the third study (207 English salespeople) builds on the first two and examines empathy as a moderating variable in the relationship between cultural intelligence and adaptive selling. This last study confirms the results of the first two. However, empathy does not have a significant moderating effect in this study. Managerial contributions, limitations and future research directions are then proposed.

Keywords

Intercultural Sales, Cultural Intelligence, Adaptive Selling, Authenticity, Sales & Relationship Performance, Multi-study Design

THÈSE POUR OBTENIR LE GRADE DE DOCTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTPELLIER

En Sciences de Gestion

École doctorale d'Economie et de Gestion (EDEG)

Unité de recherche MRM – Montpellier Research in Management

Cultural Intelligence – A key competence in intercultural sales ? A study across three cultural contexts (France, India & England)

L'intelligence culturelle - une compétence clé dans la vente interculturelle ? Une étude à travers trois contextes culturels (France, Inde et Angleterre)

Présentée par Nadine FISCHER

Le 13 décembre 2022

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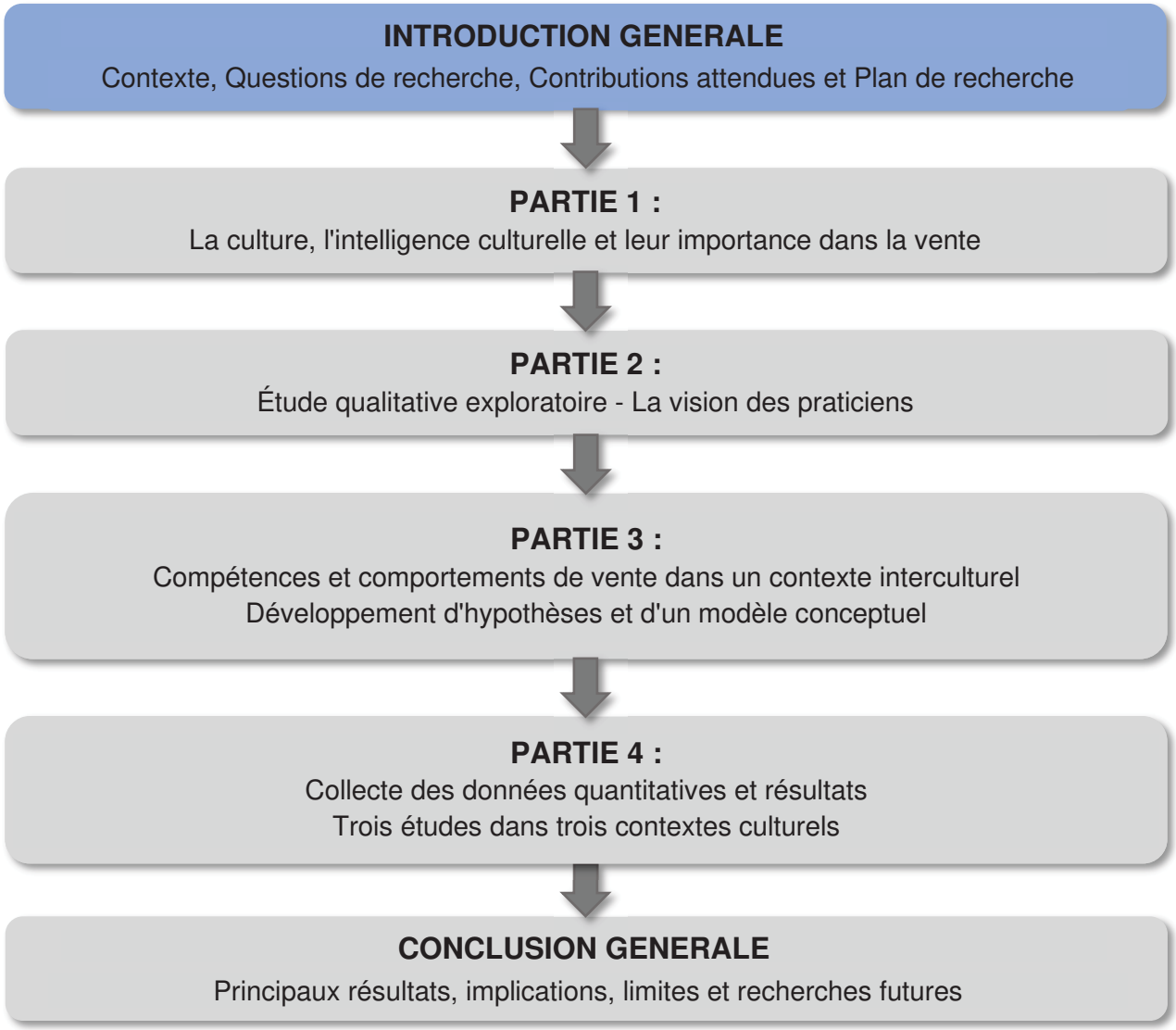
Ceci est le résumé français détaillé de ce manuscrit de thèse. Ce résumé comprend :

- Introduction : Traduction complète
- Parties 1,2,3,4 : un résumé de chaque partie
- Conclusion : Traduction complète
- Références
- Brefs résumés en anglais et français


INTRODUCTION GENERALE
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PARTIE 1 :
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PARTIE 2 :
Étude qualitative exploratoire - La vision des praticiens
PARTIE 3 :
Compétences et comportements de vente dans un contexte interculturel
Développement d'hypothèses et d'un modèle conceptuel
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Collecte des données quantitatives et résultats
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CONCLUSION GENERALE
Principaux résultats, implications, limites et recherches futures

INTRODUCTION GENERALE

Contexte de la recherche

De nos jours, les entreprises se sont de plus en plus ouvertes et le commerce international représente un grand pourcentage des échanges mondiaux (Lewin and Johnston, 1997; Simintiras and Thomas, 1998; Eisenberg et al., 2013; Alexandra, 2018). Au cours des dernières années, toutes les économies les plus importantes du monde ont multiplié leurs exportations et leurs importations et se sont ainsi de plus en plus connectées (World Trade Organization, 2019). Les tendances à la mondialisation se sont remarquablement accélérées en raison de la création de l'Union européenne et de la formation de l'ALENA (Accord de libre-échange nord-américain) ainsi que de l'OMC (Organisation mondiale du commerce). Au cours des dernières décennies, la Chine a adhéré à l'OMC et l'ALENA s'est élargi pour inclure non seulement l'Amérique du Nord, mais aussi l'Amérique centrale et du Sud. En outre, l'euro a été introduit comme monnaie unique européenne et l'Union européenne continue à croître (Johnson et al., 2006). Tous ces développements sont les raisons pour lesquelles les économies existantes se sont davantage ouvertes et, par conséquent, ont poussé les entreprises à se développer à l'échelle mondiale.

Même si certaines tendances à la démondialisation ont été constatées ces dernières années (James, 2018; Witt, 2019), les entreprises vendent toujours autant à l'échelle mondiale. Par exemple, S&P Dow Jones Indices explique que les 500 principales entreprises américaines ont produit et vendu 42,90% de leurs produits et services en dehors des États-Unis (S&P Dow Jones Indices, 2019). En outre, les progrès techniques, comme Internet par exemple, ont permis une interconnexion encore plus grande à l'échelle mondiale. Les économies occidentales et orientales ont été reliées pour créer des chaînes d'approvisionnement mondiales interconnectées (Friedman, 2006).

Ces réseaux ont bien sûr connu quelques perturbations en raison des dernières crises comme la crise de Covid ou la guerre en Ukraine. Cependant, cela n'a pas changé le fait que les commerciaux doivent toujours échanger avec des acheteurs de différents marchés géographiques afin d'assurer la continuité de leur activité (Sharma et al., 2020).

Non seulement les entreprises vendent de plus en plus à l'échelle mondiale, mais l'immigration a également augmenté au cours des dernières décennies. Déjà en 2014, la population immigrée de l'UE a atteint 55 millions de personnes (Eurostat, 2016). Cela a un large impact sur l'économie et nécessite une certaine adaptation à un contexte culturel différent, même sur les marchés nationaux.

Cet environnement mondial en pleine évolution représente un grand défi pour les entreprises en général, qui doivent s'adapter à un contexte de travail complexe avec des différences interculturelles. De nombreuses entreprises qui travaillent sur les marchés internationaux ont connu une forme d'échec lié à cette situation. Ces échecs sont coûteux pour une entreprise, tant sur le plan monétaire que social. Comme expliqué dans une étude antérieure, le taux d'échec des expatriés est estimé entre 40 et 50%, entraînant un coût monétaire de 250 000 à 1 million de dollars, en fonction de la position dans l'hiérarchie et du besoin de remplacement (Johnson et al., 2006). En outre, d'autres types de coûts peuvent être associés à ces échecs globaux, notamment les opportunités perdues, les relations endommagées et la productivité réduite, qui sont susceptibles de nuire encore plus à l'entreprise sur le long terme. Mais les coûts sont encore plus élevés si l'on tient compte non seulement des retours précoces des expatriés, mais aussi des cadres démotivés qui quittent l'entreprise dans les mois ou les années qui suivent leur retour. Une telle fluctuation du management augmente le coût du recrutement et de la formation de nouveaux employés à cause de la perte de cadres expérimentés et formés (Johnson et al., 2006).

Par conséquent, il est possible de conclure que de nombreuses entreprises ne déploient pas suffisamment d'efforts pour préparer et former les personnes à ce contexte de travail interculturel. Tous ces échecs ne peuvent pourtant pas être attribués uniquement à des

facteurs culturels, il y a aussi d'autres raisons comme les influences externes issues des procédures juridiques, la politique ou encore les influences liées au contexte. Mais le manque de compétences interculturelles et transculturelles et les problèmes qui découlent des différences culturelles semblent être un facteur majeur (Johnson et al., 2006).

Pour toutes les raisons mentionnées ci-dessus, des recherches antérieures considèrent des concepts tels que la compétence interculturelle, la compétence transculturelle ou l'intelligence culturelle comme étant parmi les facteurs les plus importants pour la réussite des relations commerciales et la performance en dehors du marché national (Messner, 2015). La recherche interculturelle démontre que les entreprises ont de plus en plus besoin d'employer des personnes capables de bien travailler dans un environnement mondialisé (Rattrie and Kittler, 2014). Les compétences interculturelles semblent être essentielles pour les personnes qui vivent à l'étranger et qui sont donc immergées dans une autre culture ou qui travaillent depuis leur culture d'origine avec des personnes de cultures différentes. La recherche dans ce domaine a gagné en visibilité et en importance au cours des dernières décennies, en parallèle avec le développement de leaders mondiaux (Van Bakel et al., 2014). Même des organisations mondiales comme PISA[1] et l'UNESCO[2] ont reconnu l'importance de ces concepts. L'UNESCO a publié un rapport à ce sujet en 2013 (UNESCO, 2013) et PISA a introduit une mesure de la compétence globale au niveau mondial en 2018.

Le domaine de la vente est particulièrement touché par ce défi interculturel. Les métiers de la vente et le quotidien des commerciaux ont énormément changé, impactant non seulement les vendeurs eux-mêmes, mais aussi l'ensemble du service commercial (Marshall et al., 2012). De plus, il a été démontré que les comportements des vendeurs sont de plus en plus importants pour la performance globale de l'organisation ces dernières décennies.

[1] **PISA – Programme international pour le suivi des acquis des élèves** : Une étude menée par l'Organisation européenne de coopération économique depuis le début des années 2000 pour évaluer le niveau des élèves de 15 ans et mesurer ainsi la performance des systèmes éducatifs des 34 pays membres de l'organisation.

[2] **UNESCO - Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture** : Une agence spécialisée des Nations Unies ayant pour mission de promouvoir la coopération internationale dans les domaines de l'éducation, de la science, de la culture et de la communication.

L'organisation des ventes et la performance individuelle des vendeurs deviennent encore plus cruciales pour le succès et même la survie d'une entreprise (Marshall et al., 2012).

La littérature scientifique dans le domaine de la vente a montré de nombreuses raisons d'échec ou de succès dans la vente. L'une des variables clés de ces dernières années sont les interactions personnelles entre un vendeur et un client (Stros et al., 2017). La dimension relationnelle est devenue primordiale dans la vente d'aujourd'hui. La fonction 'vente' est davantage centrée sur le client depuis quelques décennies, ce qui signifie que les vendeurs sont obligés de se concentrer plus sur les besoins des clients que sur la seule rentabilité (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006). Les acheteurs recherchent des vendeurs capables de leur proposer des solutions qui répondent véritablement à tous leurs besoins (Huntley, 2006). En outre, les clients sont plus exigeants qu'auparavant, allant jusqu'à vouloir être traités comme des partenaires (Beverland, 2001).

Malheureusement, certains articles sur la vente ont montré que de nombreux vendeurs manquent d'engagement, de compétences et d'expérience pour répondre aux souhaits et aux besoins de leurs clients. Ils ont tendance à davantage parler qu'à réellement faire quelque chose pour leurs clients (Schaefer and Pettijohn, 2006), ce qui rend encore plus difficile l'établissement de relations fructueuses. Ainsi, les vendeurs sont amenés à consacrer une plus grande partie de leur énergie à développer des relations avec les clients et à les fidéliser (Marshall et al., 2012). Dans le contexte industriel actuel, il est encore plus difficile de construire et de maintenir des relations à cause de la complexité des besoins des clients. Les commerciaux doivent comprendre de manière efficace les clients et proposer la meilleure solution à leurs problèmes (Marshall et al., 2012).

En général, il a été démontré que la stratégie de marketing relationnel d'une entreprise ne peut réussir que si les commerciaux d'une entreprise se comportent correctement et créent des relations fortes avec les clients (Kaski et al., 2018). Les vendeurs et surtout la force de vente de terrain ont toujours été la clé du succès d'une entreprise en raison de leur rôle de liaison entre l'entreprise et ses clients. Les vendeurs sont le visage de l'entreprise vis-à-vis de leurs

clients et jouent donc un rôle essentiel et crucial pour le succès de l'entreprise (Beverland, 2001).

De plus, les commerciaux sont souvent coûteux pour une entreprise, notamment en termes de formation et de rétention. La littérature en vente a montré que les commerciaux sont des ressources chères et qu'ils doivent savoir gérer leur temps afin d'effectuer des visites cruciaux auprès des prospects pertinents ou de maintenir les relations existantes (Moncrief and Marshall, 2005). Par conséquent, une nécessité d'identifier et de recruter des vendeurs efficaces et qualifiés se manifeste dans le contexte mondialisé d'aujourd'hui (Borg and Johnston, 2013; Novell et al., 2016). De plus en plus d'entreprises ont constaté que maximiser les performances des vendeurs est une question cruciale dans un tel contexte de marché mondialisé. En 2015, Manpower Group a publié une enquête sur la pénurie de talents qui montrait déjà que la vente était le deuxième poste le plus difficile à pourvoir lors d'un recrutement dans un contexte mondial (Stros et al., 2017).

Dans le contexte actuel de vente interculturelle, tout cela oblige les vendeurs à créer des relations avec des acheteurs d'une autre culture (Mintu-Wimsatt and Gassenheimer, 1996). Du fait des problèmes de langue, d'un héritage culturel différent ou de barrières géographiques, la création et le maintien d'une telle relation entre le vendeur et l'acheteur peuvent être très complexes (Lewin and Johnston, 1997). La plus grande tâche d'un vendeur dans une telle situation est non seulement d'identifier les différences culturelles existantes, mais aussi de les surmonter et de s'adapter à la culture de l'acheteur afin de minimiser leur impact. Ainsi, il peut être assez difficile pour les commerciaux de comprendre ce que les clients internationaux désirent ou ce dont ils ont besoin, car ils n'utilisent pas nécessairement la même façon de s'exprimer.

Par conséquent, il est essentiel pour une entreprise de savoir si un vendeur est compétent dans ce domaine interculturel afin de choisir le bon personnel pour ce contexte particulier. Mais si l'on regarde la recherche sur la vente, Panagopoulos et al. (2011) ainsi que Dugan et al. (2020) affirment que très peu de recherches sont consacrées à la vente internationale ou

interculturelle. Cela représente en fait moins de 10% des recherches en vente. Il y a un besoin accru de mieux comprendre le contexte interculturel de la vente, la façon dont les vendeurs travaillent et ce qui les rend efficaces dans ce contexte particulier.

Un concept intéressant pour expliquer quel commercial est le plus à même de réussir dans de tels contextes est l'intelligence culturelle, principalement utilisé auparavant dans la recherche sur les ressources humaines ou le management international. Cette variable fait référence aux capacités et aux compétences d'une personne à s'adapter et à interagir de manière efficace dans un contexte interculturel (Earley and Ang 2003; Earley and Peterson 2004; Thomas et al. 2008; Hansen et al. 2011; Eisenberg et al. 2013; Ang and Van Dyne 2015; Alexandra 2018) et peut être utilisé pour expliquer pourquoi certaines personnes semblent être plus à même de faire face à la diversité interculturelle (Ang and Van Dyne 2015).

Notre thèse s'intéresse à l'impact de l'intelligence culturelle sur des variables importantes de vente interculturelle et, ainsi, à la place de ce concept dans ce contexte particulier.

Problématique et questions de recherche

Notre recherche vise à répondre à certaines questions. Tout d'abord, l'objectif général de cette recherche est d'expliquer les différences en matière de performance de vente dans des contextes interculturels en utilisant le concept d'intelligence culturelle. Par conséquent, la question majeure posée par cette recherche est :

Pourquoi, comment et dans quelle mesure l'intelligence culturelle des commerciaux a-t-elle un impact sur leurs performances ?

Dans un deuxième temps, pour pouvoir répondre à cette question générale, quelques questions subsidiaires sont posées, notamment :

- ***L'intelligence culturelle peut-elle être utilisée pour expliquer les différences dans les performances de vente (à court et à long terme) ?***
- ***Certaines des compétences de vente interculturelles les plus importantes sont-elles influencées par l'intelligence culturelle ?***
- ***Quels facteurs au niveau de l'entreprise peuvent aider à développer l'intelligence culturelle ?***

L'objectif managérial final de cette recherche est d'évaluer si l'intelligence culturelle est un critère valable pour le recrutement du personnel de vente dans des contextes interculturels. Pour ce faire, il est important de comprendre l'impact de l'intelligence culturelle sur les compétences les plus importantes dans de tels contextes et, ensuite, sur les performances à court et à long terme. Enfin, notre thèse examine ce qu'une entreprise peut faire pour améliorer le niveau d'intelligence culturelle de ses commerciaux.

Contributions attendues

Cette recherche vise donc à faire progresser les connaissances dans le domaine de la vente interculturelle en écho à Panagopoulos et al. (2011) ou Dugan et al. (2020). En introduisant le concept d'intelligence culturelle dans un contexte de vente, ce travail vise à mieux comprendre l'importance de ce concept dans ce contexte de travail particulier. Pour ce faire, cette recherche examine donc le lien entre l'intelligence culturelle et une multitude de compétences de vente et de performances différentes.

Par conséquent, d'un point de vue théorique, ce travail vise à contribuer à la compréhension et à la construction de la théorie autour de l'intelligence culturelle. En la reliant à différentes théories liées à la vente, telles de la vente adaptative, de nouvelles connaissances seront apportées sur ce concept dans un contexte de vente interculturelle. En outre, en examinant

les antécédents de l'intelligence culturelle sur le plan de l'entreprise, cette recherche tente de mieux comprendre comment ce concept peut être développé au-delà de la formation interculturelle.

Du plan méthodologique, cette recherche vise à enrichir les recherches existantes en utilisant une approche méthodologique mixte. L'utilisation d'une étude qualitative exploratoire avec des commerciaux et des managers dans ce domaine permet de s'assurer que les concepts employés dans les études quantitatives sont réellement clés pour ces praticiens. En outre, le processus de rétro-traduction effectué pour toutes les échelles des études quantitatives vise à poser des bases pour de futures recherches dans d'autres contextes culturels, en l'occurrence francophones.

Enfin, d'un point de vue managérial, cette recherche débouche sur des recommandations aux entreprises sur la manière dont elles doivent recruter les vendeurs pour ce contexte de travail particulier. En outre, ce travail étudie comment les entreprises doivent être structurées et ce qu'elles doivent fournir à leur force de vente interculturelle pour qu'elle soit performante.

Plan de la recherche

Afin de répondre aux questions posées ci-dessus, une approche hypothético-déductive basée sur une méthodologie mixte a été choisie.

Tout d'abord, une revue de la littérature sur les concepts de culture et d'intelligence culturelle a été réalisée afin d'obtenir une première vue d'ensemble du sujet et de poser les fondements de cette recherche. Ensuite, une étude qualitative exploratoire a été menée auprès de managers commerciaux travaillant et ayant travaillé directement dans un contexte de vente interculturel. Six entretiens semi-directifs ont été réalisés. Les entretiens se sont déroulés soit en face à face, soit par vidéoconférence. La durée des entretiens a varié de 50 minutes pour le plus court à 2h30 pour le plus long. La contribution majeure de cette étude a été d'identifier les principales compétences nécessaires dans un contexte de vente interculturelle et de comprendre leur importance dans cet environnement de travail spécifique. En outre, cette

étude a mis en évidence l'importance de certaines caractéristiques de l'entreprise, comme le soutien de l'entreprise et le climat de diversité, afin de surmonter les obstacles dans les contextes de la vente interculturelle. Après cette étude exploratoire, la littérature concernant les compétences et les comportements clés en matière de vente ainsi que les performances de vente mentionnées par les personnes interrogées est exposée. Au cours de cette étape, les liens entre ces variables et le concept d'intelligence culturelle sont également examinés.

Cette structure suit le raisonnement chronologique de notre thèse. Il s'agit donc d'un choix pleinement conscient et assumé de structurer le manuscrit également de cette manière et pas nécessairement dans une structure classique de type Revue de littérature - Entretiens - Hypothèses.

Après ces premières étapes de revue de la littérature et une étude qualitative exploratoire, trois études quantitatives ont été menées en utilisant une approche par enquête. Ces trois études ont été réalisées tout d'abord pour vérifier si les effets trouvés lors de la première phase s'appliquent également dans d'autres contextes culturels. Ensuite, certaines variables ont été ajoutées dans chaque étude afin de mieux comprendre la manière dont l'intelligence culturelle fonctionne dans un contexte de vente interculturel. Enfin, des problèmes méthodologiques liés à quelques échelles ont nécessité de les tester non seulement dans une version traduite, en français, mais aussi dans leur version originale, en anglais. Cela a donc permis d'exclure des problèmes de traduction.

La première étude porte sur ce que nous appelons 'modèle de base' qui comprend l'intelligence culturelle, différentes compétences et comportements de vente tels que l'authenticité, la vente adaptative et l'écoute active, ainsi que les différentes performances. Cette étude a pour but d'établir quelles compétences de vente sont influencées par l'intelligence culturelle et comment cela affecte la performance commerciale et relationnelle. Cette première étude est testée auprès d'un échantillon de vendeurs français.

La deuxième étude complexifie le modèle dans la mesure où elle se concentre sur les caractéristiques de l'entreprise et examine comment le soutien de l'entreprise et le climat de

diversité peuvent améliorer les niveaux d'intelligence culturelle des vendeurs. Par conséquent, ces deux variables sont ajoutées comme antécédents au modèle de base de la première étude. Les réponses de commerciaux indiens ont été collectées pour tester les différentes hypothèses de cette étude.

Enfin, la troisième et dernière étude inclut un nouveau trait qui n'a pas été examiné dans les deux premières études, l'empathie. Ce concept est davantage ancré dans la culture, mais a été abordé dans l'étude qualitative. Il s'agit donc d'une variable intéressante à ajouter afin de voir comment fonctionne l'empathie dans un contexte interculturel et comment cela affecte l'intelligence culturelle. Cette dernière étude teste donc toutes les hypothèses de la première et de la deuxième étude et ajoute une hypothèse de modération de l'empathie. Les résultats de cette dernière étude sont testés sur un échantillon anglais.

En ce qui concerne l'analyse menée pour la partie quantitative, un prétest de la version des différentes échelles traduites en français a été effectué afin de vérifier leur fiabilité et leur validité. Pour cela, une analyse factorielle exploratoire a été réalisée. Ensuite, chacune des trois études a évalué la fiabilité et la validité du modèle de mesure par une analyse factorielle confirmatoire utilisant une analyse en composantes principales. Enfin, les hypothèses ont été vérifiées dans chaque étude en testant le modèle structurel via une modélisation par équations structurelles en utilisant la méthode du maximum de vraisemblance.

La Figure 1 présente une vue d'ensemble du plan de recherche de ce manuscrit.

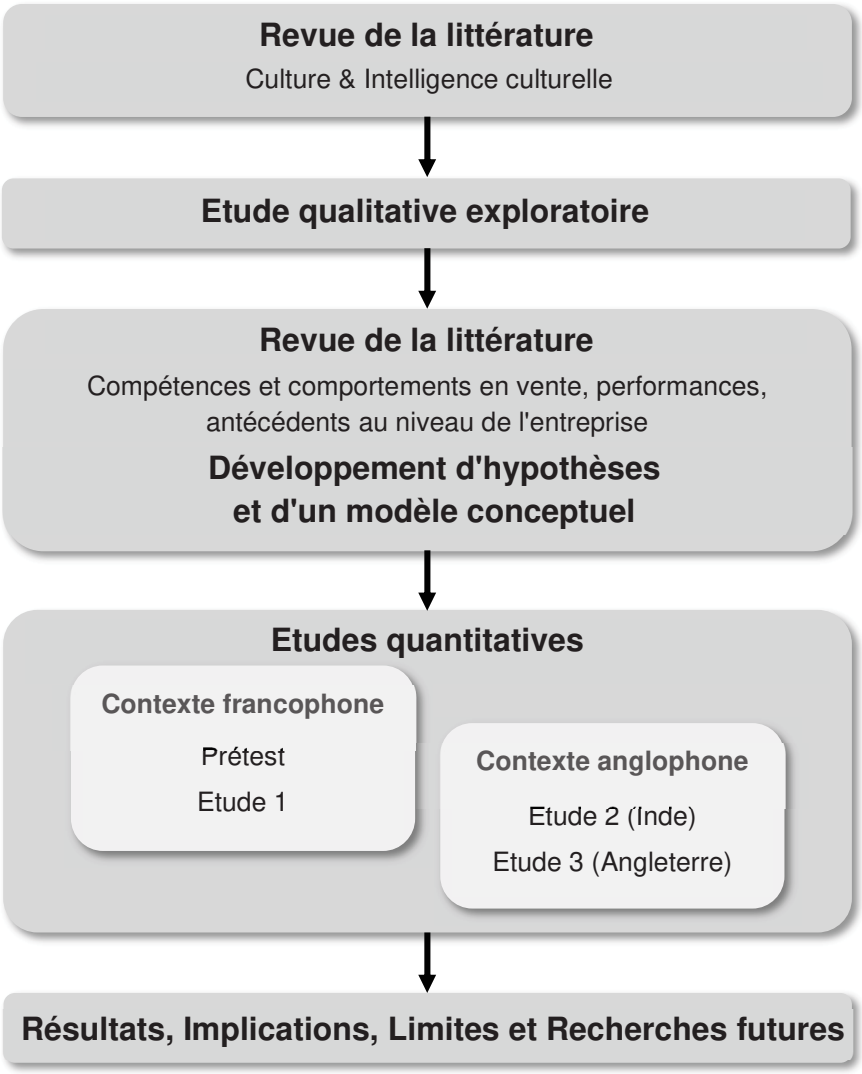
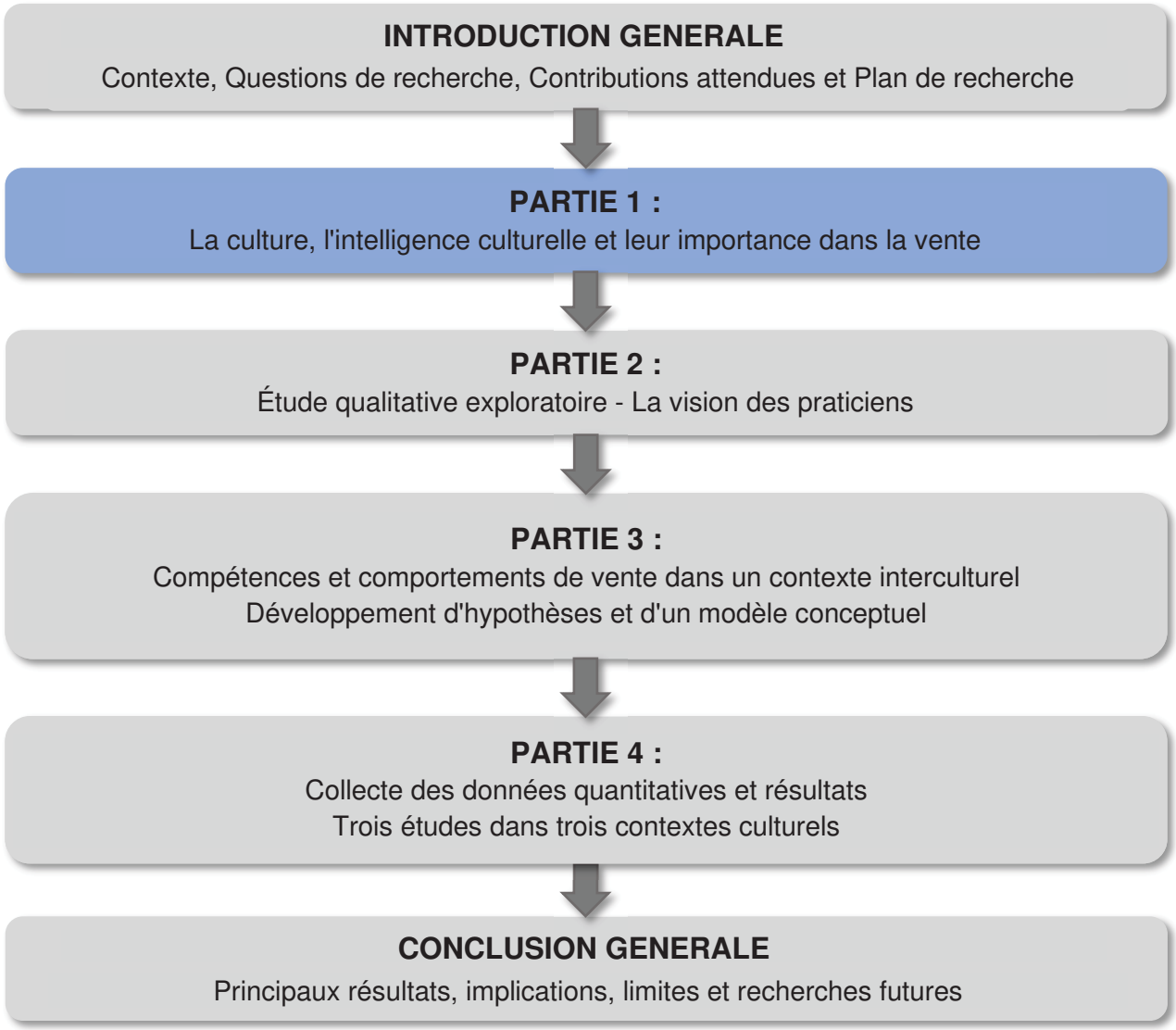


Figure 1: Structure globale de la recherche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PARTIE 1 : La culture, l'intelligence culturelle et leur importance dans la vente

Comme expliqué précédemment, la première partie de ce manuscrit est une revue de la littérature concernant les fondations de cette recherche, la culture et l'intelligence culturelle.

Dans cette partie, la notion de culture est explorée, et les différentes définitions existantes examinées. Dans ce chapitre, la littérature sur les différentes perceptions de la culture est passée en revue. Cela inclut la distinction de différents niveaux culturels ainsi que les dimensions culturelles telles que distinguées par des recherches antérieures. Ce chapitre débouche ensuite sur une définition de la culture utilisée comme fondement de cette recherche.

Ainsi, cette recherche examine le concept de culture d'un point de vue national. La culture organisationnelle ou individuelle, par exemple, ne sera pas complètement exclue, mais l'objectif principal de ce travail est la culture nationale et donc les différences culturelles entre les pays. Ce regard, basé sur le concept anthropologique de la culture, est défini de la manière suivante : ***la culture est constituée de notions et de comportements appris qui distinguent les gens d'un groupe à un autre***.

Sur la base de cette définition, il a été décidé de se pencher sur l'intelligence culturelle, un concept qui permet de distinguer les personnes capables de travailler efficacement dans des contextes culturels différents. En plus de l'explication des différentes définitions, cette variable est différencié vis à vis d'autres concepts similaires. Enfin, la dernière partie de ce chapitre expose les recherches sur les antécédents et les résultats de ce concept qui sont mentionnés dans la littérature antérieure sur les ressources humaines et la gestion, mais aussi dans la littérature en vente.

Dans ce sens, l'intelligence culturelle est définie comme ***les aptitudes et les compétences d'une personne à s'adapter et à interagir efficacement dans un contexte interculturel***

(Earley and Ang, 2003; Earley and Peterson, 2004; Thomas et al., 2008; Hansen et al., 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2013; Alexandra, 2018).

L'intelligence culturelle est une variable culturelle générale qui n'est pas particulier à une culture et doit être distingué d'autres concepts d'intelligence comme l'intelligence émotionnelle ou l'intelligence sociale qui sont très spécifiques à une culture (Earley and Ang, 2003; Thomas et al., 2008; Fang et al., 2018). Il s'agit d'une capacité malléable, non innée, qui peut par conséquent être développée au fil du temps, par exemple en voyageant, en suivant une formation interculturelle ou en effectuant des missions internationales (Van Dyne et al., 2012; Kour, 2017).

Sur la base du cadre des multiples localisations de l'intelligence de Sternberg et Detterman, (1986), l'intelligence culturelle a été présentée comme une variable multidimensionnel agrégé (Earley and Ang, 2003; Ang and Van Dyne, 2015). Le modèle d'intelligence culturelle le plus utilisé est celui d'Earley et Ang (2003) qui distinguent quatre **dimensions de l'intelligence culturelle : métacognitive, cognitive, motivationnelle et comportementale**. Cette catégorisation ayant été la seule adoptée dans les recherches en vente (par exemple, Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022), il a été décidé de l'adopter également pour ce travail.

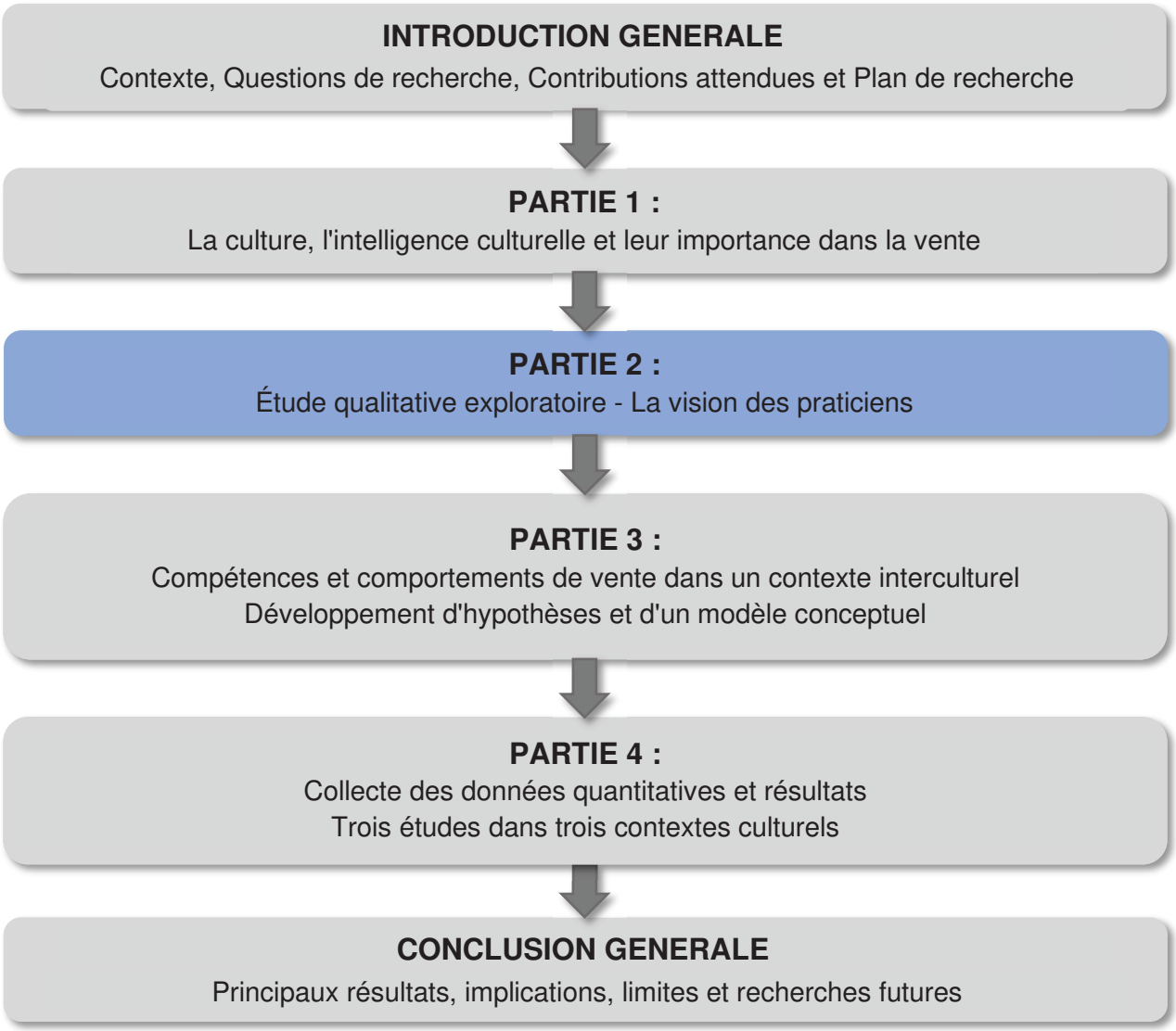
L’intelligence culturelle a été prouvée comme ayant des résultats positifs notamment dans la littérature sur les ressources humaines et la gestion à travers l'étude de l'impact sur la performance des expatriés dans différents contextes (Malek and Budhwar, 2013; Huff et al., 2014). Dans un contexte de vente, les recherches sur l'intelligence culturelle sont rares et ont principalement porté sur les résultats en termes de négociation (par exemple Caputo et al. 2019; Groves, Feyerherm, and Gu 2015; Imai and Gelfand 2010). Toutefois, quelques études établissent un lien entre l'intelligence culturelle et différents résultats de performance, l'auto-efficacité des ventes ou le comportement de vente adaptatif (Delpechitre and Baker, 2017; Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Charoensukmongkol and Pandey, 2020; Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022). Mais ce sujet de recherche n'a pas encore été suffisamment

exploré. L'importance réelle de l'intelligence culturelle pour la recherche en vente, surtout dans un contexte interculturel, n'a pas encore été clairement établie.

Les concepts de culture et intelligence culturelle constituent donc la base théorique du reste de la recherche et conduisent à certaines questions auxquelles il reste à répondre à travers les multiples études :

- → **Quels sont les compétences et les comportements commerciaux sur lesquels l'intelligence culturelle a un impact ?**
- → **Quel est l'impact de ce concept sur les performances de vente et les efforts de création de relations ?**
- → **Quels facteurs situationnels au niveau de l'entreprise peuvent aider à établir l'intelligence culturelle dans le domaine de la vente ?**
- → **Les différences dans les contextes culturels influencent-elles l'importance de ce concept pour la vente (par exemple les cultures orientales et occidentales) ?**

Afin de répondre à ces questions de recherche, la première étape consiste à mener une étude qualitative exploratoire. L'objectif de cette étude est de comprendre l'importance de la vente interculturelle pour les praticiens et d'avoir une première idée des compétences et des comportements de vente qui sont clés dans la vente interculturelle et donc susceptibles d'être impactés par l'intelligence culturelle. Le chapitre suivant illustre ce travail.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PARTIE 2 : Etude qualitative exploratoire – La vision des praticiens

Une étude qualitative exploratoire a été menée pour comprendre comment les concepts mentionnés précédemment sont perçus par les praticiens. L'objectif le plus important de cette étude qualitative est de mieux comprendre le contexte de la vente interculturelle. Que signifie la ‘culture’ pour eux ? Où les problèmes et les malentendus peuvent-ils surgir ? Que peuvent faire les entreprises pour aider leurs vendeurs à surmonter ces problèmes ? Et enfin, quelles sont les caractéristiques et les compétences requises chez un vendeur pour être efficace dans ce contexte de travail particulier. Etant donné qu'il n'y a aujourd'hui que peu de recherches sur ce sujet, il a été décidé d'effectuer une recherche qualitative exploratoire avant d'établir et de tester un modèle théorique. Cette recherche qualitative complète la revue de littérature présentée dans la partie précédente et aide à la formalisation du modèle conceptuel expliqué dans la partie suivante.

Six entretiens individuels semi-structurés ont été réalisés (un en anglais et cinq en français) à l'aide d'un guide d'entretien avec des questions de relance ouvertes. Afin de s'assurer que les vendeurs interrogés ont une expérience sur ce sujet, un échantillonnage sélectif a été choisi comme méthode d'échantillonnage (Ghauri et al., 2020). L'échantillon est donc composé de managers qui travaillent ou ont travaillé directement ou indirectement dans la vente interculturelle. Toutes les personnes interrogées sont des hommes, ce qui reflète la domination masculine de la profession de commercial. En ce qui concerne les industries et les secteurs d’activité, une certaine disparité a été recherchée afin de voir s'il existe des différences dans leurs points de vue et leurs situations en entreprise. Ainsi, les six personnes interrogées travaillent dans des industries très différentes allant de l'informatique au mobilier de bureau, en passant par la distribution de produits pour les artistes ou l'industrie pétrolière et gazière par exemple. Enfin, il a été choisi de concentrer cette recherche qualitative sur des entreprises principalement en B2B (Business to Business). Cette décision a été prise car ce type de vente nécessite de construire une relation plus longue avec les clients que la vente B2C (Business

to Consumer). Par conséquent, l'adaptation à la culture d'un client est plus importante dans un contexte de travail B2B.

Avec l'autorisation des personnes interrogées, tous les entretiens ont été enregistrés et retranscrits, puis rendus anonymes.

Cette recherche s'est concentrée sur une analyse thématique et horizontale en raison de la nature exploratoire de l'étude. L'objectif final de cette étude était de trouver des thèmes communs parmi les multiples entretiens afin de comprendre les processus sous-jacents dans le domaine de la vente interculturelle. Dans ce sens, trois étapes de codage ont été effectuées, consistant en un codage ouvert, puis un codage axial afin d'extraire des thèmes. Enfin, un second codage axial a été effectué pour mettre en évidence les différents niveaux évoqués par les personnes interrogées.

La Figure 3 récapitule tous les thèmes par code qui ont émergé de l'analyse des données qualitatives.

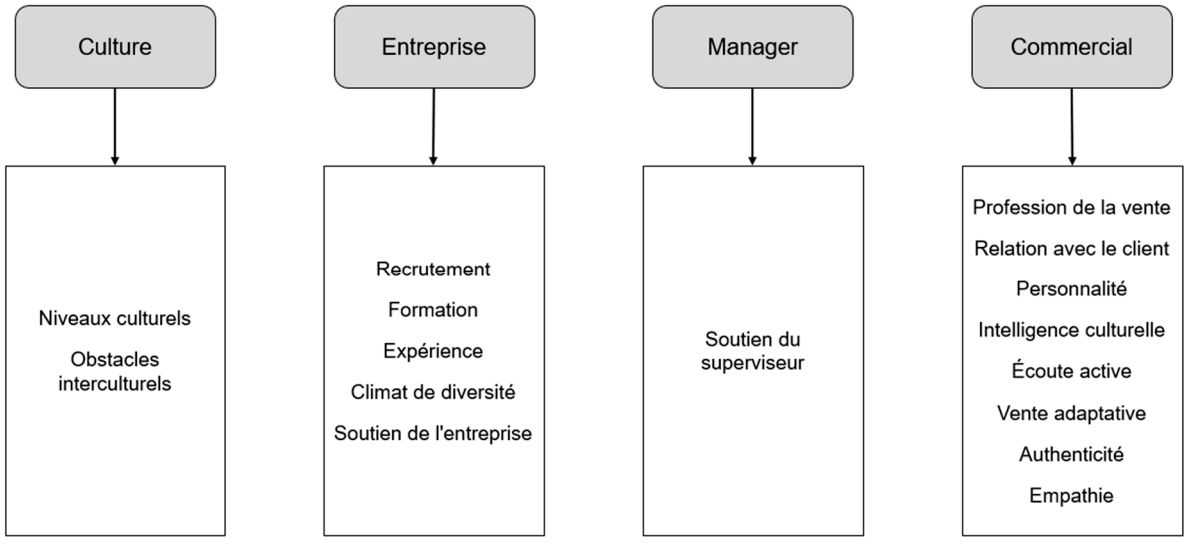


Figure 2: Thèmes par code résultant de l'analyse qualitative

Les résultats de cette étude montrent que pour les personnes interrogées, la 'culture' comprend différents niveaux tels que la culture nationale, la culture d'entreprise ou la culture personnelle. Tous ces niveaux ont un impact sur le travail du vendeur d'une manière ou d'une

autre ; il est important d'en tenir compte lorsque l'on s'adresse à des clients issus de milieux culturels différents. Cependant, la plupart des personnes interrogées ont utilisé le mot ‘culture’ de manière interchangeable avec la culture nationale. C'est la raison pour laquelle, dans cette recherche, le mot culture est utilisé pour désigner les cultures nationales. De multiples obstacles interculturels peuvent survenir en raison de problèmes de communication ou d'intégration, ou même de lois et d'interdictions culturelles. Ces obstacles interculturels doivent être surmontés par le vendeur afin de travailler efficacement avec des clients de cultures différentes.

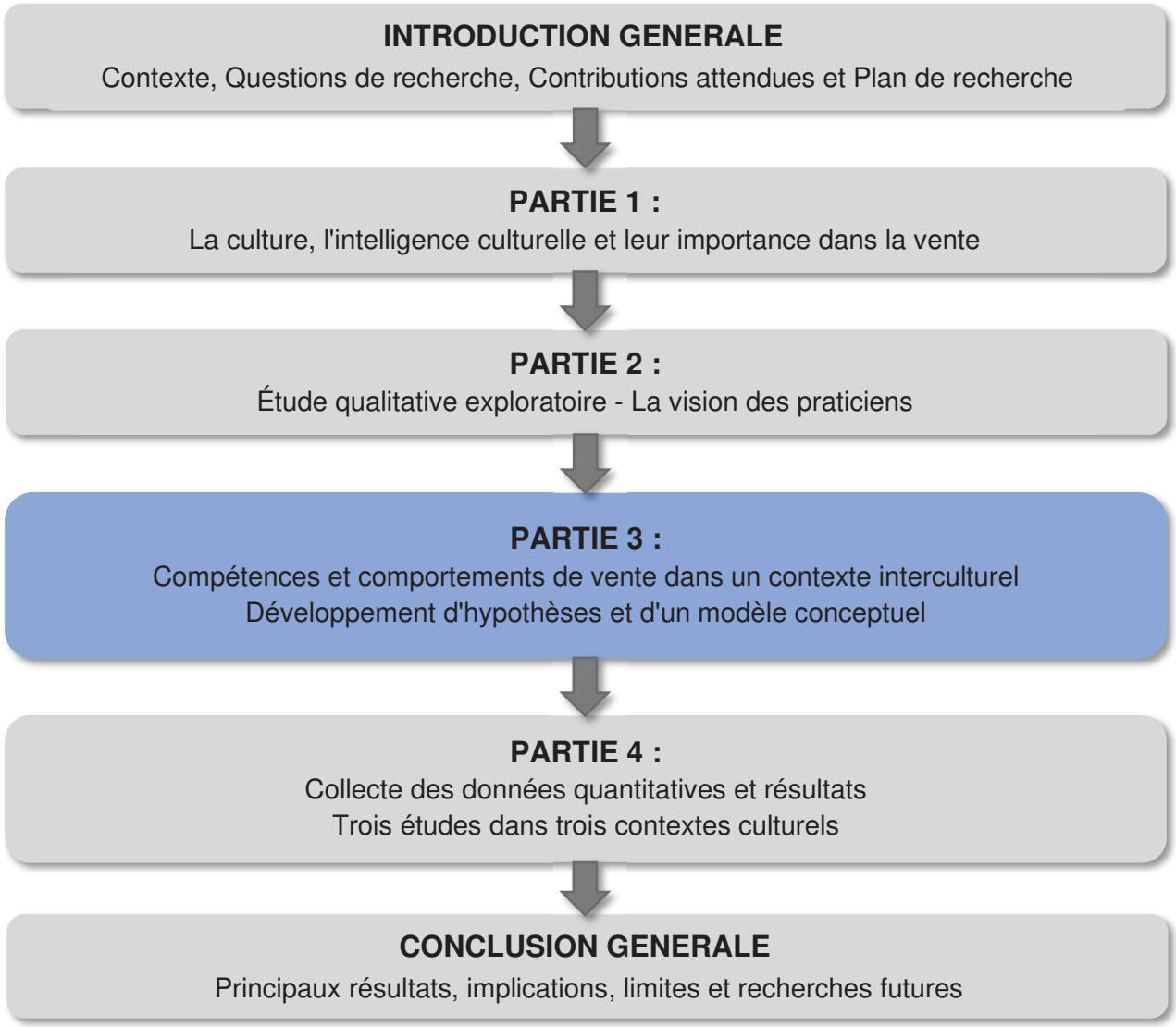
Pour aider les vendeurs à surmonter ces obstacles, une entreprise peut mettre en œuvre une multitude de mesures. Ces mesures commencent par le recrutement du personnel adéquat pour ces emplois et continuent en proposant différents types de formations. Ces formations, ainsi que l'expérience de travail avec des personnes issues de milieux culturels différents, amélioreront les performances dans un contexte interculturel. En plus de ces mesures, il convient d'instaurer une certaine culture d'entreprise qui favorise la diversité. Enfin, les vendeurs ne travaillent pas seuls, mais ont besoin d'un soutien solide de la part de leurs collègues et de l'entreprise elle-même.

Le soutien n'est pas seulement nécessaire de la part des autres services, mais aussi de la part des responsables commerciaux eux-mêmes. Les commerciaux ont besoin du soutien direct de leurs managers pour prendre les bonnes décisions et avoir confiance en leur propre travail.

Enfin, ces entretiens ont montré que le contexte de la vente interculturelle est complexe et qu'il implique plusieurs types de vendeurs, y compris les vendeurs sur le terrain, le back-office et même des partenaires locaux. En particulier dans le contexte du B2B, la connaissance pure du produit ne suffit pas pour vendre. Les vendeurs doivent également tenir compte de la dimension humaine de la vente et établir de bonnes relations avec les clients. Cette construction de relations est encore plus difficile dans un contexte interculturel et les vendeurs doivent avoir une certaine personnalité qui combine humilité et ouverture d'esprit. En outre,

une bonne intelligence culturelle est requise. Cela consiste en une compréhension cognitive des différences culturelles, une certaine tolérance et un respect des différentes cultures, ainsi qu'une curiosité et une volonté d'en apprendre davantage sur celles-ci. En outre, afin de proposer une solution adéquate aux besoins des clients, un vendeur doit être capable d'écouter attentivement. Mais l'écoute n'est pas la seule chose importante, une certaine empathie et une compréhension des émotions sous-jacentes sont également nécessaires. Une fois le problème et la situation du client compris, le vendeur doit alors être capable de s'adapter au client et de lui proposer un service adapté. Dans les situations interculturelles, il arrive que les clients ne souhaitent pas que les vendeurs s'adaptent à leur culture, car leur perspective pourrait apporter une valeur ajoutée. Ainsi, dans ces situations, les vendeurs doivent rester fidèles à eux-mêmes et être authentiques, afin de créer des relations fructueuses. Cette étude qualitative a révélé les aspects clés de ce contexte de vente interculturel et permis de préciser certaines variables intéressantes.

L'étape suivante de cette recherche consiste donc à vérifier comment ces variables jouent ensemble. Pour cela, et un modèle conceptuel est établi et différentes hypothèses sont formulées.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PARTIE 3 : Compétences et comportements de vente dans un contexte interculturel – Développement d'hypothèses et d'un modèle conceptuel

Après avoir établi le cadre théorique de cette recherche et examiné l'étude qualitative exploratoire, cette troisième partie revient sur la littérature.

La première partie de ce chapitre se penche donc sur les différentes compétences de vente qui ont été jugées clés dans la vente interculturelle : la vente adaptative, l'écoute active, l'authenticité et l'empathie. Après une revue de la littérature sur ces concepts, la deuxième partie passe ensuite en revue la littérature sur deux types de performance, la performance commerciale à court terme et la performance relationnelle pour une vision à plus long terme. Troisièmement, comme nous l'avons vu dans l'étude qualitative exploratoire, il ne suffit pas de s'intéresser au niveau du vendeur. Certains facteurs organisationnels doivent également être réunis pour faciliter le travail des commerciaux. Ainsi, la troisième partie de ce chapitre explore la littérature autour de deux facteurs organisationnels importants : le soutien organisationnel et le climat de diversité. Enfin, tous ces concepts sont reliés au cadre théorique général de l'intelligence culturelle.

Comme expliqué précédemment, dans un contexte de vente, l'intelligence culturelle a presque uniquement été liée à la littérature sur la négociation (Imai and Gelfand, 2010; Groves et al., 2015; Caputo et al., 2019). Suite à de nouvelles recherches sur le sujet, cette recherche extrait donc l'intelligence culturelle du contexte de la négociation et s'intéresse à l'impact que ce concept a dans le cadre de la vente adaptative (Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022)

L'intelligence culturelle métacognitive, cognitive, motivationnelle et comportementale sont toutes supposées avoir un impact sur la façon dont les vendeurs comprennent et réagissent aux messages émis par le client. Par conséquent, les quatre dimensions de la définition de

l'intelligence culturelle de Earley et Ang sont susceptibles d'avoir un impact direct sur le comportement de vente adaptative. De plus, dans la recherche sur les ventes, les compétences de vente telles que la vente adaptative sont identifiées comme des indicateurs clés de la performance des ventes (Rentz et al., 2002; Franke and Park, 2006). Ainsi, on peut s'attendre à un lien entre la vente adaptative et les performances sur le court et sur le long-terme.

Afin d'être en mesure d'adapter les approches commerciales en conséquence, un vendeur doit comprendre le client. Les capacités d'écoute active sont donc importantes dans ce contexte. Elles permettent au vendeur de comprendre le client plus facilement en prêtant attention à tous les signaux verbaux et non verbaux qu'il émet. En ce sens, l'écoute est censée augmenter les comportements de vente adaptatifs (Itani et al., 2019).

De plus, l'empathie est un trait qui s'est avéré aider un vendeur à mieux comprendre le client et à créer des relations efficaces. Il a été démontré qu'il s'agit également d'un indicateur de la vente adaptative (Spiro and Weitz, 1990; Limbu et al., 2016). Ainsi, il est possible de déduire que l'empathie joue également un certain rôle dans l'augmentation des comportements de vente adaptative et agit comme modérateur de la relation entre intelligence culturelle et vente adaptative.

Pour vérifier le côté négatif de l'intelligence culturelle, la relation inverse entre cette variable et l'authenticité est également incluse dans cette recherche. Puisque l'intelligence culturelle implique une adaptation aux différences culturelles (Earley and Ang, 2003), un vendeur doté d'une intelligence culturelle élevée ne se concentre pas sur ses propres croyances et valeurs personnelles, mais sur le client. Ainsi, il n'est pas nécessairement authentique envers lui-même. En revanche, il a été démontré que l'authenticité a un impact positif sur les perceptions des clients, la confiance, mais aussi les performances de vente (Stros et al., 2017). Par conséquent, il est possible d'attendre un lien positif entre l'authenticité et la performance.

Enfin, le soutien organisationnel et le climat de diversité familiarisent déjà le vendeur avec différentes cultures au sein même de l'entreprise. Ainsi, les fondations d'un haut niveau

d'intelligence culturelle sont posées via les interactions avec les collègues. Au cours de ces interactions, des problèmes culturels peuvent surgir et les vendeurs apprennent à mieux connaître ces différences, ce qui conduit donc à une intelligence culturelle plus élevée.

Le Tableau 1 ci-dessous récapitule les différentes hypothèses directes et indirectes de cette thèse.

Effets directs
H1 : L'intelligence culturelle est positivement liée à la vente adaptative.
H2 : La vente adaptative est positivement liée aux types de performances.
H3 : L'intelligence culturelle est négativement liée à l'authenticité.
H4 : L'authenticité est positivement liée aux types de performances.
H5 : L'intelligence culturelle est positivement liée à l'écoute active.
H6 : L'écoute active est positivement liée à la vente adaptative.
H7 : Le soutien organisationnel est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle.
H8 : Le climat de diversité est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle.
Effets indirects
H9 : L'écoute active a une influence positive de médiation sur la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle et la vente adaptative.
H10 : L'empathie modère positivement la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle et la vente adaptative.

Tableau 1: Synthèse des hypothèses

Sur la base de ces hypothèses, un modèle conceptuel a été développé (voir Figure 4). La prochaine étape de cette recherche est donc de tester ces relations avec une méthodologie quantitative. Cela est l'objet de la partie suivante.

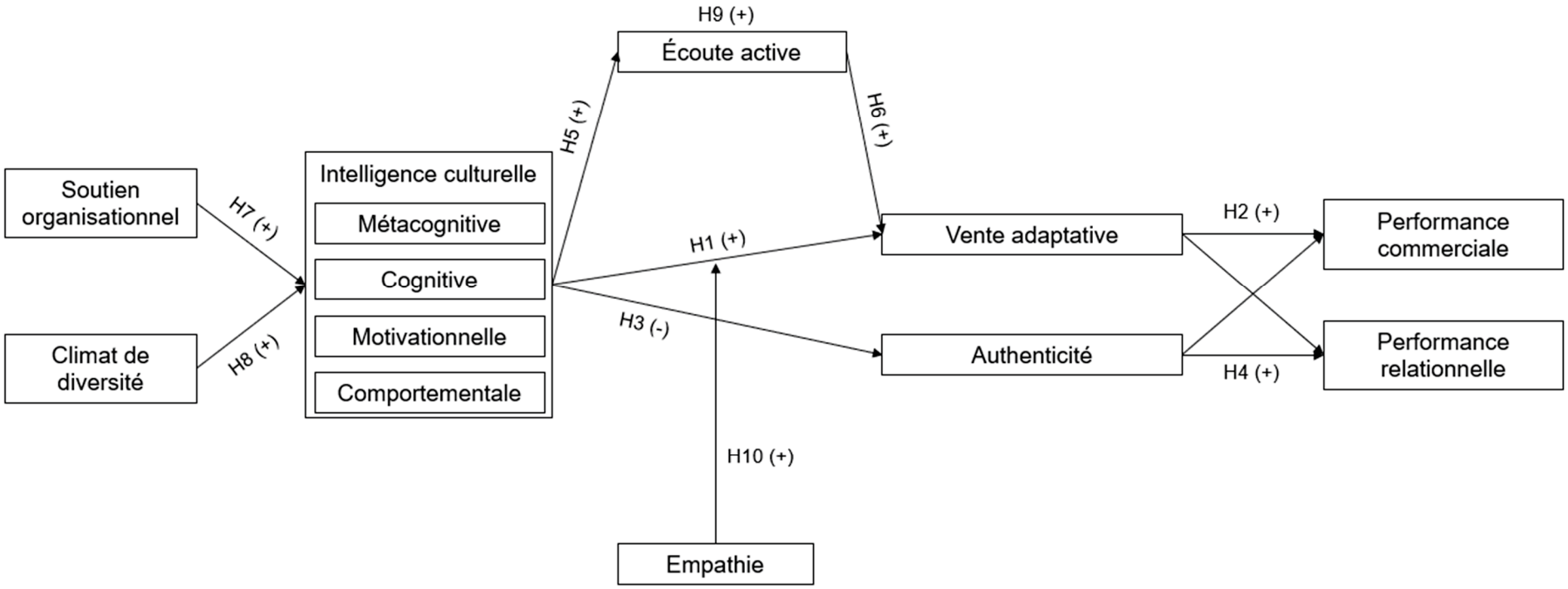
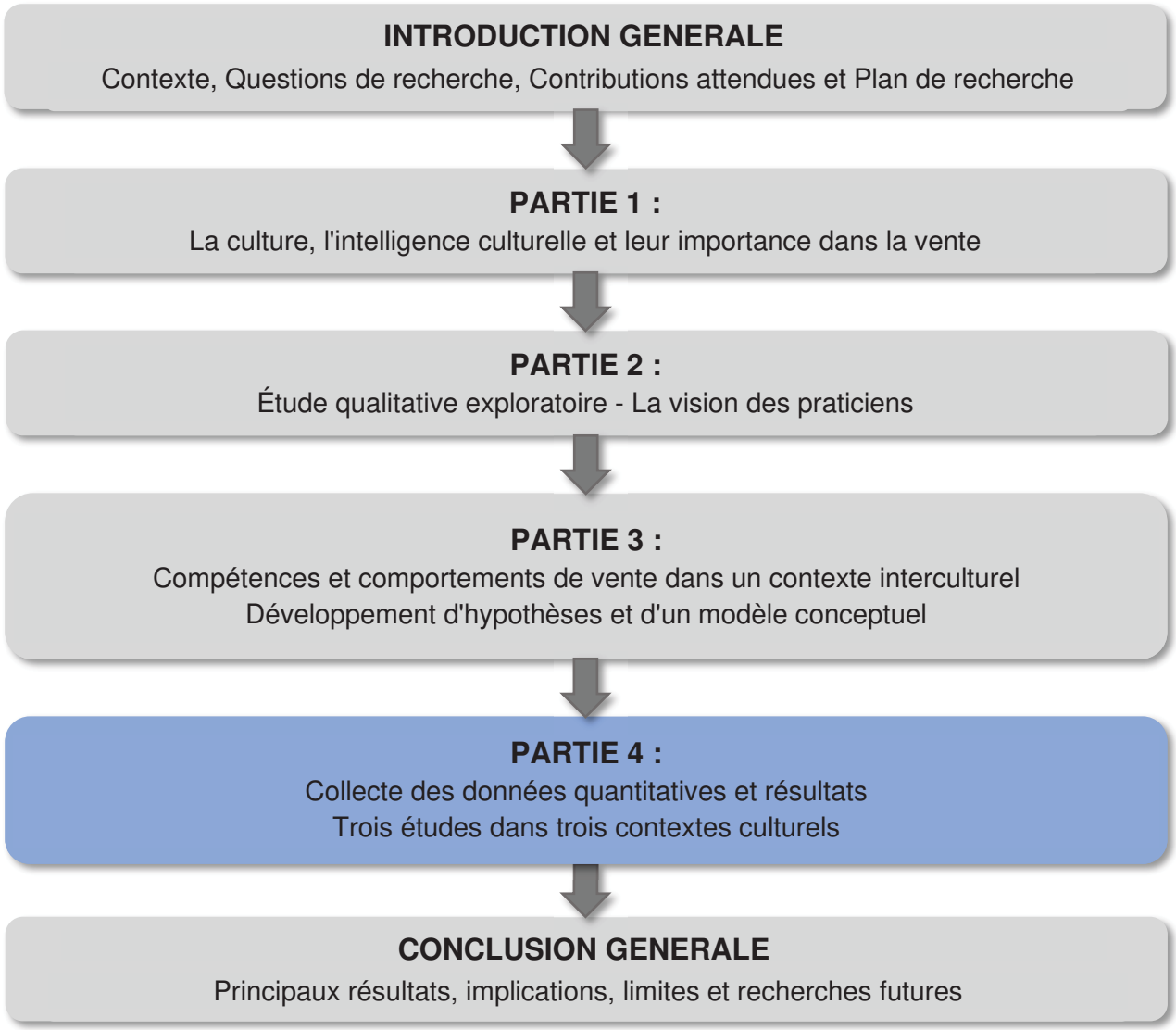


Figure 4: Modèle conceptuel incluant toutes les hypothèses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PARTIE 4 : Collecte de données quantitatives et résultats – Trois études dans trois contextes culturels

Cette dernière partie de la recherche présente le travail qui a été effectué dans le cadre des études quantitatives. Afin de collecter les données quantitatives, il a été décidé d'utiliser des échelles déjà établies dans la littérature en vente, marketing et management international. Toutes les échelles utilisées pour les trois différents questionnaires ont été publiées dans des revues à comité de lecture en double aveugle et ont montré de bonnes qualités psychométriques (fiabilité et de validité) dans leurs articles respectifs. Toutes les échelles sont de type Likert à 7 points pour garder une certaine cohérence, mais l'étiquetage des points a été adapté à l'échelle utilisée. Pour l'échantillon français, le questionnaire a été traduit en français en utilisant un processus de rétro-traduction.

La première étape de l'analyse de cette partie quantitative a donc été de tester les différentes échelles. Il a été décidé de ne faire qu'un prétest du questionnaire français. Ce prétest de la version française du questionnaire a été réalisé afin de vérifier la fiabilité et la validité des différentes échelles dans leur version traduite. Toutes les échelles ont déjà été utilisées dans leur version anglaise dans la littérature et ont montré des niveaux de fiabilité et de validité suffisants, il n'était donc pas nécessaire de les tester à nouveau en anglais pour cette recherche. Ce prétest du questionnaire français a été analysé à l'aide d'une Analyse Factorielle Exploratoire par le biais d'une Analyse en Composantes Principales.

Suite à cette analyse factorielle exploratoire, la plupart des échelles sont utilisées dans leur intégralité également pour la version française du questionnaire, avec seulement deux exceptions. Premièrement, l'échelle d'empathie est utilisée comme une échelle à quatre items au lieu des cinq items initiaux. Et deuxièmement, l'échelle d'authenticité est utilisée comme une échelle de sept items au lieu de dix.

Après la validation des échelles pour la version française du questionnaire, trois études ont été réalisées afin de tester les hypothèses formulées. En ce qui concerne les échantillons, les répondants ciblés par cette recherche quantitative étaient des vendeurs qui travaillent avec des personnes d'origines culturelles différentes. Les trois échantillons choisis représentent des milieux culturels différents - français, indien et anglais. Ces origines ont été sélectionnées afin d'étendre la recherche existante et d'aller au-delà de la focalisation principalement américaine des études sur la vente interculturelle. Ainsi, deux cultures européennes différentes ont été choisies ainsi qu'une culture asiatique pour créer une certaine variance culturelle. En outre, certains problèmes d'échelle ont rendu nécessaire le choix de contextes culturels où l'anglais est couramment parlé afin de tester la version originale anglaise du questionnaire. C'est la raison pour laquelle, à côté du contexte culturel français, l'Inde a été choisie comme deuxième contexte culturel, l'Angleterre comme troisième.

En ce qui concerne l'analyse des données, les trois études ont suivi la même structure. Tout d'abord, une analyse factorielle confirmatoire a été effectuée pour tester la validité du modèle de mesure. Cette analyse vise à déterminer dans quelle mesure les différentes échelles capturent réellement les variables latentes non observées. Pour ce faire, une série de critères ont été vérifiés :

- Normalisation des données : Skewness, Kurtosis
- Ajustement du modèle de mesure : SRMR, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, χ^2/df
- Fiabilité : Alpha de Cronbach, fiabilité de construit
- Validité convergente : Poids factoriels, variance moyenne extraite (AVE)
- Validité discriminante : RootAVE
- Biais de méthode : Test du facteur unique de Harman, Facteur unique de méthode

L'étape suivante du processus d'analyse a consisté à tester le modèle structurel et les hypothèses formulées avec une modélisation par équations structurelles basée sur la

covariance et utilise la méthode du maximum de vraisemblance. Les hypothèses de recherche sont acceptées lorsque le test d'hypothèse est statistiquement significatif, c'est-à-dire que la valeur $p \leq 0,05$. De plus, les coefficients lambda standardisés ou les charges factorielles standardisées sont regardés afin de déterminer la direction des relations entre les construits.

En ce qui concerne les études, une première étude avec 198 commerciaux français natifs a été réalisée. Ainsi, la première étude de cette partie quantitative a testé un modèle de base en collectant des données via Qualtrics. Ce premier modèle teste l'importance de l'intelligence culturelle dans un contexte de vente interculturelle en reliant ce concept à des compétences et comportements clés de la vente comme l'écoute active, la vente adaptative, mais aussi l'authenticité (comme résultat négatif). Enfin, ces compétences et comportements sont liés à deux résultats de performance : la performance commerciale et la performance relationnelle. Les résultats de cette première étude montrent que l'intelligence culturelle est effectivement importante dans ce contexte puisque trois des quatre dimensions ont un impact positif sur l'écoute active et la vente adaptative. En outre, la vente adaptative s'avère importante pour les performances à court et à long terme. En ce qui concerne l'authenticité, les résultats sont moins clairs puisque l'intelligence culturelle n'a pas d'effet significatif sur l'authenticité. De plus, contrairement aux hypothèses, l'authenticité a un impact négatif sur les performances de vente et les performances relationnelles dans cette étude. Ces résultats peuvent s'expliquer par le fait que l'échelle d'authenticité a de nouveau présenté des problèmes majeurs lors de l'analyse factorielle confirmatoire. Seuls trois des dix items initiaux ont été inclus dans le test du modèle structurel.

L'échelle d'authenticité ayant posé des problèmes, il a été décidé de tester les échelles originales dans la langue dans laquelle elles ont été développées, l'anglais pour cette deuxième étude. De plus, cette étude a été l'occasion de tester l'importance de l'intelligence culturelle dans un autre contexte culturel. Il a donc été décidé de tester le second modèle dans un contexte émergent. Les données ont été collectées en collaboration avec des étudiants indiens et ont permis de constituer un échantillon de 174 commerciaux indiens. Cette

deuxième étude a testé à nouveau le modèle de base et a ajouté également deux antécédents de l'intelligence culturelle, le soutien organisationnel et le climat de diversité. Les résultats de cette deuxième étude étaient beaucoup moins évidents que ceux de la première. La seule dimension de l'intelligence culturelle qui avait un impact sur l'écoute active et la vente adaptative dans cette étude était l'intelligence culturelle comportementale. Tous les autres liens n'étaient pas significatifs. De plus, la vente adaptative n'a eu qu'un impact positif sur les performances relationnelles dans ce contexte et aucun impact significatif n'a été trouvé sur les performances de vente à court terme. En ce qui concerne l'authenticité, seule l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive a eu un impact négatif sur cette variable. En revanche, l'authenticité n'a pas eu d'impact significatif sur les variables de performance. En ce qui concerne les antécédents, aucun impact positif n'a été trouvé. Au contraire, le climat de diversité a eu un impact négatif sur l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive et comportementale dans cette étude. Ces résultats peuvent être expliqués par quelques difficultés rencontrées lors de l'analyse. Comme pour la première étude, l'échelle d'authenticité a montré à nouveau beaucoup de problèmes et seulement deux des dix items initiaux ont été inclus dans le test du modèle structurel. Par ailleurs, l'anglais n'est pas la langue maternelle des commerciaux indiens, même s'ils parlent très bien cette langue. Ainsi, il a pu y avoir une certaine incompréhension de la formulation des questions.

Par conséquent, une troisième étude a été réalisée en recueillant des données auprès de personnes originaires d'Angleterre. Cette troisième étude a de nouveau utilisé les services de Qualtrics et a recueilli des données auprès de 207 commerciaux anglais. Le modèle de base a été testé à nouveau ainsi que les antécédents ajoutés dans l'étude 2. En outre, l'empathie a été testée en tant que modérateur entre l'intelligence culturelle et la vente adaptative. Les résultats de cette dernière étude soulignent à nouveau l'importance de l'intelligence culturelle dans la vente interculturelle. Les quatre dimensions ont un impact, d'une manière ou d'une autre, sur la façon dont les vendeurs s'adaptent à leurs clients et sur la façon dont ils les écoutent. De plus, comme dans l'étude 1, la vente adaptative a un impact positif sur les résultats de performance à court et à long terme. En ce qui concerne l'authenticité, cette étude

montre que les quatre dimensions de l'intelligence culturelle ont un impact négatif sur l'authenticité perçue des vendeurs. Mais l'authenticité influence positivement les performances de vente à court terme. Ainsi, un comportement inauthentique est réellement une conséquence négative de l'intelligence culturelle et de l'adaptation constante qu'elle implique. En ce qui concerne les antécédents, les résultats sont plus mitigés puisque des impacts positifs et négatifs peuvent être trouvés pour les deux antécédents présumés. Le climat de diversité a un impact positif sur l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive et motivationnelle, mais il a aussi un impact négatif sur l'intelligence culturelle cognitive. Le soutien organisationnel a également un impact positif sur l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive, mais aussi un impact négatif sur l'intelligence culturelle cognitive dans cette étude. Enfin, l'empathie n'agit pas comme un modérateur dans ce contexte.

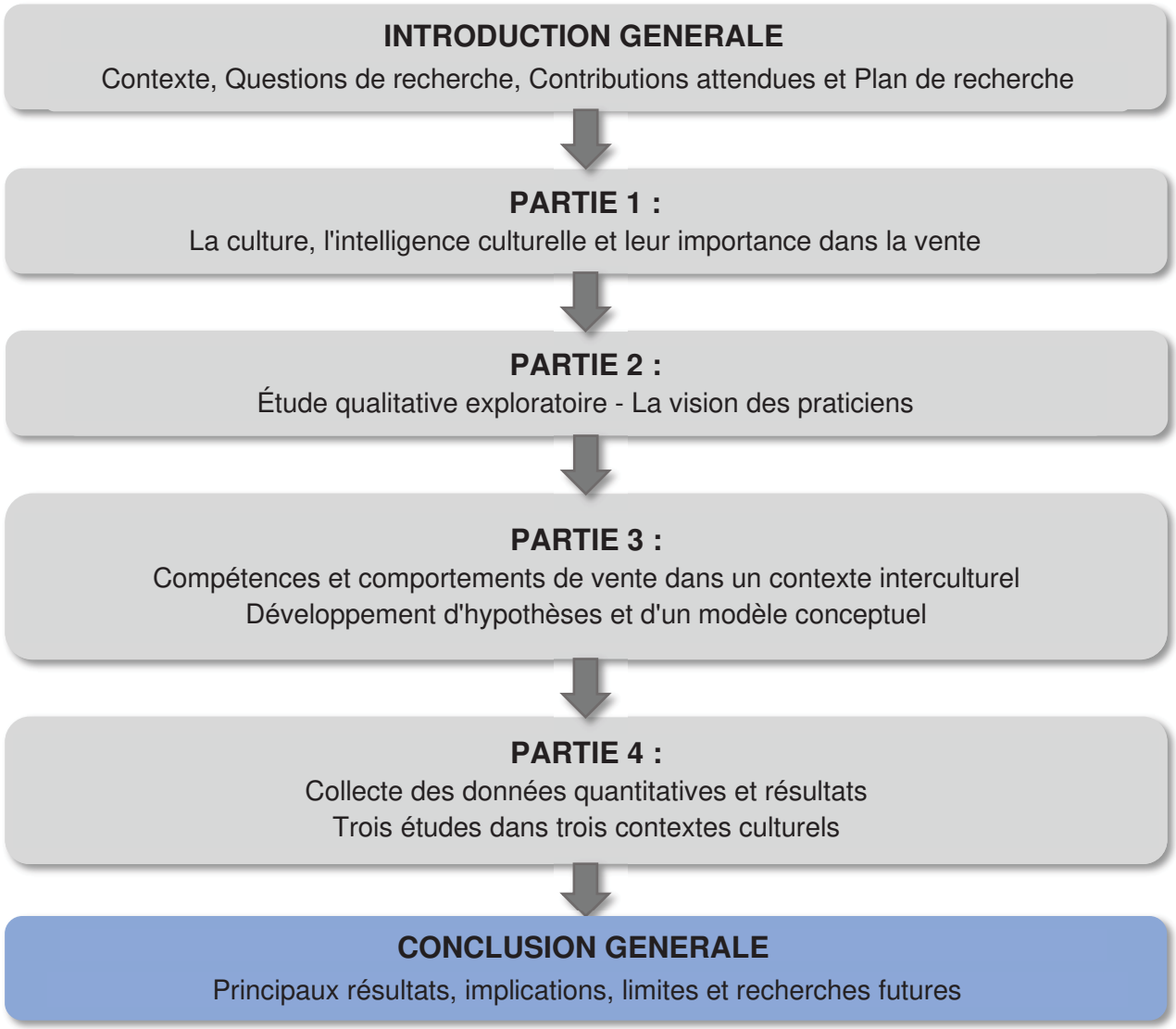
Comme les différentes études ont montré divers problèmes concernant les données, il a été décidé de ne pas faire d'analyse statistique supplémentaire en termes de comparaison des résultats.

Un résumé de toutes les hypothèses et de leur validation ou rejet dans les études respectives peut être trouvé dans le Tableau 2.

		Etude 1 (France)	Etude 2 (Inde)	Etude 3 (Angleterre)
Effets directs				
H1 : L'intelligence culturelle est positivement liée à la vente adaptative.	H1a: L'intelligence culturelle métacognitive est positivement liée à la vente adaptative.	**Validée**	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H1b: L'intelligence culturelle cognitive est positivement liée à la vente adaptative.	Rejetée	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H1c: L'intelligence culturelle motivationnelle est positivement liée à la vente adaptative.	Rejetée	Rejetée	Rejetée
	H1d: L'intelligence culturelle comportementale est positivement liée à la vente adaptative.	**Validée**	Rejetée	Rejetée
H2 : La vente adaptative est positivement liée aux types de performances.	H2a: La vente adaptative est positivement liée à la performance commerciale.	**Validée**	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H2b: La vente adaptative est positivement liée à la performance relationnelle.	**Validée**	**Validée**	**Validée**
H3 : L'intelligence culturelle est négativement liée à l'authenticité.	H3a: L'intelligence culturelle métacognitive est négativement liée à l'authenticité.	Rejetée	**Validée**	**Validée**
	H3b: L'intelligence culturelle cognitive est négativement liée à l'authenticité.	Rejetée	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H3c: L'intelligence culturelle motivationnelle est négativement liée à l'authenticité.	Rejetée	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H3d: L'intelligence culturelle comportementale est négativement liée à l'authenticité.	Rejetée	Rejetée	**Validée**
H4 : L'authenticité est positivement liée aux types de performances.	H4a: L'authenticité est positivement liée à la performance commerciale.	Rejetée	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H4b: L'authenticité est positivement liée à la performance relationnelle.	Rejetée	Rejetée	Rejetée
H5 : L'intelligence culturelle est positivement liée à l'écoute active.	H5a: L'intelligence culturelle métacognitive est positivement liée à l'écoute active.	**Validée**	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H5b: L'intelligence culturelle cognitive est positivement liée à l'écoute active.	Rejetée	Rejetée	Rejetée
	H5c: L'intelligence culturelle motivationnelle est positivement liée à l'écoute active.	Rejetée	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H5d: L'intelligence culturelle comportementale est positivement liée à l'écoute active.	**Validée**	**Validée**	**Validée**
H6 : L'écoute active est positivement liée à la vente adaptative.		**Validée**	**Validée**	**Validée**

H7 : Le soutien organisationnel est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle.	H7a: Le soutien organisationnel est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive.	/	Rejetée	Rejetée
	H7b: Le soutien organisationnel est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle cognitive.	/	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H7c: Le soutien organisationnel est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle motivationnelle.	/	Rejetée	Rejetée
	H7d: Le soutien organisationnel est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle comportementale.	/	Rejetée	Rejetée
H8 : Le climat de diversité est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle.	H8a: Le climat de diversité est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive.	/	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H8b: Le climat de diversité est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle cognitive.	/	Rejetée	Rejetée
	H8c: Le climat de diversité est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle motivationnelle.	/	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H8d: Le climat de diversité est positivement lié à l'intelligence culturelle comportementale.	/	Rejetée	Rejetée
Effets indirects				
H9 : L'écoute active a une influence positive de médiation sur la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle et la vente adaptative.	H9a: L'écoute active a une influence positive de médiation sur la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive et la vente adaptative.	Rejetée	Rejetée	**Validée**
	H9b: L'écoute active a une influence positive de médiation sur la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle cognitive et la vente adaptative.	Rejetée	Rejetée	Rejetée
	H9c: L'écoute active a une influence positive de médiation sur la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle motivationnelle et la vente adaptative.	Rejetée	Rejetée	Rejetée
	H9d: L'écoute active a une influence positive de médiation sur la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle comportementale et la vente adaptative.	**Validée**	Rejetée	**Validée**
H10 : L'empathie modère positivement la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle et la vente adaptative.	H10a: L'empathie modère positivement la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive et la vente adaptative.	/	/	Rejetée
	H10b: L'empathie modère positivement la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle cognitive et la vente adaptative.	/	/	Rejetée
	H10c: L'empathie modère positivement la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle motivationnelle et la vente adaptative.	/	/	Rejetée
	H10d: L'empathie modère positivement la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle comportementale et la vente adaptative.	/	/	Rejetée

Tableau 2: Résumé des résultats des hypothèses dans les trois études


INTRODUCTION GENERALE
Contexte, Questions de recherche, Contributions attendues et Plan de recherche
PARTIE 1 :
La culture, l'intelligence culturelle et leur importance dans la vente
PARTIE 2 :
Étude qualitative exploratoire - La vision des praticiens
PARTIE 3 :
Compétences et comportements de vente dans un contexte interculturel
Développement d'hypothèses et d'un modèle conceptuel
PARTIE 4 :
Collecte des données quantitatives et résultats
Trois études dans trois contextes culturels
CONCLUSION GENERALE
Principaux résultats, implications, limites et recherches futures

CONCLUSION GENERALE

Cette dernière partie du manuscrit expose les principaux résultats de cette recherche et présente les contributions théoriques, méthodologiques et managériales ainsi que les limites et les perspectives de recherche.

La première partie se concentre sur les résultats généraux obtenus dans les différentes études. Ainsi, en premier lieu, les résultats de l'étude qualitative exploratoire sont brièvement discutés. Ensuite, les résultats des trois études quantitatives sont résumés.

Suivent les implications théoriques et méthodologiques de cette recherche sont détaillées avant d'examiner le point de vue managérial. Enfin, cette recherche se conclut par l'exposé des diverses limites et ouvre des pistes de recherche futures.

Principaux résultats de cette recherche

Cette recherche avait pour but d'apporter un éclairage sur le contexte interculturel de la vente puisqu'il manque encore de recherches à ce sujet (Panagopoulos et al., 2011; Dugan et al., 2020). Pour ce faire, l'intelligence culturelle - une variable issue de la gestion des ressources humaines et du management international - a été examinée dans un contexte de vente. La principale question de recherche de cette thèse était donc :

Pourquoi, comment et dans quelle mesure l'intelligence culturelle des commerciaux a-t-elle un impact sur leurs performances ?

Afin de répondre à cette question de recherche, une étude qualitative exploratoire a été réalisée en complément de l'analyse documentaire. Les entretiens avec les praticiens de la vente ont montré clairement que la vente interculturelle est essentielle dans le contexte de travail mondialisé actuel et que les vendeurs doivent posséder certaines compétences particulières afin de réussir.

Quelques-unes des compétences les plus importantes mentionnées par les praticiens peuvent être trouvées dans le concept d'intelligence culturelle - une connaissance cognitive des

différentes cultures, un désir d'apprendre sur les différences ainsi qu'une ouverture d'esprit et une capacité à se comporter en conséquence. Outre l'intelligence culturelle, les personnes interrogées ont également parlé de la capacité d'écoute qui permet de s'adapter au client. En outre, l'empathie a également été mentionnée comme un élément clé pour mieux comprendre les besoins du client. Mais les personnes interrogées ont ajouté que l'adaptation n'est pas toujours souhaitée par tous les clients, certains d'entre eux préférant que les vendeurs restent eux-mêmes et soient authentiques et sincères. Cette authenticité peut donc offrir un autre regard et conduire à une situation gagnant-gagnant pour les deux parties.

En plus de ces compétences clés, les personnes interrogées ont également expliqué que certains facteurs organisationnels et managériaux sont nécessaires pour que les vendeurs réussissent dans la vente interculturelle. Tout d'abord, ils ont souligné la nécessité de choisir directement le bon personnel lors du recrutement. En outre, une fois que les vendeurs ont été désignés pour ces postes, ils ont également besoin d'une formation adéquate - ce qui fait défaut à l'heure actuelle selon les personnes interrogées. Ils ont expliqué que dans de très rares cas, seule une formation cognitive est proposée aux employés. En plus de ces deux exigences, les personnes interrogées ont également déclaré que les entreprises doivent instaurer un climat qui favorise la diversité et qui soutienne les vendeurs lorsqu'ils en ont besoin. Ce soutien peut venir des collègues, des managers ou de l'organisation elle-même.

Suite à cette étude qualitative exploratoire ainsi qu'à une revue de la littérature sur les différents concepts mentionnés par les personnes interrogées, des hypothèses ont été énoncées et un modèle conceptuel a été établi.

En ce qui concerne la partie quantitative de cette recherche, il a été décidé d'opter pour un design multi-études. Ainsi, trois études ont été réalisées dans trois contextes culturels (France, Inde et Angleterre). Ce design a permis de tester la validité externe et donc la généralisation des résultats dans plusieurs contextes culturels. De plus, cela a été l'occasion de construire progressivement un modèle de plus en plus complexe tout en validant les relations clés dans les trois études.

En ce sens, le modèle de base a été testé tout au long des trois études. Ce modèle introduit l'intelligence culturelle dans un contexte de vente et examine l'impact de ce concept sur certaines des compétences clés mentionnées précédemment. Il examine donc la relation positive entre l'intelligence culturelle et la vente adaptative via l'écoute active. Ensuite, la relation négative entre l'intelligence culturelle et l'authenticité est également étudiée. Dans une deuxième partie du modèle, l'impact de la vente adaptative et de l'authenticité sur les performances commerciales à court terme et les performances relationnelles à long terme est analysé. Ceci teste donc l'importance de l'intelligence culturelle sur différents résultats de performance. Le deuxième modèle qui a été testé dans le cadre de l'étude 2 a ajouté à ce modèle de base deux antécédents au niveau de l'entreprise (soutien organisationnel et climat de diversité) afin d'examiner comment l'intelligence culturelle peut être développée. Enfin, la troisième et dernière étude approfondit notre démarche en examinant l'empathie comme variable modératrice potentielle de la relation entre l'intelligence culturelle et la vente adaptative.

Ces trois études quantitatives ont montré que l'intelligence culturelle est cruciale dans la vente interculturelle et qu'elle impacte positivement les performances de vente à court et à long terme. Dans les trois études, l'intelligence culturelle comportementale a eu un impact positif sur la performance des ventes et des relations via une bonne capacité d'écoute (écoute active) et une bonne adaptation des comportements de vente (vente adaptative). L'intelligence culturelle métacognitive a eu un impact positif dans deux des trois études, tandis que l'intelligence culturelle cognitive et motivationnelle ont eu un impact positif significatif uniquement dans la dernière étude.

En outre, ces études ont révélé un aspect plus négatif de l'intelligence culturelle, à savoir l'impact négatif de ce concept sur les niveaux d'authenticité des vendeurs. Les études 2 et 3 ont montré que l'intelligence culturelle a un impact négatif sur l'authenticité ressentie par les vendeurs. Tandis que dans l'étude 2, seule l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive a montré un impact significatif, dans l'étude 3, les quatre dimensions présentent cet effet négatif.

En ce qui concerne les antécédents au niveau organisationnel qui ont été examinés, des résultats mitigés aparaissent dans les études 2 et 3. Alors que dans l'étude 2, le soutien organisationnel n'a pas eu d'impact significatif, il a été constaté qu'il avait un impact négatif sur l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive et un impact positif sur l'intelligence culturelle cognitive dans l'étude 3. En outre, dans l'échantillon indien de l'étude 2, le climat de diversité n'a eu un impact négatif que sur deux des quatre dimensions - l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive et comportementale. Mais dans l'étude 3, il s'avère qu'il a un impact positif sur l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive et motivationnelle tout en ayant un impact négatif sur l'intelligence culturelle cognitive. Des recherches supplémentaires sont donc nécessaires afin de tirer des conclusions solides sur cette question.

Enfin, l'effet modérateur de l'empathie a été examiné dans l'étude 3, en vain. Cela peut être lié à la nature de la variable elle-même. Mais cela pourrait également signifier que l'empathie et la compréhension des clients à un niveau plus émotionnel ne sont tout simplement pas si importantes dans un contexte de vente interculturel. Comme pour le soutien organisationnel et le climat de diversité, des recherches supplémentaires sont nécessaires.

En conclusion, ce travail a montré à travers une étude qualitative exploratoire et trois études quantitatives que l'intelligence culturelle est effectivement essentielle dans un contexte de vente interculturelle. Cette variable a un impact positif sur la performance commerciale à court terme et la performance relationnelle à long terme des vendeurs. Cette relation passe par une bonne capacité d'écoute et une meilleure adaptation des comportements de vente. A l'inverse, l'intelligence culturelle a aussi un côté sombre puisqu'elle a un impact négatif sur la perception d'authenticité des vendeurs. Ainsi, l'Intelligence culturelle est un concept à prendre en compte dans le contexte de la vente interculturelle, mais des ajustements sont nécessaires en fonction de la préférence des clients : veulent-ils de l'adaptation ou de l'authenticité ?

Implications théoriques

Le travail effectué pour cette recherche a plusieurs implications, tout d'abord sur le plan théorique. Ce sous-chapitre expose les différents points à ce niveau.

L'une des implications théoriques de cette recherche est de contribuer à la littérature sur les ventes interculturelles et internationales, comme le demandent Dugan et al. (2020) et Panagopoulos et al. (2011). Souvent, la recherche sur les ventes interculturelles se concentre sur la comparaison de différents contextes culturels, mais ne s'intéresse pas nécessairement aux concepts de culture générale (Dugan et al., 2020). Par conséquent, les recherches effectuées dans le domaine de la vente interculturelle ne sont valables que pour les contextes culturels particuliers qui ont été étudiés. Ainsi, cette recherche contribue aux ventes interculturelles en examinant un concept qui est développé pour tout contexte culturel, l'intelligence culturelle. A travers une étude qualitative exploratoire et trois études quantitatives, l'importance de l'intelligence culturelle dans trois contextes culturels différents a été démontrée, soulignant la déclaration de Earley et Ang (2003) selon laquelle ce concept est général à chaque culture et non lié à une seule culture comme l'intelligence sociale ou émotionnelle.

En outre, cette recherche va au-delà des recherches précédentes sur l'intelligence culturelle dans la vente (Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Kimber et al., 2022; Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022) et contribue donc à la connaissance de ce concept dans ce contexte de travail particulier. Cette recherche continue dans la même voie que l'étude de Kimber et al. (2022) et examine séparément les différentes dimensions de l'intelligence culturelle. Alors que Kimber et al. (2022) ont étudié le contexte culturel américain en interrogeant des commerciaux basés aux États-Unis, ce travail suit les recommandations de Sharma (2016) et Dugan et al. (2020) qui demandent plus de développement théorique dans le contexte interculturel de la vente également en dehors du contexte américain. Ainsi, cette recherche a examiné s'il existe une différence en ce qui concerne les diverses dimensions de l'intelligence culturelle à travers trois

contextes culturels différents (la France et l'Angleterre comme contextes européens et l'Inde comme contexte asiatique).

En outre, ce travail contribue également à la construction de la théorie autour du concept d'intelligence culturelle, en particulier dans un contexte de vente, en testant différentes caractéristiques, compétences et comportements de vente, comme l'empathie et l'écoute active, en tant que médiateurs et modérateurs du lien établi entre l'intelligence culturelle et la vente adaptative, comme le demandent par exemple Zhou and Charoensukmongkol (2022). De plus, la performance relationnelle en tant que performance à long terme est examinée dans cette recherche, alors que les recherches précédentes dans ce domaine n'incluaient qu'une perspective à court terme de la performance en étudiant la performance des ventes internationales (Charoensukmongkol, 2020) ou la performance en termes de jeu de rôle commercial (Baker and Delpechitre, 2016)

En plus d'examiner différents effets de médiation et de modération ainsi que l'impact sur la performance de la relation à long terme, cette recherche fait progresser les connaissances sur un côté potentiellement sombre de l'intelligence culturelle en étudiant le lien entre ce concept et les niveaux d'authenticité des commerciaux. Comme expliqué dans la discussion des résultats quantitatifs, il n'y a pas beaucoup de recherches sur un impact plus négatif de l'intelligence culturelle et plus de recherches sur ce côté ont été réclamées (Fang et al., 2018). Ainsi, ce travail contribue à la compréhension de ce côté négatif de l'intelligence culturelle en montrant que ce concept n'est pas toujours positif et peut parfois même réduire les niveaux de performance en diminuant l'authenticité perçue des vendeurs.

La dernière contribution au cadre théorique de l'intelligence culturelle réside dans l'examen des antécédents au niveau de l'entreprise, comme le soutien organisationnel et le climat de diversité. Les recherches antérieures sur le développement de l'intelligence culturelle ont surtout porté sur la formation interculturelle (par exemple, Baker and Delpechitre, 2016) , mais d'autres variables ont été négligées. Même si des recherches supplémentaires sont nécessaires sur ce sujet et que les résultats n'ont pas été concluants à travers l'étude 2 et 3,

ce travail apporte tout de même une contribution en montrant que ces variables peuvent avoir des impacts différenciés sur les différentes dimensions de l'intelligence culturelle.

En plus de faire progresser la compréhension du cadre de l'intelligence culturelle en appliquant celui-ci à un contexte de vente interculturel, cette recherche contribue également au cadre de la vente adaptative. En considérant l'écoute active comme une variable médiatrice entre l'intelligence culturelle et la vente adaptative, la compréhension de la manière dont les vendeurs développent leurs comportements de vente adaptative est étendue. De plus, les trois études quantitatives montrent clairement que la vente adaptative est particulièrement importante pour établir des relations avec les clients. Cela est une suite aux recherches qui ont établi un lien positif entre les comportements de vente adaptative et la satisfaction des clients (Román and Martín, 2014). En outre, le travail de revue de la littérature d'Itani et al. (2019) a proposé que les comportements de vente adaptative aident à construire et à maintenir de bonnes relations. Cette recherche teste donc cette hypothèse de manière empirique et fait progresser les connaissances sur les antécédents et les résultats d'un comportement clé dans la vente à savoir la vente adaptative.

Outre ces implications théoriques, cette recherche apporte également des contributions sur le plan méthodologique.

Implications méthodologiques

Cette recherche a adopté une approche hypothético-déductive à méthode mixte en réalisant d'abord une étude qualitative exploratoire qui, couplée à une analyse documentaire, a conduit à la formulation d'hypothèses. Ces hypothèses ont ensuite été testées dans trois études quantitatives différentes. Il a été démontré que la combinaison des méthodologies qualitatives et quantitatives permet de compenser les faiblesses respectives (Kelle, 2006). En ce qui concerne les études quantitatives, elles manquent la plupart du temps de connaissances culturelles et spécifiques au contexte. Les hypothèses peuvent être éloignées des préoccupations et des besoins réels de la population étudiée. Par conséquent, il est

intéressant de parler d'abord à ces personnes afin de s'assurer que leurs soucis et leurs idées sont inclus dans les études ultérieures. En suivant ce design mixte d'études qualitatives et quantitatives, cette recherche s'est donc assurée de suivre les points de vue des praticiens et d'intégrer les variables que les commerciaux jugent clés dans un contexte de vente interculturelle. Par conséquent, ce design de recherche a ouvert un point intéressant qui n'a pas été examiné auparavant : la possibilité de conséquences négatives de l'intelligence culturelle dans la vente. L'influence négative de l'intelligence culturelle sur l'authenticité a été soulevée par les personnes interrogées. Cela montre donc qu'il est important de parler d'abord aux praticiens avant d'établir des hypothèses de recherche, car la recherche a parfois tendance à négliger des sujets clés de la pratique.

Ainsi, un design séquentiel qualitatif-quantitatif, tel que réalisé dans cette recherche, apporte une contribution à la recherche et aux praticiens. La partie quantitative de cette approche permet d'assurer une certaine transposabilité et généralisation des résultats de la population étudiée à d'autres personnes dans les mêmes situations (Kelle, 2006). Dans le cas de cette recherche, cela est d'autant plus vrai que trois études différentes ont été réalisées dans trois contextes culturels différents. Le fait de tester les différentes hypothèses à travers plusieurs études est intéressant pour deux raisons principales :

1. Les échelles ont été testées et analysées par une analyse confirmatoire dans trois contextes culturels différents et dans deux langues. Cela démontre ainsi que les échelles (à l'exception de l'authenticité) fonctionnent effectivement dans de multiples contextes culturels.

2. La réplication et le test du modèle de base permettent de comparer les résultats et de déterminer les similitudes et les différences entre les trois études. En outre, cela permet également de vérifier la généralisation des résultats, ce qui est particulièrement intéressant pour un concept de culture générale comme l'intelligence culturelle.

Une deuxième implication méthodologique de cette recherche est la rétro-traduction et le test de toutes les échelles dans la langue française. Cette rétro-traduction ainsi que l'analyse

factorielle exploratoire ont permis d'établir des échelles utilisables pour poursuivre la recherche sur les différents concepts de cette recherche également dans un contexte culturel francophone. La plupart des recherches actuelles sur la vente en général et encore plus sur la vente interculturelle sont effectuées dans un contexte américain (par exemple, Kimber et al., 2022), ce qui rend encore plus important de rechercher également en dehors de cette zone géographique. Cet élargissement géographique des échantillons visés suit les recommandations de la littérature (Panagopoulos et al., 2011; Sharma, 2016; Dugan et al., 2020). Ainsi, l'Europe fait beaucoup de commerce autour du globe avec un total de 4 299 442 millions d'euros d'exportations et d'importations (Eurostat, 2022), mais encore très peu de recherches sont dédiées à ce territoire, notamment en matière de vente interculturelle.

Enfin, comme expliqué précédemment, le concept d'intelligence culturelle a souvent été utilisé comme un concept de second ordre dans les recherches antérieures sur ce sujet (Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022). La présente recherche a décidé de séparer le concept en ses quatre dimensions différentes en suivant la définition de Earley et Ang (2003). Ceci est intéressant non seulement d'un point de vue théorique, comme expliqué précédemment, mais aussi d'un point de vue méthodologique. Tester quatre variables indépendantes différentes, en même temps, permet de révéler d'éventuelles différences dans l'importance des quatre dimensions pour la recherche en vente. De plus, cela aide à déterminer sur quoi se concentrer pour des recherches ultérieures. Cela suit donc les recherches de Kimber et al., (2022) qui ont constaté des variations dans l'importance des différentes dimensions de l'intelligence culturelle pour les vendeurs internationaux basés aux Etats-Unis.

Implications managériales

En plus des implications pour la recherche sur la vente (théorique et méthodologique), cette recherche a également des implications pour les professionnels de la vente, les directeurs commerciaux et les entreprises en général.

Implications sur le recrutement des commerciaux

La première implication managériale de cette recherche porte sur le processus de recrutement des commerciaux. Lorsque l'on examine les résultats de l'étude qualitative, il ressort clairement de cela que la sélection du personnel adapté au contexte de la vente interculturelle est essentielle. Quelques personnes interrogées ont expliqué que des interdictions culturelles rendent le travail des femmes assez difficile dans certaines cultures. L'interviewé B a précisé :"*Il y a des cultures où, a priori, les personnes d'un certain sexe ne seront pas considérées au même niveau qu'une personne d'un autre sexe. Et même si nous.... uh... ... notre point de vue culturel au niveau de notre société est pour un égalitarisme total, d'un point de vue commercial, nous sommes obligés d'avoir une certaine prudence. Et donc, de faire en sorte de mettre en face de nos clients un profil qui correspond à leur environnement culturel."* Ainsi, cette recherche souligne à nouveau l'importance d'une sélection minutieuse des commerciaux avant de les envoyer travailler avec des clients internationaux. Cela fait suite aux résultats d'études antérieures sur le processus de recrutement des commerciaux dans un contexte international. Par exemple, Rouzièz et al. (2003) ont constaté dans leur étude sur l'impact de la culture sur les décisions de recrutement de personnel de vente dans plusieurs cultures européennes que trois critères de décision managériale sont essentiels dans cette situation : le potentiel des vendeurs, le fait qu'ils aient une certaine ouverture internationale ainsi que des compétences différentes. La même conclusion ressort de l'étude exploratoire qualitative de cette recherche.

Outre ces critères, cette recherche montre également que les vendeurs devraient être testés en particulier au niveau comportemental avant de les employer dans un contexte de vente interculturel. Comme le montrent les trois études quantitatives, la dimension la plus importante de l'intelligence culturelle pour le contexte de la vente est la dimension comportementale. Ainsi, avant d'affecter des vendeurs pour travailler à l'échelle internationale et interculturelle, il convient de les tester et évaluer leurs comportements verbaux et non verbaux. Savent-ils vraiment comment se comporter avec des personnes issues de milieux culturels différents ? En plus de cette dimension comportementale, les études quantitatives ont également montré que l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive, et donc la manière d'acquérir des informations, est

aussi cruciale et a un impact positif sur la vente adaptative et les performances de vente. Ainsi, en plus des tests comportementaux, les vendeurs doivent également être testés sur la façon dont ils acquièrent réellement leurs informations lors de rencontres interculturelles. Dans ce sens, Kimber et al. (2022) ont par exemple proposé, sur la base de leur étude, de demander aux candidats à des postes de vente interculturels de remplir un questionnaire comprenant l'échelle de l'intelligence culturelle (CQS). Ils suggèrent également que la dimension comportementale de l'intelligence culturelle pourrait être incluse dans les tests des centres d'évaluation en incorporant des jeux de rôle, des simulations ou des entretiens. Les mêmes suggestions peuvent être faites en suivant les résultats de cette recherche.

Implications sur la formation en vente

Mais même si les vendeurs sélectionnés pour les emplois de vente interculturelle ne possèdent pas toutes les caractéristiques nécessaires, il existe toujours une possibilité pour les entreprises de les former. Il a été démontré que l'intelligence culturelle est malléable et peut être développée avec des formations interculturelles (par exemple, Rehg et al., 2012; Baker and Delpechitre, 2016). Les commerciaux peuvent avoir des niveaux élevés de certaines dimensions de l'intelligence culturelle, mais en manquer dans d'autres. Cette recherche a donc aussi des implications sur le type de formation à la vente qui devrait être proposé dans un contexte interculturel.

Malheureusement, l'étude qualitative ainsi que les études quantitatives ont montré clairement qu'il existe un manque de formation interculturelle des commerciaux. Comme l'a déclaré l'interviewé F : "*Quand tu arrives, tu n'as pas de formation. Quand tu rentres dans l'entreprise. En gros, si tu es sélectionné pour venir, tu viens la première semaine, tu.... Tu fais ton travail. Donc... En tout cas, pour mon poste. Pour moi, ils supposent, c'est-à-dire, dans leur tête, cette personne, elle est déjà préparée.*" L'étude quantitative confirme également ce constat et montre que la plupart des vendeurs n'ont effectivement reçu aucune formation interculturelle.

En revanche, les entretiens qualitatifs ont montré que, dans quelques rares cas, les entreprises forment effectivement leurs commerciaux aux missions interculturelles. Mais la plupart du temps, la formation consiste en de courtes présentations de la culture ciblée et joue sur la connaissance cognitive des différences culturelles : "*Dans la plupart des pays qui sont plus... disons... sensibles à la culture, nous organisons, avec l'équipe de direction, disons euh... une mini introduction à la culture, les choses à faire et à ne pas faire euh... pour s'assurer que... le... pour s'assurer que l'employé est capable de correspondre... ne fait pas de faux pas évident et ne reste pas bloqué. (...) Ce sont des formations qui sont faites généralement à l'arrivée de la personne sur le site par notre... équipe de ressources humaines."* (Interviewé B). Il a effectivement été démontré que ce type de formation a un impact positif sur l'intelligence culturelle, notamment sur sa dimension cognitive (Rehg et al., 2012). Ainsi, il s'agit déjà d'un premier pas dans la bonne direction et d'une option pour les entreprises qui n'ont pas le budget pour aller plus loin dans le processus de formation commerciale.

Mais comme le montrent les études quantitatives, dans les trois études, l'intelligence culturelle comportementale a été plus importante que l'intelligence culturelle cognitive. Par conséquent, il y a un décalage entre la formation nécessaire pour la vente interculturelle et la formation réelle fournie en ce moment par les entreprises. Comme l'ont indiqué Earley et Peterson (2004), des formes de formation plus expérimentales peuvent aller au-delà de l'augmentation de l'intelligence culturelle purement cognitive et avoir un impact positif sur l'intelligence culturelle métacognitive, motivationnelle et comportementale.

Ainsi, cette recherche suggère qu'en général, plus de formations interculturelles devraient être proposées aux vendeurs qui travaillent avec des clients interculturels. De plus, la formation fournie ne devrait pas simplement se concentrer sur l'augmentation des connaissances cognitives sur une culture ciblée, mais également inclure des exercices comportementaux. Ainsi, les jeux de rôle qui impliquent de traiter et de parler réellement avec des personnes issues de milieux culturels différents seraient très bénéfiques (Baker and Delpechitre, 2016). Une fois les exercices de jeux de rôles effectués, il est primordial de faire un débriefing avec les commerciaux et de leur expliquer quel comportement était réellement correct et où ils

auraient pu faire mieux. Ces exercices de jeux de rôles peuvent également être utilisés afin d'améliorer leur façon d'acquérir des connaissances sur les différences interculturelles (intelligence culturelle métacognitive) en repérant après coup les spécificités du comportement de l'autre personne. Ainsi, les exercices de jeux de rôles et surtout le fait de laisser les commerciaux faire des exercices pratiques avec des personnes d'origines culturelles différentes peuvent améliorer les quatre dimensions de l'intelligence culturelle.

Implications sur les connexions internes et externes

En ce qui concerne le soutien organisationnel, la recherche a révélé que l'isolement sur le lieu de travail est négatif pour les vendeurs et qu'ils ont besoin d'être connectés avec des collègues au sein de leur entreprise afin d'être plus performants (Marshall et al., 2007; Nowlin et al., 2018).

Cette recherche a également une implication sur les traits de caractère importants pour les commerciaux afin que ces connexions internes à l'entreprise soient efficaces. Dans cette optique, l'étude qualitative a montré que les vendeurs de terrain interculturels ne travaillent pas seuls. Ils ont besoin d'être connectés au sein de l'entreprise et de travailler avec une multitude de divisions et notamment le back-office. En plus de cela, certaines entreprises décident de travailler avec des partenaires locaux et le département des ventes au sein de l'entreprise doit également travailler avec ces personnes locales : "*Il y a en fait deux forces de vente qui s'entraident. L'une a une très forte connaissance du contexte local, mais ne verra les choses que de son côté mono-culturel et local. Maintenant, euh... pour une entreprise multinationale, pour une entreprise globale, on peut nous demander, par exemple, d'aller faire un projet dans un pays avec lequel on n'a pas encore travaillé. Et où on va devoir expliquer aux concessionnaires locaux quelles sont les intentions du client, pour qu'il obtienne cette opération commerciale."* (Interviewé E).

Ainsi, cette recherche suggère que l'intelligence culturelle est importante pour les vendeurs, même s'ils ne sont pas directement en contact avec des clients interculturels. Les relations

des entreprises avec leurs partenaires locaux font que les vendeurs qui ne sont pas traditionnellement étiquetés comme interculturels sont tout de même en contact avec des personnes d'origines culturelles différentes. Cela peut se produire au sein de l'entreprise, par exemple lorsque des personnes d'autres cultures travaillent dans le back-office ou dans d'autres divisions. Mais cela peut aussi venir du fait que ces vendeurs doivent parfois travailler avec des partenaires locaux. Pour travailler efficacement avec toutes ces personnes différentes, cette recherche suggère donc que les vendeurs en général doivent avoir une certaine intelligence culturelle, qu'ils travaillent directement avec des clients interculturels ou non. Ils peuvent toujours être en contact avec des personnes d'autres origines culturelles et doivent y être préparés. Ainsi, même les vendeurs 'traditionnels' devraient être testés sur leur niveau d'intelligence culturelle et, si nécessaire, être formés.

Implications sur le marketing et la communication interne

Les recherches sur le marketing interne ont montré qu'il peut y avoir un écart entre la façon dont un employé pense qu'une entreprise devrait être gérée et organisée et la façon dont il perçoit qu'elle est effectivement gérée et organisée. Ce décalage entre les attentes et la réalité perçue peut être néfaste, car il engendre l'insatisfaction et la frustration des employés. À l'inverse, une bonne stratégie de marketing interne peut contribuer à réduire cet écart (Wasmer and Bruner, 1991).

En ce qui concerne le développement de l'intelligence culturelle, certains facteurs au niveau de l'entreprise ont été examinés au cours de cette recherche - suivant les suggestions de l'analyse qualitative. Même si les résultats des études quantitatives n'ont pas été concluants dans les études 2 et 3, le soutien organisationnel et le climat de diversité présentent tout de même un potentiel. En particulier, le climat de diversité est un élément qu'une entreprise devrait envisager d'installer pour préparer ses vendeurs aux différences culturelles.

Mais ces deux facteurs ne peuvent contribuer à améliorer l'intelligence culturelle que si les vendeurs savent qu'ils existent et si leurs attentes à l'égard de ces concepts correspondent à

leurs perceptions. Dans les études quantitatives de cette recherche, seule la perception des vendeurs sur ces deux concepts a été mesurée. Ainsi, cette recherche suggère que les entreprises doivent également travailler sur leur communication interne et leur stratégie marketing en interne. Les vendeurs doivent être informés des efforts déployés par l'entreprise pour instaurer une culture d'entreprise qui favorise la diversité culturelle et où les vendeurs sont soutenus. Ce n'est que dans ce cas que ces efforts peuvent réellement être bénéfiques pour le contexte de la vente interculturelle.

Implications sur le management des commerciaux

Dans les recherches en vente, il a été démontré que les directeurs ou responsables commerciaux sont souvent perçus par les vendeurs comme représentants d'une entreprise. Les vendeurs ont donc tendance à juger l'entreprise en fonction du comportement des managers (Marshall et al., 2007). Cette constatation, associée à celle mentionnée ci-dessus selon laquelle les vendeurs perçoivent parfois un écart entre leurs attentes et leurs perceptions, permet de conclure que les directeurs des ventes devraient défendre plus activement les efforts d'une entreprise en termes de soutien organisationnel et de climat de diversité.

En outre, cette recherche montre également que les managers commerciaux devraient encourager activement les comportements de vente adaptative. Selon des études antérieures, les interventions managériales comme le coaching actif sont cruciales pour augmenter la volonté des vendeurs à s'engager dans la vente adaptative (Cron et al., 2005). Les commerciaux qui reçoivent un coaching efficace peuvent augmenter leurs différentes connaissances et améliorer leur façon d'adapter leurs comportements de vente (Badrinarayanan et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2019).

Dans les trois études quantitatives, il a été démontré que les comportements de vente adaptatifs ont un impact positif sur les performances de vente à court terme qui sont plus directement liées au chiffre d'affaires et à la conclusion de contrats. Mais ces comportements

ont également un impact positif sur les résultats à plus long terme en matière de performance relationnelle. Comme le suggère l'étude qualitative, les vendeurs qui ont de bonnes relations avec leurs partenaires ont également de meilleures chances de faire de la vente incitative, ce qui signifie que leurs clients sont plus enclins à acheter d'autres produits ou services de l'entreprise. L'interviewé F a déclaré à cet égard : "*Parce que notre travail consiste à établir des relations et ensuite à vendre. Ce que nous appelons la vente incitative. La vente incitative, c'est... C'est... Il s'agit d'avoir une relation et au fur et à mesure, il suffit de prendre le téléphone et d'appeler ses partenaires."* Par conséquent, les comportements de vente adaptative doivent être encouragés au sein de l'entreprise, car ils sont bénéfiques à court et à long terme.

Dans cette optique, les managers commerciaux ne doivent pas orienter leurs efforts de coaching seulement sur la réalisation d'un chiffre d'affaires à court terme. Ils devraient également se concentrer sur la façon d'adapter les présentations et les comportements de vente de manière à améliorer les relations à long terme et à garder les clients satisfaits à long terme.

Implications sur la segmentation des clients

Enfin, cette recherche a également des implications sur la manière dont les entreprises segmentent leur base de clients. Comme le montre cette recherche, l'adaptation constante suggérée par l'intelligence culturelle n'est pas souhaitée par tous les clients. En ce sens, l'interviewé A a expliqué que le fait d'être issu d'une autre culture peut en effet apporter une certaine valeur ajoutée : "*Peut-être que le fait que je sois différent, dès que j'arrive, Français, dans un autre pays, même quand je rencontre des clients, je peux apporter autre chose peut-être."*

Dans cette optique, les trois études quantitatives ont montré que l'intelligence culturelle a un impact négatif sur l'authenticité perçue d'un vendeur. En même temps, l'authenticité a un impact positif sur la performance des ventes à court terme dans deux des trois études et sur

la performance des relations à long terme dans l'étude 1. Cela semble donc être important pour le domaine de la vente interculturelle.

Par conséquent, cette étude suggère que les entreprises doivent examiner la situation dans laquelle se trouvent leurs clients, leurs origines culturelles, les besoins qu'ils déclarent avoir et informer les vendeurs en conséquence. Ces clients viennent-ils d'une culture où l'on apprécie particulièrement l'adaptation ? Ou bien recherchent-ils un point de vue différent et peut-être une solution créative à leurs problèmes et besoins ? Ainsi, les vendeurs doivent être informés avant de travailler avec les clients pour savoir si l'adaptation ou l'authenticité doit être privilégiée lors des échanges.

Ce résultat s'inscrit dans le cadre du concept de la segmentation des clients (Maier and Saunders, 1990) et de la théorie de la catégorisation (Román and Iacobucci, 2010; Charoensukmongkol, 2020) qui préconisent le regroupement des clients en segments ou catégories en fonction de leurs valeurs communes. Ces catégories sont donc dites homogènes sur certains points permettant aux vendeurs d'adapter leurs ressources à chaque groupe de clients de manière différente et de ne pas évaluer pour chacun de manière séparée. Ainsi, il a été démontré que l'efficacité des ventes peut être améliorée en aidant les vendeurs à classer efficacement leurs clients et à choisir des comportements de vente adaptés au profil du client (Maier and Saunders, 1990). Cette recherche suggère donc que les entreprises devraient examiner une préférence potentielle d'adaptation ou d'authenticité dans un contexte interculturel afin que les vendeurs puissent ajuster leurs comportements de vente en conséquence.

Limites et recherches futures

Toute recherche a ses limites et celle-ci ne fait certainement pas exception. Mais toutes les limites ouvrent également des possibilités pour des recherches et des études futures. Par conséquent, cette dernière partie du manuscrit expose plus en détail les différentes limites de cette recherche et la façon dont elles pourraient être abordées dans des études futures.

La première limite de cette recherche réside dans la manière de collecter les données pour les études quantitatives. Cette recherche s'appuie principalement sur des données autodéclarées par les vendeurs eux-mêmes, mais des données dyadiques ou même triadiques auraient été préférables dans ce cas. Par exemple, les recherches ultérieures devraient également inclure l'évaluation des managers ou des mesures objectives des performances de vente à court terme. En outre, les recherches devraient inclure le point de vue des clients en recueillant leur opinion sur la qualité de la relation ainsi que sur les niveaux d'authenticité des vendeurs.

Deuxièmement, dans les trois études quantitatives, les données ont été recueillies auprès de vendeurs de différents secteurs d'activité afin de viser une plus grande possibilité de généralisation des résultats. D'autres études devraient se pencher sur un contexte particulier, un secteur particulier ou même une entreprise particulière afin de contrôler les effets de l'entreprise et du secteur. Le fait de se concentrer sur un seul secteur donne également l'occasion de vérifier les éventuelles différences entre les secteurs et permet de déterminer dans quel contexte l'intelligence culturelle est la plus importante.

En outre, la deuxième étude quantitative a administré un questionnaire en anglais à des Indiens. L'anglais n'étant pas la langue maternelle des Indiens, on peut s'attendre à ce que toutes les questions ne soient pas comprises exactement comme elles devaient l'être. A l'inverse, pour la première étude, le questionnaire a été traduit dans la langue maternelle des répondants, le français. Les recherches futures devraient être conscientes de ces problèmes linguistiques et traduire les différentes échelles dans la langue maternelle des répondants en utilisant un processus de rétro-traduction. Au cours de ce processus, il est important de s'assurer qu'il existe une équivalence de mesure et que les échelles sont réellement comprises comme elles le devraient. Ce n'est que dans ce cas que les résultats peuvent être comparés entre différents contextes culturels.

En ce qui concerne les échelles, la plupart d'entre elles fonctionnent assez bien dans les trois études et présentent de bonnes valeurs de fiabilité et de validité. Mais il y a aussi des limites

de ce côté-là. En particulier, l'échelle d'authenticité a été excessivement réduite dans les trois études à la suite de l'analyse factorielle confirmatoire. Cette échelle n'a repris que deux ou trois des dix items initiaux dans le test final du modèle structurel. Compte tenu de la bonne validité et de la fiabilité de l'échelle épurée, il a été décidé de conserver tout de même cette échelle dans les études. L'essentiel du concept semblait toujours être mesurée malgré la suppression de plusieurs items. Cela ouvre donc de nouvelles perspectives de recherche : Comment mesurer réellement l'authenticité des vendeurs ? La première analyse factorielle exploratoire a même montré que la version française de l'échelle est bidimensionnelle, ce qui amène de nouvelles pistes pour définir l'authenticité des vendeurs. Ce concept permet-il de mesurer uniquement la façon dont les vendeurs perçoivent leur propre niveau d'authenticité ou également la façon dont leur authenticité est perçue par leurs clients ou leurs collègues ? Les travaux sur l'authenticité en psychologie suggèrent que ce concept est en réalité bidimensionnel avec une dimension intrapersonnelle (focus sur ce que ressent une personne) et une dimension interpersonnelle (ce qui est attendu dans la société lors d'une interaction avec des gens) (Ménard and Brunet, 2012). Ainsi, des travaux supplémentaires sont nécessaires sur ce concept d'authenticité, non seulement dans un contexte de vente interculturelle, mais aussi dans la recherche en vente de façon générale.

En ce qui concerne les antécédents (climat de diversité et soutien organisationnel) proposés de l'intelligence culturelle, les résultats des études 2 et 3 n'ont pas été concluants. Seule l'étude 3 a trouvé un impact significatif des deux antécédents. Des recherches supplémentaires sont encore nécessaires sur la manière de développer l'intelligence culturelle des vendeurs. Pour l'instant, seule la formation interculturelle a été étudiée dans ce contexte (Baker and Delpechitre, 2016). Mais la question reste de savoir ce qu'une entreprise peut faire de plus pour développer les niveaux d'Intelligence Culturelle de ses commerciaux. Dans cette optique, seuls les antécédents au niveau de l'entreprise ont été étudiés ici. Certaines variables supplémentaires, au niveau du management, comme le soutien managérial (Deconinck and Johnson, 2009) pourraient également être examinées dans le cadre de recherches futures.

De plus, il a été démontré que l'empathie n'a pas d'effet significatif et ne fonctionne donc pas comme un modérateur tel que supposé. D'autres recherches devraient étudier d'autres modérateurs potentiels afin de comprendre comment l'intelligence culturelle influence la vente adaptative et dans quelles conditions. En ce sens, des traits de personnalité comme l'ouverture d'esprit (van Woerkom and de Reuver, 2009) pourraient être examinés au niveau individuel. En outre, les recherches futures pourraient également se concentrer sur les variables au niveau de l'entreprise ou du manager en tant que modérateurs, comme l'intelligence culturelle de l'entreprise (Moon, 2010), les systèmes de contrôle des capacités (Miao and Evans, 2013) ou le coaching commercial du manager (Nguyen et al., 2019).

Enfin, cette étude a examiné les quatre différentes dimensions de l'intelligence culturelle telles qu'établies par Earley et Ang (2003). Bien que cette étude soit déjà plus précise que les recherches antérieures qui ne considéraient l'intelligence culturelle que comme un concept de second ordre (Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, 2022), il reste encore beaucoup à faire pour des recherches futures. La conceptualisation de l'intelligence culturelle de Van Dyne et al. (2012) distingue onze sous-dimensions de ce concept, basées sur les quatre dimensions initiales. Une échelle a également été développée pour l'évaluation des différentes sous-dimensions : l'Expanded Cultural Intelligence Scale (E-CQS) (Kour, 2017). En utilisant cette conceptualisation plus fine, une compréhension encore plus profonde de l'intelligence culturelle dans la vente interculturelle peut être atteinte. Par conséquent, cela peut également fournir un meilleur feedback pour la formation et le coaching en identifiant précisément les domaines de l'intelligence culturelle qui sont cruciaux dans la vente interculturelle.

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Abstract

Cultural Intelligence – a key competence in intercultural sales?

Over the last decades, businesses have been opening up more and more due to globalization tendencies. These developments introduced multiple challenges for companies, especially with regards to choosing and training adequate people for these intercultural work contexts. The sales field is particularly impacted by these intercultural challenges due to the human dimension of sales. Intercultural salespeople are in contact and need to build relationships with a multitude of buyers from different cultural backgrounds. Yet, studies in the sales domain have not focused adequate attention on the predictors of selling skills, behaviors and performance in this intercultural sales context. This thesis contributes to the intercultural sales literature by looking at the importance of Cultural Intelligence – a person's abilities and skills to adapt and interact effectively in an intercultural context – in a sales setting. To do this, a mixed methodology is used.

First, an exploratory qualitative study is done to understand the point of view of practitioners who have worked in this particular context. This study gives some insights about key skills and behaviors needed for salespeople to be effective in intercultural contexts as well as what companies can do to help them succeed.

Based on this qualitative study as well as a literature review, hypotheses are established linking Cultural Intelligence to multiple sales skills and behaviors like adaptive selling, active listening, authenticity or empathy. In a second step, these skills and behaviors are linked to short-term sales performance and long-term relationship performance. Finally, company-level antecedents – company support and diversity climate – are looked at.

Across three studies, with samples of salespeople from France, India and England, this work therefore investigates the importance of salespeople's Cultural Intelligence. The first study examines a smaller baseline model with a sample of French salespeople and finds that there is indeed a positive effect of Cultural Intelligence on Active Listening and Adaptive Selling Behaviors which, in turn, impact Sales and Relationship Performance positively. Study two uses a sample of Indian salespeople to examine, in addition to the baseline model, company-level antecedents of Cultural Intelligence. The results from this study are more mitigated but show that there is also a dark-side to Cultural Intelligence since this variable negatively impacts authenticity levels of salespeople. Finally, the third study builds on the first two and goes even further by adding a moderation hypothesis of empathy to the model of study two. This last study is based on a sample of English salespeople and confirms the findings from study one and two. However, empathy does not have a significant moderation effect in this study.

Keywords

Intercultural Sales, Cultural Intelligence, Adaptive Selling, Authenticity, Sales & Relationship Performance, Multi-study Design

Résumé

L’intelligence culturelle – une compétence clé dans la vente interculturelle ?

Au cours des dernières décennies, les entreprises se sont ouvertes de plus en plus en raison de la mondialisation. Ces développements ont engendré de multiples défis pour les entreprises, notamment en ce qui concerne le choix et la formation de personnes adéquates pour ces contextes de travail interculturels. Le secteur de la vente est particulièrement touché par ces défis interculturels en raison de la dimension humaine de la vente. Les vendeurs interculturels sont en contact et doivent établir des relations avec une multitude de clients issus de milieux culturels différents. Pourtant, les études dans le domaine de la vente n'ont pas porté une attention suffisante aux prédicteurs des compétences, des comportements et des performances de vente dans ce contexte de vente interculturelle. Cette thèse contribue à la littérature sur la vente interculturelle en examinant l'importance de l'intelligence culturelle - la capacité et la compétence d'une personne à s'adapter et à interagir efficacement dans un contexte interculturel - dans un contexte de vente. Pour ce faire, une méthodologie mixte est utilisée.

Tout d'abord, une étude qualitative exploratoire est réalisée pour comprendre le point de vue des praticiens qui ont travaillé dans ce contexte particulier. Cette étude donne un aperçu des compétences et comportements clés nécessaires aux vendeurs pour être efficaces dans des contextes interculturels, ainsi que de ce que les entreprises peuvent faire pour les aider à réussir.

Sur la base de cette étude qualitative ainsi que d'une revue de la littérature, des hypothèses sont établies liant l'intelligence culturelle à de multiples compétences et comportements de vente comme la vente adaptative, l'écoute active, l'authenticité ou l'empathie. Dans un deuxième temps, ces compétences et comportements sont liés aux performances de vente à court terme et aux performances relationnelles à long terme. Enfin, les antécédents au niveau de l'entreprise - soutien de l'entreprise et climat de diversité - sont examinés.

À travers trois études, avec des échantillons de vendeurs de France, d'Inde et d'Angleterre, ce travail examine donc l'importance de l'intelligence culturelle des vendeurs. La première étude étudie un modèle de base plus petit avec un échantillon de vendeurs français et constate qu'il y a effectivement un effet positif de l'intelligence culturelle sur l'écoute active et les comportements de vente adaptatifs qui, à leur tour, ont un impact positif sur les ventes et la performance relationnelle. La deuxième étude utilise un échantillon de vendeurs indiens pour examiner, en plus du modèle de base, les antécédents de l'intelligence culturelle au niveau de l'entreprise. Les résultats de cette étude sont plus mitigés, mais montrent qu'il y a aussi un côté sombre à l'intelligence culturelle puisque cette variable a un impact négatif sur les niveaux d'authenticité des vendeurs. Enfin, la troisième étude s'appuie sur les deux premières et va encore plus loin en ajoutant une hypothèse de modération de l'empathie au modèle de la deuxième étude. Cette dernière étude se base sur un échantillon de vendeurs anglais et confirme les résultats de la première et de la deuxième étude. Cependant, l'empathie n'a pas d'effet de modération significatif dans cette étude.

Keywords

Vente interculturelle, Intelligence culturelle, Vente adaptative, Authenticité, Performance commerciale et relationnelle, Conception multi-études