

# ACADEMIC GLOBALIZATION: CULTUREACTIVE TO ICE- THE CROSS-CULTURAL, CROSS- DISCIPLINARY and CROSS-EPISTEMOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

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## ABSTRACT

Commensurate with the concept of *Academic Globalization*, coupled with the foray of *Globalization*, this paper underscores the cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary and cross-epistemological transformation from the first-generation Cultureactive to the second-generation InterCultural Edge [ICE]. The former is embedded in the experiential works of cross-cultural consultant Richard Lewis and the latter is grounded in established theoretical frameworks. Both serve to underscore the impact of the Globalization Phenomenon, as manifested in and enabled by the acceleration of academic and practitioner cross-cultural activities.

The contribution of this paper is the celebration of the long-awaited arrival of ICE [InterCultural Edge]. While previous research streams have underscored global similarities and differences among cultures, a previous paper [19] established that cross-professional rather than cross-cultural differences are more paramount. Employing Cultureactive and the LMR framework, it was noted that business versus non-business predisposition had a more direct impact on one's individual cultural profile than did nationality. Regardless of culture, persons involved in business are characterized primarily by linear-active modes of communication, and persons involved in non-business activities typically employ more multi-active/hybrid and less linear modes of communication. The pivotal question is this: Now that we have a new and improved tool, are we in a better position to assess and predict leadership, negotiating styles, individual behaviors, etc., which are central to academic globalization and preparing global business leaders?

**Keywords:** International Business, Culture, Strategic Management, Communication, Leadership, Decision-making

## GLOBAL MILIEU

With the explosion of the Internet, international business operates in a global milieu where culture remains the final barrier. Further, while immersed in a Great Britain Study Abroad Program (1999), I discovered and immediately purchased a fundamental, cross-cultural learning tool and precursor to Cultureactive, called *Gulliver* [7]. Upon sharing my find with the Duke CIBER, Arie Lewin and Jeff Russell began collaborating with Richard Lewis Communications to facilitate the innovation and evolution from Cultureactive to ICE [InterCultural Edge].

ICE is a collaborative initiative between the Fuqua School of Business, Duke CIBER, Richard Lewis Communications, and Cultureactive.com. Cultureactive and ICE are web-based products that teach cross-cultural awareness in business settings

by focusing on individual cultural profiles which are then compared to national profiles using the Linear-active, Multi-active, and Reactive [LMR] constructs. Participants analyze personal assessments with both team results and national cultural profiles. Experiments with ICE have been conducted at Fuqua (Duke University), Robinson (Georgia State) and around the world to provide a broad research base in fulfillment of rigorous academic standards for ICE validation.

## LMR FRAMEWORK

The LMR [Linear-active, Multi-active, and Reactive] model was conceived by Richard Lewis, author of *When Cultures Collide* [12] and *The Cultural Imperative* [13], in an effort to explain national, international and transnational business cultures. Cultureactive and ICE stems from Lewis' forty-plus years of cross-cultural consulting and are both derived from the LMR framework.

ICE emerged from Cultureactive when scientific research, validity and reliability issues became paramount. Known as the ABC research team, Adair, Buchan and Chen [1] & [2] capitalized upon both Hall's low context/high context communication tool and Triandis' model of subjective culture to result in the theoretical underpinnings for ICE. The conceptual reconfiguration has just been completed, transitioning cross-cultural research and application from the experientially-based Cultureactive to the theoretically-based ICE.

## LMR PROVENANCE: RICHARD LEWIS

The provenance of Cultureactive and ICE are chronicled herewith. Cross-cultural instruction was in acute demand in the 1980s, and Richard Lewis was repeatedly approached by multi-national clients for a new and practical cultural/national classification system. For years, cross-culturalists had grappled with the problem of summarizing or simplifying national characteristics. Hofstede chose four dimensions- power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. Later he added long-term versus short-term orientation. Edward Hall classified groups as monochronic or polychronic, high or low context and past- or future-oriented. Trompenaars' [18] dimensions emerged as Universalist versus Particularist, Individualist versus Collectivist, Specific versus Diffuse, Achievement-oriented versus Ascription and Neutral versus Emotional (Affective). Kluckhohn [9] explored five dimensions – attitude to problems – time, nature, nature of man, form of activity and relation to one's cultural compatriots. The GLOBE research [11] cites differences among several cultural dimensions, such as Assertiveness, Future Orientation, Gender Differentiation, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance, Institutional

Collectivism, In-Group Collectivism, Performance Orientation and Human Orientation. Lewis notes that such categorization attempts were very different from each other and often proved difficult to use as tools for assessing the culture capital that existed among employees.

A categorization that was succinct, easily understood, and comprehensive in coverage was sought. Lewis did not feel that any of the previous models had met the practical criteria required. In Lewis' assessment, Hall was sound and succinct, but did not focus on solutions. Hofstede's idea of judging people by their uncertainty avoidance and reaction to power distance, was novel, but only partly character-descriptive, and few people knew what he meant by masculinity and femininity. Trompenaars, pre-empted by Hofstede and Hall, compensated with more dimensions, which did little to provide more distinction.

Richard Lewis pondered whether managers even have employees who are diffuse, ascriptive, particularist, neutral or affective, and if so, how should they be managed? Lewis proposed that cultures could be classified more comprehensively according to the following three categories, comprising the LMR framework [12, 13]:

#### **Linear-actives**

Cultures which are task-oriented, plan, organize, schedule and pursue one thing at a time (e.g. Germans, Swiss).

#### **Multi-actives**

Cultures which are lively, loquacious, multitask, prioritize according to the importance or thrill of the event (e.g. Italians, Latin Americans, and Arabs).

#### **Reactives**

Cultures that prioritize courtesy and respect, listen quietly, and react carefully to proposals (e.g. Chinese, Japanese and Finns).

Lewis argued that *linear-active* and *multi-active* are better terms than *monochronic* and *polychronic* in that they do not restrict themselves to the use of time. A new dimension was the reactive category, indicative of the behavior of most Asians, but overlooked by previous categorizations. The focus of the Lewis model is communication, which is so often the impediment between and among cultures, and commensurately a key consideration in strategy and academic globalization.

### **THE CROSS-CULTURAL, CROSS-DISCIPLINARY and CROSS-EPISTEMOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION**

The contribution of this paper is the leap from Cultureactive to the dissemination of ICE, the next generation. Commensurate with exploring, expanding and energizing the field of transnational education, these cross-cultural assessment instruments are both cross-disciplinary and cross-epistemological as they equip academicians and practitioners with multi-cultural leadership and communication tools for the next generation.

Prior theoretical frameworks for studying cultural differences include the Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, and most notably, Hofstede [4], [9], [15] & [18]. More recently, the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness group [GLOBE] [11] analyzed data for 18,000 managers in 62 countries. Like Hofstede, Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner and Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck, the GLOBE results also established cross-cultural differences among countries. While these works are familiar to most, the Lewis model is less widely cited, perhaps because it is grounded in

experience rather than research. However, this author argues that not only does the LMR framework transcend previous models by placing the individual, rather than the nation-state center stage, its delivery through ICE rather than Cultureactive solidifies its theoretical and practical milestone.

Research consortia have just completed the requisite validity and reliability measures for ICE, and commensurate ICE teaching consortia will develop a certified teaching network.

### **UNIVERSALITY**

The cross-continent implementation of Cultureactive has elicited a fundamental question of whether one's business affinity or cultural mindset has a more direct effect on individual cultural profiles and leadership/communication/cultural styles. The samples for this work derived from several multi-cultural sources: European Fulbright students, Sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs, Duke and Georgia State University MBA and undergraduate business students. It was demonstrated that the universal dichotomy across cultures and disciplines, as measured by the business vs. non-business variable is a more powerful indicator of work habits, negotiating styles, cognitive processes, etc., than is cultural orientation. Capitalizing on the LMR framework, a group of non-business participants from the Summer Institutes for European Student Leaders, a Fulbright outreach project, were compared with business persons from Sub-Saharan Africa, MBAs from Duke University, MBAs and undergraduate business students from Georgia State University. Importantly, regardless of national culture, persons with a predisposition for business were characterized primarily by linear-active modes of leadership/ communication/ cultural mindsets, and persons with a non-business tendency typically employed less linear-active and more hybrid or linear/ multi-active modes of leadership/ communication/cultural mindsets.

The Cultureactive leadership/ communication/cultural similarities among business persons from Sub-Saharan Africa, MBAs and undergraduate business majors were more similar than dissimilar. Equally striking were the similarities among non-business persons as represented by the Fulbright outreach Cultureactive participants from six European countries. The non-business model resulted in a different yet equally powerful leadership/ communication/ cultural framework. These distinct paradigms for business vs. non-business models are further substantiated by trends emerging in other works.

Thus business or non-business predisposition has a more direct impact on one's individual cultural profile than does nationality, and yet both are important in a world where culture is the final barrier. The linkages among individual characteristics, communication styles, work behaviors, and the extent to which the LMR constructs can facilitate and predict leadership, negotiating styles, individual behaviors, etc. are central to academic globalization and preparing global business leaders.

### **CONCLUSION**

The poignant question posed in this paper is whether the universality of cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary and cross-epistemological frameworks, previously substantiated by the Cultureactive tool, can be corroborated by the next-generation ICE model. Moreover, can ICE catapult cross-cultural literacy to the next level of robustness? Will the academic, professional and institutional paradigms continue to be universal within

groups and variant between groups? This is a question that remains to be answered.

Richard Lewis' contributions were made through the lens of practitioner and teacher of cross-cultural communication. Lewis spent much of his life learning languages and observing communication styles. Intuitively, his model has a practical validity to it. CIBER at Duke University was inspired by this experiential model, and has transformed it into the theoretically-grounded InterCultural Edge (ICE). The ICE research project led by Duke University has invoked a more rigorous methodology, grounded in strong psychometric and theoretical properties, yielding a more powerful tool for practitioners and academicians.

As the world moves toward globalization, ICE provides a pivotal tool for understanding and managing culture capital and cultural diversity, such that creativity, innovation and a global mindset may be embraced and cultivated. The LMR framework is commensurate with advances in cross-cultural academic research which have demonstrated moderating influences of cultural orientations on work habits, negotiating styles, cognitive processes, etc.

This paper transcends such previous works along three salient dimensions:

- 1] Invoking the individual as the unit of analysis;
- 2] Establishing that a professional mindset is a stronger influence on communication style than is culture alone;
- 3] Introducing the next-generation cross-cultural assessment tool, i.e. ICE.

With a more sophisticated, robust and rigorously-validated ICE tool, will the same relationships emerge again? Specifically, regardless of culture, is there a universal dichotomy, where persons involved in business are characterized primarily by linear-active modes of communication, and persons not involved in business typically employ less linear and more multi-active/hybrid modes of communication? [19] In previous samples, business orientation played a major role in unifying groups across the globe in terms of underscoring a strong linear-active commonality amongst business professionals. The cross-disciplinary sample substantiated that both business and non-business orientations retain profound distinctions.

The fundamental question of whether one's business affinity or cultural mindset has a more direct effect on individual cultural profiles and leadership/ communication/cultural styles- remains. Commensurate with discovering and disseminating the field of international business, cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary and cross-epistemological assessment tools equip academicians and practitioners with multi-cultural leadership tools for the 21st century. The universality of LMR Cultureactive correlations across cultures and within disciplines is both profound and poignant in a world where culture plays a central role in cultivating global business leaders. Now ICE presents the revolution in this evolution for academic globalization.

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