

**A QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF THE CULTURAL  
INTELLIGENCE OF EXCHANGE STUDENTS IN DEALING  
WITH THAI CULTURE**



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Saowalak Buak-ieo

## **A QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF THE CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE OF EXCHANGE STUDENTS IN DEALING WITH THAI CULTURE**

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### **ABSTRACT**


This paper will discuss about the cultural intelligence (CQ) in terms of the four-factor model of CQ. The model includes metacognitive intelligence, cognitive intelligence, motivational intelligence and behavioral intelligence and three indicators of CQ. In addition, this study is made to determine the rationale that some individuals adjust their behaviors effectively than others in the same cultural situations. This research focuses on three exchange students who study at the College of Management in Mahidol University (CMMU). The data were gathered through a case study approach with in-depth open-ended interviews and self-assessment test based on the cultural intelligence framework. The qualitative information was analyzed through content analysis. Each respondent was analyzed and evaluated on a case-by-case basis through the cultural intelligence framework. The evaluation implied that exchange students with high cultural intelligence could easily deal with different cultural situations.

**KEY WORDS:** Cultural Intelligence (CQ) /Exchange students /Open-ended interviews /Self-assessment test /Thailand

25 pages

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDINGS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>BIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>25</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
3.1	Information of three interviewees	9
3.2	The sample of self-assessment test	10
4.1	Self-assessment test of respondent Q	14
4.2	Self-assessment test of respondent B	17
4.3	Self-assessment test of respondent H	19



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Framework of the Culture Intelligence (CQ)	7



## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the globalized world, cultural differences have huge effect on our daily lives from business to educational institutions. The education system in Thailand has also evolved because of this rapid change. The number of foreign students in Thailand has been increasing every year. The rapid globalization has resulted in foreign students being faced with cultural situations in their daily lives. Thus, cultural differences become important factors which need to be considered when people from different culture stay together. Furthermore, Thailand is a country which has unique culture. Foreign students have to adjust their behaviors towards Thai culture and Thai students.

Thus, cultural intelligence (CQ) becomes a vitally important aptitude and skill in a world where crossing boundaries is routine. The concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) has been introduced into the international business literature (Earley, 2002; Earley & Ang, 2003). This construct is meant to reflect the capability to deal effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds.

In this study, the researcher defines cultural intelligence based on a literature review in terms of four-factor model of CQ and three indicators of CQ. The framework of this study provides links between the four-factor model of cultural intelligence and other three indicators of cultural intelligence.

The main purpose for this study is to provide information and knowledge regarding to intercultural intelligence which includes the four-factor model of cultural intelligence (CQ) which also includes metacognitive intelligence, cognitive intelligence, motivational intelligence and behavioral intelligence. Another purpose of this study is to determine the rationale that some individuals adjust their behaviors more effectively than others in the same cultural situations.



**The research question of this study**

How does cultural intelligence support the adjustment of exchange students in Thai culture?

**Research scope**

The research scope of this study focuses on three exchange students currently taking courses at the College of Management, Mahidol University (CMMU) where approximately 20% of its students are foreigners representing different nationalities around the world. Apart from international degree students, CMMU is also a globally connected institution. Through collaborative partnerships, CMMU welcomes exchange students from their partner institutions across the world every semester. Thus, CMMU is a truly cosmopolitan campus where inter-cultural learning and experiences are offered.

The literature on Cultural Intelligence is shown in Chapter II. In Chapter III, the materials and methods used to test the Cultural Intelligence concept is explained in this study while Chapter IV presents research findings. This includes details of data collecting and analyzing methods. The conclusion of this study will be provided in the last chapter--Chapter V.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Cultural intelligence has lately been known as a qualitative continuum that reveals individual differences along with the notion that people may be classified according to how much of this attribute they possess (Earley, 2002; Earley and Ang, 2003; Thomas and Inkson, 2003, as cited in Thomas et al. 2008).

Social and emotional intelligence share some attributes with cultural intelligence; for example, the idea that intelligence is inherently multidimensional involving behavioral as well as cognition facets. Nevertheless, while social and emotional intelligence may be meaningful within one specific cultural setting, they may not apply in another. For instance, social skills learnt in one country may be futile or even considered insulting in another culture with dissimilar rules for social interaction (Ruzgis & Grigorenko, 1994 as cited in Thomas et. al. 2008). Emotional intelligence includes the ability to identify and express emotions while we are well aware that culture may have some bearing on rules of emotional display (Ekman, 1982 as cited in Thomas et. al. 2008). Additionally, there are some evidences that cultural specific norms exist for experiencing emotions (Eid & Diener, 2001 as cited in Thomas et. al. 2008). Thus, social and emotional intelligence are outcomes of the process and are limited to the culture in which they were developed.

#### ***Conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)***

Soon Ang and Linn Van Dyne (2007, p.336) and Hunter's (2000, p.3) share some similar notion asserting that the definition of cultural intelligence is an individual's ability to function and manage effectively in culturally distinct settings. They also pointed out the definition of general intelligence as “the ability to grasp and reason correctly with abstractions (concepts) and solve problem.” So to say, it is the ability to be behaviorally appropriate in a new cultural setting that makes cultural

intelligence unique and is only a part of the system of the interacting abilities (Earley, 2002).

Cultural intelligence ensues the ability to adapt and to shape, the cross-cultural interaction contexts (Sternberg, 1997). Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a multi-factor construct is based on Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) framework of the multiple foci of intelligence and is conceptualized as four diverse types of intelligence of an individual. (Sternberg and Detterman's, 1986 as cited in Ang and Van Dyne, 2007)

Four complementary ways to conceptualize individual level of intelligence was suggested by Sternberg (1986) by the combination of multitude of views on intelligence: *Metacognitive Intelligence* is the control of cognition of individuals used to acquire and understand knowledge; *Cognitive Intelligence* is the knowledge structure and individual knowledge; *Motivational Intelligence* is the motivational capabilities which are critical to the real-world problem solving and *Behavioral Intelligence* is focused on individual capabilities at the action level--what a person does rather than what he or she thinks. The four factors of Cultural Intelligence reflect contemporary views of intelligence as complex, multi-factor, individual attribute that are comprised of mental capabilities and behavioral capabilities (Sternberg & Detterman, 1986; Sternberg et. al., 2000 as cited in Ang and Van Dyne, 2007).

### **The Four-Factor Model of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)**

*Metacognitive CQ* is a level of conscious cultural awareness of an individual during cross-cultural interactions (Soon Ang and Linn Van Dyne, 2007). The existence of other cultures can be acknowledged by defining the nature of that dissimilarity is an indication of the mental processes that are at the core of systems definitions of the intelligence. People with strong metacognitive CQ therefore deliberately question their own cultural assumptions and adjust their cultural knowledge when interacting with other people from different cultures (Sternberg, 1997).

Ang and Van Dyne (2007) once mentioned an example of Western business executives with high metacognitive CQ that they would be aware, vigilant,

and mindful when it comes to the decency of their time to speak up during meetings with Asians as they would characteristically observe interactions and the communication style of their Asian counterparts and would dwell on what constituted appropriate behavior before bursting a line.

Ang and Van Dyne (2007) also stated that metacognitive CQ reflects mental processes on how an individual uses to obtain and perceive cultural knowledge, which also controls individual's thinking processes relating to culture. Relevant capabilities include planning, monitoring and revising mental models of cultural norms for each countries or groups of people. Those who are strong in metacognitive intelligence are aware of the cultural preferences and norms of diverse societies prior to and during interactions. Simultaneously, those individuals would also question cultural assumptions and would adjust their mental models during and after relevant experiences (Brislin, Worthley, & MacNab, 2006; Nelson, 1996; Triandis, 2006 as cited in Ang and Van Dyne, 2007)

*Cognitive CQ* reflects knowledge pertaining to norms, practices and conventions in different cultures that has been acquired from educational and personal experiences. Therefore, the cognitive CQ refers to an individual's level of cultural knowledge or knowledge of the cultural environment. Cultural knowledge includes knowledge of one's self as embedded in the cultural context of the environment (Soon Ang and Lim Van Dyne, 2007).

*Motivational CQ* is the ability to direct attention and energy toward learning about functioning in any situations characterized by cultural differences (Soon Ang and Lim Van Dyne, 2007). Those who have high motivational intelligence would direct attention and energy toward cross-cultural situations based on fundamental interest and confidence in cross-cultural effectiveness (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Bandura, 2002 as cited in Ang and Van Dyne, 2007).

According to Ang and Van Dyne (2007), motivational intelligence is a vital element of CQ, as it is a source of drives used to trigger effort and energy on functioning in the new cultural settings. For instance, a Chinese executive fluent in Japanese and keen on interacting with those from other cultures would not hesitate to initiate a conversation with a fellow colleague from Japan. His peer, who is also an

executive just learning Japanese or dislikes cross-cultural encounters, would be less likely to engage in such a cross-cultural interaction.

*Behavioral CQ:* As Hall (1959) emphasized, the ability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions in fact complements mental capabilities for cultural understanding and motivation. When two individuals initiate and further engage in a round of conversation, it is impossible for them to really know the hidden latent thoughts, feelings or motivation of the other party. They have to just attempt to figure out from observation through eyes and ears in the other person's vocal, facial, and other expressions. Non-verbal behaviors are very fairly significant in cross-cultural situations because they are considered as a “silent language”. Their meanings exist but in subtle and covert ways. The behavioral component of cultural intelligence is perhaps the most critical factor that observers use to evaluate one’s cultural intelligence, as the behavioral expressions are particularly prominent in cross-cultural encounters. (Hall 1959, as cited in Ang and Van Dyne, 2007)

### **Indicators of Cultural Intelligence**

A good description of such effectiveness may normally be drawn from the literature on successful adjustment to a foreign culture and the expatriate adjustment literature (Brislin, 1981; Cushner and Brislin, 1996; Ruben and Kealey, 1979 as cited in Ang and Van Dyne, 2007). Thomas et al. (2008) summarize the following characteristics of effective intercultural interactions:

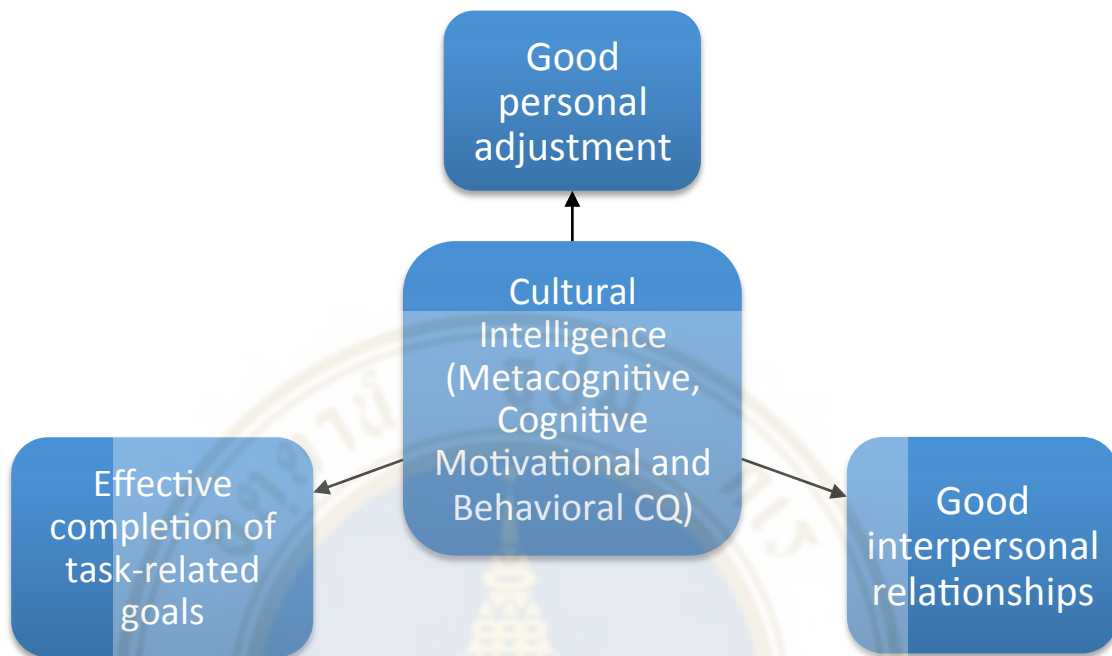
*Good personal adjustment* discerned from feelings of joy and well being. Those who have no problems adjusting themselves to a new culture would comment that the interaction between them and others from a different culture is carried on with comfort and no stress. Being in a different cultural setting and experiencing new things do not cause them any greater stress than they would in a comparable interaction in their own cultural context.

Development and maintenance of *good interpersonal relationships* with culturally different others is an indication of effectiveness from the perspective of the culturally different others.

The effective *completion of task-related goals*. In this case, a cross-cultural, goal is an indicator of an effective interaction.



To sum up, the framework of this study links the four-factor model of cultural intelligence and three indicators of cultural intelligence as shown in Figure 2.1



**Figure 2.1 Framework of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)**

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study identifies individual and interpersonal outcomes that link to the four-factor model of cultural intelligence. These outcomes include personal adjustment, decision-making, interpersonal relationships and cross-cultural adjustment. Primary data were collected to answer the objectives of this research.

#### **3.1 Primary Data Collection Method**

There are two types of primary data collection--which are “Qualitative” and “Quantitative” (*Hair et al., 2007*). The data for this study was collected with “Qualitative Method” using a case-study approach with in-depth unstructured interviews. The researcher decided to use face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions to ease any nervousness with the discussion between the researcher and interviewees. Moreover, it can also provide accurate and exact answers about individual knowledge and experiences, and the interviewees’ own perspectives.

“Open-ended questions” are selected to conduct qualitative interviewing because they help the interviewees to answer the research questions more honestly and openly. In addition, this type of question allows participants to answer questions in which attitude-related and emotional responses may be required.

Self-assessment test is another tool that the researcher uses to determine the individual contribution of each factor of cultural intelligence. Another purpose of using self-assessment is to compare the result between self-assessment test and answers from interviews. This self-assessment test was divided into three cultural intelligence aspects--which is cognitive CQ, behavioral CQ and motivation CQ. In this study, the cognitive CQ includes metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ.

To ensure validity of the data, the probing technique is adopted. Probing technique is a strategy used for seeking more detailed and precise information.

Furthermore, reflective note taking is also used to record observed data as, it is an efficient tool for capturing learning. During the interview, this tool is a specific process used to record and interpret important information. (*Castleberg, n.d*)

The interviewees are three exchange students--two of them from Europe and one from Malaysia. Details of interviewees are shown in Table 3.1. They are currently students of the College of Management, Mahidol University. The interview was conducted during March 2014. Each interviewee was interviewed for about 30 minutes. Nine open-ended questions were used, and a set of self-assessment test was completed after the interview. The list of questions and the test are provided below.

**Table 3.1 Information of three interviewees**

Person	Country	Months of experience in Thailand
H	Germany	4
G	France	6
B	Malaysia	48

### Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about situations where you experienced cultural difference during your stay in Thailand?
2. What did you learn from this situation? Did you realize that there is something wrong with that situation?
3. How did you handle and solve those situations?
4. After you stay in Thailand for a while, how do you feel about that situation? Would you change the way you reacted or would you still do the same?
5. What is the situation that most surprised you?
6. Please give me the example of some situation about working with Thai students at CMMU? Would you act the same way as when you involve with the same situation in your own country?
7. Do you feel that you have well adjusted yourself to the Thai culture? Please provide the reasons.
8. Do you feel that you have good interpersonal relationships with Thai students or Thai people whom you've dealt with? Please provide the reasons.



9. Do you feel that you achieved your study-related goals? Please provide the reasons.

**Table 3.2 The sample of self-assessment test**

Rate the extent to which you agree with each statement, using the following scale <b>1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree</b>	
Before I interact with people from a new culture, I ask myself what I hope to achieve.	
If I encounter something unexpected while working in a new culture, I use this experience to figure out new ways to approach <i>other</i> cultures in the future.	
I plan how I'm going to relate to people from a different culture before I meet them.	
When I come into a new culture situation, I can immediately sense whether something is going well or something is wrong.	
<b>Cognitive CQ</b>	
It's easy for me to change my body language (for example, eye contact or posture) to suit people from a different culture.	
I can alter my expression when a cultural encounter requires it.	
I modify my speech style (for example, accent or tone) to suit people from a different culture.	
I easily change the way I act when a cross-cultural encounter seems to require it.	
<b>Behavioral CQ</b>	
I have confidence that I can deal well with people from a different culture.	
I am certain that I can befriend people whose cultural backgrounds are different from mine.	
I can adapt to the lifestyle of a different culture with relative ease.	
I am confident that I can deal with a cultural situation that's unfamiliar.	
<b>Emotional/Motivational CQ</b>	

(P.Christopher Earley and Elaine Mosakowski, Cultural Intelligence, 2004)

Each interviewee in this study is analyzed as an individual case study based on interview and self-assessment test.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

In this section, three case studies were analyzed based on the collected information from the responses of three exchange students of the College of Management, Mahidol University (CMMU) in order to present the research outcome in terms of cultural intelligence. Data used in the analysis is based on answers from 9 interview questions and self-assessment test from 3 interviewees. This research focuses on the importance of cultural intelligence when studying abroad by linking the four-factor model of cultural intelligence with cultural intelligence indicators.

#### **4.1 Data Discussion**

By doing in-depth interviews and self-assessment tests with three exchange students, the analysis is focused on the four-factor model of cultural intelligence (CQ). Each student will be analyzed and evaluated on case-by-case basis through the cultural intelligence framework as described in chapter II.

During the interviews, the respondents were asked about different aspects of cultural intelligence and situations both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, they were also asked about adjustment they had made as to culturally different situations in Thailand.

#### **4.2 Data Analysis**

Results from the interviews suggested evidence of efforts made by the three respondents to cope with Thai culture in the classrooms at CMMU and other situations during their stay in Thailand. Moreover, the self-assessment test was another tool to add an additional perspective. This study analyzes each student's answers by

linking them to the four-factor model of cultural intelligence and three outcomes of cultural intelligence i.e. good personal adjustment, good interpersonal relationship, and completion of study-related goals.

### ***Case I: Case study of Student Q from France***

#### *Metacognitive CQ and Cognitive CQ*

According to Sternberg (1986), metacognition CQ is the control of cognition of individuals use to acquire and understand knowledge. Cognitive CQ refers to the use of interventions focusing on the learning of cultural-specific knowledge (Earley and Peterson, 2004 as cited in Thomas et. al., 2008). From the interview, respondent Q seems to have a high level of metacognition CQ and cognitive CQ considering the fact that he has sensitivity to tell whether something is going well or something is wrong when he came into new cultural situation.

In addition, he had prepared himself before he came to Thailand by learning about Thai culture from his friend who once studied at CMMU. This is the process of metacognitive CQ, which whoever has a high level of metacognition would be sensitive to this, and influence them to attend more acutely to the cultural different even they are visiting another country for the first time.

For example, respondent Q shared his situation in Thailand: *“I have one very surprising situation when I had an appointment with Thai students at CMMU. They came around 1 hour late. However, I finally considered this point as very common in Thailand as my friend had told me. Thai culture is not a time-pressured culture whereas the French culture is a time-pressured one”*.

From the interview, respondent Q seems to be good in metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ, because he is sensible to what is the cultural difference in this case. For example, when he came to Thailand for the first time, he knew which behavior is culturally acceptable and which behavior is not. Those who have high metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ would be sensitive enough to understand the differences. This will also influence them to be more attentive as to the cultural differences although they are visiting another country for the first time.

### Motivational CQ

Motivational CQ refers to the motivation and confidence to handle cross-cultural situations. In the interview, respondent Q seems not good in motivational CQ. He shows that he is not confident to deal with people from different culture. From the interview it can be concluded that respondent Q had no confidence in dealing with Thai people as he stated, *“What I learnt is that the language barrier is a huge factor in the understanding of different behaviors. There is obviously a misunderstanding at the beginning. Plus, you add two cultures, which are opposite, and you obtain a troubled communication. Sometimes, I found it difficult to change the way I usually act. I’m not confident at all”*. Respondent Q mentioned that it seemed to be hard for him to change some behavior and body language e.g. eye contact or posture to suit Thai students.

Moreover, respondent Q mentioned, *“I want to make friends with Thai students but it’s very hard because they always stay together with their group. I’m not confident enough to talk with Thai students when they stay in their groups.”* This reply, respondent Q shows that he is not confident enough to participate with other people from different cultures. Even though he has been trying to learn some Thai language, but it is still difficult to go deeper in the relationship as he expressed, *“It is hard to go deeper in the relationship with Thai students. Maybe because expats tend to find common cultural points when they live abroad, but I am sure that the time could give a deeper relationship with a Thai people.”*

### Behavioral CQ

For behavioral CQ, respondent Q shows that he has high level of behavioral CQ. In the interview, respondent Q mentioned that he was very surprised when he studied at CMMU. Thai students are very quiet in the classroom. It is totally different from his country France. For this situation, he adapted himself by individually asking the professor outside the classroom: *“I’m very surprised when I study at CMMU. Thai classrooms are very quiet. Sometimes I saw Thai students asked their friends instead of instructor. In contrast, in my country, we ask the professor more often than our classmates. Studying at CMMU for a while, I understand that these behaviors are common for Thai students. Thus, I try to not ask too many questions in classroom but I will ask individually with instructors after the class.”*

This ability of respondent Q also involves good personal adjustment, which is the outcome of cultural intelligence.

In addition, he mentioned, *“In France, people tend to be more direct in the verbal and non-verbal form that is easier to pass on a message. On the other hand, it could be seen that it is rude for Thai person. I need to handle this situation really carefully. I try to adapt my personal behavior to Thai students.”* For example, he tends to be more indirect in verbal communication among Thai students at CMMU. This ability of respondent Q also involves the appropriate behavior for different intercultural situations and also extrapolates to generate new behavior. He thinks that he can deal with a cultural situation that is unfamiliar. All of this behavioral of respondent Q shows that he has good personal adjustment and completes his study-related goal.

To conclude, from the interview, respondent Q seems to have good personal adjustment as he mentioned that he really enjoys his stay in Thailand. Moreover, he said that he want to stay in Thailand after graduation for working. Respondent Q seems to have high level of metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ, which matches the result of self-assessment test shown in table 4.1 below. For motivational CQ and behavior CQ, respondent Q had average scores of self-assessment.

**Table 4.1 Self-assessment test of respondent Q**

<b>Metacognitive CQ and Cognitive CQ</b>	<b>4 /5</b>
<b>Motivational CQ</b>	<b>3.5 /5</b>
<b>Behavior CQ</b>	<b>3.25 /5</b>

***Case II: Case study of student B from Malaysia.***

*Metacognitive CQ and Cognitive CQ*

From the interview, Respondent B said that he had been to Thailand many times for vacation before he came to study at CMMU. He noticed that Thai culture does not focus on punctuality, but does on respect. Although he knew that Thai people



always pay respect to elders, he was still very upset with those who did not communicate directly with him just because he is older than them.

Respondent B shared his experience about cultural different situation: *“I invited my friends to have dinner at my condo, but one of them couldn’t join. She said sorry that she couldn’t join the dinner to my friend instead of me. She said it is rude if she told me directly just because I’m older than her. At first, I don’t understand but after I talked to other friends, now I know that it is because of Thai culture.”* Over time, he realized that this situation is very common in Thai culture. This ability of respondent B shows that he has metacognitive CQ. He has adjusted his cultural knowledge when interaction with people from difference cultures.

From the interview, respondent B said that he learnt that Thai culture does not concern time-pressure, so he had tried to adapt himself not to be angry about this behavior of his Thai friends. Even it should not be acceptable, but as it is cultural difference, he has to adjust himself and get along. His behavior linked to the processes of metacognitive CQ. Thus, he seems to have good personal adjustment due to he is very enjoy his life in Thailand.

### Behavioral CQ

Form the interview; respondent B seems to be very good in behavioral CQ, which leads to good personal adjustment and the effective completion of study-related goals. Respondent B said, *“As Thai culture is not focusing on the time, so Thai people don’t have time-pressure at all. My Thai friends always came late for almost every appointment. It seems to be a normal situation for them.”* He also said that he had adjusted himself by coming late around 10-15 minutes. This behavior of respondent B relates to behavioral intelligence, which consequently leads to personal adjustment.

In addition, respondent B also pointed out about time-pressure in Thailand that not only Thai students at CMMU do not have much concern about the time, but also other Thai people such as government officers as he further explained his perspective: *“When I have to work with Thai students at CMMU, they always finish their assignments at the last minute. It worries me, so I adjust myself by doing whatever I can without waiting for other members of the group.”*

Over time, he realized that this behavior of Thai students is very common. They are very relaxed, slow-paced and not concerned about time. He said he had to adjust his behavior and emotion depending on each situation. He always stays with Thai friends to learn their behaviors. This ability of respondent B shows that he has very good personal adjustment with culturally different situations. Moreover, he seems to be good interpersonal relationships with Thai people too.

Respondent B also faced a problem with the language barrier as did the other two respondents. For the case of respondent B, he stated that he had to make his English as simple as he could when communicating with Thai people to make a clear conversation so that they can understand. Respondent B elaborated: *“Thai people always talk in Thai among themselves. It makes me confused because I don’t know what they want. I have to learn Thai language to make the conversation easier.”* This ability shows that respondent B seems to have high behavioral CQ and good personal adjustment. He adjusts himself to fit it with Thai students and Thai people.

### Motivational CQ

From the interview; respondent B seems to have high level of motivational CQ. He said that he had very confidence in dealing with people from a different culture. In addition, respondent B explained: *“The longer I stay, the more I understand Thai people and Thai culture. Currently, I feel very comfortable with Thai people.”* Respondent B also shared his feeling that he has had a very good relationship with Thai students at CMMU and also with other Thai people elsewhere. From this behavioral of respondent B, he had very confidence in dealing with others people so it leads to good personal adjustment.

To conclude, respondent B seems to have high knowledge and skills in culturally different situations. He is very good personal adjustment and completion of study-related goals. As he explained, *“The longer I stay the more I understand Thai people and Thai culture. Currently, I feel very comfortable with Thai people. I have many Thai friends and like their culture too. I want to stay here more than in my country”*. Thus, this behavior of respondent B is the outcome of cultural intelligence behavior, which is good personal adjustment. Thomas et Al. (2006) say that the outcome of culturally intelligent behavior is more effective intercultural interaction.

The self-assessment test of respondent B is shown in table 4.2. The result provides evidence that respondent B has high scores in motivational CQ, which matches with the answers in the interview. He seems to be very confident in adjusting to Thai culture and Thai students. He was able to easily adapt his lifestyle to Thais. Moreover, he can befriend with anyone from a different cultural background. This ability of respondent B shows that he is good personal adjustment, good interpersonal relationships and study related goal achievement. From self-assessment test, respondent B got an average level of cognitive CQ and behavioral CQ that not match with the answer in the interview, respondent B seems to have high cognitive CQ and behavioral CQ. According to the interview, respondent B seems to have more confidence than other two respondents from Europe, because he has more experience from his longer stay in Thailand. In addition, he can easily change his behavioral when encounter with cultural situation. He wants to stay in Thailand so he try to learned Thai culture and adjust his behavioral to fit with Thai people. Thus, the experience is one of the ways of building confidence.

**Table 4.2 Self-assessment test of respondent B**

<b>Metacognitive CQ and Cognitive CQ</b>	<b>4 /5</b>
<b>Motivational CQ</b>	<b>3.5 /5</b>
<b>Behavior CQ</b>	<b>3.25 /5</b>

***Case III: Case study of student H from Germany.***

***Metacognitive CQ and Cognitive CQ***

According to respondent H, he had never been to Thailand, so he felt that sometimes it was difficult to adjust his behavior to fit with Thai culture and lifestyle of Thai students. Moreover, he didn't prepare himself about Thai culture before he came to Thailand. Thus, people who visit other countries for the first time in their life may experience culture shock because of their limited specific cultural knowledge and overall cultural intelligence.



As he said, “ *In my country, time-pressure is the key attribute of culture unlike in Thailand where people don’t care much about time. At first, I tried not to get angry or upset. After staying in Thailand for one month, I learnt that it is common in Thai culture, so I adjusted myself to go along with other Thai friends by not expecting them to come on time.*” He also stated that he didn’t expect people to have similar behavior as he did. This ability shows that he has metacognitive CQ and Cognitive CQ.

From the interview, respondent H said, “ *In my country, time-pressure is the key attribute of culture unlike Thailand where people don’t care much about time.*” In addition, he also mentioned that Thai student always came late at the meeting: “*They came an hour late. It didn’t happen only once, but almost in every meeting. I felt angry but tried to understand that it is because of cultural differences.*” This ability of respondent H shows that he uses his knowledge and experience to understand other people from a different culture.

#### Behavioral CQ

From the interview, respondent H seems to be good in behavioral CQ. Respondent H mentioned that sometimes he had problems when working with Thai students. They always discuss in Thai with their friends. Thus, he adjusted himself by learning some Thai words from his classmates. Moreover, he also shared his experience about communication in Thailand: “*When a taxi driver knows I’m a foreigner, the taxi driver took me another way, further than the normal way to increase the fee. I was so angry but couldn’t do anything about it. Currently, I can speak some Thai language. Overall, I like Thai people and Thai culture.*” He also mentioned that sometimes it hard to change the way he acts when a cross-cultural encounter seems to require. Thus, respondent H is also leads to personal adjustment that is the outcome of adapting his behavior to Thai culture.

From the interview, respondent H seems not that good in behavioral CQ and personal adjustment because he just adapted some of his behavior to fit those Thai students. As respondent H mentioned, “*When I arrived here, it was a very difficult time. First two weeks was the hardest for me. However, adapting yourself is much less*

*work than expecting other people to do the job for you, so I tried to adapt myself first.”*

### Motivational CQ

From the interview, he seems not good in motivational CQ. He said that he has not confidence in his interactions with others people from a different culture. Respondent H stated: *“I’m not confident when I stay with Thai students or people from different culture”*. Respondent H also said that he not care much about cultural different because he will stay in Thailand for a short time. Thus, this would be linked to motivational CQ.

As evident from the self-assessment test, it is found that respondent H got average level of all three CQ’s. Results from self-assessment test match with answers from the interview. According to the interview, respondent H’s behavior indicates that he did well in two aspects of indicators of cultural intelligence, which are good personal adjustment and completion of study-goal. In the interview, respondent H also said that the way he adjusted his behavior would depend on the situation and the moment it took place. For the case of respondent H, he felt that it took time to adjust behaviors and build up a relationship with Thai students.

**Table 4.3 Self-assessment test of respondent H**

<b>Metacognitive CQ and Cognitive CQ</b>	<b>3.25 /5</b>
<b>Behavior CQ</b>	<b>3.25 /5</b>
<b>Motivational CQ</b>	<b>3.75 /5</b>

To sum up, it is found from the study that cultural intelligence is significant in multicultural situations. Thus, cultural understanding is the important factor used to adjust individual’s behaviors. From the four factors of cultural intelligence, we can now explain an individual’s capability to adjust one’s self to various and diversified cultural situations. Therefore, it is crucial for exchange students to be able to understand and adapt themselves to the whole new culture.

According to Thomas (2006), the behavioral adaption needs to be based on the knowledge of the other culture and their expectation, as well as their personal motives and goals to anticipate desirable interpretations of specific behaviors.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) may help explain and evaluate individuals who can interact with culturally different situations more effectively. The behavior component of cultural intelligence (CQ) is the ability to adjust their behavior depending on situations and expectations of others from a different culture. Exchange students with high cultural intelligence can somehow be considered as progressing through the four-factor model of cultural intelligence. In addition, personal experience can also help an individual to deal with the cultural situations.

However, for this adaptive skill to demonstrate cultural intelligence, it must be based on the knowledge of cultural metacognition and other aspects of CQ, which allow specific knowledge to be translated into behaviors, which are appropriate to new intercultural interactions.

From the analysis, the exchange student from Malaysia seems to adapt his behavior more easily than other two students from Europe due to the similarity of Thai and Malaysian cultures. In addition, being in Thailand for a longer period may help the Malaysian exchange student in terms of behavioral adaptation. Thus, it seems to be easier for him to adapt his behavior to fit with Thai culture. The Malaysian exchange student also wants to stay in Thailand, so his desire may make it easier for him to easily to adapt himself to fit with Thai people.

In conclude, the study provides a practical application of the concept of cultural intelligence. This study also provides the links between knowledge and behavioral appropriateness for cultural difference situations. Lastly, exchange students who are good in cultural intelligence not only know about Thai culture but they also must perform as well.

## 5.2 Limitations of the study

Firstly, the time frame for conducting the research is the biggest limitation for this study. It was difficult to arrange interview sessions with many people in only one week. The interviewee's time schedule that was allowed for the interview was quite limited.

This study managed to get responses from interviews by using in-depth unstructured patterns of interviews based on each interviewee's personal experiences about cultural difference situations in Thailand. Thus, the interviewee's length of stay in Thailand is another limitation of this study as it was very hard to get exchange students to answer the questions with relevant topics when their length of stay is too short or too long. For instance, it seems very hard to get the answer from exchange student who stay in Thailand for only 4 months, because some students seem to either don't care to adjust his behavioral to cultural difference situations or don't want to change behavioral to fit with any cultural situation. They also don't even about other people's perception about them. Identically, it seems difficult to get answers from exchange student who stay in Thailand for a long time too. This group of students mostly has forgotten what they did when they're involved with the cultural situation for the first time.

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