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The importance of CQ in the service sector

What's the relative impact of the different dimensions of front-line employees' CQ on customer satisfaction during ICSEs?

Deposed by

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Abstract

This study helps to understand how multicultural encounters in the service industry develop when the front-line employee and the customer have different cultural backgrounds. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is a globally recognized way of assessing and improving effectiveness in culturally diverse situations. The literature about the concept of CQ explains that this construct has an impact on the outcome of multicultural interactions. Therefore, it is interesting to know how each dimension of a front-line employee's CQ influence customer satisfaction when an intercultural service encounter occurs. To be able to measure this relationship, a questionnaire was designed, and respondents were kindly asked to estimate the perceived level of CQ possessed by the front-line employee who served them as well as their level of satisfaction with the service. A total of 121 responses were collected. Results shows that the front-line employee's level of general CQ has an impact on the overall final satisfaction of customers. Additionally, three among the four sub-dimensions of CQ were tested in this study and they were found to be individually linked to an increase in customer satisfaction. The originality of this study resides in the fact that many studies investigated the managerial aspect of CQ, but only a few have linked the concept to customer satisfaction in the service industry. The managerial implications of this study are not to be underestimated. Being aware of how front-line employees' CQ can affect the level of satisfaction that customers feel towards the service is critical to the continued operation and success of the business.

Keywords

Cultural intelligence, customer satisfaction, intercultural services encounters.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of culture is extremely important as it determines many aspects of people's lives (Sharma & Wu, 2018). Throughout time, many definitions of culture have been provided. A well-established definition was given by Linton (1945) who described the culture of a society as "the way of life of its members: the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share, and transmit from generation to generation" (p. 21). This contribution highlights the idea that culture refers to the beliefs, values, and norms shared by a group of people that distinguish them from the rest of the world and guarantee the well-functioning of society. Additionally, the definition emphasizes the fact that culture is transmitted from generation to generation. This can be possible due to socialization, education, and communication between individuals. A more recent contribution concerning the concept of culture was made by Hofstede et al. (2010) who argued that culture is "the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes members of one group or category of people from another" (p. 6). The consensus that emerges from these definitions of culture is that the latter shapes in unique ways how people perceive the world, interact with others, and process experiences (Sharma & Wu, 2018).

In the last few years, the topic of cultural differences has become central because, due to globalization, people move around a lot more than they used to, which leads to a multiplication of interactions between culturally diverse individuals. If years ago, people were used to interact only with individuals of the same culture, and thus cultural characteristics were the same, today this is not the case anymore (Lorenz et al., 2017). This multiplication of interactions between culturally diverse people also occurred in the service sector. In fact, more and more encounters between front-line employees and customers from different cultures exist (Sharma & Wu, 2018). Bitner et al. (1990) defined these interactions between clients and front-line employee's coming from different cultural backgrounds "Intercultural Services Encounters" (ICSEs).

Over the years, many studies have highlighted the influence that the cultural background of a person has during ICSEs on several facets of the customer's service experience. According to Sharma and Wu (2018), culture shapes people's expectations, perceptions, evaluations, and behavioural intentions during service experiences. The authors also reported that many studies tried to explain the impact of culture on different service dimensions, relying on Hofstede's (1980, 1991, 2001) findings. With his framework, Hofstede (1980) allows the differentiation of cultures based on their fundamental characteristics. The underlying idea is that people from a specific culture will tend to replicate typical attitudes learned during their early life experiences.

Hofstede proposed a classification of each culture according to the intensity of the presence that each culture had in four specific dimensions: individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, power distance high/low and uncertainty avoidance high/low. The individualism/collectivism dimension represent the degree to which societies are integrated into groups and the level to which individuals feel part of the group. Individualistic cultures tend to put individual objectives and interests before those of society. The masculinity/femininity dimension considers the degree to which roles are established in each society and, therefore, whether equity between people is respected or not. Societies that are preponderantly masculine tend to have rigid roles and a higher level of competitiveness. The power distance dimension represents the extent to which inequality between individuals is tolerated in a society. High levels of power distance indicate that an important hierarchical distance exists and that people at the top of the pyramid have much more power over the others. Finally, the uncertainty avoidance dimension consists of how society perceives and deals with uncertainty, meaning whether it is accepted and managed with peace or if it is a source of stress. Societies that have high levels of uncertainty avoidance tend to escape from what's not predictable by programming the future. These dimensions strongly form and influence the way people live and interact with others and are therefore central in the marketing field. For example, according to Liu et al. (2001) and Liu and McClure (2001), customers with a more individualistic cultural background (e.g., USA) tend to complain more when a service failure happens. On the contrary, customers from collectivistic cultures (e.g., China, Singapore, and Korea) are more likely to remain silent when faced with similar situations. Poon et al. (2004) argued that this difference may depend on the fact that some cultures attribute responsibility only to one side, while others tend to distribute it. Additionally, according to Riddle (1992), people from individualistic cultures are more autonomous, competitive, and focused on their path and goals. Furthermore, they expect from others what they would expect from themselves, and this causes them to expect a functional and efficient service. According to Donthu and Yoo (1998), Furrer et al. (2000), and Laroche et al. (2005), in individualistic cultures customers generally have higher levels of expectation from a service compared to collectivistic cultures. More specifically, as explained by Donthu and Yoo (1998), people from individualistic cultures expect the service provider to be more empathetic and attentive towards them. They want their needs to be fulfilled and are less tolerant than people from collectivistic cultures. Additionally, as explained by Herbig and Genestre (1996), people from different cultures perceive and evaluate a service based on the expectations they had before entering the experience, which are indeed shaped by their culture and what they are used to in their home country. The differences in the process of

evaluating a service also depend on which attribute of the service weighs the most for the clients (e.g., some attach great importance to price and others to quality), and typically this depends on the values of the culture he or she belongs to (Sharma & Wu, 2018).

These culture-specific differences are important during interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds. The fact that every culture brings with it unspoken customs and rules means that when people from different backgrounds find themselves interacting, small or large misunderstandings can cause conflicts (Paparoidamis, 2019). According to Leong and Ward (2000) and Ward (2008), “intercultural interactions may lead to ethno-cultural identity conflict”. Stening (1979) argued that having an interaction between two culturally diverse people may cause “misattributions, communication gaps, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, prejudice, and discrimination”. Additionally, Johnson et al., (2002) added that “intolerance, confrontation, and even violence against ethnic minorities may occur” (Sharma & Wu, 2018, p. 3). Associated with ICSEs, there is also the central issue of the emotional burden a situation may carry. In fact, employees in contact with customers from different cultures often have a higher emotional load that can cause stress and anxiety (Kogovsek & Kogovsek, 2014).

The result is that ICSEs are extremely delicate and require a higher level of attention compared to interactions between people of the same culture, as the natural reactions of individuals need to be controlled and thought about more. Managing these situations can be difficult and resource draining. Despite all the difficulties, service providers need to try to establish a good relationship with customers because the increasing competition in today’s economy obliges them to do so. Often, service providers only have one opportunity to make a good impression and to initiate what hopefully will become a strong and long-lasting relationship with their clients. In the service sector, the pressure to create a strong bond is often on the front-line employees, as they are directly in contact with clients. Front-line employees are the representation of the firm, and if their communication style is efficient, they can constitute an element of competitive advantage (Lorenz et al., 2017).

To be able to handle ICSEs at their best, front-line employees rely on a specific type of intelligence referred as CQ. In fact, CQ is a subdimension of the major construct of intelligence. The need for this new type of specification arose due to the increasing globalization and mobility of people. CQ is a new type of intelligence that explains how some individuals function and adapt better than others in culturally diverse contexts (Earley & Ang, 2003). Initially, the concept was mainly investigated in the field of management regarding expatriates’ ability to adapt to new cultures, but later it was also introduced in the field of international service

marketing. However, research about CQ in the field of international service marketing is still very limited (Magnusson et al., 2013).

The first conceptualization of CQ was given by Earley and Ang (2003), who described CQ as a multidimensional construct composed of three dimensions: cognitive, motivational, and behavioural. This conceptualisation served as the foundation for future developments and research on the topic of CQ. In the marketing field, CQ holds great importance because it can explain how different front-line employees can offer different levels of satisfaction to their customers during a similar service experience (Van Dyne et al., 2012).

Customer satisfaction has been defined by Oliver (1997) as the feeling of pleasure and fulfilment that a product as well as a service, or part of it, can provoke in customers after they have used that product or service. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2012), the feeling of pleasure and fulfilment might depend on several factors. These factors also include situational and personal aspects that make it more complicated for service providers to meet the needs and offer a satisfying service of culturally diverse people using a one-size-fits-all approach. Despite this difficulty, Kotler (2006) highlights the importance for service providers to be able to satisfy their customers, especially in a competitive and increasingly global market.

In the service sector, being able to satisfy customers with different cultural backgrounds requires front-line employees to possess higher levels of CQ (Mohsin, 2006). Given the fact that CQ is a multidimensional construct, it becomes interesting to know which dimension of the construct has the most impact on customer satisfaction.

As of today, there are very few studies that have been interested in trying to explain the relationship between each dimension of CQ and the final customer satisfaction. This study is conceived and intended to investigate the relationship between each dimension of CQ and customer satisfaction. Hence, the research question for this study: What is the relative impact of the different dimensions of CQ on customer satisfaction in services?

The empirical part of the research was based on data that was collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure the front-line employee's level of CQ and the impact that the latter had on customer satisfaction during an ICSE. The items proposed in the questionnaire were mainly extracted from the study of Lam et al. (2021). Therefore, clients had to estimate the perceived level of CQ of the front-line employee who served them and later evaluate their level of satisfaction with the service.

The interest of this study is based on investigating the impact of CQ on customer satisfaction and allowing one to understand how CQ can be leveraged by service providers with the aim of increasing the satisfaction that their customers derive from the service. The conclusions of this study could be useful for companies in the service industry. Knowing how CQ of front-line employees impacts customer satisfaction could be of great interest to managers, as it allows them to evaluate whether it is necessary or not to increase their training.

This work begins by reviewing the relevant literature, first by introducing the concept of CQ and further developments that have been added over time. Secondly, it expresses the importance of satisfying customers for service providers. Lastly, this work attempts to explain the importance of the link between CQ and customer satisfaction. Based on the literature, four hypotheses are proposed as the pillars of this research and motivate the subsequent data collection and analyses.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, the concept of CQ is explained, and the main theories concerning the topic are presented. This first section begins with the contextualization of the concept of CQ and continues with an explanation of the various studies that have led to the development of the latter. In the second part of the literature review, customer satisfaction and the importance of this concept in today's economy are explained. Finally, in the third part, the focus is on the relationship between CQ and customer satisfaction. This section begins by defining the relationship and investigating the theories and empirical research that concern the impact of CQ on customer satisfaction in the service sector. It later continues by investigating the impact that each dimension of the construct has on customer satisfaction. Finally, the four hypotheses on which this research is based are formulated, and together they give rise to the research model.

The concept of CQ

Described below is a review of the existing literature concerning the concept of CQ as well as later additions which have been presented.

The antecedents of CQ

To investigate how the concept of CQ came to be, the general idea of intelligence must be briefly introduced and understood. The concept of intelligence is fascinating and confusing at the same time, and a consensus on the topic is still missing despite several decades of study on this topic. Intelligence usually represents the idea that someone possesses the faculties to enable them to adapt and function in any given situation, learn from experiences, and exercise different skills (Ealey & Ang, 2003). An important contribution on this topic was made by Sternberg and Detterman (1986), which consisted of the idea that intelligence resides in different loci of the brain. In this sense, different parts of the brain are responsible for different processes that, when added together, make up what is trivially referred to as "intelligence". The first locus of intelligence was identified to be the biology dimension, which consisted of structural brain aspects such as the neuronal processes that give rise to brain activities. The second locus of intelligence was determined to be the cognitive dimension, which consisted of normal

cognition, known as what one knows, as well as metacognition, which is understanding one's own and others' cognitions. The third locus of intelligence was identified as the motivational dimension, which consisted of the strength and direction of cognitions. Finally, the last locus of intelligence was determined to be the behavioural aspects of intelligence, including the mental processes which are behind a person's actions.

In addition to knowing that intelligence resides at different loci of the brain, it is also important to make it known that different types of intelligence can exist. Throughout time, intelligences such as emotional intelligence, social intelligence, or practical intelligence have been theorised. According to Thorndike and Stein (1937), social intelligence is the ability to understand both our own and others' attitudes and to create a strategy to cope with social situations. Practical intelligence has been described by Wagner and Sternberg (1985) as the capacity of solving concrete problems that are not purely academic that some people might possess. Finally, Mayer and Salovey (1993) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to cope with all types of emotions independently, whether these are one's own or those of others (Ang et al., 2007). According to Earley and Ang (2003), even though these types of intelligence explained people's behaviours in different contexts, what was missing was a type of intelligence that explained how some individuals function more easily than others in culturally diverse contexts.

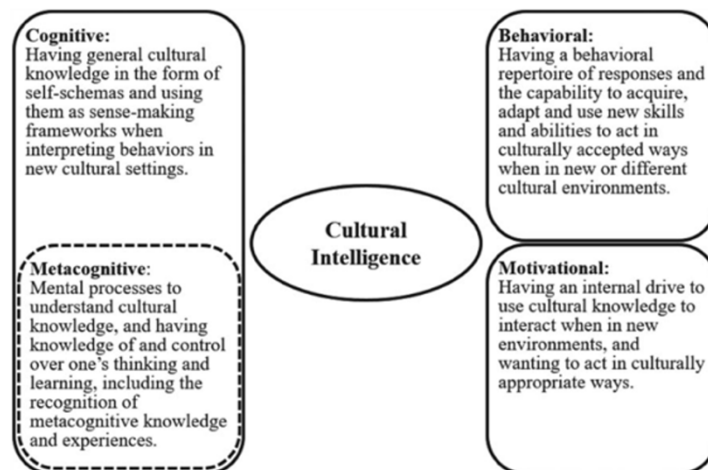
Definition and conceptualization of CQ

Earley and Ang (2003) were primarily motivated by an interest in understanding how some people experience fewer difficulties than others when interacting with individuals from different cultures. In their work, the authors formally introduced the concept of CQ as "a person's capability for successful adaptation to new cultural settings, that is, for unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context." (p. 9). Their conceptualization of CQ was initially the result of three dimensions: cognitive, motivational, and behavioural dimension. The first dimension of CQ was defined as the cognitive dimension of intelligence and included both cognitive and metacognitive elements of intelligence. Cognitive elements of intelligence are general knowledge regarding cultural rules, customs, and practices acquired through personal and educational life experiences. For example, people with high levels of cognitive intelligence are familiar with the languages spoken by other people and are therefore able to be more flexible during interactions. This dimension of CQ is important because all societies have systems that affect their way of life in unique ways. A person's knowledge of other systems makes it easier

to comprehend in depth the patterns that others apply during interactions and relate more effectively to them. Metacognitive elements of intelligence are the knowledge a person has about mental processes that allows them to acquire, process, and store new information. People with high levels of metacognitive intelligence tend to have complex mental processes that enable them to be more observant towards other people's behaviour and try to replicate it during the interaction. Metacognitive intelligence is considered a critical component of CQ because it engages active thinking about the cross-cultural situation, causes patterns of thought and action to shift from habits, and makes people more capable of adapting to differences to achieve the desired outcome (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). The second dimension of CQ is motivational intelligence. Even if, in the past, motivation did not have a preponderant weight in the process of intercultural relations, the authors argued that in order to successfully adapt to new situations, a person needs to have both intelligent and motivated conduct. Motivational intelligence allows people to direct their energies towards a specific purpose, which in this case is getting to know new cultures and learning new skills from the interaction. In fact, motivation causes people to have the desire and drive to continue to push and learn new knowledge about the habits and customs of other cultures. This dimension of CQ is therefore crucial, as through motivation, people can grow their cognitive intelligence. For example, people with high levels of motivational intelligence would be more inclined to speak a foreign language, and this will inevitably lead to an improvement in their knowledge (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). The last dimension of CQ is behavioural intelligence. The authors described behavioural intelligence as the necessary abilities to explain, predict, influence, and control the future behaviours of other people and your own. People usually have an inventory of behaviours that are considered appropriate to apply in specific situations, which are determined by practices, rituals, and habits belonging to their cultural background. During cross-cultural interactions, people are often required to modify overt behaviour, meaning the behaviour that the counterpart can perceive, to accommodate the other and avoid misunderstandings. This dimension of intelligence is crucial because it allows people to adapt and function efficiently in new cultural contexts. Individuals who possess good levels of behavioural CQ are flexible in terms of behaviour as they can adjust their attitude depending on with whom they interact (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). The study of Earley and Ang (2003) led to the conclusion that people with higher levels of CQ are more likely to function in culturally different contexts than their own. These conclusions had massive implications in terms of how companies decided to organize and prepare cultural encounters from that moment on. Furthermore, the authors suggested three strategies to handle cultural differences during intercultural interactions. The strategies suggested by the authors

consisted of finding ways to elevate people’s interest in other cultures, paying attention to the non-verbal behaviour of the counterparts, being flexible, and trying to adapt the communication based on with whom we are interacting.

Figure 1: The facets of CQ



Source: Ott and Michailova, 2018

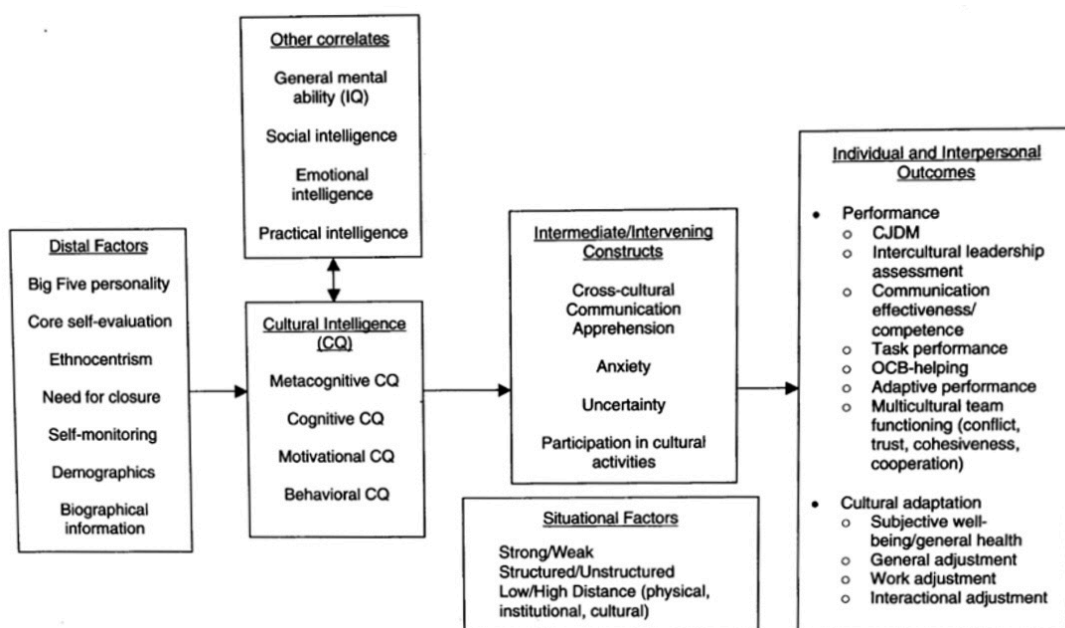
Based on the assessment made by Earley and Ang (2003), many other variations and additions to their original model were made by different researchers that allowed CQ to achieve a greater degree of clarification.

A year later, Thomas and Inkson (2004) proposed to separate the cognitive dimension of CQ into two distinct and independent dimensions: the cognitive dimension and the metacognitive dimension of CQ. In their model, the cognitive dimension represented the knowledge a person possesses about other cultures, and the metacognitive dimension represented the mental processes that occur in everyone's brain during intercultural interactions and help them adapt their behaviour depending on the situation. In proposing this separation into two different dimensions, the authors highlight the fact that to have intelligent behaviour, it is not only necessary to have knowledge about other cultures, but it is also very important to be able to apply this knowledge to the situation and assume suitable behaviours.

Ang and Van Dyne (2008) described the four dimensions of CQ as a series of steps necessary to achieve CQ as a construct. The authors proposed the introduction of a “Nomological Network” that helps to understand the importance of CQ in the study of intercultural

effectiveness. The Nomological Network assumes that four main relationships exist and influence an individual's outcome in intercultural situations. Firstly, distal factors such as the Big Five personality traits, core self-evaluation, ethnocentrism, the need for closure, self-monitoring, demographics, and biological information indirectly influence the four dimensions of CQ. Secondly, the four dimensions of CQ affect a series of intermediate or intervening variables such as cross-cultural communication apprehension, anxiety, uncertainty, and participation in cultural activities. Thirdly, a bilateral relationship exists between the four factors of CQ and other types of intelligence such as social intelligence, emotional intelligence, or practical intelligence. The last relationship theorised by the authors was related to the importance of context, as it could influence the connection between the dimensions of CQ and the outcome. This means that in situations where the environment is well structured and the tasks are defined, CQ plays less of a role because there is less necessity to adapt to the environment. Conversely, in unstructured environments where people are somewhat left to their own resources, having strong adaptive skills makes for better results. Also, perceived cultural distance could influence the need for CQ. In situations where the distance between the front-line employee and the clients is perceived as large, CQ result to be more important because a major need for adaptation is required.

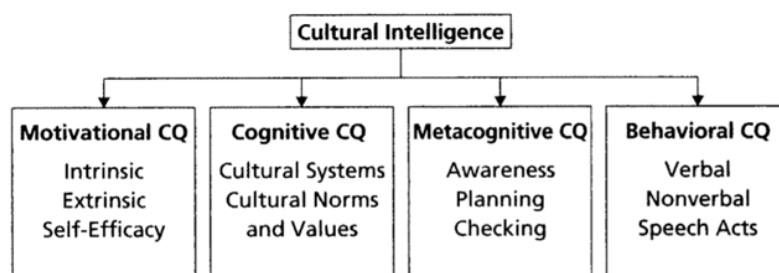
Figure 2: The Nomological Network



Source: Ang & Van Dyne, 2008, p.11

Later, Van Dyne et al. (2010) added new subdimensions to better explain the role that each dimension had in the overall construct of CQ. The cognitive dimension depicted the general insight a person has about other cultures and the differences between them. This dimension includes business, interpersonal, and socio-linguistic knowledge. Business knowledge consists of information about legal and economic systems. Interpersonal knowledge consists of what a person knows about values, social interaction norms, and religious beliefs in other cultures. And finally, socio-linguistic knowledge consists of information about other languages' rules and ways to express non-verbal behaviours. The metacognitive dimension consisted of the skills that people possess that enables them to find meaning behind the situations they experience. This dimension allows people to have opinions on their own mental processes, through which it is possible to process information as well as the mental processes of others. This dimension is the result of awareness, planning, and checking. Awareness represents what a person is conscious of knowing. Planning enables people to put strategies in place. Finally, checking is what allows people to follow the progress of relationships and adjust them as necessary. The motivational dimension represented the interest and ability to function in new cultural contexts. This dimension includes intrinsic and extrinsic interests as well as self-efficacy. Intrinsic interest is the fact that individuals derive enjoyment from different experiences. Extrinsic interest represents the fact that individuals benefit from experiencing culturally diverse experiences. Finally, self-efficacy encompasses the aspects of having confidence and being effective in culturally diverse settings. The last dimension was the behavioural dimension, which represented a person's capability to adjust verbal and nonverbal behaviour to be effective in culturally diverse settings. Being able to modify verbal and non-verbal behaviour represents an increased level of action intelligence. People can either modify non-verbal behaviour by paying attention to gestures and facial expressions or verbal behaviour by modifying things such as accent and tone.

Figure 3: Sub-dimensions of CQ



Source: Van Dyne et al., 2010, p. 134

With the intent to extend prior work, Van Dyne et al. (2012) proposed new subdimensions of CQ. The authors ended up with a model composed by four dimensions and eleven subdimensions. The objective was to better specify the nature of each dimension of the final construct. Regarding the metacognitive dimension, three new subdimensions were proposed: planning, awareness, and checking. The planning dimension represents the aspect of “thinking deeply about a culture and anticipating what needs to be done in advance of the interaction” (p. 299). The awareness dimension “describes the degree to which people have real-time consciousness of how culture influences (i) their own mental processes and behaviours; (ii) the mental processes and behaviours of others in intercultural interactions; and (iii) the intercultural situation” (p. 299). The checking dimension “involves thinking about and questioning deep-seated assumptions and adjusting mental models based on new inputs” (p. 299). Concerning the cognitive dimension, the authors added only two new subdimensions: culture-general and context-specific knowledge. The general knowledge of culture has been defined by the authors as the “knowledge of the universal elements that constitute a cultural environment” (p. 301). Context specific knowledge “is defined as declarative knowledge about manifestations of cultural universals in a specific domain and procedural knowledge of how to be effective in that domain” (p. 302). According to Triandis (1994), a domain is “a specific cultural context, such as a particular country or part of the world” (p. 301). Regarding the motivational dimension, the authors added three new subdimensions: intrinsic interest, extrinsic interest, and self-efficacy. The intrinsic interest “includes the intrinsic satisfaction gained from novel intercultural interactions and the basic enjoyment of working with people from different cultural backgrounds. It also includes a fundamental interest in working in diverse groups where people come from different cultural backgrounds” (p. 303–304). The extrinsic interest “includes a sense of increased employability based on having intercultural experiences and an enhanced reputation based on international work experiences. It also includes other tangible benefits that can result from international work assignments, such as promotions and access to higher levels of responsibility” (p. 304). Thirdly, the self-efficacy to adapt subdimension “focuses on feeling capable of dealing with the stresses of adjusting to new cultures. It also includes a sense of confidence to interact with locals who have different cultural backgrounds and confidence to work in culturally diverse groups and settings” (p. 304). Finally, for the behavioural dimension, the authors proposed three new subdimensions: verbal behaviour, non-verbal behaviour, and speech acts. In line with the definition proposed by Beamer and Varner (2001), the authors argued that the subdimension of verbal behaviour “includes changing the amount of warmth, enthusiasm, and formality conveyed by style of expression. Verbal behaviour also includes

flexibility in using pause and silence because cultures differ in the extent to which they take turns and use or avoid silence” (p. 305). In the same way, in agreement with Westphal et al., (2010), the authors stated that non-verbal behaviour “includes modifying facial expressions and gestures” (p. 305). Finally, in line with the thinking of Bowe and Martin (2007), the authors argued that the speech act dimension consisted of “flexibility in manner of communicating specific types of messages such that requests, invitations, apologies, gratitude, disagreement, and saying “no” are expressed appropriately based on local standards” (p. 305).

Figure 4: The eleven-dimension scale of CQ

Sub-dimension	Example item
Metacognitive CQ	
Sub-dimensions	
Planning	I develop action plans before interacting with people from a different culture
Awareness	I am aware of how my culture influences my interactions with people from different cultures
Checking	I adjust my understanding of a culture while I interact with people from that culture
Cognitive CQ	
Sub-dimensions	
Culture-General Knowledge	I can describe the different cultural value frameworks that explain behaviors around the world
Context-Specific Knowledge	I can describe the ways that leadership styles differ across cultural settings
Motivational CQ	
Sub-dimensions	
Intrinsic interest	I truly enjoy interacting with people from different cultures
Extrinsic interest	I value the status I would gain from living or working in a different culture
Self-efficacy to adjust	I am confident that I can persist in coping with living conditions in different cultures
Behavioral CQ	
Sub-dimensions	
Verbal behavior	I change my use of pause and silence to suit different cultural situations
Non-verbal behavior	I modify how close or far apart I stand when interacting with people from different cultures
Speech acts	I modify the way I disagree with others to fit the cultural setting

Source: Van Dyne et al., 2012, p. 301

More recently, Rockstuhl and Van Dyne (2018) proposed a bi-factor model as a meeting point in a debate in-between two opposing viewpoints: those who argued that CQ should be represented by a one-factor model and those who argued that a four-factor model should be used instead. Despite the simplicity, reliability, and precision that a one-factor model can have, it also has flaws compared to more complex models. In fact, a four-factor model can more easily identify which factors are most responsible for the efficiency of the result. However, the four-dimensional model could be disadvantageous because it “confounds factor-specific contributions with the effect of shared variance among the CQ factors” (p. 126). Therefore, the authors, decided to conceptualize CQ with the use of a bi-factorial model. This way, it became possible to integrate the idea of a general factor (responsible for the shared variance among all the CQ items) and many specific factors (responsible for factor-specific variance in CQ items) into the same model. This study is of great importance as having a factor in the model that can

explain the variance between all the items that measure CQ allows us to understand, above all, what the relationships between the different dimensions are. For example, a person who has a higher level of motivational CQ will be more inclined to take an interest in other cultures, which will lead to more knowledge, which will result in a higher cognitive CQ. This represents one of the possible links that exist between the different CQ dimensions.

Research around CQ in international management

Initially, the concept of CQ was mainly investigated in the field of management in relation to expatriates' capability to adapt to new cultures.

Leung et al. (2014) argued that CQ predicts the psychological and performance outcomes of front-line employees. The authors specify that “although all four factors are significantly and positively correlated with psychological and performance outcomes, motivational CQ is more strongly correlated with psychological outcomes, and metacognitive and behavioural CQ is more strongly correlated with performance outcomes” (p. 495). Therefore, the authors concluded that “global firms and local firms in ethnically diverse nations cannot afford to ignore the intercultural competence of their grassroots employees, and we expect research and theory on selection and development of intercultural competence to extend to all organizational levels” (p. 510).

Groves et al. (2015) investigated the impact that CQ has on expatriate performance in negotiations. The authors highlight how “international negotiation failures are often linked to deficiencies in negotiator cross-cultural capabilities, including limited understanding of the cultures engaged in the transaction, an inability to communicate with persons from different cultural backgrounds, and limited behavioural flexibility to adapt to culturally unfamiliar contexts” (p. 210). The study concluded that expatriates with high levels of CQ have more interest in negotiation behaviours which allows them to increase their performance.

Rockstuhl and Van Dyne (2018) argued that CQ has an impact on different performance outcomes. These performance outcomes are task performance, such as citizenship performance and leadership performance. Additionally, the authors concluded that behavioural CQ has an impact on citizenship performance whereas motivational CQ on leadership performance.

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an important topic in the marketing field, and therefore many definitions have emerged over the years.

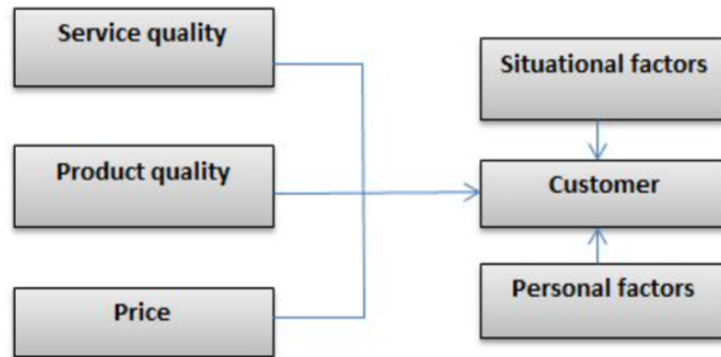
The general concept of customer satisfaction

Oliver (1997) argued that customer satisfaction can be defined as the feeling of pleasure and fulfilment that a product or a service (or part of it) can provide to customers after they have used that product or service. A similar but more recent definition is given by Kotler (2006), who defines customer satisfaction as a “person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment that results from comparing a product’s perceived performance or outcome against his or her expectations” (p. 144). Given the fact that customer satisfaction is a feeling, it can vary depending on different factors (Hom, 2000).

According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2012), customer satisfaction can be influenced by product quality, service quality, and price, as well as situational and personal factors. If the first three factors can be easily managed by the company, the last two cannot. In fact, situational and personal factors strongly depend on specific characteristics of the product or the service and can change from one moment to the next, thus making it very difficult for the company to manage them. According to the authors, each one of these four factors has an impact on customer satisfaction. The first determinant of customer satisfaction is product quality. The second determinant is service quality. Service quality can result either from the perfect adherence to the client’s needs or from the absence of flaws in the product or service offered. The third factor that has an impact on customer satisfaction is the price of the service. The price must be within a certain range of acceptance by the client because otherwise, it will cause a decrease in satisfaction. Situational factors are related to the context in which the service is provided. These factors can result from situations occurring in the moment when the client is obtaining the product or the service and impact the level of satisfaction. For example, the number of people present around the client at the time of the interaction as well as the front-line employee can affect the client’s satisfaction because they might feel pressured. Finally, personal factors are characteristics of the individual can affect the perception of the product or service and therefore impact satisfaction. For example, the expectations of the client can have

an influence on his or her satisfaction with the service because if the expectations of the client are not met, he or she will experience a feeling of disappointment that will consequently translate into a decrease of satisfaction (Genoveva, 2015).

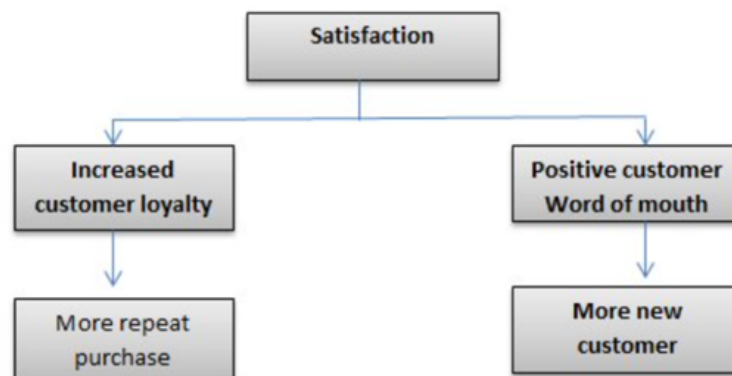
Figure 5: Factors influencing customer satisfaction



Source: Genoveva, 2015, p. 499

Customer satisfaction is crucial for service providers because it generates several consequences that are extremely beneficial to the smooth running of business. According to Baker and Crompton (2000), higher quality leads to higher satisfaction levels, resulting in customer loyalty. In an extremely competitive world, customer loyalty becomes crucial in order to survive and thrive (Kotler, 2006). Companies need to satisfy customers because a satisfied client will not only be more likely to repeat the purchase and therefore become loyal but also engage in a positive word of mouth with other people (Genoveva, 2015).

Figure 6: Model of customer satisfaction and loyalty



Source: Genoveva, 2015, p. 500

Customer satisfaction in the service sector

A specific feature of services is that they involve close contact between the front-line employee and the customer (Sharma & Wu, 2018). In fact, according to Lorenz et al. (2017), service providers are the “interface between customers and the organization”, and as such, they represent “a key source of competitive advantage for service organizations” (p. 488). Kotler and Armstrong (2012) argued that the most common way to satisfy customers is by trying to deeply understand them as well as their needs and preferences. More specifically, service providers need to understand customers’ “(1) needs, wants, and demands; (2) market offerings (products, services, and experiences); (3) value and satisfaction; (4) exchanges and relationships; and (5) markets” (p. 6).

Nowadays, however, this objective is compounded by the ulterior difficulty of having to satisfy extremely different requirements coming from extremely different clients, such that a one-size-fits-all sales model no longer works.

The impact of CQ on customer satisfaction

Although initially the concept of CQ was often associated with management issues, over time it has become a topic of interest also in the marketing sector (Magnusson et al., 2013). In fact, recently, the construct has been associated with satisfaction (Neelu & Pallavi, 2015).

The impact of general CQ on customer satisfaction

Years ago, front-line employees in the service industry only had to worry about satisfying culturally similar customers but today, this can no longer be true. In fact, because of globalization, international tourism and migration have increased, which leads to a multiplication of interactions between culturally diverse individuals. With that, a new challenge arises because satisfying culturally diverse individuals is more difficult. During ICSEs, a person's culture comes into play and determines the way people think and behave. Therefore, when in service encounters, a front-line employee is found to interact with a client of a different culture, increased attention must be paid to the explicit and implicit rules of the other person's culture. Inevitably, this can be the source of difficult situations (Sharma & Wu, 2018).

Regarding the fact that different cultural background in front-line employees and customers may disadvantage the interaction, Strauss and Mang (1999) identified two distinct but related variables that can possibly become a source of problems in interactions between culturally diverse individuals. The first problem has to do with the fact that the service offered by the employee does not meet the expectations of the customer. In this case, the performance of front-line employee lacks in terms of cultural adaptation. The second problem is related to the fact that the customer does not maintain the behaviour expected, so the front-line employee has more difficulties to deliver satisfactory service. In this case, the customer's lack of performance in adaptation makes the work harder for the front-line employee. In both cases, the situation can be resolved if the front-line employee demonstrates a good level of CQ that enables him or her to adapt and function well in such situations. In fact, CQ is the ability to function and adapt to others' cultural context, and as such is considered a basic requirement for front-line employees to be able to perform their tasks to the best of their ability even when the situation involves people from different cultures (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Van Dyne et al., (2010) argued that CQ allows service providers to not just comprehend the needs and demands of culturally different customers, but also modify their conduct according to the tone of the interaction. According to the authors, when we are confronted with a new cultural situation, strategies coming from our cultural background might not be very useful. In fact, when we interact with an individual with a different cultural background than our own, it is possible that we perceive the other person's attitude as unusual. In this type of situation, people with high levels of CQ can think deeply and adapt their attitude in relation to the encounter. On the other hand, people with lower levels of CQ tend to stick to their habits and adopt the usual attitude that they would apply to any other interaction, regardless of the culture of their counterpart. On the same line of thinking, Papanoidamis et al. (2019) argued that "service employees with high CQ carefully use cultural knowledge and express culturally appropriate reactions and behaviours in the social exchange with customers from different cultures", and this leads to higher levels of perceived service quality and loyalty.

When it comes to the impact that CQ has on customer satisfaction, Mattila (1999) explains that front-line employees with higher levels of intercultural competence are more likely to satisfy culturally different clients. That is simply because these abilities enable them to modify their attitude towards the interaction and build a service adapted to the culture of the customer. This

increased attention on the part of the front-line employee makes the encounter more enjoyable for the client, who will therefore retain a higher level of satisfaction.

A similar conclusion was obtained by Mohsin (2006), who conducted a similar study. The author concluded that when a service encounter between a front-line employee and a customer with different cultural backgrounds happens, front-line employees who are more sensitive and attentive to the customer's culture are more likely to deliver a satisfactory experience. This means that higher levels of CQ in front-line employees can represent a competitive advantage because client satisfaction can have positive repercussions, such as repeat purchase intention and positive word of mouth for the service provider.

Despite the great importance that this topic holds, empirical studies on the impact that CQ has on satisfaction are still limited.

Neelu and Pallavi (2015) investigate the impact of CQ on the client's satisfaction in three different luxury five-star hotels in India. The study collected the responses of 696 front-line employees and 552 customers through two different questionnaires. The first one was intended to be filled out by customers, and what was asked was the level of satisfaction they had with the service and the front-line employee's behaviour. The second questionnaire was intended for front-line employees, and they were asked to evaluate their level of CQ as well as their training and productivity. Once the data was collected, the analysis required to cross information to obtain results. The limit of this method consisted of the fact that front-line employees were asked to self-assess their level of intelligence, and this could constitute a bias for responses. However, what they were able to prove was the significant influence of CQ on customer satisfaction. This means that culturally intelligent front-line employees can deal with diversity and adapt to new situations to provide a more satisfactory service.

Another study on the subject was conducted by Presbitero (2017). The study was aimed at pointing out the impact of motivational CQ on customer satisfaction in call-center services. The data was collected in two steps: initially, call-center workers' language abilities were tested. Six months later, data on the performance of front-line employees was requested, and motivational CQ was calculated based on previous tests. What emerged from the results was a clear indication that language abilities are positively linked to a front-line employee's performance.

Another important study was conducted by Lam and Cheung (2018). The authors investigate the implications that CQ and the four sub-dimensions of the construct have on the ability of front-line employees to adapt to culturally diverse situations in the hospitality sector. The study was based on a survey composed of a 14-item scale measuring CQ. Front-line employees of ten different hotels in Hong Kong were considered for a total of 719 responses. The results allowed us to prove that front-line employees who possessed good levels of CQ in all the sub-dimensions theorized were more able to interact with customers from different cultures.

Hassan et al. (2020) conducted a similar study in the real estate sector in Malaysia. The objective of their research was to study how different dimensions of CQ affect the satisfaction level of customers. The results of the research proved that the dimensions of motivational and behavioural intelligence have a significant impact on customer satisfaction, as opposed to metacognitive and cognitive intelligence, which have a lower impact on the final satisfaction that customers derive from the service.

Another important study was conducted by Lam et al. (2021), investigating the impact that CQ and EI have on customers final satisfaction. The data collection research was slightly different from most of the previous studies because, in this case, the evaluation of all the dimensions of the model was made by clients in Hong Kong. In fact, the authors directly asked Asian and non-Asian customers to evaluate the perceived CQ and EI of front-line employees and subsequently evaluate their satisfaction with the service provided. In this way, it was possible to eliminate the biases that occur when the front-line employee must respond to questions about their own CQ. The research concluded that both CQ and EI have a strong impact on customer satisfaction and that the impact of CQ is more important than the impact of EI. An interesting conclusion that this study permitted to be highlighted was the fact that, overall, Asian hotel guests tend to give lower scores compared to non-Asian customers when evaluating a service. According to the authors, this happens because the data collection takes place in Hong Kong, and therefore, the cultural closeness between the front-line employee and the Asian clients makes dissatisfaction more likely if the client's expectations are not met.

These studies proves that high levels of CQ in front-line employees lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction as customers feel more cared for and their needs are met more precisely. This gave rise to the first hypothesis (H1) of this research: In the service sector, CQ of front-line employees is positively related to customer satisfaction.

The impact of each dimension of CQ on customer satisfaction

Not only was the impact of the general construct of CQ on customer satisfaction investigated, but also the specific impact that each dimension of CQ has on customer satisfaction during ICSEs.

Front-line employees with higher levels of cognitive CQ normally possess more knowledge about other cultures, which can facilitate interaction (Ang et al., 2003). Thomas and Inkson (2004) stated that people with higher levels of cognitive CQ will be more likely to build good relationships with clients because of their knowledge, which allows them to be more attentive around certain sensitive topics. Brislin et al. (2006) added that front-line employees with higher levels of cognitive CQ are more likely to understand similarities and differences between cultures, and this often results in a more satisfactory service for the client. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) of this study can be formulated to test the link between the cognitive dimension of CQ and customer satisfaction: In the service sector, cognitive CQ of front-line employees is positively related to customer satisfaction.

The metacognitive dimension of CQ represents a person's ability to collect relevant information and conceive behavioural strategies, which makes it possible to fulfill customer needs more easily (Paparoidamis, 2019). An important study conducted by Ang et al. (2003) argued that metacognitive CQ makes it easier for front-line employees to plan and interpret situations with the purpose of being efficient in responding to clients' expectations. Regarding the impact of the metacognitive dimension of CQ on customer satisfaction, Lorenz et al. (2017) found that high levels of metacognitive CQ can lead to greater adaptability, which consequently leads to greater customer satisfaction.

Motivational intelligence makes front-line employees more inclined to interact with culturally diverse people and learn about other cultures' preferences and habits (Ang et al., 2003). Among other researchers, Bandura (2002) argued that the motivational dimension of CQ has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. In this regard, front-line employees with a higher level of motivational CQ are more likely to be confident enough to deliver a satisfactory service to customers in intercultural contexts. Consequently, the third hypothesis of this study (H3) can be formulated to test the link between the motivational dimension of CQ and customer

satisfaction: In the service sector, motivational CQ of front-line employees is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Finally, behavioural CQ allows people to modify their conduct to respond to clients' demands without hurting anyone's sensibilities (Ang et al., 2003). As far as the impact that behavioural intelligence can have on customer satisfaction, studies have highlighted the positive relationship between the two constructs. Front-line employees who are flexible and can adapt to new situations are those who are able to deliver the most satisfactory service experience to customers (Neelu & Arora, 2015). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis (H4) allows to understand the link between the behavioural dimension of CQ and customer satisfaction: In the service sector, behavioural CQ of front-line employees is positively related to customer satisfaction.

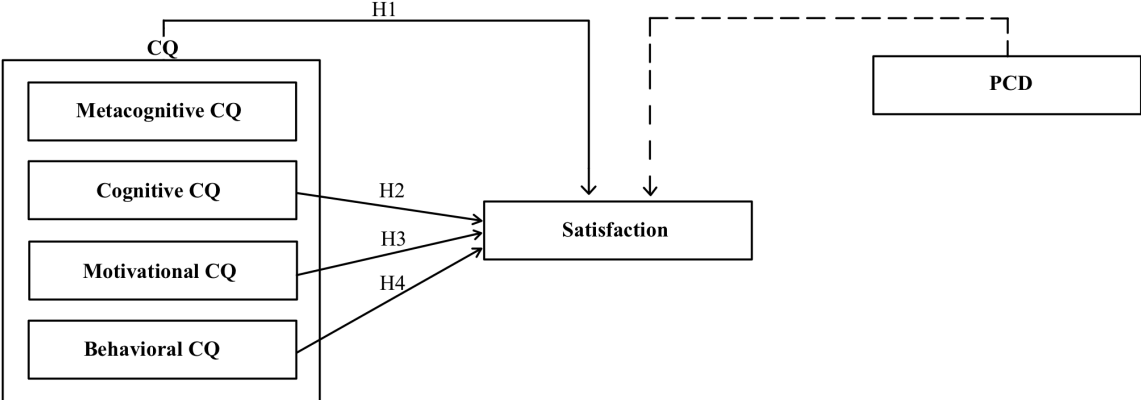
The role of PCD on customer satisfaction

The cultural distance between the customer and the front-line employee must be carefully taken into consideration in ICSEs because it can have an influence on the perceived service quality and the level of satisfaction among customers (Ang et al. 2017).

According to Sharma et al. (2009), perceived cultural distance is the “extent to which people from one culture perceive those from other cultures to be different in terms of their ethnicity, nationality, language, values, and customs” (p. 229). The authors also explained that when PCD is low, meaning that the cultures of the two people interacting are similar, communication is generally facilitated, and it is easier to understand the expectations of the other person. When PCD is higher, the exact opposite happens (Sharma & Wu, 2018).

Research often considers PCD a source of conflict during ICSEs because it generally affects in a negative way the final evaluation of service quality and satisfaction from a customer's perspective. This means that the higher the PCD between people interacting, the more difficult it will be to deliver a satisfactory service (Ang et al. 2017).

Figure 7: Visual representation for the research model



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following chapter presents the methodology used to test the relationship between the different components of CQ and customer satisfaction. Firstly, the context of the study and the various choices related to it are clarified. Secondly, an explanation of how the data was collected is given. Starting with the design of the items, a description of the scale used to assess the opinion of the respondents and the pre-testing process is provided before an explanation of how the questionnaire was distributed. Finally, an illustration about the statistical tests necessary to analyse data and draw interesting conclusions is delivered.

Context of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the various dimensions of CQ and the satisfaction of customers in ICSEs. Firstly, the interest lies in establishing that CQ has a positive effect on customer satisfaction during an international service encounter. Secondly, it is interesting to be able to understand what role each dimension plays in the final satisfaction of consumers with the service.

To investigate this relationship, the service sector was chosen. The element that motivates this choice was the proximity between customers and front-line employees that characterizes many of the activities. The proximity between front-line employees and customers in the service sector puts enormous pressure on the company because the moment of the interaction constitutes the main opportunity for them to make a good impression and succeed.

It is therefore very interesting to understand, via data collection and analyses, if the theoretical relationship between CQ and customer satisfaction is truly there.

Data collection

The establishment of the items and the choice of the scales

The purpose of this work was to determine the nature of the relationship between the CQ and customer satisfaction. The approach used in this study was based on the work of Lam et al.

(2021). The method presented by the authors allowed us to assess the level of CQ by directly asking customers what their perception is about the level of CQ of the front-line employee who served them and their level of satisfaction with the service. In fact, according to Kohsaka et al. (2015), Rod et al. (2016), and Specht et al. (2007), it is appropriate to assess customer satisfaction based on their perception of the service (Lam et al., 2021).

The study conducted was a quantitative study. On the first page of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to recall a situation in which they interacted with a front-line service employee from a different culture than their own. The situation could have been related to their last trip abroad and the interactions they had with service staff in a hotel, restaurant, shop, or any other service they used. The encounter might also have occurred in their daily lives in their home country, during a service interaction with a front-line employee from another culture. Both of these situations were suitable for reference in the questionnaire responses.

The questionnaire was divided into three main parts. In the first part, respondents were asked to evaluate, through their perception, the level of CQ of the front-line employees with whom they interacted during the ICSEs. In the second part, respondents were asked to evaluate the perceived cultural distance between them and the front-line employee as well as their level of satisfaction with the service offered by the front-line employee. In the last part, several demographical questions were proposed with the aim of collecting some basic information about the sample.

At the beginning of the questionnaire, a specific question was asked to be able to exclude respondents who had never interacted with a front-line employee from another culture. In fact, these customers did not present the necessary conditions to fill out the questionnaire, as they would have no actual situation to refer to. The question was formulated as follows: “Have you ever interacted with a front-line employee from a culture different than your own?” If a respondent negatively answered this question, for them, the questionnaire immediately ended, and the respondent was directly sent to the final acknowledgments page. The objective of this question was to differentiate between useful and non-useful data in perspective of the analyses.

For the first part of the questions, many items used to conduct this study resulted from the literature review. Ang et al. (2007) were the first to propose a scale for self-assessment of their own level of CQ for front-line employees. The problem with this scale was that it was the front-

line employees themselves who assessed CQ, and therefore biases could exist. For this reason, Lam et al. (2021) introduced a scale that allowed clients to directly assess their perception of the CQ of the front-line employees with whom they had interacted. Their scale was therefore a modification of the original scale. However, as also done and explained by Lam et al. (2021), the metacognitive dimension had to be excluded from the questionnaire because it concerned the front-line employee's mental processes, and the client could not have any information regarding this dimension. Therefore, the survey consisted of questions concerning the three remaining dimensions of CQ, including the cognitive, motivational, and behavioural dimensions. The total number of items for this section was nine. Of the total of nine items, eight were taken from the study of Lam et al. (2021), and only one was added. It concerns the motivational dimension of CQ and is: "The service employee appeared stressed during the interaction". It seemed appropriate to add this item because several studies, such as the one from Lorenz et al. (2017), point to the fact that stress in ICSEs can represent a break in motivation to engage in these types of situations. The questions regarding the level of CQ of the front-line employee were proposed in a randomized order to prevent any type of bias in responses.

The second section of the questionnaire aimed to investigate PCD and the level of satisfaction that the customers had with the service. Regarding PCD, the following question was formulated: "I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine". The purpose of this question was to estimate the intensity of the interaction. In fact, if a client perceives the distance between their culture and the culture of the front-line employee as important, the front-line employee should adapt more to deliver a satisfactory service, and therefore a higher level of CQ is required. Regarding satisfaction, three questions leading to the assessment of this variable were proposed. The first question proposed was adapted from the study conducted by Brady et al. (2012). The original question was "I am happy that I got service from this employee (service firm)" and became "I am pleased to have been served by this employee". The other two items were built to be able to evaluate the satisfaction and the fulfilling of customers' expectations towards the service.

Finally, in the third section of the questionnaire, we asked our respondents to fill out some personal information about their gender, age, country of residence, and the country where they have lived the longest. These questions were necessary to get information about our sample. In

this case, only the first question was a multiple-choice question whereas the other three were open questions where the respondent had to write in the answer.

A symmetrical seven-point Likert scale was used to evaluate customers' perceptions of CQ as well as perceived cultural distance and satisfaction. For each section of the questionnaire, the scale was explained as follows: "For each question below, we ask you to choose the answer that best reflects your impression from among those provided. Please note that for each question, the scale ranges from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree")". All the items taken from previous studies were already rated on a 7-point Likert scale, and for this reason, no changes were necessary. Instead, for the demographic questions, a mix of proposed answers and boxes to type in short words or numbers were proposed.

The survey pre-test

A pre-test was carried out before contacting the actual sample. The pre-test consisted of a specific controlled test of the questionnaire and was intended to find out potential errors in wording or writing but also to know how long it took to complete the entire questionnaire. In this case, since the questionnaire was translated into three different languages (i.e., English, French, and Italian), a pre-test for each language of the questionnaire was conducted. For each language, an English, French, and Italian native speaker were respectively asked to perform this test by assessing the overall comprehensibility of the questionnaire and the time required to complete it. The three people selected to perform this test agreed that the questionnaire took approximately five minutes to complete. Furthermore, following some grammatical and punctuation corrections, all three agreed that comprehension of the questions was easy. The full versions of the questionnaires translated into the three languages can be found in the appendix of this document.

The desired sample and the process of data collection

The nature of the study did not require any special pre-conditions other than having already interacted with a person from a different cultural background during an ICSEs. Roughly, the objective for this study was to get 50% of men and 50% of women responding to the questionnaire to have an equal distribution based on the gender of the respondents. Regarding

the age of the respondents, the intention was to obtain the same amount of data from the three main age groups (0–25, 25–50, and 50+) that have been chosen. Clearly, in terms of the sample size, the ideal number of respondents was the biggest number achievable, but a minimum of 100 respondents was considered necessary. Given the fact that the questionnaire was open to everyone, it was impossible to precisely control the demographic characteristics of respondents.

For this research, data was collected using a “convenience sampling” method. With this sampling method, respondents are selected based on how easily they can be reached by the person carrying out the research. It is a non-probability sampling method, and this means that the people in the population do not all have an equal probability of participating in this study (Omar, 2014).

The process of data collection started once the surveys were ready and pre-tested. A link was generated for each language and sent out via common communication channels such as WhatsApp and Instagram. The general response was positive. Many people declared that the survey was easy and fast to fill out. However, a few people expressed some difficulties related to the questionnaire. These difficulties have been taken into consideration and analysed in the section dedicated to the limits of this study.

Data analyses

All the analyses were conducted with the help of a statistical tool, SPSS statistics.

To study the collected data, three main statistical analyses were used in this study. The first analysis was the factor analysis. Factor analysis is a well-known statistical method that enables one to determine the minimal number of factors necessary to enclose various items. Later, a reliability analysis was conducted for each dimension that resulted from the factor analysis to assure the internal reliability of the factors. Finally, the last analysis that was carried out was a regression analysis that allowed the testing of the hypotheses formulated at the end of the literature review. In fact, with this analysis, each hypothesis was to be taken into consideration and accepted or rejected. This will allow to draw conclusions from the entire study.

RESULTS

The next chapter of the study is dedicated to the analysis of the data collected via the questionnaire. In approximately two weeks (from March 13 to March 27, 2023), a total of 121 responses were obtained from the questionnaire. In addition to these 121 people, 71 people opened the link but did not complete the questionnaire. Therefore, only the 121 complete answers were considered and analysed.

In the first part of this chapter, the profiles of the respondents were analysed. The appropriateness of the factor analysis was then checked before the actual factor analysis was carried out. Next, the internal reliability of each factor was assessed. And finally, linear regression was chosen to confirm or reject the hypotheses of this study.

Preparation of the analysis

Before starting to analyse the data collected via the questionnaire, it was necessary to adjust some responses to make the process smoother.

The first necessary adjustment was to harmonise the answers to the questions “*In which country do you live?*” and “*In which country did you live the longest?*” as three questionnaires in different languages were proposed. In fact, people usually responded to this question in their native language, but this obviously caused a problem in the process of analysing the data. This problem could be avoided by proposing for example the use of a radio list where only the choice between “Swiss” and “Other” were possible as these were the only information necessary to the analysis.

The second adjustment necessary was to reverse the scale of the responses related to the third item of the motivational CQ: “*The service employee appeared stressed during the interaction*”. In fact, this question was formulated in an opposite way compared to other questions. The question stated that the front-line employee was stressed during the interaction, and consequently, a high score from the part of the respondents would indicate a low level of motivational CQ. To make this question comparable to all the other questions, it was necessary to invert all values with the help of SPSS.

Description of the sample

The objective of obtaining a sample of 50% women and 50% men can be considered only partially achieved, as in this case, the percentage of women who answered the questionnaire was 55,4 % and the percentage of men was 42,1%. Regarding the presence of three balanced age groups, it was more difficult to obtain data from people in the third age group. In fact, the 0–25 (43,0%) and the 25–50 (40,5%) categories were more balanced in terms of the percentage of respondents, but the third category had a much smaller percentage of respondents (16,5%) belonging to it. Obviously, Switzerland was the country where most of our respondents live (87,6%). The rest of the sample was composed by people who live in United Kingdom (7,4%), Italy (3,3%) and Canada (0,8%). The percentage was slightly different when it came to the country where people lived the longest. In this case Switzerland was also the number one country where the respondents have lived (78,5) followed by Italy (9,1%), United Kingdom (7,4%), United States of America (2,5%), Canada (0,8%) and Algeria (0,8%). Finally, it is interesting to note that the questionnaire was mainly filled out in Italian (74,4%). The second language was French (19%) followed by English (6,6%).

Table 1: Summary of demographic data about the sample

Categories		Number of respondents	Percentage
Language of the questionnaire	Italian	90	74,4%
	French	23	19,0%
	English	8	6,6%
Gender	Male	51	42,1%
	Female	67	55,4%
	Other	1	0,8%
	Prefer not to answer	2	1,7%
Age	0–25	52	43,0%
	25–50	49	40,5%
	50<	20	16,5%
Country of residence	Switzerland	106	87,6%
	Other	15	12,4%
Country where lived the longest	Switzerland	95	78,5%
	Other	26	21,5%

Appropriateness of the factor analysis

Before conducting a factor analysis, it was necessary to test if collected data was suitable for this purpose. To establish this, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index (KMO) and the Bartlett test for sphericity are used.

The KMO index indicates if the sample is adequate to conduct a factor analysis. In order it to be, the result must be higher than 0,5. Kaiser (1974) suggested that statistic results for this test that are higher than 0,9 are marvellous, lower than 0,9 but higher than 0,8 are meritorious, lower than 0,8 but higher than 0,7 are middling, lower than 0,7 but higher than 0,6 are mediocre, lower than 0,6 but higher than 0,5 are miserable, and all that are lower than 0,5 are unacceptable. In this study, the KMO index on all the items measured on a Likert scale from 1 to 7, conducted with a Varimax rotation, resulted in 0,875. This meant that the sample was considered suitable for a factor analysis.

The Bartlett test for sphericity assess the null hypothesis that there is no correlation in the data set. To carry out a factor analysis, what would be expected is to see the null hypothesis rejected in favour of the opposite hypothesis that confirms the existence of correlation between variables. This can only happen if the p -value is smaller than 0,05 (p -value < 0,05). In the context of this study, the p -value was lower than 0,001 (p -value < 0,001). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the opposite hypothesis, meaning that correlation between variables existed, and consequentially, a factor analysis was suitable to be executed.

Once the relevance of the factor analysis was established, it could be carried out.

The factor analysis

In the context of this study, a factor analysis by dimension seemed more suitable. In fact, since the study was conceived around the scale of measurements proposed by Lam et al. (2021), the main objective was to determine whether the items in each dimension significantly measured the dimensions. Therefore, factor analysis for each dimension of CQ and for satisfaction was conducted separately but in parallel. The results are summarized in Table 2, and the analysis output is presented in the appendices.

The cognitive CQ dimension: The factor analysis on cognitive CQ only presented one factor composed of three items (cog1, cog2, and cog3). This means that the items all measured the same construct, which was good because it was coherent with literature. Nevertheless, the first item (cog1) resulted in a low factor loading (0,608), and therefore it has been subsequently eliminated, and only the two other items (cog2 and cog3) were considered for the continuation of the study. The new factor analysis with only the two remaining items still showed that one factor existed, and under this factor, the items obtained very good factor loadings. Additionally, the two items together explained the 86,708% total variance of this factor in the data collected. Therefore, it was possible to conclude that the first factor in the model was composed of the two items measuring cognitive intelligence (cog2 and cog3).

The motivational CQ dimension: The factor analysis on motivational CQ only presented one factor composed of three items (mot1, mot2, and mot3). This means that the three items all measured the same thing. However, the third item (mot3) resulted in a low factor loading (0,571) and therefore was not considered for the continuation of the study. The new factor analysis, considering only the two remaining items (mot1 and mot2), showed that the two items can be regrouped under the same factor because the factor loadings are high. Additionally, the two items together explained 74,184% of the total variance of this factor for the collected data. It was possible to conclude that the second factor of this study was measured by the two items measuring motivational intelligence (mot1 and mot2).

The behavioural CQ dimension: In this case, all the items (beh1, beh2, and beh3) were loading under one dimension, resulting in strong factor loadings. This means that there is no need to eliminate any of the proposed items, in contrast to what happened with the previous two factors. All three items widely measured the factor they were supposed to measure. Additionally, together, the three items explained 80,588% of the total variance of this dimension for the data collected.

Satisfaction: Satisfaction was measured by three items (sat1, sat2, and sat3), and the factor analysis on these dimensions showed that all three items loaded under only one dimension. Additionally, all the items used to measure satisfaction had a high value of factor loading, so it was appropriate to maintain all three items in the study. It was important to note that together, the three items of satisfaction explained 91,394% of the total variance of this factor among the collected data.

Reliability analysis

Once the validity had been confirmed through the factor analysis, it was crucial that the items measured each dimension accurately. To be able to assure this, a reliability test was needed. Generally, the objective of a reliability test is to see if the questions are clustered around the same factor, and this must be done for each dimension.

In this case the value of the Cronbach alpha test for each dimension were used to test the reliability of each dimension. The results are summarized in Table 2, and the output of the analysis is presented in the appendices. The Cronbach alpha test usually shows a value within the range of 0 to 1. The higher the value, the better the internal reliability is proven to be. A minimal level of acceptance is usually 0,7 for factors measured by three items.

The Cronbach alpha resulted from the reliability analysis on the cognitive and the behavioural dimensions of CQ as well as the satisfaction dimension all resulted higher than 0,7 and therefore there was no doubt that the reliability was proven. On the contrary, the dimension of motivational CQ presented a lower score but nevertheless it has to be considered that the dimension is only composed by two items and due to this reason, it's possible to consider these results as acceptable and confirm the internal reliability of the dimension.

Table 2: Factor analysis and reliability analysis

Question	Cognitive	Motivational	Behavioural	Satisfaction	α
cog2	0,931				0,846
cog3	0,931				
mot1		0,861			0,652
mot2		0,861			
beh1			0,877		0,879
beh2			0,921		
beh3			0,895		
sat1				0,943	0,952
sat2				0,977	
sat3				0,948	

At this point, the validity and reliability of the items were proven, and therefore it was possible to aggregate the different items into variables. Aggregating the items into variables means creating a new variable for each factor resulting from the analysis previously performed. When creating a variable, the process consists of adding together all the items and dividing the result by the number of items considered. For example, the items cog2 and cog3 were added together and divided by 2 to create the variable “Cognitive CQ”. The same thing was done for the “Motivational CQ” variable composed by items mot1 and mot2, the “Behavioural CQ” composed by the items beh1, beh2, and beh3, and finally for the “Satisfaction” variable composed by the items sat1, sat2, and sat3. Additionally, the variable measuring the general construct of CQ was created following the same rule but, in this case, aggregating the dimensions of cognitive, motivational, and behavioural CQ. This allowed the linear regression to be performed and the hypotheses of the research model to be tested.

Linear regression

When testing the effects that variables have on each other to see if the hypothesis formulated is accepted or rejected, a linear regression is usually the best statistical method to do so. This analysis enables to test if the data regressed naturally around a straight line, which would mean that there is a relationship between the specific variables taken into consideration. For this study, this means that the objective was to understand if higher levels of CQ of any kind were positively related to customer satisfaction during ICSEs.

A linear regression in SPSS aims to test the relationship between one or several independent variables and one dependent variable. In the context of this study, the independent variables were the general construct of CQ as well as the three subdimensions of the latter, namely: cognitive, motivational, and behavioural CQ. On the other hand, only one dependent variable was tested, and it was the satisfaction variable. An independent variable is the manipulated variable, and a dependent variable is the observed variable. In this study, the manipulated variables were the variables measuring the general level of CQ as well as the three variables measuring each sub-dimension of CQ. The observed variable was customer satisfaction.

In the following liner regressions, PCD was used as a control variable with the aim of eliminating the effects that a higher or lower PCD between the front-line employee and the customer could have on the overall level of satisfaction. In fact, this study aims to investigate

the impact of CQ on customer satisfaction, so the influence of PCD must be controlled. The objective was to avoid confusing a lower level of PCD with a higher level of front-line employee CQ, and vice versa. In fact, if the effect of the PCD is not controlled, a good level of satisfaction with the service experience expressed by the customer could have been both the result of a high level of CQ on the front-line employee's part and the consequence of a less demanding situation in terms of adaptation due to a hypothetical proximity of cultures. By controlling the variable in question, the effect of PCD is eliminated, which makes it possible to assess only the impact that CQ has on customer satisfaction.

When conducting a linear regression analysis, a threshold must be chosen in advance for the accepted probability of error. Usually the values chosen are 10%, 5% and 1%. The higher the threshold chosen, the less precisely the model hypotheses are tested. Most researchers choose a threshold of 5%, and in this study, the same choice was made. This implies that if the *p*-value for a regression was higher than 5%, the hypothesis had to be rejected (Rousson, 2013).

In the research model, four different hypotheses were formulated. Therefore, there was a need to carry out four different linear regressions, testing each hypothesis separately. The first relationship that was tested was between the general construct of intelligence and satisfaction. Later, all other relationships between each sub-dimension of CQ and customer satisfaction were tested as well. In the following paragraphs, the results of each regression are briefly discussed, but the direct outputs provided by SPSS are presented in the appendices section.

The first linear regression carried out was between the general construct of CQ and customer satisfaction. This regression aimed to prove that when the general level of CQ in the front-line employee grows, the same should happen to customer satisfaction. To do so, a linear regression was performed with the help of SPSS. The first result that was considered was the value of the coefficient of determination (R^2). Which provides information about the goodness of fit of a model. In other words, the R^2 value tells how well the line of the linear regression approximates the data. The value can range between 0 and 1, and higher values indicate that the model fits the data better. For the first linear regression that was performed, the R^2 had a value of 0,490. This result shows that 49,0 % of the variance in the dependent variable (satisfaction) can be explained by the independent variable (general CQ). This number is not very high, but it is considered acceptable (Rousson, 2013). The second result that was considered was the *p*-value in the ANOVA table. When a linear regression is carried out, a null hypothesis must be

formulated in order to evaluate whether the latter can be accepted or rejected. In this case, the null hypothesis was formulated as follows: “In the service sector, CQ is not positively related to customer satisfaction”. The hope was obviously to be able to reject this hypothesis in favor of the opposite hypothesis: “In the service sector, CQ is positively related to customer satisfaction”. To determine if the null hypothesis is accepted or rejected, the p -value in the ANOVA table must be lower than 5% (0,05) because the lower the p -value, with the more confidence it is possible to reject the null hypothesis. In this specific case, the p -value was lower than 0,001 and therefore it was possible to safely reject the null hypothesis in favor of the opposite hypothesis and conclude that in the service sector, CQ is indeed positively related to customer satisfaction. Finally, the last results that were considered were the sign and the value of the β coefficient resulting from the table of coefficients. In linear regressions, the β coefficient represents the proportion by which the dependent variable grows with each unit increase in the independent variable. The sign of the β coefficient indicates the direction and value of the intensity of the relationship between the two variables. However, before interpreting the β coefficient, the significance of the latter must be proven. This can be done by verifying that the p -value associated with the coefficient is lower than 0,05. In this specific case, the p -value was lower than 0,001, therefore it was possible to evaluate the sign and value of it. Here, the β had a positive sign, which indicates that when the CQ of the front-line employee grows, the level of customer satisfaction does the same. On the other hand, the value of the β expresses the increase in the outcome variable (satisfaction) caused by the increase in the predictor variable (general CQ). In this case, the β value of 0,720 showed that for each one unit increase in general CQ, satisfaction among customers would increase by 0,720. Hence, from this first linear regression, it was possible to conclude that general CQ and customer satisfaction are positively linked, and this means that when CQ in front-line employees increases, the level of satisfaction in customers follows.

The second linear regression carried out was between the cognitive dimension of CQ and customer satisfaction. This regression aimed to prove that the growth in front-line employees' cognitive CQ can positively impact the level to customer satisfaction. In this case, the first result that was considered was the value of the coefficient of determination (R^2). For this second regression, the R^2 had a value of 0,327, which meant that 32,7 % of the variance in the dependent variable (satisfaction) can be explained by the independent variable (cognitive CQ). This number was slightly low, but the reason behind this could reside in the fact that other variables explained the satisfaction better. The second result taken into consideration was the

p -value in the ANOVA table. The null hypothesis in this second regression was formulated as follows: “In the service sector, cognitive CQ is not positively related to customer satisfaction”. The objective was to be able to reject this hypothesis in favour of the opposite hypothesis, which was “In the service sector, cognitive CQ is positively related to customer satisfaction”. In this second regression, the p -value was lower than 0,001 which allows to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that in the service sector, cognitive CQ is indeed positively related to customer satisfaction. Finally, the third result that was considered in this second regression between cognitive CQ and customer satisfaction was the β coefficient sign and value. The significance of the β was confirmed because the p -value associated with had a value lower than 0,001. Regarding the β coefficient sign, this linear regression showed a β with a positive sign, which means that for every increase in the predictor variable, the outcome variable would also increase. The value of the β was 0,578 and this showed that for each unit increase in cognitive CQ, satisfaction among customers will increase by 0,578. For this second linear regression, it was possible to conclude that cognitive CQ is positively related to customer satisfaction, which means that when front-line employees have higher levels of cognitive CQ, the level of satisfaction among customers increases. Despite this, there may be better variables that predict the level of satisfaction among customers than cognitive CQ.

The third linear regression that was carried out was between the motivational CQ and satisfaction. This regression wanted to prove that the growth in front-line employees' motivational CQ can positively impact customer satisfaction. The first important result that was obtained with this regression was the value of R^2 . In this specific case, R^2 was 0,519. This result is considered acceptable and means that 51,9 % of the variance in the dependent variable (satisfaction) can be explained by the independent variable (motivational CQ). The second result that was interesting to take into consideration was the p -value in the ANOVA table. The null hypothesis in this third regression was formulated as follows: “In the service sector, motivational CQ is not positively related to customer satisfaction”. The objective was to be able to reject this hypothesis in favour of the opposite hypothesis, which was “In the service sector, motivational CQ is positively related to customer satisfaction”. Thanks to the fact that the p -value associated with this test was lower than 0,05, it was possible to reject the null hypothesis in favour of the opposite one, which proved that in the service sector, motivational CQ is indeed positively related to customer satisfaction. The third result worth mentioning is the sign and value of the β coefficients. The β coefficient can be considered significant because the p -value associated with it was lower than 0,05. In this case, the β had a positive sign, which meant that

for every increase in the predictor variable, the outcome variable will also increase. The value of the β was 0,734 and this indicates that for each unit increase in motivational CQ, customer satisfaction would increase by 0,734. For this third regression, it is possible to conclude that motivational CQ is positively related to customer satisfaction, which means that when front-line employees have higher levels of motivational CQ, the level of satisfaction among customers increases.

The fourth and final linear regression that was carried out was between the behavioural CQ and satisfaction. This regression aimed to prove that the growth in front-line employees of behavioural CQ can positively impact the level of customer satisfaction. The first result taken into consideration was an R^2 . In this case, the value of the R^2 was 0,304. This result meant that 30,4 % of the variance in the dependent variable (satisfaction) could be explained by the independent variable (behavioural CQ). This result is quite low, and the reason could be that other variables explain the satisfaction better than behavioural CQ. The second important result for this linear regression is the p -value associated with the hypothesis test. In fact, the null hypothesis in this fourth regression was formulated as follows: “In the service sector, behavioural CQ is not positively related to customer satisfaction”. The objective was to be able to reject this hypothesis in favour of the opposite hypothesis, which was “In the service sector, behavioural CQ is positively related to customer satisfaction”. In this case as well, the p -value associated with the test was lower than 0,05, and therefore it was possible to reject the null hypothesis in favour of the opposite one that stated that in the service sector, behavioural CQ is indeed positively related to customer satisfaction. Finally, the third and last result analysed for this fourth linear regression is the β coefficient. The significance of the coefficient is confirmed by the fact that the p -value associated with it is lower than 0,05. For this linear regression the β had a positive sign and a value of 0,552. This result means that for each unit increase in behavioural CQ of front-line employees, the level of satisfaction with the service among customers increases by 0,552. Hence, behavioural CQ is positively related to customer satisfaction, and this means that when front-line employees have higher levels of behavioural CQ, the level of satisfaction among customers increases. However, there may be better variables that predict the level of satisfaction among customers than the behavioural CQ.

From these linear regressions, we can conclude that general CQ as well as the three sub-dimensions of the construct have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction. However, the intensity in the prediction changes from one dimension to the other. In fact, the general

construct of CQ and the motivational sub-dimension of CQ had higher values in terms of β coefficient, which meant that they better predicted the level of satisfaction.

Table 3: Summary of hypotheses validation

Hypothesis	Hypothesis description	Validation
H1	In the service sector, CQ of front-line employees is positively related to customer satisfaction.	Yes
H2	In the service sector, cognitive CQ of front-line employees is positively related to customer satisfaction.	Yes
H3	In the service sector, motivational CQ of front-line employees is positively related to customer satisfaction.	Yes
H4	In the service sector, behavioural CQ of front-line employees is positively related to customer satisfaction.	Yes

DISCUSSION

Resume of findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the link between CQ and customer satisfaction during ICSEs. In fact, the research question from which the study started was the following: What is the relative impact of the different dimensions of CQ on customer satisfaction in services?

The first important result that this study has been able to demonstrate is that there is indeed a relationship between CQ and customer satisfaction in ICSEs. Not only was the relationship between the two variables significant, the β also indicated that the intensity of this relationship was important. This result is of extreme interest as it proves that in this specific case, front-line employees who are perceived to have higher levels of CQ by their clients are usually better able to satisfy them even if they have different cultural backgrounds. In other words, people with greater knowledge of other cultures are more likely to deliver satisfactory services. The reason behind this conclusion was obviously drawn from literature and consist of the fact that front-line employees with higher levels of CQ are more able to adapt and function in contexts that are culturally different from what they are used to, and this leads them to be better perceived by the client (Van Dyne et al., 2010). As said before, culture is part of every human being and shapes our expectations, perceptions, and evaluation of every situation we experience (Sharma & Wu, 2018). Therefore, in a multicultural context, a front-line employee who possesses high CQ means that he or she can sense the difference between the two cultures and act accordingly. This often results in a more satisfactory service for clients because they feel more cared for and respected (Paparoidamis et al., 2019). Overall, this first result is aligned to previous findings in the literature.

However, this study did not limit itself to merely investigating the relationship between CQ and customer satisfaction but also focused on the relationship between three out of four sub-dimensions of CQ and their relationship with customer satisfaction. In other words, the aim was to see if front-line employees with higher levels of cognitive, motivational, or behavioural CQ could somehow influence the level of customer satisfaction during ICSEs. All three linear regressions proved the existence of a significant relationship between the three sub-dimensions

of CQ and customer satisfaction. The intensity of the relationship obviously changed for every independent variable considered. However, the β coefficients for the cognitive and behavioural dimensions of CQ were slightly lower than expected, which meant that the relationship exists, but it is not as strong. As anticipated by the literature, the cognitive and behavioural dimensions of CQ have an impact on customer satisfaction. In this regard, Thomas and Inkson (2004) supported the idea that people with higher levels of cognitive CQ will be more likely to build good relationships with clients because of their knowledge, which allows them to be more attentive around certain sensitive topics. Similarly, Brislin et al. (2006) added that front-line employees with higher levels of cognitive CQ are more likely to understand similarities and differences between cultures, and this often results in a more satisfactory service for the client. This study was able to prove the existence of a relationship between the two variables, but the intensity of this relationship was found to be slightly weak. The same applies to the behavioural dimension. In fact, the behavioural dimension of CQ, according to the literature, is linked to customer satisfaction, meaning that higher levels of behavioural CQ will result in higher levels of customer satisfaction. According to Neelu and Arora (2015), front-line employees who are flexible in terms of behaviour and can adapt to new situations are those who are able to deliver the most satisfactory service experience to customers. This data reflected the existence of a relationship between the variables but found that the intensity of the relationship was slightly weak. On the other hand, the motivational dimension of CQ was proven to have a high β and this means that the intensity of the relationship is good. This important result allowed to assume that in this specific case, front-line employees who are perceived to have higher levels of motivational CQ by their clients, meaning they are more interested in interacting with people from other cultures, have the tendency to deliver satisfactory services. The fact that higher levels of CQ will translate in higher levels of satisfaction in customers, agrees with what has emerged from the literature. A probable reason why motivational CQ has an impact on satisfaction is presented by Bandura (2002). In fact, according to the author, people who are interested in other cultures will not only be more likely to interact with clients from a different cultural background, but they will also actually enjoy it more, which has a positive impact on customers. In the context of this research, the link between motivational CQ and satisfaction is proven and can be considered true.

Overall, the results obtained in this study confirm that the perception of the clients about the level of CQ in front-line employees is linked to customer satisfaction in services. Front-line employees with higher levels of CQ are usually better at responding to the demands of

customers. Given the fact that research in this field is still limited, this study helps with the assessment of the link that exists between CQ and customer satisfaction.

Managerial implication

This study concludes that front-line employees' CQ indeed has an impact on customer satisfaction and must be taken into consideration when trying to improve the service experience.

Managers need to seriously consider the level of CQ of their front-line employees, because the interaction they have with clients is the first impression clients will have of the entire company (Lorenz et al., 2017). This means that in services, front-line employees are the face of the organization and to satisfy customers, it is better to have good levels of CQ today. In an extremely competitive environment, having front-line employees that are culturally speaking more intelligently, constitute a source of competitive advantage for companies. Obviously, clients want to be treated with respect and attention, and the expectations, perceptions, and evaluations strongly depend on culture. Therefore, being able to adapt and meet the necessity of clients is an important requirement that must be observed if the company aims to be better than the competition.

In conclusion, this study could be useful for all managers in the service industry. Knowing whether the CQ of front-line employees has an impact on customer satisfaction allows managers to assess whether it makes sense to increase the training of their front-line employees. By receiving specific and targeted training, front-line employees have the possibility to increase their level of CQ and learn about what constitutes the right attitude towards multicultural interactions. The goal is that trained front-line employees will apply their knowledge, abilities, and actions to satisfy all customers, paying specific attention to cultural backgrounds.

Limits of the study and further developments

The following part aims to briefly summarise the main limitations of this study. At the same time, some possible solutions are suggested. The main limits of this study are the representativeness of the sample, the number of participants, the clarity of the questionnaire and finally the scale used to measure CQ.

The representativeness of the sample

As mentioned previously, the method used to collect data was a non-probability sampling method and more specifically it was a convenience sampling method. A convenience sampling method consist in recruiting participants based on the proximity to the researcher. In this case, close friends and family were contacted and it was asked if they could spread the word and contact other people. Even though this method results to be at the same time easy and economic, it presents some limitations. The first and most important limitation is the fact that the representativeness of the population cannot be assumed. In fact, not all people in the population had the same probability to be chosen to participate in this study and this constitutes a bias in the composition of the sample. This means that the results of this research are valid for this specific study, but they cannot be generalized to all population. If this study were repeated, the choice of a different sampling method is suggested to avoid the limitation of representativeness.

Another important constraint that was linked to the representativeness of the sample was the relative absence of different cultures. Given the fact that this study aims to investigate the impact of CQ on customer satisfaction, it would have been better to have multiple cultures represented by the respondents. In this regard, this study lacks in terms of heterogeneity of cultures. No question was explicitly formulated to investigate the culture of the respondents. The reason behind this choice is linked to the fact that it could be difficult for someone to define to which cultural group they belonged to. Instead, two questions were proposed concerning the place of residence and the country in which one has lived the longest. The objective was to try to define roughly the cultural background of respondents. The responses to this question highlight a strong predominance of Swiss respondents. This was obviously to be expected due to the sampling method that was chosen. Nevertheless, further research could try to obtain a more diversified sample in terms of culture. It could be indeed interesting to see if different cultural backgrounds influence the expectation, perception, and evaluation of service experiences of customers.

The number of participants

A total of 121 responses were collected via the questionnaire. Even if the number of responses obtained was sufficient to proceed to the analysis, a bigger sample would most likely better

represent reality. In fact, the lower the number of respondents, the higher the possibility that a few outstanding questionnaires could constitute a variation in results. Further research could repeat this study with a higher number of respondents and investigate if the results are still the same obtained in this study.

The understanding of the situation

Some difficulties emerged linked to the comprehension of the situation that people had to imagine when answering the questionnaire. Few respondents expressed some difficulties in remembering a situation that suited the requirements described in the introduction of the questionnaire. For example, one person after having completed the questionnaire, explained that she kept in mind multiple situations at the same time when responding to the questionnaire which was not what was described in the introduction of the questionnaire. These compromised responses were taken into consideration in the data analyses as it was impossible to detect them. Even though these misunderstandings emerged, the general sense of people about the questionnaire was positive and this led to imagine that most of the respondents understood the background situation of the questionnaire.

The scale used to measure CQ

The questions meant to measure customer perception of front-line employees CQ, have been taken from the study of Lam et al. (2021). The scale proposed by Lam et al. (2021) seemed to be particularly convenient for this study because it allowed obtaining all the data needed at once only by asking clients what their perception of the front-line employee's CQ and their levels of satisfaction was. However, it must be noted that the Lam et al. (2021) scale is an adaptation of the much-discussed scale proposed previously by Ang et al. (2007). In fact, Lam et al. (2021) adapted the scale to enable clients to assess the perception of the front-line employee's CQ instead of basing these results on the self-assessment of the front-line employees themselves. Over time, researchers such as Furrer et al. (2016) have questioned the CQ scale and concluded that "the original four-dimensional CQ lacks discriminant validity and does not possess cross-cultural measurement invariance" (p. 311). If this conclusion is considered to be true, this would obviously constitute a limitation of this study as well.

Additionally, the study conducted by Lam et al. (2021) neglects the assessment of the metacognitive CQ. The problem is that the metacognitive dimension of CQ includes the mental processes that go through people's minds during an ICSE. Because these are mental processes, it is not possible for the clients to evaluate. The only possibility to have an evaluation of the metacognitive dimension would be to ask front-line employees directly to assess it. Nevertheless, being able to evaluate three out of four subdimensions of CQ can be considered a good start for this study. Additionally, a person who is culturally intelligent in the three assessed dimensions will probably tend to have a similar level of intelligence even in the fourth dimension. If so, future research might be interested in proving whether the fourth dimension is aligned with the other dimensions of CQ so that it would be possible to draw conclusions without necessarily measuring it directly.

Another possible restriction of this research somewhat linked to the scale used to measure CQ is the aspect that the questionnaire only investigated the level of CQ of the front-line employee which is interesting to know from a managerial point of view. However, what is not considered in this study is the possibility that the clients possessed a high level of CQ which complemented a possible low level of CQ in the front-line employee. In a hypothetical scenario consisting in a front-line employee with a lower level of CQ and a client with a higher level of CQ, it is possible that the effort to adapt to a different cultural context is mainly made by the client that possesses a higher CQ and that this adaptation causes the interaction to remain moderately at an acceptable level. This would mean that the client would judge it satisfactory even though more effort has been made on his or her side. Further research could focus on this hypothetical situation and, through the help of a control variable, could eliminate the impact that the client's intelligence could have on such situations.

Finally, it is important to highlight the possibility that customers could evaluate the service experience based on other factors than the employee's CQ. For example, a client who is not happy with the price of the service obtained, could tend to evaluate the front-line employee with low scores due to an absence of differentiation. In this case, it becomes very difficult to control this type of situation given the fact that the client may not even be aware. To solve this problem, further research could integrate a control variable measuring the degree of satisfaction for the general service apart from the interaction with the specific front-line employee.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to prove that the CQ of front-line employees has an impact on customer satisfaction during ICSEs. More specifically the interest lies in understanding if front-line employees with higher levels of CQ have more possibility to satisfy customers with different cultural backgrounds. According to literature, the general construct of CQ is positively related to customer satisfaction meaning that front-line employees with higher levels of this intelligence can better satisfy their customers (Mohsin, 2006). The purpose of this study was to investigate the existence of this relation in the service sector and understand if the subdimensions of CQ were also positively related to customer satisfaction.

Initially, the previous theoretical work conducted in past years has been illustrated in the theoretical framework and served as a foundation for the construction of the four hypotheses that structured the study. In the second chapter, the empirical part of this study was described to give an explanation about the processes underlying the idea of this work. In the third chapter, the results obtained from the different analyses conducted were presented, and in the fourth chapter they were discussed. In the fourth chapter, the limitations, managerial implication, and further developments of research are introduced.

In conclusion, this study was designed to investigate the increasingly important impact that CQ has on customer satisfaction in ICSEs. The importance of this topic is crucial as today we live in an economy where people from different cultures find themselves to interact. Therefore, companies in the service sector should have front-line employees who can satisfy all types of customers to have a competitive advantage. To better satisfy culturally diverse customers, higher levels of CQ need to be possessed by the front-line employees who serve them. Managers must recognize this need and adequately invest in front-line employees' training to prepare for these types of situations. Not only will these interactions be happening more frequently, but they will also gain more importance as the competition between service companies is increasing day by day.

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APPENDICES

Output SPSS

Descriptive statistics

Language of the questionnaire

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	en	23	19.0	19.0	19.0
	fr	8	6.6	6.6	25.6
	it	90	74.4	74.4	100.0
	Total	121	100.0	100.0	

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A	1	.8	.8	.8
	Femminile	67	55.4	55.4	56.2
	Maschile	51	42.1	42.1	98.3
	Preferisco non rispondere	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	121	100.0	100.0	

Country in which you currently live

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Canada	1	.8	.8	.8
	Italy	4	3.3	3.3	4.1
	Switzerland	106	87.6	87.6	91.7
	Switzerland/UK	1	.8	.8	92.6
	UK	9	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	121	100.0	100.0	

Country in which you lived the longest

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Algeria	1	.8	.8	.8
	Canada	1	.8	.8	1.7
	Italy	11	9.1	9.1	10.7
	Switzerland	95	78.5	78.5	89.3
	Thailand	1	.8	.8	90.1
	UK	9	7.4	7.4	97.5
	USA	3	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	121	100.0	100.0	

Year of birth

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1953	1	.8	.8	.8
	1959	1	.8	.8	1.7
	1960	2	1.7	1.7	3.3
	1961	1	.8	.8	4.1
	1962	1	.8	.8	5.0
	1963	2	1.7	1.7	6.6
	1964	1	.8	.8	7.4
	1965	1	.8	.8	8.3
	1966	1	.8	.8	9.1
	1968	2	1.7	1.7	10.7
	1970	2	1.7	1.7	12.4
	1971	4	3.3	3.3	15.7
	1972	1	.8	.8	16.5
	1973	1	.8	.8	17.4
	1974	2	1.7	1.7	19.0
	1975	2	1.7	1.7	20.7
	1976	2	1.7	1.7	22.3
	1977	5	4.1	4.1	26.4
	1978	4	3.3	3.3	29.8
	1979	3	2.5	2.5	32.2
	1980	2	1.7	1.7	33.9
	1981	2	1.7	1.7	35.5
	1983	3	2.5	2.5	38.0
	1985	2	1.7	1.7	39.7
	1986	1	.8	.8	40.5
	1987	2	1.7	1.7	42.1
	1988	2	1.7	1.7	43.8
	1989	2	1.7	1.7	45.5
	1990	1	.8	.8	46.3
	1991	3	2.5	2.5	48.8
	1994	3	2.5	2.5	51.2
	1995	1	.8	.8	52.1
1996	2	1.7	1.7	53.7	
1997	4	3.3	3.3	57.0	
1998	8	6.6	6.6	63.6	
1999	29	24.0	24.0	87.6	
2000	4	3.3	3.3	90.9	
2001	5	4.1	4.1	95.0	
2002	1	.8	.8	95.9	
2003	2	1.7	1.7	97.5	
2004	1	.8	.8	98.3	
2005	2	1.7	1.7	100.0	
Total		121	100.0	100.0	

Appropriateness of the factor analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.875
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1074.514
	df	78
	Sig.	<.001

Factor analysis by dimension

Cognitive dimension of CQ with three items:

Component Matrix^a

	Component 1
The service employee generally knew the language I use	.608
The service employee generally knew the values and beliefs of my culture.	.911
The service employee generally knew the basic rules for expressing body language (e.g. posture, distance, gesture) in my culture.	.870

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Cognitive dimension of CQ with two items:

Total Variance Explained

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.734	86.708	86.708	1.734	86.708	86.708
2	.266	13.292	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix^a

	Component 1
The service employee generally knew the values and beliefs of my culture.	.931
The service employee generally knew the basic rules for expressing body language (e.g. posture, distance, gesture) in my culture.	.931

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Motivational dimension of CQ with the three items:

Component Matrix^a

	Component 1
The service employee enjoyed interacting with me.	.797
The service employee talked to me confidently.	.825
Inverted values mot3	.571

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Motivational dimension of CQ with only 2 items:

Total Variance Explained

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.484	74.184	74.184	1.484	74.184	74.184
2	.516	25.816	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix^a

	Component 1
The service employee enjoyed interacting with me.	.861
The service employee talked to me confidently.	.861

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Behavioural dimension of CQ with three items:

Component Matrix^a

	Component 1
The service employee changed his/her verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) conforming to my culture.	.877
The service employee changed his/her body language (e.g., posture, gesture) conforming to my culture.	.921
The service employee adapted his/her facial expressions (e.g. smile, look) in agreement with my culture.	.895

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Total Variance Explained

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.418	80.588	80.588	2.418	80.588	80.588
2	.353	11.764	92.352			
3	.229	7.648	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Satisfaction dimension with three items:

Component Matrix^a

	Component 1
I am pleased to have been served by this employee.	.943
I am satisfied with the service of this employee.	.977
The service provided by the employee fully meets my expectations.	.948

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Total Variance Explained

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.742	91.394	91.394	2.742	91.394	91.394
2	.188	6.276	97.670			
3	.070	2.330	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Reliability analysis

Cronbach alpha for cognitive CQ:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.846	.847	2

Cronbach alpha for motivational CQ:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.652	.652	2

Cronbach alpha of behavioural CQ:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.879	.879	3

Cronbach alpha of satisfaction:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.952	.953	3

Linear regressions

Linear regression between general CQ and satisfaction:

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.136 ^a	.019	.010	1.39547	.019	2.257	1	119	.136
2	.700 ^b	.490	.481	1.01060	.471	108.895	1	118	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.

b. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine., GeneralCQ

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.395	1	4.395	2.257	.136 ^b
	Residual	231.733	119	1.947		
	Total	236.129	120			
2	Regression	115.613	2	57.806	56.599	<.001 ^c
	Residual	120.516	118	1.021		
	Total	236.129	120			

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.

c. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine., GeneralCQ

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.026	.321		15.674	<.001
	I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.	.112	.075	.136	1.502	.136
2	(Constant)	1.713	.393		4.357	<.001
	I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.	-.067	.057	-.082	-1.185	.238
	GeneralCQ	.828	.079	.720	10.435	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Linear regression between general cognitive CQ and satisfaction:

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.136 ^a	.019	.010	1.39547	.019	2.257	1	119	.136
2	.572 ^b	.327	.315	1.16065	.308	54.022	1	118	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.

b. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine., CognitiveCQ

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.395	1	4.395	2.257	.136 ^b
	Residual	231.733	119	1.947		
	Total	236.129	120			
2	Regression	77.170	2	38.585	28.643	<.001 ^c
	Residual	158.959	118	1.347		
	Total	236.129	120			

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.

c. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine., CognitiveCQ

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.026	.321		15.674	<.001
	I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.	.112	.075	.136	1.502	.136
2	(Constant)	3.067	.377		8.134	<.001
	I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.	-.021	.065	-.025	-.323	.747
	CognitiveCQ	.535	.073	.578	7.350	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Linear regression between general motivational CQ and satisfaction:

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.136 ^a	.019	.010	1.39547	.019	2.257	1	119	.136
2	.720 ^b	.519	.511	.98126	.500	122.670	1	118	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.

b. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine., MotivationalCQ

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.395	1	4.395	2.257	.136 ^b
	Residual	231.733	119	1.947		
	Total	236.129	120			
2	Regression	122.510	2	61.255	63.617	<.001 ^c
	Residual	113.619	118	.963		
	Total	236.129	120			

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.

c. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine., MotivationalCQ

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.026	.321		15.674	<.001
	I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.	.112	.075	.136	1.502	.136
2	(Constant)	1.200	.413		2.908	.004
	I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.	-.049	.055	-.060	-.904	.368
	MotivationalCQ	.839	.076	.734	11.076	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Linear regression between general behavioural CQ and satisfaction:

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.136 ^a	.019	.010	1.39547	.019	2.257	1	119	.136
2	.552 ^b	.304	.293	1.17984	.286	48.474	1	118	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.

b. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine., BehavioralCQ

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.395	1	4.395	2.257	.136 ^b
	Residual	231.733	119	1.947		
	Total	236.129	120			
2	Regression	71.871	2	35.936	25.816	<.001 ^c
	Residual	164.257	118	1.392		
	Total	236.129	120			

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.

c. Predictors: (Constant), I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine., BehavioralCQ

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.026	.321		15.674	<.001
	I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.	.112	.075	.136	1.502	.136
2	(Constant)	3.004	.397		7.563	<.001
	I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.	.000	.065	.001	.007	.995
	BehavioralCQ	.534	.077	.552	6.962	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Questionnaires

English version

Survey on cultural intelligence of service employees and customer satisfaction

This study is conducted as part of my Bachelor's thesis at the Chair of Marketing of the University of Fribourg, under the supervision of Prof. Olivier Furrer. My research examines the impact of the cultural intelligence of service employees on customer satisfaction during intercultural service encounters. This questionnaire has been designed to be completed in less than 5 minutes.

The sincerity of your answers is essential in order to ensure realistic results.

Please be assured that your answers will remain strictly anonymous and confidential. They will be combined with those of other people when analysing the results.

Next

General instructions

In answering this survey, we would like you to recall a situation in which you interacted with a service employee from a different culture than your own. This may be related to your last trip abroad and the interactions you had with service staff in a hotel, restaurant, shop or any other service you used there. It may also have occurred in your daily life in your home country, during a service interaction with an employee from another culture.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. In the first part, we ask you, through your perception, to evaluate the level of cultural intelligence of the employee you interacted with during the service. In the second part, we ask you to evaluate the perceived distance between your culture and the culture of the service employee as well as your level of satisfaction with the service offered by the employee.

Please answer all questions conscientiously but spontaneously; the first impression is usually good, as it reflects your true feelings. On the other hand, there are no right or wrong answers, it is your impression that is important.

*Have you ever interacted with a service employee from a different culture than yours?

Choose one of the following answers

- Yes
 No

Previous

Next

Questions about cultural intelligence

The following questions concern your perception of the cultural intelligence of the service employee you interacted with. For each question below, we ask you to choose the answer that best reflects your impression from among those provided. Please note that for each question, the scale ranges from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 7 "Strongly agree".

*The service employee enjoyed interacting with me.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The service employee generally knew the values and beliefs of my culture.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The service employee adapted his/her facial expressions (e.g. smile, look) in agreement with my culture.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The service employee changed his/her verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) conforming to my culture.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The service employee changed his/her body language (e.g., posture, gesture) conforming to my culture.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The service employee generally knew the basic rules for expressing body language (e.g. posture, distance, gesture) in my culture.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The service employee generally knew the language I use.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The service employee talked to me confidently.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The service employee appeared stressed during the interaction.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Previous

Next

Question about your perception of the service

The following questions concern your perception of the service. For each question below, we ask you to choose the answer that best reflects your impression of the service. Please note that for each question, the scale ranges from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 7 "Strongly agree".

*I think the cultural background of the service employee is very similar to mine.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*I am pleased to have been served by this employee.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*I am satisfied with the service of this employee.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The service provided by the employee fully meets my expectations.

	1 = Strongly disagree	2	3	4 = Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	7 = Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Previous

Next

Demographic questions

Finally, we ask you to answer the following questions.

*What is your gender?

Choose one of the following answers

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

*What is your year of birth? (e.g. 1955)

*In which country do you live? (e.g. Switzerland)

*In which country have you lived the longest? (e.g. Switzerland)

Previous

Submit

You have completed the survey.
Thank you for your valuable participation.

Questionnaire sur l'intelligence culturelle des employés de service et la satisfaction des clients

Cette étude est menée dans le cadre de mon travail de Bachelor, réalisée au sein de la Chaire de Marketing de l'Université de Fribourg, sous la direction du Prof. Dr. Olivier Furrer. Ma recherche porte sur l'impact de l'intelligence culturelle des employés de service sur la satisfaction des clients lors de rencontres de services interculturelles. Le présent questionnaire a été conçu de sorte que vous puissiez le compléter en moins de 5 minutes.

La sincérité de vos réponses est essentielle car elle permettra d'obtenir des résultats reflétant la réalité.

Soyez assuré(e) que vos réponses resteront strictement anonymes et confidentielles. Elles seront combinées à celles d'autres personnes lors de l'analyse des résultats.

Suivant

Instructions générales

En répondant à ce questionnaire, nous vous demandons de vous rappeler d'une situation dans laquelle vous avez interagi avec un(e) employé(e) de service d'une culture différente de la vôtre. Cette situation peut être liée à votre dernier voyage à l'étranger et aux interactions que vous avez eues avec le personnel de service d'un hôtel, d'un restaurant, d'un magasin ou de tout autre service que vous avez utilisé sur place. Cela peut aussi avoir eu lieu dans votre vie quotidienne en Suisse, lors d'une interaction de service avec un(e) employé(e) d'une autre culture.

Le questionnaire est divisé en deux parties. Dans la première partie, nous vous demandons, à travers votre perception, d'évaluer le niveau d'intelligence culturelle de l'employé(e) avec lequel vous avez interagi pendant le service. Dans la deuxième partie, nous vous demandons d'évaluer la distance perçue entre votre culture et celle de l'employé(e) de service ainsi que votre niveau de satisfaction vis-à-vis du service offert par l'employé(e).

Merci de répondre à toutes les questions de manière consciencieuse mais spontanée : la première impression est généralement bonne, car elle reflète votre véritable sentiment. D'autre part, il n'y a pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses, c'est votre impression qui est importante.

*Avez-vous déjà interagi avec un employé(e) de service d'une culture différente de la vôtre ?

● Veuillez sélectionner une réponse ci-dessous

- Oui
 Non

Précédent

Suivant

Questions relatives à l'intelligence culturelle

Les questions suivantes portent sur votre perception de l'intelligence culturelle de l'employé(e) de service avec qui vous avez interagi. Pour chaque question ci-dessous, nous vous demandons de choisir la réponse qui correspond le mieux à votre impression parmi celles proposées. Veuillez noter que pour chaque question, l'échelle va de 1 « Pas du tout d'accord » à 7 « Tout à fait d'accord ».

*De manière générale, l'employé(e) de service connaissait la langue que j'utilise.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*De manière générale, l'employé(e) de service connaissait les règles pour exprimer des comportements non-verbaux (p.ex., posture, distance, geste) dans ma culture.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'employé(e) de service m'a semblé stressé(e) pendant l'interaction.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'employé(e) de service a eu du plaisir à interagir avec moi.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'employé(e) de service m'a semblé confiant(e) dans sa manière de communiquer pendant l'interaction.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'employé(e) de service a adapté son comportement verbal (p. ex., expression, accent, ton) conformément à ma culture.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'employé(e) de service a adapté ses expressions faciales (p. ex., sourire, regard) conformément à ma culture.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*De manière générale, l'employé(e) de service connaissait les valeurs et les croyances de ma culture.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'employé(e) de service a adapté son comportement non-verbal (p. ex., posture, distance, gestes) conformément à ma culture.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Précédent

Suivant

Question relative à votre perception du service

Les questions suivantes portent sur votre perception du service. Pour chaque question proposée ci-dessous, nous vous demandons de choisir la réponse qui correspond le mieux à votre impression parmi celles proposées. Veuillez noter que pour chaque question, l'échelle va de 1 « Pas du tout d'accord » à 7 « Tout à fait d'accord ».

*Je pense que l'origine culturelle de l'employé(e) de service est très similaire à la mienne.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Je suis content(e) d'avoir été servi(e) par cet(te) employé(e).

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Je suis satisfait(e) du service de cet(te) employé(e).

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Le service offert par l'employé(e) correspond pleinement à mes attentes.

	1 = Pas du tout d'accord	2	3	4 = Ni d'accord, ni pas d'accord	5	6	7 = Tout à fait d'accord
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Précédent

Suivant

Questions démographiques

Pour terminer, veuillez s'il-vous-plaît répondre aux questions suivantes.

*Quel est votre genre ?

• Veuillez sélectionner une réponse ci-dessous

- Masculin
- Féminin
- Autre
- Préfère ne pas répondre

*Quel est votre année de naissance ? (p. ex., 1955)

*Dans quel pays vivez-vous ? (p. ex., Suisse)

*Dans quel pays avez-vous vécu le plus longtemps ? (p. ex., Suisse)

Précédent

Envoyer

Vous avez terminé l'enquête.
Je vous remercie pour votre précieuse participation.

Questionario sull'intelligenza culturale degli impiegati di servizio e sulla soddisfazione dei clienti

Questo studio è stato elaborato nell'ambito della mia tesi di laurea presso la cattedra di Marketing dell'Università di Friburgo, sotto la supervisione del Prof. Dr. Olivier Furrer. La mia ricerca si concentra sull'impatto dell'intelligenza culturale degli impiegati di servizio sulla soddisfazione dei clienti durante gli incontri interculturali. Questo questionario è stato progettato in modo tale che possiate completarlo in meno di 5 minuti.

La sincerità delle vostre risposte è essenziale per ottenere risultati che riflettano la realtà.

Le vostre risposte sono raccolte in forma anonima e rimarranno strettamente confidenziali. Nell'analisi dei risultati saranno combinate con quelle di altre persone.

Avanti

Istruzioni generali

Nel compilare questo questionario, vi chiediamo di ricordare una situazione in cui vi siete trovati ad interagire con un'impiegato(a) di servizio appartenente ad una cultura diversa dalla vostra. Questa situazione può riguardare il vostro ultimo viaggio all'estero e le interazioni con il personale di servizio di un hotel, un ristorante, un negozio o qualsiasi altro servizio di cui avete usufruito. Tale incontro potrebbe anche essersi verificato nel vostro paese d'origine, durante un'interazione con un(a) dipendente di servizio di un'altra cultura.

Il questionario è diviso in due parti. Nella prima parte vi chiediamo, attraverso la vostra percezione, di valutare il livello di intelligenza culturale del(la) dipendente con cui avete interagito durante il servizio. Nella seconda parte, vi chiediamo di valutare la distanza percepita tra la vostra cultura e quella dell'impiegato(a) di servizio, oltre al vostro livello di soddisfazione nei confronti del servizio.

Vi preghiamo di rispondere a tutte le domande in modo coscienzioso ma spontaneo: la prima impressione è solitamente buona, in quanto riflette i vostri veri sentimenti. Non ci sono risposte giuste o sbagliate, ciò che conta è la vostra sensazione.

*Avete già interagito con un'impiegato(a) di servizio di una cultura diversa dalla vostra?

! Scegliere solo una delle seguenti voci

- Sì
 No

Indietro

Avanti

Domande sull'intelligenza culturale

Le domande seguenti riguardano la vostra percezione dell'intelligenza culturale del(la) dipendente di servizio con cui avete interagito. Per ogni domanda che segue, vi chiediamo di scegliere la risposta che meglio riflette la vostra impressione tra quelle fornite. Per ogni domanda, la scala va da 1 "Fortemente in disaccordo" a 7 "Fortemente d'accordo".

*L'impiegato(a) di servizio ha apprezzato interagire con me.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'impiegato(a) di servizio ha adattato il suo comportamento verbale (ad es., espressione, accento, tono) conformemente alla mia cultura.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Nel complesso, l'impiegato(a) di servizio conosceva le regole per esprimere i comportamenti non verbali (ad es., postura, distanza, gesti) appartenenti alla mia cultura.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'impiegato(a) di servizio sembrava sicuro(a) del proprio modo di comunicare durante l'interazione.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'impiegato(a) di servizio è apparso(a) stressato(a) durante l'interazione.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'impiegato(a) di servizio ha adattato le sue espressioni facciali (ad es., il sorriso, lo sguardo) conformemente alla mia cultura.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*L'impiegato(a) di servizio ha adattato il suo comportamento non verbale (ad es., postura, distanza, gesti) conformemente alla mia cultura.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Nel complesso, l'impiegato(a) di servizio conosceva la lingua con la quale sono solito(a) esprimermi.

	1 = Completamente in disaccordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Nel complesso, l'impiegato(a) di servizio conosceva i valori e le credenze della mia cultura.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Indietro

Avanti

Domande sulla percezione del servizio

Le domande seguenti riguardano la vostra percezione dell'intelligenza culturale del(la) dipendente di servizio con cui avete interagito. Per ogni domanda che segue, vi chiediamo di scegliere la risposta che meglio riflette la vostra impressione tra quelle fornite. Per ogni domanda, la scala va da 1 "Fortemente in disaccordo" a 7 "Fortemente d'accordo".

*Ritengo che il contesto culturale dell'impiegato(a) di servizio sia molto simile al mio.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Sono contento(a) di essere stato(a) servito(a) da questo(a) impiegato(a) di servizio.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Sono soddisfatto(a) del servizio di questo(a) impiegato(a) di servizio.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Il servizio fornito dall'impiegato(a) di servizio soddisfa pienamente le mie aspettative.

	1 = Per niente d'accordo	2	3	4 = Né d'accordo, né in disaccordo	5	6	7 = Completamente d'accordo
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Indietro

Avanti

Domande demografiche

Infine, vogliate per favore rispondere alle seguenti domande.

*Qual'è il suo genere?

! Scegliere solo una delle seguenti voci

- Maschile
- Femminile
- Altro
- Preferisco non rispondere

*In che anno è nato(a)? (ad es. 1955)

*In quale paese vive (ad es. Svizzera)?

*In quale paese ha vissuto più a lungo (ad es. Svizzera)?

Indietro

Invia

Avete completato il questionario.
Grazie per la vostra partecipazione.


DECLARATION

Par ma signature, j'atteste avoir rédigé personnellement ce travail écrit et n'avoir utilisé que les sources et moyens autorisés, et mentionné comme telles les citations et paraphrases.

J'ai pris connaissance de la décision du Conseil de Faculté du 09.11.2004 l'autorisant à me retirer le titre conféré sur la base du présent travail dans le cas où ma déclaration ne correspondrait pas à la vérité.

De plus, je déclare que ce travail ou des parties qui le composent, n'ont encore jamais été soumis sous cette forme comme épreuve à valider, conformément à la décision du Conseil de Faculté du 18.11.2013.

Fribourg....., le 24 mai..... 20²³.....

.....

(signature)

Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales
Département de Gestion
Chaire de Marketing
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CH-1700 Fribourg

DECLARATION: AUTORISATION DE PUBLICATION

Par ma signature, j'autorise la Chaire de Marketing à publier mon nom, le titre ainsi que le PDF de mon travail de fin d'étude sur le site internet de la Chaire.

Nom et Prénom VITTORI CHIARA
Lieu FRIBOURG
Date 02.06.2023
Signature 