Performing in diverse settings: A diversity, equity, and inclusion approach to culture

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Abstract
Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are being built into the fabric of today's organizations, and utilizing such a lens is vital to understanding cross-cultural performance. Yet, most of the culture and diversity literature has grown in silos and is therefore not leveraging the many benefits that their integration could provide. To counter this gap, we advance a theoretical framework featuring a new definition of cross-cultural performance (CCP) from a DEI perspective, as a new angle for doing work across cultures. Specifically, CCP is defined as *the integration of multiple cultural perspectives of individuals who work together with the goal of enabling a diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment.* By applying the DEI lens to CCP, we elevate the meaning of performance due to added consideration of compositional differences, the possible barriers to employees' success, and the extent to which others' perspectives are indeed valued. Accordingly, our framework identifies three main components of CCP: catalyzing cultural differences, taking part in engaging communication, and promoting allyship activities. Furthermore, we specify emotional management as the glue of these three components, and key outcomes at different levels of analysis. Last, we discuss the implications of our framework to both theory and practice as well as directions for future research.

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The face of the current workplace is changing to be more and more diverse. Accordingly, diverse workplaces provide opportunities for employees and employers to integrate new understandings of one another to become more successful as an organization (Harvey, 2015). Diverse perspectives within an organization can lead to more effective and successful work (e.g., Ely and Thomas, 2001; Simons and Rowland, 2011). Such diversity can give access to a wealth of new perspectives and knowledge (e.g., Chen and Liang, 2016), but also lead to misunderstanding and suboptimal performance when mismanaged (e.g., Reinwald et al., 2019). With the potential for more innovative outcomes and other expansion strategies, thousands of organizations have attempted to expand their business to a global level. However, global collaboration does not automatically happen smoothly, especially in the early years of organization expansion. In fact, results from 20,000 companies in 30 different countries showed that international selling companies had an average return on assets of negative 1% up to 5 years after their global expansion (Stadler et al., 2015). Although some of these failures may be due to other market or procedural issues, enhancing cross-cultural performance would only diminish such losses.

To respond to organizational needs to improve their global expansions and support for diverse teams, theoretical and applied work in the realm of diversity and cross-cultural interaction has increased greatly throughout the past few decades (e.g., Charleston et al., 2018; Grossman et al., 2021; Stahl and Maznevski, 2021). This increased effort has moved the state of science toward a more grounded understanding of diversity and cultural differences. A glut of theories and research regarding culture (e.g., Chao and Moon, 2005; Giorgi et al., 2015; Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004; Schwartz and Sagiv, 1995; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998) and diversity (e.g., Allen et al., 2008; Case, 2007; Farndale et al., 2015; Hagman, 2021; Härtel et al., 2013; Helmold, 2021; Paluck, 2006; Roberson et al., 2017; Stahl and Maznevski, 2021; Tan, 2019; Weissmann et al., 2019) have arisen in response to the growing need to understand the interpersonal similarities and differences which are featured in these cross-cultural collaborations. However, most of the growth has been done in silos within each literature. Advances in the integration of diversity and culture theories should translate into a better understanding of how to perform in culturally diverse settings, which is the aim of this paper.

We define cross-cultural performance (CCP) as *the integration of multiple cultural perspectives of individuals who work together with the goal of enabling a diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment.* This integration between culture and diversity, specifically to better define CCP, will fill several gaps. Regardless of the growing interest in the topic, the conceptualization of cross-cultural performance is not well defined, and researchers struggle to agree on a definition (Hardison et al., 2009). The very culturally diverse context of cross-cultural performance invites the benefits of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Based on our review, there is no conceptualization of CCP to date that explicitly incorporates (1) systemic and structural issues inherent to the context (i.e., equity), (2) the extent to which employees feel safe to be their authentic selves (i.e., inclusion), or (3) how dissimilar they are from others beyond cultural orientation or distance (i.e., diversity). While improving CCP will undoubtedly improve an organization's productivity and efficiency (e.g., Brannen and Peterson, 2009; Sultana et al., 2013), there must be a strong emphasis on the values exemplified in the DEI framework for CCP to reach its optimal potential in the workplace. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are three characteristics that are featured in CCP. After all, improving CCP will nurture a workplace environment that promotes and encourages diverse perspectives, a characteristic that will enable employees to be heard and provided with equitable opportunities regardless of their backgrounds (Roberson et al., 2017; Harrison and Klein, 2007). Furthermore, the use of DEI in this context can further clarify the lasting impact of positive CCP at multiple levels of the organization. The complex nature of cross-cultural interactions lays out the platform to
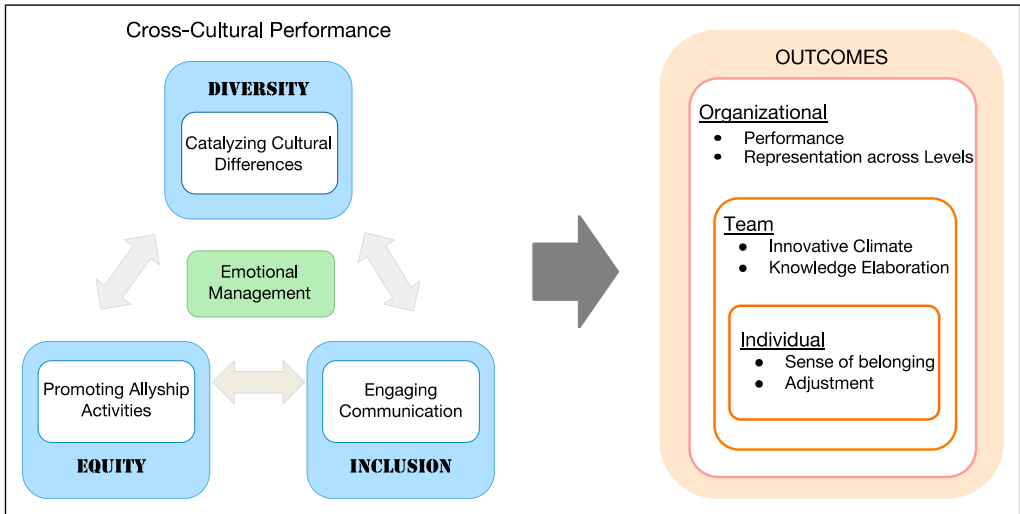
Figure 1. Theoretical framework for leveraging diversity, equity, and inclusion to define cross-cultural performance.

understanding the systemic, shared, and individually focused angles that this approach may offer and influence.

Other domains have used the DEI approach with success, including in data visualization (Schwabish and Feng, 2020), information literacy (Heffernan, 2020), engineering education (Pollock et al., 2022), nutrition (Mensch and Souza, 2021), as well as wellness, burnout, and recovery (Knight, 2022). It is only logical that we take this approach to a performance-based construct as CCP, where we encourage others to go beyond the awareness of their biases and actually change their behavior to integrate dissimilar others into the conversation (e.g., Tate and Page, 2018; Dobbin and Kalev, 2018). By applying the DEI lens to CCP, we can elevate the meaning of performance due to added consideration of compositional differences, the possible barriers to employees' success, and the extent to which others' perspectives are indeed valued. We present a theoretical framework for leveraging DEI to more holistically define CCP in Figure 1. Therefore, this article positions DEI as a locus of CCP, explaining both of these concepts, defining CCP, explaining why DEI is a powerful tool, and outlining its multi-level consequences. Last but not least, we will offer an array of future directions that this new integrative framework can offer.

What is cross-cultural performance?

Cross-cultural performance has been ill-defined in the literature. However, when individuals fail to work well together within a global setting, many negative consequences emerge from more proximal (e.g., creating cross-cultural communication barriers, a lack of cultural knowledge, and intercultural communication skills) to more distal (e.g., enhancing ethnocentrism, lowering return of equity) outcomes (Jenifer and Raman, 2017). The inability to overcome some of these cross-cultural barriers can inhibit growth across organizations (Bucata & Rizecu, 2016). Most commonly, articles will look at predictors of cross-cultural performance and then simply measure job performance as tasks related to the organizational missions or goals (e.g., Koopmans et al., 2016). With CCP clearly defined, researchers can begin informing organizations on how to prevent the negative effects of

poor CCP. Before presenting our own definition of CCP, we will first differentiate this term from other concepts.

What cross-cultural performance is not

Due to the inconsistency of CCP definitions, it is important to also differentiate what cross-cultural performance is not. The first term we would like to differentiate cross-cultural performance from is cultural orientation. Cultural orientation can be defined as how one interprets and absorbs information as well as one's preferred pattern of interacting with others (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1991; Earley, 1993). Cultural orientation impacts an individual's preferred way of working, which in turn can affect one's performance at work. Thus, cultural orientation can be viewed as a precursor of cross-cultural performance with the potential for conflict when employees come to hold different cultural orientations and have limited knowledge about each other's preferences. Cultural orientation and cross-cultural performance are two different, independent constructs and must be recognized as such, regardless of the potential ability of cultural orientation to significantly influence cross-cultural performance.

Similar to cultural orientation, cultural intelligence (CQ) has the ability to greatly impact cross-cultural performance. CQ has been defined as the "capability of an individual to function effectively in culturally diverse settings" (Van Dyne et al., 2012: p. 295). These authors describe their sub-dimensions when as metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral. CQ and its dimensions are described as developable abilities (Vogelgesang Lester et al., 2009), which greatly differs from CCP as the latter is characterized by integratory behaviors within a culturally diverse setting. However, some may describe CQ as the manifestation of appropriate behavior in a cross-cultural context (Thomas, 2006). Although such appropriate behaviors may be coded as positive CCP, CQ would only tap into the individual-level behaviors rather than any dyadic, team- or higher level of analysis that would allow the understanding of how backgrounds are being integrated within a setting.

Another two terms that should be explicitly distinguished from the CCP are cross-cultural competence and intercultural sensitivity. However, before we differentiate these two terms from cross-cultural performance, we must first distinguish them from each other. Cross-cultural competence refers to an employee's ability to interact efficiently with those who are culturally dissimilar from them (Fantini, 2009) whereas intercultural sensitivity is the ability to properly extract and confront cultural differences (Hammer et al., 2003). Although cross-cultural competence and intercultural sensitivity are both important antecedents for effective cross-cultural performance, these two constructs are not behavioral in nature. Cross-cultural performance goes beyond the constructs of cross-cultural competence and intercultural sensitivity. Specifically, cross-cultural performance emphasizes converting one's knowledge of different cultures and interacting with others from dissimilar backgrounds into actions where differences are not only understood and respected, but also celebrated. It is then obvious that if individuals have built the capacity to interact with dissimilar others and properly confront differences, they will then be more likely to integrate dissimilar others in cross-cultural settings.

Now, moving on to a similar term that is often used as the criterion is the employee's work adjustment, particularly in the expatriate literature, which refers to how successful one may cope with the changes in their new context (Takeuchi et al., 2005). A closer look at this criterion urged researchers to differentiate adjustment considering Searle and Ward's (1990) conceptualization of psychological and sociocultural dimensions (Feitosa et al., 2014). Concerning CCP, these psychological and sociocultural components of "fitting in" a new place may be a consequence as the

adjustment is broader in nature, and it would include items such as family and friends' relationships. If a company or team has high levels of cross-cultural performance, it is likely that this will spill over to influence individual-level adjustment. This link will be addressed in more detail later under the CCP outcomes section.

What is the diversity, equity, and inclusion approach?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is an initiative that promotes a culture in which, within a given context, each person is valued and given equal opportunities to thrive. Diversity can be defined as the variability in individuals' characteristics within a work unit (Roberson et al., 2017). Such differences can be encapsulated in three different categories: separation, variety, and disparity (Harrison and Klein, 2007). Respectively, these three refer to differences in (i) values, beliefs, and attitudes, (ii) knowledge, functional background, and industry experience, as well as (iii) status, pay, and decision-making authority. This is where the literature on diversity and culture overlaps for addressing the composition or diversity with regard to cultural values (e.g., cultural diversity management model; Seymen, 2006). The other term, equity, can be defined as "acknowledging the multiple ways in which some people face barriers (both visible and invisible) to their success and working to dismantle these barriers" (Hagman, 2021: p. 77). Lastly, inclusion is the extent to which individuals feel that the environment provides them with a sense of belonging that allows them to be authentic (Jansen et al., 2014). These terms are different but related. For instance, with equitable practices in place, such as unbiased hiring and an inclusive climate, diversity can be optimized.

Broadly speaking, DEI centers its work on ensuring the fair treatment of minoritized employees. This focal point of DEI can be traced back to the 1960s, when the educational system pushed forth multicultural initiatives related to affirmative action (Weissmann et al., 2019). Since then, it has dramatically evolved to be a much more robust and centered initiative, related to organizational strategies. A DEI strategy includes helping organizations transform their culture to create meaningful change from the injustice that has detrimentally affected minoritized employees in the workplace. Key components of such strategies include the self-examination of our privileges and biases, understanding of structural systems, and dismantling of systematic differences in many subgroups related to main human resource functions. All these strategies can play a crucial role in improving an organization's productivity. The steps to follow a DEI approach can be broken down into introspection, education, and action (Pollock et al., 2022). The DEI approach is beneficial to organizations that seek to help their employees navigate diverse settings (e.g., culturally, linguistically, ideologically, racially, sexually, and others) as it provides a transformational platform to think beyond knowledge, skills, and abilities and promotes a focus on the organizational context, climate, and *action*. Consequently, the inherent diversity in cross-cultural settings makes cross-cultural management research one of the logical subfields within which DEI should be most helpful. Although cross-cultural management research has traditionally emphasized national cultural diversity (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2007; Gerhart, 2008), the DEI concept will only strengthen cross-culture research if applied to this context as it would to others.

Specifically, adopting a DEI approach will provide organizations with divergent perspectives and backgrounds, which will allow employees to brainstorm new, creative ways to solve complex problems (Prieto et al., n. d.). Furthermore, organizations that implement a DEI approach will exemplify the importance of providing sufficient rewards for each employee's contribution to the organization, valuing each employee and improve individual and organizational performance in the process (Inuwa, 2017). In addition to valuing each employee and capitalizing on diverse perspectives, the DEI approach promotes the need for cross-cultural competence, skill that will

undoubtedly improve cross-cultural performance. To clarify, cross-cultural competence can be broadly defined as the capability to navigate cross-cultural environments efficiently independently of the cultural context (Abbe et al., 2007). With this skill, organizations will facilitate an environment in which every employee, regardless of cultural perspective, will feel valued, respected, and included (Johnson et al., 2006). In summary, companies can improve their CCP by focusing on the *diversity* of employees' characteristics, the *equity* of organizational processes, and the *inclusion* of employees across all cultures. Taken together, the integration between the DEI approach and cross-cultural work allows us to target the different components of performance.

Defining cross-cultural performance from a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

By defining CCP from a DEI lens, we can create a holistic definition, guiding both research and practice. As previously mentioned, we define CCP as the extent to which individuals integrate multiple cultural perspectives while working together to enable a diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment. At the core of this definition are the main components of cross-cultural performance, which include (1) *catalyzing* cultural differences, (2) *engaging communication* with others, and (3) promoting *allyship activities*. Additionally, we highlight *emotional management* as the key mechanism by which these three components will turn into successful behaviors in a cross-cultural setting.

With this newly proposed definition, there are several characteristics that should be highlighted. First, this definition focused on the *integration* of cultural perspectives, not on the specific- or general-knowledge acquisition. The concept of integration relies upon a mixture of new and old information (Zheng et al., 2015), combining distinct expertise (Balakrishnan et al., 2011; Salazar et al., 2019), including one's cultural lens and other individuals' perspectives; thus, going beyond assimilation or adaptation to a new culture. Second, this is not an individual-level concept, but a higher-level construct that could be applied to dyads, teams, departments, units, and other entities where more than two individuals are involved. Similar to the concept of knowledge elaboration in which members must consider each other's insights (Van Ginkel and Van Knippenberg, 2009), but must go beyond that to consider each other's background and to work actively in understanding and making space for others. Third, this construct is contextually bounded in the workplace. Some of the studies that considered CCP have either been too broad (e.g., social adjustment, Klafehn et al., 2013) or too simplistic (e.g., assignment termination, Chen et al., 2014) in nature. By establishing our boundaries in the workplace, we can target behaviors that are either task-relevant and/or team-relevant.

General job performance is often described as the set of behaviors that individuals carry for a given time that is expected to enhance organizational value (Motowidlo, 2003). It combines multiple, discrete behaviors. Furthermore, it frequently requires one to adapt to changes in task and context (Levinthal & March 1993). When we expand this to a cross-cultural setting, the set of behaviors is even more closely linked to flexibility and adaptability due to the complexities of the interaction across cultures. Accordingly, people are more likely to succeed in a diverse workforce if they are willing to attempt new methods (Brunton and Cook, 2018). For instance, to make oneself understood, individuals may have to try communicating the same information in different ways (e.g., orally, visually, contextualized, etc.). When individuals engage in such alternative-seeking behaviors, a more welcoming environment would allow for more novel ideas to flow. By utilizing diverse perspectives to find a solution, better outcomes are likely to emerge (Ang et al., 2007).

Another important development in the cross-cultural management literature is the specific taxonomy of CCP that includes enabling (e.g., managing stress in an unfamiliar cultural setting) and goal-oriented (e.g., establishing credibility, trust, and respect) behaviors (Hardison et al., 2009). These behaviors can be mapped onto our framework as, for instance, some of the enabling behaviors are aligned with emotional management and engaging communication, whereas the goal-oriented ones are more likely to align with allyship activities and ways of catalyzing diversity. We will now go over the three defining characteristics of CCP: catalyzing cultural differences, engaging communication, and promoting allyship activities; followed by the emotional management component that serves to unite these three components into a cohesive CCP construct. Each one of these CCP components is behaviorally-focused related to a DEI topic.

Catalyze Cultural Differences for Diversity

Unfortunately, leaders often fall into the trap of minimizing the differences in employees to focus on their shared goals. For instance, team training targets the creation of collective identity and goals, fostering ingroup belonging (Dávila and García, 2012; Oyserman et al., 2006). However, drawing on theories such as Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991), we know that individuals have a need not just to belong, but also to feel unique. These two driving forces, also referred to as the belonging-distinctiveness paradox (McCluney and Rabelo, 2019), shape individual and team identities. Consequently, these team-focused strategies may trigger positive team dynamics, but with the caveat that diverse talent may be left untapped. Becoming motivated to catalyze cultural differences allows entities to bring the existing diverse knowledge to the forefront.

There are inherent steps to catalyzing these differences effectively, which include learning about these differences and knowing how to confront them properly. One example of this is the Individual Difference Approach to Assessing and Developing Diversity Awareness (IDADA, Härtel et al., 2013). Using the IDADA framework, one can evaluate and change employees' openness toward their peers' differences, with the end goal of forming an overall organizational culture that molds together (Härtel et al., 2013). This approach also does not focus on cultural stereotypes and acknowledges that individuals within a specific culture can vary and have their differences (Härtel et al., 2013; Härtel and Fujimoto, 1999). This idea is also consistent with more recent theorizing that highlights that not all members of marginalized groups are treated the same. Within a model of stereotyping through associated and intersectional categories (MOSAIC), Hall et al. (2019) explained the patterns of stereotypes from a micro-level. By focusing on individual employees, peers learn to not generalize characteristics, maximizing the success rate in integrating different cultural perspectives within an organization. Consequently, going beyond merely tolerating cultural differences (Collins, 2015), but respecting each other's unique, diverse identities, and utilizing these to have better engagement with one another.

Having a diverse workforce provides the opportunity to confront differences and implement new thinking, allowing an organization to improve its CCP. When an individual confronts and recognizes multiple viewpoints, they are enabled to provide support for their colleagues who may be experiencing discrimination (Brunton and Cook, 2018), or even less explicit exclusionary practices such as microaggressions. A similar construct to confronting differences is the motivation to confront prejudice, where people speak up and those that engage in biased statements may develop from such reactions (Rattan and Dweck, 2010). When individuals enter a new country or an organization with employees of different backgrounds, it is crucial, to successfully build diversity and to explore unfamiliar approaches to communication and practice. It is through overcoming exclusionary dynamics (e.g., stereotyping) and engaging in positive interactions that one can

facilitate inclusion (Bernstein et al., 2020). Through this exploration and experimentation, high CCP entities can actively anticipate the potential for friction. Past research has suggested that the amount of diversity itself in a group does not inhibit the process of social integration but attributes of members that correlate rather than cutting across memberships (Lau and Murnighan, 1998). The alignment of attributes can be understood as faultlines (i.e., "hypothetical dividing lines based on member attributes that split a team into relatively homogenous subgroups"; Meyer and Glenz, 2013: 393). Consequently, one does not want to be blind to these potential subgroup formations. Instead, it is through acknowledging, celebrating and catalyzing the multitude of differing characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, and behaviors, each individual holds to activate this diversity positively (Charleston et al., 2018). Thus, understanding employees' backgrounds and potential subgroups can help to catalyze cultural differences without furthering the divide.

It is important to highlight the importance of the word *catalyze,* we refer to intentional acceleration of diversity. This component of CCP may look different depending on the type of job and industry. This may include the presence of awareness of cultural differences and the development of tools to understand and learn more about these perspectives for expatriation settings. It is shown that expatriates, for instance, may have an unrealistic expectation of cultural similarities when they are similar at the surface level with each other (Van Bakel et al., 2015). This can also include providing different means that can diversify the way that people provide input and how amplify such messages if you are managing a culturally diverse team. Regardless, catalyzing DEI is about making meaningful changes (Gentle-Genitty et al., 2021). Therefore, the above suggests that we can broadly catalyze cultural differences by learning about employees, confronting differences, and intentionally facilitating the interaction between dissimilar others.

Promoting allyship activities for equity

The workplace, as well as society, can often be considered a place of biases and privilege. White (and other types of) privilege segregates an organization's employees due to inequality, stereotypes, and prejudice, making it very difficult for employees from minoritized backgrounds to interact and work efficiently (Case, 2007). The major obstacle presented when trying to reduce privilege is that most majority members are meticulously taught to be oblivious to their privilege (McIntosh, 1988). Cumulative consequences are related to these social inequalities that carry over to the workplace and can span from individual to organizational levels (Van Dijk et al., 2020). This is related to the concept of equity, which represents identifying, and acknowledging, cultural differences between individuals and dismantling the barriers they may have to succeed (Tan, 2019). Equity can guide CCP behavior and actions that target systemic level issues or its microfoundations (i.e., stereotypes, Barney and Felin, 2013). As a result, individuals must be very intentional and attentive to status quo policies and procedures that are probably harming some key employees.

An important tool to support and advocate for individuals who have limited power and are often from historically marginalized identities is allyship (Sabat et al., 2013). Although this terminology has only received some empirical momentum in the last decade (e.g., Russell and Bohan, 2016; Uluğ and Uysal, 2021), allyship activities have existed for a long time in work settings and even more broadly in society. For instance, Salter and Migliaccio (2019) mention Helm's (1984) racial identity work, highlighting the white folks who could use their racial privilege to benefit others. In addition to the historical roots of allyship, these researchers called out specifically the relevance of allyship to the cross-cultural setting as it serves to bring diversity and inclusion strategies together at a global level. When an organization decides to focus on equity, they foster an environment that allows individuals to blossom regardless of their identities (Tan, 2019), and allyship activities are

one way to achieve this equitable work environment. Specifically, allyship will serve as the means of properly integrating cultural perspectives by capitalizing on the positive changes that allies enact on.

With regard to the actual process of allyship, Warren and Warren (2021) identified four stages: energizing psychological investment, thinking through complexities that are relevant to allyship, initiating action, and committing to allyship. Relatedly, the three categories of behaviors are (1) knowledge and awareness, (2) communication and confrontation, and (3) action and advocacy (Salter and Migliaccio, 2019). Integrating cultural perspectives can translate into listening to people's experiences, intervening when someone is harmful, and backing up folks who need support. Especially in a cross-cultural setting, making sure everyone is communicating and agreeing before acting is important to ensure proper space is given to those who want it and that inequities are being minimized, not just from one's perspective. Those that engage in allyship activities are taking charge of learning more about different identities and cultures, and making sure *listening* happens before *acting* (Kluttz et al., 2020). To function efficiently in a multicultural organization, employees need to be interested in learning about other cultures, acknowledge cultural differences, and be willing to alter their behavior to make coworkers from other cultures feel respected (Hammer et al., 2003). Consequently, allyship as a component of CCP provides strong implications for the breakdown of systemic level inequities (cf. Thoroughgood et al., 2021).

Adopt an engaging communication for inclusion

Engaging communication goes beyond information sharing as it includes components of closed-loop and amiable communication in addition to the active listening that employees engage in when others are contributing. Consequently, the call for engaging rather than simply effective communication is due to the cultural differences that may exist in this context. From intercultural communication literature, this type of communication is not meant to be oversimplistic (Jones and Quach, 2007; Ting-Toomey and Chung, 2005). Instead, it is indeed complex and iterative. First, by adopting closed-loop communication, or "the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver irrespective of the medium" (Salas et al., 2005: p. 561), communicators can align their understanding of the content of the message. Although communication norms can be specific to certain cultures, the attempt to adopt engaging communication through closed-loop strategies to ensure information does not get *lost in translation* is good practice beyond just assimilation.

Second, engaging communication has an inherent emotional component (Lowenstein, 2015). Rather than only focusing on the content of the message, how the message is delivered is just as, if not more, important. Expanding from the adaptability literature, this would include the capability to manifest both verbal and nonverbal appropriate behaviors (Sozbilir and Yesil, 2016). To achieve this, employees must identify specific actions with curiosity and appreciative inquiry (Charleston et al., 2018). Curiosity consists of both cultural- and self-awareness, both vital for ensuring communication is being maintained. When communication is clear, employees can build relationships with each other and avoid unnecessary conflict (Waldeck, et al., 2012). To establish further rapport, employees should work on building trust is key. Even informal conversations across individuals with different roles can lead to more engaging communication (Kim and White, 2018), likely due to trust. Establishing trust was also highlighted as a key goal-oriented behavior in the coding of cross-cultural performance (Hardison et al., 2009). Through these trusting relationships, employees can internalize and acknowledge each other's viewpoints and work together efficiently with minimal task conflict.

This type of communication was one of the three leadership dimensions that contributed toward successful change in the Royal Air Force (Wren and Dulewicz, 2005), and the most important

component in managerial competence assessment across construction project managers in Malaysia (Tabassi et al., 2016). Even though some communication styles may differ among cultures, individuals can still learn how to engage with one another through clear communication by modifying their communication techniques and conflict resolution strategies when interacting with others from different backgrounds (Brew and Cairns, 2004). Combining cultural communication, or the amiable interactions between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Jenifer and Raman, 2017), and thorough engagement in these interactions, this is the type of communication that characterizes high CCP (Wren and Dulewicz, 2005). Accordingly, teams with better communication skills lead to higher-performing teams (Entin and Serfaty, 1999). These improved cross-cultural communication skills tap into CCP within organizations, as with better communication and understanding of others' needs, employees will be able to modify behaviors and treat their coworkers more inclusively (Tan, 2019).

With such engaging communication, employees know clearly what is expected of them and feel heard, a key component of inclusion. An inclusive environment is also related to a sense of belonging, which allows employees to be their complete, authentic selves (Jansen et al., 2014). In addition to feeling a sense of belonging, this type of communication when present can also enable less conflict (Bergman et al., 2016). When employees are amicable with each other, they are more likely to understand and be open-minded toward the different cultural perspectives that each employee may have. An open-minded environment where employees feel readily accepted promotes higher work and happiness levels (Mitchell et al., 2012). Furthermore, because engaging communication enables employees to understand each other's perspectives, it makes them feel as if they are one team (Waldeck, et al., 2012). This type of communication will allow employees to understand their coworkers further and interact with them feasibly, increasing productivity and performance (Ayoko et al., 2012). In turn, these raised levels of CCP and individual performance indicators enable the organization to become more successful. Ultimately, although employees may have different backgrounds and communication preferences, and can have biases in the workplace, the engaging communication with employees that is characterized by effective CCP would include active listening, closed-loop communication, and rapport building.

Summary

Taken together, we argue that a DEI lens that bounds the CCP to catalyze cultural differences, communicate engagingly and promote allyship activities while working to manage their own emotions is crucial. Table 1 summarizes how these CCP behaviors fall within the DEI framework. Next, we will then cover the emotional component.

Emotional management as the activator of CCP through the DEI lens

With the three aforementioned components of CCP, we highlight the role of emotions to capitalize on the benefits of CCP. Emotions are important in reconciling differences (e.g., Garcia-Prieto et al., 2003), intercultural communication (e.g., Matsumoto et al., 2005), as well as allyship (e.g., Chong and Mohr, 2020). Furthermore, when training focuses on the management of emotions, more long-term transfer of behavioral changes and organizational results emerged because of new training knowledge (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005; Holtz et al., 2020). This was achieved through targeting affective, behavioral, and cognitive components that helped consolidate learning on all levels. Furthermore, leaders that employ emotional management strategies can support employees in understanding their peers and the consequences of their cross-cultural behavior and interactions to

Table 1. Summary of CCP behaviors through a DEI lens.

DEI component	Lens' focus	Operating with this lens for CCP change	Representative behaviors
Diversity	Compositional differences	Acknowledging, celebrating, and catalyzing cultural differences	•Providing the space for new ideas •Allowing for different ways to contribute •Amplifying messages •Raised awareness of biases •Intentionally facilitating interaction between dissimilar others •Actively anticipating subgroup formation
Equity	Removal of barriers to success	Promoting allyship activities when applicable	•Prioritizing contextually appropriate access to resources and opportunities •Communicating and agreeing before acting •Listening to people's experiences •Intervening when someone is being harmful or hurtful •Standing behind folks who need support
Inclusion	Feeling valued and welcomed	Building rapport and being clear through engaging communication	•Practicing active listening •Communicating through different means •Engaging in closed-loop communication practices •Including information conversations to build rapport •Creating summaries of important dialogues and procedures •Checking in with employees for feedback

make any changes necessary (Markey et al., 2021), which sets the tone for the DEI lens to come to fruition. Consequently, this mechanism of managing emotions is crucial for integrating different cultural perspectives to build a diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment.

Emotional management has also been identified as key to developing a sense of belonging that unites teams despite their diversity, reconciling the two goals of team training (i.e., collectiveness) and diversity training (i.e., distinctiveness). Rather than solely focusing on being in sync with each other, the complementary components of emotional management provide the necessary tools to allow diverse teams to tap into their members' uniqueness while still fostering a sense of belongingness that can empower them to leverage their resources (Davis et al., 2022). Expanding this idea to a cross-cultural setting, the unfamiliarity with dissimilar others' cultural backgrounds can greatly increase anxiety. According to social categorization and social identity theories (Tajfel, 1981; Turner et al., 1987), many difficulties, including conflict and miscommunication, happen when individuals categorize others as outgroup members, or too dissimilar from them. Relatedly,

managing stress has been included as key CCP behavior across the few frameworks available in the literature (e.g., Hardison et al., 2009; Wisecarver et al., 2014). Therefore, the need to regulate one's and other's emotions is key to shaping effective CCP.

By using emotional management, organizations can increase empathy and understanding, which will facilitate engaging communication, ensuring that all employees feel included (Jetten and Spears, 2003). In this context, empathy refers to the conscious effort to include others' emotional perspectives and actions that may emerge due to different cultural backgrounds. Accordingly, empathy can offer a platform for learning how to interact with others that may be struggling emotionally (Walter and Shenaar-Golan, 2018). Research has found that empaths are capable of reading and imitating facial expressions (Jospe et al., 2018), allowing them to understand another person's feelings without verbal confirmation. Because of these important interpersonal effects, emotional management strategies such as empathy is a vital skill to increase cross-cultural performance. However, the only way to become empathetic is to become aware of one's own emotions (Ratka, 2018). Therefore, although engaging in emotional management can improve empathy, one must learn how to be self-aware, specifically in terms of emotion recognition. Therefore, this emotional management allows the catalyzing of cultural differences, engaging communication, and promotion of allyship activities to emerge more promptly and aligned with the cross-cultural contextual needs.

Cross-cultural performance outcomes

Before diving into the multi-level outcomes, it is important to clarify the level of analysis of cross-cultural performance. Across the culture literature, multilevel discussions are among the most critical conceptual issues to consider (e.g., Fischer, 2015). Multilevel models are being utilized increasingly, allowing for greater insights into the complexities of cross-cultural interactions. As previously defined, CCP is about the integration of cultural perspectives, which by default requires more than one individual. However, some individuals are likely more equipped to perform integratory actions, such as those with strong cultural competence and experience in cross-cultural settings (e.g., Johnson et al., 2006; Mendenhall et al., 2013). Figure 2 shows some of the precursors for integratory behaviors that are likely to contribute to the CCP as we define it. Consequently, to listen, evaluate, and leverage the different perspectives, two or more individuals should be involved. Accordingly, we highlighted the following behavioral indicators of CCP: catalyzing cultural differences, showing engaging communication, and promoting allyship activities. These behaviors can be manifested within specific contexts; more importantly, a context that is characterized by DEI principles. Because context is by nature a multilevel construct (Jackson and Joshi, 2004), CCP behaviors can be captured at different nesting levels, from dyadic to networks within the workplace.
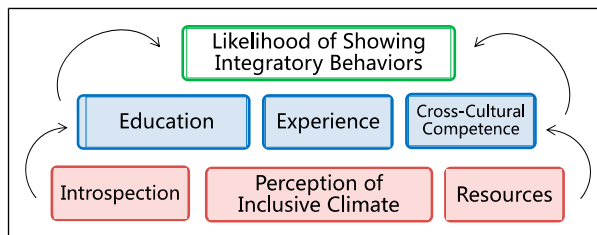

Figure 2. Individual-level predictors of integratory behaviors related to CCP.

Although the cross-cultural performance component of our framework is at a higher level of analysis, it does not preclude having multi-level consequences. The vast majority of the cross-cultural literature has either shown differences across individuals from two countries (e.g., Sagie and Aycan, 2003; Oliver and Lee, 2010), clarified components of cross-cultural competence (e.g., Abbe et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2006), or highlighted predictors of positive cross-cultural interactions (e.g., Bierwiaczonek and Waldzus, 2016; Crowne and Engle, 2016). The outcomes of this work are usually oversimplified to either one's perception of adjustment or objective firm-level outcomes such as expatriate assignment failure. To address this gap, we acknowledge that the outcomes of CCP span multiple levels of analysis because CCP is inherently interpersonal. Next, we will now expand on the impactful outcomes CCP may have.

Organizational-level

Performance. It is through many empirical studies (e.g., Gil et al., 2019; Ozgen et al., 2013; Shachaf, 2008), but also core theories such as the information/decision-making perspective that show the positive impact of cultural diversity in organizations. By hiring people from different backgrounds, the organization can access a wider pool of knowledge. It is not surprising that culturally heterogeneous groups can generate more ideas on creativity tasks (McLeod et al., 1996) and attain greater financial outcomes (Greer et al., 2012). More importantly, when CCP is effective, the organization will gain legitimacy with outsiders. Currently, stakeholders care about the company's image and its *social* impact (e.g., Pfajfar et al., 2022). When organizations have high levels of cross-cultural performance, they are likely to translate what is in their mission into action – a very desirable link that investors, employees, and clients want to see. Accordingly, CCP includes behaviors such as leveraging cultural differences, communicating efficiently, and utilizing one's privilege to counter inequities. Taken together, this will lay the foundation for a likely global organization to achieve its optimal but also lasting potential regarding performance.

Team-level

Innovative climate. Given that one of the most significant benefits of diverse teams is an increase in creativity (Johnson et al., 2015; Nijstad et al., 2010), having a perception as a collective of the team's possibilities to create new ideas and products is crucial. Members can bring their distinct perspectives to bear on the team task (Van Knippenberg and Schippers, 2007), which in turn can be integrated and lead to creative synergy (Kurtzberg and Amabile, 2001). Innovative climate can be defined as "shared perceptions of location members concerning the practices, procedures, and behaviors that promote the generation, introduction, and realization of new ideas" (Van der Vegt et al., 2005: 1172). When engaging in effective CCP, it is then possible to tap into different team members' ideas, healthily exchange ideas, and provide the space for meaningful brainstorming to happen. Relatedly, the concept of psychological safety, which stands for the "shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking" (Edmondson, 1999: 354), is likely to emerge. By seeing the context as welcoming, individuals can share their thoughts freely, thus, fostering the integration of cultures that contribute to the desired DEI environment. With that, an innovative climate emerges that is likely to trigger more innovative ideas and outcomes.

Knowledge elaboration. The integration of multiple cultural perspectives contributing to the DEI context yields an environment that facilitates the exchange of information, including a team's knowledge elaboration. Knowledge elaboration is defined as "the extent to which team members

exchange information and share their individual-level processing with the group" (Homan et al., 2007: 1189). A growing body of research shows the positive impact of diversity on knowledge elaboration (e.g., Martins and Sohn, 2022; Kearney et al., 2009). This knowledge elaboration is particularly helpful in the cross-cultural context due to the variability and richness of being cognizant of others' cultures and norms. Researchers have long debated the importance of culture-specific versus general knowledge. Many cross-cultural training programs focus exclusively on cultural awareness, or knowledge of cultural dimensions and fail to address the application of this knowledge in specific and relevant task settings through elaboration. Accordingly, Bhawuk and Brislin (2000) show that these program types are effective on a cognitive, but not behavioral level. Without managing the emotions of trainees, it is unlikely that increased declarative or procedural knowledge will translate to performance in the field (Ajzen, 1991; Baldwin and Ford, 1988). Because CCP is heavily grounded in behavioral indicators in addition to its emotional management mechanism, it can fill the gap to transform such knowledge into a more complex and useful outcome, the elaboration of knowledge in culturally diverse teams. This formative "map" of which team members know what can support the greater elaboration of ideas and innovative task performance (Richter et al., 2012; Stasser et al., 2000; Van Ginkel and Van Knippenberg, 2009).

Individual-Level

Sense of belonging. When individual-level outcomes are subpar, organizational outcomes, such as global growth, can be greatly jeopardized (Brannen and Peterson, 2009). An individual-level outcome that is extremely important is that employees feel valued and connected, as this can diminish expensive human resource functions such as turnover and overall morale (e.g., Hussain and Asif, 2012). It is also a core need of all humans (Brewer, 1991). Although it has not been commonly explored as an outcome when studying cross-cultural performance, this is indeed an expected consequence of CCP through the DEI lens. Dimensions of belonging include an individual's experience with the interpersonal relations around them, the opportunities available to enable connections to form further, seeking out relations with others, and the translation of lived experiences into an evaluation of whether they belong (Allen et al., 2021). All of these are likely to increase when someone's team, unit, or department is indeed catalyzing cultural differences, showing engaging communication, and promoting allyship activities. A sense of belonging is also linked to affective commitment (Vandenberghe and Bentein, 2009), authenticity (Aday & Shmader, 2019), and inclusion (Shore et al., 2011), which are tightly related to the emotional component strategies such as empathy that have been included in our CCP framework. This creates more opportunities for deeply connecting with dissimilar others, breaking down potential barriers. Consequently, effective CCP will enhance one's feeling of being valued and welcomed due to the DEI approach throughout.

Adjustment. Contrary to a sense of belonging, an individual-level adjustment has been highly scrutinized as a typical outcome of positive cross-cultural interactions. Specifically, it addresses how individuals cope with the changes and react to the new environment (Takeuchi et al., 2005). This is probably enhanced by CCP for utilizing the DEI framing— individuals should feel more adjusted as the work context becomes more friendly and they see it as a place they can be their authentic selves. Relatedly, the incidents of discrimination at work can directly influence individual-level outcomes (Shaffer et al., 2000). Research also shows that even across two different cultures, a psychological breach can influence many outcomes-specifically, turnover intentions and satisfaction were greatly impacted in American employees, whereas performance, commitment, and organizational

citizenship behaviors decreased for employees in Hong Kong (Kickul et al., 2004). Thus, organizations must offer structures and resources so that employees can succeed and feel respected, valued, and safe. Nishii et al. (2018) highlight the attitudinal and cognitive reactions that employees will have to diversity practices. Although CCP is not a policy per se, it contributes to a DEI climate. This positive work environment can easily spill over to someone's life satisfaction, and likewise their adjustment to a new environment. Other macro-level influencers, such as cross-border mergers and acquisitions, influence individual-level cross-cultural adjustment (Brannen & Peterson, 2009). Although cultural differences are inconsistent across situations (Chao and Moon, 2005). For example, aggressive behavior may not be frequently seen in a given culture but then be a strong characteristic of successful negotiations (Heine and Norenzayan, 2006). Consequently, it is vital to develop CCP to ensure members from different cultural backgrounds can properly adjust.

Discussion

This paper puts forth a new conceptualization of CCP that draws from a DEI lens. We define CCP as the integration of multiple cultural perspectives that contributes toward a diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment while accomplishing their main tasks together. We define the three main components of CCP: catalyzing cultural differences, taking part in engaging communication, and promoting allyship activities. We then specify emotional management as the *glue* of these three components. We conclude by highlighting the key outcomes that belong to different levels of analysis. With this framework, we provide an understanding of CCP that is measurable (behaviors) and context-bounded (workplace), with outcomes that go beyond oversimplistic models. Next, we discuss the many implications of our framework and directions for future research.

Theoretical and practical implications

This CCP framework contributes to the literature in three ways. First, we update what CCP is by including DEI concepts, an approach that calls for looking within, across, and forward to pave the way for a better working environment. By anchoring our framework around DEI, we identify specific behaviors that offer a new perspective on what cross-cultural performance is or should be. Although the call for integrating culture and diversity is not novel (e.g., Feitosa et al., 2012; Ferdman and Sagiv, 2012), the idea of defining cross-cultural performance with such a lens is. With that, we elevate the idea of performance to go beyond knowing about a specific culture to actual consideration of compositional differences, the possible barriers to employees' success, and the extent to which others' perspectives are indeed valued.

Second, we differentiate CCP from other culture-related constructs. We make comparisons from antecedents, such as cross-cultural competence, to outcomes, such as adjustment. This hopefully helps in avoiding the proliferation of "old wine in new bottles" issue that our field has (Ross et al., 2010). Consequently, managers can now differentiate CCP from what should be used for selection or training at the individual level. This is an important distinction because organizations are currently building DEI into their fabric across contexts (e.g., Nora, 2021), and this is not different for more global organizations. Knowing the CCP nomological network helps in clarifying construct boundaries, which is key when going from theoretical to operational.

Last but not the least, we identify three specific behaviors that comprise CCP. The advantage of this operationalization is that it can be easily observable, and thus measurable. Furthermore, these behaviors are categorized at the unit level, which allows for debriefing and rewards to be performed as such. This is an important contribution because it is common for organizations to reward A while

desiring B (Kerr, 1975). Applying this to the cross-cultural context, organizations will invest in training for individuals, such as cultural competence training, when in reality they want performance as a unit. Consequently, our work lays a foundation for providing a roadmap to assessment that goes beyond an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities. Organizations that adopt such a framework will not only enhance adjustment and innovation in their teams, but they should see returns of investment at the organizational level that are lasting and aligned with their mission statements.

Future research

Based on our CCP framework, there are several avenues for future research. We, first, urge researchers to make the leap from this conceptualization of CCP to its operationalization. Previously, the CCP conceptualizations varied from objective (e.g., expatriate failure rates) to very perception-based ones (e.g., subjective adjustment); thus, inviting a proliferation of articles that do necessarily address the same thing. With the definition we put forth, CCP is behaviorally-focused. Although we defined this construct within this integration framework with behavioral indicators, it will likely manifest itself differently across contexts. Consequently, the creation of behaviorally-anchored rating scales (BARS) would be a fruitful avenue; particularly for extreme teams that may not have the time to fill out psychometrically-sound self-report measures. Furthermore, many validity issues can emerge from self-report measures including individual biases and potential fatigue (Krosnick, 1999; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Filling out self-reports can also become disruptive, particularly if they draw resources away from task performance (Salas et al., 2015). Thus, the development of BARS to measure CCP would be a worthwhile effort due to its assessment in real-time without causing disruption, reduction of biases for not relying on respondents' recall, and the possibility of more access to real-world samples. With further clarification in the conceptualization of CCP, we hope the advancement in measurement follows.

Another fruitful research avenue would be related to the close investigation of the complexities of CCP over time. Because of the many possible outcomes, the extent to which CCP influence each in relation to one another is not yet known. Specifically, the specific behaviors: catalyzing cultural differences, practicing engaging communication, and promoting allyship activities may impact outcomes differently. Research shows that thinking that diversity is a worthwhile goal can be related to the extent to which people will take action to diminish workplace inequality (Bowman Williams and Cox, 2022). Thus, future research should empirically test the relative impact of each CCP component on the different outcomes and what patterns of the integration of cultures exist across units. Relatedly, Blanchard et al. (2022) have recently shown the variability that is explained by entitativity, a similarly higher-level phenomenon. Furthermore, there may be a potential need for further training to integrate other cultures when the composition of the unit changes. There may be new threats to subgroup formation or discrimination that emerges. Echoing the call of previous researchers (Littrell et al., 2006), we recommend that more empirical studies and qualitative research address cross-cultural training that increases organizations' cross-cultural performance. To investigate such complexity, mixed methods and structural equation models including more longitudinal designs would be ideal. These results could aid in helpful guidance for practice for when and how to prioritize certain behaviors depending on the main outcome they mustachieve or behavioral decay that their units are showing.

Along the lines of the complexity of CCP, a much-needed area of research is its multilevel and cross-cultural possibilities. We defined CCP as a unit level, with consequences to organization, teams, and individual outcomes. To avoid ecological fallacy, which uses the aggregate level results to make inferences about individuals (Schwartz, 1994), we warrant researchers of the cross-level

analysis without the assumption of isomorphism as well as the need to unpack some of these aggregates (Barney and Felin, 2013). Additionally, we envision future work on the top-down process that highlights more contextual influences on the lower levels of the nomological network presented here. Each organization will come with its own culture and climate, possible historical traumas, and norms. With that in mind, another fruitful avenue to explore is moderators. Gallus et al. (2014) mention some of these potential questions that have yet to be answered, such as (1) are these components of CCP that is more or less important depending on the job type? and (2) how will power interact with the cultural competence of individuals? It is important to note we cannot just apply the concepts of CCP that are Western-based, as others have specified, many of these assumptions may not hold when dealing with a culturally diverse setting (Feitosa et al., 2018). Taken together, these avenues for future research include advances in operationalization, temporal components, levels, and overall complexity for a better understanding of CCP.

Conclusion

In summary, cross-cultural performance is crucial for the success of organizations at multiple levels. Through utilizing a DEI approach, employers can focus on implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies to ensure that their workplace is a safe, fair place for the employees that facilitates high organizational performance and effective teamwork. Units can also encourage employees to embrace each other's differences, have more engaging communication and promote allyship with other employees. Each of those CCP components relates to diversity, inclusion, and equity, respectively. We highlight the powerful potential of the CCP framework to integrate cultures to foster a positive DEI context beyond task performance to influence organizational, team, and individual-level outcomes. By integrating the culture and diversity literature, we advance the idea of performance to go beyond cultural knowledge or awareness to consider compositional differences, possible barriers to employees' success, and the extent to which others' perspectives are indeed valued. Using the present definition, CCP can clarify the key behaviors needed by enriching the cross-cultural context, but such clarity is contingent on the development and operationalization of this construct in practice. Therefore, it is our hope that this work serves to help answer the call for a better understanding of CCP as to its conceptualization and nomological network. Lastly, we provide a foundation for future research to continue on this path of advancing CCP in a more nuanced manner.

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