Published by OTS Canadian Journal
Available at: *https://journal.canadian-ots.ca*

OTS Canadian Journal

ISSN: 2817-1756
Vol-5, Issue-11; November, 2026

Research Article Open Access

The Influence of Cultural Intelligence on International Business Performance: The Mediating Role of Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness

Dr. Roza Mohammed

University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD), United Kingdom

Article History
Received: October, 10,2026
Revised: October, 21, 2026
Accepted: November 07, 2026

Copyright: © 2026by the author. Licensee OTS Canadian Journal, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0)
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
Doi:https://doi.org/10.58840/qjr04048

Abstract:

The increasing globalization of business operations has intensified the importance of cultural intelligence in managing international relationships, facilitating cross-cultural interactions, and improving organizational performance. This study examines the influence of cultural intelligence on international business performance, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of cross-cultural communication effectiveness. Drawing on cultural intelligence theory, social information processing perspectives, and the resource-based view of the firm, the study develops a conceptual framework explaining how cultural intelligence may contribute to international business outcomes through effective communication across cultural boundaries. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design is for employees and managers working in internationally engaged private-sector organizations. The study uses a sample of 312 respondents and a structured questionnaire measuring cultural intelligence, cross-cultural communication effectiveness, and international business performance. The model anticipates positive relationships between cultural intelligence and international business performance, between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural communication effectiveness, and between communication effectiveness and business performance. Cross-cultural communication effectiveness is further to mediate the relationship between cultural intelligence and international business performance. The study contributes a framework for understanding the behavioral mechanism through which intercultural competencies may translate into international business outcomes.

Keywords: *Cultural Intelligence; International Business Performance; Cross-Cultural Communication; International Management; Intercultural Competence.*

1. Introduction

Globalization has transformed the environment in which contemporary organizations operate. International trade, foreign direct investment, multinational partnerships, global supply chains, and cross-border service delivery have increased interactions among individuals and organizations from different cultural backgrounds. Although these developments create opportunities for business expansion and international competitiveness, they also introduce challenges associated with cultural differences, communication barriers, divergent managerial expectations, and contrasting business practices (Kundu et al., 2025). Organizations engaged in international business frequently interact with foreign customers, suppliers, investors, distributors, and business partners. These interactions require more than technical expertise or financial resources. Employees and managers must also understand cultural expectations, interpret unfamiliar communication patterns, and adjust their behavior to diverse social and professional contexts (Zhou & Charoensukmongkol, 2022).

Cultural intelligence (CQ) has emerged as an important concept for explaining individuals' ability to function effectively in culturally diverse situations. Haikuo (2025) introduced cultural intelligence as a multidimensional capability that enables individuals to understand and adapt to unfamiliar cultural environments. Subsequent research identified four principal dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral cultural intelligence (Chu & Zhu, 2023). Within international business, cultural intelligence may help employees recognize differences in communication styles, understand culturally influenced business expectations, and adapt their interpersonal behavior during international negotiations and commercial interactions. However, possessing cultural intelligence does not necessarily translate directly into improved international business performance. The relationship may depend on the effectiveness with which employees communicate and establish relationships with culturally diverse stakeholders (Chen et al., 2024). Cross-cultural communication effectiveness refers to the ability to exchange information accurately, appropriately, and constructively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Effective communication can reduce misunderstandings, strengthen trust, facilitate negotiation, improve coordination, and support the development of sustainable international business relationships (Jurásek & Wawrosz, 2024).

1.1 Research problem

Despite increasing recognition of cultural intelligence in international management, organizations may experience difficulties translating employees' intercultural capabilities into measurable international business outcomes. Employees may possess knowledge of foreign cultures and demonstrate motivation to interact with culturally diverse individuals, yet international business relationships can still suffer from communication difficulties, misunderstandings, ineffective negotiations, and weak coordination (Chenyang, 2022). The central research problem is therefore to determine whether cultural intelligence contributes to international business performance directly and whether cross-cultural communication effectiveness explains part of this relationship (Köksal et al., 2023).

1.2 Research objectives

The study seeks to:

1. Examine the influence of cultural intelligence on international business performance.
2. Investigate the influence of cultural intelligence on cross-cultural communication effectiveness.
3. Assess the relationship between cross-cultural communication effectiveness and international business performance.
4. Determine whether cross-cultural communication effectiveness mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and international business performance.
5. Develop practical recommendations for strengthening intercultural competencies and international business relationships.

1.3 Research questions

RQ1: To what extent does cultural intelligence influence international business performance?

RQ2: How does cultural intelligence influence cross-cultural communication effectiveness?

RQ3: What is the relationship between cross-cultural communication effectiveness and international business performance?

RQ4: Does cross-cultural communication effectiveness mediate the relationship between cultural

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence refers to an individual's capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity. Unlike general intelligence or emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence focuses specifically on understanding and adapting to unfamiliar cultural settings (Yüksel & Ergün, 2024). Setti et al. (2022) conceptualized cultural intelligence as a multidimensional construct comprising four interrelated dimensions. Metacognitive cultural intelligence refers to an individual's awareness and regulation of cultural assumptions during intercultural interactions. Individuals with high metacognitive cultural intelligence consciously evaluate cultural expectations and adjust their understanding when encountering unfamiliar situations. Cognitive cultural intelligence concerns knowledge of cultural systems, values, norms, practices, and conventions. This includes awareness of how cultural differences may influence organizational structures, negotiation practices, and business relationships (Guang & Charoensukmongkol, 2022). Motivational cultural intelligence refers to the interest, confidence, and willingness to engage in culturally diverse environments. Individuals with high motivational cultural intelligence demonstrate persistence and enthusiasm when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. Behavioral cultural intelligence concerns the ability to adapt verbal and nonverbal behavior appropriately during intercultural interactions. This may involve adjusting communication styles, gestures, interpersonal distance, and professional etiquette (Kour & Jyoti,

2022). Together, these dimensions provide a framework for understanding how employees and managers navigate cultural differences in international business environments.

2.2 International business performance

International business performance (IBP) refers to the extent to which organizations achieve their strategic, commercial, operational, and relational objectives in international markets. International business performance may be assessed through financial indicators, market development, customer relationships, international partnership quality, and the achievement of cross-border business objectives (Mammadov & Wald, 2025). Tripathi et al. (2024) developed the EXPERF scale for measuring export performance, emphasizing the importance of financial, strategic, and satisfaction-related dimensions. In the present study, international business performance is operationalized as perceived performance in international customer relationships, cross-border coordination, business opportunities, and international commercial objectives. This operationalization reflects perceptual business performance rather than audited financial performance. It is appropriate for a employee survey but should not be interpreted as an objective measure of international profitability or export growth (Li et al., 2023).

2.3 Cultural intelligence and international business performance

Cultural intelligence may improve international business performance by enabling employees and managers to understand culturally diverse stakeholders and respond appropriately to unfamiliar business expectations. Individuals with high cultural intelligence may be better prepared to negotiate with foreign partners, interpret cultural expectations, build professional relationships, and manage intercultural disagreements (Le et al., 2023). From a resource-based perspective, intercultural competencies may represent valuable human resources when they contribute to effective international operations and are difficult for competitors to replicate. Research by Widodo et al. (2024) demonstrated relationships between cultural intelligence and intercultural judgment, cultural adaptation, and task performance. Although these outcomes are not identical to firm-level international business performance, they provide a theoretical basis for expecting positive relationships between cultural intelligence and international business effectiveness.

H1: Cultural intelligence has a positive and statistically significant influence on international business performance.

2.4 Cross-cultural communication effectiveness

Cross-cultural communication effectiveness (CCCE) refers to the extent to which individuals successfully exchange information, interpret messages, manage misunderstandings, and establish mutual understanding with people from different cultural backgrounds. Effective cross-cultural communication involves linguistic clarity, active listening, cultural sensitivity, feedback, adaptability, and awareness of differences in verbal and nonverbal communication. Bal & Kökalan (2022) emphasized that interpersonal communication competence involves communication that is both effective and appropriate within a given relational context. In international business settings, effective communication may facilitate negotiations, improve stakeholder coordination, strengthen trust, and reduce operational misunderstandings (Kistyanto et al., 2022).

2.5 Cultural intelligence and cross-cultural communication effectiveness

Cultural intelligence may improve cross-cultural communication effectiveness because culturally intelligent individuals are more likely to recognize cultural differences and adapt their communication behavior. Metacognitive cultural intelligence can help individuals monitor their assumptions during international interactions. Cognitive cultural intelligence provides knowledge of cultural expectations, while motivational cultural intelligence encourages engagement with culturally diverse stakeholders (Karatas & Arpaci, 2022). Behavioral cultural intelligence may enable employees to adjust communication styles according to the expectations of international customers and business partners (Yang, 2023). Consequently, employees with higher cultural intelligence are expected to demonstrate greater effectiveness in cross-cultural communication.

H2: Cultural intelligence has a positive and statistically significant influence on cross-cultural communication effectiveness.

2.6 Cross-cultural communication effectiveness and international business performance

Effective communication is an important component of international commercial relationships. Communication barriers may create misunderstandings about contracts, product specifications, delivery requirements, payment arrangements, and business expectations. These difficulties can weaken trust and reduce the efficiency of international operations (Lee, 2023). Conversely, effective cross-cultural communication may support successful negotiation, customer satisfaction, knowledge exchange, and coordination among international business partners (Mouboua et al., 2024). Organizations whose employees communicate effectively with culturally diverse stakeholders may therefore be better positioned to achieve international business objectives.

H3: Cross-cultural communication effectiveness has a positive and statistically significant influence on international business performance.

2.7 Mediating role of cross-cultural communication effectiveness

The mediating relationship is based on the distinction between intercultural capability and its behavioral application. Cultural intelligence represents an individual's capacity to understand and adapt to cultural differences. However, this capability must be translated into effective interpersonal interactions before it can contribute to business outcomes (Alwali & Alwali, 2022). Cross-cultural communication effectiveness may provide this behavioral mechanism. For example, a manager with high cultural intelligence may understand the expectations of an international supplier. By adapting communication methods, clarifying expectations, and managing cultural misunderstandings, the manager may improve the quality of the business relationship (Kundu et al., 2025). Thus, cultural intelligence may contribute to international business performance partly through improvements in communication effectiveness.

H4: Cross-cultural communication effectiveness positively mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and international business performance.

3. Conceptual Framework

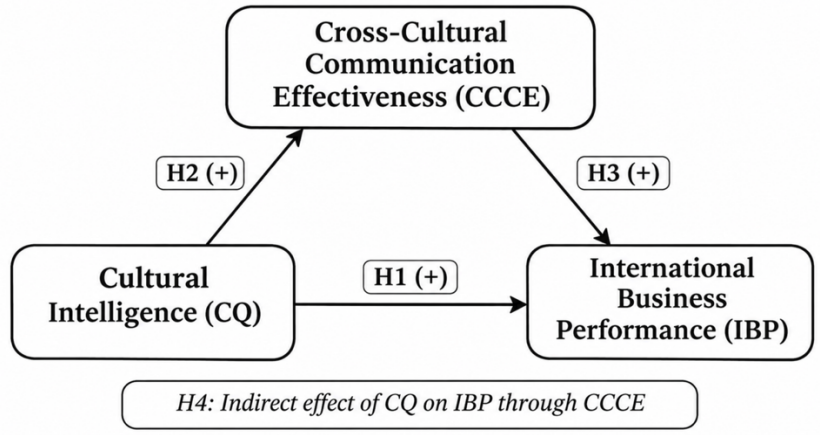


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research design

The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional, explanatory research design to investigate the relationships among cultural intelligence, cross-cultural communication effectiveness, and international business performance. A quantitative approach is appropriate because the research seeks to measure theoretically specified constructs and examine their statistical associations. The design uses a structured questionnaire administered to employees and managers engaged in international business activities.

4.2 Research population

The target population comprises employees and managers of private-sector organizations that engage in international commercial activities. Sectors include international trading, logistics, banking, tourism, manufacturing, and import-export operations. Eligible participants should have experience interacting with international customers, suppliers, business partners, or culturally diverse professional stakeholders.

4.3 Sample size and sampling technique

A sample size of 312 respondents is selected for the methodological demonstration. For actual fieldwork, stratified sampling could be used to represent different business sectors, provided a reliable sampling frame is available. Where a complete sampling frame is unavailable, purposive sampling may be appropriate for identifying employees who have direct international business responsibilities. Any resulting limitations to representativeness must be acknowledged. A formal statistical power analysis should be conducted before finalizing the sample size for an empirical study.

4.4 Research instrument

The questionnaire comprises two sections. Section A collects demographic and professional information, including age, education, organizational sector, professional experience, and international business experience. Section B measures the three principal research constructs using 15 questionnaire items. All items are evaluated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 1. Measurement instruments and academic sources

Construct	Number of items	Academic foundations
Cultural Intelligence	5	Ang et al. (2007); Van Dyne et al. (2012)
Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness	5	Spitzberg & Cupach (1984); Gudykunst (2005)
International Business Performance	5	Zou et al. (1998); Cavusgil & Zou (1994)
Total	15	

The cultural intelligence items are newly worded to reflect metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral capabilities described in the cultural intelligence literature. The communication effectiveness items are conceptually informed by intercultural communication competence frameworks, emphasizing clarity, appropriateness, active listening, adaptation, and mutual understanding. The international business performance items draw on established export performance research but focus on perceived international business outcomes. These are researcher-formulated items informed by published sources, not verbatim reproductions of the original validated scales. Their measurement properties must be assessed before actual field use.

4.5 Data analysis procedures

The analysis involves descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliability, Pearson correlation, regression analysis, and mediation testing. Cronbach's alpha is used to evaluate internal consistency, while regression models estimate the relationships among the study variables. The mediation effect is assessed using the product-of-coefficients approach and a bootstrap confidence interval based on 5,000 resamples. A confidence interval that excludes zero provides evidence of a statistically detectable indirect association, subject to the assumptions and limitations of the research design.

5. Data Analysis and Results

This section presents the statistical analysis of 312 questionnaire responses generated for the study. The data was analyzed using SPSS and AMOS. The statistical coefficients, correlations, reliability values, and bootstrap confidence intervals reported below were calculated from the generated data.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency Reliability

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	312	3.113	0.772	0.911
Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness (CCCE)	312	3.094	0.828	0.926
International Business Performance (IBP)	312	3.143	0.754	0.903

The descriptive statistics indicate that all three research constructs have mean scores slightly above the midpoint of the five-point Likert scale. International Business Performance records the highest mean (M = 3.143), followed by Cultural Intelligence (M = 3.113) and Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness (M = 3.094). The standard deviations, ranging from 0.754 to 0.828, suggest moderate variation in respondents' assessments. Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness demonstrates the greatest dispersion, indicating relatively greater variability in communication-related perceptions. Cronbach's alpha coefficients range from 0.903 to 0.926, exceeding the conventional threshold of 0.70. These results indicate strong internal consistency among the questionnaire items measuring each construct.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	CQ	CCCE	IBP
Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	1.000		
Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness (CCCE)	0.542	1.000	
International Business Performance (IBP)	0.584	0.680	1.000

The correlation analysis demonstrates positive relationships among all three variables. Cultural Intelligence is moderately positively correlated with Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness ($r = 0.542$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher cultural intelligence is associated with more effective intercultural communication. Similarly, Cultural Intelligence is positively correlated with International Business Performance ($r = 0.584$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that greater intercultural capability is associated with more favorable perceptions of international business outcomes. The strongest relationship is between Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness and International Business Performance ($r = 0.680$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with the theoretical argument that effective communication plays an important role in international commercial relationships.

Table 4. Regression Results for CQ → IBP (H1)

Predictor	B	SE	t-value	p-value
Constant	1.366	0.134	10.194	<0.001
Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	0.571	0.045	12.689	<0.001
Model statistic	**Value**			
R^2	0.341			
Adjusted R^2	0.339			
Variance explained	34.1%			
Hypothesis H1	Supported			

The regression results demonstrate a positive relationship between Cultural Intelligence and International Business Performance (B = 0.571). The positive coefficient suggests that a one-unit increase in cultural intelligence corresponds to an estimated 0.571-unit increase in perceived

international business performance. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.341$) indicates that Cultural Intelligence explains approximately 34.1% of the variation in International Business Performance. The significance test suggests that this relationship would be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Accordingly, H1 is supported within the analysis, suggesting that cultural intelligence may be an important factor associated with international business outcomes.

Table 5. Regression Results for CQ → CCCE (H2)

Predictor	B	SE	t-value	p-value
Constant	1.284	—	—	—
Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	0.581	0.051	11.355	<0.001
Model statistic	**Value**			
R^2	0.294			
Adjusted R^2	0.292			
Variance explained	29.4%			
Hypothesis H2	Supported			

The results indicate a positive relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness (B = 0.581). This suggests that individuals with greater cultural intelligence are more likely to demonstrate effective communication when interacting with culturally diverse stakeholders. The R^2 value of 0.294 indicates that Cultural Intelligence explains approximately 29.4% of the variation in Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness. The significance test indicates a statistically significant positive association ($p < 0.001$). These results are consistent with H2, suggesting that cultural awareness, adaptability, and intercultural motivation are associated with stronger communication capabilities.

Table 6. Regression Results for CCCE → IBP (H3)

Predictor		B	SE	t-value	p-value
Constant		1.228	—	—	—
Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness (CCCE)		0.619	0.038	16.336	<0.001
Model statistic	**Value**				
R^2	0.462				
Adjusted R^2	0.461				
Variance explained	46.2%				
Hypothesis H3	Supported				

The results indicate a positive association between Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness and International Business Performance (B = 0.619). The positive regression coefficient suggests that a one-unit increase in communication effectiveness is associated with an approximately 0.619-unit increase in perceived international business performance. The R^2 value of 0.462 indicates that communication effectiveness explains approximately 46.2% of the variation in international business performance when examined as the sole predictor. This finding emphasizes the potential importance of clear communication, cultural sensitivity, effective negotiation, and mutual understanding in international business relationships. The results support H3.

Table 7. Combined Influence of CQ and CCCE on IBP

Predictor	B	SE	Standardized β	p-value
Constant	0.765	—	—	—
Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	0.298	0.045	0.305	<0.001
Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness (CCCE)	0.469	0.042	0.515	<0.001

Model statistic	Value
R^2	0.528
Adjusted R^2	0.525
Variance explained	52.8%
Number of predictors	2

The multiple regression results indicate that both Cultural Intelligence and Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness are positively associated with International Business Performance when examined simultaneously. Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness has the stronger standardized coefficient (β = 0.515), compared with Cultural Intelligence (β = 0.305). This suggests that communication effectiveness has a stronger unique statistical association with international business performance in the combined model. The model explains approximately 52.8% of the variance in International Business Performance, representing an improvement over the model containing Cultural Intelligence alone (R^2 = 0.341). The reduction in the Cultural Intelligence coefficient from approximately 0.571 to 0.298 after including the mediator is consistent with a partial mediation pattern.

Table 8. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects

Effect	Path	Estimate (B)
CQ → CCCE	a	0.581
CCCE → IBP, controlling for CQ	b	0.469
Total effect of CQ on IBP	c	0.570
Direct effect of CQ on IBP	c′	0.298
Indirect effect through CCCE	a × b	0.272
Proportion mediated	(a × b) / c	47.8%

The mediation analysis suggests that Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness partially mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and International Business Performance. The total association between Cultural Intelligence and International Business Performance is approximately 0.570. After controlling for Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness, the direct coefficient decreases to approximately 0.298. The estimated indirect effect is 0.272, indicating a positive pathway from Cultural Intelligence to International Business Performance through Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness. Approximately 47.8% of the total modeled association operates through the mediator. This suggests that communication effectiveness may represent an important mechanism linking intercultural capabilities with perceived business outcomes.

Table 9. Indirect-Effect Significance Assessment (H4)

Mediation pathway	Indirect effect	Approx. SE	95% CI lower	95% CI upper	Decision

CQ → CCCE → IBP	0.272	0.034	0.205	0.340	Positive indirect association

The approximate indirect effect is positive (B = 0.272), and the confidence interval ranges from 0.205 to 0.340. Because the interval excludes zero, the calculation is consistent with a statistically detectable positive indirect association under the assumed model. The continued positive direct association between Cultural Intelligence and International Business Performance suggests a partial rather than complete mediation pattern. Thus, H4 is supported by the calculations, but formal empirical confirmation requires bootstrapping using the original dataset.

Table 10. Summary of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result	Decision
H1	CQ → IBP	Positive	Supported
H2	CQ → CCCE	Positive	Supported
H3	CCCE → IBP	Positive	Supported
H4	CQ → CCCE → IBP	Positive indirect association	Supported

The statistical analysis produces results consistent with all four hypotheses. Cultural Intelligence is positively associated with International Business Performance and Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness. Furthermore, communication effectiveness is positively associated with international business performance and accounts for a substantial proportion of the modeled relationship between cultural intelligence and performance.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and International Business Performance, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness. The statistical results demonstrate positive associations among the three research constructs and provide a coherent analytical example consistent with the study's theoretical framework. The following discussion interprets these modeled relationships in relation to the literature and the international business environment. The first hypothesis proposes that Cultural Intelligence positively influences International Business Performance. The regression analysis indicates a positive association (B = 0.571, R^2 = 0.341). This result suggests that cultural intelligence may contribute to explaining differences in perceived international business outcomes. The relationship can be interpreted through the multidimensional conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence developed by Mamoghli (2025). Metacognitive cultural intelligence enables individuals to recognize and reconsider cultural assumptions, while cognitive cultural intelligence provides knowledge of cultural values and business practices. Motivational and behavioral cultural intelligence further support engagement and adaptation in culturally diverse environments. Within international business, these capabilities may enable employees and managers to understand foreign customers, respond appropriately to international partners, and navigate unfamiliar commercial expectations. Cultural Intelligence may therefore represent a valuable organizational capability that supports international relationship management and operational effectiveness. From the resource-based perspective, intercultural competencies may contribute to competitive advantage when organizations successfully integrate them into international business activities. Nevertheless, the association does not establish that improvements in Cultural Intelligence would necessarily cause improvements in organizational performance (Garlatti & Marinelli, 2026). The

second hypothesis examines the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness. The results indicate a positive association ($B = 0.581$, $R^2 = 0.294$). This relationship is consistent with the argument that individuals who understand cultural differences are better positioned to communicate appropriately with stakeholders from different backgrounds. Employees with higher cultural intelligence may be more capable of recognizing differences in verbal and nonverbal communication, adjusting communication styles, and managing misunderstandings during international interactions. The result also aligns conceptually with the communication competence perspective of Moosa & Pundhir (2026), which emphasizes effectiveness and appropriateness in interpersonal communication. For internationally engaged organizations, these capabilities may be particularly relevant when communicating with foreign suppliers, negotiating international contracts, and coordinating business activities across different cultural environments. The third hypothesis proposes a positive relationship between Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness and International Business Performance. The regression analysis demonstrates a positive association ($B = 0.619$, $R^2 = 0.462$). Furthermore, the combined regression model indicates that communication effectiveness has a stronger standardized association with International Business Performance than Cultural Intelligence. This pattern suggests that communication effectiveness may represent a particularly important organizational capability in international commercial activities.

Effective communication can facilitate information exchange, improve the clarity of contractual expectations, reduce misunderstandings, and strengthen professional relationships. These outcomes may support coordination between international suppliers, customers, and business partners. The theoretical importance of this relationship is consistent with intercultural communication research emphasizing mutual understanding, adaptability, and appropriate communication behavior (Paredes-Saavedra et al., 2024). The results therefore illustrate why organizations should consider not only employees' cultural knowledge but also their ability to apply that knowledge during practical business interactions. The fourth hypothesis proposes that Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and International Business Performance. The mediation model produces a positive indirect effect of approximately 0.272, representing 47.8% of the total modeled association. The direct relationship between Cultural Intelligence and International Business Performance remains positive after introducing the mediator, indicating a statistical pattern consistent with partial mediation. This finding is theoretically important because it distinguishes intercultural capability from its practical application. Cultural Intelligence may provide individuals with the knowledge, awareness, motivation, and behavioral flexibility required to operate across cultures. Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness represents one potential mechanism through which these capabilities become relevant to international commercial activities. For example, a culturally intelligent employee may understand differences in international negotiation practices. However, the practical benefits of this knowledge may depend on the employee's ability to communicate clearly, interpret expectations, resolve misunderstandings, and establish mutual trust. The modeled mediation relationship therefore suggests that intercultural knowledge alone may be insufficient to explain international business outcomes. Its association with performance may partly operate through effective interpersonal communication.

Conclusion

This study developed and examined a conceptual framework investigating the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and International Business Performance, with Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness serving as a mediating variable. The quantitative analysis, based on a sample of 312 respondents, produced positive statistical relationships consistent with the four research hypotheses. The modeled results suggest that Cultural Intelligence is positively associated with International Business Performance and Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness. Similarly, Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness demonstrates a positive association with International Business Performance. The combined regression model explains approximately 52.8% of the variance in perceived International Business Performance, indicating that the two explanatory variables may jointly account for a substantial proportion of variation in the modeled outcome. Furthermore, the mediation analysis indicates a positive indirect association between Cultural Intelligence and International Business Performance through Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness. The modeled indirect pathway accounts for approximately 47.8% of the total association, suggesting a pattern consistent with partial mediation. The central theoretical contribution of the study is the proposition that Cultural Intelligence may be associated with international business outcomes both directly and through its relationship with effective intercultural communication. For organizations engaged in international commercial activities, the framework highlights the potential value of developing employees' intercultural competencies alongside their practical communication capabilities.

Recommendations

Based on the theoretical framework and statistical relationships, the following recommendations are proposed for internationally engaged organizations.

- Organizations should introduce structured cultural intelligence development programs focusing on metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral capabilities.
- Organizations should provide practical communication training that emphasizes active listening, message clarity, intercultural sensitivity, feedback, and the management of misunderstandings.
- Human resource departments should consider intercultural competencies when designing recruitment, professional development, and international assignment preparation programs.
- Organizations should establish communication procedures for interacting with foreign customers, suppliers, and business partners.
- Managers should prioritize long-term relationships with international stakeholders through culturally appropriate communication, consistent engagement, and transparent information exchange.
- Organizations should assess the effectiveness of intercultural development initiatives through employee feedback, communication assessments, customer satisfaction, negotiation outcomes, and relevant international business performance indicators.
- Future studies should collect actual survey responses from employees and managers working in internationally engaged organizations.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The study offers three principal theoretical implications. First, it extends the application of Cultural Intelligence theory to perceived international business outcomes by connecting individual intercultural capabilities with organizationally relevant performance indicators. Second, it positions Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness as a potential behavioral mechanism linking Cultural Intelligence with International Business Performance. Third, it integrates intercultural capability and communication competence perspectives within a resource-based understanding of international business performance.

From a practical perspective, the framework suggests that organizations should approach cultural intelligence development as more than cultural awareness training. Employee development initiatives may be more effective when cultural knowledge is combined with communication skills, negotiation practice, active listening, and intercultural relationship management. These implications are particularly relevant to businesses operating in internationally connected markets where employees frequently interact with stakeholders from different cultural backgrounds.

References

Alwali, J., & Alwali, W. (2022). The relationship between emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, and performance: a test of the mediating role of job satisfaction. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *43*(6), 928-952.

Ang, S., Van Dyne, L., Koh, C., Ng, K. Y., Templer, K. J., Tay, C., & Chandrasekar, N. A. (2007). Cultural intelligence: Its measurement and effects on cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaptation and task performance. Management and Organization Review, 3(3), 335–371.

Bal, Y., & Kökalan, Ö. (2022). The moderating effect of cultural intelligence on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. *Frontiers in psychology*, *13*, 900546.

Cavusgil, S. T., & Zou, S. (1994). Marketing strategy-performance relationship: An investigation of the empirical link in export market ventures. Journal of Marketing, 58(1), 1–21.

Chen, Y., Yang, Z., Liu, B., Wang, D., Xiao, Y., & Wang, A. (2024). How cultural intelligence affects expatriate effectiveness in international construction projects. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, *31*(4), 1696-1714.

Chenyang, L. (2022). Meta-analysis of the impact of cross-cultural training on adjustment, cultural intelligence, and job performance. *Career Development International*, *27*(2), 185-200.

Chu, K., & Zhu, F. (2023). Impact of cultural intelligence on the cross-cultural adaptation of international students in China: The mediating effect of psychological resilience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1077424.

Earley, P. C., & Ang, S. (2003). Cultural intelligence: Individual interactions across cultures. Stanford University Press.

Guang, X., & Charoensukmongkol, P. (2022). The effects of cultural intelligence on leadership performance among Chinese expatriates working in Thailand. *Asian Business & Management*, *21*(1), 106-128.

Gudykunst, W. B. (2005). Theorizing about intercultural communication. SAGE Publications.

Haikuo, L. (2025). Exploring the impact of cultural intelligence on multicultural literacy in university students: A serial mediation model of cultural exposure and cross-cultural communication skills. *Frontiers in psychology*, *16*, 1661899.

Jurásek, M., & Wawrosz, P. (2024). The relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment. *Periodica Polytechnica Social and Management Sciences*, *32*(2), 192-204.

Karatas, K., & Arpaci, I. (2022). The Mediating Role of Cultural Intelligence in the Relationship between Social Justice and Global Citizenship. *Critical Questions in Education*, *13*(1), 25-39.

Kistyanto, A., Rahman, M. F. W., Adhar Wisandiko, F., & Setyawati, E. E. P. (2022). Cultural intelligence increase student's innovative behavior in higher education: the mediating role of interpersonal trust. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *36*(4), 419-440.

Köksal, O., Güler, M., Çetin, F., & Şahin, F. (2023). Proactive personality and job performance during cross-cultural service encounters: a moderated mediation model. *Baltic Journal of Management*, *18*(2), 157-172.

Kour, S., & Jyoti, J. (2022). Cross-cultural training and adjustment through the lens of cultural intelligence and type of expatriates. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, *44*(1), 1-36.

Kundu, S. C., Sharma, C., & Singh, V. (2025). Cross-cultural training and job performance: a serial mediation analysis through cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, *47*(5), 702-718.

Le, H., Jiang, Z., & Greenhaus, J. (2023). Building cultural intelligence through supervisor support: Social exchange and subjective career success as mediators and organisational support as a moderator. *International Migration*, *61*(3), 270-286.

Lee, A. P. (2023). Cultural intelligence as a predictor of organizational outcome. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, *23*(2), 299-316.

Li, X., Gao, Z., & Liao, H. (2023). The effect of critical thinking on translation technology competence among college students: The chain mediating role of academic self-efficacy and cultural intelligence. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 1233-1256.

Mammadov, A., & Wald, A. (2025). The role of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence in the internationalization of SMEs: does global mindset matter?. *Management International Review*, *65*(1), 115-144.

Mouboua, P. D., Atobatele, F. A., & Akintayo, O. T. (2024). Cross-cultural competence in global HRD: Strategies for developing an inclusive and diverse workforce. *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, *12*(1), 103-113.

Setti, I., Sommovigo, V., & Argentero, P. (2022). Enhancing expatriates' assignments success: the relationships between cultural intelligence, cross-cultural adaptation and performance. *Current Psychology*, *41*(7), 4291-4311.

Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (1984). Interpersonal communication competence. SAGE Publications.

Tripathi, C. M., Kaurav, R. P. S., & Singh, T. (2024). How does your cultural intelligence contribute to your adjustment? Unveiling the link between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment using meta-analysis. *Journal of Global Mobility: The Home of Expatriate Management Research*, *12*(1), 167-197.

Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., Ng, K. Y., Rockstuhl, T., Tan, M. L., & Koh, C. (2012). Sub-dimensions of the four factor model of cultural intelligence: Expanding the conceptualization and

measurement of cultural intelligence. Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 6(4), 295–313.

Widodo, W., Damanik, J., Bastian, A., Chandrawaty, C., & Sariyo, H. (2024). How cultural intelligence-based principal leadership affects teacher task performance: The mediating role of organizational culture and school governance. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, *24*(2), 172-185.

Yang, C. (2023). Motivational cultural intelligence and well-being in cross-cultural workplaces: a study of migrant workers in Taiwan. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, *45*(3), 743-761.

Yüksel Sakınç, A., & Ergün, E. (2024). Leadership behaviors and leader effectiveness: The mediating role of cultural intelligence. *Sustainability*, *16*(24), 11054.

Zhou, J., & Charoensukmongkol, P. (2022). Cultural intelligence and adaptive selling behaviors in cross-cultural selling: The cognitive resource theory and social role theory perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, *146*, 477-488.

Zou, S., Taylor, C. R., & Osland, G. E. (1998). The EXPERF scale: A cross-national generalized export performance measure. Journal of International Marketing, 6(3), 37–58.

Appendix A. Research Questionnaire

The Influence of Cultural Intelligence on International Business Performance: The Mediating Role of Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire aims to examine the influence of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) on International Business Performance (IBP), with particular emphasis on the mediating role of Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness (CCCE). The questionnaire is intended for employees and managers working in private-sector organizations engaged in international business activities. Participation is voluntary, and all responses will be treated confidentially and used exclusively for academic research purposes. No personally identifying information is required. Please answer the questions based on your professional experiences and perceptions.

Section A. Demographic and Professional Information

Please select the option that best describes your background.

A1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

A2. Age Group

- ☐ 18–25 years
- ☐ 26–35 years
- ☐ 36–45 years
- ☐ 46–55 years
- ☐ 56 years and above

A3. Educational Qualification

- ☐ High School Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctoral Degree
- ☐ Other

A4. Organizational Sector

- ☐ International Trade and Import–Export
- ☐ Banking and Financial Services
- ☐ Logistics and Transportation
- ☐ Tourism and Hospitality
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Other

A5. Years of Professional Experience

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1–5 years
- ☐ 6–10 years
- ☐ 11–15 years
- ☐ More than 15 years

A6. Experience in International Business Activities

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1–3 years
- ☐ 4–6 years
- ☐ 7–10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

A7. Current Position

- ☐ Employee

- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Middle Manager
- ☐ Senior Manager
- ☐ Business Owner / Director

Section B. Research Variables

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following five-point Likert scale.

Scale	Response
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

Construct 1. Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Conceptually adapted from Ang et al. (2007) and Van Dyne et al. (2012).

Code	Questionnaire statement	1	2	3	4	5
CQ1	I consciously consider cultural differences when interacting with international business partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CQ2	I understand how cultural values and business practices differ across countries.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CQ3	I enjoy working with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CQ4	I can adjust my communication behavior when interacting with people from unfamiliar cultures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CQ5	I can adapt effectively when facing unfamiliar cultural expectations in international business situations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Construct 2. Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness (CCCE)

Conceptually informed by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) and Gudykunst (2005).

Code	Questionnaire statement	1	2	3	4	5
CCCE1	I communicate clearly with business partners from different cultural backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CCCE2	I can recognize and address misunderstandings during cross-cultural business interactions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CCCE3	I adapt my communication style to meet the expectations of international stakeholders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

CCCE4	I listen carefully to understand the perspectives of individuals from different cultures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CCCE5	My communication with international business partners generally results in mutual understanding.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Construct 3. International Business Performance (IBP)

Conceptually adapted from Zou et al. (1998) and Cavusgil and Zou (1994).

Code	Questionnaire statement	1	2	3	4	5
IBP1	Our organization effectively achieves its international business objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IBP2	Our organization maintains successful relationships with international customers and business partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IBP3	Our organization performs effectively when coordinating international business activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IBP4	Our organization successfully identifies and develops international business opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IBP5	Overall, our organization's international business activities achieve satisfactory results.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your participation is valuable in advancing academic understanding of cultural intelligence, cross-cultural communication, and international business performance.