

An American researcher will measure, for the first time, the Cultural Intelligence Scale in Moldova

[Eugen Muravschi](#) 31/08/2015 [An American researcher will measure, for the first time, the Cultural Intelligence Scale in Moldova](#)2015-08-31T14:59:58+00:00Society, Opinion, Important



American researcher Dr. R. Boyd Johnson will measure, for the first time, the Cultural Intelligence Scale in Moldova. It is also the first time when the scale is translated to Romanian. We interviewed him to find out more about his research [here](#).

– Dr. Johnson, what is this Cultural Intelligence Scale? What does it measure precisely?

Let's start with clarifying what cultural intelligence is. This concept was first introduced in the literature by researchers Ang & Van Dyne in 2003, and is defined as “an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings” and across cultures.

Cultural Intelligence is measured on a 20 items scale provides a valid and reliable measure of a person's ability to function effectively in culturally diverse situations, measuring primary factors which represent distinct capabilities: CQ-Drive, CQ-Knowledge, CQ-Strategy, and CQ-Action. (CQ stands for cultural quotient, just like in IQ)

– Why is it useful? Is it a purely academic endeavour or can the results of this research be used in any other way NGOs, government bodies or simply to improve public knowledge and awareness about some issues?

This is a very good question. The CQ is not a purely academic concept. It is extensively used in management, organizational psychology, leadership, and wide acceptance in business and even in the public sector. Cultural intelligence contributes to the successful operations of individuals in any sector.

-How did you choose Moldova?

Moldova is a country which has and is still undergoing major social, economic, and political changes, and in this context the need for researching cross cultural interaction and cultural intelligence in the country is rising.

Currently, Moldova is facing various structural changes and challenges, building international and European private and public partnerships, attracting investments, and generally speaking, the number of potential intercultural ventures at both private and public levels is increasing. Thus the cross-cultural interactions represent a prerogative for the successful development of various areas of Moldovan society. This includes an understanding of how Moldovans see the world beyond their borders, and how well equipped they are to successfully interact across cultures.

-Are there any similar studies in neighboring countries like Romania and Ukraine? If so, are there any "curious" findings in these countries?

Interesting that you ask this. Yes, indeed, there are. I was able to measure Cultural Intelligence in Ukraine before the recent political changes.

In 2012-2014, together with a group of Ukrainian colleagues from Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and with the support of Dr. Svitlana Buko, we have organized a similar study in Ukraine. The project was implemented in three phases: translation and adaptation of CQS (1), testing of cultural intelligence scale (2), and application of the CQS to a national sample of Ukrainians in various regions throughout the whole country.

In the Ukrainian study, the respondents were also asked to identify their primary language to use in the questionnaire: Russian or Ukrainian. A comparison of these two groups' responses also revealed important differences. In about two-thirds of the questions, the Russian speakers had higher levels of (self-reported) cultural intelligence.

However, in questions that measured flexibility in altering verbal behavior in cross-cultural encounters, and in knowledge of non-verbal behavior, the Ukrainian speakers scored higher. They also scored higher in their response to the statement, «I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures». And yet the Ukrainian speakers were significantly lower in their response to the statement, «I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me». These findings may appear somewhat contradictory, but again historical factors may be relevant. Ukrainian speakers have had to adjust their verbal behavior due to periods of linguistic suppression, and this may have been subtly passed on to current speakers of the language.

It certainly could have been a useful adaptive feature when dealing with surrounding countries and shifting national borders. All the findings from this Ukrainian national sample demonstrate that cultural intelligence is a concept that can be studied in Ukraine, with results that are relevant from sociological, historical and even psychological perspectives.

-At what stage is the research right now?

The project started in November 2014, and the field work was launched end of February. The CQS project in Moldova is following the Ukrainian design and has also three phases: (1) the adaptation and translation of the instrument. We have organized already two focus groups, in the urban and rural areas, as we wanted to see how the local population perceives the items on the scale, and to identify correct formulations and finalize the scale in Romanian language. These two focus groups were really revealing, and we have learned a lot about the CQ perception and CQ understanding in Moldova. (2) The second phase included the testing of the scale and currently we are preparing to launch in the last phase of the project in September.

In this third phase, CQS will be applied to a large national sample in Moldova (throughout the country). We want to have a representative study, which will allow us then to make a comparative analysis of the Moldovan and Ukrainian results.

-What are the initial results or expectations?

We would like to see perceptions of Moldovans about Cultural intelligence and measure CQS of Moldovans. I also want to look at both similarities and differences compared to the Ukrainian study. At the same time, there are specific historical, cultural and social aspects, which have impacted those elements that CQS is measuring.

During the focus group discussions of the concepts, the participants from both the urban and the rural areas were very open and have provided answers, examples and improvement suggestions related to the scale items. Though it is premature to make some conclusions at this point, I can state that the focus groups participants have had very different interpretations of the CQ scale items meaning.

-Who's on the team? Locals or Americans, students, volunteers, professors?

This is a Moldovan – American project. While I am the main investigator in this research, we have a Moldovan research coordinator, Diana Mirza-Grisco, who ensures the smooth running of the processes, as well as the development of the content. We also have a partner institution in Moldova, who has supported the study by running the data collection – Magenta Consulting, as well as other US-based experts, and European-based associate researchers, who support with peer reviewing and additional input.

-What do you think about the state of local social sciences? What areas are ok and what should be improved?

It would be difficult for me to answer this question. I have visited Moldova for a few days only, so far, and I do not have direct contacts at the universities from Moldova. But I can reflect on the experience I had with this project. Our initial plan was to work with a local university or academics representing the university, which could have helped the study with data collection.

But it was very difficult to secure such a partnership. Though we have reached out to several institutions, we were not successful. Then we have turned to a well-established private agency, which has extensive experience in the field, including data collection in marketing and social sciences studies: Magenta Consulting. The consultants from this agency have been very professional, demonstrating excellent skills.

-When will the study be ready and how will the results be presented here?

We plan to finalize the study by mid October. The results will be presented to Moldovan media during a press-conference, which will take place toward the end of October. I am also looking forward sharing the findings of the studies in peer-reviewed academic journals.

-Any other thoughts on Moldova in general?

Yes, I'm finding that Moldova is a fascinating country, with an interesting history. As a person trained in anthropology, I fully enjoy getting to know new cultures, and Moldova is a society that's a blend of many traditions and historical influences. From a researcher's perspective, it's a wonderful area to study. And from a personal perspective, it has some of the best food I've ever had — and I've been to over 60 countries. And the wines are truly exceptional!

– **Thank you very much.**

– Thank you.