

**The impact of the cultural intelligence of service staff on the service
delivery experiences of customers at casual dining restaurants in
Bloemfontein**

by

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree

**MASTER OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES IN HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**

in the

Department of Business Management

Faculty of Management Sciences

at the Central University of Technology, Free State

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**Bloemfontein
October 2023**

Declaration of Independent Work

I, Puseletso Mary Sents'o, bearing identity number _____ and student number _____, hereby affirm that the research project presented to the Central University of Technology, Free State, in pursuit of degree *Master of Management Sciences in Human Resource Management*, is solely my own work and adheres to the principles of academic integrity. Furthermore, it complies with all relevant policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the Central University of Technology, Free State. I confirm that this research project has not been previously submitted to any other institution by myself or any other individual as a means of fulfilling, either wholly or partially, the requirements for any qualification.

Signature of student

Date: 26 October 2023

Abstract

In the ever-changing world of work, especially in the tourism and hospitality industry, it is important for service staff to generate innovative ideas to enhance organisational effectiveness. One way of achieving this is to focus on the cultural intelligence of service staff. Cultural intelligence refers to an individual's deliberate cognitive recognition and capacity for processing cultural information in the context of intercultural interactions.

The study investigated the impact of the cultural intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers at casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein. Cultural intelligence was measured using four components conceptualised by Ang, Van Dyne and Koh (2006), namely cognitive, metacognitive behavioural, and motivational cultural intelligence. The SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) was used to measure perceptions of service delivery. This model consists of the following components: tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, reliability, and assurance.

The study adopted quantitative, post positivist research approach using a cross sectional, Ex-post Factor research design. A structured questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 403 customers of casual dining restaurants, using QuestionPro. The application of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to examine the relationship between the variables.

Statistically significant negative relationships were recorded: between metacognitive cultural intelligence and service delivery; and between cognitive cultural intelligence and service delivery related to assurance, reliability, and responsiveness. However, no relationships were found between cognitive cultural intelligence and empathy and tangibles.

Statistically significant negative relationships were also recorded between behavioural cultural intelligence and service delivery related to assurance, empathy, and responsiveness, while no relationships were found between behavioural cognitive intelligence and reliability and tangibles. In contrast, statistically significant positive relationships were recorded between motivational cultural intelligence and all the levels of service delivery.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Almighty for graciously bestowing blessings upon me and providing protection throughout this personal journey.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Professor Koko for her consistent support of my research endeavours, as well as her outstanding patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and extensive expertise. The guidance provided by her has proven to be of great worth during the process of conducting research and composing this dissertation. I could not have asked for a better advisor and mentor for my studies. *You are my hero.*

My sincere gratitude to my mother, Mathabo Sents'o, for, first, giving birth to such a wonder. Thank you for supporting me spiritually throughout my life. *Mama, I made it.* Your love and support saw me through this ordeal. To my father, Monts'o Sents'o, thank you for always believing in me.

I want to express my thanks to my brother, Molefi Sents'o, for his encouragement, my sisters, Nts'enyane Sents'o and Malerato Sents'o, for their support and valuable prayers. My sincere thanks also go to Lerato Sents'o, Mapaseka Sents'o and Leseli Sents'o for always cheering me up during this journey. Special thanks to friends and classmates for the support and kindness while I was writing this dissertation. Thank you for the genuine support and patience throughout this research project.

Finally, I would like to express my profoundest appreciation to my husband, Monyake Hlabanyane, for being considerate, affectionate, and encouraging. Your support during difficult times is greatly valued and will be remembered. Your willingness to oversee our household duties while I completed my work was a tremendous source of respite and assurance.

To my children, Kamohelo Hlabanyane and Tlhonefatso 'Blessing' Hlabanyane, for always putting a smile on my face and keeping me motivated during this journey: my heartfelt thanks. Special thanks to the Central University of Technology, Free State, for the generous financial assistance provided to me throughout my studies. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the participants who took part in this study.

List of Acronyms

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information Communication Technology
SA	South Africa
SDS	Service Delivery System
TGCSA	Tourism Grading Council of South Africa
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The evolving new world of work has reshaped our understanding of work and the competencies needed for success in today's workplace. According to R  th and Netzer (2020), the new world of work is defined by workforce diversity, increased use of digital technologies, business innovation, and flexible working arrangements. The disruptions caused by globalisation, especially those brought about by Information Communication Technology (ICT) and the Internet, have resulted in organisations having to rethink issues of effectiveness and efficiency as they become exposed to competition on a global scale (Barcelos, 2018).

Indeed, ICT and the Internet have facilitated the emergence of a mobile workforce that is increasingly connected to their workplace. The phenomenon of global interconnectedness has resulted in greater diversity in the workplace. Workforce diversity refers to the presence of employees who possess characteristics that notably differ regarding gender, age, nationality, cultural background, disability, etc. (Bedi, Lakra and Gupta, 2014). In the 21st century, the inclusion of diverse individuals in the workforce has emerged as the crucial advantage for various sectors, particularly the tourism and hospitality industry, where attracting and retaining talent is a top priority.

There is evidence that workforce diversity leads to positive organisational outcomes. For example, R  th and Netzer (2020) found that a diverse workforce has a positive impact on an organisation. A workforce consisting of individuals with diverse nationalities and backgrounds can contribute to the organisation's responsiveness and productivity by combining their unique perspectives and experiences. Tariq and Lorenz (2017) concur that understanding workforce diversity is imperative in the new world of work as it can boost employee morale and productivity.

Despite the potential benefits of workforce diversity, Abdullah and Jin (2015) assert that organisations frequently encounter challenges in harnessing these benefits. The challenges, however, are not primarily attributed to a deficiency in well-informed business strategies rooted in diversity, but rather to a scarcity of proficient labour. Within a competitive and diverse global world, skilled labour is expected to function effectively (Solomon and Steyn, 2017a). This implies that cultivating a culturally intelligent workforce

is important imperative. More so, a culturally intelligent and skilled labour force is especially relevant in the hospitality industry as it needs to serve culturally diverse patrons (Yari et al., 2020).

Presbitero (2020) defines 'cultural intelligence' as the acquisition of intercultural competence by an individual, which include knowledge about culture, cultural skills, and metacognition of culture (Nassaji, 2015). Hassan, Basit and Sethumadavan (2020) and Ang et al. (2007) explain cultural intelligence in terms of its four dimensions, that is, metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural dimensions. Metacognitive cultural intelligence encompasses the cognitive processes that are essential for the analysis, regulation, and comprehension of knowledge. Cognitive cultural intelligence pertains to an individual's factual understanding and entails both general and specific knowledge of the norms, values, and practices associated with different countries and cultures (Jiony et al., 2021). Motivational cultural intelligence pertains to the inclination to actively engage in, guide and sustain one's enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge and effectively operating within culturally diverse contexts and undertakings (Kundu and Mor, 2017). Lastly, behavioural cultural intelligence refers to the individual capacity to engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds through verbal and non-verbal means (Hassan et al., 2020).

Cultural intelligence – like emotional intelligence which pertains to one's self- perceived capacity to recognise, regulate, and comprehend emotions – serves as a significant indicator of both professional and personal achievements within a multifaceted and interconnected work environment (Jyoti and Kour, 2017b). As restaurant staff need to interact on a personal level with customers, cultural intelligence is an important predictor that may influence customer perception of service delivery. This relates to interpersonal interaction not only with customers, but also between employees and managers in a culturally diverse hospitality sector (Jyoti and Kour, 2017b).

The tourism and hospitality industry are widely recognised as one of the largest industries globally, with the hospitality industry representing the biggest sector within the wider tourism industry. The term 'tourism and hospitality industry' thus applies widely (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2020) and the industry is a major contributor to the global economy. In the South African context, the tourism and hospitality industry has made a

positive contribution to the trade balance by generating foreign exchange receipts and by sustaining around 700 000 direct jobs before the Covid-19 pandemic (Pocket Guide to South Africa Tourism, 2017).

Before the onset of the pandemic, the tourism and hospitality industry contributed R116,9 billion to the South African GDP. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2018), the sector contributed R425 billion to the country's GDP in 2018/19. This marked a 12.7% increase between 2017 and 2018. In 2018/19, international tourists accounted for 75% of direct spending in South Africa (R87.4 billion). Domestic tourists contributed R29,5 billion representing a 35.7% increase over the previous year (South African Tourism Annual Report, 2019).

However, the tourism and hospitality industry were negatively affected by the pandemic. The closing of international borders, global demand meltdowns, supply chain disruptions, and the downsizing of human and industrial activities were the result. According to Rogerson and Rogerson (2020), the closing of borders, the cessation of international aviation operations, the cancellation of sports events and festivals, and the almost zero occupancies for accommodation services were some of the manifestations of the pandemic. Also, the lockdown regulations instituted by many governments forbade sit-in guests which had a devastating impact on the industry (Hadi, Naeem and Karim, 2022).

In South Africa the tourism industry is governed by the Tourism Act of 2014 and consequently falls under the Department of Tourism. The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) functions as the only recognised and globally credible quality assurance body for tourism products in South Africa (Kumudumali, 2020; Jamal and Budke, 2020). The tourism and hospitality industry are divided into different sectors such as food and beverages (e.g., restaurants, bars, and fast foods), travel and tourism (e.g., attractions, transportations, and sightseeing), accommodation (e.g., hotels, guest houses, and bed and breakfasts), and recreation (e.g., adventure activities, and tour guiding) (Samyгина, 2017). Of these sectors, food and beverages and accommodation fall within the hospitality industry.

The focus of this study was on the food and beverages sector, specifically casual dining restaurants, as an important component of the hospitality industry. Casual dining

establishments are characterised by a laid-back atmosphere and ample seating arrangements. Typically, these establishments provide comprehensive table service and may additionally feature a wine menu or a complete bar service. There are four distinct types of 'casual dining' restaurants: fine dining restaurants, fast food or quick serve restaurants, fast casual restaurants, and family-style restaurants (Samygina, 2017).

Fine dining establishments are characterised by a higher level of customer service attentiveness compared to casual dining restaurants. Full services with special food are offered and these types of restaurants typically have a special design, unique decoration, and high-quality furniture. *Fast food or quick service* restaurants are appealing to customers due to their rapid service, convenience, and comparatively affordable prices. Fast food restaurants can include stands or kiosks, often with no exterior sitting area. *Fast casual* restaurants generally do not provide comprehensive full table service, although higher food quality and better atmosphere can be enjoyed than at a fast-food establishment (Samygina, 2017). Also, according to Daskalaki (2016), the pricing of the menu items at fast casual restaurants tends to be higher compared to that of fast-food establishments.

The focus of the study was on casual dining restaurants as they attract a high number of patrons who are serviced by service staff, including waiters and managers/supervisors. These restaurants were also accessible to the researcher.

1.2 Problem statement

The hospitality industry plays a significant role in both developed and developing economies. Apart from being one of the largest employers globally, the hospitality industry is extremely labour intensive, and employees need to interact with individuals from a variety of cultural groups, hence the importance of cultural intelligence among employees (Jiony et al., 2021). The success of the hospitality industry is contingent upon the level of customer satisfaction and the perceived value attributed to the services provided by employees (Waqanimaravu and Arasanmi, 2020). Intercultural understanding and communication between managers and employees, as well as between employees and customers, are thus crucial (Wang, 2017).

Owing to the nature of the hospitality industry, service delivery is an essential

component. There is a dearth of research that focuses on cultural intelligence and its impact on service delivery in restaurants (Jiony et al., 2021). The main objective of this study was thus to investigate the impact of perceived cultural intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers within casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 Main research objective

The main objective of the study was to determine the impact of cultural intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in the Bloemfontein.

1.3.2 Secondary research objectives

1. To determine the impact of the cognitive intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein.
2. To explore the impact of the metacognitive intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein.
3. To establish the impact of the motivational intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein.
4. To identify the impact of the behavioural intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein.
5. To develop cultural intelligence strategies for enhancing service delivery in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein.

1.4 Research questions

1.4.1 Main research question

What is the impact of the cultural intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers at casual dining restaurants in the Bloemfontein?

1.4.2 Secondary research questions

1. What is the impact of the cognitive intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein?
2. What is the impact of the metacognitive intelligence of service staff on the service

delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein.

3. What is the impact of the motivational intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein?
4. What is the impact of the behavioural intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein?
5. What cultural intelligence strategies can enhance service delivery in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein?

1.5 Aim of the study

Because of the service-intensive and people-oriented nature of the hospitality industry, staff are continuously involved in customer service delivery. The main aim of the study was to empirically investigate the impact of service staff's cultural intelligence on customer service experiences in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein, thereby contributing both conceptually and theoretically to gauging the intercultural development of service staff in the hospitality industry.

1.6 Research philosophy

Research philosophy refers to a researcher's view regarding the development of knowledge. Nonetheless, there exist two distinct ways to conceptualise research philosophy, which rely on the researcher's perspective on the research process: namely: ontology (includes pragmatism, objectivism, and constructivism) which pertains to the fundamental nature of reality, and epistemology (includes positivism, interpretivism and critical realism which concerns the acceptable forms of knowledge acquisition. In essence, ontology is characterised by its external nature, objectivity, and independence from social actors.

Epistemology pertains to the interaction between the researcher and reality, includes the methods through which reality is apprehended or understood. Due to the nature of this study, objectivism served as ontological stance while positivism was applied as epistemological stance (Mukhles and Ababneh, 2020). In positivism, science or knowledge is mostly obtained through observation and experiments. In essence, positivists believe that human behaviour can be understood only by using observation and experimentation (Bonache and Festing, 2020). The positivist paradigm, which is closely associated with quantitative methodology, was adopted in this study as the

researcher believes that meaning can be objectively measured.

1.7 Research methodology

According to Brar, Jain, Singh, and Punjab (2013), research involves gathering, analysing, and interpreting data to answer questions and solve problems. 'Research methodology' refers to a structured approach employed by researchers to address a problem and encompasses the various procedures utilised to describe, explain, and predict phenomena. The concept of research methodology includes the examination and analysis of the different methods employed to acquire knowledge. The process encompasses the gathering of data, the subsequent analysis of the collected information, and the interpretation of the research outcomes.

Three types of research approaches can be distinguished, namely qualitative (involves analysing non-numerical data), quantitative (involves statistically testing objective theories), and mixed methods (involves both quantitative and qualitative methods). Owing to the nature of the study, a quantitative research methodology was used (Yariet al., 2020).

A 'research design' is the conceptual structure that guides the execution of a research study. It serves as the foundational framework for the systematic gathering, quantification, and examination of data. The research design consists of a comprehensive plan that delineates the researcher's intended actions, starting from the formulation of the research problem and culminating in the analysis of the collected data (Creswell and Creswell, 2022). Research designs can be categorised according to specific descriptors, including the time dimension (cross-sectional or longitudinal), methods of data collection (observational or questionnaire), the purpose of the study (descriptive or causal study), and the extent to which the research question has been clearly defined (exploratory or formal study).

This study adopted a descriptive design to establish ideas, highlight flaws within current practice, and make judgments. Descriptive designs entail collecting, analysing, and presenting data, as well as identifying and measuring factors related to a phenomenon of interest (Loeb et al., 2017). The use of closed-ended questions in most descriptive methods aids in the identification of trends, traits, and behaviours among respondents. Descriptive research designs also seek to understand the attitudes and opinions of

respondents. Surveys, naturalistic observations, and case studies are all examples of descriptive research.

In this study, survey research was performed to collect data from respondents. Leedy and Ormrod (2015), as well as Nassaji (2015), suggest that the purpose of survey research is to assess the prevalence, frequency, and distribution of traits in a population. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the findings of the study.

1.8 Ethical considerations

The study received ethical clearance from the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee (FRIC) of the Central University of Technology, Free State (see Annexure A).

The following ethical standards were adhered to:

- Respondents who participated in the study were informed of the purpose of the study.
- All the information gathered was treated confidentially.
- Participation in the study was voluntary and was explained as such, and
- Privacy was always maintained. Questionnaires were completed anonymously.

1.9 Limitation of the study

Limitations refer to the specific elements within the design or methodology of a study that have the potential to influence the outcomes of the research or the way the findings are utilised or understood. Limitations may impose constraints on the extent to which research findings can be generalised and, consequently, applied. The primary constraint for this study was the Covid-19 pandemic and its unparalleled impact on the global economic landscape. Furthermore, the researcher's data collection capacity was compromised due to the reluctance of certain patrons of casual dining establishments to partake in the study. The data collection occurred after the conclusion of the period of lockdown, specifically spanning from June to April 2022.

1.10 Layout of the study

The study is set out in the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter explained the background of the study and set out the research objectives, research questions and aim. It also outlined the research methodology that was adopted in the study, the limitations of the study, as well as the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Contextualising cultural intelligence

Chapter 2 deals with the literature pertaining to cultural intelligence. It commences by describing the nature of the hospitality industry, after which the concepts of 'culture' and 'cultural dimensions' are explained. This includes descriptions of the term 'cultural intelligence', components and attributes of cultural intelligence, benefits of cultural intelligence, and the challenges of a lack of cultural intelligence. The model of cultural intelligence is set out, and intercultural service encounters are defined. Lastly, the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework are discussed.

Chapter 3: Service delivery in the hospitality context

Chapter 3 examines the nature of service encounters. The importance of service delivery and the challenges faced by organisations in service delivery are discussed, as well as customer expectation and factors affecting customer satisfaction in casual dining restaurants. The role of employees in service delivery to achieve customer satisfaction is assessed as well. Other concepts to be addressed include the Service Delivery System (SDS) and service delivery challenges for casual dining restaurants. Cultural diversity in the hospitality industry will be investigated, which includes cultural intelligence in the South African context.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Chapter 4 presents a discussion on the methodology that was adopted to achieve the study objectives. The discussion includes the research design, the data-gathering instrument, the population and sample, and challenges related to fieldwork.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and presentations of findings

Chapter 5 analyses and provides the findings of the study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

Chapter 6 provides the conclusions based on the analysis of the findings of the study and gives recommendations that the hospitality industry could apply for success.

1.10 Summary

This chapter focused on motivating the need for the research. The problem statement of study was stated, and the chapter reviewed the background of the study. It also delineated the main and subsidiary objectives and research questions to be answered. The aim and the research paradigm for the study were identified. The methodological considerations were stated, as well as relevant ethical aspects. The chapter concluded with a layout of the study.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALISING CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

2.1 Introduction

Globalisation is increasing the prevalence of cultural contact and diversity. This applies to societies and institutions alike. Apart from enhancing creative outputs, cultural diversity can lead to better relationships and intercultural understanding (Ang, Ng and Rockstuhl, 2019). It is therefore pertinent, especially for managers, to encourage good intercultural relationships by promoting respect, empathy, and effective intercultural communication in the organisation. According to Nel et al. (2015), cultural intelligence refers to the capacity to effectively navigate and operate within an intercultural setting where individuals encounter diverse assumptions, values, and traditions that may differ from their own cultural background. Ang, Ng and Rockstuhl, (2019) introduced the term 'cultural intelligence' specifically to address the challenges of comprehending intercultural relationships.

According to Ljubica and Dulcic (2012), a crucial determinant of success for an organisation is its capacity to consistently meet the needs of customers by effectively recognising and dealing with employees and customers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Culture involves the ways in which societies interpret the world around them, thus making sense of a highly complex environment (Gunkel, Schlaegel and Taras, 2016). As these sense-making activities differ from one cultural group to another, they impact the ways in which individual members interpret the world. Cultural values thus affect many aspects, including the perception and problem-solving abilities of individuals, and shape their interpretation of experiences like service delivery. In this context, service providers, notably casual dining restaurants, must engage in effective intercultural communication to tap into the increasingly lucrative pools of culturally diverse customers (Kastanakis and Voyer, 2014).

Considering the above, it is vital to understand how organisations should embrace diversity to grow and achieve a competitive advantage. Therefore, cultural awareness is an essential component for hospitality establishments. As a multidimensional social–mental construct, cultural intelligence enables people to better study, comprehend, and engage with diverse cultures with regard to reaching organisational goals and individual well-being.

Researchers such as R  th and Netzer (2020) are of the opinion that cultural intelligence represents a strategic tool enabling top management to optimise their way of production as well as their implementation of global strategies, which clearly highlights the importance of cultural intelligence. Hassan et al. (2020) argue that cultural intelligence also allows trainers to discover flaws such as customers satisfaction, while the training of employees should be aimed at adjusting organisational processes to help the organisation thrive.

The aim of this chapter is to examine and explore the existing literature pertaining to cultural intelligence. The chapter delineates culture and cultural dimensions, the term ‘cultural intelligence’ and its components, the benefits of cultural intelligence, and the challenges of a lack of cultural intelligence. Attributes of cultural intelligence are identified, followed by a model of cultural intelligence. Steps for incorporating cultural intelligence are set out, as well as the theoretical framework for the study.

2.2 Defining culture

Culture has its roots in the study of anthropology (the science that deals with the origins, physical and cultural development, biological characteristics, and social customs and beliefs of humankind), a field which investigates the cultural development of ancient and contemporary societies (Doda, 2005). Human culture presents ways of adapting to the complex world as it provides individual members with knowledge, rules, and regulations to govern their behaviour. Culture applies to organisations as well, seeing that organisations are also characterised by distinct rules, regulations, and acceptable behavioural patterns (Harunavamwe and Palmer, 2015).

However, delineating ‘culture’ is complex due to its many definitions, ranging from references to cultural social heritage or tradition. Normative definitions of culture focus on rules or ways of doing things; psychological definitions focus on adjustments and/or problem solving; structural definitions focus on patterns and collective units (Cohen, 2009). An additional factor that contributes to the complexity of defining culture is the presence of various components, including material culture (the means through which individuals exchange goods, services, and technology), subjective culture (the ideas and knowledge shared within a group), and social culture (the shared norms governing social behaviour and institutions) (Dreyer (2017).

Anderson's (2015) view is that culture arises from the interaction of humans and their surroundings. Culture consists of shared elements and is transmitted across time periods and generations. According to Dreyer (2017), culture is a socially transmitted aspect consisting of elements such as practices, competencies, ideas, symbols, values, norms, goals, constitutive rules, artefacts, and modifications of the physical environment. Maude, (2016) agrees, defining culture in managerial terms as the reflection of how individuals perceive the organisation, the management system, and the level of employee engagement, particularly during decision making. Maude, (2016) adds that culture can be viewed as a commitment and driving force in enhancing organisational performance, as it includes shared sets of values, beliefs, and ideas.

Mai, Le and Duong (2016) describe culture as a collection of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours that are shared by a specific group of individuals. However, it is important to note that culture can vary among individuals within the same group and that it is transmitted from one generation to another. This fact aligns with the notion of culture as a shared cognitive framework and a vague collection of fundamental assumptions and values, life orientations, beliefs, policies, procedures, and behavioural norms.

Meier (2007) views culture as the enduring patterns through which individuals perceive, comprehend, and react to their surroundings. The concept encompasses the shared practices of a particular community and is universal across all human groups. Culture is influenced by historical, social, political, economic, and geographical factors, and is acquired through learning. It serves as a framework for individuals to interpret their environment and guide their social interactions.

Language plays a pivotal role in the transmission of culture (Moore and Díaz, 2019). Harunavamwe and Palmer (2015) assert that culture is perceived as a repository of knowledge, significance, and principles that permeate every facet of human existence (Gelfand, Erez and Aycan, 2007). Culture comprises a range of patterns, both explicit and implicit, that pertain to the behaviours exhibited by individuals within a society. The acquisition and transmission of these patterns occur through the utilisation of symbols which serve to embody and signify the distinctive achievements of diverse human collectives. Furthermore, culture is expressed through the presence of tangible objects and artefacts (Gelfand et al., 2007).

McGuigan (2016) sees culture as being composed of everything we make and almost everything we think and do, to the degree that everything that we make, think, and do is influenced by our group experiences. Anderson (2015) emphasises that culture is not a natural attribute that we possess from birth, but rather a social construct that we acquire through our immersion in human social communities. The prevailing way this concept is commonly articulated is by asserting that culture is a phenomenon that is passed down from one generation to succeeding ones. Thus, we are not born *with* culture, but *into* culture, and we learn it by living in human social groups. This is how we become 'enculturated' (Mai et al., 2016).

Based on the definitions, three significant characteristics of an individual's culture are emphasised. Firstly, culture is a product of human agency, continuously evolving through human activities and transmitted to future generations. Secondly, the influence of culture manifests in both intangible and tangible forms. People's fundamental attitudes and values are directly shaped by their cultural milieu, encompassing beliefs in the principles of freedom of expression and choice. Moreover, individuals leave material traces of their culture through artistic expression, craftsmanship, architectural structures, furnishings, legal systems, culinary traditions, etc. Thirdly, cultural environments undergo a process of evolution, often spanning extended periods of time (Harunavamwe and Palmer, 2015).

For this study, culture is viewed as all the products of human thought and action that aid individuals in their effort to communicate with one another within a specific cultural group (Anderson, 2015). Applying this definition to the study, it is important to note that culture manifests itself at various levels, such as organisational units, occupational groups, industries, geographical regions, and countries (Harunavamwe and Palmer, 2015). Given their profound influence on individual behaviour and cognitive processes within the framework of multinational organisations, country-based cultures or national cultures should be investigated, as well as their potential impact on performance within such organisations (Mai et al., 2016).

The preceding discourse demonstrates that culture is a continuous and fluid phenomenon, signifying that our assumptions are reinterpreted and adjusted as we

mature and gain knowledge through interactions with external influences. Culture is evident in tangible items and artefacts such as food, clothing, and art, as well as in core beliefs, conceptions of time and space, and principles regarding human nature. Its attributes range from readily identifiable and explicit manifestations to subtler and concealed elements, encompassing attitudes, values, and beliefs.

2.2.1 Dimensions of culture

According to Harunavamwe and Palmer (2015), culture encompasses the various assumptions, values, and beliefs held by individuals, representing the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes one group or category of people from another (Veiga, 2017). While it remains crucial and intriguing to demonstrate the significance of culture by investigating cultural diversity and identifying differences in behaviour and development, there are many aspects of culture that are not fully understood by people from other cultures. Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions' framework presents six dimensions that characterise different cultures. These dimensions include power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, long-/short-term orientation, and indulgence/restraint. The cultural dimensions refer to the broad characteristics of cultures that can be measured and thus facilitate comparisons between cultures. Each dimension is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Hofstede (2011) posits that *power distance* is an important aspect in the culture of societies and organisations in general. Power distance describes the way power is shared between persons. According to Gunkel et al. (2016), cultures characterised by low power distance tend to value the authenticity of power, while high power distance cultures tend to overlook the legitimacy of power and accept unequal power distribution (Macmillan, 2016). In low power distance cultures, there is a belief that leaders should be accessible and decision making should be decentralised, whereas high power distance cultures acknowledge the entitlement of leaders to privileges and the authority to make decisions (Karahanna, Evaristo and Srite, 2005).

Harunavamwe and Palmer (2015) contend that, in societies with high power distance, employees exhibit a reluctance to engage in decision-making processes and instead endorse the idea of their superiors' making decisions on their behalf and providing them

with instructions to be passively followed. Conversely, Ghosh (2011) asserts that high power distance is associated with a deeply ingrained collectivist culture, whereas low power distance is characterised by a more individualistic culture.

Uncertainty avoidance is a cultural dimension that is distinct from risk avoidance and pertains to a society's capacity to tolerate ambiguity. It signifies the degree to which individuals within a culture either avoid or embrace situations that are unstructured and complex. Individuals who exhibit low uncertainty avoidance can navigate uncertainties with ease, while those with high uncertainty avoidance seek clarity and organisation (Hofstede, 2011). In essence, leaders in cultures with a high level of uncertainty avoidance tend to prioritise attention to detail, whereas leaders in cultures with low uncertainty avoidance are more inclined towards strategic considerations (Solomon and Steyn, 2017c).

The dimension of *individualism/collectivism* refers to the extent to which individuals operate as a collective unit. Cultures that prioritise individualism emphasise the importance of the individual and autonomy, particularly in work environments. On the other hand, collectivist cultures emphasise the integration of individuals into groups, such as extended families. In such cultures, there is a diminished emphasis on supporting subordinates' creativity, as evidenced by Hofstede (2011) and Solomon and Steyn (2017b). Harunavamwe and Palmer (2015) postulate that collectivism focuses on context, emphasising interdependency with less self-centredness. Collectivism has proven to be an important concept to consider because it conveys strong value contents.

According to Hofstede (2011), *masculinity* in the context of his model refers to the extent to which a society encourages assertiveness. In masculine cultures, there is a high regard for power and differentiation between genders, while *feminine* cultures prioritise modesty, compassion, and achieving a balance between work and family life.

Long-term orientation refers to the way individuals from a specific culture prepare themselves for the future. Cultures with a long-term orientation are characterised by their ability to adapt to changing circumstances and their belief that significant life events will occur in the future (Hofstede, 2011). In contrast, cultures with a *short-term orientation* prioritise the present and place a strong emphasis on preserving traditional practices.

The last dimension, *indulgence*, refers to a societal inclination towards the unrestricted fulfilment of fundamental and innate human desires associated with the pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment (Hofstede, 2011). It also pertains to the level of contentment that a culture deems acceptable. Indulgent cultures foster engagement in sports, leisure activities, and open forms of communication, whereas restrained cultures exhibit contrasting tendencies.

The cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede (2011) were originally developed to analyse national cultures. While there is some evidence to suggest that national cultural values are linked to workplace behaviours, the use of these dimensions to measure individual cultural metrics is still problematic (Wendt, Euwema and Van Emmerik, 2009).

2.3 Explaining intelligence

According to Sternberg (2000), defining the concept 'intelligence' is a complex endeavour. Alshaibani (2015) views intelligence as the capacity to generate and manage abstract concepts, as well as to effectively address and resolve challenges. The author further defines intelligence as the capability to employ previously acquired knowledge to effectively address unfamiliar problems. In essence, intelligence refers to an individual's ability not only to solve problems, but also to adapt to novel circumstances.

According to relativism – a theory that knowledge is relative to the limited nature of the mind and the conditions of knowing – intelligence is an act which a particular culture defines or values as intelligent (Cocodia, 2014). Sharma and Hussain (2017) adopt an academic perspective on intelligence, defining it primarily as a fundamental cognitive ability or 'g factor' that facilitates effective mental functioning across diverse contexts. In contrast, the multiple intelligence theory posits the existence of various intelligences.

According to Afsar et al. (2020), the conventional understanding of human intelligence has primarily focused on the academic or cognitive aspects, such as reasoning, problem-solving, and learning. However, Narikbayeva (2016) argues that individuals possess non-academic intelligences that can be valuable in explaining their thoughts and social interactions. These non-academic intelligences encompass various domains,

including emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and practical intelligence. Emotional intelligence involves perceiving, accessing, generating, understanding, and reflecting on emotions to enhance both emotional and cognitive processes. Social intelligence pertains to the ability to communicate and form relationships with empathy and assertiveness. Practical intelligence refers to an individual's capacity to effectively handle everyday problems and situations (Narikbayeva, 2016).

Researchers in the field of management, such as Beacham and Barrington (2007), have shown a significant interest in the resources and skills of individuals who achieve positive outcomes in the organisation, such as high job performance and strong organisational commitment. These resources can be categorised as either external, such as customers and suppliers, or internal, such as human and financial resources. Among the internal resources, an individual's intelligence is considered the most valuable. In the context of this study, the focus was on social intelligence, as it enables individuals to effectively interact with others. It is worth noting that social intelligence shares characteristics with cultural intelligence, suggesting that cultural intelligence can be seen as a subset of social intelligence.

The various forms of intelligence, such as cognitive, social, and emotional intelligence, hold importance for both individuals and the workplace. These intelligences contribute to the attainment of personal and/or organisational objectives within the work environment. Consequently, there has been a growing emphasis on non-academic intelligence, such as emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and practical intelligence. In addition, cultural intelligence has been developed as a form of intelligence that enhances effective functioning in multicultural contexts.

2.3.1 Cultural intelligence

The 'cultural intelligence' concept was developed by Ang (2003 in Dogra, 2016) with the purpose of measuring and predicting intercultural performance. The term was conceptualised in the early 21st century when the world was experiencing unprecedented globalisation and interconnectedness (Colom and Román, 2018). Dogra (2016) acknowledges that cultural intelligence is positively associated with a high level of communication effectiveness and job satisfaction that reduces anxiety in multinational organisations. Hence, cultural intelligence is strongly associated with cultural adaptation,

behavioural and interactional adjustment, and effective cultural judgment and decision making.

In this regard, Harunavamwe and Palmer (2015) posit the possession of cultural intelligence is deemed crucial for leaders, particularly in the context of South Africa, as it would enable them to effectively navigate various transformations, including but not limited to globalisation, the emergence of virtual organisations, the increasing diversity of employees, the formation of autonomous working groups, and the evolving job demands placed on employees. Solomon and Steyn (2017c) view cultural intelligence as a non-academic intelligence that portrays a person's competence in functioning effortlessly in those environments that are representative of cultural variety. Dangmei (2016) proclaims that cultural intelligence affects the intercultural adaptation of employer and employee to multinational environments and contributes to an increase in performance.

According to Solomon and Steyn (2017b), cultural intelligence is regarded as a type of intelligence that is not typically associated with academia. It pertains to an individual's capacity to navigate and thrive in culturally diverse settings. Dangmei (2016) sees a strong correlation between cultural intelligence and the intercultural adaptation of individuals in multinational environments, including both employers and employees. This correlation is assumed to have a positive impact on overall performance, leading to improvements in various aspects of work.

A study conducted by R  th and Netzer (2020) has demonstrated the significant role of cultural intelligence in predicting managerial success within intercultural settings. The accuracy of such predictions has been established and validated through numerous studies involving tens of thousands of participants since 2003. Cultural intelligence enables individuals to identify and address potential challenges such as cultural clashes and the interpretation of ambiguous behaviour. Moreover, it facilitates the training of employees and the adaptation of organisational processes, thereby promoting the overall success of companies operating in diverse cultural environments.

According to Dangmei (2016), cultural intelligence can be defined as an individual's ability to effectively adapt to new cultural contexts while respecting the values and beliefs

of a particular society or culture. It also represents a form of intelligence that aids in the adjustment to cultural behaviours and entails being skilled and flexible in understanding different cultures. Furthermore, the concept of cultural intelligence involves actively learning from interactions and gradually adopting a more empathetic mindset and behaviour towards other cultures. As Ramalu and Subramaniam (2019) emphasise, cultural intelligence entails an individual's capacity to function effectively in culturally diverse contexts, reflecting their ability to navigate and thrive in unfamiliar cultural environments.

Dangmei (2016) agrees that cultural intelligence is an inherent ability of an individual to effectively navigate and handle situations in a culturally diverse environment. These environments may, for example, include people with different religions, backgrounds, and/or sexual orientations (Stokes, 2014). According to Van der Horst and Albertyn (2018), a defining feature of cultural intelligence is that it is related to anthropology. Anthropology consists of two constructs with emic and etic constructs. An emic construct to studying culture involves integrating data from ethnographic observations, which are used as main descriptions of culture. An etic construct involves functionalist logic, which is put through a comparison of cultures to get a solid answer. The etic construct involves an objective and external viewpoint that is taken when studying a culture, language, the associations of meaning, and real-world events.

For this study, cultural intelligence is regarded as a valid measure of the etic construct, which entails the examination of multiple cultures to identify shared characteristics. The etic nature of cultural intelligence is a significant quality, as the knowledge derived from it can be applied to cross-cultural coaching, irrespective of the specific cultural setting (Van der Horst and Albertyn, 2018). Cultural intelligence is a flexible competency that can be enhanced through training and coaching, in conjunction with self-assessments and personalised development plans (Clark and Polesello, 2017).

Tariq and Lorenz (2017) claim that there has been a growing interest in the field of intercultural management regarding cultural intelligence. This can be attributed to the expanding global presence of organisations and the growing diversity within the workforce. Consequently, it has become increasingly crucial to comprehend the factors that contribute to certain individuals' superior performance in culturally diverse

environments (Bedi et al., 2014).

To conclude, cultural intelligence is the capability to understand, adapt and adjust to different cultural situations. In essence, it is not just about being familiar with other people's culture, but also about being able to communicate with others outside your own cultural group and respecting their conventions and values. Hence it is viewed as the mental framework of an individual which drives him or her to act accordingly in a cultural situation.

2.4 The components of cultural intelligence

Owing to its applicability, the model of Ang et al. (2007) served as theoretical framework for the cultural intelligence part of the study. In this model cultural intelligence is conceptualised into four critical components necessary for effective intercultural interaction: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural (Ang et al., 2007). These components will be explained below.

2.4.1 Metacognitive component

According to Ang et al. (2007), and some authors like Le, Jiang and Radford (2021) and Jiony et al. (2021a), the metacognitive component relates to aspects such as control and monitoring of cognition, the process of knowledge acquisition, and comprehension. Whitfield (2019) adds that this component includes not only the planning and monitoring of a cognitive model, but also the adaptation and adjustment of the model to the cultural norms of others. In many ways, metacognition is a critical cultural intelligence component since it facilitates active thinking about people and situations in cross-cultural interactions. It involves an individual's ability to control their thinking processes through various strategies, such as organising, monitoring, and adapting. It also relates to the ability to reflect upon the tasks or processes that individuals undertake to select and utilise the appropriate strategies necessary for intercultural interactions.

Van der Horst and Albertyn (2018) posit that metacognition is an inherent and ubiquitous characteristic that pertains to the nature and organisation of cognitive processes, specifically the act of reflecting on one's own thinking. The acquisition and comprehension of knowledge, thought categorisation, levels of analysis, and information acquisition strategies constitute the process employed by individuals. Metacognitive

cultural intelligence surpasses cultural boundaries and does not prioritise the specific content of any culture. Instead, metacognitive cultural intelligence focuses on the cognitive mechanisms. In this sense, metacognition plays a crucial role in the process of converting cognitive processes into purposeful and socially acceptable actions. Individuals who possess elevated levels of metacognitive cultural intelligence demonstrate a heightened awareness of the cultural preferences of those with whom they interact. Throughout and following interactions, individuals also engage in scrutinising their cultural assumptions and adjust their cognitive frameworks (Ang et al., 2007).

According to Le et al. (2021), metacognition is widely recognised as a crucial element in achieving effective learning outcomes. This process encompasses the practice of self-regulation and self-reflection wherein individuals assess their own strengths, weaknesses, and the various strategies they have developed. Metacognitive cultural intelligence is significant in culturally intelligent leadership, as it elucidates the cognitive processes employed by individuals when analysing a problem or situation, as well as the subsequent formulation of strategies to effectively tackle said problem or situation (Van der Horst and Albertyn, 2018).

The metacognitive component consists of three processes, namely planning, awareness, and checking. Van der Horst and Albertyn (2018) indicate that *planning* refers to the preparatory phase that occurs prior to engaging in a culturally diverse encounter. This phase entails preliminary arrangements, such as deliberate contemplation of immediate and future goals, as well as the formulation of action plans tailored to address specific measures within distinct cultural environments. The act of planning enables one to proactively consider the perspectives of culturally diverse individuals prior to engaging in intercultural events, thereby anticipating, and preparing for their potential reactions to various approaches. Engaging in a deliberate process of anticipating and contemplating the behaviours of individuals and considering the cultural milieu can significantly enhance comprehension, particularly in unfamiliar circumstances (Ang et al., 2019).

The second process of the metacognitive component, namely *awareness*, is conceptualised as the cognitive state of possessing current knowledge about cultural

perspectives and understanding oneself and others. Awareness refers to the state of being conscious and knowledgeable about one's own cultural habits, as well as the way one employs own cultural knowledge during interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This entails being cognisant of the potential influence of cultural factors on individual behaviour and the behaviour of others. Lastly, it encompasses a proactive approach and adoption of culturally diverse perspectives. Therefore, awareness pertains to the ability to comprehend one's own identity, the identities of others, and the circumstances within specific cultural frameworks (Yari et al, 2020).

Checking is the third process of the metacognitive component and refers to going over assumptions and changing mental maps when real events differ from one's expectations. The process of checking entails the comparison between anticipated outcomes and the actual events that transpire within intercultural interactions (Xu and Chen, 2017). Le et al. (2021) state that metacognitive strategies are those strategies that individuals design to monitor their progress, and which are related to their learning and the tasks at hand. These strategies are a mechanism for controlling one's thinking activities and ensuring that one achieves one's goals. For instance, metacognitive strategies for learning a new language can include the following:

- Monitoring whether one understands the language lessons.
- Recognising when one fails to comprehend information communicated in the new language.
- Identifying strategies that help to improve one's comprehension.
- Adjusting one's pace for learning the information (e.g., studying for two hours, rather than one hour, every day).
- Maintaining the attitude necessary to ensure that one completes the lessons in a timely manner, and
- Creating a check-in system at the end of each week to make sure one understands what one has learned.

2.4.2 Cognitive component

According to Ang et al. (2007), the cognitive component denotes an individual's understanding of various cultural elements, including norms, values, religious beliefs, artistic values, and language rules of diverse cultures. This knowledge can be obtained through educational means and personal encounters (Puyod and Charoensukmongkol,

2019). Livermore and Van Dyne (2015) mention that the cognitive component also includes an individual's understanding of the principles and beliefs of diverse cultures and subcultures, as well as their economic and legal framework. In essence, the cognitive component involves an individual's ability to process information. In a cultural context this involves the complete knowledge and experience individuals have gained about cultural situations and their interactions within those situations. In addition, it entails how an individual has thought or processed this information that is stored in their memory. One's ability to retrieve this stored information is defined as cognitive ability.

The ability to recognise and integrate various social and environmental cues, and accurately interpret them within their specific context, is essential for individuals. By possessing self-awareness and strong reasoning skills, individuals can develop metacognition. In the study, "Redefining interactions across cultures and organizations: Moving forward with cultural intelligence" by (Early, 2007) metacognitive cultural intelligence is highlighted as a crucial aspect of cultural intelligence. This is because navigating a new culture often requires piecing together patterns to form a coherent understanding, even if the individual is unsure of what this understanding should entail.

The cognitive component of cultural intelligence includes both culture-general knowledge and context-specific knowledge, as discussed by Van Dyne et al. (2012). *Culture-general knowledge* refers to knowledge about the fundamental elements that comprise a cultural setting. It is crucial to comprehend these general elements as they offer individuals a cognitive framework to consider the potential similarities and differences among cultures (Yari et al., 2020). *Context-specific knowledge* refers to the possession of declarative knowledge pertaining to the expressions of cultural universals within a particular field, as well as the procedural knowledge necessary to achieve effectiveness within that field (Livermore and Van Dyne, 2015).

2.4.3 Motivational component

Ang et al. (2007) describe motivational cultural intelligence the capacity of individuals to focus their attention and efforts on acquiring knowledge about and effectively operating in situations marked by cultural disparities. Peng, Van Dyne and Oh (2015) concur by stating that the motivational aspect plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' ability to perceive cross-cultural interactions from a different perspective and their willingness to

actively seek out new experiences with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Clearly, this component holds significance in the context of problem-solving.

Nel et al. (2015) support the above view and add that individuals with high levels of motivational cultural intelligence tend to possess strong intercultural self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation to engage in cross-cultural experiences and understand their intricacies. This is due to their high levels of confidence and interest in exploring unfamiliar cultural settings. Motivational cultural intelligence, therefore, involves the ability to consider culturally diverse situations and derive learning from them, serving as a catalyst for action. It encompasses intrinsic and extrinsic interest, as well as self-efficacy (Rohmetra and Arora, 2015).

Intrinsic interest pertains to the appreciation of culturally diverse experiences for their own sake, as they inherently provide satisfaction. This includes the gratification derived from engaging in novel intercultural interactions and the sheer enjoyment of collaborating with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. It also encompasses a fundamental inclination towards participating in diverse groups composed of individuals with varying cultural backgrounds. The significance of intrinsic benefits derived from intercultural experiences lies in their self-generated nature, as they are not contingent upon external factors or circumstances (Dagher, 2010).

Extrinsic interest is defined as the appreciation of the concrete, individual advantages that can be obtained from engaging in culturally diverse encounters. These advantages include increased employability stemming from intercultural experiences, as well as an improved reputation derived from international work engagements. In addition, extrinsic interest encompasses other tangible benefits that may arise from international work assignments, such as promotions and access to higher levels of responsibility. The significance of extrinsic benefits in intercultural experiences lies in their ability to provide organisations with mechanisms and rewards that motivate employees to accept and persist in demanding cross-cultural work commitments (Rohmetra and Arora, 2015).

Self-efficacy to adjust refers to an individual's task-specific confidence in navigating culturally diverse situations. It pertains to the belief in one's ability to effectively cope with the challenges associated with adapting to new cultures. This includes having the

confidence to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds and the ability to work in diverse groups and settings. The concept of self-efficacy necessitates both adaptability and initiative. Adaptability pertains to an individual's capacity to manage multiple demands, adapt to new challenges, and acclimate to changes in their environment. This, in turn, enables an individual to effectively navigate the complexities and uncertainties inherent in different cultures. Confidence and intrinsic motivation are closely intertwined, as an individual is more likely to engage in activities when they possess a sense of efficacy (Ang et al., 2006).

2.4.4 Behavioural component

Ang et al. (2007) and Solomon and Steyn (2017b) define behavioural cultural intelligence as an employee's ability to display appropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviours when engaging with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This type of intelligence emphasises actions rather than thoughts or emotions. Kiznyte, Ciutiene and Dechange (2015) state that behavioural intelligence reveals the fundamental qualities necessary for maintaining relationships.

The behavioural component of cultural interaction pertains to the expression of verbal and non-verbal feedback by individuals in various cultural situations (Stokes, 2014). In this regard, it is important to note that a face-to-face meeting may not be sufficient for discerning each other's underlying thoughts and motivations. It is crucial for effective communication that individuals possess an understanding of cultural cues, acquire cultural knowledge, and comprehend the cultural implications of their interactions.

The behavioural component encompasses verbal behaviour, non-verbal behaviour, and speech acts. *Verbal behaviour* refers to the ability to be flexible in vocalisation, including using accent and tone appropriately. It also involves the ability to modulate speaking speed, volume, pitch, and inflection, allowing for adjustments in affection, passion, and formality conveyed through expression. In addition, it includes the ability to employ pauses and silence adaptably, recognising that cultural norms vary in terms of turn-taking practices and the utilisation or avoidance of silence (Kiznyte, Ciutiene and Dechange, 2015).

Non-verbal behaviour refers to the ability to communicate with versatility through

gestures, facial expressions, and body language, as opposed to relying solely on verbal communication. According to Alshaibani (2015), the ability to adapt non-verbal behaviour means that one can adjust facial expressions and gestures, as different cultures exhibit varying degrees of neutrality or expressiveness, resulting in divergent physical gestural patterns.

Speech acts refer to the ability to effectively convey various types of messages, such as requests, invitations, apologies, expressions of gratitude, disagreements, and refusals, in a way that aligns with the cultural norms and expectations of a particular context (Alshaibani, 2015). The significance of this matter lies in the fact that various cultures possess distinct conceptualisations regarding the suitable manner of conveying certain types of messages.

From the above discussion, behavioural cultural intelligence can be viewed as a person's ability to perform appropriately in cross-cultural situations, both verbally and non-verbally. Individuals who have a high level of behavioural cultural intelligence are more likely to be flexible in both verbal and non-verbal actions when interacting face to face with people from other cultures. These individuals also can choose the most appropriate behaviours based on their cultural knowledge and adjust their behaviours as needed to achieve the best outcomes when applying their behavioural cultural intelligence.

2.5 Incorporating cultural intelligence into organisations

Kiznyte et al. (2015) suggest that cultural intelligence is built on four steps: increasing cultural intelligence drive, expanding cultural intelligence knowledge, constructing cultural intelligence strategy, and adjusting cultural intelligence action. These steps can be used to integrate cultural intelligence into organisations. Figure 2.1 below outlines the four steps in adopting cultural intelligence.

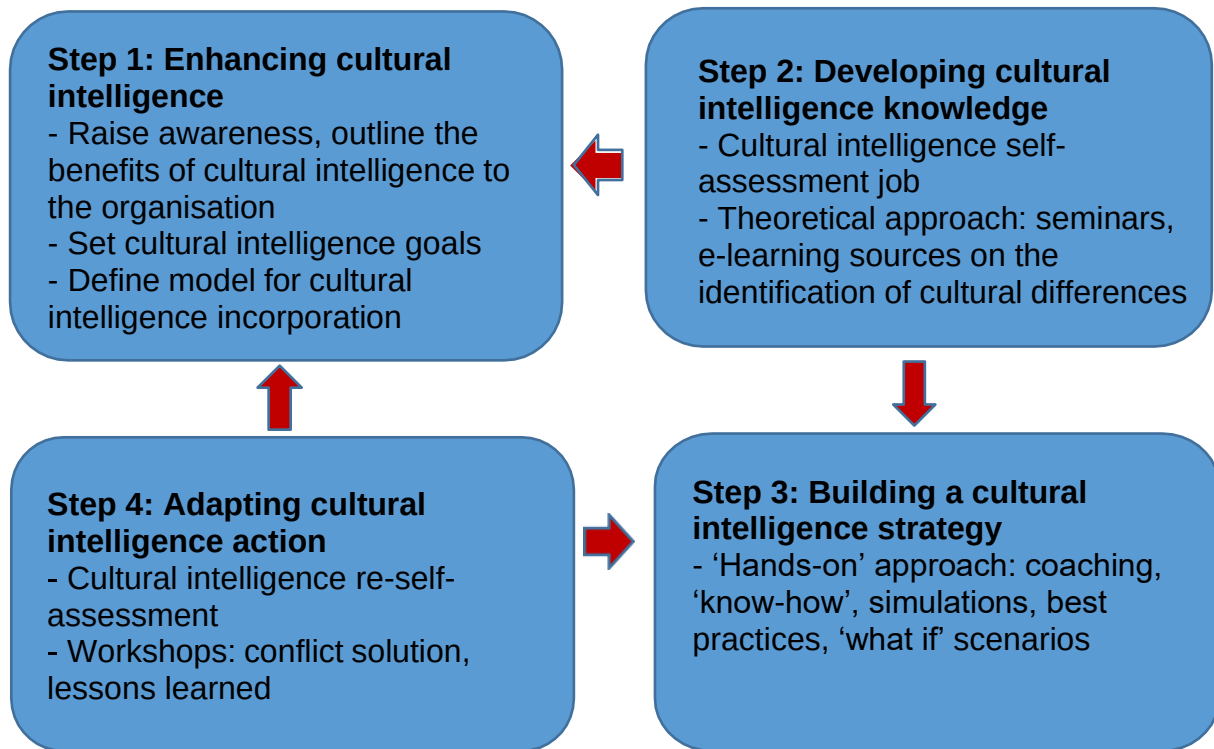


Figure 2.1: Steps and actions to integrate cultural intelligence into the organisation

Source: Kiznyte et al. (2015)

Figure 2.1 depicts the steps and actions to integrate cultural intelligence into the organisation. These include enhancing cultural intelligence, developing cultural intelligence knowledge, building cultural intelligence strategy, and adapting cultural intelligence action. The steps are discussed below.

Enhancing cultural intelligence refers to the fact that organisations must increase their understanding of cultural diversity to create value and achieve organisational success. To support cultural intelligence, top-level management must prioritise the development thereof. It is their responsibility to set goals and develop a strategy for integrating cultural intelligence into the organisation (Kiznyte et al., 2015). The following factors should be considered when applying cultural intelligence:

- Form of activities: training, workshops, coaching, peer-to-peer coaching, e-learning, etc.
- Content of activities: cultural sensitivity, conflict solution, identification of cultural differences, etc.
- Time of activities: on/off the job.
- Approach to development: individual/group training, and

- Team structure: virtual, distributed, outsourced, remote, on-site, etc.

In the next step, *developing cultural intelligence knowledge*, the integration of cultural intelligence focuses on a theoretical framework that can be applied by project managers and team members to acquire fundamental understanding of cultural diversity and cultural disparities. It should be emphasised that teams working remotely have the capability to utilise the same resources as on-site teams, thereby enabling the integration of e-learning with seminars. This phase would involve meeting individual knowledge requirements and would not be linked to specific job tasks (more of an on-the-job approach) to establish a foundational understanding of cultural differences management (Kiznyte et al., 2015).

To establish one's personal understanding of intercultural encounters through practical tasks in a professional setting, it is imperative that training programmes adopt a more pragmatic and experiential approach. This is one of the foremost actions taken in the third step, namely *building a cultural intelligence strategy*. The development of a cultural intelligence strategy would involve implementing coaching programmes for managers and team members, facilitating the exchange of best practices derived from their experiences, creating hypothetical scenarios to anticipate future intercultural dynamics, and conducting simulations to expose individuals to culturally diverse situations.

The last step, *adapting cultural intelligence action*, involves the evaluation of cultural intelligence development, with an emphasis on self-assessment (Kiznyte et al., 2015). The purpose of self-assessment is to ascertain how successfully one has applied one's cultural intelligence knowledge in cross-cultural interactions. In addition, it aims to identify the challenges encountered during workshops, with the intention of discussing lessons derived from these experiences, providing feedback, and enhancing an understanding of conflict resolution in real-time scenarios. According to Kiznyte et al. (2015), the development of cultural intelligence should be understood as a cyclical process in which various actions interact with one another, leading to a reciprocal relationship where cultural drive enhances motivation to acquire new knowledge.

Knowledge serves as the framework for comprehending cultural disparities, which serves as the bedrock for devising a strategic approach to cultural interactions. In turn,

the strategic approach informs the actions undertaken by individuals when confronted with such interactions. The process needs to be repeated multiple times to attain a heightened level of cultural intelligence, incorporating self-assessment to critically evaluate progress.

2.6 The advantages of cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence significantly influences the level of cooperation observed among individuals from diverse corporate cultures, traditions, nationalities, disciplines, functions, and cultures (Solomon and Steyn, 2017b). Therefore, the ability to bridge cultural differences can have a critical impact on the success of a business venture. Dolatshah and Ghorban Hosseini (2016) assert that the process of cultivating and augmenting cultural intelligence may present challenges. The process described involves individuals gradually acquiring a fresh perspective and deeper understanding of new professional methodologies and terminology, enabling them to devise more effective solutions in the context of cross-cultural scenarios (Le et al., 2021).

There are several advantages of having a culturally intelligent workforce and management. One advantage is that innovative work behaviour is created among employees. Innovative work behaviour can be defined as the deliberate and purposeful initiation and implementation of novel ideas, processes, and procedures within the context of individual job roles, work groups, and larger organisation' (Le et al., 2021). It entails idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation. Individual innovation begins with the development of a novel, practical, and useful idea.

This leads to the further advantage that the workplace itself becomes a centre for creativity and innovation where problem-solving, design-oriented thinking is nurtured. This is achieved through the facilitation of effective teamwork and enhanced productivity, as well as the establishment of an entrepreneurial culture. According to Cherradi (2017), culturally astute leaders possess a strong orientation towards change and are prepared to embrace and navigate through it. Culturally intelligent organisations and employees possess the ability to anticipate various scenarios for change and facilitate the process of embracing change.

Regarding individual innovation, cultural intelligence has the ability to mediate the effect

of multiculturalism on individual innovation (Triandis, 2006). Cultural intelligence integrates knowledge from different cultures and translates it into creative behaviours. Cultural intelligence is critical in decreasing stress, anxiety and uncertainty triggered by integrating multiple cultures (Yari et al., 2020). Employees who have high cultural intelligence believe in their adaptive ability and the usefulness of their cultural knowledge. This belief creates a positive influence in their organisation in different cultural destinations (Afsar et al., 2020).

As mentioned previously, cultural intelligence facilitates the process of individual cross-cultural adjustment and enhances performance within a diverse context. Cultural intelligence thus facilitates the dissemination of team knowledge within an organisational context, which is a second advantage. Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol (2020) found that teams that possess a high level of cultural intelligence are more likely to engage in extensive knowledge sharing within the team and receive more favourable evaluations of their innovative performance compared to teams with low cultural intelligence. Prior research, exemplified by the work of Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol (2020), has similarly demonstrated that the association between team cultural intelligence and innovation is mediated by team knowledge sharing.

Another advantage of cultural intelligence is that it enables organisations to assess cross-cultural performance and capabilities in relation to various factors, including behaviour, knowledge, motivation, and strategy (Cherradi, 2017). A conducive work environment can cultivate emotional intelligence competencies, including empathy and self-assurance, while fostering diversity as a pathway to achievement (Cherradi, 2017). Azevedo (2019) points out that the cultivation of cultural intelligence has been identified to enhance workplace satisfaction, promote a greater understanding of diversity, and strengthen the principles of inclusivity and talent retention.

People who possess a significant degree of cultural intelligence demonstrate the capacity to effectively navigate and excel in culturally diverse scenarios. These scenarios may include collaborating on projects with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds or engaging with customers and vendors in international markets. Individuals and teams can enhance their intercultural competence through on-the-job experiences, such as participating in multicultural teams, performing international

assignments, and engaging in international negotiations aimed at expanding into new markets (Azevedo,2019).

Regarding teams, cultural intelligence has been found to positively impact decision-making processes, as well as foster enhanced levels of idea-sharing, information-sharing, and creative collaboration within teams. According to Azevedo (2019), the presence of cultural intelligence in Human Resource Management practitioners has been found to enhance the efficacy of human resources practices in the recruitment and management of talent, particularly considering the growing diversity and global nature of the workforce. Individuals who possess a high level of cultural intelligence demonstrate superior emotional and psychological adaptation when confronted with situations that involve diverse or unfamiliar cultures, including subcultures. This phenomenon contributes to a reduction in burnout symptoms and an increase in individual resilience levels.

Furthermore, individuals who possess cultural intelligence exhibit enhanced levels of resilience in challenging circumstances, alongside increased levels of endurance and productivity. According to Ziyatdinova and Tigerstedt (2017), individuals who possess a high level of cultural intelligence demonstrate greater adaptability in the face of uncertain, complex, and dynamic work requirements commonly encountered in intercultural contexts, such as working in teams comprised of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Engaging in work-related activities plays a crucial role in the cultivation and enhancement of cultural intelligence. Work engagement can be defined as a state of mind in the workplace that is characterised by feelings of energy, dedication, and absorption. In the present context, vigour is defined as the state of having elevated levels of energy and mental fortitude, specifically characterised by a willingness to exert effort in one's occupation and persist in tasks related to work. Dedication can be characterised as a profound engagement in one's profession, accompanied by enthusiasm, a sense of challenge, pride, and inspiration related to one's job. Absorption can be defined as the state of being fully engaged and immersed in one's professional responsibilities, wherein one's attention is directed towards the completion of tasks. This level of absorption is so profound that time seems to elapse rapidly, and disengaging

from work becomes challenging (Afsar et al., 2020).

Kuok and Taormina (2017) found that individuals who possess elevated levels of cultural intelligence are more likely to establish successful interpersonal connections, leading to the acquisition of a greater range of culturally diverse resources through these fruitful interactions. Consequently, this phenomenon serves as a catalyst for individuals to demonstrate increased dedication and vigour in their professional endeavours, thereby establishing cultural intelligence as an intrinsic asset that fosters work engagement (Ramalu and Subramaniam, 2019). Organisations have acknowledged the necessity of investigating the potential impact of work engagement, as it has been found to potentially encourage employees to display proactive behaviour, effectively handle the challenges associated with geographical dispersion, and cope with the intricacies of boundary-crossing tasks.

Afsar et al. (2020) adds that the presence of job resources and personal resources, either individually or in combination, has been found to be a significant predictor of work engagement. Cultural intelligence is a personal asset that has the potential to enhance an employee's level of work engagement. The consequences of work engagement encompass employee positive behaviours, including discretionary and non-obligatory behaviours, as well as creativity and innovation. Hence, it is justifiable to posit that work engagement could serve as an intermediary variable between cultural intelligence and innovative work behaviour. Organisations require employees who demonstrate high levels of engagement, characterised by their enthusiasm, commitment, and deep immersion in their work. There exists a positive correlation between work engagement and enhanced individual and collective performance.

Multicultural team management is enhanced by the presence of employees who possess cultural intelligence. Effective communication with a diverse range of employees, both within the local workforce and across international borders, is paramount for an organisation to achieve success. The global distribution of employees and clients necessitates the leader's ability to adapt policies and strategies to cater to diverse cultural groups, a skill known as cultural intelligence (Harunavamwe and Palmer, 2015). Cultural intelligence significantly facilitates the process of recruiting and nurturing talent. The contemporary business landscape is characterised by intense competition in

acquiring highly skilled personnel, prompting numerous enterprises to progressively engage in international recruitment practices. Furthermore, cultural factors can pose challenges in the retention of employees from diverse national and ethnic backgrounds. According to Eriksson and Hägg (2016), the presence of cultural intelligence within an organisation enhances its capacity to effectively identify, develop, and retain individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Cultural intelligence facilitates the ability to effectively modify one's leadership style in response to diverse cultural contexts. Diverse cultures exhibit distinct responses to different leadership styles, necessitating the possession of cultural intelligence to customise the leadership approach for optimal effectiveness within a specific cultural context. For example, in Germany, it is common practice for managers to engage employees in the decision-making process, whereas in Saudi Arabia managers tend to be more effective when they exercise independent, authoritative decision-making. Individuals who possess elevated levels of cultural intelligence are more inclined to cultivate trust and exhibit effective leadership within multicultural groups and projects, whether they are situated domestically or geographically dispersed across the globe (Kiznyte et al., 2015).

The ability to engage in effective cross-cultural negotiation is widely recognised as a critical competency in the contemporary global workforce. Findings of Le et al. (2021) indicate that individuals possessing a higher level of cultural intelligence exhibit greater proficiency in cross-cultural negotiations compared to those with lower levels of cultural intelligence. When confronted with the uncertainty inherent in intercultural communication, individuals possessing a high level of cultural intelligence demonstrate a greater propensity to persevere and allocate substantial resources towards achieving a mutually beneficial outcome, even in the absence of contextual cues that facilitate effective negotiation within a more familiar setting.

2.7 The challenges of a lack of cultural intelligence

Increased connectivity and global collaboration have made cultural intelligence increasingly important in organisations (Brooks and Normore, 2018). This is particularly relevant for casual dining restaurants, as they need to effectively engage with diverse consumers and employees in the global marketplace. Challenges arising from a lack of

cultural intelligence may include difficulties in motivating culturally diverse teams, managing multicultural and operational challenges, and preventing employee burnout (Afsar et al., 2020). These challenges are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Motivating culturally diverse teams can be a challenge for organisations that possess single-threaded motivation and a reward system rooted in the norms and values of their country of origin. When expanding to other cultures, using the same motivation system, may lead to decreased efficiency and employee satisfaction, as individuals from different cultures may not be motivated by the same factors. Therefore, it is essential for managers to possess cultural intelligence to ensure the satisfaction of all employees (Velten and Lashley, 2018).

Multicultural and operational issues pose significant obstacles for employees in the hospitality industry, as they are frequently required to work extended hours, including weekends and public holidays, in an environment where customer satisfaction takes precedence. In today's global economy, complex issues cannot be effectively addressed by individuals, single cultures, or even separate continents operating in isolation. The pursuit of optimal efficiency is hindered by the considerable amount of time spent resolving misunderstandings arising from diverse cultural backgrounds (Harunavamwe and Palmer, 2015).

Lastly, *employee burnout* can contribute to a significant turnover rate among employees, leading to the accrual of expenses associated with recruiting and onboarding new staff members. In addition, the absence of adequate training in effectively managing culturally diverse teams can pose challenges for cross-cultural managers. These managers often express a need for appropriate tools and strategies to successfully lead and manage such teams. Consequently, the ability to effectively manage diversity is considered a valuable extension of their existing management skills. While culturally diverse teams present certain challenges, they also offer numerous opportunities for growth and development (Dolatshah and Ghorban Hosseini, 2016).

2.8 Attributes for achieving cultural intelligence

According to Jyoti and Kour (2017b), important attributes of cultural intelligence include the ability to suspend judgment, the importance given to the situation, training to

overcome ethnocentrism, and organisational practices.

The *ability to suspending judgment* refers to when a culturally intelligent individual refrains from making judgments until sufficient information is obtained that goes beyond the ethnic background of the other person, as it is essential to consider their individual personality traits (Triandis, 2006). This relates to the second attribute, namely *the importance given to the situation*. Culturally intelligent employees actively observe and analyse behaviour exhibited in various situations, placing particular significance on the circumstances at hand (Li, Wu and Xiong, 2021).

The third attribute, *training to overcome ethnocentrism*, is essential in promoting cultural intelligence and understanding. ‘Ethnocentrism’ refers to the tendency to judge other cultures, practices, behaviours, beliefs, and people based on one’s own cultural frame of reference, rather than using the standards of the specific culture being observed (Triandis, 2006). It is a common human trait to believe that what is considered normal in one’s own culture should be the norm everywhere. However, ethnocentrism can be mitigated through appropriate training. Cultural intelligence encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects, all of which can be developed through training. By providing individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes, they can increase their cultural intelligence.

Being able to tolerate and adapt to different organisational attributes is an important attribute of a culturally intelligent person. Various organisations have distinct characteristics, such as voluntary organisations, research institutes, academia, military, and mass production facilities, each with their own cultural norms and values. Culturally intelligent individuals can choose organisations that align with their own values and are flexible enough to adapt to different organisational environments (Jyoti and Kour, 2017b).

The last attribute pertains to *organisational practices*. This refers to culturally intelligent employees who demonstrate the ability to align their actions with the established norms and procedures of the organisation. Such individuals refrain from making hasty judgments or decisions without first gathering sufficient and accurate information (Triandis, 2006).

2.9 Intercultural service encounters

The size and scope of the hospitality industry create challenges for employees and managers, relating to customer expectations, shortage of skilled employees, retaining quality staff, the need for adaptability, and working in a cultural diversity environment (Grobelna, 2015). Paulina and Esi (2012) and Alshaibani (2015) found a positive relationship between customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and perceived service quality in the hospitality industry. Similarly, Tariq and Lorenz (2017) point to the importance of service encounters in this industry, as they serve as opportunities to promote hospitality services and leave a positive impression on customers, ultimately enhancing the overall reputation of the organisation. Alshaibani (2015) highlighted the importance of interactions between customers and front-line service employees as the influence of service quality. Also, Rohmetra and Arora (2015) identified the management of diverse individuals as a major challenge faced by hospitality establishments.

According to the proposition put forth by Tariq and Lorenz (2017), the cultural intelligence of customers plays a significant role in determining the outcome of a service encounter. On the other hand, Presbitero and Quita (2017) found that cultural intelligence influence advertising effectiveness in an organisation. However, Jie and Harms (2017) argue that simply enhancing a global mind-set is not enough and more effort is required in tackling the challenge. This can include entrepreneurship education and sensitivity training. For this reason, a strong cultural intelligence can serve as a valuable skill for service personnel in effectively managing cross-cultural service interactions.

Stoermer, Davies and Froese (2021) conducted a study on the influence of expatriate cultural intelligence on organisational embeddedness and knowledge sharing, focusing on the moderating effects of the host country. They found that, to become immersed into the new environment, employees need to navigate several challenges, including making sense of and understanding the foreign environment. Other studies have found cultural intelligence as an important moderator in various contexts including that of expatriates. For example, Froese, Kim and Eng., (2016) found that multicultural corporations can retain expatriates better by implementing a common corporate language and making their organisations more multicultural. Magnusson et al. (2013), in their study on the role of cultural intelligence in marketing adaptation and export performance, indicate that

export managers' metacognitive cultural intelligence (level of conscious cultural awareness during intercultural interactions) positively moderates the relationship between marketing mix adaptations and export performance.

Regarding the hospitality industry, Tariq and Lorenz, (2017) found that, in intercultural service encounters, both perceived cultural differences and out-group status positively affect the restaurants service employees' willingness to adapt to different cultural backgrounds. Cultural intelligence also moderates relationships forged in intercultural service encounters. Rosenauer et al. (2016) concludes by stating that cultural intelligence strengthens the relationship between intercultural differences and cross-cultural adjustment, as well as performance on intercultural teamwork.

2.10 Characteristics of cultural diversity

In the 21st century, cultural diversity in organisations has become an essential asset for hospitality establishments. In isolation, capital and physical resources do not possess the ability to improve efficiency or generate a higher return on investment. On the basis of the preceding assertion, Patrick and Kumar (2012) identified the following characteristics of cultural diversity in the era of globalisation:

- Diversity incorporates numerous cultural orientations.
- Different cultures have defining features like skin colour, language, religion, art and food preferences.
- Within cultural diversity, other types of diversity can emerge.
- Based on what members of a cultural groups share ideological, religious, and political positions can arise.

There are also many types of cultural diversity:

- Biological diversity is a broad term that encompasses all aspects of nature.
- Physical limitations are referred to as functional diversity in sociology.
- Human sexuality is associated with sexual diversity.
- Cultural diversity refers to a human group's cultural wealth.
- Religious diversity encompasses all religions in the world, and
- Ethnic diversity is made up of people who share a common historical identity, language, and religion.

Cultural diversity holds several advantages for the organisation. The success and competitiveness of an organisation are contingent upon its capacity to embrace diversity and recognise the advantages it brings. Saxena (2014) highlights that organisations that actively evaluate their approach to workplace diversity issues and establish and execute diversity plans experience numerous benefits, as outlined below:

- Cultural diversity opens the mind to new ideas.
- In research-oriented and hi-tech industries, the presence of a diverse workforce comprising individuals from different genders and ethnic backgrounds fosters a greater level of creativity. This diversity of talents within the organisation proves to be an invaluable asset.
- Cultural diversity has been shown to enhance problem-solving capabilities within organisations. Multicultural organisations exhibit superior problem-solving skills as they possess a heightened capacity to extract nuanced meanings and are more inclined to consider multiple perspectives and interpretations when addressing complex issues. This is exemplified by the increased availability of diverse solutions for problems related to service, sourcing, and resource allocation.
- There is a strengthening of cultures.
- It stimulates innovation and talent in one place, as well as productivity, creating a world-class culture that can outperform the competition.
- Different cultures bring great knowledge and more points of view, and
- A multicultural organisation is better suited to cater for a diverse external clientele in a more increasingly global market. These organizations possess a heightened comprehension of the demands stemming from the legal, political, social, economic, and cultural contexts of foreign countries.

Diversity specifically related to skills and experiences can enable organisations to effectively cater to customers in the global sphere. In the management of cultural diversity, there are five fundamental strategies that can be employed: cultural dominance, cultural avoidance, cultural compromise, cultural synergy, and cultural accommodation. *Cultural dominance* refers to the cultural practices that hold dominance within a specific political, social, or economic entity where multiple cultures coexist (George et al., 2019). The second strategy, *cultural avoidance*, involves disregarding inappropriate behaviour exhibited by individuals from a particular culture.

Cultural compromise is applied when policies and practices are generally similar between two or more cultures involved (Kim et al., 2020). *Cultural synergy* is an approach that aims to bring together two or more cultures to create an organisation or environment that leverages the combined strengths, concepts, and skills of each culture. Lastly, *cultural accommodation* involves integrating a culture into the dominant society without imposing the complete assimilation of the dominant culture's norms, beliefs, and values.

Among these strategies, cultural synergy highlights the critical importance of cultural intelligence (Harunavamwe and Palmer, 2015). It places high value on other cultures while maintaining one's own cultural identity. Frijns, Dodd and Cimerova (2016) argue that appreciating cultural diversity and recognising universal elements present in all cultures contribute to humanising other cultures and fostering mutual understanding.

2.11 Challenges of cultural diversity

The effective use of monetary and material resources to achieve organisational goals relies on the collective efforts of individuals. However, it is essential to continuously enhance attitudes, efforts, and skills to optimise the effectiveness of human resources and enable them to tackle greater challenges. The management of human resources are a crucial aspect as the organisation heavily relies on its employees. Amrutha and Geetha (2020) note that human resource management focuses on overseeing the 'human aspect' of the organisation, ensuring the attainment of organisational objectives while promoting employee development and satisfaction.

However, the presence of employees with diverse characteristics regarding age, gender, perception, attitude, social status, religion, and region can pose difficulties for both management and employees in adapting and functioning within such an environment (Saxena, 2014). Some of the disadvantages of cultural diversity are the following:

- Ethnocentrism may manifest (i.e., considering one's culture to be superior) leading to conflict.
- As cultural norms and values are complex it can increase ambiguity, especially from those members that are not familiar with the culture.
- Ambiguity can lead to communication and interpersonal challenges, which can also hamper decision-making and well-being.

2.12 Cultural intelligence in the South African context

To effectively improve business operations in Africa and other geographical regions, it is important to possess cultural intelligence, as it plays a crucial role in determining the feasibility and success of the business venture. Given the current era of the fourth industrial revolution, which is characterised by the need for creativity and adaptability, there is a growing demand for novel approaches, ideas, methodologies, technologies, and entrepreneurial initiatives (Harunavamwe and Palmer, 2015).

South African organisations consist of individuals from different cultural backgrounds, each possessing unique perspectives, thoughts, beliefs, norms, customs, and values. Consequently, South Africa can be characterised as a culturally heterogeneous society (Harunavamwe and Palmer, 2015). According to Martin (2014), inadequate management of cultural diversity within the workplace can result in detrimental effects on interpersonal relationships. These effects may manifest in various forms, including miscommunication, the establishment of barriers, maladaptive behaviours, and conflict between individuals.

As South African organisations become more global, and the population becomes more diverse, it is becoming more important to understand why some people perform better in culturally diverse environment than others. Cultural intelligence can explain why some organisations thrive in culturally diverse environments, while others suffer. In the South African context, the situation is more complicated because the population of the country consists of people from various ethnic groups (Nel and Mziray, 2017). According to Statistics South Africa (2022), there are at least 14 different cultural groups in the country, speaking 11 official languages.

Innovation has become critically important, and innovation comes best from well-led discourse; from culturally diverse groups led by managers with high levels of cultural intelligence who actively seek to encourage differences. The world is shrinking and managers from different cultures are discovering the importance of working together. The need to work across cultures is amplified, making it crucial for managers to formulate strategies on assumptions of mutual understanding (Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol, 2020).

Nel and Mziray (2017) note that, in a culturally diverse setting like South Africa, the inability to adapt to and comprehend the similarities and differences among cultures frequently leads to the use of incorrect, and often inappropriate, language and behaviour. This can have negative consequences on the sustainability of organisations. Harunavamwe and Palmer (2015) indicate that effective communication across cultural differences, as well as the ability to navigate complex social situations and being knowledgeable about the customs and norms of various cultures, are crucial skills in contemporary South African organisations. Consequently, it is essential for employees to recognise that they interact with, cater to, and are surrounded by individuals who possess diverse perspectives and expectations stemming from their unique backgrounds.

Owing to the multicultural nature of South African society, most organisations encounter internal challenges. These challenges necessitate effective collaboration among various divisions, including production, sales, marketing, and finance, as well as their respective managers, in order to achieve harmonious functioning (Nel and Mziray, 2017). The complexity of a diverse nation can pose serious challenges in the workplace and could equally create significant opportunities to the organisation. In this regard, it is the manager's responsibility to deal with such complexities from business units, customers, and employees while ensuring that improved performance and organisational objectives are attained. In dealing with these complexities, cultural intelligence would allow managers to navigate through challenges while propelling the organisation to success. Cultural intelligence thus equips managers to be culturally adaptable while ensuring that diverse cultures are nurtured and remain expressive to add value.

Nel and Mziray (2017) posit that cultural intelligence is a crucial attribute for managers, especially in South Africa, to effectively navigate and adjust to various transformations, including, but not limited to globalisation, the rise of virtual organisations, a more diverse workforce, the emergence of autonomous working groups, and evolving job demands for employees. Cultural intelligence acts as a facilitating approach for effective mentoring and coaching practices among managers, thereby reducing the risks of miscommunication, disharmony, and prejudice within teams. By fostering a peaceful environment, promoting innovation, and ensuring alignment, cultural intelligence

contributes to the overall success of organisations. Particularly in the context of South Africa, a high level of cultural intelligence can greatly assist employees and managers in adapting to their new environment with greater ease (Harunavamwe and Palmer, 2015).

2.13 Theoretical framework

For the purposes of the study, social learning theory served as a theoretical framework. Social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. This theory is founded on the premise that we learn through our interactions with others in a social context. It further postulates that people learn from others in a variety of ways, including observational learning, modelling, and initiation. According to Bandura (1989), social learning theory involves cognitive processes, which means that people internalise and make sense of what they observe to replicate the behaviour.

This type of learning consists of four stages:

- Attention: refers to the fact that the model's behaviour must capture the learner's attention for them to notice the behaviour and implement observational learning.
- Retention: refers to how well the behaviour is remembered, for example, the learner must retain the model's behaviour
- Reproduction: refers to the ability to execute the model's behaviour, and
- Motivation: refers to the learner's having the desire or will to do a certain behaviour.

This theory has often been referred to as a bridge between behavioural learning theories and cognitive learning because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation (Muro and Jeffry, 2008). The theory links to the cognitive component of cultural intelligence in that they both integrate learning from others. It is part of humannature to learn from each other, which is manifested in aspects such as food preparation, clothing, and serving customers. These aspects are emphasised and taught to upcoming young employees as they cultivate skills and learn from their seniors. In the world of work, employees emulate the behaviour of leaders and managers. Social learning theory in the context of service delivery and culturalintelligence entails behavioural patterns that emerge because of influences gathered at the workplace, which can include positive or negative behaviour.

2.14 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of culture and its dimensions. The concepts of 'intelligence' and 'cultural intelligence' were defined as they apply to this study. The cultural intelligence model of Ang et al. (2007) was presented to create a comprehensive understanding of the components of cultural intelligence. The chapter also discussed the benefits and challenges of incorporating cultural intelligence into organisations. Aspects such as intercultural service encounters, cultural diversity in the hospitality industry, characteristics of cultural diversity, and challenges of cultural diversity were identified. Cultural intelligence in South Africa and the theoretical framework were also addressed.

CHAPTER 3: SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE HOSPITALITY CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

The primary goal of service providers should be to provide excellent service. High-quality service can help businesses increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, which will assist them in sustaining long-term profitability and sustainability (Lodorfos, Kostopoulos and Kaminakis, 2015). Service organisations must develop and put into action realistic strategies if they want to deliver high-quality services. Likewise, the ongoing improvement of service procedure helps to optimise service delivery and raises the organisation's standards of service (Lodorfos et al., 2015).

The aim of this chapter is to define service delivery and examine the nature of service encounters and the effectiveness of the service delivery system. The importance of service delivery, and the challenges faced by organisations in service delivery will also be discussed. The indicators of the service delivery system in casual dining restaurants will be alluded to, as well as cultural diversity in the hospitality industry. The conceptual framework for the study is also presented.

3.2 The nature of service encounters

According to Ramdhani, Mnyamana and Karodia (2017), the term 'services' can be explained as a range of activities, benefits, or contentment that are made available for purchase or rendered in conjunction with the sale of tangible products. In the marketplace, businesses typically engage with customers when selling goods or providing specialised services. These interactions involve customers who are interested in purchasing these goods or services. 'Service' refers to intangible activities or a series of activities that usually occur during interactions between the customer and the service employee (Moletsane, 2012). A service encounter, which leads to service delivery, is a crucial aspect of business and encompasses the interaction between service providers (service staff) and clients (customers).

During this encounter, the provider offers a service, such as information or a task, and the client either gains or loses value as a result. The five key elements of service encounter are service culture, service quality, employee engagement, customer experience, and empathy (Fraser, Watanabe and Hvolby, 2013). *Service culture*

includes various components such as principles in leadership, vision, mission, and values. It refers to the overarching principles that guide management in controlling, maintaining, and enhancing the social process involved in delivering services and creating value for customers (Fraser, Watanabe and Hvolby, 2013).

The second element, *employee engagement*, refers to a range of factors that influence the attitudes and behaviours of employees within an organisation. These factors include the leadership style that emphasises a sense of purpose, as well as the effectiveness of human resources processes. It is worth noting that, while well- designed processes and systems are essential, their success ultimately depends on the level of engagement exhibited by individuals. In this regard, employee engagement serves as a mediator between the design and execution of a service excellence model (Fraser, Watanabe and Hvolby, 2013).

Service quality is the third element and includes various components, namely strategies, processes, and performance management systems. The development of effective strategies and processes is essential for the establishment of a comprehensive service management framework. The main goal of any service provider partnership is to aid the client in accomplishing their mission and supporting their organisational objectives. This serves as the foundation of such collaborations.

Customer expectation consists of multiple facets, including customer intelligence, account management, and continuous improvements. The perception of the service that is rendered to the customer is paramount, necessitating regular evaluations of how both the customer and end-user perceive the service delivery to facilitate ongoing collaboration. A prosperous service delivery model operates under the assumption that the customer actively engages in the co-creation and provision of the service.

The last key element of service encounter, *empathy*, is characterised by an organisation's delivery of personalised and compassionate care to its customers (Moletsane, 2012). The concept entails the ability to empathically perceive and understand the emotions of others in a manner that resembles one's own emotional experiences. Empathy is rooted in the provision of a customised or individualised service, which effectively communicates to customers that they are recognised as

unique and important individuals, and that their requirements are understood and validated.

3.3 Explaining service delivery

‘Service delivery’ is the term used to describe the process by which a company provides services to its customers. Effective service delivery consists of various components, as the provision of services by a business entails tasks that customers are unable to perform independently. The process involves several stages, namely introductory dialogue, onboarding, configuration, service fulfilment, and follow-up provisions (Othman et al., 2019).

The process by which an organisation provides services to a customer is commonly known as service delivery. Effective service delivery consists of various components as the nature of services provided by a business typically entails tasks that customers are unable to perform independently. The process involves several stages, namely introductory dialogue, onboarding, configuration, fulfilment of the service, and the provision of follow-up support (Othman et al., 2019).

The provision of exceptional service is essential for the prosperity and longevity of organisations in the contemporary era. Alomari (2021) asserts that customers within the service sectors exhibit interest not only in the outcomes of service delivery processes, commonly referred to as service quality, but also in the way the services are delivered. This rationale is in line with the foundation on which the SERVQUAL model was developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988). The SERVQUAL model was deemed suitable for this study due to the inherent connection between service quality and service delivery. The model comprises five distinct dimensions, namely tangibles, empathy, assurance, reliability, and responsiveness, which are discussed below.

The dimension of *tangibles* focuses on how well kept the surroundings, equipment, and staff are. In essence, it pertains to all physical aspects that have an impact on the level of service provided to customers. For instance, the provision of well-maintained and organised customer waiting areas, amenities catering to customer needs, the physical presence of staff and employees, the ambiance of the room, as well as the decoration and interior design (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Empathy refers to the extent to which organisations demonstrate care, focus on its clientele, and provide personalised attention to their customers. Empathy, fundamentally, pertains to the capacity to deliver assured service with accuracy and dependability. The concept of corporate comprehension can be effectively achieved through active customer engagement, facilitating problem-solving for customers, empathically identifying, and addressing customer concerns and anxieties, fostering a sense of solidarity with customers, and ensuring customer retention by avoiding abandonment (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Assurance is the ability of organisations to instil confidence and trust in customers by means of the knowledge and courtesy displayed by their service staff (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This relates closely to the dimension of *reliability*, which pertains to the ability to deliver the promised service consistently and accurately. This is the platform through which customers can conveniently access the products and services offered by the organisation at any time and from any location. The organisation consistently provides its services to customers (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

The last dimension, *responsiveness*, refers to the willingness of an organisation to assist customers and deliver expeditious service. The assessment of responsiveness can be conducted using inquiries, such as gauging the extent to which an organisation's inquisitiveness aligns with the challenges faced by its clientele, evaluating the organisation's proficiency in assisting customers in resolving issues, and examining the organisation's receptiveness towards general complaints and customer grievances (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

3.4 The importance of service delivery

Customer service plays a pivotal role as the primary source of competitive advantage within the hospitality industry. Front-line employees are widely regarded as the most critical asset of any service organisation, fulfilling a crucial part in attaining and maintaining a competitive advantage. Consequently, it is imperative for organisations to acknowledge the significance of their employees in effectively representing and strengthening the brand identity of the establishment, as well as ensuring the accurate delivery of services (Vance, 2006).

Achieving and maintaining a competitive advantage are critical in-service organisations. Thus, organisations should acknowledge the significance of service delivery. Service delivery is especially important with regard to five factors: acquiring repeat business, establishing a favourable business reputation, mitigating elevated prices, cultivating a niche market, and enhancing overall morale (Vance, 2006). These factors are elaborated on below.

The occurrence of *repeat business* is not coincidental but can be attributed to the establishment of a long-term relationship by the organisation, achieved through the provision of exceptional customer service. The act of sending a thank-you email following each purchase serves to convey appreciation to customers, thereby fostering a sense of value and incentivising their continued patronage (Vance, 2006).

Regarding *combating higher prices*, it is possible that organisations may encounter financial constraints that prevent them from providing competitive pricing. By delivering exceptional customer service, individuals or businesses can mitigate the impact of their comparatively higher prices by offering enhanced customer experience. Businesses that prioritise customer service have the potential to increase their prices by up to 9 per cent and achieve a growth rate that is twice as high as the industry average (Vance, 2006).

Cultivating a niche is a vital factor in today's competitive market. In an era characterised by customer dissatisfaction due to inadequate service and a sense of insignificance in their intentions with organisations, the provision of exceptional customer service has the potential to differentiate a business from its rivals. By placing a strong emphasis on customer service within their marketing strategy and following through on this commitment, a female or a male entrepreneur will distinguish herself from competitors who merely fulfil their obligations, thereby cultivating a perception of distinctiveness surrounding her enterprise (Vance, 2006).

The final factor important for service delivery is *enhancing morale*. Establishing a workplace culture that prioritises customer service has the potential to positively impact employee morale. In turn, enthusiastic employees have the potential to alleviate customer concerns and improve their overall shopping experience. This could foster a more favourable work atmosphere and engender a sense of job satisfaction among

employees (Vance, 2006).

3.5 Service delivery challenges

According to Ramdhani et al., (2017), exceptional service should be a focus of any organisation and should be rendered in the most responsive and efficient way possible. Most organisations around the world, however, suffer service delivery issues and South Africa is no exception. The following are some of the issues that organisations are faced with when it comes to service delivery: building a corporate brand, challenges in managing a brand, building a relationship with customers, and customer relationship management (CRM). Ramdhani et al. (2017). These issues are discussed in the following paragraphs.

According to (Ramdhani et al., 2017), *building a corporate brand* necessitates the allocation of resources by top management to generate brand awareness through activities such as public speaking, media responses, and effective communication with both external and internal stakeholders. Organisations should prioritise their corporate social responsibility initiatives, ensuring active employee engagement in these endeavours. The reason for this is that employees fulfil an essential function in interacting with external stakeholders. Therefore, it is imperative to provide employees with comprehensive training on brand values, as this will enable them to possess a strong understanding of the product and effectively contribute to the communication and delivery of the brand message.

However, *managing a brand presents numerous challenges*, including the need to sustain relevance amid market fluctuations, develop cost-effective products, and mitigate visible drawbacks that may lead to customer attrition and damage to the company's reputation. According to Ramdhani et al. (2017), effective management of brand service delivery in businesses can be achieved through various strategies. These include facilitating customer complaints, responding to customer feedback derived from these complaints, encouraging sales staff to actively identify and address customer issues, providing comprehensive training to staff members on complaint handling, establishing a well-defined procedure for responding to complaints, and designating a senior manager to assume ultimate accountability for customer complaints. Furthermore, in cases where the company bears responsibility, it is advisable for

management to provide customers with vouchers or hampers. However, it is crucial to exercise caution in implementing such arrangements to prevent any potential misuse.

Another area of challenge regarding service delivery is *building a relationship with customers*. Ramdhani et al. (2017) state that marketing research is key in the monitoring and analysis of the competitive landscape within the business environment, with the primary objective of identifying potential business opportunities. In specific instances, these research methodologies can function as a catalyst for fulfilling consumer demands, yielding advantages for both the organisation and its clientele. To exceed consumer expectations, organisations must prioritise various critical aspects: gaining insight into their clientele, discerning customer anticipations, furnishing clear details regarding the extent of service provided, fulfilling the established expectations, and consistently upholding a superior standard of service.

Lodorfos et al. (2015) argue that the provision of satisfactory customer service necessitates effective communication with customers, extending a warm welcome during interactions. It also pertains to demonstrating adeptness in overseeing the entirety of the service experience – which involves the ability to handle challenging situations with grace. Lastly, it entails that employees demonstrate proficiency in managing a team focused on service delivery, and ultimately, transforming the entire team into one that prioritises customer service.

Vallabh (2017) states that a step towards delivering excellent customer services is through the implementation of *Customer relationship management (CRM)*, which can help organisations build a pool of satisfied customers. CRM can also assist marketers by increasing customers focus as well as improving customer's engagement with their brands. Ramdhani et al. (2017) add that (CRM) involves the communication between an organisation and customers, aiming to align their needs and preferences. This can be achieved through the utilisation of CRM technology, which enables the customization of services to effectively cater to these requirements. CRM software has the potential to electronically organise and, more importantly intergrade various organisation processes including sales, marketing and customer service or technical support. For organisations to gain a competitive edge, it is recommended that they employ a customer relationship manager to establish enduring connections with customers and understand their needs,

thereby bridging the gap between customers and the organisation.

According to Chiguvi, Madondo and Dube (2019), the implementation of CRM can aid organisations in identifying critical aspects of customer expectations. This, in turn, can cultivate customer loyalty and contribute to the organisations long term profitability by consistently addressing customer needs and ensuring their satisfaction. In their study, Ramdhani et al. (2017) found that managers in casual dining establishments should have insight into their field and successfully navigate their interactions with patrons. To gain and maintain a competitive advantage, organisations should allocate resources towards understanding the desires and requirements of customers over an extended period. This is crucial as consumers tend to exhibit a cautious approach towards establishing trust with organisations, necessitating a thorough evaluation process.

The formulation of a customer strategy will facilitate the integration of customers into the organisations mission statement and allow the organisation to gain understanding about the concept of value from the customers' perspective. Hence, it is imperative for managers to develop their ability to comprehend and effectively adapt and cater to the evolving needs of customers. To achieve this, managers must engage in regular and consistent communication with customers.

3.6 Understanding customer expectations

According to Harris (2014), the concept of understanding customer expectations pertains to the individual perception held by customers regarding the outcomes they anticipate from their experiences. Harris (2014) elaborates that the principal expectation stems from the fulfilment of customers' fundamental needs, such as the acquisition of sustenance or apparel, whereas the secondary expectation is contingent upon the primary expectation. The scope of influence typically includes the spread of negative customer reviews resulting from unfavourable experiences, which tend to reach a wide audience. Conversely, positive customer service experiences are often shared within close-knit circles of family and friends.

Harris (2014) underscores the notion that customers can exert significant influence on others by sharing negative experiences, thereby dissuading potential interactions with the company in question – which would ultimately result in adverse implications for the

business. The comprehension of the true essence of customer service among individuals working in a business setting is generally lacking among service staff. Consumer satisfaction is commonly characterised as an evaluative reaction regarding the perceived result of a consumption encounter. It is additionally posited that customers develop brand loyalty when they receive exceptional services, leading them to engage in repeat purchases from the company and share their positive experiences with their social network.

Organisations can enhance customer satisfaction by allocating resources towards a dedicated effort in this regard. This would include proactive engagement with customers by consistently enhancing the quality of work performed and ensuring that employees are appropriately recognised for their contributions to customer satisfaction, while also striving to meet or surpass customer expectations Harris (2014). According to Bontis, Richards and Serenko (2011), 'reputation management' refers to the systematic approach of assessing the public perception of an organisation and devising a strategic course of action to rectify, sustain, or augment its reputation. Customer satisfaction is influenced by the value and quality of services provided. The influence of service quality perception and exceptional service delivery on customer purchase behaviour is significant. Credibility is derived from the amalgamation of contemporary knowledge, reputation, and professionalism.

Harris (2014) asserts that organisations can enhance credibility through the implementation of various strategies. These strategies include maintaining consistency, fulfilling promises, continuously improving customer service delivery, and demonstrating a strong commitment to customers. By adopting these practices, organisations can instil confidence in their customers, ensuring that they perceive the organisation as credible and reputable.

The importance of customer satisfaction lies in its ability to foster customer loyalty and enhance organisational profitability. This is achieved through the alignment of service delivery with customer expectations, ensuring that customers are content with the provided services. Customer satisfaction is contingent upon the comprehensive evaluation and perception of the service provider. Ultimately, the significance of good customer service lies in its ability to reduce costs associated with customer

dissatisfaction.

Communication refers to the systematic exchange of information, ideas, and comprehension between two or more individuals (Moore and Díaz, 2019). Effective communication skills are crucial when interacting with consumers. The skills required for effective communication include the ability to accurately perceive and understand the messages conveyed by consumers, the ability to transcribe information onto paper in a manner that is easily understandable, the skill of reading and understanding written information, and the possession of strong non-verbal expression, as employees' body language can effectively convey their emotions (Harris, 2014).

Internet communication functions as a viable alternative mode of communication, particularly for customers who encounter challenges in engaging in lengthy telephone conversations, perceiving them as both time-consuming and frustrating. In the contemporary era, advancements in technology have provided customers with alternative and valuable methods of communication through the internet. Organisations utilise the internet to establish connections with their clientele, employing the creation of a website equipped with an extranet platform that facilitates unhindered communication with customers (Harris, 2014).

3.7 The role of employees in service delivery

Hospitality consumption operations involve regular social interaction among personnel, which are progressively assuming an international and intercultural character. This implies that employees from a specific cultural group who are employed in the service industry may encounter customers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Consequently, such encounters may give rise to conflict and misunderstandings, ultimately leading to subpar customer experiences (Ramdhani et al., 2017).

To achieve customer satisfaction in casual dining restaurants, it is crucial to understand the role of employees. Business managers and employees need to comprehend how to effectively manage employee relations, embrace innovation, and maximise short-term profits to ensure the long-term viability of their establishment (Ramdhani et al., 2017). The main challenge faced by the service industry, including casual dining restaurants, is their ability to provide excellent service and high customer satisfaction. A satisfied

customer is more likely to become a repeat buyer, and overall satisfaction significantly influences customer loyalty intentions (Ramdhani et al., 2017).

The role of employees in service delivery encompasses employee engagement, service delivery innovation, and understanding the service delivery innovation process. *Employee engagement* refers to employees who are actively and fully investing themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally in the execution of their daily responsibilities (Osborne and Hammoud, 2017). Furthermore, engaged employees are individuals who possess a strong emotional attachment to the organisation. Organisations with high levels of employee engagement in their workforce tend to generate higher profits compared to those lacking engagement. They also maintain positive customer satisfaction, financial gains, and employee productivity. The promotion of work engagement and empowerment is of considerable importance in fostering employee involvement.

The implementation of service training programmes has been found to enhance employee engagement, resulting in a positive impact on the financial performance of the organisation. Also, direct correlation exists between employee dedication and the fulfilment of their basic needs for satisfaction. According to Hill (2015), there is a noteworthy significance in recognising the importance of employee engagement and its impact on organisational success, particularly regarding reducing employee turnover and enhancing customer loyalty, satisfaction, and profitability.

Service delivery innovation, as defined by Paulina and Esi (2012), refers to the comprehensive procedure of creating novel service offerings within an organisation. Service delivery innovation is vital for employees in the contemporary economy due to the dynamic nature of customer preferences and the emergence of diverse customer segments characterised by varying tastes, values, and consumption patterns. Therefore, employees use innovation to efficiently provide services and products, enhance customer value, and optimise service delivery processes to enhance profitability and reduce expenses. According to Paulina and Esi (2012), when products or services reach a state of homogeneity or when a unique competitive advantage is no longer sustainable, organisations can turn to service innovation to enhance their growth rate and profitability.

To attain a competitive service position, casual dining restaurants, functioning as service organisations, should have the ability to offer services and products in innovative ways by leveraging their unique competencies in the form of knowledge and skills to the public. The concept of an innovation orientation in service delivery pertains to an organisation's willingness to embrace novel ideas and its inclination to adapt by incorporating new technologies, resources, skills, and administrative systems.

The significance of proactive service delivery innovation lies in its focus on improving organisational practices, procedures, and processes in anticipation of potential issues, rather than reacting to them after they have arisen. The initiatives are centred in the ongoing enhancement of performance in the organisation. The utilisation of various delivery modes is progressively emerging as a novel means of distinguishing and fostering innovation within contemporary organisations (Ledimo and Martins, 2015). To align the service package and service encounter with the requirements of both the customer and the service organisation, it is imperative for organisations to prioritise proactive measures in the design and delivery of their service concept.

Service delivery innovation is of great value to employees as it serves to improve or enhance the following aspects:

- Service operation: the way in which the service is offered. Service experience: the customer's direct experience of the service.
- Service outcome: the advantages and feedback of the service for the customer or client, and
- Value of the service: the important features the customer perceives as inherent in the service weighed against the cost of the service (Ledimo and Martins, 2015).

The *service delivery innovation process* encompasses several key stages, namely initiation, communication, management, and customer impact, which occur in a cycle (Paulina and Esi, 2012). This process is depicted in Figure 3.1.

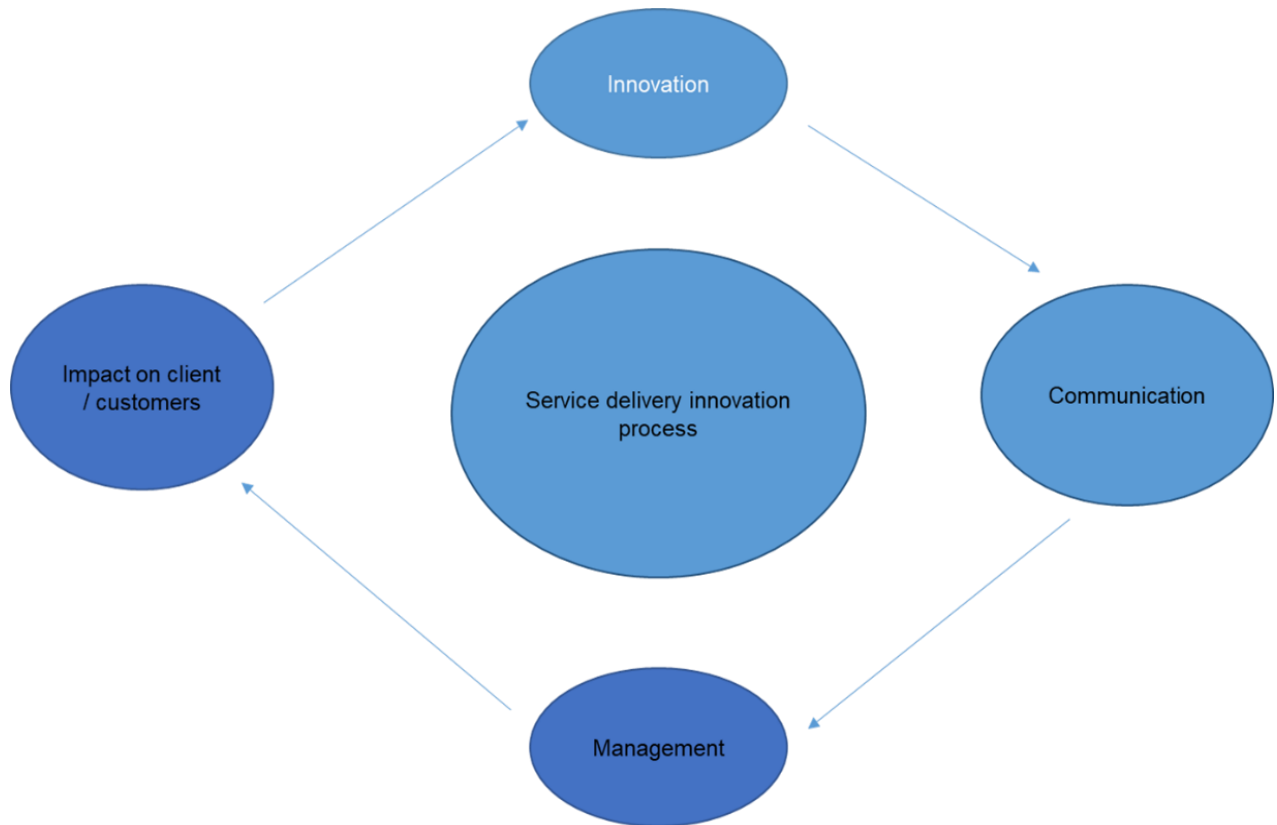


Figure 3.1: Service delivery innovation process

Source: Paulina and Esi (2012)

The first stage of the process, the *initiation of service delivery innovation*, entails the establishment of a culture in the organisation that fosters continuous improvement in service provision. An organisation that adopts an innovation orientation is more likely to achieve breakthrough innovation due to its emphasis on creativity. This orientation also plays a crucial role in the development of additional (new) and improved (renewed) service delivery channels, thereby enhancing convenience for customers. This stage also encompasses the participation of both internal and external stakeholders. The solicitation of feedback and input from employees, managers, business partners, and customers/clients is actively encouraged to introduce innovation. In the context of the service delivery innovation process, both internal and external stakeholders play a crucial role as knowledge providers, underscoring the significance of collaborative efforts among stakeholders.

The second stage, *communication*, involves the dissemination of information regarding service delivery innovation. The objective is to establish a comprehensive and mutually

agreed-upon understanding of the characteristics of the service to be offered, specifically the service concept. This will enable managers and employees to effectively strategise, execute, and evaluate the effectiveness of the intended new service. The dissemination of information serves the purpose of obtaining support from both internal and external stakeholders, while demonstrating the commitment of management towards the proposed innovation. At this juncture, all relevant parties are notified, via both print and electronic communication channels throughout the organisation, regarding the initiation, endorsement, and execution of novel procedures, commodities, or amenities for the launching of a new service. Active engagement in the process can be achieved by detailed communication and promoting awareness among all stakeholders.

Management is the third stage and pertains to the facilitation and support of leadership in the process of service delivery innovation. The ability to innovate is a fundamental aspect of effective process management, as it entails the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills to introduce novel processes, products, or ideas within an organisation. The effective management of the process of service delivery innovation by leadership necessitates the comprehensive consideration of various factors, including the involvement of individuals responsible for service provision, the utilisation of technology, the optimisation of physical facilities and equipment, and the specific methodologies employed in the creation and delivery of the service.

The establishment of a framework for service delivery innovation should be based on several key factors: the level of standardisation; the volume of transactions within a given time; the locus of profit control; the type of operating personnel involved; the nature of customer interactions; the implementation of quality control measures; the orientation of facilities; and the motivational characteristics exhibited by management and operating personnel. The fourth and final stage is assessing the *impact of service delivery innovation on customers and clients*. Managers encounter various challenges when seeking to innovate services to enhance process efficiencies, reduce costs, and improve both employee and customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is a crucial element in enhancing service delivery through innovation, as it contributes to improved performance. The implementation of service delivery innovation in organisations has been found to have a favourable effect, as it

enables the organisation to effectively carry out its assigned tasks and address the needs and expectations of its stakeholders. The impact of service delivery innovation on the financial performance of an organisation is considered a significant factor and is often utilised as a metric to gauge the success of innovation. The assessment of the impact of service innovation has predominantly relied on perceptual measures of organisational performance, rather than actual measures.

3.8 The Service Delivery System

According to Lodorfos et al. (2015), the Service Delivery System (SDS) can be described as the combination of physical elements (e.g., facilities and equipment), organisational infrastructure (e.g., job design and skills), and operational processes that are followed in the provision of a service within a services management framework. According to Ponsignon, Smart and Maull (2011), the concept of SDS encompasses the physical locations where services are rendered, as well as the procedures and methods employed in the delivery of said services. Based on the definitions, SDS seems to pertain to the extent to which the objectives of a system have been accomplished. Consequently, an effective SDS is characterised by its ability to successfully deliver the intended outcomes for which it was initially conceived and constructed. Lodorfos et al. (2015) claim that the Strategic Decision Support system typically has the potential to yield favourable results, including cost reduction, enhanced operational efficiency, improved service quality, and optimal customer experience.

According to Lodorfos et al. (2015), the primary factors influencing the effectiveness of a service system are the performance of front-line employees, their capacity to accommodate individual customer requirements, the efficiency of their coordination, and the effectiveness of process control. The determinants of SDS effectiveness have been identified as key factors by Lages et al. (2020). The performance and adaptability of employees in casual dining restaurants are widely recognised as significant factors influencing the effectiveness of SDSs. These factors directly impact the ability of the SDS to meet customer needs and generate customer value in the context of casual dining establishments.

The effectiveness of an SDS is influenced by the presence of multiple interdependent service processes that are organised in a hierarchical manner and integrated within a

specific process architecture. Therefore, it is important to consider the coordination and control of these service processes when assessing the effectiveness of an SDS. This is because the service processes will ascertain the way this cohesive collection of procedures will be incorporated into the provision of services, which, in turn, will influence the efficacy of the system. The SDS is influenced by several key factors, as suggested by Lodorfos et al. (2015), namely employee role performance, employee adaptability, the effectiveness of employee coordination, and the effectiveness of process control. The factors are discussed in the paragraphs to follow.

Employee role performance refers to the performance of service employees, including front-line workers and their supporting counterparts. This factor is integral to the successful provision of services. To achieve optimal performance, front-line employees need to carry out their designated task effectively and efficiently. The individual employee's involvement in the SDS is determined by either their superiors or outlined in an official job description, blueprint, or similar document. The employee's role is designed to align with customer requirements, management-defined standards, and service level agreements. Therefore, through the efficient execution of their designated responsibilities, service personnel have the potential to assist the organisation in attaining quality benchmarks and serve as a link between service provision and customer expectation. Hence, the performance of front-line employees plays a significant role in positively influencing customers' perceptions.

The next factor is *employee adaptability*. The adaptability of employees should not be mistaken for arbitrary fluctuations in their conduct and productivity. This is because only deviations that are intended to fulfil customer requirements contribute to the provision of services. In the present study, employee adaptability is defined as 'the capacity of employees to modify their actions in order to fulfil the requirements of each customer interaction', building upon established definitions. According to the study's definition, the adaptability of employees plays a vital role in the company's endeavour to fulfil predetermined quality standards and is regarded as a significant measure of the effectiveness of SDS. The service quality provided by front-line employees directly correlates with their ability to adjust to the behaviour of individual customers (Lodorfos et al., 2015).

Employees who possess greater adaptability, particularly when they are granted authority, will be better able to provide personalised attention to customers, thereby effectively meeting their requirements. In contrast, employees lacking the aptitude or inclination to adjust their conduct in accordance with the needs of the customer, and instead simply adhere to their supervisors' directives, will be unable to provide a superior level of service. Indeed, it is often observed that contented customers primarily attribute their satisfaction to employees' aptitude in understanding their unique requirements and providing them with personalised services. The capability of front-line employees to adapt to the behaviour of individual customers has a favourable impact on customers' perceptions of service quality.

The effectiveness of employee coordination refers to the extent to which employees can collaborate and achieve desired outcomes, collaboratively working towards the attainment of mutually agreed-upon objectives. Successful collaboration among employees has a beneficial impact on the operational efficiency of an organisation (Lodorfos et al., 2015). The primary objective of service providers is to enhance employee communication and optimise collaboration within teams and departments. The rationale behind promoting enhanced coordination among individual employees lies in its potential to not only improve the overall organisational function, but also facilitate the creation of value for customers.

To achieve this objective, it is imperative to enhance both the inter-employee coordination within a specific department or team, as well as the coordination of activities within a department. By effectively coordinating activities, a service organisation can prevent duplication of efforts, eliminate bottlenecks, and minimise miscommunication throughout the process of service delivery. By mitigating operational, organisational, and managerial deficiencies, the efficacy of the SDS is guaranteed and its efficiency is enhanced, leading to improved customer assessments. The improved level of coordination between front-line and back-office personnel is a crucial determinant in the successful delivery of services. Based on the above information, the efficacy of employee coordination has a positive impact on customers' perceptions regarding the quality of service (Lodorfos et al., 2015).

The last key factor that influences the SDS is the *effectiveness of process control*, which

exerts a positive impact on service quality. Process control refers to the comprehensive collection of systems and procedures implemented to regulate the flow of work and optimise the use of available capacity resources to achieve predetermined performance benchmarks. The implementation of these procedures, which encompass the application of precise criteria, performance evaluation instruments, and control charts, has the potential to enhance both the efficacy and the efficiency of the service delivery process. The service provider employs a systematic approach to oversee the SDS, enabling ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and refinement of the service delivery process. This approach aims to enhance effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and customer-centricity (Lodorfos et al., 2015). In this way, the control process perpetually enhances the provision of services and elevates the quality of service rendered to customers.

Given its integral part in the SDS, any enhancements made to process control will yield increased efficacy and efficiency in delivery procedures, leading to improved customer service. Based on the preceding discussion, it can be inferred that the efficacy of service process control has a positive influence on customers' perceptions regarding service quality (Lodorfos et al., 2015).

3.9 Service delivery challenges for restaurants

Restaurants encounter significant challenges in the dynamic and fiercely competitive global business landscape, as they strive to satisfy or surpass customer demands through the provision of services that exhibit exceptional quality (Agostino, Arnaboldi and Lema, 2020). Shifting customers' preferences and expectations remains a challenge in restaurants. Restaurant customers, especially millennials (anyone born between 1981 and 1996), have high expectations regarding nutrition and product authentication. This makes it difficult for restaurant employees to deliver excellent service which will satisfy customers' needs (Agostino et al., 2020).

Moletsane (2012) indicates that restaurant guests are not the same as the typical restaurant guest of 20 years ago. This is mainly due to the evolving world of work and workforce diversity that have changed the restaurant environment. Diversity can increase the level of dissatisfaction in employees and customers. Increased employee turnover, absenteeism, and lower quality of performance can be regarded as other factors that promote insufficient service. Younger generations have a highly refined

perspective on food due to their extensive exposure to restaurant environments during their formative years.

The escalating level of competition within the restaurant industry has resulted in customers adopting a more discerning approach when selecting their preferred services. According to a study conducted by Halim, Halim and Felecia (2019), significant challenges exist in the communication between staff members and managers within the restaurant industry. Gong (2008) adds that the presence of diverse languages and cultural backgrounds poses a challenge to effective communication between restaurant employees and customers. Language is widely regarded as a fundamental component of cultural identity, playing a pivotal role in shaping, and preserving various cultural attributes. Ineffective communication can arise from various barriers, including perceptual, cultural, and language factors. These barriers have the potential to cause confusion, hinder teamwork, and diminish employee morale. This, in turn, can hinder the ability of restaurants to exhibit flexibility and prioritise customer satisfaction.

3.10 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for the study is presented in Figure 3.2 below.

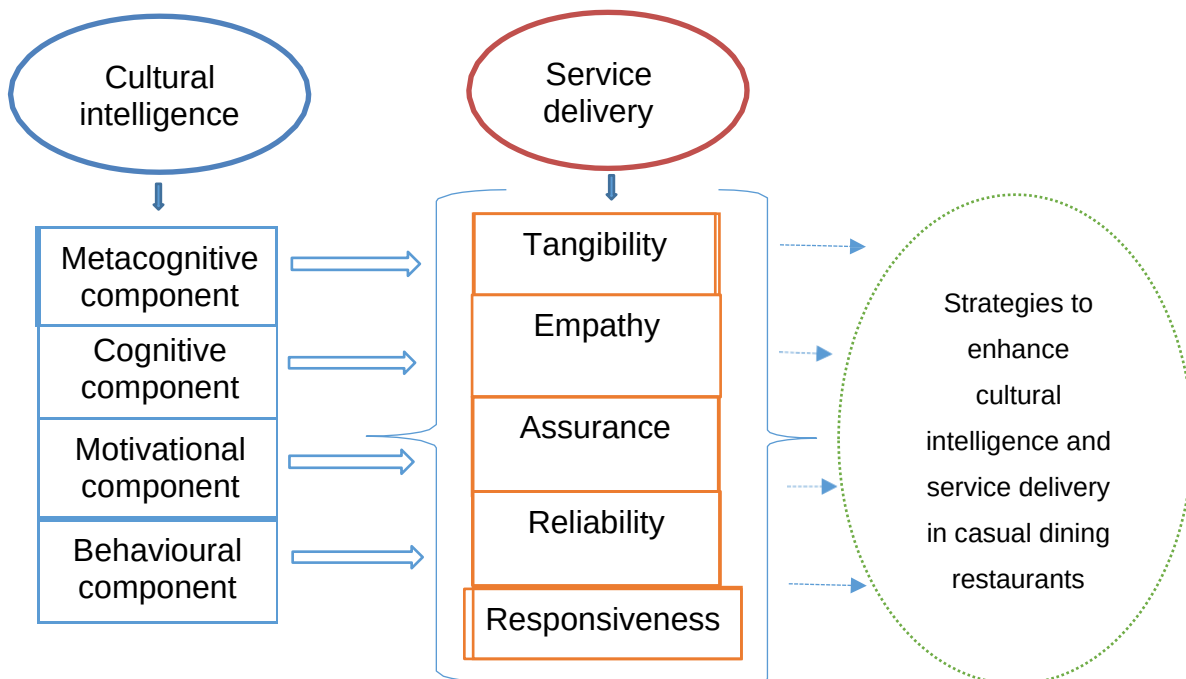


Figure 3.2: Conceptual framework for the study

Figure 3.2 shows the main constructs for this study. The study measured the impact of the cultural intelligence components (metacognitive component, cognitive component,

motivational component, and behavioural component) on service delivery (tangibles, empathy, assurance, reliability and responsiveness). This enabled the researcher to formulate strategies that can enhance cultural intelligence and service delivery in restaurants (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Ang et al., 2007).

3.11 Summary

The concept of service delivery was explained in this chapter. For this study, the service encounter was defined as a component of business that explains the interaction between providers (service staff) and clients (customers). The service provider offers a range of services, including information or tasks, which can either generate value for the client or result in a loss of value. The challenges that organisations face when delivering services to consumers were also discussed in this chapter. In a service organisation, it is important to understand customers' expectations; for this reason, customers' expectations were defined in this chapter. The role of employees in service delivery was discussed, as well as the Service Delivery System. The conceptual framework for the study was also presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Research can be defined as a methodical and rational exploration aimed at discovering novel and valuable information pertaining to a specific subject. The primary objective of this endeavour is to identify resolutions to scientific and social challenges by means of impartial and systematic examination. It encompasses the pursuit of knowledge, including the revelation of concealed truths and alternative viewpoints (Gounder, 2012). The process of conducting research should be undertaken in a methodical and organised manner. This principle is applicable throughout all phases of the research process, commencing with the rationale for conducting the research, the goals and objectives, the design of the research project, the methodologies employed to investigate the issue, and ultimately, the conclusions drawn.

The concept of research methodology refers to the precise procedures through which a research investigation is formulated (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). Meaning, the researcher needs to employ a series of methodical steps to investigate and communicate the research problem. According to Mafuwane (2011), the choice of research design is influenced by the aforementioned factor, which, in turn, affects the collection and analysis of data. As previously indicated, the current study comprised a literature review presented in Chapters 1 to 3, followed by an empirical component. The literature review included a variety of primary and secondary data. The term 'primary data' refers to newly collected data that are utilised by the researcher for the first time. According to Muhammad and Kabir (2018), surveys, interviews, and focus groups are commonly employed methods for gathering primary data.

The term 'secondary data' pertains to data that have been obtained from a previously published source in any format (Powell and Steinberg, 2020; Muhammad and Kabir, (2018). The study incorporated a range of secondary sources, including books, scholarly journals, and unpublished dissertations, which were consulted and reviewed for their relevance. The aim of this chapter is to outline the research methodology employed to the current study. This includes the research paradigm, the research approach and design, as well as the study population and the data-collection instrument. The pilot study conducted prior to the commencement of data collection is also discussed.

4.2 Research philosophy and paradigm

A research philosophy involves the underpinnings or fundamental belief system that informs the researcher's actions and shapes their perspective on the world. The term 'paradigm', as introduced by Thomas Kuhn in 1970, refers to the collective generalisations, beliefs, and values held by a community of specialists in relation to the nature of reality and knowledge (Vibha and Christine, 2019). There are three distinct paradigms: positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. As elucidated in the first chapter, it can be inferred that the positivist paradigm is founded upon the underlying assumption that a singular and tangible reality exists, which can be comprehended, defined, and measured. The study adopted the positivist approach, which posits that knowledge can and should be developed in an objective manner, free from the influence of researchers' or participants' values.

4.3 Research approach

There are three types of research approaches that can be distinguished: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The qualitative approach aims at developing descriptions of social phenomena, which allow us to understand the world in which we live (Kumar, 2014). A mixed-methods approach combines the benefits of the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative approach, which is explained in detail below, was considered appropriate for this study given that the objective of the researcher was to determine facts and demonstrate relationships between variables (cultural intelligence and service delivery).

Mafuwane (2011) asserts that quantitative research is grounded in a specific theoretical framework that determines what can be considered as valid knowledge. Quantitative studies usually involve the systematic measurement of numerical values or quantities. This type of research employs methodologies such as experiments and surveys to elucidate and provide explanations for observed phenomena. Many of these methodologies are derived from the natural sciences, which are specifically designed to uphold principles of objectivity, generalisability, and reliability.

Kumar (2014) affirms that quantitative research is specifically designed to address research inquiries using numerical quantities. Data are generated in the form of numbers which can be subjected to statistical analysis, presented in tables and graphs.

Quantitative research employs various methodologies, such as unbiased random selection of research participants from the study population, standardised questionnaires or interventions, and statistical techniques to examine predetermined hypotheses concerning the association between distinct variables.

4.4 Research design

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), the concept of ‘research design’ can be defined in two ways. Firstly, a research design encompasses the comprehensive planning of a scientific investigation, spanning from its initial conceptualisation to its ultimate completion. In this context, the research design serves as a tool to assist the researcher in the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of observed data, commonly known as research management or planning. Secondly, a research design can be described as the systematic blueprint outlining the approach to be employed in carrying out a study, including the methodology, methods, and instruments used in both quantitative and qualitative research. As previously mentioned, this study employed a descriptive research design and utilised a structured survey. The rationale for discussing the constructs under investigation, namely cultural intelligence, and service delivery, is due to their significant impact.

4.5 Population and sampling

According to Cash et al. (2022), the term ‘population’ in research methodology does not pertain to the overall population of a country, but to the specific objects, subjects, phenomena, cases, events, or activities that are identified for the purpose of sampling. The term refers to a comprehensive collection of individuals or objects that share specific characteristics as defined by the sampling criteria established by the researcher. Harbin and Lutsey (2020) define ‘population’ as the complete set of units under investigation for which the researcher aims to draw conclusions. There are two categories of sampling methodologies, being probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is a method based on the principle that every individual within a population has an equal opportunity of being included in the sample (Stratton, 2021).

Non-probability sampling is employed when the individuals in a population do not have equal opportunity to be selected as part of the sample. This suggests that the probability of each element being included in the sample is unknown. Non-probability sampling

entails the selection of sample elements based on the researcher's subjective judgement, without applying randomisation techniques (Cashet al., 2022). This study used non-probability sampling, as the researcher collected feedback from patrons of casual dining restaurants. A total of 36 casual dining establishments located in Bloemfontein were identified using a desktop search method. The study exclusively included establishments that self-identified as casual dining restaurants.

The researcher personally contacted the establishments to obtain permission for data gathering (see Annexure B). Only five establishments granted the researcher permission to approach customers for data gathering. The researcher visited each establishment numerous times and requested the informed consent of customers to complete the questionnaire. QuestionPro was used for data gathering. Convenience sampling thus applied to this investigation. Convenience sampling (also referred to as availability sampling) is non-probability sampling technique that depends on data collection from population members who are readily available and willing to participate in a study (Gul, 2021). Facebook polls or questions are also examples of convenience sampling (Hassan et al., 2020).

As the population of individuals frequenting casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein is more than 100 000 (N) per year, 398 respondents (n) would be deemed representative. For this study, 408 questionnaires were completed and used for data analysis.

4.6 Data-gathering instrument

As previously mentioned, data from participants were collected using a structured questionnaire. According to Young (2019), a structured questionnaire is a list of questions that have been carefully selected and tested to ensure the collection of dependable responses from a specific sample. Typically, this form of survey employs closed-ended questions with predetermined response options or fixed question choices.

The inclusion of a questionnaire in a survey holds considerable value for social scientists, as it enables the collection of data pertaining to individuals' attitudes and personal experiences (Young, 2019). However, as Young (2019) argues, the efficacy of a survey is contingent upon the way the researcher has constructed the interrogative prompts. Insufficient planning of a questionnaire may result in respondents' confusion

which would impede their ability to provide accurate and meaningful responses. The questionnaire for this study comprised of three sections: Section A captured the demographic profile of respondents (race, age, and gender of respondents). Section B captured perceptions related to cultural intelligence, based on Ang et al. (2007). Section C captured the levels of service delivery the respondents experienced, based on Grosset et al. (1983). Refer to Annexure C for the questionnaire.

4.7 Pilot study

A pilot study is a preliminary investigation conducted to assess the viability of different methodological approaches intended for a subsequent, more comprehensive, or validating study (Sedgwick, 2013). To determine the clarity and comprehensibility of the measuring instrument, it is recommended that a pilot study be conducted with subjects selected from the target population but who will not be included in the final study. The primary objective of a pilot study is not to provide definitive answers to specific research inquiries, but to safeguard against embarking on a large-scale study without sufficient understanding of the intended methods. In essence, a pilot study is conducted as a precautionary measure to mitigate the risk of encountering a significant flaw in a study that would entail substantial investments of both time and financial resources (Sedgwick, 2013).

During the pilot study, it is important to assess whether the questions possess the qualities of accuracy, lack of ambiguity, and simplicity to facilitate ease of completion. The self-administered questionnaire employed in the pilot study provided the researcher with an opportunity to address any difficulties encountered by respondents in understanding the questions. The pilot study involved four individuals who were patrons at casual dining establishments. The participants were provided with a hard copy of the questionnaire, and they were not included in the primary investigation. The participants of the pilot study demonstrated a clear comprehension of the questions, and as a result, no modifications were deemed necessary for the questionnaire.

4.8 Field work challenges

The researcher encountered several challenges during the administration of the questionnaires:

- The participants indicated time constraints as problematic in completing the

questionnaire.

- A portion of the participants declined to partake in the research. In such cases, the researcher was permitted to express gratitude to the participants for their time and proceeded to the next participant.

4.9 Summary

This chapter presented the research methods that were used in the study to achieve the research objectives. The positivist paradigm was considered appropriate in this study. A review of primary and secondary sources enabled the contextualisation of cultural intelligence and service delivery. The research design was quantitative in nature and the data-gathering instrument was a structured questionnaire. The study applied non-probability sampling and 408 patrons of casual dining restaurants completed the questionnaire via QuestionPro. The difficulties faced by the researcher during the fieldwork were also addressed. The discussion of the methodology establishes the context for the next chapter, wherein the data gathered will be presented and analysed, and the findings discussed.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the empirical findings of the study. The analysis begins by providing the survey results, starting with the demographic information. This is followed by an examination of the responses to the questionnaire pertaining to the sections on cultural intelligence and service delivery. As previously mentioned, the questionnaire was administered using QuestionPro and the data were recorded in Microsoft Excel. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used in the analysis to examine the relationship between variables, encompassing both inferential and descriptive statistics.

5.2 Descriptive statistics

According to Sherman (2022), descriptive statistics serve the purpose of providing a summary of the attributes of a given data set and include measures such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation. This facilitates a deeper understanding of the aggregate properties exhibited by the constituent data elements.

This section presents the descriptive statistics derived from the data gathered from the respondents, who were customers at casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein. These statistics include the demographic profile of the respondents.

5.2.1 Section A: Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic data provide essential information regarding the research participants. This section describes the demographic profile of customers at casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein regarding racial group, age, and gender.

In question 1 respondents had to indicate their racial group.

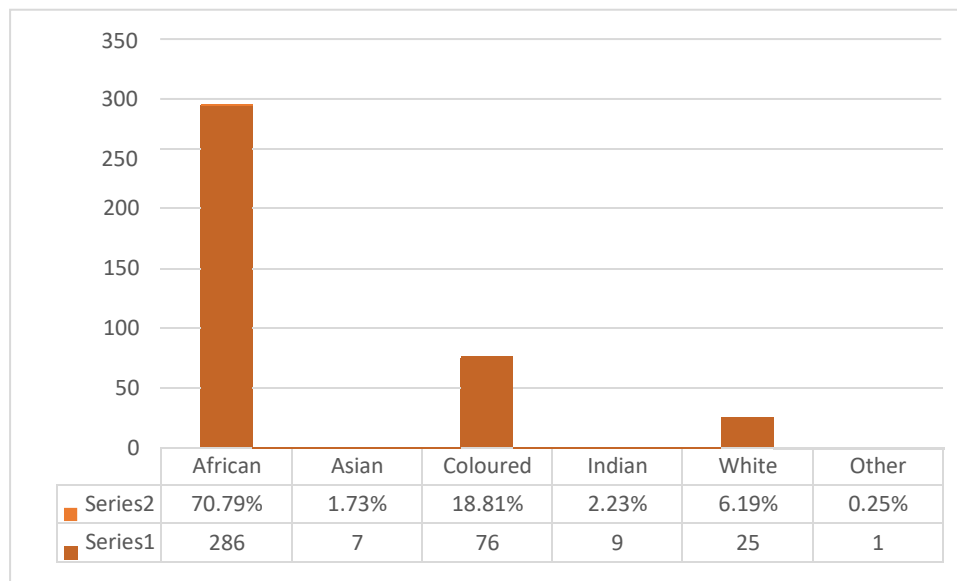


Figure 5.1: Racial group of respondents

The racial groups of the respondents are presented in Figure 5.1. The results indicate that the respondents were 71% African, 19% coloured, 6% white, 2% Asian, 2% Indian, and 0% others.

In question 2 respondents had to indicate their age.

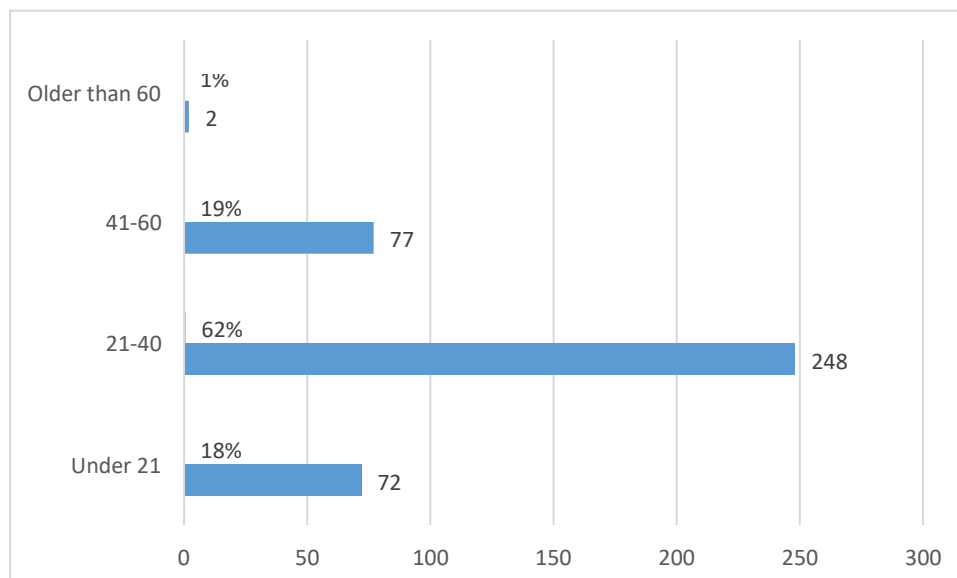


Figure 5.2: Age composition of respondents

Figure 5.2 indicates that 72% of the respondents were under the age of 21, 62% were between the ages of 21 and 40, and only 19% were between the ages of 41 and 60. One per cent (1%) were older than 60 years.

In question 3 respondents had to indicate their gender.

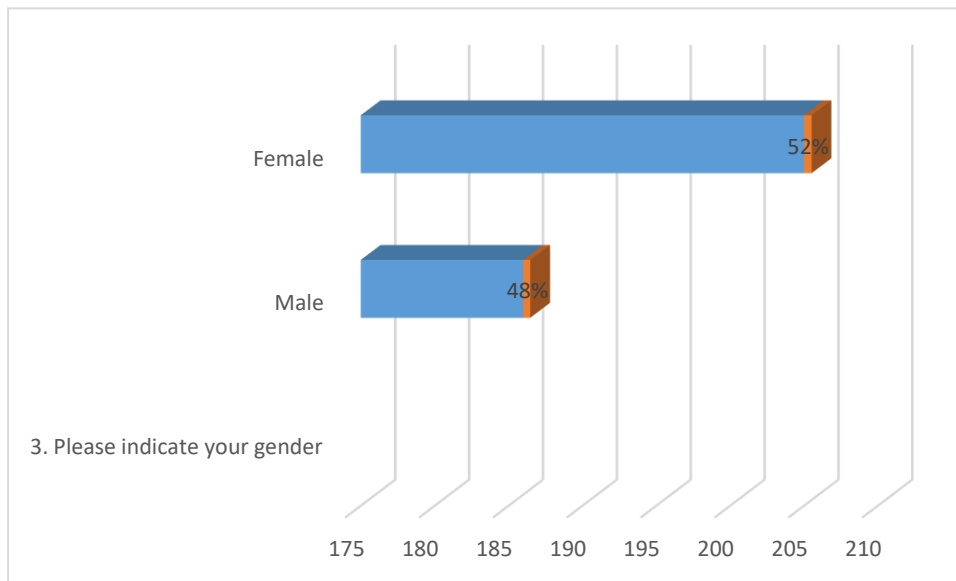


Figure 5.3: Gender composition of respondents

Figure 5.3 shows that most of the customers at casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein were female (53.43%), with 47.57% being male.

5.2.2 Section B Cultural intelligence

This section details the respondents' perceptions on the four components of cultural intelligence by Ang et al. (2007), namely metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behaviour. This section of the questionnaire consisted of 21 questions addressing cultural intelligence in the hospitality industry. The statistics for the four components are presented in four tables below. After each table, a discussion follows.

Table 5.1: Metacognitive component

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
5.1	Service staff are conscious of the cultural knowledge they use when interacting with customers from different cultural backgrounds.	35%	12%	6%	8%	13%	22%	4%
5.2	Service staff adjust their cultural knowledge as they interact with customers from a culture that is unfamiliar to their own.	4%	33%	14%	8%	9%	24%	8%
5.3	Service staff are displaying a positive attitude when interacting with culturally diverse customers.	4%	12%	28%	12%	13%	24%	7%
5.4	Service staff are conscious of the cultural knowledge they apply to cross-cultural interaction.	5%	12%	16%	17%	13%	28%	9%
5.5	Service staff generally have good interpersonal skills.	2%	10%	16%	15%	18%	31%	8%

5.6	Service staff check the accuracy of their cultural knowledge as they interact with customers from different cultures.	4%	11%	18%	18%	15%	26%	8%
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Source: Compiled by author

According to Table 5.1, 35% (question 5.1) of the respondents strongly disagreed that service staff are conscious of the cultural knowledge they use when interacting with customers from different cultural backgrounds, whereas 9% (question 5.2) stated that service staff adjust their cultural knowledge as they interact with customers from a culture that is unfamiliar to their own. Of the 407 respondents, 24% (question 5.3) indicated that service staff are displaying a positive attitude when interacting with culturally diverse customers. In question 5.4, only 28% of the respondents agreed that service staff are conscious of the cultural knowledge they apply to cross-cultural interaction, but 5% indicated that service staff are not particularly conscious of the cultural knowledge they apply to cross-cultural interaction. According to responses to question 5.5, 15% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that service staff generally have good interpersonal skills, and 26% (question 5.6) agreed that service staff check the accuracy of their cultural knowledge as they interact with customers from different cultures.

Table 5.2 Cognitive component

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
6.1	Service staff display knowledge of the legal and economic systems of other cultures.	6%	16%	17%	17%	13%	23%	8%

6.2	Service staff know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages which customers use.	4%	13%	14%	18%	19%	23%	9%
6.3	Service staff understand the non-verbal behaviour of culturally diverse customers.	3%	11%	14%	17%	22%	25%	8%
6.4	Service staff have the ability to listen to the culturally diverse customers.	2%	7%	13%	16%	20%	33%	9%

Source: Compiled by author

A total of 16% of respondents (question 6.1) revealed that service staff do not display knowledge of the legal and economic systems of other cultures, while 23% (question 6.2) agreed that service staff know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages which customers use. Twenty-five per cent (25%) of respondents (question 6.3) further showed that service staff understand the non-verbal behaviours of culturally diverse customers, whereas only 2% (question 6.4) indicated that service staff do not have the ability to listen to the needs of culturally diverse customers.

Table 5.3: Motivational component

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
7.1	Service staff are comfortable to serve diverse groups of customers.	12%	29%	15%	15%	16%	9%	4%

7.2	Service staff are sure that they can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to them.	9%	26%	18%	18%	13%	12%	4%
7.3	Service staff are confident to serve customers from cultures different from their own.	9%	28%	18%	17%	13%	10%	5%
7.4	Service staff generally enjoy interacting with culturally diverse customers.	6%	22%	22%	21%	12%	12%	5%
7.5	Service staff are confident that they can get accustomed to dealing with customers in cultures different from their own.	6%	25%	21%	18%	16%	10%	4%
7.6	Service staff generally have the ability to juggle multiple needs of culturally diverse customers.	6%	27%	20%	19%	12%	13%	3%

Source: Compiled by author

In question 5.3, 29% of respondents divulged that service staff are not comfortable serving diverse groups of customers. A total of 13% of respondents (question 7.1) slightly agreed that service staff are sure that they can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to them, while 28% (question 7.2) disagreed that service staff

are confident to serve customers from cultures different to their own. Further responses revealed that 12% of respondents found service staff to generally enjoy interacting with culturally diverse customers (question 7.3). In question 7.4, only 4% of respondents agreed that service staff are confident that they can get accustomed to dealing with customers in cultures different from their own, while 27%(question 7.5) disagreed that service staff generally can juggle multiple needs of culturally diverse customers.

Table 5.4: Behavioural component

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
8.1	Service staff change their verbal behaviour (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	7 %	10%	13%	18%	17%	28%	7%
8.2	Service staff use pauses and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.	4%	12%	11%	18%	20%	28%	7%
8.3	Service staff change their non-verbal behaviour to understand customers' needs.	3%	7%	13%	16%	19%	33%	9%
8.4	Service staff vary their rate of speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	3%	8%	13%	20%	18%	28%	10%

8.5	Service staff know and understand what is expected from them.	2%	5%	10%	16%	28%	33%	6%
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Source: *Compiled by author*

Only 18% of respondents (question 8.1) neither agreed nor disagreed that service staff change their verbal behaviour (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it. Responses to question 8.2 indicated that 20% of the respondents slightly agreed that service staff use pauses and silences differently to suit various cross-cultural situations. As little as 3% of respondents (question 8.3) strongly disagreed that service staff change their non-verbal behaviour to understand customers' needs. In question 8.4, 8% of respondents disagreed that service staff vary their rate of speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it, while 33% (question 8.5) agreed that service staff know and understand what is expected from them. According to responses for question 8.6, 28% of respondents slightly agreed that service staff know and understand what is expected from them.

5.2.3 Section C: Service delivery

This section presents the responses regarding service delivery. This part of questionnaire consisted of 20 questions focusing on the service delivery of employees.

Table 5.5: Scores for tangibles

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
9.1	Restaurant has modern-looking equipment.	2%	2%	1%	5%	24%	46%	20%
9.2	The physical facilities are visually appealing.	1%	1%	1%	2%	22%	48%	25%
9.3	Service staff have a neat appearance.	1%	1%	1%	2%	26%	48%	21%
9.4	Materials associated with the service are visually appealing.	1%	1%	2%	2%	20%	52%	22%

Source: *Compiled by author*

Table 9.1 reveals that most respondents (46%) agreed that the restaurant has modern-looking equipment (question 9.1). Only 1% (question 9.2) of respondents strongly disagreed that the physical facilities are visually appealing. In question 9.3, 48% agreed that service staff have a neat appearance, and only 1% (question 9.4) disagreed that materials associated with the service are visually appealing.

Table 5.6: Scores for reliability

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
10.1	Service staff generally meet their promised timeframes for responses to customers.	2%	4%	3%	5%	14%	52%	20%

10.2	Service staff are sympathetic and reassuring when the customers experience problems.	2%	4%	3%	3%	18%	42%	28%
10.3	The restaurant performs the service right the first time.	1%	4%	4%	3%	13%	42%	33%
10.4	Service staff are quick and efficient in-service delivery	2%	3%	3%	4%	13%	46%	29%

Source: Compiled by author

Most respondents (52%) in question 10.1 agreed that service staff generally meet their promised timeframes for responses to customers, while 28% (question 10.2) strongly agreed that service staff are sympathetic and reassuring when the customers experience problems. For question 10.3, 4% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the restaurant performs the service right the first time. A total of 46% indicated that service staff are quick and efficient in-service delivery (question 10.4).

Table 5.7: Scores for responsiveness

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
11.1	Service staff adequately informs customers when services will be performed.	1%	4%	2%	3%	15%	55%	20%
11.2	Service staff provide prompt service.	1%	2%	3%	4%	11%	48%	31%

11.3	Service staff are willing to help customers.	0%	1%	1%	3%	18%	47%	30%
11.4	Service staff are never too busy to respond to customers' requests.	1%	6%	2%	5%	12%	42%	32%

Source: *Compiled by author*

Responses to question 11.1 revealed that 55% of respondents agreed that service staff adequately inform customers when services will be performed. Regarding question 11.2, 4% neither agreed nor disagreed that service staff provide prompt service. Only 1% disagreed and 47% agreed that service staff are willing to help customers (question 11.3), while 42% strongly agreed that service staff are never too busy to respond to customers' requests (question 11.4).

Table 5.8: Scores for assurance

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
12.1	The behaviour of service staff instils confidence in customers.	0%	4%	2%	5%	13%	56%	20%
12.2	Customers feel safe in their transactions.	0%	1%	2%	4%	15%	44%	34%
12.3	Service staff are consistently courteous.	0%	1%	2%	5%	13%	46%	33%

12.4	Service staff have sufficient knowledge to answer customers' enquiries about the offerings and operations.	1%	5%	2%	5%	13%	48%	26%
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Source: *Compiled by author*

Most of the respondents (56%) agreed that the behaviour of service staff instils confidence in customers (question 12.1). No respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. A total of 34% of the respondents strongly agreed that customers feel safe in their transactions (question 12.2), while 2% (question 12.3) disagreed that service staff are consistently courteous. In question 12.4, 48% respondents agreed that service staff have sufficient knowledge to answer customers' enquiries about the offerings and operations.

Table 5.9: Scores for empathy

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
13.1	Service staff give individual attention to the customer.	1%	5%	2%	4%	14%	56%	18%
13.2	Service staff give personal attention to customers.	1%	8%	2%	5%	12%	39%	33%
13.3	Service staff understand specific needs of their customers.	0%	3%	1%	6%	14%	46%	30%
13.4	Service staff have the best interests of customers at heart.	1%	4%	1%	6%	17%	40%	31%

Source: *Compiled by author*

Slightly more than half (56%) of the respondents agreed that service staff pay individual attention to the customer (question 13.1), whereas 2% slightly agreed that service staff pay personal attention to customers (question 13.2). According to the responses captured in question 13.3, 30% strongly agreed that service staff understand specific needs of customers. The last question in this section (question 13.4) elicited a response of 40% agreeing that service staff have the best interests of customers at heart.

5.3 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics aim to draw conclusions about the population, based on sample analysis and observation. Before conducting data analyses, all variables used to measure the study items were evaluated for normality. The condition of normality is an essential requirement for a significant proportion of parametric statistical analyses. (See the codebook of items in Annexure D.)

The validation of the use of PLS-SEM was conducted due to the substantial deviation of all data from a normal distribution. (See Annexure E.) PLS-SEM is a data analysis method used for analysing complex relationships among constructs and indicators. In using PLS-SEM the following minimum sample size apply: (1) ten times the most formative indicators used to measure one construct or (2) ten times the most structural paths directed at a specific construct in the structural model (Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2017). The sample size of the study (N=403) far exceeds the minimum requirements.

The statistical package SmartPLS version 3.3.7 was used to conduct the PLS-SEM analysis. The following relates to the main research questions of the study:

1. What is the impact of the metacognitive intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein? (Model 1)
2. What is the impact of the cognitive intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein? (Model 2)
3. What is the impact of the motivational intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in

Bloemfontein? (Model 3)

4. What is the impact of the behavioural intelligence of service staff on service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein? (Model 4)

5.3.1 Outer model assessment

Prior to conducting an examination of the structural model for a significant relationship, it is imperative to assess the measurement model using (Fornell and Larcker 1981) criterion. The evaluation of the measurement model, also known as the outer model, in PLS analysis involves the assessment of validity and reliability (Amora, 2021). The purpose of reliability tests is to assess the stability and consistency of a measuring instrument, while validity tests aim to determine the accuracy of the instrument in measuring a specific concept for which it was designed (Janadari et al., 2016). The procedure employed in this study involved evaluating the reliability and different types of validity of the measurement models. These are discussed below.

Indicator reliability

Hulland (1999), posits that reflective indicator loadings >0.5 indicate that an item effectively measures a latent construct. However, as stated by Hair et al. (2017), the outer loadings of the indicator should exceed 0.70. Ringle, Sarstedt and Straub (2012) state that it is important to exercise caution when eliminating a significant number of indicators from a construct, as doing so may have a negative impact on the construct's content validity.

According to the guidelines outlined by Hair et al. (2017), any indicators with loadings below 0.70 were removed from the measurement models. The only exception was cases where the removal of indicators that had a loading of less than 0.70 would have resulted in less than three indicators for each construct. To ensure content validity, a minimum of three indicators was considered essential for the measurement of each construct.

- **Convergent validity**

Convergent validity refers to the degree to which a measurement instrument demonstrates a positive correlation with other measures that assess the same underlying construct. The evaluation of convergent validity involves the utilisation of the

Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which represents the mean variance that is mutually shared between a construct and its corresponding measures (Janadari et al., 2016). The AVE should be greater than 0.5 according to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), as well as Fornell and Larcker (1981).

- **Internal consistency reliability**

Internal consistency reliability can be evaluated using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (α). According to Gefen, Straub and Boudreau (2000), the CR should be greater than 0.7 to indicate adequate internal consistency reliability. Hair et al. (2017) state that, in exploratory research, a lower bound of 0.60 to 0.70 is considered acceptable values for α as α underestimates internal consistency reliability.

- **Discriminant validity**

Discriminant validity is the term used to describe the extent to which a construct is genuinely separate from other constructs based on empirical criteria. Discriminant validity implies the extent to which a construct is distinct and includes phenomena that are not accounted for by other constructs within the model. (Hair et al., 2017). The cross loadings criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio were used to assess the discriminant validity of the measurement models.

The Fornell-Larcker criterion involves the comparison of the square root of the AVE values to the correlations of latent variables. The square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than the highest correlation with any other construct. However, the most reliable method for assessing discriminant validity is the HTMT ratio. As Hair et al. (2017) explain that HTMT is a statistical measure that compares the average correlations between indicators measuring different constructs (known as heterotrait-heteromethod correlations) to the average correlations between indicators measuring the same construct (known as monotrait-heteromethod correlations). This ratio can be applied as a tool for evaluating the extent to which different constructs are distinct from each other, also known as discriminant validity. The HTMT ratio should not be greater than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2017).

5.3.2 Inner model (structural model) assessment

The assessment of the structural models of the study was conducted in two steps:

Step 1: Assess the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships. The assessment of the direct impacts of all the hypothesized relationships was performed through bootstrapping analysis. Bootstrapping is a resampling technique commonly utilized in statistical analysis; whereby multiple subsamples are drawn from the original data set with replacement. Subsequently, models are estimated for each of the subsamples. The objective of this study is to determine the standard errors of coefficients to assess their statistical significance, without relying on assumptions about the distribution. The standardized beta coefficients and t-values were calculated through a bootstrapping technique, employing a resample size of 5,000 (Hair et al., 2017).

Step 2: Assess the level of R^2

The R^2 statistic measures the percentage of variance in a latent endogenous construct that can be accounted for by other exogenous constructs. Exogenous constructs are characterised as independent constructs in all equations in which they are present, whereas endogenous constructs are identified as dependent constructs in at least one equation, although they may function as independent variables in other equations within the system.

5.4 SEM model 1 – Metacognitive component

SEM model 1, shown in Figure 5.4, documents the impact of the metacognitive component of cultural intelligence on the service delivery dimensions. This SEM model was assessed by applying the two-stage process explained in section 5.3.2.

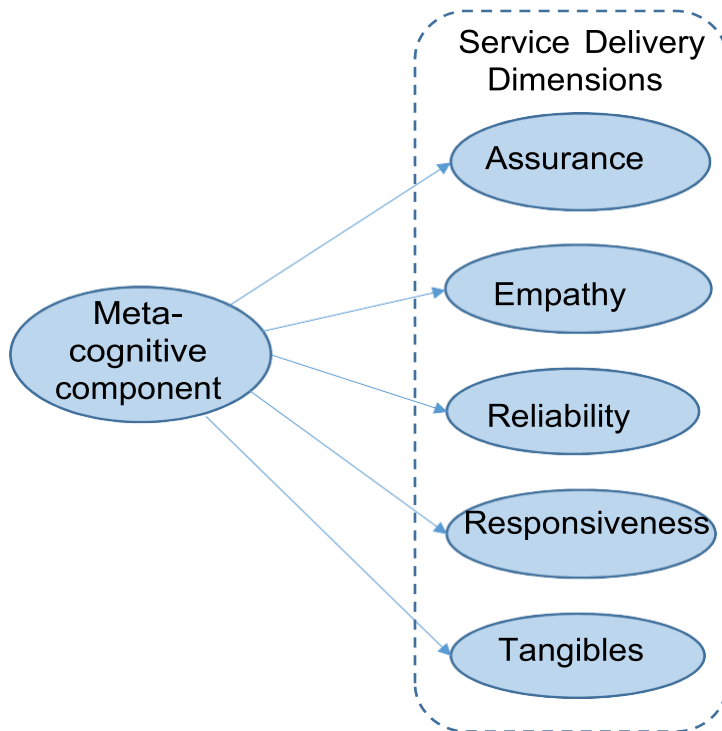


Figure 5.4: SEM research model 1

5.4.1 Outer model (measurement model) assessment

5.4.1.1 Indicator reliability

As alluded to before and based on the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2017), indicators that had loadings lower than 0.70 were removed from the measurement model. The following indicators were removed: ASS1, MCG6, REL3. All indicator loadings for SEM model 1 are shown in Table 10 below.

Table 5.10: Factor loadings SEM model 1

	Assurance	Empathy	Meta-cognitive component	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
ASS2	0.778					
ASS3	0.825					
ASS4	0.754					
EMP1		0.729				

EMP2		0.784				
EMP3		0.802				
EMP4		0.817				
MCG1			0.879			
MCG2			0.891			
MCG3			0.796			
MCG4			0.766			
MCG5			0.780			
REL1				0.736		
REL2				0.793		
REL4				0.791		
REL5				0.779		
RES1					0.709	
RES2					0.754	
RES3					0.801	
RES4					0.728	
TAN1						0.766
TAN2						0.816
TAN3						0.808
TAN4						0.802

Table 5.10 shows that all indicator loadings are above the 0.7 threshold, as prescribed by (Hair et al., 2017). It can therefore be concluded that the measurement model for SEM model 1 exhibits indicator reliability.

5.4.1.2 Convergent validity

As can be seen from Table 5.11 below, the AVE of all constructs in the measurement model is above the 0.5 threshold, as prescribed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), indicating convergent validity of all constructs.

Table 5.11: Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	AVE
Assurance	0.618
Empathy	0.614
Metacognitive	0.679

component	
Reliability	0.601
Responsiveness	0.561
Tangibles	0.637

5.4.1.3 Internal consistency reliability

Table 5.12 shows that the Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (α) of all items are equal to or above the 0.70 threshold, as prescribed by Gefen et al. (2000). All constructs therefore display an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability.

Table 5.12: Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha and CR

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Assurance	0,700	0,829
Empathy	0,793	0,864
Meta-cognitive component	0,886	0,913
Reliability	0,779	0,857
Responsiveness	0,742	0,836
Tangibles	0,811	0,875

5.4.1.4 Discriminant validity

From Table 5.13, the indicator loadings of each construct (shown in bold) do not load higher on any other construct, which, therefore, indicates discriminant validity.

Table 5.13: Cross loadings

	Assurance	Empathy	Meta-cognitive component	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
ASS2	0.778	0.403	-0.240	0.322	0.384	0.248
ASS3	0.825	0.466	-0.333	0.347	0.481	0.323
ASS4	0.754	0.644	-0.263	0.429	0.572	0.227
EMP1	0.470	0.729	-0.185	0.356	0.490	0.128
EMP2	0.461	0.784	-0.291	0.400	0.552	0.200
EMP3	0.539	0.802	-0.254	0.371	0.547	0.237
EMP4	0.536	0.817	-0.283	0.463	0.573	0.208
MCG1	-0.411	-0.359	0.879	-0.335	-0.414	-0.313
MCG2	-0.318	-0.357	0.891	-0.332	-0.360	-0.307
MCG3	-0.237	-0.182	0.796	-0.178	-0.247	-0.136
MCG4	-0.164	-0.123	0.766	-0.146	-0.162	-0.222

	Assurance	Empathy	Meta- cognitive component	Reliability	Responsive- ness	Tangibles
MCG5	-0.255	-0.219	0.780	-0.208	-0.270	-0.217
REL1	0.306	0.325	-0.216	0.736	0.402	0.351
REL2	0.418	0.447	-0.249	0.793	0.488	0.390
REL4	0.347	0.427	-0.227	0.791	0.437	0.370
REL5	0.359	0.379	-0.275	0.779	0.478	0.377
RES1	0.412	0.507	-0.225	0.432	0.709	0.179
RES2	0.425	0.467	-0.266	0.445	0.754	0.238
RES3	0.513	0.516	-0.352	0.351	0.801	0.314
RES4	0.467	0.595	-0.268	0.562	0.728	0.204
TAN1	0.275	0.184	-0.195	0.337	0.219	0.766
TAN2	0.265	0.206	-0.261	0.407	0.318	0.816
TAN3	0.289	0.172	-0.265	0.340	0.208	0.808
TAN4	0.270	0.242	-0.243	0.446	0.274	0.802

The square root of the AVE of each latent variable is denoted in bold font along the diagonal in Table 5.13, along with the correlations between the latent variable and other latent variables. The data presented in Table 5.14 clearly demonstrates that the square root of the (AVE) for each latent variable surpasses the correlation with any other latent variable. This finding further supports the notion of discriminant validity within the measurement model.

Table 5.14: Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Assurance	Empathy	Meta- cognitive component	Reliability	Responsive- ness	Tangibles
Assurance	0.786					
Empathy	0.639	0.784				
Metacognitive Component	-0.360	-0.330	0.824			
Reliability	0.463	0.510	-0.315	0.775		
Responsiveness	0.611	0.692	-0.379	0.585	0.749	
Tangibles	0.344	0.252	-0.305	0.480	0.321	0.798

The HTMT ratio should not exceed 0.9 (Hair et al., 2017). Table 5.15 below shows that 14 out of 15 HTMT ratios do not exceed the 0.9 threshold. Only one indicator is equal to the 0.9 threshold. It can therefore be said that the measurement model does exhibit discriminant validity.

Table 5.15: HTMT ratios

	Assurance	Empathy	Metacognitive component	Reliability	Responsive-ness
Empathy	0.862				
Metacognitive component	0.419	0.349			
Reliability	0.629	0.642	0.345		
Responsiveness	0.839	0.900	0.422	0.780	
Tangibles	0.450	0.307	0.337	0.602	0.399

5.4.2 Inner model (structural model) assessment

The assessment of the structural models of the study was conducted in two steps:

Step 1: Assess the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships Table 5.19 indicates a statistically significant negative relationship between the metacognitive component and assurance ($\beta = -0.360$, $p < 0.001$). The finding is the opposite to that of Alshaibani (2015) who found that $\beta = .620$ ($p < 0.001$), confirming that the metacognitive cultural intelligence of employees predicts their task performance.

A statistically significant negative relationship was also found between the metacognitive component and empathy ($\beta = -0.330$, $p < 0.001$). This finding contrasts with that of Ang et al. (2007) which supports the relationship between metacognitive cultural intelligence and cultural judgement and decision-making effectiveness ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.05$).

Two other statistically significant negative relationships were found, between the metacognitive component and reliability ($\beta = -0.315$, $p < 0.001$), as well as responsiveness ($\beta = -0.379$, $p < 0.001$). Lastly, there is a statistically significant negative relationship between the metacognitive component and tangibles ($\beta = -0.305$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 5.16: Path model results of SEM model 1

	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
Metacognitive component -> Assurance	-0.360	0.039	9.212	<0.001	Accepted
Metacognitive component -> Empathy	-0.330	0.040	8.251	<0.001	Accepted
Metacognitive component -> Reliability	-0.315	0.037	8.478	<0.001	Accepted
Metacognitive component -> Responsiveness	-0.379	0.035	10.876	<0.001	Accepted
Metacognitive component -> Tangibles	-0.305	0.051	5.946	<0.001	Accepted

Step 2: Assess the level of R^2

A graphical representation of the metacognitive component SEM model is shown in Figure 5.5 below, which indicates that the R^2 value of tangibles is 0.093. This means that the metacognitive component construct explains 9.3% of the variance in the tangibles construct. According to Cohen (1992), R^2 values of 0.12 or below indicates a low effect size; values between 0.13 and 0.25 indicate a medium effect size; and values of 0.26 or above indicate a high effect size. From these guidelines, the metacognitive component construct has a low predictive power for the tangibles construct.

The R^2 value of reliability is 0.099, indicating that the metacognitive component construct explains 9.9% of the variance in the reliability construct. The metacognitive component construct thus has a low predictive power for the reliability construct (Cohen, 1992). Figure 5.5 also shows the R^2 value of responsiveness as 0.143, indicating that the metacognitive component construct explains 14,3% of the variance in the responsiveness construct. This means that the metacognitive component has a medium predictive power for the responsiveness construct (Cohen, 1992).

The R^2 value of assurance is 0.130. This means that the metacognitive component construct explains 13.0% of the variance in the assurance construct. Therefore, the metacognitive component construct has a medium predictive power for the assurance construct (Cohen, 1992).

Lastly, the R^2 value of empathy is 0.109. In essence, the metacognitive component

construct explains 10.9% of the variance in the empathy construct. The metacognitive component construct thus has a low predictive power for the assurance construct (Cohen, 1992).

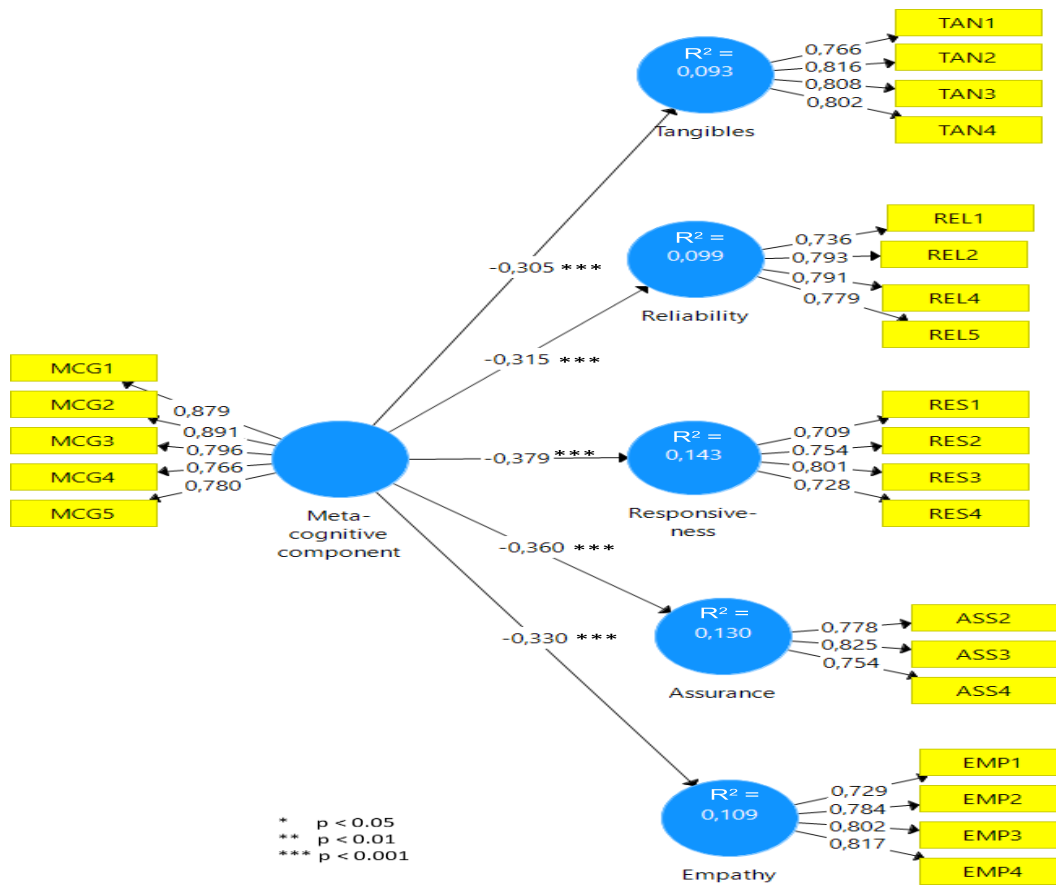


Figure 5.5: SEM model for the metacognitive component

5.5 SEM model 2 – Cognitive component

The SEM model 2, shown in Figure 5.6, was constructed to determine the impact of the cognitive component of cultural intelligence on the service delivery dimensions.

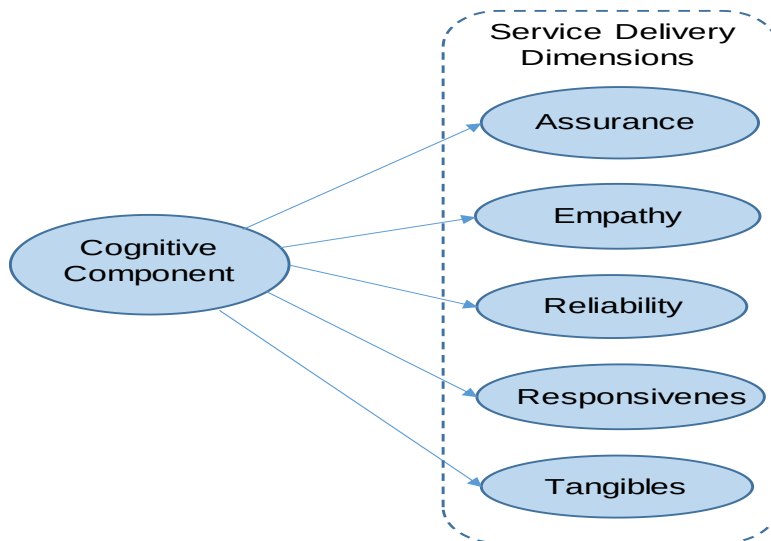


Figure 5.6: SEM research model 2

5.5.1 Outer model (measurement model) assessment

5.5.1.1 Indicator reliability

Based on guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2017), indicators that had loadings lower than 0.70 were removed from the measurement model. The following indicators were removed: ASS1, EMP1, REL3, RES4. All indicator loadings for SEM model 2 are shown in Table 5.17 below.

Table 5.17: Factor loadings SEM model 2

	Assurance	Cognitive component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
ASS2	0.811					
ASS3	0.825					
ASS4	0.718					
COG1		0.806				
COG2		0.786				
COG3		0.811				
COG4		0.809				
EMP2			0.870			
EMP3			0.780			
EMP4			0.775			
REL1				0.793		
REL2				0.752		

	Assurance	Cognitive component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
REL4				0.764		
REL5				0.778		
RES1					0.714	
RES2					0.794	
RES3					0.841	
TAN1						0.756
TAN2						0.779
TAN3						0.822
TAN4						0.827

Table 5.17 shows that all indicator loadings are above the 0.7 threshold, as prescribed by Hair et al. (2017). It can therefore be concluded that the measurement model for SEM model 2 exhibits indicator reliability.

5.5.1.2 Convergent validity

As can be seen from Table 5.18 below, the AVE of all constructs in the measurement model is above the 0.5 threshold, as prescribed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), indicating convergent validity of all constructs.

Table 5.18: Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	AVE
Assurance	0.618
Cognitive component	0.644
Empathy	0.656
Reliability	0.596
Responsiveness	0.549
Tangibles	0.635

5.5.1.3 Internal consistency reliability

Table 5.19 shows the Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (α) of all items are above the 0.70 threshold, as prescribed by Gefen et al. (2000). All constructs therefore display an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability.

Table 5.19 Composite Reliability and Cronbach's alpha

	Cronbach's α	CR
Assurance	0.700	0.829
Cognitive component	0.820	0.879
Empathy	0.748	0.851
Reliability	0.779	0.855
Responsiveness	0.742	0.828
Tangibles	0.811	0.874

5.5.1.4 Discriminant validity

Table 5.20 shows the cross loadings of each construct (shown in bold). They do not load higher on any other construct and are therefore an indication of discriminant validity.

Table 5.20: Cross loadings

	Assurance	Cognitive component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive- ness	Tangibles
ASS2	0.811	-0.096	0.387	0.312	0.383	0.246
ASS3	0.825	-0.112	0.434	0.337	0.462	0.323
ASS4	0.718	-0.076	0.637	0.423	0.512	0.230
COG1	-0.121	0.806	-0.077	-0.113	-0.117	-0.101
COG2	-0.047	0.786	-0.012	-0.109	-0.070	-0.101
COG3	-0.072	0.811	-0.067	-0.061	-0.125	-0.063
COG4	-0.128	0.809	-0.115	-0.099	-0.120	-0.085
EMP2	0.444	-0.096	0.870	0.392	0.506	0.200
EMP3	0.530	-0.058	0.780	0.362	0.533	0.234
EMP4	0.523	-0.058	0.775	0.454	0.500	0.211
REL1	0.299	-0.112	0.338	0.793	0.350	0.352
REL2	0.411	-0.067	0.430	0.752	0.424	0.392
REL4	0.343	-0.073	0.410	0.764	0.363	0.368
REL5	0.351	-0.105	0.369	0.778	0.426	0.375
RES1	0.400	-0.078	0.496	0.429	0.714	0.174
RES2	0.415	-0.106	0.479	0.440	0.794	0.228
RES3	0.508	-0.131	0.509	0.346	0.841	0.315
TAN1	0.273	-0.069	0.189	0.338	0.248	0.756
TAN2	0.267	-0.073	0.220	0.404	0.312	0.779

	Assurance	Cognitive component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
TAN3	0.291	-0.100	0.174	0.336	0.202	0.822
TAN4	0.266	-0.099	0.244	0.442	0.265	0.827

The square root of the AVE of each latent variable is indicated in bold along the diagonal in Table 5. 21, along with the correlations between the latent variable and other latent variables. The discriminant validity of the measurement model is confirmed by Table 5. 21, which demonstrates that the square root of the (AVE) for each latent variable surpasses the correlations with any other latent variable.

Table 5. 21: Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Assurance	Cognitive component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
Assurance	0.786					
Cognitive component	-0.122	0.803				
Empathy	0.597	-0.092	0.810			
Reliability	0.444	-0.121	0.489	0.772		
Responsiveness	0.567	-0.138	0.624	0.502	0.785	
Tangibles	0.343	-0.109	0.259	0.477	0.316	0.797

The final and most accurate method of assessing discriminant validity involves utilising the HTMT ratio of the correlations. The HTMT ratio should not be higher than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2017). As indicated in Table 5. 22, no HTMT ratio exceeds 0.9; therefore, the measurement model exhibits discriminant validity.

Table 5. 22 HTMT ratios

	Assurance	Cognitive component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness
Cognitive component	0.149				
Empathy	0.874	0.120			
Reliability	0.629	0.146	0.659		
Responsiveness	0.818	0.176	0.875	0.702	
Tangibles	0.450	0.131	0.339	0.602	0.413

5.5.2 Inner model (structural model) assessment

The assessment of the structural models of the study was conducted in two steps:

Step 1: Assess the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships Table 5.23 shows a statistically significant negative relationship between the cognitive component and assurance ($\beta = -0.122$, $p = 0.008$). This finding is contrary to that of Ang et al. (2007) who found a positive relationship between cognitive cultural intelligence and cultural judgement and decision-making effectiveness ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.05$). No statistically significant relationship was found between the cognitive component and empathy ($\beta = -0.330$, $p = 0.121$). This finding is also contrary to what Alshaibani (2015) found in her study on the relationship between cultural intelligence and service quality in hospitality, namely a significant relationship between cognitive cultural intelligence and assurance ($\beta = .913$, $p < 0.01$), and between cognitive cultural intelligence and treatment ($\beta = .562$, $p < 0.01$).

A statistically significant negative relationship between the cognitive component and reliability ($\beta = -0.121$, $p = 0.014$) was found, as well as between the cognitive component and responsiveness ($\beta = -0.138$, $p = 0.004$). Lastly, no statistically significant relationship was found between the cognitive component and tangibles ($\beta = -0.109$, $p = 0.065$). Alshaibani (2015) did find a significant relationship between treatment and assurance ($\beta = .517$, $p < 0.01$), as well as between cognitive cultural intelligence and assurance, in the presence of treatment performance ($\beta = .899$, $p < 0.01$) and found a significant relationship between cognitive cultural intelligence and empathy ($\beta = .120$, $p < 0.01$) and between cognitive and empathy, in the presence of treatment performance ($\beta = .097$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 5. 23: Path model results of SEM model 2

Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
Cognitive component -> Assurance	-0.122	0.046	2.649	0.008	Accepted
Cognitive component -> Empathy	-0.092	0.059	1.549	0.121	Rejected
Cognitive component -> Reliability	-0.121	0.049	2.446	0.014	Accepted
Cognitive component -> Responsiveness	-0.138	0.047	2.913	0.004	Accepted

Cognitive component -> Tangibles	-0.109	0.059	1.844	0.065	Rejected
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Step 2: Assess the level of R^2

A graphical representation of the cognitive component SEM model is shown in Figure 5.7. Figure 5.23 shows the R^2 value of tangibles as 0.012, but the relationship was not significant. This means that the cognitive component construct is not a predictor of the tangibles construct.

Figure 5.7 also shows that the R^2 value of reliability is 0.015. This means that the cognitive component construct explains 1.5% of the variance in the reliability construct. According to Cohen (1992), R^2 values of 0.12 or below indicates a low effect size; values between 0.13 and 0.25 indicate a medium effect size; and values of 0.26 or above indicate a high effect size. Following these guidelines, the cognitive component construct has a low predictive power for the reliability construct.

As indicated in Figure 5.7, the R^2 value of responsiveness is 0.019. This means that the cognitive component construct explains 1.9% of the variance in the responsiveness construct. According to Cohen (1992), the cognitive component construct has a low predictive power for the responsiveness construct. In addition, the R^2 value of assurance is 0.015. This means that the cognitive component explains 1.5% of the variance in the assurance construct. According to Cohen (1992), the cognitive component construct has a low predictive power for the assurance construct. Lastly, the R^2 value of empathy is 0.008, but the relationship was not significant. Thus, the cognitive component construct is not a predictor of the empathy construct.

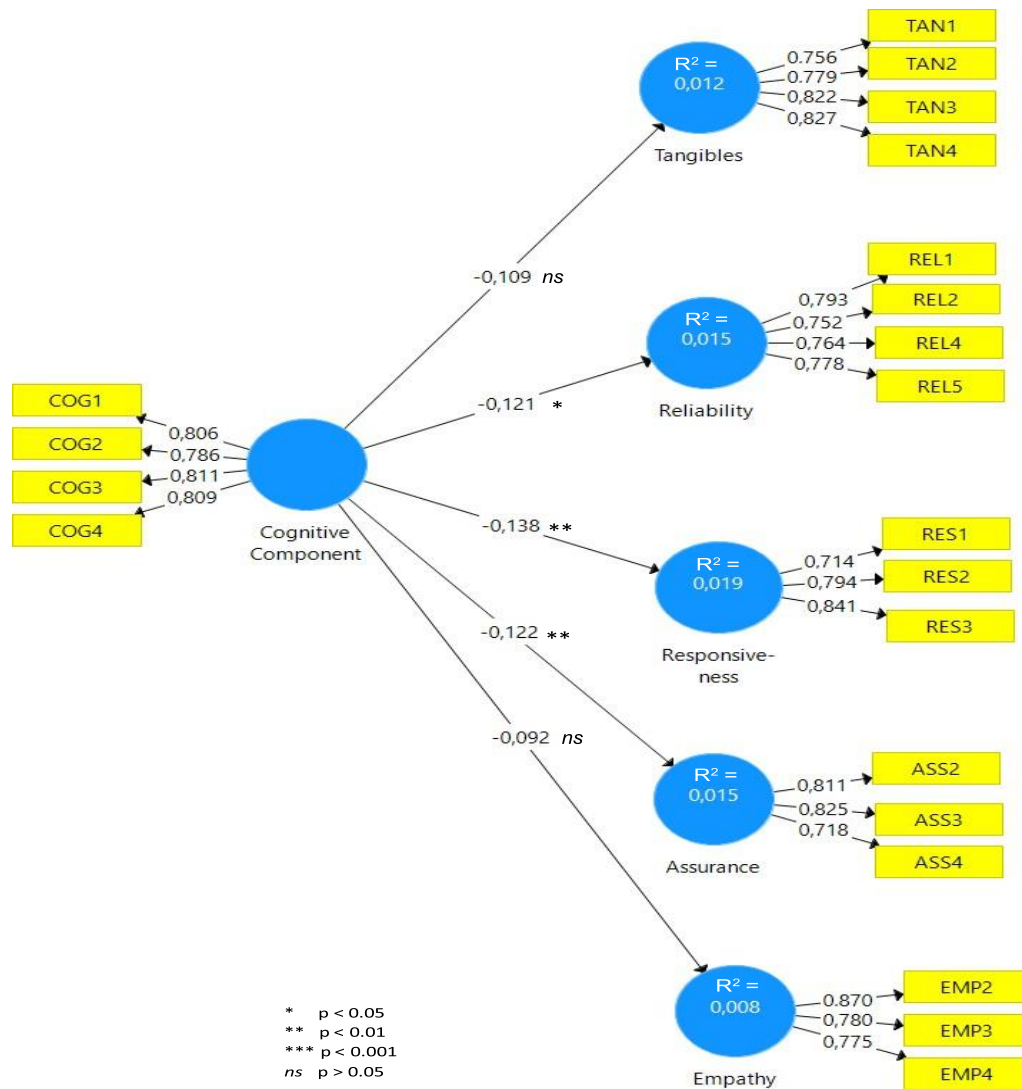


Figure 5.7: SEM model for the cognitive component

5.6 SEM model 3 – Behavioural component

The SEM model 3, shown in Figure 5.8, was constructed to determine the impact of the behavioural component of cultural intelligence on the service delivery dimensions.

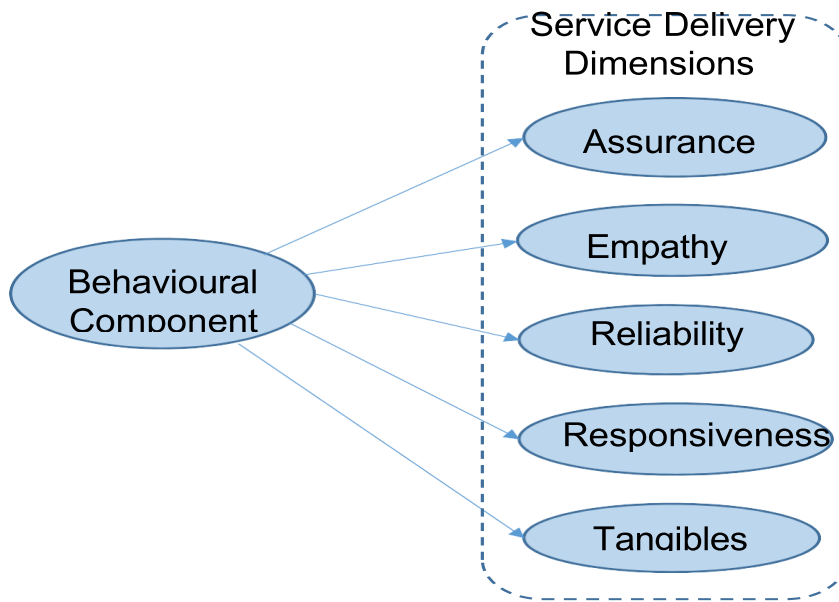


Figure 5.8: SEM research model 3

5.6.1 Outer model (measurement model) assessment

5.6.1.1 Indicator reliability

Based on guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2017), the indicators that had loadings lower than 0.70 were removed from the measurement model. The only exception is TAN3 whose removal would have resulted in less than three indicators remaining to measure the tangibles construct. The following indicators were removed: BEH2, REL1, REL3, TAN4. All indicator loadings for SEM model 3 are shown in Table 5. 24 below.

Table 5. 24: Factor loadings SEM model 3

	Assurance	Behavioural component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
ASS1	0.700					
ASS2	0.824					
ASS3	0.750					
ASS4	0.751					
BEH1		0.866				
BEH3		0.800				
BEH4		0.723				
BEH5		0.773				
EMP1			0.730			
EMP2			0.712			
EMP3			0.831			

	Assurance	Behavioural component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
EMP4			0.847			
REL2				0.703		
REL4				0.834		
REL5				0.872		
RES1					0.818	
RES2					0.755	
RES3					0.700	
RES4					0.713	
TAN1						0.790
TAN2						0.954
TAN3						0.637

Table 5. 24 shows that only one indicator loading (TAN3) was below the 0.7 threshold, as prescribed by Hair et al. (2017). This indicator was not removed, as explained above, to ensure content validity. It can therefore be concluded that the measurement model for SEM model 3 exhibits acceptable indicator reliability.

5.6.1.2 Convergent validity

As can be seen from Table 5. 25 below, the AVE of all constructs in the measurement model is above the 0.5 threshold prescribed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), indicating convergent validity of all constructs.

Table 5. 25: Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	AVE
Assurance	0.562
Behavioural component	0.627
Empathy	0.612
Reliability	0.650
Responsiveness	0.558
Tangibles	0.647

5.6.1.3 Internal consistency reliability

Table 5. 26 shows that the CR of all items is above the 0.70 threshold, as prescribed by Gefen et al. (2000). Regarding Cronbach's alpha, the intuitive decision-making style is

only slightly below the 0.7 threshold. Therefore, all constructs display an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability.

Table 5. 26: Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR)

	Cronbach's α	CR
Assurance	0.747	0.836
Behavioural component	0.822	0.870
Empathy	0.793	0.863
Reliability	0.740	0.847
Responsiveness	0.742	0.834
Tangibles	0.764	0.843

5.6.1.4 Discriminant validity

Table 5. 27 shows that the indicator loadings of each construct (shown in bold) do not load higher on any other construct, which is an indication of discriminant validity.

Table 5. 27: Cross loadings

	Assurance	Behavioural component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive- ness	Tangibles
ASS1	0.700	-0.076	0.516	0.432	0.471	0.176
ASS2	0.824	-0.166	0.408	0.296	0.364	0.235
ASS3	0.750	-0.125	0.478	0.367	0.454	0.296
ASS4	0.751	-0.125	0.634	0.390	0.571	0.194
BEH1	-0.194	0.866	-0.217	-0.136	-0.138	-0.094
BEH3	-0.102	0.800	-0.134	-0.025	-0.050	-0.031
BEH4	-0.079	0.723	-0.070	0.012	0.006	-0.076
BEH5	-0.105	0.773	-0.114	-0.045	-0.126	-0.038
EMP1	0.490	-0.104	0.730	0.372	0.490	0.100
EMP2	0.459	-0.110	0.712	0.387	0.553	0.185
EMP3	0.555	-0.173	0.831	0.357	0.535	0.236
EMP4	0.544	- 0.190	0.847	0.448	0.566	0.169
REL2	0.452	- 0.047	0.445	0.703	0.505	0.344
REL4	0.374	- 0.068	0.424	0.834	0.433	0.344
REL5	0.363	-	0.377	0.872	0.479	0.350

	Assurance	Behavioural component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
		0.091				
RES1	0.418	- 0.121	0.499	0.402	0.818	0,194
RES2	0.427	- 0.086	0.466	0.428	0.755	0.274
RES3	0.499	- 0.064	0.514	0.355	0.700	0.279
RES4	0.496	- 0.079	0.589	0.546	0.713	0.198
TAN1	0.260	- 0.040	0.187	0.304	0.214	0.790
TAN2	0.258	- 0.093	0.205	0.404	0.307	0.954
TAN3	0.289	- 0.021	0.173	0.323	0.167	0.637

The Fornell-Larcker criterion, shown in Table 5. 28, indicates that the square root of the AVE of each latent variable is indeed higher than any correlation with any other latent variable. This also indicates the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

Table 5. 28 Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Assurance	Behavioural component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
Assurance	0.750					
Behavioural component	-0.172	0.792				
Empathy	0.656	-0.194	0.782			
Reliability	0.471	-0.089	0.497	0.806		
Responsiveness	0.599	-0.122	0.680	0.572	0.747	
Tangibles	0.303	-0.080	0.226	0.422	0.304	0.804

The HTMT ratio should not exceed 0.9 (Hair et al., 2017). As can be seen from Table 5. 29, 14 out of 15 indicators' HTMT ratio did not exceed 0.9 and only one indicator was equal to the 0.9 threshold. Therefore, the measurement model exhibits discriminant validity.

Table 5. 29: HTMT ratios

	Assurance	Behavioural component	Empathy	Reliability	Responsive-ness
Behavioural component	0.178				
Empathy	0.871	0.205			
Reliability	0.685	0.086	0.670		
Responsiveness	0.846	0.129	0.900	0.791	
Tangibles	0.426	0.082	0.286	0.564	0.388

5.6.2 Inner model (structural model) assessment

The assessment of the structural models of the study was conducted in two steps:

Step 1: Assess the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships.

As indicated in Table 5. 30, there is a statistically significant negative relationship between the behavioural component and assurance ($\beta=-0.172$, $p<0.001$). Alshaibani (2015) also found that behavioural cultural intelligence had a significant positive influence on task performance ($\beta=0.47$, $p<0.001$).

A statistically significant negative relationship was found between the behavioural component and empathy ($\beta=-0.194$, $p<0.001$). This finding is contrary to that of Anget al. (2007) who indicated that behavioural cultural intelligence ($\beta=0.31$, $p<0.05$) predicted supervisor-rated task performance. The current study found no statistically significant relationship between behavioural component and reliability ($\beta=-0.089$, $p=0.251$), but a statistically significant negative relationship between the behavioural component and responsiveness ($\beta=-0.122$, $p=0.040$). Lastly, no statistically significant relationship was found between the behavioural component and tangibles ($\beta=-0.080$, $p=0.442$).

Table 5. 30: Path model results of SEM model 3

Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
Behavioural component -> Assurance	-0.172	0.043	4.015	<0,001	Accepted
Behavioural component -> Empathy	-0.194	0.037	5.223	<0,001	Accepted

Behavioural component -> Reliability	-0.089	0.078	1.148	0.25 1	Rejected
Behavioural component -> Responsiveness	-0.122	0.060	2.049	0.04 0	Accepted
Behavioural component -> Tangibles	-0.080	0.104	0.769	0.44 2	Rejected

Step 2: Assess the level of R^2

A graphical representation of the behavioural component SEM model is given in Figure 5.9. This figure shows that the R^2 value of tangibles is 0.006, but the relationship was not significant. In essence, the behavioural component construct is not a predictor of the tangibles construct.

According to Figure 5.9, the R^2 value of reliability is 0.008, but the relationship was not significant. Thus, the behavioural component construct is not a predictor of the reliability construct. Figure 5.9 also indicates that the R^2 value of responsiveness is 0.015. This means that the behavioural component construct explains 1.5% of the variance in the responsiveness construct. According to Cohen (1992), R^2 values of 0.12 or below indicates a low effect size; values between 0.13 and 0.25 indicate a medium effect size; and values of 0.26 or above indicate a high effect size. According to Cohen (1992), the behavioural component construct has a low predictive power for the responsiveness construct.

The R^2 value of assurance is shown as 0.030. This means that the behavioural component construct explains 3% of the variance in the assurance construct. Based on Cohen (1992) guidelines, the behavioural component construct has a low predictive power for the assurance construct. Lastly, the R^2 value of empathy is 0.037. This means that the behavioural component construct explains 3.7% of the variance in the empathy construct. Thus, based on Cohen (1992), the behavioural component construct has a low predictive power for the empathy construct.

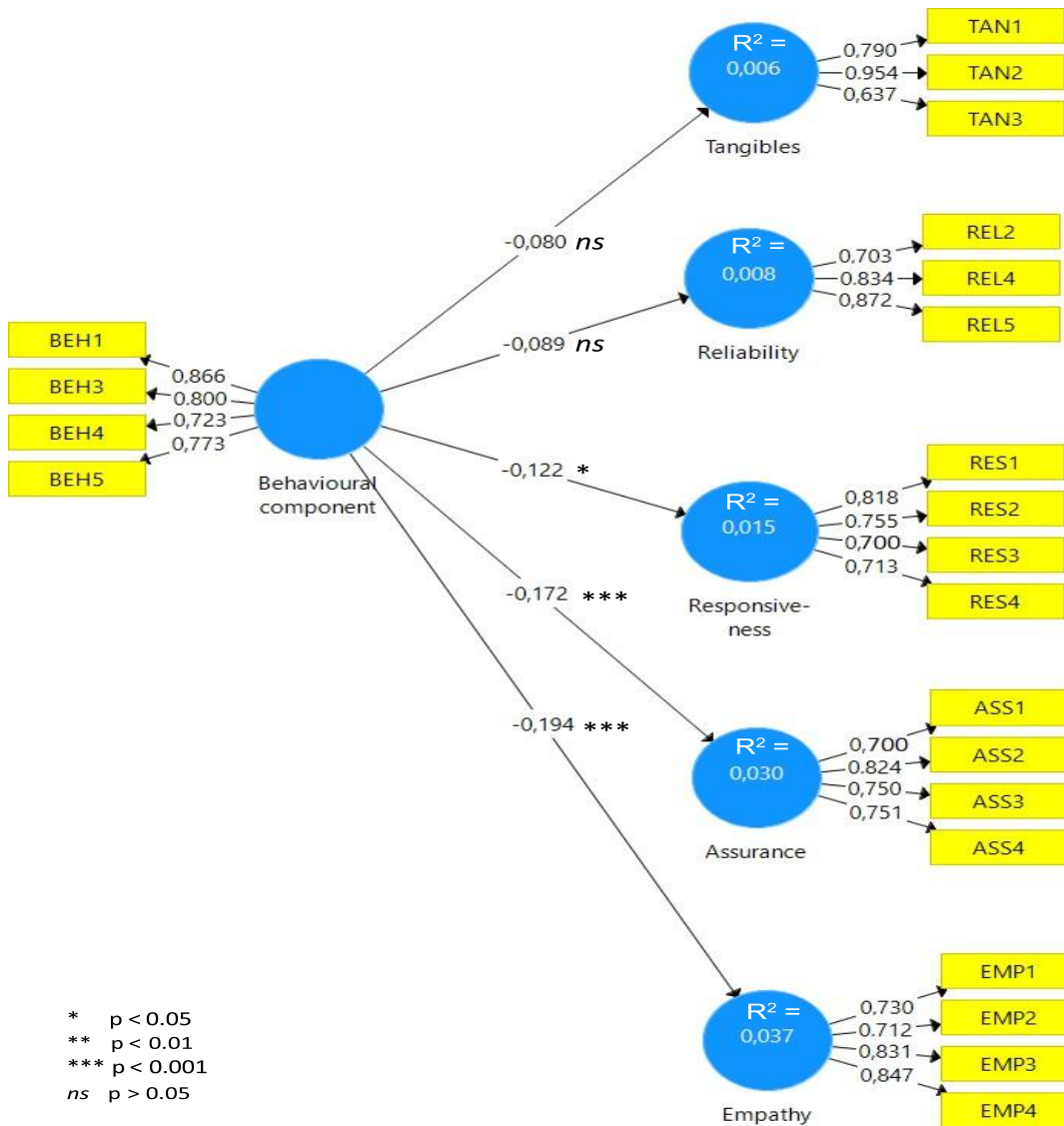


Figure 5.9: SEM model for the behavioural component

5.7 SEM model 4 – Motivational component

The SEM model 4, shown in Figure 5.10, was constructed to determine the impact of the motivational component of cultural intelligence on the service delivery dimensions.

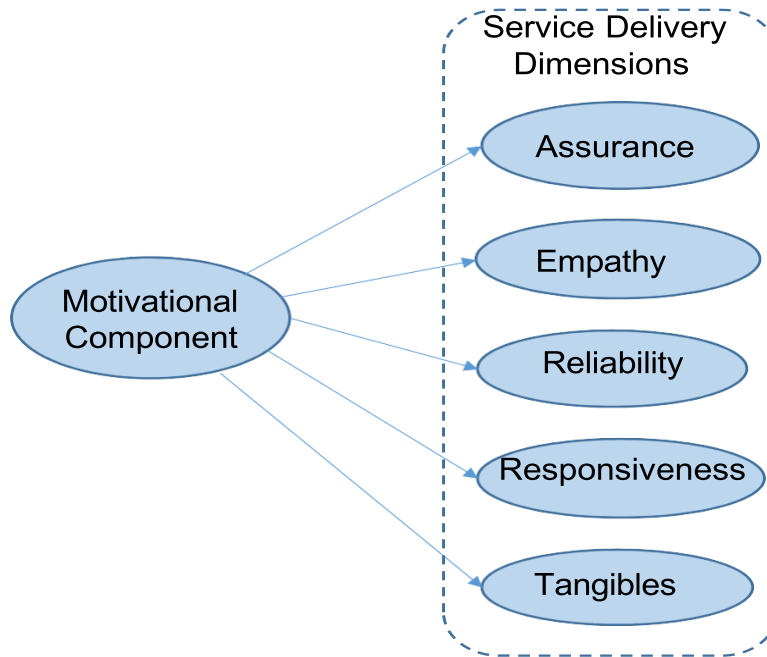


Figure 5.10: SEM research model 4

5.7.1 Outer model (measurement model) assessment

5.7.1.1 Indicator reliability

All indicator loadings for SEM model 4 is shown in Table 5. 31 below. In accordance with Hair et al. (2017) guidelines, any indicators with loadings below 0.70 were eliminated from the measurement model. The only exception was RES1 whose removal would have resulted in less than three indicators remaining to measure the responsiveness construct. The following indicators were removed: ASS1, EMP1, MOT1, REL1, RES4.

Table 5. 31: Factor loadings SEM model 4

	Assurance	Empathy	Motivational component	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
ASS2	0.824					
ASS3	0.709					
ASS4	0.817					
EMP2		0.888				
EMP3		0.773				
EMP4		0.751				
MOT2			0.794			
MOT3			0.862			
MOT4			0.832			

	Assurance	Empathy	Motivational component	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
MOT5			0.818			
MOT6			0.821			
REL2				0.762		
REL3				0.807		
REL4				0.730		
REL5				0.721		
RES1					0.683	
RES2					0.825	
RES3					0.831	
TAN1						0.729
TAN2						0.826
TAN3						0.816
TAN4						0.806

According to Table 5. 31, it can be observed that there was only one indicator loading (RES1) that fell slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.7, as prescribed by Hair et al. (2017). The retention of this indicator was done to maintain content validity. Hence, it can be inferred that the measurement model for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) model 4 demonstrates satisfactory indicator reliability.

5.7.1.2 Convergent validity

As indicated by Table 5.32 below, the AVE of all constructs in the measurement model is above the 0.5 threshold prescribed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), indicating convergent validity of all constructs.

Table 5. 32: Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	AVE
Assurance	0.616
Empathy	0.650
Motivational component	0.682
Reliability	0.571
Responsiveness	0.613
Tangibles	0.632

5.7.1.3 Internal consistency reliability

Table 5. 33 shows that the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's alpha of all, but one item are above the 0.70 threshold, as prescribed by Gefen et al. (2000). Only the assurance construct's Cronbach's alpha was slightly below 0.7. Therefore, it can be said that all constructs display an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability.

Table 5. 33: Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's α	CR
Assurance	0.694	0.827
Empathy	0.748	0.847
Motivational component	0.884	0.915
Reliability	0.763	0.842
Responsiveness	0.695	0.825
Tangibles	0.811	0.873

5.7.1.4 Discriminant validity

According to Table 5.34, the indicator loading of each construct, as indicated in bold, do not exhibit higher loadings on any other construct. This shows a discriminant validity.

Table 5. 34: Cross loadings

	Assurance	Empathy	Motivational component	Reliability	Responsive- ness	Tangibles
ASS2	0.824	0.384	0.114	0.406	0.381	0.249
ASS3	0.709	0.425	0.077	0.411	0.460	0.320
ASS4	0.817	0.635	0.122	0.386	0.509	0.224
EMP2	0.483	0.888	0.209	0.390	0.501	0.202
EMP3	0.548	0.773	0.116	0.405	0.532	0.236
EMP4	0.528	0.751	0.104	0.454	0.496	0.208
MOT2	0.069	0.143	0.794	0.081	0.163	0.096
MOT3	0.121	0.173	0.862	0.191	0.138	0.179
MOT4	0.119	0.160	0.832	0.109	0.193	0.181
MOT5	0.079	0.136	0.818	0.102	0.137	0.165
MOT6	0.156	0.173	0.821	0.132	0.134	0.207
REL2	0.437	0.426	0.098	0.762	0.423	0.389

	Assurance	Empathy	Motivational component	Reliability	Responsive-ness	Tangibles
REL3	0.399	0.351	0.154	0.807	0.387	0.366
REL4	0.345	0.407	0.057	0.730	0.365	0.374
REL5	0.339	0.365	0.112	0.721	0.425	0.381
RES1	0.416	0.494	0.087	0.417	0.683	0.176
RES2	0.424	0.477	0.159	0.428	0.825	0.241
RES3	0.499	0.506	0.167	0.416	0.831	0.315
TAN1	0.258	0.188	0.089	0.332	0.245	0.729
TAN2	0.249	0.220	0.191	0.414	0.315	0.826
TAN3	0.285	0.174	0.180	0.374	0.203	0.816
TAN4	0.248	0.241	0.162	0.438	0.263	0.806

Table 5. 35 reveals that the square root of the AVE of each latent variable surpasses the correlation with any other latent variable, also confirming the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

Table 5. 35: Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Assurance	Empathy	Motivational component	Reliability	Responsiveness	Tangibles
Assurance	0.785					
Empathy	0.621	0.806				
Motivational component	0.136	0.192	0.826			
Reliability	0.504	0.498	0.153	0.756		
Responsive-ness	0.568	0.617	0.185	0.527	0.783	
Tangibles	0.324	0.258	0.206	0.493	0.322	0.795

The HTMT ratio should not be higher than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2017). As indicated in Table 5.36 below no HTMT ratio exceeds 0.9; therefore, the measurement model exhibits discriminant validity.

Table 5. 36: HTMT ratios

	Assurance	Empathy	Motivational component	Reliability	Responsive-ness
Empathy	0.874				
Motivational component	0.167	0.213			
Reliability	0.687	0.686	0.168		
Responsiveness	0.818	0.875	0.224	0.728	
Tangibles	0.450	0.339	0.223	0.620	0.413

5.7.2 Inner model (structural model) assessment

The evaluation of the structural models in the study was carried out in a two-step process:

Step 1: Assess the significance and pertinence of the relationships within the structural model.

Table 5. 41 shows a statistically significant positive relationship between the motivational component of cultural intelligence and assurance ($\beta=0.136$, $p=0.001$). Alshaibani (2015) found a positive direct relationship between motivational cultural intelligence and task performance ($\beta=.126$, $p<.01$). Moreover, a statistically significant positive relationship between the motivational component and empathy ($\beta=0.192$, $p<0.001$) was recorded. This finding concurs with that of Ang et al. (2007) who found a positive relationship between motivational cultural intelligence and interaction ($\beta=0.41$, $p<0.001$).

A statistically significant positive relationship was found between the motivational component of cultural intelligence and reliability ($\beta=0.153$, $p<0.001$). This is affirmed by Hassan et al. (2020) who observed that motivational cultural intelligence has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction behaviour. The current study also found a statistically significant positive relationship between the motivational component and responsiveness ($\beta=0.185$, $p<0.001$). Lastly, a statistically significant positive relationship was recorded between the motivational component and tangibles ($\beta=0.206$, $p<0.001$). These results are shown in Table 5.37 below.

Table 5.37: Path model results of SEM model

Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
Motivational component -> Assurance	0.136	0.042	3.231	0.001	Accepted
Motivational component -> Empathy	0.192	0.041	4.631	<0.001	Accepted
Motivational component -> Reliability	0.153	0.041	3.696	<0.001	Accepted
Motivational component -> Responsiveness	0.185	0.046	4.018	<0.001	Accepted
Motivational component -> Tangibles	0.206	0.037	5.605	<0.001	Accepted

Step 2: Assess the level of R^2

A graphical representation of the motivational component SEM model is given in Figure 5.11, which shows that the R^2 value of tangibles is 0.042. This indicate that the motivational component construct is 4.2% of the variability seen in the tangibles construct. Cohen (1992), indicate that R^2 values of 0.12 or under indicates a low effect size; values between 0.13 and 0.25 shows a medium effect size; and values of 0.26 or more indicate a high effect size. In accordance with the prescribed guidelines, the motivational component construct has a low predictive power for the tangibles construct.

Figure 5.11 shows that the R^2 value of reliability is 0.023. This means that the motivational component construct explains 2.3% of the variability observed in the reliability construct. Cohen (1992) believes that the motivational component construct has a low predictive power for the reliability construct.

Furthermore, Figure 5.11 indicates the R^2 value of responsiveness as 0.034. This means that the motivational component construct explains 3,4% of the variability observed in the responsiveness construct. Cohen (1992) asserts that the motivational component construct has a low predictive power for the responsiveness construct.

The R^2 value of assurance is 0.019 as shown by Figure 5.11. This means that the motivational component construct explains 1,9% of the variability observed in the assurance construct. Cohen (1992) claims that the motivational component construct

has a low predictive power for the assurance construct. Lastly, the R^2 value of empathy is 0.037; thus, the motivational component construct explains 3,7% of the variance in the empathy construct. Thus, the motivational component construct has a low predictive power for the empathy construct (Cohen, 1992).

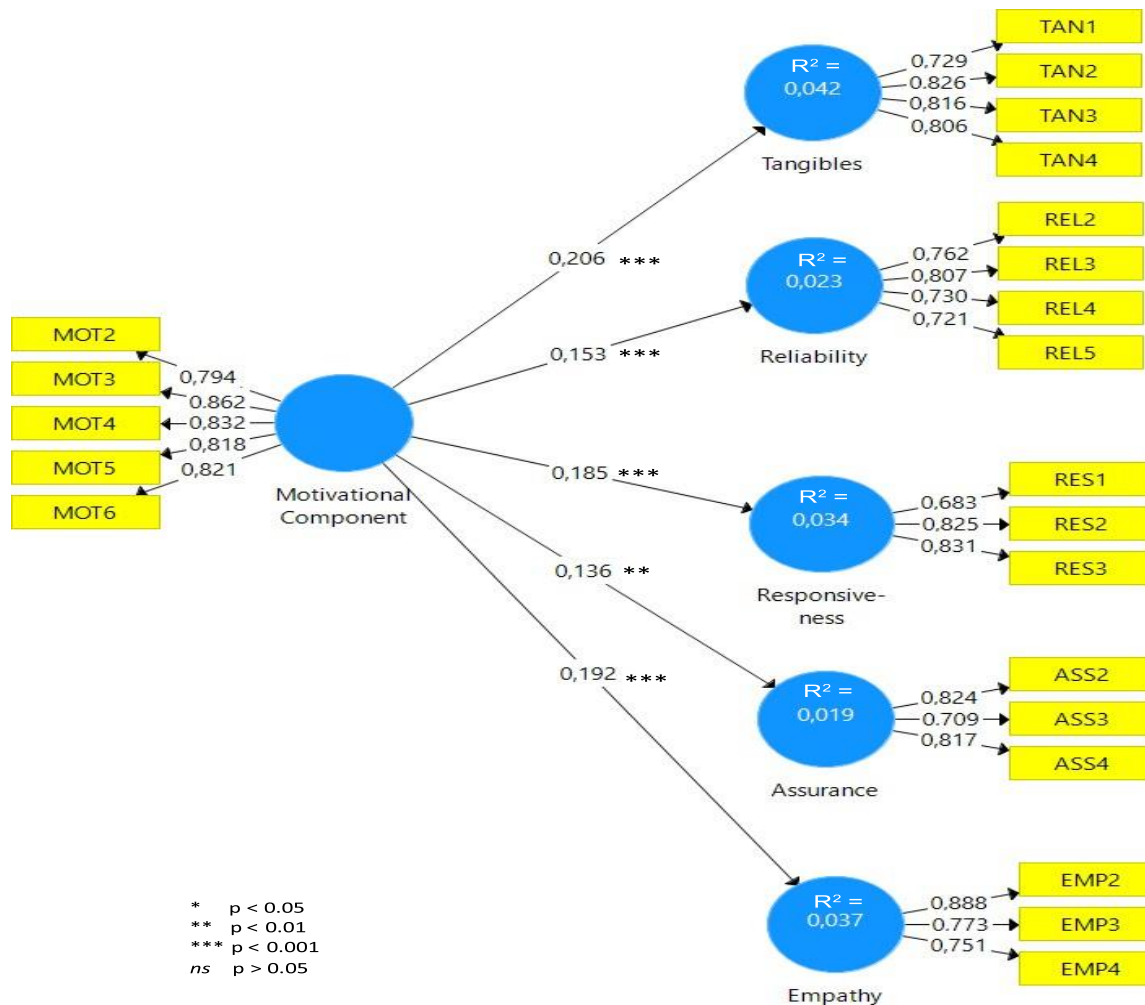


Figure 5.11: SEM model for the motivational component

5.8 Summary

This chapter presented and examined the findings that were obtained from the primary data. The chapter began by providing a definition of descriptive statistics, which encompassed the racial group, age, and gender of the respondents. These variables were derived from the data collected through the demographic section of the questionnaire. This chapter is structured into three sections. Section A focuses on the demographic profile of the respondents. Section B explores the respondents' perceptions on the four components of cultural intelligence. Lastly, Section C examines the responses related to service delivery. This chapter also included a discussion on the

application of inferential statistics to the data. The investigator employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to examine the correlation between cultural intelligence and service delivery within the context of casual dining establishments. The preceding chapter has established the groundwork for the subsequent chapter, wherein the researcher will derive conclusions and formulate relevant recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided an overview and analysis of the study's findings. This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the study's conclusions and offers recommendations based on the findings presented in Chapter 5. The current chapter will also address the limitations of the study and propose potential areas for future research.

6.2 Conclusions

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the impact of the cultural intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers in casual dining restaurants in the Bloemfontein. The relationships between the variables were conducted using PLS-SEM.

The demographic data revealed that 52% of the participants identified as male, while 48% identified as female. Most participants fell within the age range of 21 to 40 years. Most participants were of African descent, comprising 71% of the total sample. This was followed by individuals of coloured ethnicity, accounting for 19% of the sample. White participants constituted 6% of the sample, while Asian and Indian participants each represented 2% of the total.

Metacognitive cultural intelligence relates to active thinking in a cross-cultural setting, which means that individuals need to continuously organise, monitor, and adapt their ways of thinking about interactions (Ang et al., 2007). The findings of the study (see Figure 5.5) revealed that the metacognitive component has a statistically significant negative relationship with assurance ($\beta = -0.360$, $p < 0.001$), as well as with empathy ($\beta = -0.330$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, the study found that the metacognitive component has a statistically significant negative relationship with reliability ($\beta = -0.315$, $p < 0.001$), with responsiveness ($\beta = -0.378$, $p < 0.001$), and with tangibles ($\beta = -0.305$, $p < 0.001$).

Statistically negative relationships imply that the higher the variable (the metacognitive component), the lower the other variable (service delivery). Applied to this study, the findings thus mean that service staff did not instil confidence and trust when interacting

with customers. This extends to caring and paying sufficient attention to customers to ensure a reliable service experience. Metacognitive cultural intelligence also impacts the tangibles of service delivery, which relates to the physical appearance of facilities, equipment, and staff.

Cognitive cultural intelligence refers to the understanding and awareness of various cultural elements, including but not limited to norms, values, religious beliefs, artistic values, and language. This knowledge is generally required through learning and experience (Ang et al., 2007; Puyod and Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Findings related to the cognitive component (see Figure 5.7) revealed a statistically significant negative inverse correlation between the cognitive component and assurance ($\beta=-0.122$, $p=0.008$), as well as between the cognitive component and reliability ($\beta=-0.121$, $p=0.014$) and responsiveness ($\beta=-0.138$, $p=0.004$). No statistically significant relationships were recorded between the cognitive component and tangibles ($\beta=-0.109$, $p=0.065$). Finally, no relationships were recorded between cognitive cultural intelligence and empathy ($\beta=-0.092$, $p<0.05$) and between cognitive cultural intelligence and the tangibles of service delivery ($\beta=-0.109$, $p<0.065$).

As mentioned above, statistically negative relationships imply that the higher the variable (cognitive component), the lower the other variable (service delivery). Applied to this study, service staff thus did not instil confidence and trust in the service delivery relationship. Furthermore, they neither delivered the promised service nor showed a willingness to deliver prompt service to customers. Service staff who possess behavioural cultural intelligence demonstrate the ability to engage in suitable verbal and non-verbal interactions with customers belonging to diverse cultural groups. (Anget al., 2007).

With respect to this form of cultural intelligence, the results of the research (see Figure 5.9) demonstrate a statistically significant inverse correlation between the behavioural aspect and assurance ($\beta=-0.172$, $p<0.001$) and between the behavioural component and empathy ($\beta=-0.194$, $p<0.001$). The findings are also applicable to the relation between the behavioural component and responsiveness, as evidenced by the statistically significant negative correlation ($\beta=-0.122$, $p=0.040$). However, no relationships were recorded between the behavioural component and reliability ($\beta=-0.089$, $p=0.251$) and

between the behavioural component and tangibles ($\beta=-0.080$, $p=0.442$).

The findings imply that the higher the behavioural component, the lower the service delivery. Thus, the service staff did not adhere to the expectations of good service, caring for customers and responding to their needs. The reliability of the service staff showed no relationship with behavioural component— meaning that the performance of service staff was not up to standard. The behavioural component did not have an impact on the tangibles (the physical layout and appearance of the facility, equipment, and staff) of the establishments.

Motivational cultural intelligence implies that individuals direct their attention towards intercultural factors by learning through new experiences (Ang et al., 2007). The results of the study (see Figure 5.11) revealed statistically positive associations between motivational cultural intelligence and all the constructs of service delivery: assurance ($\beta=0,136$, $p=0,001$), empathy ($\beta=0,192$, $p=<0,001$), reliability ($\beta=0,153$, $p=<0,001$), responsiveness ($\beta=0,185$, $p=<0,001$), and tangibles ($\beta=0,206$, $p=<0,001$).

These results imply that the higher degree of motivational intelligence, the higher all levels of service delivery. In other words, service staff demonstrated a genuine commitment to intercultural learning, as evidenced by their attentiveness and capacity to effectively navigate culturally diverse contexts, thereby facilitating their own personal growth and development. High levels of motivational cultural intelligence indicate a strong intercultural self- efficacy and an inherent drive to actively to actively participate in intercultural interactions. This is an interesting finding as most of the respondents were African millennials (born between 1980 and 2000) (Wawrosz and Jurásek, 2021).

These findings are against those of Jiony et al. (2021), specifically regarding the lack of conscious awareness among employees regarding the cultural preferences of their peers. The outcome may have been influenced by factors such as inadequate training, a relatively youthful workforce, and educational qualifications. In the present study, it was observed that a significant proportion of respondents (33%) reported that service staff did not adapt their cultural understanding when engaging with customers belonging to a culture that is unfamiliar to them. On the other hand, respondents showed that service staff generally had good interpersonal skills (31%).

In their study, Tariq and Lorenz (2017) concluded that there was a significant increase of service failure as a result of disparities in cultural backgrounds between service employees and customers. Moreover, the restaurant environment serves as a suitable representation of an intercultural service encounter. The study conducted by Jiony et al. (2021) has documented that an increased understanding of cultural intelligence has a significant influence on the psychological capital of front-line employees, subsequently impacting the overall quality of service.

Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol (2020), discovered that teams demonstrating elevated levels of cultural intelligence were found to be more engaged in extensive team sharing of expertise and receive higher evaluations of their innovative work compared to teams with low cultural intelligence. In her study, Alshaibani (2015) discovered that the forefront hospitality service staff who are culturally prepared can effectively utilise and adapt their understanding of culture when engaging with customers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Consequently, individuals who possess these qualities are also more inclined to offer guests a dependable and compassionate service, thereby bolstering confidence and trust in the organisation. In Alshaibani (2015) study, a positive correlation was also found between this factor and both the level of engagement in interactions and the job performance of employees.

Puyod and Charoensukmongkol (2019) found that individuals with less work experience derived a significantly greater benefit from cultural intelligence regarding their involvement in interactions and job performance compared to individuals with more work experience. Furthermore, Suthatorn and Charoensukmongkol (2018) suggested that employees who possess a higher degree of cultural intelligence exhibit not only proficient cross cultural communication when interacting with customers from various cultural backgrounds, but also actively strive to meet customer expectations more effectively in comparison with individuals with a lesser degree of cultural intelligence. According to the research conducted by Tariq and Lorenz (2017), it was demonstrated that possessing a strong cultural intelligence is a significant skill for effectively managing cross-cultural service interactions.

6.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed to enhance the cultural intelligence of

service staff in the hospitality industry:

- It is imperative that service personnel possess a sufficient level of intercultural understanding and competence to effectively navigate and fulfil the diverse demands of customers from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Considering the inherent characteristics of the hospitality sector, the role of cultural intelligence training will be paramount in the development of service staff's cross-cultural competence. This, in turn, will improve their ability to engage effectively with customers of diverse backgrounds.
- Service staff serving the hospitality industry encounter various situations while engaging with diverse customers. Consequently, the enhancement of their soft skills will yield advantageous outcomes for both employees and the organisation.
- Due to the challenges and uncertainties surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, it is crucial to recognise the significance of cross-cultural communication training as an integral component of cultural intelligence. This is particularly relevant for service staff who may have limited experience in this field. This will allow the development of a greater level of understanding and sensitivity towards diverse customers' attitudes and behaviours.

6.4 Limitations

This study specifically examined casual dining establishments within the hospitality industry located in Bloemfontein. Hence, the conclusions derived from this study are not applicable to the entire population of hospitality service staff. Another constraint of this study was the researchers' inability to acquire consent from certain casual dining establishments that declined to participate.

6.5 Suggested future research

This current study has the potential to be replicated by future researchers in various South African contexts. To enhance the generalisability of their findings, other researchers may opt to utilise a larger sample size, despite the potential for increased financial and temporal demands associated with conducting a study of such magnitude.

Further research can employ alternative methods of data gathering, such as conducting interviews, to allow direct interaction with service employees in the hospitality industry for a better understanding of the factors that contribute to their cultural intelligence.

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Annexure A: Ethical Clearance



**FACULTY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER**

Date: 8 September 2022

This is to confirm that:

Applicant's Name	PM Sentso
Supervisors' Name[s] for Student Project (where applicable)	Prof D Kokt
Level of Qualification for Student Project (where applicable)	Master's in management sciences in Human Resource Management
Title of Research Project	The impact of the cultural intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers at casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein

Ethical clearance has been provided by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee in view of the CUT Research Ethics and Integrity Framework, 2016, with reference number **FMSEC07/19**.

The following special conditions were set:

☒ None

☐ Specific conditions

The following specific conditions apply:

1. __NA__

2. __NA__

3. __NA__

We wish you success with your research project.

Professor P Rambe
Deputy FRIC Chairperson



Annexure B: Letter of request



REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT CASUAL DINING RESTAURANT

Dear Owner/Manager

My name is Puseletso Mary Sentso. I am a master's student in Human Resource Management at the Central University of Technology Free State. I am conducting a survey on the impact of the cultural intelligence of service staff on the service delivery experiences of customers at casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein, Free State. At this stage, I am collecting data from customers at casual dining restaurants in Bloemfontein. This study is supervised by Prof Koko.

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach several customers at your restaurant to participate in this project. Customers' responses to this questionnaire are voluntarily and would be treated with strict confidentiality. The questionnaires will be filled anonymously, and the responses will be reported in an aggregate form. This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes. I notably appreciate your assistance.

Yours faithfully Puseletso

Mary Sentso

Prof Deseré Koko (Main supervisor) 0827756840

koko@cut.ac.za

Annexure C: Cultural intelligence and service delivery questionnaire



This questionnaire relates to employees' level of cultural intelligence in service delivery experience of customers. The completion of the questionnaire is anonymous and your willingness to assist is highly appreciated.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Please indicate your response by making an X.

1. Please provide your racial group by ticking an X in the appropriate box.

African	
Asian	
Coloured	
Indian	
White	
Other	

2. Please indicate your age by ticking an X in the appropriate box.

Under 21	
21-40	
41-60	
Older than 60	

3. Please indicate your gender.

1.	Female
2.	Male

SECTION B: CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking X in the appropriate box.

For the sake of this questionnaire service staff refers to all individuals that serve you at the restaurant – including managers and waitrons.

4. Meta-cognitive component

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4.1	Service staff are conscious of the cultural knowledge they use when interacting with customers from different cultural backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.2	Service staff adjust their cultural knowledge as they interact with customers from a culture that is unfamiliar to their own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.3	Service staff are displaying a positive attitude when interacting with culturally diverse customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.4	Service staff are conscious of the cultural knowledge they apply to cross-cultural interaction.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.5	Service staff generally have good interpersonal skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.6	Service staff check the accuracy of their cultural knowledge as they interact with customers from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Cognitive component

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5.1	Service staff display knowledge of the legal and economic systems of other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.2	Service staff know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages which customers use.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.3	Service staff understand the non-verbal behaviour of culturally diverse customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.4	Service staff have the ability to listen to the needs of culturally diverse customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. Motivational component

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6.1	Service staff are comfortable to serve diverse groups of customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.2	Service staff are sure that they can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.3	Service staff are confident to serve customers from cultures different from their own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.4	Service staff generally enjoy interacting with culturally diverse customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6.5	Service staff are confident that they can get accustomed to dealing with customers in cultures different from their own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.6	Service staff generally have the ability to juggle multiple needs of culturally diverse customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. Behavioural component

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.1	Service staff change their verbal behaviour (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.2	Service staff use pauses and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.3	Service staff change their non-verbal behaviour to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	understand customers' needs.							
7.4	Service staff vary their rate of speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.5	Service staff know and understand what is expected from them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION C: SERVICE DELIVERY

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking X in the appropriate box.

Tangibles

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8.1	The restaurant has modern-looking equipment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.2	The physical facilities are visually appealing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.3	Service staff are neat appearing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.4	Materials associated with the service are visually appealing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. Reliability

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9.1	Service staff generally meet their promised timeframes for responses to customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.2	Service staff are sympathetic and reassuring when the customers experience problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.3	The restaurant performs the service right the first time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9.4	Service staff are quick and efficient in-service delivery.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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10. Responsiveness

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10.1	Service staff adequately inform customers when services will be performed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.2	Service staff provide prompt service.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.3	Service staff are willing to help customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.4	Service staff are never too busy to respond to customers' requests.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. Assurance

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11.1	The behaviour of service staff instill confidence in customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.2	Customers feel safe in their transactions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.3	Service staff are consistently courteous.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.4	Service staff have sufficient knowledge to answer customers' enquiries about the offerings and operations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. Empathy

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12.1	Service staff give individual attention to the customer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.2	Service staff give personal attention to customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.3	Service staff understand specific needs of their customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.4	Service staff have the best interests of customers at heart.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.5	Service staff give each customer individualised attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for your time and participation!!!!

Annexure D: Codebook of construct items

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE	
Metacognitive component	
MCG1	Service staff are conscious of the cultural knowledge they use when interacting with customers with different cultural backgrounds.
MCG2	Service staff adjust their cultural knowledge as they interact with customers from a culture that is unfamiliar to their own.
MCG3	Service staff are displaying a positive attitude when interacting with culturally diverse customers.
MCG4	Service staff are conscious of the cultural knowledge they apply to cross-cultural interaction.
MCG5	Service staff generally have good interpersonal skills.
MCG6	Service staff check the accuracy of their cultural knowledge as they interact with customers from different cultures.
Cognitive component	
COG1	Service staff display knowledge of the legal and economic systems of other cultures.
COG2	Service staff know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages which customers use.
COG3	Service staff understand the non-verbal behaviours of culturally diverse customers.
COG4	Service staff have the ability listen to the needs of culturally diverse customers.
Motivational component	
MOT1	Service staff are comfortable to serve diverse groups of customers.
MOT2	Service staff are sure that they can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to them.
MOT3	Service staff are confident to serve customers from cultures different from their own.
MOT4	Service staff generally enjoy interacting with culturally diverse customers.
MOT5	Service staff are confident that they can get accustomed to dealing with customers in cultures different from their own.

MOT6	Service staff generally have the ability to juggle multiple needs of culturally diverse customers.
Behavioural component	
BEH1	Service staff change their verbal behaviour (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.
BEH2	Service staff use pauses and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.
BEH3	Service staff change their non-verbal behaviour to understand customers' needs.
BEH4	Service staff vary their rate of speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.
BEH5	Service staff know and understand what is expected from them.
SERVICE DELIVERY	
Tangibles	
TAN1	The restaurant has modern-looking equipment.
TAN2	The physical facilities are visually appealing.
TAN3	Service staff are neat appearing.
TAN4	Materials associated with the service are visually appealing.
Reliability	
REL1	Service staff generally meet their promised timeframes for responses to customers.
REL2	When a customer has a problem, service staff show a sincere interest in solving it.
REL3	Service staff perform the service right the first time.
REL4	Services are provided by service staff at the time they promised to do so.
REL5	Service staff keep accurate records.
Responsiveness	
RES1	Service staff adequately inform customers when services will be performed.
RES2	Service staff provide prompt service.
RES3	Service staff are willing to help customers.
RES4	Service staff are never too busy to respond to customers' requests.

Assurance	
ASS1	The behaviour of service staff instils confidence in customers.
ASS2	Customers feel safe in their transactions.
ASS3	Employees are consistently courteous.
ASS4	Service staff have sufficient knowledge to answer customers' enquiries about the offerings and operations.
Empathy	
EMP1	Service staff give individual attention to the customer.
EMP2	Service staff give personal attention to customers.
EMP3	Service staff understand specific needs of their customers.
EMP4	Service staff have the best interests of customers at heart.

Annexure E: Normality assessment – Shapiro-Wilk

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
COG1	.931	345	.000
COG2	.934	345	.000
COG3	.929	345	.000
COG4	.908	345	.000
MOT1	.921	345	.000
MOT2	.927	345	.000
MOT3	.923	345	.000
MOT4	.936	345	.000
MOT5	.930	345	.000
MOT6	.926	345	.000
BEH1	.915	345	.000
BEH2	.917	345	.000
BEH3	.908	345	.000
BEH4	.924	345	.000
BEH5	.899	345	.000
TAN1	.805	345	.000
TAN2	.795	345	.000
TAN3	.797	345	.000
TAN4	.792	345	.000
REL1	.752	345	.000
REL2	.769	345	.000
REL3	.736	345	.000
REL4	.749	345	.000
REL5	.750	345	.000
RES1	.739	345	.000
RES2	.734	345	.000
RES3	.806	345	.000
RES4	.761	345	.000
ASS1	.735	345	.000
ASS2	.798	345	.000
ASS3	.790	345	.000
ASS4	.760	345	.000
EMP1	.724	345	.000
EMP2	.762	345	.000
EMP3	.764	345	.000
EMP4	.784	345	.000

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