
A Review of Recent Literature on Coaching in a Cross-Cultural Context

MA Professional Practice (Neuro coaching)

Module: BMPF7100

Research and Academic Communication

Alannah Britz

Student number: 2029338

Word count: 6498

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
Context	3
Overview of Cross-cultural Coaching	4
Definition of Key Terms	5
THEORETICAL COMPONENTS IN CROSS-CULTURAL COACHING	7
Cultural Profiling	8
Metacognition to Build Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	9
Experiential Learning	10
EMERGING THEMES FROM THE LITERATURE	10
Cross-Cultural Coaching – A Connected Evolution	10
Cross-Cultural Coaching in Today's Context	12
Key Questions for Today's Coach	14
Intersectionality	14
How to make space for Indigenous knowledge and other worldviews	15
The coach's role in driving social change	16
GAPS IN THE LITERATURE	16
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	17
REFERENCES	19

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a review of recent literature on cross-cultural coaching. It draws on broader research on culture and discourse on social trends and the impact on fields such as leadership. The paper explores the factors coaches must consider when they are supporting clients in an environment of significant global change. Given that the focus of this review is on emerging themes rather than on a detailed retrospective analysis, and that cross-cultural coaching is itself a new and developing practice, most of the literature considered has been published in the last decade. However, there is reference to some of the earlier seminal works on cross-cultural research. While this paper does not provide an exhaustive review of the literature, it reflects a variety of perspectives on cross-cultural coaching and cultural theory more broadly. For the analysis, this author has applied Dixon-Woods et al.'s 2006 Critical Interpretative Synthesis (CIS) approach as a means of integrating diverse perspectives to identify theoretical components, common themes, and gaps in the literature. The review concludes with a recommendation for research into the competencies and tools that a coach needs to create a coaching environment that recognises and makes space for the diversity of difference clients both embody and have to navigate in a world of increasing cultural complexity.

Context

Over the past two decades, globalisation has changed the world at unprecedented rates. Vanham (2019a) reflects in his World Economic Forum article "A brief history of globalisation" that globalisation began with the start of the Silk Road, more than 2000 years ago.

Globalization Era	Age of Discovery (15 th -18 th century)	Globalization 1.0 (19 th century – 1914)	Globalization 2.0 (1945-1989)	Globalization 3.0 (1989-2008)	Globalization 4.0
Leading Exports	Raw Material / Basic Goods	Textiles / Industrial Goods	Factories	Global Supply Chain	Digital Goods / Services
Leading Nations					
Exports as % World GDP	<5%	6 → 14%	5 → 15%	15 → >20%	?
Enabling Era	Scientific Revolution (15 th -17 th century)	1st Industrial Revolution (1780s–mid 19 th century)	2 nd Industrial Revolution (1870s-1910s)	3 rd Industrial Revolution (1960s-1990s)	4 th Industrial Revolution (2000s-2010s)
Enabling Innovations					
Characterizing GDP Trend	Europe ↗	Britain ↗↗	World ↗	United States ↗↗↗	China ↗↗↗↗

History of Globalization and Industrial Revolutions – by Peter Vanham, World Economic Forum

Figure 1: A brief history of globalisation (Vanham 2019a)

He explains that we are now in the globalisation era, 'Globalisation 4.0' (Figure 1 above), the effects of which, through the technological advances of the 20th century, are being experienced as increasingly complex and fast paced. Two significant features of globalisation are labour mobility and digital enablement such as the use of web-based technologies to conduct business (Cox et al 2014). The World Economic Forum estimates that there are more than four billion people online, worldwide, with millions added each month (Vanham 2019b). In terms of labour mobility, the International Monetary Fund contends that, in 2019, approximately 270 million people in the world were migrants (people living in a country other than where they were born), an increase from approximately 120 million in 1990 (IMF 2020). These factors mean that individuals and organisations are increasingly exposed to, and engaged in, intercultural interactions that require competencies, including contextual awareness and mental and behavioural agility to support their successful navigation of complex cross-cultural challenges (Plaister-Ten 2013, Cox et. al 2014, Booysen 2015). While the pace of migration has steadily increased over the last two decades, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly curtailed international travel and slowed migration (Altman and Bastion 2022). Consequently, societies have changed in the way people live, work, and interact, resulting in flexible and remote working arrangements and greater opportunities for remote international work (Mangla 2021, Reuil 2022). However, Mangla (2021) notes that these shifts have had an initial negative impact on trust, collaboration, and communication. Therefore, to successfully operate in these new working environments, individuals need to develop greater degrees of behavioural sensitivity and cultural intelligence.

Overview of Cross-Cultural Coaching

Cox et al. (2014) describe coaching as drawing on a multitude of different knowledge bases, which are constantly evolving in line with shifts in societal thinking to meet the changing needs of individuals. This is seen particularly in the context of cross-cultural coaching with the literature indicating that the different perspectives outlined echo global social change and an evolution of cultural theory. These perspectives, explored further in following sections, appear to evolve from an application of culturally bounded methodologies to approaches with a greater emphasis on individual reflective practice. It is also noticed that while the definition of cross-cultural coaching is for the most part common, the definition of culture itself varies across the literature and that appears to influence the types of frameworks and methodologies applied to the coaching conversation.

Several authors define cross-cultural coaching as the process of using coaching to help individuals build their ability to navigate situations of cross-cultural complexity (den Outer 2010, Plaister-Ten 2013, Cox et. al 2014). Booysen (2015, p242) expands on this definition by describing cross-cultural coaching as a coach helping a client “through a process of assessment, challenge, reflective and reflexive questioning, and support to make sense of how culture influences his own beliefs and behaviours and that of others”. Van der Horst and Albertyn (2018) take this definition further, positing that cross-cultural coaching can help an individual not only build their self-awareness and awareness of others but also use that knowledge to inform culturally appropriate behaviour. In their paper “Leadership coaching across cultures” Chmielecki and Contreras-Loera (2020, p79) describe cross-cultural coaching as helping to build behavioural flexibility, which is “the ability to straddle cultures and willingness to adapt to several norms and expectations that may even be conflicting”. However, Anandlal (2017) has a different perspective, defining cross-cultural coaching as a contracted engagement between individuals from different races. What is noticed with this definition is that the emphasis on cross-culture is not between the client and their environment but between the coach and the client. This is similar to the discussion by Geber and Keane (2013, p9) who also focus on the coach/ client relationship and call for the development of “culturally consonant coaching training” to incorporate indigenous knowledge and greater sensitivity to past racial trauma.

Considering the different perspectives and the macro societal context outlined above, this author supports an integrated definition of cross-cultural coaching that incorporates elements of those outlined above to form four components. First, the coach can use cross-cultural coaching to encourage reflective practice and metacognition to build a client’s self-awareness (Cox et. al 2014), including consideration of their cultural context or experiences and how that may be influencing their identity as explored by Plaister-Ten (2013). Second, with an understanding of how their thinking is shaped, the coach can then help a client recognise and appreciate the differences in others which Chmielecki and Contreras-Loera (2020) speak of, including being aware of some of the cultural values and characteristics that may be present in their surrounding environment as described by Rosinki (2003). Third, the coach can work with the client to convert this knowledge into the ability to navigate the complexities and paradoxes of today’s world as described by Cox et. al (2014) and van der Horst and Albertyn (2018). Fourth, this author believes that cross-cultural coaching requires a coach to be culturally aware as explored by Cox et. al (2014) and Car and Seto (2013). The coach should also possess an understanding and appreciation of the indigenous knowledge that may form part of the client’s identity as discussed by Geber and Keane

(2013), and a sensitivity to the different lived experiences of others, including pain and racial trauma as referred to by Anandlal (2017).

Definition of Key Terms

Considering the concept of culture itself, the literature refers to the broad definitions of early interculturalists, such as Hofstede (1997), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), and Schein (1999) and Rosinki (2003), who define culture as the collective understanding of one group of people that distinguishes it from another and which is manifest through its symbols, artefacts, and language, and the external manifestation of internal subconscious worldview, including values and assumptions. This definition is further explored by Booysen (2015, p246) who expressed culture as being 'socially constructed', comprising a set of values, perspectives, and activities. More recently, Zagaria (2021) compared the Naturalist definition of culture as a process of social learning versus the Culturalist view of culture as 'webs of significance' formed through meaning making and symbolism. The author posits that both these perspectives should be considered in understanding culture as part of humankind's evolutionary process and agrees with Chin, Desormeaux and Sawyer (2016) who postulate that the concept of culture as a singular, homogenous construct does not exist in today's world. Rather, leaders must deal with the complexity of navigating several forms of diversity at any one time. They discuss 'multiculturalism' which is defined in the American Psychological Associations Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organisational Change for Psychologists as "the broad scope of dimensions of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, class status, education, religious/ spiritual orientation, and other cultural dimensions" (Chin, Desormeaux and Sawyer 2016, p50).

The literature also includes exploration of the concepts of cultural experience and cultural identity. Berry and Candis (2013, p44) view cultural experience as the "events (singularly or collectively engaged) specific to a group of individuals with share beliefs, values, traditions, customs, practices, and language". Wilson's (2013) article explores the concept of the critical experience, a particular cultural event or experience which influences one's understanding of ourselves or our environment. She suggests that because of these critical experiences, one's understanding of culture is a shifting construct. This idea is also reflected in den Outer's (2010) work, which explores how an individual's identity is shaped by cultural experiences that are described as a journey and meaning-making practice. More recently, Yang, Zhao, and Lui (2021 p180) suggest that cultural identity isn't just how we define

ourselves, but it also gives us a “sense of belonging” in terms of the broader definition of culture that includes race, ethnicity, religion, and language.

What is noticeable about the definitions of culture is the fact that there are various perspectives of what constitutes culture. It can be based on nationality, or it can include a broader range of elements, such as gender, race, and/or religion. Reflecting on the related concepts of cultural experience and cultural identity, this author notices what appears to be a cyclical and mutually dependent relationship between culture, cultural experience, and cultural identity. That is, culture is viewed as a constantly changing construct of individual and social learning within which an individual's identity is shaped by their experiences in an interconnected world of globalisation, which in turn influences their behaviour that, when experienced by others, can further shape the broader culture.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is a concept in cross-cultural coaching that the literature indicates has emerged in recent years in response to the increasing complexity of cross-cultural interactions as discussed by Booysen (2015) and van der Horst and Albertyn (2018). It is widely considered to comprise four components: cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioural ability (Cox et al. 2014, Andresen and Bergdolt 2017, van der Horst and Albertyn 2018, Mangla 2021). Van der Horst and Albertyn (2018) contend that (CQ) is an etic construct since it exists independently of any specific culture and is an intelligence that is present in every individual. Given its applicability to any cultural belief, it could be an effective skill to navigate cross-cultural situations regardless of the definition of the word ‘culture’.

THEORETICAL COMPONENTS IN CROSS-CULTURAL COACHING

In reviewing the literature, three broad theoretical components emerged relating to cross-cultural coaching: a focus on cultural profiling including culturally bound identities and values (Plaister-Ten 2013, Cox et al 2014, Booysen 2015, van der Horst and Albertyn 2018); a focus on an individual's internal process of metacognition to build cultural intelligence (Plaister-Ten 2013, van der Horst and Albertyn 2018, Morris et. al 2019, Goryunova 2020); and the role of learning gained through consideration of an individual's experience and their narrative of those experiences in relation to their environment to expand their self-awareness and worldview (den Outer 2013, Geber and Keane 2013, Wilson 2013, Cox et. al 2014, van der Horst and Albertyn 2018, Chin et. al 2016).

Cultural Profiling

Hofstede (1997), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), and Schein (1999) studied the various cultural traits and characteristics present in different nationalities and informed much of the intercultural work of the late 1990s and early 2000s such as the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) study which built on their work to research culture and its implication on leadership across 61 countries (Plaister-Ten 2013). In the literature reviewed, several authors, including Plaister-Ten (2013), Cox et. al (2014) and van der Horst and Albertyn (2018), applied this cultural profiling work in cross-cultural coaching, incorporating both the externally demonstrated behaviours and the underlying cultural paradigms and perceptual maps of experience that were observed within groups of people of the same nationalities. For example, Plaister-Ten (2013) considered the use of cultural profiling as part of her framework, the Cross-cultural Kaleidoscope, with which the coach helps a client become aware of the influence their culture has in shaping their values and building awareness of how these may vary from others they interact with. Plaister-Ten (2013) also considered how this approach can help a client to build awareness of a particular cultural identity or value that may no longer be serving them in order to identify what change(s) in their belief system or behaviour might be necessary to help them move forward. Similarly, both Carr and Seto (2013) and Cox et. al (2014) referred to Rosinki's Cultural Orientations Framework (COF) that encourages individuals to view culture not as a barrier but as an opportunity to enhance interactions between people of different cultures. It is this author's view that the cultural profiling work of Hofstede (1997), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), and Schein (1999) and subsequent coaching frameworks such as Plaister-Ten's (2013) Cross-cultural Kaleidoscope and Rosinki's COF (2003) provide a vocabulary for individuals to raise conscious awareness of, and reflect on the cultural differences they notice (Carr and Seto 2010, Rosinki 2013, Cox et. al 2014, Booysen 2015). For example, Rosinki's (2003) COF helps individuals consider culture in terms of elements such as time management (for instance, does a culture focus on the past, present, or future?) and identity and purpose (does a person identify as an individual or part of a collective?). However, what the cultural profiling work did not consider was that, with globalisation, an individual's cultural identity may increasingly be influenced by experiences beyond their national culture made available through TV, the internet, and social media as explored by Vanham (2018). Similarly with the increase in migration (IMF 2020), individuals from cross-cultural families is increasingly likely and with that comes the complexity of dual or more cultural identities. As such, one cannot consider a person through a single cultural lens. In fact, the coach should be just as, if not more sensitive to the client's cultural identity as they are to their cultural context.

Metacognition to Build Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

The second component is the role of metacognition in the cross-cultural coaching process. Morris et al. (2019) describes metacognition as the process of noticing, tracking, and managing one's thoughts. In their discussion on how to build a client's cross-cultural effectiveness, van der Horst and Albertyn (2018) explore the use of metacognitive strategies, such as awareness-building, perspective-taking, and mindfulness, that a coach can use to help an individual build greater self-awareness of their blind spots. Goryunova (2020) also considers the use of metacognitive strategies, such as situational awareness and 'seeing the big picture', to help leaders gain a deeper understanding of their cognitive processes as well as how they interact with others. What is noticed in the articles is the ability of an individual to gain a degree of cognitive distance from their experiences, which enables them to reflect on what they are noticing and apply that expanded perspective into their daily behaviours and interactions.

Given cognition and metacognition are two components of CQ, van der Horst and Albertyn (2018) suggest that metacognitive strategies are an effective tool in building CQ. Reflecting on the concepts of cultural experience and cultural identity outlined earlier in this paper, it appears that the use of metacognitive strategies to build CQ can be effective mechanisms in the cross-cultural context to help a client to reflect on their experiences to gain a deeper understanding of how their identity has and is being shaped, and more importantly consider how they would like to use that insight to inform their future action. For example, Wilson (2013) opines that a client's experience with culture impacts the development of their cognitive perspective or global mindset. This experience, or what Wilson (2013, p40) describes as the 'critical experience' can feed into the narrative of their experience, including influencing any assumptions they may be making that they will exhibit through their behaviour. The use of a metacognitive strategy such as Goryunova's 2020 'seeing the big picture' can help a client to reflect on the impact of that 'critical experience' on their worldview and, in doing so, shift their mindset and consider the perspective, or narrative of others.

The third element of CQ — motivation — possibly comes into play when an individual is experiencing cognitive dissonance in a situation. Plaister-Ten (2013) states that cognitive dissonance can occur when an individual's personal values are at odds with those of their environment. This author believes that using CQ as an approach to explore this cognitive dissonance could help an individual identify what might need to change in their thinking, and in considering the fourth component of CQ; namely, what they do as a result of their reflections (behaviour).

Experiential learning

The third theoretical component that is present across all the research is the concept of learning. Den Outer (2010) refers to the value of developmental theory being applied in cross-cultural coaching to facilitate a shift from one developmental level to another.

Pinkavova (2010) explores the use of Kegan's 'orders of consciousness' in coaching to help clients navigate situations of change, build awareness of their experiences, and expand that viewpoint by considering the perspectives of others. Another view explored in the literature is Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (1984), which Van der Horst and Albertyn (2018) maintain can help deepen the impact of cross-cultural coaching when used in conjunction with metacognitive strategies to build CQ as outlined above.

Whether it is the use of cultural profiling (Plaister-Ten 2013), consideration of one's critical experiences (Wilson 2013), the use of metacognition strategies (Morris et al. 2019), or the process of building cultural intelligence (van der Horst and Albertyn (2018), the literature indicates that a critical component is the process of learning. In reflecting on Berry and Candis's (2013) view of cultural experience, using an approach such as Kolb's ELT (1984) which encourages a cycle of reflection, can help an individual to gain a deeper perspective of an experience to help them navigate future intercultural experiences. The literature points to the use of metacognitive strategies as practical tools a coach can use with a client as part of this reflective experiential learning practice and, in doing so, help build a client's ability to continue the practice independently. This author recognises the correlation between this process of taking that knowledge back into daily life as the final stage of Kolb's ELT and the belief that individuals have unique potential and coaching helps surface this for them to then apply take that enriched understanding back in their daily lives. This also aligns with the components of CQ moving from cognition through to behaviour.

EMERGING THEMES FROM THE LITERATURE

Cross-Cultural Coaching – A Connected Evolution

The research indicates a correlation between the development of methodologies used in cross-cultural coaching and the evolution of broader academic thinking and social discourse about culture as an evolving construct. It appears that in line with the belief such as Cox et. al (2014) express, that coaching should adapt to the changing needs of clients, the rise of cross-cultural coaching reflects the increasingly complex situations globalisation is presenting to individuals, organisations, and nations (Cox et al. 2014, Booysen 2015).

Exploring the development of cross-cultural coaching more closely it appears that at first it echoed the cultural profiling work of Hofstede (1997), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), and Schein (1999). Early cross-cultural coaching approaches developed frameworks that help a client gain a better understanding of the characteristics, traits, and mindset they have in relation to those of someone from another culture. For example, Plaister-Ten (2013) explores how different working environments will be influenced by the traits of the culture they operate within, such as an approach to timekeeping, communication styles, conformity to rules, and perceptions of authority, which are driven by the underlying values that sit within a national psyche. She explains that an individual from a culture that is motivated by a different set of values to that of the environment they are working in can experience misunderstandings and breakdown in relationships due to a disconnect in their respective worldviews (Plaister-Ten 2013).

Cox et al. (2014) however, highlights the risk of looking at only one cultural variable and cautioned coaches to avoid an over-simplified lens of cross-cultural coaching since, as they reflected, in this age of globalisation it is rare for an individual to be influenced by only one culture. Instead of helping an individual explore the potential differences between their culture and another's, they suggest the goal for cross-cultural coaching should be to help an individual operate within paradoxical situations and build a comfort level with a dynamic and shifting landscape (Cox et al. 2014).

This idea is echoed in broader research on emerging challenges for leadership, such as Chin, Desormeaux and Sawyer's (2016) 'Making way for paradigms of diversity leadership' where they discuss insights from the American Psychological Association's Leadership Diversity Summit (LDS), a leadership meeting that aimed to explore the increasingly diverse and complex environment leaders are operating in and the key issues leaders are grappling with, with the intention of identifying core competencies to address these challenges. For instance, a male Latin leader shared that he grappled with the national culture's idea of 'masculinity', while also recognising the role of a leader to encourage equality across genders and managing an employee who was non-traditional in their gender identity (Chin, Desormeaux and Sawyer 2016). It was experiences such as these that led to the LDS recommending leadership competencies that included utilizing a global and diverse mindset and promoting a diversity-supportive and inclusive climate. More recently, Chmielecki and Contreras-Loera (2020) observe the multi-faceted challenges facing leaders in the types of dilemmas leaders seek coaching guidance for, such as managing projects hampered by

communication breakdowns caused by different viewpoints from a range of national, team, and role cultures.

What is clear from both the wider research as well as that of cross-cultural coaching is that, in today's world, one cannot simply focus on one element of culture, but rather a multi-dimensional view. Chin, Desormeaux and Sawyer (2016) describe this as multiculturalism and expressed the importance of leaders recognising and valuing the differences that exist between groups and actively encouraging inclusion, which requires a degree of cultural competence. Based on the discussions by Cox et. al (2014), van der Horst and Albertyn (2015) and Booysen (2015), this author sees the value of using a CQ approach to help build this competence to successfully navigate the increasingly complex landscape of culture as outlined in the following section.

Cross-Cultural Coaching in Today's Context

Moving from the use of frameworks that consider specific national cultural profiles, the literature reflects an increased focus on metacognition and the use of CQ as an approach to build cultural competence as discussed in the works of Booysen (2015), Andresen and Bergdolt (2017) and van der Horst and Albertyn (2018). Andresen and Bergdolt (2017) argue that, with the challenges and paradoxes leaders now encounter, methodologies tailored to specific cultural context are no longer effective since leaders need to be able to “decode complex cross-cultural situations and think outside narrow cultural boundaries” (2017, p171). In fact, what is noticed in their paper is that the term ‘cross-cultural’ is used interchangeably with ‘intercultural’ and it occurs to this author that it is an indication of the shift from singular views to a multi-dimensional view of culture versus the concept of ‘cross-cultural’ as a singular focus on a particular culture. Given that CQ is a construct that exists independent of any specific culture, it can arguably be applied to any type of cultural environment, including situations of interculturalism which are helpful in this age of complex globalisation. CQ enables an individual to consider how they are thinking about a situation, to challenge the assumptions they may be making, to reflect on the situation itself, and to evaluate how they might need to shift their behaviour to respond appropriately (Booyesen 2015, Andresen and Bergdolt 2017, van der Horst and Albertyn 2018). The use of CQ as a construct to aid in cross-cultural or intercultural interactions could indicate a process of even greater internal reflection to support improved external interaction. That is, while cultural profiling-based methodologies, such as Rosinki's COF (2003) and Plaister-Ten's Cross-Cultural Kaleidoscope (2013), encourage reflection on the deeper values and worldviews present in different cultures, the components of CQ; namely cognition and metacognition, encourage

an individual to gain even deeper awareness of themselves to notice their own thinking patterns, before considering the environment or situation in question. Andresen and Bergdolt (2017 p176) also consider the other two components of CQ; namely motivation and behaviour, reflecting on how an individual might have the cognitive knowledge, but unless it is acted upon it will remain “inert knowledge”. They posit that these components are integral to an individual’s success in navigating intercultural situations. Given the pace of globalisation and the influence of recent global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it is this author’s view that the ability to dynamically reflect on one’s experiences and act appropriately are important to successfully navigate the complex environments of intercultural interaction experienced today.

The literature also indicates that what is essential to the building of CQ is an individual’s experiential learning process. Cox et al. (2014) and van der Horst and Albertyn (2018) both explore the beneficial role that Kolb’s ELT can play to help a person to reflect on their experiences to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the situation and apply that enriched perspective back into their actions. Their view echoes the earlier works of Pinkavova (2010) and den Outer (2010) in the use of Kegan’s Order of Consciousness as a learning approach in coaching. In considering the leadership dilemmas described by Chin et al (2016) and Chmielecki and Contreras-Loera (2020), it is this author’s view that the use of Kolb’s ELT or Kegan’s Order of Consciousness could help those individuals to think about and learn from their experiences to create a positive and inclusive working environment for their teams. In addition, the incorporation of learning theory into cross-cultural coaching is another example of how the practice follows the evolution of cultural theory which Zagaria (2021) discusses. Building on the belief that culture is a socially learned construct is the view that it evolves with our experiences and our experiences with its evolution (Zagaria 2021). Vanham (2018) reflected on this concept in his World Economic Forum piece of the global success of Korean boy band BTS as an example of how globalisation is increasing our experiences of interculturalism and influencing our individual cultural maps or understanding of the world. In considering our experiences of the world as an evolving construct which influences and changes the culture we exist within; we are faced with the need to navigate the paradoxical concept of culture.

In addition to the challenges, complexities, and opportunities that the world has been faced with in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, another issue society has been experiencing in the last few years, is the increasing call for social change. Climate change, decolonisation,

gender identity and equality, and racial justice are all issues society is grappling with, and therefore that coaching needs to consider how it can support in responding.

Key Questions for Today's Coach

In reviewing the literature, three areas are emerging for coaches to consider today with regards to coaching in a cross-cultural context: recognising intersectionality; how to make space for Indigenous knowledge and non-Western constructs; and what role coaches should play in social change.

Intersectionality

Building on the earlier discussion of the shift from cross-culturalism, which focussed on an individual's understanding of interacting with a culture different from theirs, to interculturalism which is focussed on an individual interacting in an environment of potentially multiple cultural components, is the concept of intersectionality. In their paper, Zhang et. al (2021) define intersectionality as the process of making sense of the complexity of human existence, particularly where multiple dimensions of identity exist within one person, such as race, gender identity, national cultural identity, education, and age. Zhang et. al (2021) focus on intersectional inequality; that is, the lived experiences of individuals that, due to the nature of one or more of their identity dimensions such as race or gender identity, have been the subject of oppression or injustice. In a world where globalisation and the recent pandemic have created increased labour mobility, both in person and virtually, and where due to technological connectedness, our cultural frameworks are evolving at an increasing rate, intersectionality is an increasingly present reality. With intersectionality, comes increasingly complex layers to understanding our own concepts of identity as well as the complex layers of identity of others and importantly how to successfully bridge those differences to interact symbiotically. In a cross-cultural coaching context, this author considers that it would be important for a coach to be both conscious of this increasing intersectionality as a complex paradigm that clients experience, both within themselves and in the environments that they are operating in. In line with coaching evolving with a client's changing needs, the expectation is that a coach should be able to effectively surface and deal with this multiculturalism or intersectionality in the coaching context. In a world of increased intersectionality, how can a coach create a space that welcomes this 'difference' of the client that might be different to their own. Acknowledging 'difference' is raised in Chin et al.'s 2016 work where leaders stressed the importance of viewing people as multidimensional rather than 'labelling' them with one specific identifier such as their sexual preference. They also reflect the frustration expressed among younger generations at the

assertion “I cannot see race” (Chin et al. 2019, p59). Similarly, but more recently, Roche and Passmore (2021) and Boyatzis et. al (2022) raised the potential ‘blind spot’ of impartiality that coaching has been operating within and argue that by seeing all people as the same, a coach is inadvertently silencing the voice of that individual’s unique experience. Further, if through globalisation, societies and individuals are becoming increasingly ‘blended’, then does that not mean that the idea of cross-cultural coaching as a specific discipline will become irrelevant as all coaching should be ‘intercultural’? In the context of these questions for coaches, it appears that the use of metacognitive strategies and CQ are as important for coaches as they are for clients. Plaister-Ten (2013), Carr and Seto (2013), Cox et. al (2014), and Booysen (2015) all speak of the importance of a coach’s self-awareness, generally, in coaching. They opine that in cross-cultural coaching, this self-awareness needs to extend to an understanding of their own mental frameworks and the fact that they are influenced by their initial cultural paradigms as well as their lived experiences. In the current environment, where the idea of difference is multi-faceted and constantly shifting due to drivers such as technology, it is this author’s view that it is vital for a coach to incorporate an experiential learning approach such as Kolb’s ELT (1984) in their self-development practice.

How to make space for Indigenous knowledge and other worldviews

Another theme that is emerging for consideration in cross-cultural coaching is the very concept of coaching itself. Boyatzis et al. (2022) acknowledged that coaching, as a discipline, has emerged from the West and is a product of Western cultural paradigms which include colonisation. With the global dialogue about the influence of colonisation on indigenous communities, so too is the question of how, if coaching is to work with a client’s worldview, is that possible if it is operating as a Western and colonial construct. Geber and Keane (2013) explored this question in relation to coaching in Southern Africa and how the concept of Ubuntu should be considered in the coaching context as an important part of the Black South African worldview and values set. While Geber and Keane’s (2013) research focused on a particular culture, it could be considered an appropriate question for other indigenous cultures who have been the subject of colonial oppression, such as the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, the Māori iwi of New Zealand, and the First Nations in America and Canada. For a coach, this issue raises an important consideration of how to challenge one’s own worldview and use learning theories, such as Kolb’s ELT (Kolb 1984) and Kegan’s Order of Consciousness (Pinkavova 2010) to become aware of the deepest differences in others to be able to connect in as ‘clean’ a manner as possible. This author would argue that rather than a coach ignoring or overlooking one’s cultural identity, the

coach should acknowledge all the differences that may exist within an interaction and, in doing so, create a space where open and safe discussion is possible.

The coach's role in driving social change

The third consideration is an emerging case being made for a shift in the role of coaching when it comes to the part it plays in upholding or challenging existing systems of oppression. Movements like 'Black Lives Matter' have signalled fundamental shifts in how society is using its voice and the power it now has in a globally connected world to drive change in support of people who have historically been and continue to be disadvantaged (Roche and Passmore 2021). As discussed earlier, coaching should evolve to meet the changes and needs in society. However, the questions now being asked are how should coaching evolve and what role it should play in supporting this social change? Roche and Passmore (2021), Chiu (2022), and Boyatzis et. al (2022) all explore the concept of allyship-informed coaching, shifting coaching from its traditionally held neutral stance to using its position of access and influence to support social change. Chiu (2022) reflects on how, while a coach cannot fully understand the world view of someone who is different, they can become informed about the systems of oppression that this difference exists within. With this knowledge, Chiu (2022) argues that a coach can become an ally to help resist and challenge the very systems of oppression and injustice. However, what are the ethical considerations of allyship in coaching, and what might a coach need to incorporate the concept of allyship? Another question to consider is how would allyship work with the more traditional view of coaching being a 'clean' and impartial place that works with what the client brings, and not the agenda of the coach? In the same way that society is dealing with the increased complexity and 'blurring' of lines, so too is coaching as a profession grappling with increased complexity in how to fulfil its role as a driver of positive change for individuals, organisations and societies as a whole.

GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

In the literature, it was observed that cross-cultural coaching is explored through the lens of culture as a national construct and then more recently incorporating the concept of multiculturalism, including race, gender, ethnicity, language, and religion. In addition, intersectionality is recognised as important to consider in the cross-cultural coaching conversation of today. One facet of culture that doesn't seem to appear as a factor of multiculturalism is that of organisational culture and the influence that can have on an individual's experiential learning and resulting worldview.

It is also noted that there is a wide range of literature that explores the concepts of culture on a national level, multiple cultures in interculturalism, intersectionality of identity, the rising call for social change and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cultural practices. However, there doesn't appear to be literature that explores the combination of all of these and how they are shaping each other in the current macro context.

Further, while the literature reveals a wide range of theories and approaches on how to help a client better navigate situations of cultural complexity, there appears to be little consideration of the cultural context within the coaching interaction itself. In an environment of growing complexity—globalisation, interculturalism, intersectionality—it could be argued that it is increasingly likely that a coach will work with clients from a variety of intercultural and intersectional backgrounds. In this context, what are the competencies that a coach needs to successfully navigate cultural complexity within the coaching relationship? This question pertains both to how a coach can successfully prepare themselves for intercultural and intersectional coaching conversations, as well as the strategies to mindfully and actively create a space that welcomes these different components of differences a client might have within them, which they need to surface to feel welcomed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

While the literature reviewed is not an exhaustive study of all published works on culture and coaching in a cross-cultural context, it covers a range of recently published works (within last 10 years) the majority of which are peer reviewed. Several articles exploring different perspectives of cross-cultural coaching appeared in the August 2013 edition of the International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring implying that a particular focus for that month was this topic. The reviewed literature revealed various definitions of culture and an evolution of the practice of cross-cultural coaching that correlates both with the thinking and discourse on culture as well as on shifting macro societal trends.

It appears that, through this evolution so far, cross-cultural coaching has moved from the application of national cultural profiling theory to more internally focussed approaches, such as CQ and metacognitive strategies. Experiential learning is also widely considered to be a powerful mechanism to help an individual gain deeper understanding of their intercultural experiences and to convert that knowledge into action in a culturally appropriate manner. The literature also reveals the increasing consciousness of intersectionality in society driven by globalisation. In addition there is an increasing discourse on both the impact of Western social constructs such as colonisation on society, as well as a growing voice for social

change. The literature shows a gap in terms of how these various emerging themes interact and influence each other in today's context and within the coaching interaction. In addition, there appears to be a strong focus on the concept of cross-cultural coaching as a niche client offering. However, in an increasingly intersectional and multicultural society, a coach is likely to face cultural diversity in their coaching sessions. Yet this issue does not appear to be explored in any depth. It is, therefore, recommended that research be conducted into the competencies that a coach needs to have to effectively manage these differences in their interactions. Research is also recommended into the types of strategies that a coach can employ to create a safe space that recognises and welcomes in a coaching conversation the difference that a client might embody in their identity as well as what they might be grappling with in their interactions.

REFERENCES

- ALTMAN, Steven, A. and BASTIAN, Caroline, R. (2022). The State of Globalisation in 2022. *Harvard Business Review*. [online] Last accessed 14 November 2022: <https://hbr.org/2022/04/the-state-of-globalization-in-2022>
- ANDERSON, Maïke and BERGDOLT, Franziska (2017). A systematic literature review on the definitions of global mindset and cultural intelligence – merging two different research streams. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, **28** (1), 170 – 195.
- ANANDLAL, Pranesh. (2017). Executive coaching across cultures: perceptions of Black and White South African leaders. *Research submission to Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand*. 1 – 126.
- BERRY, J.R. and CANDIS, M.R. (2013). Cultural identity and education: A critical race perspective. *Educational Foundations*, 43 – 64. [online] Last accessed 14 November 2022 at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1065655.pdf>
- BOOYSEN, Lize in RIDDLE, Douglas, HOOLE, Emily R. and GULLETTE, Elizabeth C.D. (2015) CCL Handbook of Coaching in Organisations. Somerset, USA, ProQuest
- BOYATZIS, Richard E., HULLINGER, Alice, EHASZ, Sharon F., HARVEY, Janet, TASSAROTTI, Silvia, GALLOTTI, Anna, and PENAFORT, Frances (2022). The Grand Challenge for Research on the Future of Coaching. *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, **58** (2), 202 – 222.
- CARR, Catherine, and SETO, Lily. (2013). *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*. **11** (2), 94 – 110,
- CHIN, Jean Lau, DESORMEAUX, Lyne, SAWYER, Katina (2016). *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*. **68** (1) 49 – 71.
- CHUI, Lou W.Y. (2022). Conceptualising allyship for coaching to promote social change. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*. **16**, 40 – 54.
- CHMIELECKI, M. (2021). Leading intercultural virtual teams during the COVID-19 pandemic – Research results. *Journal of Intercultural Management*, **13** (1), 1 – 19.
- CHMIELECKI, M. and CONTRERAS-LOERA (2020). Leadership coaching across cultures. *Journal of Intercultural Management*, **12** (1) 78 – 91.
- COX, Elaine, BACHKIROVA, Tatiana and CLUTTERBUCK, David (2014). The complete handbook of coaching. 2nd ed., London, Sage Publications Ltd.
- DEN OUTER, Birgit. (2010). Coaching and cross-cultural transitions: a narrative inquiry approach. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*. **4**, 95 – 105.
- DIXON-WOODS, M., CRAVERS, D., AGARWAL, S., ANNANDALE, E., ARTHUR, A., HARVEY, J., SUTTON, A. J. (2006). Conducting a critical interpretive synthesis of the literature on access to healthcare by vulnerable groups. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, **6** (35). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-6-35>

GEBER, Hilary. and KEANE, Moyra (2013). Extending the worldview of coaching research and practice in Southern Africa: the concept of Ubuntu. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, **11** (2), 8 - 18.

GORYUNOVA, Elizabeth. (2020). Metacognitive Strategies for Effective Interaction Across Cultures: Global Leaders Perspective. *Journal of Business Diversity*, **20** (1), 28 – 45.

HAMPDEN-TURNER, C., & TROMPENAARS, F. (1997). *Riding the waves of culture*. London: Nicholas Brealey

KOLB, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall.

MANGLA, N. (2021). Working in a pandemic and post-pandemic period - Cultural intelligence is the key. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, **21** (1).

MORRIS, Michael W., FINCHER, Katrina, SAVANI, Krishna (2019). Metacognition Fosters Cultural Learning: evidence from individual differences and situational prompts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology: Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes*, **116** (1), 46 – 68.

PINKAROVA, Eva (2010). Keeping our heads above water: applying Kegan's 'orders of consciousness' theory in coaching. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, **8** (1), 14 – 21.

PLAISTER-TEN, Jenny (2013). Raising culturally derived awareness and building culturally-appropriate responsibility: the development of the cross-cultural kaleidoscope. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, **11** (2), 53 – 69.

RAKOTSOANE, F. (2019). Structure and parts of an article. [online]. The National University of Lesotho, Roma, 1-8. Article from ResearchGate. Last accessed 26 October 2022 at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334959618_Structure_and_Parts_of_an_Article

REUIL, T. (2022). The rise of remote work means we need better “intercultural skills” – This is what that means. World Economic Forum.
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/03/remote-work-intercultural-skills/>

ROCHE, Charmaine, and PASSMORE, Jonathan. (2021). Racial justice, equity and belonging in coaching. Henley-on-Thames: Henley Business School.

ROSINKI, P. (2003). Coaching across cultures: new tools for leveraging national, corporate & professional differences. London: Nicholas Brealey.

The Macroeconomic Effects of Global Migration: World Economic Outlook. (2020). IMF Chapter 4, 77 – 104. Last accessed 14 November 2022: <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/WEO/2020/April/English/ch4.ashx>

VAN DER HORST, Catherine A. and ALBERTYN, Ruth M. (2018). The importance of metacognition and the experiential learning process within a cultural intelligence-based approach to cross-cultural coaching. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, **16** (0), 1 – 11.

VANHAM, Peter. (2018). Here's what a Korean boyband can teach us about globalization 4.0. [online]. World Economic Forum. Last accessed 14 November 2022:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/12/here-s-what-a-korean-boy-band-can-teach-us-about-globalization/>

VANHAM, Peter. (2019a). A brief history of globalization [online]. World Economic Forum. Last accessed 14 November 2022: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/01/how-globalization-4-0-fits-into-the-history-of-globalization/>

VANHAM, Peter. (2019b). What a football shirt tells us about globalization [online]. World Economic Forum. Last accessed 14 November 2022: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/01/fc-barcelona-shirt-sponsors-tell-us-changing-face-globalization/>

WILSON, Wendy. (2013). Coaching with a global mindset. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, **11** (2) 33 - 52.

YANG, B., ZHAO, D., and LUI, L. (2021). An analysis of Hall's theory of cultural identity and its application in flipped class. *Advances in Social Sciences, Education and Humanities Research*, **588**, 177-184.

ZAGARIA, Andrea. (2021). What do we talk about when we talk about culture? There is a missing link between the natural and the social sciences. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Science*, **55**, 850 – 857.

ZHANG, Bin, CHANG, Bo, and DU, Wenqian. (2021). Employing intersectionality as a data generation tool: suggestions for qualitative researchers on conducting interviews of intersectionality study. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, **20**, 1 – 9.