

APPLIED INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL FOR MANAGERIAL INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

The focus of managerial development should be the global neighborhood in which managers develop a personal repertoire of intercultural understanding and skill. Fostering intercultural competence requires attention to both ontological and epistemological knowledge. Theory operates at the ontological level, and comparative ability functions at a basic level competence with real world understanding. Instructional practice is a critical tool that uses theoretical models as a functional means to gain intercultural perspective. However, management training should include theory that engages practice experience. Theoretical experience coupled with practice experience intentionally guides managers in comparing similarities and differences between their own contexts and cross-cultural settings and provides an environment to begin designing conceptual bridges between the two contexts.

This article presents an instructional model for managerial intercultural competence with a 5-space design that systematically includes: Theoretical Experience → Practice Experience → Comparative Experience → Experiential Synthesis as Blended Managerial Experience → Intercultural Competence. Cultural Theory with its grid/group distinctions is the example theory used with the chosen topic pertaining to conflict, relationships, and power. A short digital video script of conflict resolution in the Niger context is provided as the practice experience. How to combine these two components in a comparative experience for a training exercise is explored as well as queries to motivate managerial participants toward developing their own models reflecting intercultural competence.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of managerial development should be the global neighborhood in which managers develop a personal repertoire of intercultural understanding and skill. Why? Because the global business environment now more than ever has managers dealing with cross-cultural interactions among diverse ethnic colleagues and clients with little knowledge of these cultural contexts. Intercultural competence has understandably become a prerequisite for thriving global business operations. There is the need to clarify one's own cultural peculiarities while interacting with a diverse world business community (Westrick 2005).

Negotiating this intercultural reality is a process in which a manager identifies their own ethnocentric approach to a situation, seeks to understand the approach of other cultures, actively compares and contrasts these different viewpoints, and then designs a model of ideas and behaviors that reflect intercultural competence. "Negotiating reality enables managers to recognize and use cultural differences as a resource for learning and for the design of effective action in specific contexts" (Antal and Friedman 2008:364).

Increased world mindedness is fostered in instructional programs businesses offer to develop intercultural sensitivity. Mere cross-cultural contact does not result in increased intercultural competence (Heyward 2000). Training should be intentional and include a theoretical framework to guide categorizing

experience and a process of reflection that enables learners to construe differences between personal and cross-cultural contexts (Bennett 1993). Intercultural competence requires adaptation by managers to gain enough knowledge so that they are able to modify their messages, methods, and responses to the norms of cross-cultural expectations.

INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL FOR INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Managerial intercultural competence requires several types of experience to develop deep understanding of those outside one's social world. This article presents an instructional model for managerial intercultural competence with a 5-space design. The intent is to contribute to instructional approaches that view intercultural competence as an active, social construct (Blanton and Barbuto 2005). This social component highlights the unique flavor and complex social construct of cross-cultural situations (Weiss 2003). The model systematically moves through each space characterized as instructional experiences. The 5-space model advances through the following steps: Theoretical Experience → Practice Experience → Comparative Experience → Experiential Synthesis as Blended Managerial Experience → Intercultural Competence.

Fostering intercultural competence requires attention to both ontological and epistemological knowledge. Theory operates at the ontological level, and comparative ability functions at a basic level competence with real world understanding. Engaging theory in training allows learners to explore necessary criteria to interpret and critically interact with a wide range of cross-cultural environments. Thus, an instructional model for intercultural competence begins with choosing a theory as an analytical tool for a practice experience (case study) chosen from a cultural context. The strength of including a theoretical approach resides in its quality for organizing information thereby sharpening distinctions (Altman and Baruch 1998).

A host of literature supports the argument that a learner must interact with a cross-cultural setting in order to develop cross-cultural competence (Hanvey 1986; Meyer 1991; Triandis et al 1994). Learners need real life examples from cross-cultural contexts otherwise knowledge is limited to being *about* another culture rather than engaging a real place with real people. For this reason, the practice experience as step two is meant to provide direct exposure to a cross-cultural happening. Theoretical experience coupled with practice experience advances to a comparative experience which intentionally guides managers in comparing similarities and differences between their own contexts and cross-cultural settings.

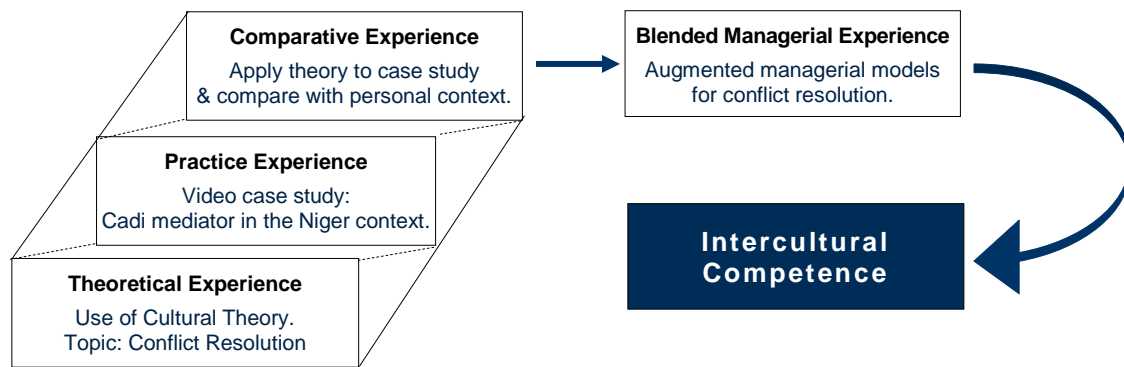
The comparative experience naturally provides an environment to begin designing conceptual bridges between the two contexts in what is coined as a blended managerial experience. Managers employed in a global business are automatically functioning in a multicultural space. Chiu et al (2009) found the exposure to notions and images from a different culture coupled with attention to one's own culture synthesizes perception to produce a blended response. Blended managerial experience results in a manager who is comfortable with a blend of ideas and behaviors from both sides of the cultural landscape and is able to overcome conflicting cultural values and behaviors. A necessary step toward intercultural competence is the ability to integrate each side of the comparative experience. Ultimately, the four spaces of instructional experience lead to managerial intercultural competence in the global context (see Figure 1).

Unique to the 5-space instructional model are corresponding features with four levels of questioning strategies. Recall questions correlate with the presentation of theory; processing questions allow the participant to apply theoretical topics to the cultural context under study; application questions allow for evaluation and comparison; and synthesis questions inspire a blend of intercultural understandings. Each of these four types of questioning strategies will be discussed in the appropriate section of the instructional model.

Cultural Theory is the example theory used in this paper with the chosen topic pertaining to conflict, relationships, and power. A short video script of conflict resolution in the Niger context is provided as the practice experience. Use of technology has become a key enabler for effective managerial training (Jackson and Philip 2005). Video technology allows participants to enter a cross-cultural environment without ever leaving the instructional context and experience the unique and complex interaction inherent in differing social situations.

How to combine the theoretical and practice components in a comparative experience for a training exercise is explored as well as queries to motivate managerial participants toward developing their own models reflecting intercultural competence. Change, in particular social and cultural change, is a fact of life in the human condition. It is a reasonable goal for managers to actively participate in an instructional process that augments personal and managerial constructs to respond to emerging interactions within the global community.

Figure 1: Five-Space Instructional Model for Intercultural Competence.



THEORETICAL EXPERIENCE

Developing a global perspective in management practices involves exploring the rich diversity of social worlds. Cultural Theory is a research model designed for application across cultures to make sense of human experience and identification of specific socio-cultural orientations (Douglas 1982, 1989).ⁱ Cultural Theory recognizes four primary classifications governing socio-cultural orientations, these are: Bureaucratic, Hierarchic, Individualist, and Egalitarian social environments. The two domains of Group commitment and Grid control define features of each social environment (Altman and Baruch 1998). Grid measures the degree to which social roles govern behavior, and Group assesses the degree to which collective relations are valued.

Grid gauges how much external societal prescriptions control personal and social interaction; thus, grid is the dimension of individuation (Stansberry and Harris 2005). Bureaucratic and Hierarchic social worlds are both high grid orientations. Society pressures each member into conforming behavior through status and role distinctions that are carefully laid out in a network of social rules. A Bureaucratic social world (*high grid*, weak group) is characterized as an authoritarian way of life while a Hierarchic social world (*high grid*, strong group) has a corporate orientation. The low grid contexts of the Individualist (*low grid*, weak group) and Egalitarian (*low grid*, strong group) views encourage nonconforming behavior through support for individuals exhibiting unique value and autonomy (See Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison of Features in the Four Orientations of Cultural Theory.

Bureaucratic	Corporate	Individualist	Collectivist
<u>Orientation</u> Authoritarian	<u>Orientation</u> Hierarchist	<u>Orientation</u> Individualist	<u>Orientation</u> Egalitarian
<u>High Grid</u> Role specialists, defined rules of authority	<u>High Grid</u> Strong hierarchy, roles & customary rules for action	<u>Low Grid</u> Promotes self autonomy	<u>Low Grid</u> Unique selves, minimum status differences
<u>Weak Group</u> Individualism, private interest cliques as groups	<u>Strong Group</u> Group cohesion, identity, cooperation	<u>Weak Group</u> Resists collective action among individuals	<u>Strong Group</u> Demands corporate action

The dimension of Group refers to the strength of affiliation people perceive to have with one another. Hence Group is the dimension of social incorporation by group members. The Hierarchic social world (low grid, *strong group*) features a collectivist approach to life in a strong group setting and values group cohesion as does the Egalitarian social world (high grid, *strong group*). A strong group context demands collective support for social group survival with well defined insider/outsider distinctions. In contrast, the weak group typology is a social context that rejects commitment to social groups in favor of individualistic motivations. An Individualist social world (low grid, *weak group*) is distinguished by a preference for self autonomy among societal members. The Bureaucratic social world (high grid, *weak group*) also is characterized with weak group value as each social member strives for personal survival despite the group (Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky 1990).

The Bureaucratic, Hierarchic, Individualist, and Egalitarian social orientations differ in their rules for handling conflict. Managers have the opportunity to understand in greater depth the differences that characterize intercultural interaction by recognizing the four social worlds of Cultural Theory. The following sections focus on a particular case study from Niger, the perception of conflict resolution in this context, the use of Cultural Theory as a tool for analysis and understanding, and how managers can apply theoretical perspectives to devise intercultural models for communication competence.ⁱⁱ

Recall questions correlate with the presentation of theory as basic, fundamental ideas, “*This is what we are defining and describing through this theoretical stance.*” Recall questions are designed to generate data which participants may then process at a higher level. Example verbs for recall questions include defining, describing, identifying, selecting, and observing. Cultural theory approaches the topic of conflict resolution from two comparative vantage points. Grid determines whether people prefer “working the network” or “going through channels.” Group characterizes the preference for either “preserving resources” or “preserving relationships.” Each grid/group distinction has five areas and corresponding questions to define and describe that particular social context (see Table 2). The theoretical questions in Table 2 are meant to serve as recall questions participants review before viewing/reading the digital case study. These questions give the learner a sense of what to observe for later recall while watching the Niger case study.

Conflict in a Low grid context describes those who settle disputes through informal channels of either personal networks or influence brokers. People tend to finesse the outcome by using their own network to negotiate or by utilizing influential leaders to broker the outcome (see Table 2). On the other hand, high grid outlines the use of formal, institutional channels that govern conflict resolution. How people use authorities and institutional structure as well as customary law and/or legal code to characterize a high grid context. People in a low grid environment use relationships to work the network but may be constrained by the pressure to compromise for public good. Low grid is a person directed process with the time agenda of dispute settlement set by the individual, peer network, or influential leader. Grievances

among high grid groups are settled according to a known mediator bound by institutional law and placed on the formal agenda by authority figures.

Table 2: Grid Recall Questions for Conflict from Cultural Theory.

LOW GRID RECALL QUESTIONS <i>Work the Network</i>	HIGH GRID RECALL QUESTIONS <i>Go through Channels</i>
<p><u>Informal Channels</u> Identify, do participants use informal channels for settling the dispute?</p> <p><u>Finessing the Outcome</u> Observe, do participants rely on strategy to settle the dispute?</p> <p><u>Sense of the Public Good</u> Observe, do participants seem obligated by an uncodified "sense of the public good" or do they "work the network?"</p> <p><u>Personally Direct Process</u> Observe, do participants use posturing or negotiation in settling the dispute?</p> <p><u>Personal Time/Agenda</u> Identify, do individual participants organize a settlement following their interests and convenience?</p>	<p><u>Formal Institutional Channels</u> Identify, do participants define institutional channels to settle the dispute?</p> <p><u>Powering the Outcomes</u> Observe, do participants turn to courts, judges, or supervisors for a win-lose decision?</p> <p><u>Codification of Rules</u> Observe, do officials use a customary code to legitimize dominant relationships in the dispute?</p> <p><u>Institutional Process</u> Observe, do participants settle by adjudication or arbitration?</p> <p><u>Institutional Time/Agenda</u> Identify, do adjudicators/arbitrators place cases on the agenda?</p>

A weak group approach to conflict characterizes the degree to which resources are the priority and the extent people are willing to break into factions to secure resources. This includes individuals making independent decisions and/or factions bargaining for the benefit of members. Strong group environments tend to give a higher priority to preserving relationships in resolving conflicts and will sustain loss of resources to do so. The resolution of conflict in a strong group orientation gives precedence to consensus decision making so that the group as a whole is benefited (see Table 3).

Table 3: Group Recall Questions for Conflict from Cultural Theory.

WEAK GROUP RECALL QUESTIONS <i>Preserve Resources</i>	STRONG GROUP RECALL QUESTIONS <i>Preserve Relationships</i>
<p><u>Conglomeration of Factions</u> Observe, are resources rather than relationships the high priority in disputes?</p> <p><u>Independent Decision Making</u> Describe, do participants make decisions independently of others by private bargaining?</p> <p><u>Exposing Weakness</u> Observe, are participants publicly challenged by exposing their weaknesses and challenging their credibility?</p> <p><u>Display of Personal Power</u> Describe, is public display and contest part of dispute?</p> <p><u>Open Confrontation with Equals</u> Identify, do participants value open confrontation?</p>	<p><u>Relational Network</u> Observe, do participants sustain economic losses in order to support valued relationships?</p> <p><u>Consensus Decision</u> Describe, does the group demand a consensus which limits the authority of leaders?</p> <p><u>Protecting Vulnerability</u> Observe, do participants carefully safeguard the vulnerability of those in the dispute?</p> <p><u>Broker/Mediation</u> Describe, are bargaining and/or compromise primary strategies to mediate a dispute?</p> <p><u>Confrontation Avoidance</u> Identify, do participants work to avoid confrontation?</p>

The weak group context openly exposes the weaknesses of those in the conflict and challenges their credibility. This public display is part of the dispute process meant as a strategic confrontation. Quite the opposite is the strong group approach which carefully seeks to safeguard against vulnerability and privately engages a mediator to broker a compromise. Most striking is the weak group value of open confrontation while the strong group players work to avoid confrontation as a means of maintaining public decorum.

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

In the West African country of Niger, which is largely Muslim, many citizens seek justice from the local Islamic judge, or 'Cadi,' who interprets Koranic Law. The short digital case study chosen for the practice experience is, *A Matter of Honor*, filmed in the village of Agadez in northern Niger. The film visually documents a small civil dispute concerning an accusation of theft that is brought before the Cadi for resolution. Five teenage boys are accused of stealing from a shop owner. These boys, the shop owner, as well as supporting entourage on both sides come before the Cadi. The topic of focus is conflict resolution in which personalities of the judge and disputants are highlighted as well as the socio-cultural means for resolving conflict, determining guilt or innocence and restitution within the Niger context.ⁱⁱⁱ A script of the case study is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Script for “A Matter of Honor.”

“Which one of you is speaking?” asks the Cadi. “Who asked to be summoned?” There are seven men in the room seated on the floor in front of the Cadi. “Was it you?” The Cadi looks at one of the young men. “So you should be the one to speak. Okay, what happened?”

“We were in his shop, there were five of us. He (shop owner) lost his money, a sum of 55,000 CFA,” said the young man.

“And this money is gone from where you put it?” asked the Cadi. “You boys were all in the shop?”

“Yes,” answered the boys.

“You were there at night?” asked the Cadi.

The young men shook their heads no and one said, “It’s open during the day. Everyone comes and goes.” another boy spoke up and said, “Yes, anyone can go in.”

The Cadi asked, “Was the door broken?”

“No,” responded the shop owner.

The Cadi asks the shop owner if the boys stole the money and the shop owner responds, “Yes.”

The Cadi then asks the shop owner if the money was in a safe. The shop owner replies, “No, in the shop.”

“Laying around or hidden?” asks the Cadi.

“Hidden,” replies the shop owner.

“You searched, it wasn’t there?”

“Yes, it wasn’t there.”

The Cadi casts his eyes down while leaning forward and asks the shop owner, “So you looked for the thief? And you suspect one of them?”

The shop owner replied, “No, no one in particular. With all who come and go, I just don’t know who it could be.”

The Cadi asks the young men, “No one among you took this money?”

One of the boys says, “No, no one.”

“Speak for yourself!” admonishes the Cadi.

The young man says, “Me, I didn’t take his money and I don’t know who stole it.”

Another boy says, “I didn’t even know. We were together, the five of us. It’s the sixth. We sell like that. He put his money under the sugar. He asked a few times. But, personally, if I took this money, or if I knew who took it, I’d tell on them. Anyway, it wasn’t me.” He continues, “I have something to say: We all promised to pass a test. It consists of boiling water in a pot. When someone innocent dunks his hand and pulls out the needle, his hand’s not burnt. If he didn’t steal, he gets the needle. I boiled the water and I dunked in my hand and I got the needle. The others couldn’t get it. That’s what you see here. That’s why I came. I was told I was unhurt, but really, I was burned.”

“Who proposed this test?” asks the Cadi.

Voices erupt in the room and one of the young men points and says, “There they are.”

The Cadi asks, “Who knows this secret? Who proposed the test?”

One young man said, “He recited the verses.” Lots of pointing ensues and the Cadi slaps his knee several times.

The Cadi asks, ‘A witchdoctor or a fetishist?’

"The money was theirs," someone says.
 The Cadi again asks, "They proposed this? Where are they?"
 The shop owner replies, "I said not to dunk their hands and take responsibility."
 One of the boys says, "Yeah, but those who won't dunk their hands are the thieves."
 Again the shop owner says, "I asked that no one dunk their hands."
 "Who is the witchdoctor?" asks the Cadi.
 The shop owner says, "I warned them it was risky. I told them not to put their hands into that water."
 "You were the one who said that this test has been around for a long time," said one of the boys.
 "It's been proven. He who didn't steal gets the needle from boiling water as if the water were cold," replies someone.
 A boy says, "I was the first to put my hand into the boiling water after having put the needle in."
 "Yes," said the shop owner, "and your hand got burned?"
 "Yes, look. I put my hand in twice."
 "But I told them not to do that," said the shop owner.
 "The test was proposed and we were obligated to do it. Because he who refuses is the thief," said one of the boys. "I never stolen anything. Why would I steal this money?"
 The Cadi says, "Putting your hand into boiling water" as he shakes his head.
 One boy says, "And now, our only option is to swear."
 "So you want to swear?" asks the Cadi.
 Someone says, "For the burned hands, it's God's will."
 One boys says, "I forgive the boss."
 Someone says, "As you forgive, it is over."
 The boys again states, "As for me, I forgive."
 Another boy says, "Me too, I forgive."
 Another boy says, "Me too."
 The shop owner says, "But for the theft, you must swear."
 The Cadi says, "We'll make you swear, yes. It must be at night at 4 pm after the La'assar prayer, come to swear together."

PAUSE

"When I put my hand in the water, I felt it burn. When I found the needle, I felt nothing. Actually, we were all burned. He told us that we wouldn't burn our hands if we hadn't stolen," said one of the boys.
 Someone advises, "Don't cover it. Let it breathe."
 "You see it is swollen and it smells," says a boy.
 "You didn't go to the hospital?" asks the Cadi. "That is making your own justice. No one reported the one who made the fire. No one talks."
 The boys speak up and say, "It was the boss (shop owner)."
 "I warned all of you. What was important was to pass the test and be declared innocent," says the shop owner.
 "Take responsibility!" replies the Cadi.
 "I didn't want this. I don't know who stole it," replies the shop owner.
 The Cadi tells everyone to be patient and not all talk at once.
 The Cadi says, "I've never seen anything like this. An abuse of power. Look what happens! If their hands need medical treatment, who will pay? This is serious. If the organization that takes care of human problems...What is it called again?...Human rights...that group won't ignore this case. Even if you forgive, it won't ignore this. We can't make our own justice. If you catch a their, you don't have the right to hit him. You must tell the cops. They have the right to punish. If you do it yourself, you create problems. This case is serious, we can't just settle it."
 "It's true, Cadi. This case might rebound. These youths also have parents," an advisor comments.
 "Of course. If people talk, their parents will hear about it. Then there will be more."
 "As for me, I forgive him," says a boy.
 "Kid, you don't decide, justice will decide. Koranic law decides, not you," responds an advisor.
 "Yes, I know that."
 An advisor says to the owner, "You should have come here sooner. When you lost your money, you should have gone to the Cadi. He could have settled this. But you, you made your own

justice.”

The Cadi declares, “Now you have to go tell the police everything. Yes, you must go. Go to the police station.”

Three men speak to the Cadi, “Dear Cadi, the boss excuses are only a manner of speaking. The test was his idea. They’ll detain him at the police station.”

“After having them burn themselves, how can he deny it? Ignoring this case would have cost us. I sent them to the police station as they are peasants, the boss took advantage of them,” responds the Cadi.

The men believe the shop owner will dupe the young men and make it seem like a simple accident.

Just as the Cadi compares and contrasts the stories of the five boys and the shop owner, so too do those participating in the practice experience. Those viewing the digital case study are guided through a discussion of processing questions which includes distinguishing between the parties in conflict, explaining the role of the Cadi, comparing how each of the litigants defines the conflict and their view of one another, and how the Cadi organizes his questions (see Table 5).

Table 5: Case Study Processing Questions for Conflict in “A Matter of Honor.”

Processing Questions	Processing Answers
Niger Identities 1. Distinguish, who is the conflict between?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 5 Boys vs. Shop Owner
2. Explain, what is the role of the mediator/Cadi?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Determine guilt or innocence ◆ Determine justice
Niger Logic of Conflict & Interests 1. Compare & Contrast, what is the conflict about? <i>and</i> How does each of the parties define the conflict?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Shop owner lost 55,000 CFA (approx. \$122.00). ◆ Owner appeals to the witchdoctor’s test as proof. ◆ 5 boys seek exoneration by swearing on the Koran. ◆ Shop owner seeks return of money.
2. Contrast, how does each party view the other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Boys felt obligated to do the witchdoctor test or else they’d be seen as guilty; but with a burned hand, they were guilty anyway.
Niger Mediation & Power 1. Organize, how does the Cadi mediator arrange his questions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Who made the summons? What happened? ◆ And the money is gone? ◆ You were all in the shop? ◆ This was at night? ◆ Is the door broken? ◆ They stole the money? ◆ Was the money in a safe? laying around or hidden? ◆ You searched and it wasn’t there? ◆ You looked for the thief and suspect one of them? ◆ No one among you took the money? ◆ Who proposed this ‘boil’ test? ◆ If their hands need treatment, who pays?

Processing questions take theoretical topics to the level of experimenting with them in a situated context where the learner begins explaining the cultural context under study, “*This is what I found out in this practice experience.*” Processing questions are designed to have participants draw some relationships of cause and effect about the experience. Example verbs for processing questions include analyzing, comparing, contrasting, distinguishing, explaining, organizing, and inferring.

COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCE

The training exercise moves from the initial processing of the scenario to evaluating the case study according to Grid and Group distinctions. Application questions serve to bring the Niger example to a

level of evaluation and comparison, “*This is the value system operating in this context, the reasons for it, and how it is similar and different from mine.*” Verbs that may serve as the behavioral objective for the level of application include evaluating, judging, hypothesizing, applying a principle, speculating, and generalizing. Comparative experience is designed to intentionally engage theoretical experience coupled with practice experience so that managers have the opportunity to compare similarities and differences between their own contexts and cross-cultural settings (see Table 6). The intent is to have the trainee apply the principles of Cultural Theory to both the Niger context and the trainee’s social context. This forces managerial participants to make judgments about the Niger case study and their own personal world.

The Cadi mediator begins the resolution process by asking what the shop owner did to ascertain guilt or innocence of the accused boys. The boys were challenged with two supernatural tests: 1) to swear in the name of God; and 2) prove their innocence by dipping their hands in boiling water. One could speculate the Cadi was unhappy with the shop owner for using witchcraft under the guise of proving wrong doing as a means of punishing the boys for the theft. These actions stand in contrast to American judicial process which does not allow religious beliefs to govern conflict resolution or the notion of ‘taking the law into your own hands’ with personal actions against the accused. Interviewing U.S. litigants is only one of many types of evidence which also may include a polygraph, sworn written statements, legal search, and security video.

The managerial trainees must also evaluate the judgment of the Cadi to send the boys and shop owner to the police station. In this case, the Cadi does not resolve the dispute with a settlement, and it is unclear whether or not the shop owner and boys will actually go to the police station. Discussion should consider whether the shop owner took advantage of the peasant boys and the Cadi wanted to punctuate his disapproval of the way the issue was handled. An alternative explanation is that the Cadi views each side as even. The shop owner burned the boys hands and this action forfeited his demand for the stolen money. The boys are neither charged with theft or expected to return the money because the shop owner used a form of torture on them. In contrast, the police would have been called in immediately in the U.S. context with the dispute most likely settled with a warning, ticket, or jail sentence for those found guilty.

The end of the comparative experience requires managerial participants hypothesize the level of Grid and Group for settling disputes in both the Niger Context and personal U.S. context. The case study from the Niger context operates according to low Grid, weak Group principles associated with an Individualist orientation. Thievery in an American context is usually resolved in a judicial system that functions as high Grid, weak Group thus characterized as Bureaucratic. In both cases, resources rather than relationships are the valued commodity. Those in Niger work the network by posturing for a perceived upper hand in the negotiations. The U.S. context requires a due process of law, blind justice, that demands going through legal channels with little room for posturing.

Table 6: Case Study Application Questions for Conflict in “A Matter of Honor.”

Application Questions	Niger Application Answers	US Trainee Application Answers
<p>Mediation & Power</p> <p>1. Judge, how does the mediator resolve conflict?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Make boys swear at night. ◆ Abuse of power to make boys burn their hands in boiling water - making own justice. ◆ Human rights are serious - we cannot make our own justice. ◆ You do not have the right to punish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Polygraph test ◆ Sworn statement ◆ Legal search ◆ Interview/questioning of witnesses ◆ Security video
<p>2. Evaluate, what is his judgment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sent the boys and shop owner to the police station. ◆ The boys are peasants and the boss took advantage of them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Warning ◆ Ticket, fine ◆ Jail time

3. Hypothesize, what is the Grid and Group system in this context?	Individualist Orientation ♦ Low Grid: Work the Network ♦ Weak Group: Preserve Resources	Bureaucratic Orientation ♦ High Grid: Go through Channels ♦ Weak Group: Preserve Resources
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EXPERIENTIAL SYNTHESIS AS BLENDED MANAGERIAL EXPERIENCE

Experiential synthesis is a step for designing a socio-culturally appropriate managerial response to the global contexts one finds under their purview. Cultural intelligence is the ability to adapt to global social contexts (Thomas et al 2008). Experiential synthesis fosters cultural intelligence by developing a repertoire of appropriate cultural responses to cross-cultural interactions. The blended managerial experience builds managerial capability to perform and manage competently in diverse cultural settings (Ang et al 2007).

Real synthesis in intercultural competence begins in the planning stages of designing a third culture response. A learner recognizes many possibilities in creating a blended managerial experience. Synthesis questioning requires trainees move beyond comparison and interpretation to ask what must be modified and adapted to create a blend of intercultural understandings for the managerial experience, *“If I am to successfully conduct business here, what must I eliminate, substitute, combine, modify, and adapt to create managerial competence for this context?”*

Key to experiential synthesis is the recognition by trainees of how their personal social background for resolving conflict differs from the Niger context. From these recognized differences, managers can then begin the process of constructing a blended response with elements from each comparative experience. Normally, in an American setting, confrontation with suspected thieves is mediated by a security guard or police rather than a customary elder. Evidence to prove guilt or innocence is restricted to physical tangibles rather than a supernatural realm accessed through witchcraft.

A quite significant question is how one’s business managerial style for resolving conflict differs from the Niger context. One obvious difference is the U.S. corporate business environment does not include religious sentiment in the process of resolving conflicts. One of the challenges posed by globalization is the contact between people with collective identities and religious identities that are very dissimilar to one’s own (Bokser-Liwerant 2002). Cross-cultural differences in the scope of what is categorized as a private sphere versus a public sphere is magnified in the Niger context when compared to the American context. To do business and resolve inevitable conflicts in the Niger setting brings into sharp focus the importance of religious identity within the ethnic collective. Globalization does not and will not dissolve collective identity because of its intrinsic value to maintaining a stable and cherished way of life. Contrary to Western tendencies to keep religion private, religious traditions continue to flourish across cultures in such as way as to permeate every aspect of both private and public life (Casanova 1994).

Table 7 offers suggestions for synthesis answers to the Niger case study, but each manager has to construct their own model of innovative ideas by minimizing and maximizing key features of conflict resolution from both scenarios of the comparative experience. Personal background and each business context varies and requires devising workable models specific to each person and their context. For some American managers, the acceptance of customary arbitrators will need to become a common practice. For others, the exercise of open confrontation will be a necessary responsibility rather than the task of security personnel or lawyers.

Table 7: Synthesis Questions for Managerial Competence in Intercultural Conflict

Synthesis Questions	Synthesis Answers
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<p>Blended Managerial Mediation</p> <p>1. How does my personal social context for resolving conflict need to adapt to the Niger context? (adapt, modify)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Substitute formal charges with police for hearing before the Cadi, a customary mediator. ◆ Modify legal code to include religious authority.
<p>2. How does my business managerial style for resolving conflict need to adapt to the Niger context? (adapt, modify)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Modify personal behavior to be forceful and verbally confrontational in the business setting. ◆ Modify behavior so that one may participate in open confrontation before the arbitrator. ◆ Adapt to a context that expects social posturing.

It is quite necessary to adapt the Niger context that expects social posturing by litigants. One cannot assume the honest facts will speak for themselves. Dispute participants must play the social game of posturing with a display of somewhat artificial attitudes and behavior that either is meant to deceive or impress the Cadi mediator to be inclined toward their position. Appearance holds as much value as reality in Niger dispute settlements. Managers must be willing to adapt to this social expectation by presenting themselves along with their entourage as the wronged party and not rely on impersonal evidence or facts to be the convincing argument.

APPLIED INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Intercultural competence may be defined as the understanding and successful participation in cross-cultural engagement. A manager should recognize a plethora of applications for intercultural competence to the managerial context. Intercultural competence allows one to make choices on the basis of greater awareness of differing ways of life, exhibit tolerance and respect as well as meaningful dialogue with others. The goal is to foster meaningful, working relations with the ability to shift between multicultural contexts (Heyward 2002).

The significance of intercultural competence cannot be overstated. Management with multiple socio-cultural perspectives have an advantage of a contextual evaluation skill that allows informed managers to consider issues from differing vantage points. Without intercultural competence there is the very real possibility managers in the global community will commit needless mistakes that ultimately cost organization ventures.

Applied intercultural competence is the fruition of considering what elements are key to understanding a context, considering a specific scenario, identifying the indigenous perception as compared to one’s own interpretation, and what modified strategies can be devised to most appropriately enact in a context. Antal and Friedman (2008:365) suggest,

“Posing questions about one’s own cultural underpinnings does not come naturally because culture is taken for granted. *Cultural* competence is in essence the ability to generate appropriate strategies of action unconsciously, but *intercultural* competence is the ability to consciously explore one’s ways of thinking and acting so as to actively construct an appropriate strategy.”

Intercultural competence includes recognition and synthesis of epistemologies across social traditions. Managers come with the skill of criticality from their personal and professional experience. Utilizing criticality in comparative critical awareness leads to integration and a reconstruction of knowledge emerging as a global perspective (Yoynton 2005). Comparative critical learning for managers is most effective as an experiential exercise that displays validity and relevance to the management setting. The 5-step process presented in this paper enables management learners to define key factors of a situation and

compare the strategies used to attain goals pursued by participants in that context with their own normal action strategies (Morgan and Dennehy 2004).

CONCLUSION

Negotiating reality in a cross-cultural setting requires managers to be aware of their own socially shaped orientations to any one particular situation, consciously investigate the culturally colored interpretations of others, and design behavioral strategies that are sensible to all participants (Friedman and Antal 2005). The design of the 5-step instructional model is based on the notion reality-based experience coupled with exploring assumptions through conscious reflection are effective means for to intercultural learning (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Intercultural competence enables managers to function rationally and practically across cultural settings. Motivation for attaining intercultural competence is fueled by less than successful intercultural interactions that are filled with a clash of world views. The reality of participating in the global community suggests managers both identify and exploit cultural differences in designing appropriate action in specific environments. Prior knowledge and ways of doing integrate new, other-world understandings to create a dynamic multicultural perspective.

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ⁱ Cultural Theory has been employed by a number of researchers across disciplines. See Duval, D. (2006). "Grid/Group Theory and its Applicability to Tourism and Migration." *Tourism Geographies*, Volume 8, Number 1, 1-14; Neyrey, J. (2005). "God, Benefactor and Patron: The Major Cultural Model for Interpreting the Deity in Greco-Roman Antiquity." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Volume 27, 465-492.

ⁱⁱ The Grid/Group recall questions for conflict are a modified version Lingenfelter's Cultural Theory approach to conflict, political interests, and cultural bias. See Lingenfelter, S. (1996). *Agents of Transformation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

ⁱⁱⁱ "A Matter of Honor" is one case study of seven from the film, *Justice at Agadez*, filmed in 2005 by Christian Long and distributed by First Run/Icarus Films. The population of Agadez is predominantly Muslim Twareg who are camel pastoralists. The official justice system of Niger is based on the Napoleonic Code and French colonial administration. The Cadi as an Islamic judge works in consonant with the national judicial system.