

# **TOWARD AN ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK FOR CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the literature on cross cultural management and to trace its evolution over time through the analysis of about five decades of research published in leading management journals. Drawing on a database of 317 articles published between 1960 and 2008 in 48 academic journals, we present a detailed analysis of the content and development of cross cultural management studies. Specifically, we first provide a brief overview of cross-cultural management and summarize a number of review studies on cross-cultural management. Next, we describe the methods adopted in our study. We then describe the database of cross-cultural management articles employed in this study in terms of the distribution of the selected articles over time and per subject areas. After this, we provide an analysis of the major themes that have characterized cross cultural management research across the selected decades. Specifically, ‘old’, ‘new’, and ‘enduring’ themes are identified. Finally, we present a framework for positioning the different streams of cross cultural management research.

## **1. Introduction**

Over the last decades, globalization has raised an increasing interest in cross-cultural management issues and specifically in comparing management practices across different cultures and nations (Werner, 2002; Tsui et al., 2007). An important corollary to this is the growing number of publications relating to cross-cultural management (Schollhammer, 1973; Capaldo, Della Piana and Vecchi, 2012). Indeed, cross-cultural research has developed rapidly over the last decades as awareness has grown that cross-cultural research can offer significant contributions to the overall field of management studies by deepening our understanding of the international business context.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the literature on cross cultural management and to trace its evolution over time through the analysis of about five decades of research published in leading management journals. Drawing on a database of 317 articles published between 1960 and 2008 in 48 academic journals, we present a detailed analysis of the content and development of cross cultural management studies and we identify the major streams of research on cross-cultural management.

The paper is organized as follows. First, a brief overview of the cross cultural management field is provided. Second, the methods adopted in this study are described. Section three offers a description of the database of cross-cultural management articles employed in this study in terms of the distribution of the selected articles over time and per subject areas. In section four we examine the major themes that have characterized cross cultural management research across the selected decades. In particular, ‘old’, ‘new’, and ‘enduring’ themes are identified. A framework for positioning the different streams of cross cultural management research is presented in section five. Section six concludes the paper.

## **2. Cross Cultural Management: An Overview**

In order to understand the boundaries and future developments of cross cultural management research, it is important to preliminarily outline the origins of the field and identify the distinctive features of cross cultural management research.

What is cross-cultural management? How has it been defined? Is there a definition that has remained stable over time? The concept of "cross-cultural management" (CCM) seems to have been assimilated into the knowledge store of management scholars, and today it is defined by a set of characteristics that distinguish it. An often-quoted definition of cross-cultural management identifies the field as follows:

“Cross-cultural management is the study of the behavior of people in organizations located in cultures and nations around the world. It focuses on the description of organizational behavior within countries and cultures, on the comparison of organizational behavior across countries and cultures, and, perhaps most importantly, on the interaction of peoples from different countries working within the same organization or within the same work environment.” (Adler, 1983: 226)

This definition has remained substantially identical over time (Adler, 1991; Adler, Gundersen, 2008). Based on the reported definition, *description of organizational behavior within countries and cultures*, *comparison of organizational behavior across countries and cultures*”, and *interaction of people within the same organization or work environment* are the three building blocks of cross cultural management.

Over time, as the field developed, several attempts to map and take stock of the growing literature on cross cultural management have been accomplished and a number of comprehensive review articles have been published. They are summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Early narrative reviews by, among others, Schollhammer (1969), Ajiferuke and Boddewyn (1970), Kraut (1975), and Negandhi (1975) pointed out the theoretical and methodological orientations of comparative management studies, thus contributing to the establishment of comparative management as a separate field of research.

More than a decade later, Adler's (1983) survey of the articles published in 13 top American management journals between 1971 and 1980 revealed that only 4.2% of them could be properly considered as cross-cultural. She argued that the adoption of a cross-cultural perspective in management studies, and in particular in studies on organizational behavior, would become increasingly important, given the growing internationalization of the work environment.

Cross-cultural research has developed rapidly over the 1990s and 2000s, reflecting the shift "from curiosity to achieving an enlightened understanding of how management and organizational phenomena relate to cultural and national characteristics" (Earley and Singh, 1995: 329). The increasing awareness of the potential contribution offered by cross-cultural research to the overall field of management studies has led to an increasing number of cross-cultural studies, and to several attempts to map and take stock of this growing literature.

Working on a sample of 210 articles published in eight academic management journals between 1995 and 2001, Schaffer and Riordan (2003) identified common methodological practices and proposed some best practices for conducting cross-cultural research. Gelfand *et al.* (2007: 496) documented how "cultural perspectives have infiltrated virtually all of the micro and meso areas of organizational behavior", and identified fundamental issues and challenges for cross-cultural organizational behavior research. Focusing more specifically on both contents and methods of cross-national/cross-cultural organizational behavior research, Tsui *et al.* (2007) extensively discussed topics, cultural variables, and research methods used in a sample of 93 articles published in 16 leading management journals between 1996 and 2005.

The large number of review articles published over the last years reveals that the need of organizing what we know about cross-cultural management is perceived as urgent by several cross-cultural scholars. The present paper contributes to responding to this need by

assessing the evolution of the literature on cross-cultural management over the last about five decades and providing a framework for identifying and positioning the different research streams that co-exist within this field.

### **3. Methods**

In order to identify a representative sample of cross cultural management studies we employed an adapted version of the approach advanced by David and Han (2004) and further refined by Newbert (2007). Following David and Han (2004), we deemed such an approach suitable to our purposes in the light of our aim to contribute to the building of knowledge in the field of cross-cultural research, of the exploratory nature of our analysis and the high degree of heterogeneity in the examined literature, and finally of our intent to adopt a rigorous and replicable, but simple and straightforward, methodology.

Some preliminary decisions were taken in order to restrict the scope of our investigation. First, we decided to include articles published in top scholarly journals only. The Journals to be searched were selected from the AIDEA (Accademia Italiana di Economia Aziendale) Journal Rating (2007 release), which offers a comprehensive classification of international academic journals based on their quality. The 2007 AIDEA Journal Rating comprised five fields (Banking & Finance, Public Sector Management; Accounting & Control; Organization; Management & Strategy). Within each field, journals were rated A to D based on the ISI impact factor, Harzing's Journal Quality List, and other journal ratings and journal rankings from reputable Universities and major international academic associations. Second, based on both the nature of the topic under investigation and the purposes of our analysis, we limited our search to the "Organization" and the "Management & Strategy" fields. Third, in order to include only high-quality research in our analysis, we focused on journals rated A exclusively. Thus, our analysis was based on a total of 48 journals. Within

these journals, we searched for articles published between 1940 and 2008 included. The EBSCOhost's Business Source Premier and the JSTOR databases were used as search tools.

We selected our sample through the following three steps. Initially, we searched for all articles having the keyword "cross-cultural" in their body. This query restituted 2086 articles, many of which were not relevant to the task at hand. Thus, we decided to narrow our search by searching for articles having the keyword "cross-cultural" in their title or abstract. This led us to identify 393 articles. The abstracts were then read independently by two coders in order to exclude from the sample those articles that, albeit dealing with cross-cultural issues, were not specifically focused on cross-cultural management. Articles were excluded when both coders recommended to do so. When the two coders provided opposite recommendations, the decision whether to include or not the paper into our database was taken by a third coder who decided on the basis of both the first two coders' recommendations and his own judgement.

This led us to identify 317 articles published between 1960 and 2008 in 40 journals. No article published between 1940 and 1959 matched our selection criteria and no articles containing the keyword "cross-cultural" in the title or abstract were found in the following eight journals: Economic Geography, Journal of Economic Geography, Journal of Business, Journal of Industrial Economics, RAND Journal of Economics, International Journal of Industrial Organization, and Research Policy. Table 2 reports the journals searched and the corresponding number of articles found.

Insert Table 2 about here

## **4. Findings**

### ***4.1 Number of articles per decade***

In order to provide a preliminary assessment of the development of cross-cultural management research over the examined time period, we focus on the number of articles published across the last five decades. Results are reported in Table 3. Looking at the entire

time period under investigation, we note a steady increase in the number of articles published across the decades. Also the number of journals publishing cross-cultural research has increased steadily from the first to the last examined decade, but at a lower rate when compared to the number of articles published. This entails a continuous increase in the average number of published articles per journal (AAPJ) across the decades.

Insert Table 3 about here

Looking at each decade individually, we note that, during the first decade (1960-69), only 9 articles dealing with cross-cultural management were published, distributed over 7 journals. This is the far less productive decade for cross-cultural management scholars. The *American Sociological Review* and the *Academy of Management Journal* were the journals that contributed most.

During the second decade (1970-79), 31 articles were published, distributed over 16 journals, thus reflecting a substantial increase in the interest of management scholars for cross-cultural management. The *Academy of Management Journal* and *Administrative Science Quarterly* were the most active contributors. It's worth noting that the *Journal of Marketing* started to pay attention to cross-cultural management research during this decade.

During the third decade (1980-89), 46 articles were published in 20 journals, proving a further increase in the interest of management scholars for cross-cultural management in comparison with the previous two decades. The *Journal of International Business Studies* and the *Academy of Management Journal* contributed most to the development of the field. These journals were followed by the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, which confirms the increasing contribution of marketing scholars to cross-cultural research.

During the fourth decade (1990-99), 101 articles dealing with cross-cultural management issues were published in 31 different journals, in particular in the *Journal of International Business Studies* and the *Journal of Advertising*.

Finally, during the last decade (2000-08), we found 130 articles and 34 journals dealing with cross-cultural management. This further confirms the increasing attention to cross-cultural management issues over time. The *Journal of International Business Studies*, followed by the *Academy of Management Executive*, was the most active contributor.

#### ***4.2 Number of articles per subject area***

In order to evaluate the specific disciplinary background of management scholars doing cross-cultural management research, we referred to Ann-Wil Harzing's Journal Quality List (JQL) subject areas. We considered only the ten subject areas to which the journals included in our database belong. These subject areas and the corresponding journals are reported in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

The results of our analysis are reported in Table 5. The Table shows that the subject areas that contributed most to cross-cultural management research are: General & Strategy; Marketing; International Business; and Organizational Studies/ Organizational Behavior/ Human Resource Management/ Industrial Relations. Overall, these four subject areas cover 88.64% of the total number of articles published during the examined time period, totaling together 281 articles. The remaining 36 articles are distributed over the remaining six subject areas, among which Sociology appears to be the most active and, somewhat surprisingly, Psychology is the less active.

Insert Table 5 about here

#### ***4.3 Content of cross cultural management research: Major topics and evolution over time***

In order to examine the content of cross cultural management research, we performed a multiple-step analysis. The first step consisted of the identification of the article titles. Indeed, article titles are typically used by the authors to synthesize the contents of their papers by



means of a few meaningful words. 236 article titles were analyzed here as we excluded book reviews from this analysis.

The second step aimed at extracting representative words (i.e., words with a high semantic weight) from the article titles. We extracted one single representative word from each single article title.

The third step focused on deriving research topics from the analysis of the representative words. To do so, we merged the representative words into a number of topics, on the basis of their similarity. We thus obtained 47 research topics from our 236 representative words. With reference to this step, a linguistic remark is necessary. Generally speaking, simple words (i.e., words limited by blanks) may have different meanings, and their use can be disambiguated only within sentences or discourses. On the contrary, compound words or multiwords (i.e., meaning units composed by more than one simple word) are more likely to be non-ambiguous, even outside sentences or discourses. Therefore, the terms chosen to express the topics (and hence the themes in the fifth step below) are compound words, which, as we will see, have also the ability of indicating and/or resuming specific concepts.

In the fourth step, we checked what we had done in the previous one. To do so, we focused on the articles' abstracts, rather than on their title. Abstracts, being brief summaries written by the articles' authors, helped us to better understand in what sense specific words appeared in the article titles, and so to decide whether associating a specific representative word with a given research topic was correct.

The fifth and final step concerned the refinement of the topics, which led us to identify a restricted number of recurring themes across cross cultural management research. This phase, named "rectification of names" by the ancient Chinese philosophers, served to reduce potential ambiguity produced by the overall knowledge organization system described so far. We merged close (in terms of their meaning) research topics together so as to obtain a lower

number of themes with higher variance among them. This final step of our analysis led us to identify a total of 20 themes out of the 47 research topics. The themes are listed in Table 6, along with the corresponding representative words.

Insert Table 6 about here

In order to highlight the evolution of the themes over the period 1960-2008, Table 7 reports the number of published articles that dealt with each single theme in each of the five decades. On the basis of the results of our analysis, we distinguish between old, new, and enduring themes.

Insert Table 7 about here

We label ‘old’ themes those that have received attention by those doing cross-cultural research in the field of management since the first or the second examined decade. Specifically, the old themes are: American Management, Conflict, Leadership, and Value.

We label ‘enduring’ themes those for which we detected continuous interest over time, starting with the first or the second decade. Therefore, the enduring themes are the following: Cross-cultural research (conceptual), Cross-cultural Training & International Assignment, Interaction, Collaboration & Negotiation, Consumer Behavior, Information System & Technology, Decision Making, Social.

Finally, we label ‘new’ themes those that have received interest more recently (i.e., during the last three decades). The new themes are: Corporate Governance, Entrepreneurship, Ethics, Knowledge Sharing, Language & Semiotics, Performance, Product Innovation, Organizational Change & Development.

In Table 8 the identified themes are matched with the subject areas mentioned in section 4.2. The Table reports, for each theme/subject area, the corresponding number of published articles. This analysis enables us to address two basic questions, that are: How pervasive the identified cross cultural management themes are across the subject areas? And: To what

extent did each subject area contribute to the development of each theme? Thus, the themes are listed in Table 8 according to their “pervasiveness”, i.e. on the basis of the (decreasing) number of subject areas that contributed to the development of the themes.

Insert Table 8 about here

We note that the themes labeled “Information Systems & Technology”, “Interaction, Collaboration & Negotiation”, and “Cross-Cultural Training & International Assignment” are the most pervasive across the subject areas, with the last two themes being characterized by the highest number of articles. Our results also show that a large variety of themes have been addressed within the following subject areas: General and Strategy; Marketing; International Business; and Organizational Studies/ Organizational Behavior/ Human Resource Management/ Industrial Relations.

A number of neglected themes also emerge from our analysis. First, the theme labeled “Performance” has been very poorly addressed in the examined literature, and only in the International Business subject area (two articles). Second, research issues related to “Language & Semiotics” have been addressed only in five articles (three in the Marketing area and two in the Organizational Studies/ Organizational Behavior/ Human Resource Management/ Industrial Relations area). Other underrepresented themes are “Organizational Change & Development” and “Corporate Governance”, both of which have only been marginally addressed in the General and Strategy and International Business areas. We believe that these underrepresented themes can offer non-trivial research opportunities for management scholars interested in doing cross-cultural research.

It is also worth noting that the themes labeled “Cross-cultural Training & International Assignment and Interaction” and “Collaboration & Negotiation” are especially central within the examined cross-cultural management literature. Indeed, besides being ‘enduring’ themes (Table 7), the above two themes are especially pervasive across the subject areas.

## **5. An Organizing Framework for cross cultural management research**

In this section we present a framework for positioning the huge body of cross cultural management literature published over the last five decades. The first basic distinction concerns the number of conceptual (43%) versus empirical papers (57%). Among the conceptual papers, 20 review articles are included (6%). Analogously to Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007: 1282), we included among the empirical articles both those articles whose authors followed the hypothetical-deductive model (i.e., they use theory to formulate hypotheses before empirical testing) and those whose authors follow the deductive model (i.e., they use empirical data to generate theory through inductive reasoning).

In order to analyze in more depth the empirical articles (n. 181), we employed an organizing framework that Figure 1 reports as a 2 x 2 matrix. The vertical dimension refers to culture and distinguishes between studies that analyse a single culture and studies focusing on multiple cultures. For example, the former research includes analysis on executives from one country. The latter consists of research embracing different cultures, such as surveys on managers with different nationalities. Culture is therefore intended here as culture/nationality of the subjects under investigation.

Single-culture studies mostly focus on the description of the key characteristics of a culture and similarities within a cultural (typically national) environment. We identified 33 single-culture studies. 14 of these studies have been published in the last examined decade. Asian cultures are those most analysed in single culture studies, especially during the last two decades.

Multi-culture studies largely focus on comparisons across culture. Specifically, 69 out of the 148 multicultural studies that we found in our database focused on comparisons between two cultures. When two cultures are compared, US is the country most compared to

others (26 cases during the first four decades, 15 in the last decade). Comparisons between American and Japanese and Chinese cultures are largely dominant (13 cases). The remaining articles (n. 79) focus on multi-country comparisons involving more than two countries.

The vertical dimension of our proposed framework is the research setting. This dimension distinguishes single-setting studies versus multiple-setting studies, regardless of the culture/nationalities of the subjects under investigation. The focus here is on the context where data on people, executives, firms, etc. are collected. We found 35 single-setting studies. We found 146 multiple-setting studies.

Based on these two dimensions, four major streams of cross cultural management research are identified. In quadrant 1 (*single culture, single work setting*) the so called unicultural research (Lenartowicz and Roth, 1999) is positioned. Most studies in this area focus on the individual level of analysis. For example, Schiffman, Dillon and Ngumah (1981) explore the potential role of subcultural (religious) and personality (Rokeach Dogmatism Scale) characteristics in explaining differences in the extent of consumer acculturation. The results of the authors' survey suggest that, for a complex and heterogeneous nation like Nigeria, there are significant within-nation differences that may influence consumer acculturation.

Quadrant 2 (*single culture, multiple work setting*) includes research on replication/adaptation of domestic management practices in foreign countries. Primary research questions in this area are: Can we use home country theories abroad? And: Can domestic management practices successfully transferred abroad? For example, at the individual level of analysis, the study of Sullivan, Peterson, Kameda and Shimada (1981) investigated whether the manner in which conflicts are resolved in Japanese-American joint ventures in Japan influences the level of future mutual trust. The authors conclude that Japanese managers perceive a higher level of future trust when disputes are resolved through

conferral, except when an American is in charge of operations.

At the firm level of analysis, Yager (1992) identified patterns in the relationships among international technology transfers and the contexts within which those transfers take place. The international context for this study includes three quite different geographic locations sharing a common underlying Chinese social texture, i.e., Hong Kong, Singapore, and the southern province of Guangdong in the People's Republic of China. The study is focused on the leading transnational corporations in each industry transferring manufacturing technology to affiliates in the three countries.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The typical research question addressed by research work positioned in quadrant 3 (*multiple culture, single work setting*) can be summarized as follows: How do people of different nationalities behave within the same work setting?

Most studies in this quadrant focus on the individual level of analysis. For example, Botti (1995) describe the experience of a Japanese transplant in Italy, the crisis of its Fordist regime, and the process of its transition to a flexible, quality-oriented production model. Focusing upon misunderstandings (trust failures) which developed between the Japanese managers and the Italian workforce, the author shows how this fundamental process can prove to be particularly problematic in bicultural work settings such as those provided by Japanese transplants and how, within new systemic constraints, an emerging pattern of symmetric expectations constitutes an important characterizing factor in the transplant's transition towards its own 'local' version of Lean Production.

Research in quadrant 4 (*multiple cultures, multiple work setting*) received attention from scholars more recently, if compared to the previous area. Several research works replicating and testing Hofstede's (1980) study can be positioned in this quadrant. In the 2000s, the GLOBE research project opened the door to an increase of the research in this area.

Our proposed framework can also be used to link the type of analyses to the approaches used in cross cultural management research. Adler (1983b) identified six approaches to researching cross-cultural management issues: parochial, ethnocentric, polycentric, comparative, geocentric, and synergistic (Table 9).

Insert Table 9 about here

If we look only at empirical papers, interesting trends can be identified. In the 1960s empirical papers are mostly localized in quadrants 2 and 4. They focus on the individual level of analysis. The primary object of investigation is individual behavior and mostly in multiple work setting and involve the comparison between different cultures. For example, Oberg (1963) provides information on a survey of management problems among groups of businessmen from Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil and Michigan. The author presents a comparison of the problems perceived by the two sets of managers and offers solutions to each set based on cultural aspects particular to each group and on the differences in the business climate and situations that exist between Brazil and Michigan.

In the 1970s, empirical studies do not exclusively take into account individual behavior. An increasing interest in the analysis of organizational behavior emerges. The purpose of the Vertinsky's study (1972) was to explore the processes of diffusion of management science and operation research managerial technologies into industrial organizations in a developing region. The study focused mainly on the impact of cultural and environmental variables on the process of diffusion. In this study, two complementary strategies of research were employed: a community study of organizations in the region, and a longitudinal case study of implementations of OR/MS. The paper presents a profile of OR/MS implementation and managerial innovation in the region.

The evolution towards an increasing emphasis on the organizational level of analysis stopped in the 1980s. The empirical papers focus more on the individual level. This is the decade of

cross country empirical research in which different nationalities and individuals are examined in their own work setting. The majority of research focuses on multiple countries. Literature in this decade reflects the impact of Hofstede (1980) research, which was very influential. Most of the empirical research is positioned in quadrant 4.

In the 1990s, empirical papers dramatically increased. Indeed, we found 60 empirical papers against 24 for the previous decade. We also detected a growing interest for the organizational level of analysis (42 articles, 18 of which focused on individual organizations). An example of a study that focuses on the individual level, which can be placed in quadrant 4 and qualifies as a comparative study, is by Daghfous, Petrof and Pons (1999). This paper focuses on cultural values because an individual's inclination to adopt a new product reflects his system of values and because the influence of personal values on new product adoption has been neglected in the literature. In order to determine the influence of values on adoption, the authors utilize a multicultural research framework consisting of consumers living in a large metropolitan area and coming from three distinct cultural groups, i.e., business school students from Quebec, France, and North Africa. The results of this study suggest that individual values have a significant impact on consumers' inclinations to adopt new products. In multi-ethnic heterogeneous markets, segmenting consumers according to their values should be an important tool in the strategic kit of marketing managers.

An example of a study which focuses on the organizational level, which can be placed in quadrant 2 and classified as ethnocentric, is the one by Hui and Graen (1997) on cross-cultural differences regarding Sino-American joint ventures. This article is an attempt to theorize about effective leadership processes in SinoAmerican joint ventures in mainland China. In sum, during the 1990's, cross-cultural management research, can be mostly positioned in quadrants 2 and 4.



During the 2000s, the number of empirical studies can be split in two groups, based on the level of analysis (individual versus organizational level of analysis). Most importantly, research in the 2000s consists of 12 single-culture studies (quadrant 1 and 2), although there are still papers that can be positioned in quadrant 4. An example of work focused on the individual level, which can be placed in quadrant 1 and classified as polycentric, is the one by Shapiro, Ozanne and Saatcioglu (2008), in which cultural sensitivity is assumed to be important in international business. In-depth interviews with buyers from the Asian Pacific Rim were conducted, and support was found for a four-stage model of cross-cultural sensitivity in which buyers move through the stages of romantic sojourner, foreign worker, skilled worker, and partner. This paper explores the development and evolution of cultural sensitivity as it interacts with trust and development of international business relationships.

An example of work referred to this decade that can be placed in quadrant 3 and classified as synergistic is offered by Schneider (2002), who focuses on cognitive, language-based, information processing in organizations. This study introduces a symbolic interactionist framework that allows the investigation of organizational behavior based on affective meaning, on emotion-generated implications. Unlike most symbolic interactionist approaches, affect-control theory is based on rigorous mathematical formalization that allows precise empirical methodologies. The effectiveness of this affective model is demonstrated in a multicultural setting where cultural differences and language differences make communication within the organization difficult. Computer-based simulations of interaction address the problems that managers experience following culture-centric behavior prescriptions instead of using the affective meaning of their professional identities as guidance for their behavior.

In Figure 1, we have also traced the quadrants of our framework to the three "building blocks" (BB) of CCM's definition by Adler (1983):

- quadrant 1 shows the studies that describe a culture and that can be put within the first BB "description of organizational behavior within countries and cultures";
- quadrants 2 and 4 summarize the studies that compare two or more cultures and that can be related to the second BB "comparison of organizational behavior across countries and cultures";
- finally, quadrant 3 shows those studies concerned with the study of the conditions (general and specific) that regulate the interaction between people of different cultures. These studies can be related to the third BB "interaction of people."

## **6. Conclusions**

Cross cultural management has advanced considerably over the last five decades as it is shown by the increasing number of articles published in top management journals devoted. Such an increase raises the need for frameworks and conceptualizations that organize the extant literature so as to explain what we (think we) know and what we do not about cross cultural management. Our paper contributes to responding to this need. We review 317 articles published in leading management journals between 1960 and 2008. Research works are analyzed in terms of subject areas, major topics and evolution over time.

This study provides some data that can contribute to our understanding of cross cultural management field. Our analysis shows that the interest in cross cultural management research has steadily increased over time, with the number of articles moving from 9 in the decade 1960-69 to 130 in the period 2000-2008. The subject areas that contributed most to cross-cultural management research are: General & Strategy; Marketing; International Business; and Organizational Studies/ Organizational Behavior/ Human Resource Management/ Industrial Relations. Overall, these four subject areas cover 88.64% of the total number of articles published during the examined time period, totaling together 281 articles.

On the basis of the analysis on the content of the papers, we have identified 'old',

'new', and 'enduring' themes. In addition, our article presents a framework for positioning the extant studies on cross cultural management. This framework can be useful to help the readers to classify existing literature as well as identify potential directions for future research. We also link research contributions to the six approaches to research in cross cultural management, as identified by Adler (1983). Despite its limitations, our paper contributes to the development of an 'architecture' of cross cultural management studies, which could prove useful for both identifying the areas of cross-cultural management research where knowledge has substantially advanced and suggesting directions for future enquiry.

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**Table 1. Summary of review articles on cross-cultural management**

Article	Research Focus
Neghandi & Estafen (1965)	Discussion of management philosophy, process, and effectiveness and formalization of a model to determine the applicability of American management know-how in differing cultures and environments.
Ajiferuke & Boddewyn (1970)	Focus on cultural, economic and psychological explanatory variables used in comparative management studies.
Boddewyn & Nath (1970)	Discussion of comparative studies and classification of extant cross-cultural research in three categories (i.e., descriptive, conceptual, and hypothesis testing).
Roberts (1970)	Categorization of cross-cultural research literature related to organizations into 26 substantive areas and classification on the bases of whether the examined articles offer micro- or macro-data, and the vantage point from which research questions are asked.
Schollhammer (1969)	Discussion on the proliferation of different conceptual approaches to comparative management theory.
Schollhammer (1973)	Focus on conceptual difference between international management (concerned with the management and operations of multinational firms) and comparative management (concerned with cross-cultural similarities and differences of management issues).
Kraut (1975)	Discussion of similarities (geography and language) and differences (economic, organization, personal status) among managers.
Bhagat & McQuaid (1982)	Focus on micro-organizational behavior and introduction of a conceptual framework for classifying cross-cultural studies.
Child & Tayeb Sekaran (1983)	Discussion of the conceptual foundations of cross-cultural management. Focus on concerns deriving from the critics to cross-cultural research and on the need for inductive research.
Adler (1983a)	Discussion on the need of developing of a cross-cultural perspective to organizational behavior.
Hui & Triandis (1985)	Focus on the notion of equivalence in cross-cultural measurement and on the methods proposed for attaining satisfactory measurement.
Ronen & Shenkar (1985)	Focus on published literature on country clustering by using the country as the unit of analysis.
Redding (1994)	Analysis of the dilemmas stemming from alternative frameworks of meaning and call for new approaches to comparison.
Schaffer & Riordan (2003)	Identification of key best practices for conducting cross-cultural research.
Yeganeh & Su (2006)	Reflections on the conceptual foundations of cultural management research.
Gelfand et al. (2007)	Identification of fundamental issues and challenges for cross-cultural organizational behavior research.
Tsui et al. (2007)	Focus on the contents and methods of cross-national, cross-cultural organizational behavior research.
Hult et al. (2008)	Focus on data equivalence in cross-cultural international business research.
Peterson & Søndergaard (2011)	Analysis of quantitative cross-cultural societal research in organization studies and discussion of recent social science innovations and early social science perspectives regarding cultural groups.

**Table 2. Journals searched (1940-2008) with corresponding number of articles found**

Journal	N. of articles
1. Academy of Management Executive	20
2. Academy of Management J.	22
3. Academy of Management R.	9
4. Administrative Science Quarterly	8
5. American J. of Sociology	6
6. American Sociological R.	4
7. British J. of Industrial Relations	1
8. British J. of Management	2
9. California Management R.	5
10. Decision Sciences	3
11. Economic Geography	-
12. Harvard Business R.	9
13. Human Resource Management	10
14. Industrial Relations	4
15. Information & Management	1
16. Information System Research	2
17. International J. of Industrial Organization	-
18. International J. of Research Marketing	11
19. J. of Advertising	13
20. J. of Advertising Research	7
21. J. of Business	-
22. J. of Business Venturing	5
23. J. of Consumer Research	7
24. J. of Industrial Economics	-
25. J. of International Business Studies	64
26. J. of Management	6
27. J. of Management Studies	8
28. J. of Marketing	9
29. J. of Marketing Research	7
30. J. of Operations Management	1
31. J. of Personality & Social Psychology	3
32. J. of Product Innovation Management	6
33. J. of Retailing	3
34. J. of the Academy of Marketing Science	11
35. J. of Economic Geography	-
36. Leadership Quarterly	12
37. Management Science	2
38. Marketing Letters	1
39. Marketing Science	1
40. MIS Quarterly	4
41. MIT Sloan Management R.	3
42. Operations Research	-
43. Organization	7
44. Organization Science	6
45. Organization Studies	12
46. RAND J. of Economics	-
47. Research Policy	-
48. Strategic Management J.	2
Total	317



**Table 3. Number of articles published per year and per journal**

Decade	A	J	AAPJ
1960-69	9	7	1,29
1970-79	31	16	1,94
1980-89	46	20	2,3
1990-99	101	31	3,26
2000-08	130	34	3,82
Tot	317	40	7,9

A = n. of Articles published in the examined time period;

J = n. of Journals publishing cross-cultural research in the examined time period

AAPJ = Average n. of Articles Per Journal

**Table 4 Subject areas and corresponding journals searched**

Subject Areas	Journals
General & Strategy (G&S)	Academy of Management Journal, The Academy of Management Perspective, Harvard Business Review, Academy of Management Review, J. of Management Studies, Administrative Science Quarterly, J. of Management, California Management Review, Strategic Management Journal, British J. of Management, J. of Business, Sloan Management Review.
Marketing (MKT)	J. of Advertising, International J. of Marketing Research, J. of the Academy of Marketing Science, J. of Marketing, J. of Advertising Research, J. of Consumer Research, J. of Marketing Research, J. of Retailing, Marketing Letters, Marketing Science
International Business (IB)	J. of International Business Studies.
Organizational Studies/ Organizational Behavior/Human Resource Management/Industrial Relations (O/O/H/I)	Leadership Quarterly, Organization Studies, Industrial Relations, Organization Science, Human Resource Management (US), British J. of Industrial Relations, International J. of Industrial Organization, Organization.
Management Information Systems, Knowledge Management (M/K)	MIS Quarterly, Information System Research, Information & Management.
Sociology (SOC)	American J. of Sociology, American Sociological Review.
Innovation (INN)	J. of Product Innovation Management.
Operations Research, Management Science, Production & Operations Management (O/M/P)	Decision Sciences, Management Science, J. of Operations Management, Operations Research.
Entrepreneurship (ENT)	J. of Business Venturing
Psychology (PSC)	J. of Personality & Social Psychology.

**Table 5. Ranking of the subject areas on the number of published cross-cultural management articles**

Subject Area	ASi	CSi (%)
General & Strategy	94	29.65
Marketing	71	22.40
International Business	64	20.19
Organizational Studies /Organizational Behavior/Human Resource Management/ Industrial Relations	52	16.40
Sociology	10	3.15
Management Information Systems, Knowledge Management	7	2.21
Innovation	6	1.89
Operations Research, Management Science, Production & Operations Management	6	1.89
Entrepreneurship	5	1.58
Psychology	2	0.95

**Table 6. Identified themes and corresponding representative words**

Topic	Representative words
CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH [CONCEPTUAL] (CCR)	Culture, comparative management, organizational behavior, role of culture, cross-cultural management, cross-cultural management research, cross-cultural research, culture cross-cultural management, managerial attitudes, boundaries of business, organizations and national culture, cultural theory, groups, Hofstede, cultural research, organization culture research, organizational behavior research, cross-cultural research, cultural sensitivity, cross-national and intra-national diversity
KNOWLEDGE SHARING (KS)	knowledge creation and dissemination, management knowledge, management knowledge, global knowledge-sharing, global knowledge management system, supply chain
INFORMATION SYSTEM & TECHNOLOGY (IS&T)	operation research/management system implementation, information seekers, information management research, international technology transfer, IT diffusion, information service quality, strategy, perception and use of e-mail, information privacy, information systems, software projects, national culture, corporate web sites, end-user computing satisfaction instrument
LANGUAGE AND SEMIOTICS (L&S)	nonverbal communication, cross-cultural evaluation, language and consumer memory, multicultural corporations, semiotics
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT (OC&D)	organizational development, positive organizational change, organizational change
SOCIAL (SOC)	socioeconomic indicators, career plans, societal development, Karasek's model, collective identity, social contracts, social exchange, bribery activity, identity scholarship
ENTREPRENEURIAL (ENTR)	entrepreneurial perceptions, corporate entrepreneurship, firm entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurship, high-tech entrepreneur
PERFORMANCE (PRF)	managerial performance, motivational domains
CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING & INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS (CCT&IA)	personnel administration, U.S. organizational concepts, occupational attainment, managerial job attitudes, task related contextual and job involvement orientation, international human resource management, expatriate assignments, training methods, cross-cultural training, cross-cultural adjustment, u-curve adjustment, employee participation, emotional response, corporation-wide safety policy, expatriate satisfaction, global assignment systems, cross-cultural work settings, employees, cultural theory, expatriates, export market orientation, work-family interface, cross-cultural competencies, teams, expatriate training, international assignments, expatriate training, cross-cultural role expectations, international compensation practices, strategic HRM through the cultural looking, IHRM, expatriates adjustment, empowerment, culture intelligence, teams and teamwork, international experience, cross cultural competence, behavior in foreign cultural interaction, human resources planning, human resources planning, climate for autonomy
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (CG)	Cronyism, corporate annual reports, capital structure

Topic	Representative words
INTERACTION, COLLABORATION & NEGOTIATION (I,C&N)	Negotiate, negotiations, cross-cultural interaction, business negotiations, international joint ventures, international joint ventures, cross-cultural transactions, collective identity, joint ventures, cross-cultural negotiations, cross-cultural negotiations, organizational behavior, collaborative research, global virtual teams, negotiations, cooperative ventures, cross-cultural collaborations, joint venture longevity, cross-cultural Buyer-Seller relationships, cross-border negotiations, negotiation model, cooperative alliances, power-satisfaction-and-relationship-commitment, trust and duplicity, organizational trust, supervisor trustworthiness, behavior in foreign cultural interaction, interorganizational cooperation, interorganizational relationships, cultural sensitivity
CONSUMER BEHAVIOR (COB)	made in product image, consumer acculturation, consumer attitudes, consumer society, consumer behavior, language and consumer memory, emotional response, cross-cultural consumer research, interpersonal information exchange, consumer behavior, consumer cognition judgment and choice, consumer research, consumption,
PRODUCT INNOVATION (PINN)	product/market innovations, international technology transfer, new product, product innovation and development, product development cycle time
DECISION MAKING (DM)	managerial decision making, communication and decision making, idea deficient situations, style managers, purchase decision processes, venture creation decision, power-satisfaction-and-relationship commitment, host-country nationals, promotability
LEADERSHIP (LEAD)	chief executives attitudes, managerial attitudes, global leadership competencies, leadership, leadership styles, leadership perceptions, leadership theories, leadership, leadership, charismatic leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, teams and teamwork, public leadership
ETHICS (ETH)	business ethical standards, management ethics, ethical perceptions, stakeholder interests, moral philosophies, ethical attitude
AMERICAN MANAGEMENT (AM)	American management know-how, U.S. organizational concepts, American and Chinese managers, American management concepts
ADVERTISING & BRAND (ADV&B)	case study approach, advertising effectiveness, attitudes toward foreign products, advertising advertising attitudes, multinational advertising, advertising strategy, advertisement, advertising, print advertisements, print advertising, brand extension, advertising, international advertising education, commercials, music and lyrics, brand switching behavior, magazine advertisements, brand personality constructs, interaction of auditory and visual advertising elements, comparative advertising, ethnic minorities' media use, brand-attribute associations
CONFLICT (CFT)	orientation role conflict and alienation from work, conflict resolution approaches, conflicting environmental expectations, culture conflicts, conflict management, cross-cultural disagreements, managers' conflict-handling, organization-customer conflict, representation perceptions
VALUE (VAL)	Values, personal values, cultural values-work beliefs-and-attitudes, cultural values, work values, belief formation, value differences , values, value test

**Table 7. Number of articles per theme across the decades**

Theme	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2008	Total
AM	1		2	1		4
CFT	1		3	2	3	9
LEAD		2		5	6	13
VAL		3		4	3	10
ADV&B	2	3	2	9	7	23
CCR		3	8	4	8	23
CCT&IA		1	7	17	18	43
COB		1	3	8	3	15
DM		3	1	1	3	8
I,C&N		1	2	11	16	30
IS&T		2	1	5	6	14
SOC		2	1	3	3	9
CG				1	2	3
ENTR				3	2	5
ETH				1	5	6
KS					6	6
L&S				3	2	5
OC&D			1	1	1	3
PRF					2	2
PINN				3	2	5

**Table 8. Pervasiveness of the themes across the subject areas**

Theme	ENT	G&S	IB	MKTG	M/K	O/M/P	O/O/H/I	INN	SOC	PSC
I,C&N		10	9	4		1	5			1
IS&T		2	2	2	5	2	2			
CCT&IA		17	11	1			13		1	
SOC		3		2			1		2	1
VAL		3	3	2			1		1	
CFT		3		3			1		2	
LEAD	1	4	2				6			
ETH	1	2	1	2						
CCR		10	9				4			
ADV&B			1	21						1
DM		5		2		1				
ENT	3	1	1							
COB			3	12						
KS		4					2			
L&S				3			2			
PINN			1					4		
OC&D		2	1							
CG		1	2							
AM		4								
PRF			2							

**Table 9 Six different approaches to cross-cultural management research**

Approach	Focus
Parochial (A)	Studies are designed and conducted in one culture by researchers from that culture (e.g. studies of the US conducted by people from the US)
Ethnocentric (B)	Studies originally designed and conducted in one culture by researchers from that culture are replicated in a second culture.
Polycentric (C)	Individual domestic studies conducted in various countries around the world (search for that which is specific in a particular culture)
Comparative (D)	Studies are designed to identify the similarities and differences across two or more cultures and thus distinguish between those aspects of organizational theory which are truly universal and those which are culturally specific
Geocentric (E)	Studies focus on organizations operating on in more than one culture, to identify the similarities among cultures which will allow multinational organizations to have unified policies for their world-wide operations
Synergistic (F)	Studies explore cross-cultural interaction and the positive uses of similarities and differences in creating both universal and culturally specific patterns of management. The focus is no understanding the patterns of relationships as well as the theories which apply when people from more than one culture interact within a work setting, typically multinational and transnational organizations

Source: Adapted from Adler (1983)



Figure 1 A framework for cross cultural management research

