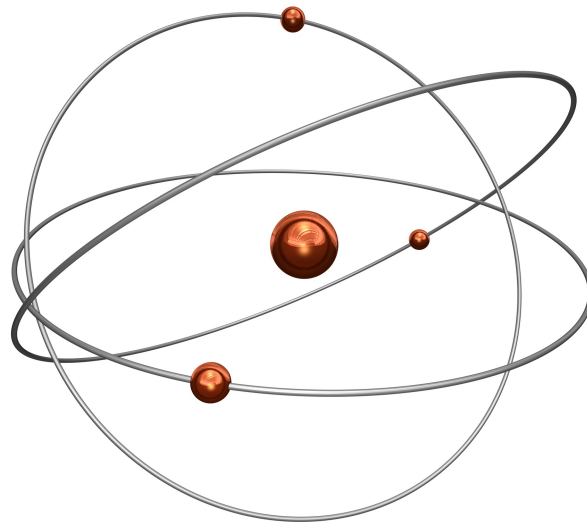


ICBQ

Evaluation

InterCultural Balance Questionnaire



Luise Muster

finished: xxx

Introduction

Internationality will play an ever more important role in our working lives in the future. In many professional teams today, people from different cultures find themselves working side-by-side, and larger companies often expect their employees to have experience of working abroad. Intercultural skills are becoming a central competence for professional success, and not only for people sent to work abroad.

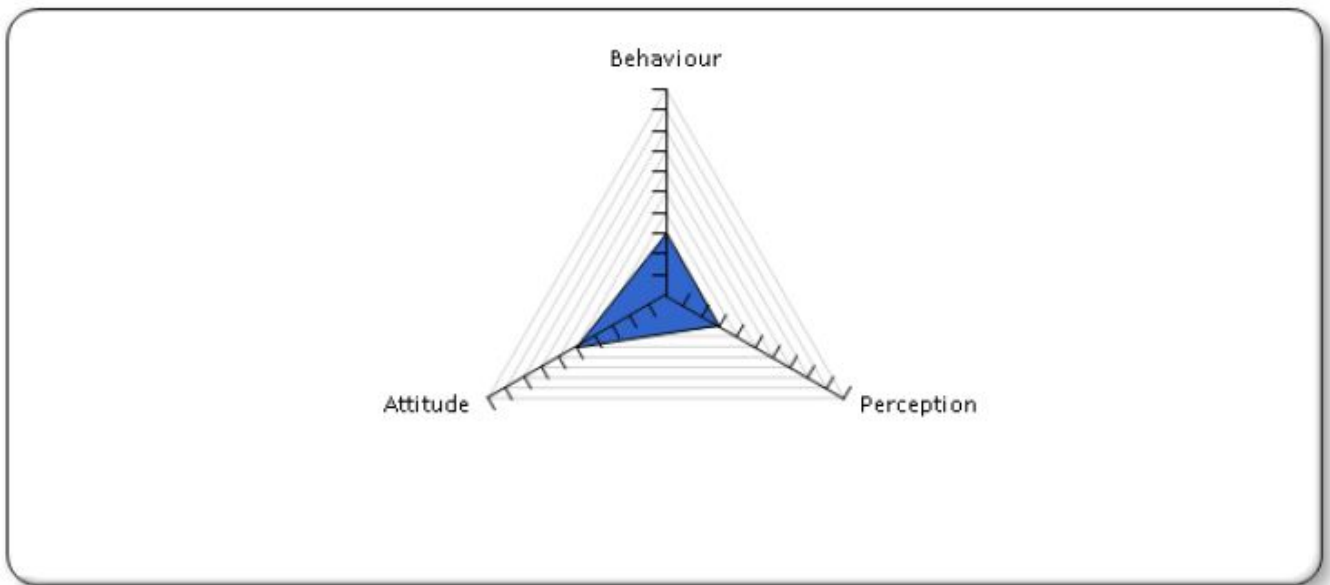
Intercultural competence is the ability to interact with people from other cultures with a view to mutual benefit. We understand intercultural competence as a fundamental personal prerequisite for dealing constructively with new, unfamiliar or unknown situations in an intercultural context. The ICBQ doesn't assess whether special behaviour techniques that can be helpful in a particular culture have already been learned; rather, it measures basic intercultural skills without addressing the specific culture in detail.

In scientific surveys, three factors have emerged that are especially relevant for recording intercultural competence:

- Attitude to the unfamiliar
- Perception of the unfamiliar
- Behaviour towards the unfamiliar

These are psychological dimensions that can be changed or developed in the long term.

In order to be successful in intercultural situations, the subject doesn't need to achieve the highest possible score for all factors. Rather, it is a balance between the different kinds of individual potential and the specific requirements that is decisive. These requirements vary, for example, according to the duration and intensity of the contact with the other culture.



The individual degrees to which the dimensions are present are shown on a diagram like the one above. The dimensions stand for the following:

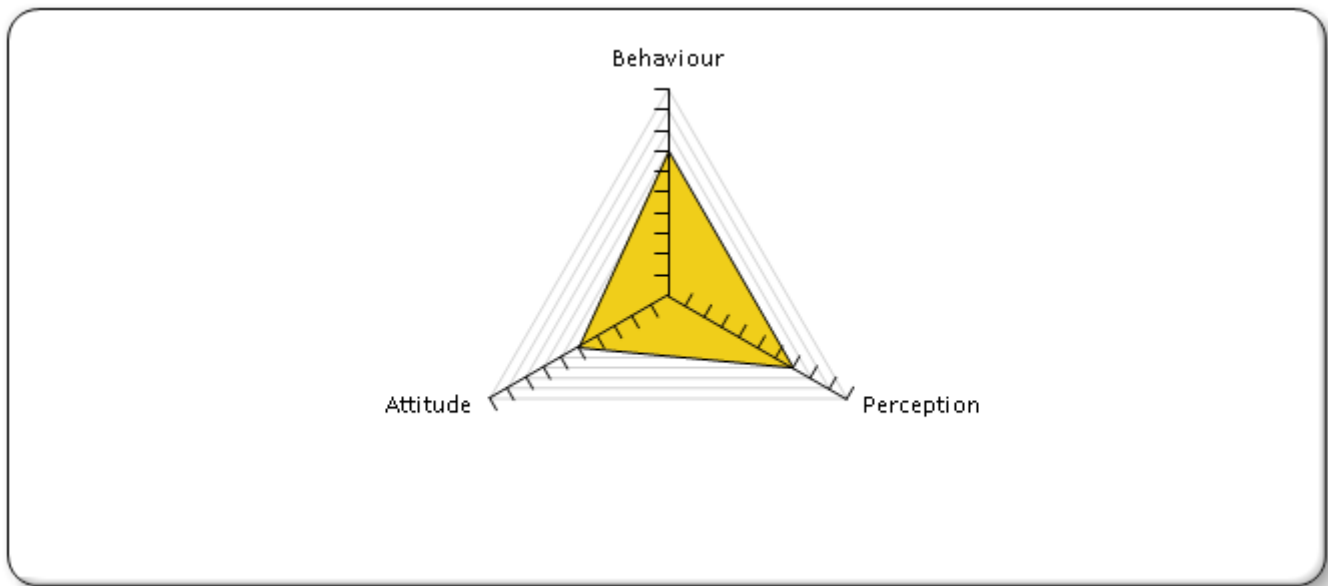
ATTITUDE (openness) stands for receptiveness, interest in and receptiveness for the new and the unknown. What is my personal attitude to things I am not familiar with?

PERCEPTION (empathy) measures the depth of interpersonal sensitivity. To what extent am I aware of the other person's sensitivities, to what extent do I want to understand him?

BEHAVIOUR (rationality) records willingness to deal reasonably with new situations. How do I cope with changes?

In the individual assessment you will find information showing to what degree each of the three factors is present in your case, what contribution you can make to intercultural cooperation, and what risks may exist for you. You will also find information about what you should pay particular attention to in the intercultural environment. If you take advantage of the chances offered to you and are aware of your weaknesses, you will be able to act more successfully in the intercultural context.

Your personal balance



The chart shows how strongly each of the individual factors is present in your case. Please bear in mind that more is not necessarily better. This analysis records your personal qualifications for dealing with the unfamiliar.

Think about what role and what responsibilities you will have to fulfil in which cultural environment. These are the general conditions that can vary from one intercultural cooperation to the next. Think about what requirements you have to fulfil in the intercultural cooperation and how you can put your abilities to best use.

Studies have shown that a higher level of openness and rationality often goes hand-in-hand more time spent abroad, be it for private or business reasons. Your empathy value tells you something about the extent to which you get personally involved.

Attitude

You are pretty open and receptive towards new things. When you come into an unfamiliar environment, you are interested in what others do and how they go about it. You are prepared to open up to strangers and to learn new things, if you think it's appropriate to you. However, you aren't actively searching for new experiences.

In unfamiliar situations you are good at combining new things with what you already know, and this enables you to mediate between the two areas. Ideally, you like to take the best of both worlds and combine it.

Perception

Relationships with other people are important to you. You want to get on well with strangers, but not at any cost. You are a good listener and want to understand what motivates other people's actions. In the process, you try not to judge other cultures, but to accept that each of us has his own nature.

You are able to establish good personal relationships with strangers, too. You show tolerance and sensitivity, and can function as a mediator between different cultures.

However, it might prove to be a disadvantage that you take trouble first and foremost to establish good relationships with others.

Behaviour

You are able to adapt to new situations in unfamiliar cultures and you're flexible. Actively adapting to new environments is a positive challenge for you. In the process, you find it fairly easy to give up familiar working routines. Even in unfamiliar environments, you find your own way to behave appropriately. That enables you to integrate quickly without merely fitting in. In alien environments you display an above-average amount of rationality. This gives you clear potential for coping reasonably with unfamiliar situations. As you are searching for new routes, you also have the ability to introduce new impulses to the work with others.

Tips and Suggestions

To prepare for a stay in a foreign culture, it can be helpful to make use of the tips and suggestions below in order to confront in advance some problems that may crop up. The suggestions made are derived from your results, so that they are geared to your personal needs.

Preparation

You don't necessarily need a lot of preparation. You'll soon get your bearings in the new environment without it.

The best idea is for you to select what suits you best from the different integration and training offers.

Information

How much information do you need to give you the best support?

You benefit most from best-practice information: What has already proved useful? What experience is already documented?

What kind of information is important for you when dealing with foreigners?

In addition, background cultural information will help you gain a broader understanding of the new environment.

In what form should the information be available to you?

You get hold of the relevant information yourself when you need it.

Local contact person

It's adequate for you to have the contact details of a competent person that you can contact when necessary.

Special tips

A preparatory "look & see" visit would probably be helpful for you.

Exact plans and advance structuring restrict you too much.

Sample Report
ICBQ

Basic conditions

Everyone has his own needs and inclinations that make it easier or harder for him/her to fulfil special requirements. Some basic conditions that may apply in a different culture are listed below, which may be particularly favourable or unfavourable for you personally.

Length of stay:

You can adapt to both longer and shorter stays.

Possible assignments in the host country:

Support in forming joint ventures

Your possible role:

Forging links with the local people

Intensity and type of the working relationship:

You are well-suited to assignments where you can compare notes intensively and at a personal level with people from the host country. You like to have a pleasant human atmosphere and not just a factual one.

Affiliation:

You will probably be able to get in touch with strangers on your own and establish lasting relationships with them.