An Empirical Analysis of Cultural Intelligence, Narcissism, and Export Firm Performance in Japan

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Abstract

Metacognitive cultural intelligence (CQ) monitors and objectively controls cognitive processes, and may affect the narcissism of Japanese export managers. This study conducted an empirical analysis, using data collected from small- and medium-sized enterprises in Japan, to examine the hitherto unexplored relationship between CQ, narcissism, and export firm performance. The findings suggest that narcissism moderates the relationship between metacognitive CQ and performance prediction. In addition, motivational CQ—moderated by metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, and narcissism—affects export firm performance and performance prediction.

Keywords:
Cultural Intelligence, Narcissism, Firm Performance, Japan

(1) Introduction

Globalization has increased the number of foreign tourists and workers, which affects both export firms that conduct cross-border business and those that mainly conduct business domestically. In this situation, firms must be mindful of cultural differences. Managers need to develop the skills and capabilities necessary to understand and adapt to other cultures.

The concept of cultural intelligence (CQ), introduced by Earley (2002), can be used to recognize the importance of cultural understanding. CQ "refers to a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts" (Earley and Ang, 2003, p.59). CQ focuses on an individual's cognitive skills, motivation, and cultural adaptation behavior. Earley and Ang (2003) identified CQ as a multifactor concept that includes metacognition, cognition, motivational, and behavioral factors. Empirical findings have indicated a relationship between the facets of CQ and psychological factors: Big five (Ang et al., 2006) and self-efficacy (Hu et al., 2018; Rehg et al., 2012).

This study proposes that CQ is related to the narcissism of Japanese export managers, who determine the course of business. Narcissism mainly refers to our feelings about ourselves, including self-esteem and self-

admiration[1]. Managers with high levels of narcissism often disrupt teamwork and impair the overall performance of the export firm (Judge et al., 2009; Resick et al., 2009). Metacognitive CQ, which monitors and controls the cognitive process, can be used to restrain one's level of narcissism, thereby improving export performance.

Previous research on CQ (Bücker et al., 2014; Elenkov and Manev, 2009; Magnusson et al., 2013) and narcissism (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007; Wales et al., 2013) has focused on managers and other senior management members. However, no study has examined the relationship between the CQ and the narcissism of export managers, or how this relationship affects export performance. This study conducts an empirical analysis to examine this relationship and its effects.

This study applies the trait theory of leadership (Geiser, 1967; Judge et al., 2002; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991), which considers the behavior of the leader of an organization, to two personality traits of export managers: CQ and narcissism.

This study makes several contributions to research on international business and narcissism, which are relevant to management. First, this study uses empirical analysis to further investigate the effect of CQ on export performance. Previous studies on CQ focused on the relationship between individual traits and CQ (Ward and Fischer, 2008; Huff et al., 2014; Hu et al., 2018). Previous studies on narcissism in business management did not focus on CQ, though studies have examined the relationship between CEO narcissism and business performance (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007; Wales et al., 2013). The present study proposes a new perspective of CQ to deepen our understanding of the relationship between CQ and narcissism in a business management context.

This paper first presents a theoretical background of CQ and narcissism to develop the hypotheses. Second, it presents the method of analysis used to test the hypotheses, and the results. Finally, it discusses the implications of the findings.

(2) Theoretical background and hypotheses

1. CQ

CQ is a multidimensional concept that includes metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behavior. According to Ang and Dyne (2008), who defined the four facets of CQ, metacognitive CQ refers to "the individual's level of conscious cultural awareness during cross-cultural interactions" (p.5); cognitive CQ reflects "knowledge of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultures that has been acquired from educational and personal experiences" (p.5); motivational CQ reflects "the capability to direct attention and energy toward learning about and functioning in situations characterized by cultural differences" (p.6); and behavioral CQ reflects "the capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people from different cultures" (p.6).

[1] In this study, narcissism does not mean a pathological condition.

Empirical studies of CQ and business have indicated that the four facets of CQ are positively associated with short-term business travel, the need to control a situation, and international non-work experiences (Tarique and Takeuchi, 2008; Tay et al., 2008).

Thomas et al. (2015) developed another conceptual model of CQ that included three facets: knowledge, metacognition, and skills. These facets respectively correspond to cognitive CQ, metacognitive CQ, and behavioral CQ, as defined by Ang and Dyne (2008). However, Thomas et al.'s model does not include a facet that corresponds Ang and Dyne's (2008) motivational CQ because, "motivation and intelligence may have a limited recursive relationship" (Thomas et al., 2015, p.1100). The facets of CQ as outlined by Thomas et al. (2015) may have reliability issues. The authors operationalized the three facets based on very few questions: 2 questions on knowledge, 5 questions on skills, and 3 questions on metacognition. Consequently, the model's reliability index of Cronbach's α is low, which is problematic (Soga, 2019).

Therefore, this study adopts the CQ model introduced by Earley and Ang (2003) because it has been used in many previous studies. Earley and Ang (2003) used 20 questions to identify the facets of CQ: 4 questions on metacognitive CQ, 6 questions on cognitive CQ, 5 questions on motivational CQ, and 5 questions on behavioral CQ (Ang et al., 2007). Thus, they did not have a reliability problem.

Prior studies have shown the effects of the four CQ facets, as defined in the Earley and Ang (2003) model, on business management. Bücker et al. (2014) analyzed the effect of CQ on communication effectiveness and job satisfaction in a sample of Chinese managers working in multinational enterprises. The results indicated that CQ enhances communication effectiveness and job satisfaction. In addition, Magnusson et al. (2013) used data from US exporting firms to examine the influence of CQ on marketing mix adaptation and export performance. Their study revealed that metacognitive CQ moderates the relationship between marketing mix adaptation and export performance, and motivational CQ moderates the relationship between environmental differences and marketing mix adaptation. Based on these studies, CQ has a positive effect on business management and firm performance.

2. Narcissism

Narcissism originates from the Greek myth of Narcissus, a beautiful young man who fell in love with his reflection in water. Sigmund Freud (1914-1957) used narcissism as a term to describe a personality disorder, based on this myth. In the social sciences, narcissism is used to refer to our feelings about ourselves, including self-esteem and self-admiration.

Narcissism has both positive and negative effects. Lubit (2002) suggested that narcissism could be healthy (positive) or destructive (negative). Healthy narcissism reflects reality and results in self-confidence. Destructive narcissism causes grandiose thinking and the devaluation and exploitation of others. In addition, destructive narcissism involves "the need to be admired,

self-glorification, taking credit for the work of others, repressive control, critical and devaluing behavior, envy, lack of empathy, and lack of insight" (Lubit, 2002, p.132).

Previous studies have developed scales to measure narcissism. Raskin and Terry (1988) conducted an empirical analysis of items in the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) and identified 7 components of narcissism: authority, exhibitionism, superiority, vanity, exploitative, entitlement, and self-sufficiency. In addition, Resick et al. (2009) used 8 characteristics—arrogant, assertive, boastful, conceited, egotistical, self-centered, show-off, and temperamental—to measure the narcissism of CEOs.

Using these measures, empirical research has elucidated how narcissism affects business management. Namely, narcissism detracts from the use of contingent reward leadership because a narcissistic person has little concern for others (Resick et al., 2009). Further, the narcissism of a leader affects firm performance. Chatterjee and Hambrick (2007) examined the relationship between the narcissistic tendencies of CEOs and firm performance; the results of their empirical analysis revealed that when a firm's CEO had narcissistic tendencies, the firm's performance was either higher or lower than the average. Wales et al. (2013) also analyzed this relationship, revealing that the narcissism of CEOs affects the variance of firm performance, and that entrepreneurial orientation has a moderating effect on this relationship.

3. Hypotheses

Metacognitive CQ is related to cognitive CQ. Flavell (1979), who introduced the concept of metacognition, defined the term as reflecting on one's own thinking. Nelson and Narens (1990) explained metacognition by splitting the cognitive process into two levels: object-level and meta-level. The meta-level cognitive process uses experience and knowledge to monitor and control the object-level cognitive process. This results in an objective understanding of one's own cognitive process. Metacognition can be used to avoid narcissistic qualities, such as overconfidence, overestimation, and higher self-esteem. The following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1a: Metacognitive CQ is positively associated with cognitive CQ.

Hypothesis 1b: Metacognitive CQ is positively associated with narcissism.

Narcissism affects motivation. According to Foster and Trimm (2008), narcissism has a weak impact on the motivation to avoid negative outcomes but a strong impact on the motivation to attain desirable outcomes. An empirical analysis by Brunell et al. (2014), however, which focused on volunteer motivation, identified no relationship between narcissism and motivation. This is likely because narcissists do not typically practice selfless acts such as volunteering. In other words, narcissists are motivated by outcomes related to success and reputation, and volunteering does not provide those outcomes. This study examined motivational CQ in the context of jobs that yield desirable outcomes. The following hypothesis is

proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Narcissism is positively associated with motivational CQ.

Expertise enhances the motivation to develop skills and accumulate knowledge. Individuals with expertise have the desire to utilize their skills. Tsuji and Yoshikane (2010) investigated the relationship between expertise and work motivation among library employees in Japan. The results indicated that employees with a librarian license had higher motivation than those without it. Similarly, export managers who had familiarity with different cultures had a high motivation to communicate with individuals from different cultures. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Cognitive CQ is positively associated with motivational CQ.

Narcissism of the company leader is associated with firm performance. According to previous studies, narcissism results in extreme (higher or lower than average) firm performance (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007; Wales et al., 2013). Narcissists also tend to overestimate their performance, intelligence, and attractiveness (Buffardi and Campbell, 2008; Farwell and Wohlwend-Lloyd, 1998; Gabriel et al., 1994). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 4a: Narcissism is positively associated with export performance.

Hypothesis 4b: Narcissism is negatively associated with the accuracy of export performance prediction.

Motivation is one of the important factors in organization behavior. Grant (2008) classified motivation as intrinsic and prosocial to analyze the relationship between motivation and job performance. The results suggested that motivation does not affect performance; however, the interaction between intrinsic and prosocial motivation has a significant effect on job performance. In addition, Barrick et al. (2002) classified motivation into communication striving, accomplishment, and status striving to analyze the moderating effect of motivation on the relationship between personality and job performance. Their findings suggested that communication striving, accomplishment, and status striving had a significant effect on job performance. Thus, motivational CQ enhances export performance. If export managers' motivation leads to good performance, their prediction of performance will also improve. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 5a: Motivational CQ is positively associated with performance.

Hypothesis 5b: Motivational CQ is positively associated with the accuracy of export performance prediction.

(3) Analysis

1. Method

To test these hypotheses, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), using SmartPLS 3.2.7, was employed.

This technique is used to conduct factor analysis, path analysis, and regressions (Charoensukmongkol, 2016). PLS-SEM can be applied when the sample size is small, compared with covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM), which has the same objective as PLS-SEM (Rigdon et al., 2017).

2. Samples

Data were collected from February to April 2018. Information on 2,342 Japanese small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) was extracted from the databases of TSR Kigyo Joho File and Kaigai Sinshutsu Kigyo Soran[2]. Questionnaires were mailed to the enterprise leaders responsible for the international business of these SMEs; 67 usable questionnaires were returned. The leaders in the usable sample have international experience. The average time these leaders engaged in export was 25.8 years. In addition; the average time they were engaged in business in a foreign country was 18.7 years.

3. Measures

CQ items in this study were adopted from the 20-item CQ scale (CQS) (Ang et al., 2007): metacognitive CQ = 4 items; cognitive CQ = 6 items; motivational CQ = 5 items; and behavioral CQ = 5 items. In addition, confidence was measured according to the definition of superiority index in the Japanese NPI (Konishi et al., 2006). These items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Furthermore, export sale information was obtained to measure export performance. We calculated the accuracy of export performance prediction based on the difference between the firm leader's forecast and actual export sales; for example, if the forecasted sales were 10% higher than the actual export sales, the respondent wrote -10% in the questionnaire.

Missing values were replaced with average values.

(4) Results

1. Measurement of model evaluation

Before the PLS estimation, tests were used to evaluate the model and confirm the reliability and validity of all latent variables. The test of common method variance was conducted; single respondents were asked questions about the three CQ facets and narcissism. Harman's single factor test and exploratory factor analysis of the three CQ facets and narcissism revealed five factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0. The contribution rate of the first factor was 40.246%. Thus, the common method variance is not confirmed in this study.

Second, three measures of construct reliability were conducted: Cronbach's α coefficient, RhoA coefficient, and composite reliability coefficient. The minimum value of these coefficients was greater than .70, which is a widely recommended value (see Table 1). Therefore, the model of this study meets the criterion of reliability.

[2] Questionnaires were filtered based on capital and number of employees. However, they were not filter for type of industry specialization.

Third, the test of convergent and discriminant validity was conducted. The average variance extracted (AVE) was measured, and the square root of the AVE was compared with the correlation coefficient. The minimum value of the AVE was greater than .50, which is the cut-off point suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) (see Table 1). The square root ranged from 0.749 to 0.881 (see Table 2). Each of these values was higher than the correlations between them and the other latent variables. These results showed that the model of this study has a high level of validity.

Fourth, the outer loading was checked to test the effects of the variables on the construct. All outer loadings were greater than .50, which is the criteria suggested by Hair et al. (2017).

These results showed the reliability and validity of the construct of this study.

2. Results of empirical analysis

The variance inflation factor (VIF) was measured to test the presence of multicollinearity. The maximum value of the VIF in the inner model was 1.230. As the value was less than 5, the suggested criteria by Hair et al. (2017), the problem of multicollinearity is not confirmed.

The bootstrap method was used to estimate the path coefficient and test the hypotheses (see Table 3). The result of the PLS analysis confirmed a positive and significant relationship between metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ ($f^2 = 0.315$, $\beta = 0.489$, $p < .001$), and metacognitive CQ and narcissism ($f^2 = 0.284$, $\beta = 0.470$, $p < .001$). Consequently, H1a and H1b are supported. The results also confirmed a positive and significant relationship between narcissism and motivational CQ ($f^2 = 0.068$, $\beta = 0.223$, $p < .05$), and cognitive CQ and motivational CQ ($f^2 = 0.343$, $\beta = 0.502$, $p < .001$). Thus, H2 and H3 are supported. The result indicated a positive, but not significant relationship between narcissism and performance ($f^2 = 0.027$, $\beta = 0.175$, $p > .10$). However, narcissism had a significantly negative effect on export performance prediction ($f^2 = 0.043$, $\beta = -0.21$, $p < .01$). H4a is not supported, but H4b is supported. Motivational CQ had a significant negative effect on performance ($f^2 = 0.075$, $\beta = -0.293$, $p < .05$), so H5a is not supported. On the other hand, motivational CQ had a significant positive effect on export performance prediction ($f^2 = 0.083$, $\beta = 0.306$, $p < .05$), which supported H5b.

R^2 and Q^2 were used to measure the predictive accuracy and relevance of the study. R^2 explains the level of the endogenous variable compared to the exogenous variable. Q^2 shows the prediction level of the model. The R^2 values of cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and narcissism were greater than 0.25, but those of performance and export performance prediction were less than 0.25. This suggests a weak predictive accuracy of cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and narcissism. The Q^2 values of cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and narcissism were greater than 0.12, but those of performance and export performance prediction were 0.056 and 0.041 respectively. This study had a Q^2 value greater than 0, which indicates that this model has a high predictive relevance.

Table 1 Cronbach's α, Rho$_A$, composite reliability, and average variance extracted

METACQ: metacognitive CQ; COGCQ: cognitive C						
	METACQ	COGCQ	MOTICQ	NAR	PER	PER_PRE
Cronbach's α	.740	.942	.918	.891	1.000	1.000
Rho$_A$	.738	.944	.935	.916	1.000	1.000
Composite reliability	.835	.954	.939	.914	1.000	1.000
Average variance extracted	.561	.776	.756	.577	1.000	1.000

Q; MOTICQ: motivational CQ; NAR: narcissism; PER: performance; PER_PRE: performance prediction

Table 2 Correlation and square root of AVEs

	METACQ	COGCQ	MOTICQ	NAR	PER	PER_PRE
METACQ	***.881***					
COGCQ	.489	***.749***				
MOTICQ	.322	.595	***.870***			
NAR	.470	.418	.433	***.759***		
PER	.046	-.026	-.217	.048	1.000	
PER_PRE	.036	.071	.211	-.088	-.041	1.000

METACQ: metacognitive CQ; COGCQ: cognitive CQ; MOTICQ: motivational CQ; NAR: narcissism; PER: performance; PER_PRE: performance prediction

Table 3 PLS-SEM path coefficient

Hypothesis	Path			Coefficient	f^2
H1a	metacognitive CQ	→	cognitive CQ	0.489**	0.315
H1b	metacognitive CQ	→	narcissism	0.470**	0.284
H2	narcissism	→	motivational CQ	0.223*	0.068
H3	cognitive CQ	→	motivational CQ	0.502**	0.343
H4a	narcissism	→	performance	0.175	0.027
H4b	narcissism	→	performance prediction	− 0.221 †	0.043
H5a	motivational CQ	→	performance	− 0.293*	0.075
H5b	motivational CQ	→	performance prediction	0.306*	0.083

†$p < 0.1$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

(5) Discussion

The results of this study show that the metacognitive CQ of export managers affects their cognitive CQ. This supports the findings of Flavell (1979), and Nelson and Narens (1990), which suggested that metacognition monitors and controls cognitive process. Metacognitive CQ encourages leaders to obtain more knowledge about different cultures when their knowledge is lacking. The metacognitive CQ of export managers has a significant positive effect on their narcissism. This is attributed to the level of self-esteem among Japanese people. Previous studies have indicated that Japanese people have lower self-esteem compared to other nationalities (Feather and McKee, 1993; Kobayashi and Brown, 2003; Schmitt and Allik, 2005; Yamaguchi et al., 2007). Japanese people tend to underestimate themselves. In the Japanese context, metacognitive CQ does reduce the level of self-esteem in general, but it improves the self-esteem of export managers to the appropriate level, which is neither too high nor too low.

The narcissism of export managers enhances motivational CQ. Brunell et al. (2014) analyzed the relationship between narcissism and the motivation to volunteer. They did not confirm whether narcissism significantly enhanced motivation. In the context of their analysis, narcissists did not have positive feelings towards volunteering, because volunteering does not provide the honor and fame that narcissists wish to attain. However, the results of the present study, which investigated the effect of motivational CQ, elucidated a significant relationship between narcissism and motivation. This is because motivational CQ is relevant to narcissists' ability to achieve job success and reputation. This is an important new implication for the relationship between narcissism and motivation.

The analysis conducted in the present study shows that cognitive CQ has a positive effect on motivational CQ. This implies that motivational CQ should be included as a facet of CQ. Although Thomas et al. (2015) suggested that the facet of motivation should be excluded from CQ measures, the results of the present study, which highlighted the relationship between motivational and cognitive CQ, suggest that it is better to include motivation as a facet.

The results of this study further indicate that narcissism significantly affects performance prediction, but not actual performance. Previous studies have suggested that the narcissism of a leader results in extreme performance (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007; Wales et al., 2013), but those studies did not consider the relationship between narcissism and export performance, which has not been confirmed. The narcissism of export managers provides both positive and negative aspects to their export performance. The present study shows that narcissism has a negative effect on performance prediction. Narcissism causes export managers to overestimate the firm's future performance. It is critical that researchers who explore the role of narcissism in business management investigate the prediction of firm performance in addition to actual performance.

This analysis shows that, in export firms, motivational CQ negatively affects actual export performance and positively affects the

prediction of export performance. These results imply that motivation and behavior—including ability and skill—are not synchronized. Porter and Lawler (1968) argued that ability moderates motivation (effort) and performance. Baum and Locke (2004) elucidated that entrepreneurial skills, in addition to motivation, impact performance. However, since the present study only focused on psychological factors, it could not clarify the relationship between motivation and behavior.

(6) Conclusion

This study showed that psychological factors—narcissism and cultural intelligence—affect export performance. Narcissism and motivational CQ also affect the prediction of firm performance. These results suggest that export managers should consider their psychological traits when predicting firm performance to ensure that the prediction is accurate.

Although the present study's empirical analysis provides some significant results, this study has some limitations. First, as the study focused on only Japanese SMEs, managers of large-sized enterprises in other countries must be investigated in future research. This study only focused on export performance. Although export is at an early stage in the traditional internationalization model, many recent firms place it in a later stage since they have foreign subsidiaries (Root, 1982). Unlike exporting firms, these firms face problems managing international human resource and cross-cultural understandings in their international teams. Therefore, future research should add this as a variable.

Although this study clarified the relationship between narcissism, CQ, and export performance, it did not address the behavior of export managers and organizations. Behavior is an important element for performance analysis because it reflects the psychological traits of managers. Future business management research should include behavior as a variable to clarify the relationship between managers' psychological traits and firm performance.

The results showed that while narcissism, which is enhanced by metacognitive CQ, negatively affects the prediction of firm performance, motivational CQ, which is indirectly and positively influenced by metacognitive CQ, positively affects the prediction of firm performance. In other words, metacognitive CQ indirectly affects firm performance prediction both negatively and positively. There is partial evidence of the effects of metacognitive CQ. Future empirical research is necessary to analyze metacognition according to the following classification: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive monitoring, and metacognitive control.

This study measured narcissism using only the notion of superiority index based the Japanese version of the NPI. Future research should consider other factors to clarify the effect of narcissism in detail.

This study does not focus on industry difference. Cultural intelligence is needed in industries where the product adapts to the host country. Future studies should control for industry differences.

This study clarifies the relationship

between CQ and narcissism, thereby contributing to the literature on leadership. This analysis demonstrates that metacognitive CQ enhances the narcissism of Japanese export managers. Narcissism has a significant negative effect on export performance prediction. This study elucidates the relationship between CQ and narcissism, which contributes to the literature on narcissism in management performance. Further research is necessary to understand CQ, and other psychological factors, in business management.

Acknowledgement

This research was partially supported by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science, Grant-in-Aid for Research Activity Start-up, 2017-2018 (JP17H06981).

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(Received: July 31, 2019)
(Accepted: October 30, 2019)