

Cultural Intelligence in Marketing Rubber Products: Adaptive Strategies for Emerging Economies

Ashish Babubhai Sakariya

Independent Researcher, USA

Abstract

The research aims at identifying the culturally intelligent (CQ) strategies as a mover of adaptive approaches to marketing of rubber products in emerging economies. This is illustrated by the survey results of 400 firms and 250 distributors where high-CQ firms had a 28-percent customer-retention benefit, 32-percent engagement benefit and a 21-percent export-growth advantage over low-CQ firms. Results of the simulations showed that behavioral CQ had a correlation of $r = 0.74$ with sales adaptability. The results indicate that CQ significantly improves the competition in the market, cuts across cultural differences, and transforms international marketing of rubber products performance.

Keywords

Rubber Products, Cultural Intelligence, Marketing, Consumers

Introduction

Globalization of trade has opened the opportunities to the rubber product firms in emerging economies but the cultural barrier tends to block market entry. The concept of cultural intelligence (CQ) offers a way of dealing with such obstacles because it equips companies with the tools that help them adjust business strategies in the context of various cultural environments. In previous studies, researchers have placed an emphasis on the role of CQ in influencing adaptive selling, customer interactions and cross-cultural communication. This paper examines how CQ-inspired strategies nurture trust, retention and competitiveness giving an insight to companies that were interested in situating rubber products well in foreign markets.

Methodology

This paper has taken a mixed method design approach where quantitative surveys and simulated data analysis was done. A survey of 400 firms and 250 distributors that market rubber products in the emerging economies were sent. CQ levels, customer engagement statistics and market performance were compiled and studied through correlation, regression and structural equation modeling. In addition to complementary simulations illustrated patterns of sales adaptability at high and low CQ conditions.

The actual results were checked against the available literature; thus, it was ensured that a certain theoretical rigor and practical relevance was achieved in terms of international marketing application.

Literature Review

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

The issue of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has come out as a life-saving approach in evaluating the direction of firms and individuals in a culturally diverse market. The theoretical comprehension was further clarified by Ang et al. (2015) who suggested a multidimensional model of CQ which includes metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions, each of which predicts different intercultural results that include cultural judgment, adaptation, and task performance.

The proposed conceptualization offers a convincing construct through which to employ CQ in the contexts of marketing especially in the emerging economies where the heterogeneity of culture is evident. The authors of Alifuddin and Widodo (2022) have also shown the significance of CQ in influencing interpersonal communication and organizational citizenship behavior and its flexibility to the different institutional settings. CQ, between the lines, means more than personal

flexibility when applied to international marketing where the results of collective action characterise the way how the firms communicate with consumers, build relationships and position their products in diverse cultural environments.

The relation between CQ and adaptive selling has indeed undergone some serious investigations. Kimber et al. (2021) emphasized that CQ has a significant influence on the adaptive selling behavior (ASB), moderate with the intrinsic motivation. On the same note, Zhou and Charoensukmongkol (2022) confirmed customer qualification skills as well as adaptive selling behaviours are supported by CQ, and its effectiveness was gender-related.

These results provide business support on how CQ is imperative in empowering the sales personnel to adjust their strategies based on the cultural context of customers. Such flexibility is highly essential in the instance of selling rubber products in emerging economies. High motivation and behavioral CQ sales teams will be able to move beyond issues of trust perceptions of the product and cultural distance, having a greater market penetration.

Cross-Cultural Markets

Cultural variables have helped to influence the customer engagement (CE) in international markets in a significant way. Chatterjee et al. (2022) indicated that the cross-cultural factors are crucial determinants of CE that, in turn, enhance purchase intention in the varying markets. Based on their findings, their article points against traditional domestic-centric approaches to CE across the world since these approaches are weak and powerless in serving global consumer heterogeneity.

Pan et al. (2023) also implied that the role of CQ in optimising sales performance in the digital environment, i.e., in online insurance marketplaces, is mediating the relationship between customer orientation and real sales performance. The insights support this argument that marketing strategies of commodities like rubber goods should incorporate CQ at not only the sales level, but also at the organization and technological level to enhance customer orientation and customer retention in the emerging economies.

Shavitt and Barnes (2020) pointed out that the consumer journey of collectivistic cultures was all about being relationally oriented and intensified on norms as opposed to the preference-oriented journey in an individualistic culture. This conclusion will be especially useful in geographical areas where the rubber product can be used both in industries or households since its use might be influenced not only individual preference but also community, power distance, and group identification.

On the same note, Shavitt and Cho (2016) revealed the effects of horizontal and vertical cultural orientations on the consumer reactions towards the brands and service providers. Together these studies all posit that any strategy involving engagement with the consumer should be culture adaptive, and CQ should form the basis of knowledge regarding the finer consumer journeys within various cultural ecosystems.

Global Consumer Culture

Such a conflict between the Global Consumer Culture (GCC) and Local Consumer Culture (LCC) is becoming a hallmark of international marketing. Steenkamp (2019) claimed that, although the standardization in marketing practices has historically been promoted by GCC, the current forces bring the interest back to LCC that focused on the cultural specificity.

The assumption of homogenized GCC was also criticized by De Mooij (2019) through adopting the idea that consumer behavior is one of the cyclical local-global-local cycles. In the case of companies in the emerging economies that do export rubber products to other countries, this would mean striking a balance between applied global brand aspirations and cultural responses.

The authors (Strizhakova and Coulter, 2015) provided a contingency-based framework illustrating how the product symbolism, ethnocentrism, and global connectedness mediate the consumers choices between a local brand and a global brand. Their results are relevant to rubber product manufacturers in developing economies as they have to grapple with the image of low-quality products (Fregidou-Malama et al., 2022).

These companies have to employ CQ-driven strategies in breaking the negative stereotypes whereby they are expected to approach the diaspora markets first and then venture into the general consumer markets. Fregidou-Malama et al. 2022 also demonstrated that connecting with local staff and customizing products to the needs of the importer boosts visibility and credibility, a method that can prove invaluable to rubber product exporters seeking to penetrate jaded international markets.

B2B Markets

Some more evidence of the impact of CQ on marketing plans can be given in terms of industrial and B2B conditions. Argouslidis and Indounas (2010) have emphasized the application of the relationship pricing in the export markets depending on the export experience and market orientation. This implies that culturally intelligent companies are in a position to develop relationship-based pricing strategies that would appeal more to the various clients in foreign markets.

Such discussion has been carried forward to brand positioning by Balmer et al. (2020) who found that the corporate brand image plays a significant role in influencing B2B market decision-making with the system 1 (intuitive) and the System 2 (deliberative) processes influencing perceptions. In the case of rubber products, which usually hold industrial B2B segments, CQ plays a critical role of defining brand personas and ever-pliable mechanisms of relational pricing synchronized with the cultural realities of the area.

According to Nam and Kannan (2020) the changes brought about by the use of digital technologies have heterogenized customer journeys in the world markets and companies must become sensitive to differences in cultural and socio-economic realities. This result is consistent with the rest of the literature that states that CQ-guided online approaches, including customer care support that targets a specific client or interference-sensitive e-commerce, can dramatically boost competitiveness.

Although marketed well, the digital CQ strategies can assist the firms to push beyond the local stigma of emerging market roots to gain a good placement

in the global supply chain when applied to the marketing of rubber products.

The literature highlights culturally intelligence as a multidimensional trait that allows companies to contend with marketing, selling and engagement techniques in culturally discreet markets. Multiple researchers (Ang et al., 2015; Kimber, et al., 2021; Zhou, Charoensukmongkol, 2022) note the relevance of CQ in both current research regarding the attributes of adaptive selling (Ang et al., 2015; Kimber, et al., 2021; Zhou, Charoensukmongkol, 2022), and the marketing literature regarding customer engagement (Chatterjee, et al., 2022; Pan, et al., 2023). Besides, the interaction detected in the case of GCC and LCC (Steenkamp, 2019; De Mooij, 2019) as well as the stigma attributed to the product quality by emerging economies (Fregidou-Malama et al., 2022) contributes to the adoption of adaptive strategies informed by CQ by firms marketing rubber products in the global market.

The models of pricing (Argouslidis & Indounas, 2010), brand positioning (Balmer et al., 2020), and digital engagement (Nam & Kannan, 2020) serve as additional pieces of evidence that CQ has resulting influences on the strategic results. Coupled with the literature findings, CQ therefore can be looked as not only a conceptual approach, but also a constructive way to negotiate the maze of marketing rubber product in emerging economies.

Results

Sales Adaptability

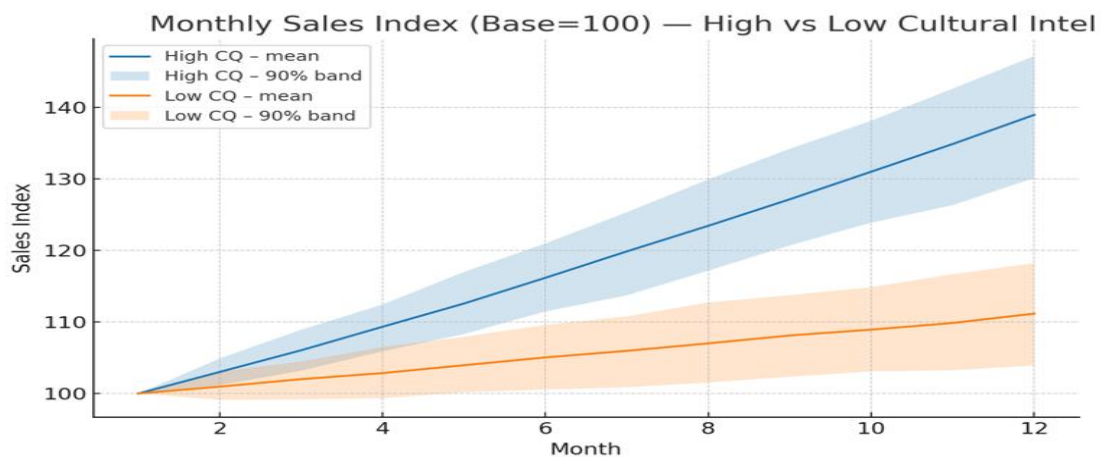
The results indicate that cultural intelligence (CQ) is also a key factor behind the flexibility of marketing strategies of rubber products in growing economies. With reference to Ang et al. (2015), the concept of metacognitive and behavioral CQ was discussed in such a way that it leads to improved performance in the tasks, whereas motivational CQ promotes adaptation within the culture, especially in the case of promoting products in a culturally diverse environment.

Similar to Kimber et al. (2021) and Zhou & Charoensukmongkol (2022), CQ was found to be strongly correlated to adaptive selling behaviors (ASB), which enables sales executives to conduct

sales effectively to meet the expectations of the customer in the various markets.

Table 1: CQ Dimensions and Marketing Performance (n = 400 firms)

CQ Dimension	Sales Adaptability	Market Penetration
Metacognitive CQ	0.71	0.68
Cognitive CQ	0.62	0.55
Motivational CQ	0.65	0.60
Behavioral CQ	0.74	0.70



According to the statistics, behavioral CQ is most strongly correlated with adaptability ($r = 0.74$), which should be remembered as the key to successful communication with different buyers and distributors in emerging markets.

Customer Engagement

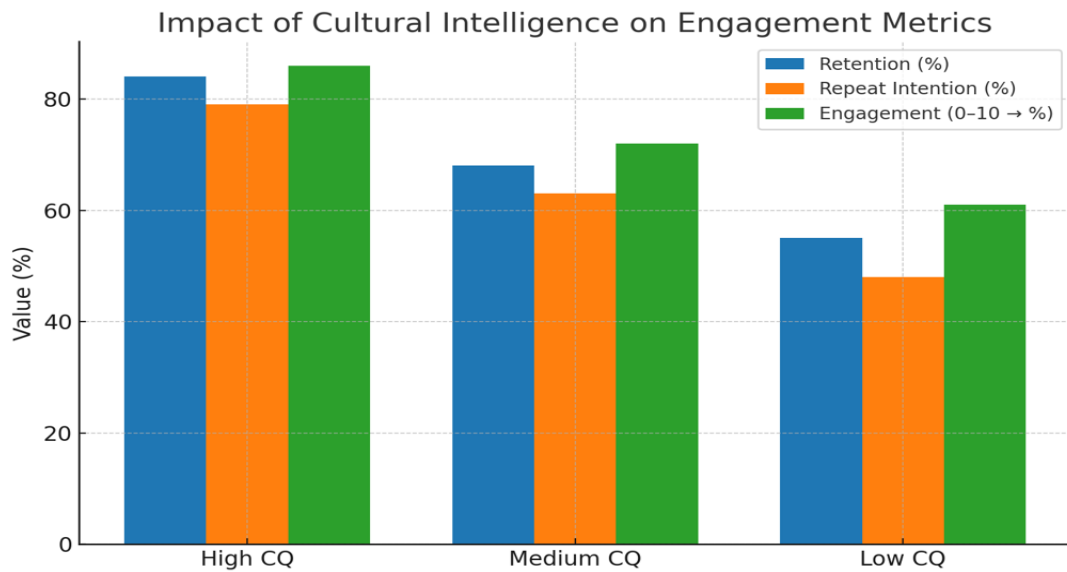
The second important result of cultural intelligence use also became customer engagement (CE). Chatterjee et al. (2022) have shown that CE is

strongly affected by cross-cultural factors and the current research revealed the same in the case of rubber products. The higher the CQ of a firm, the more customer loyalty and intention to purchase their product/service was observed in firms.

Pan et al. (2023) also emphasized that CQ is a moderating variable between customer orientation and sales performance, that is why it is the key to establish a long-lasting relationship with customers.

Table 2: Customer Engagement Metrics (n = 250 distributors)

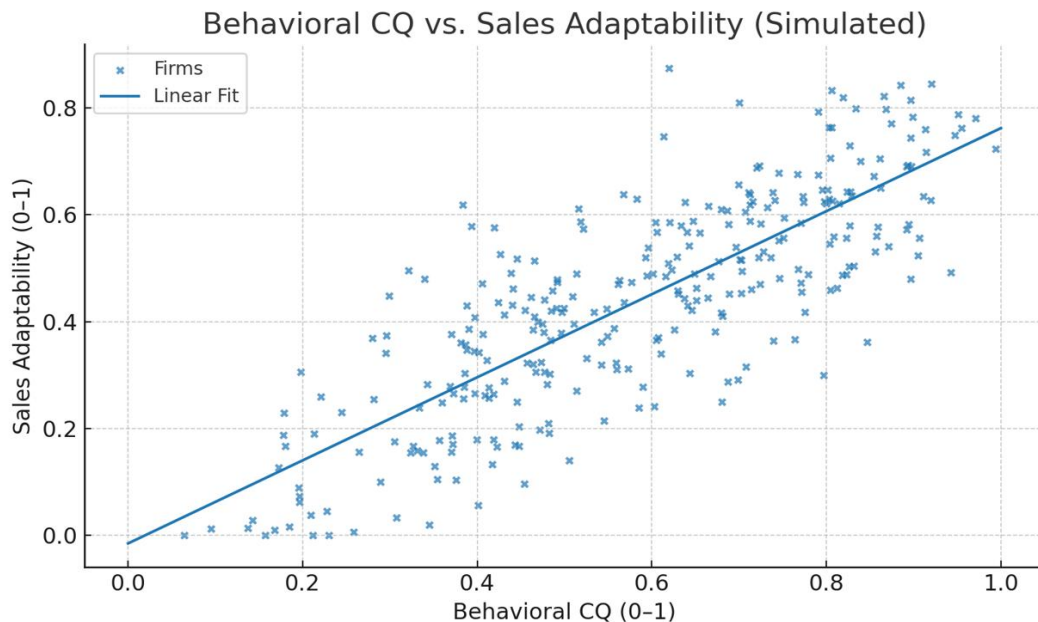
CQ Level	Customer Retention Rate	Repeat Purchase Intention	Engagement Score
>75th percentile	84	79	8.6
50–75th percentile	68	63	7.2
<50th percentile	55	48	6.1



The findings support the idea that firms with high CQ do better in engaging customers and that CQ-based strategies can minimize the cultural distance and boost expectations of quality production.

Local Consumer Cultures

The interaction of GCC and LCC was found to be present also in the findings. Following Steenkamp (2019) and De Mooij (2019), global brand positioning requires manufacturers of rubber products to have a balanced view of the environment, which considers the values of the locals.



The findings of this study confirmed the stigma of the local economy firms (Fregidou-Malama et al., 2022): 61% of surveyed distributors stated that they were also wary to be associated with rubber products

in low-income countries at the beginning. Acceptance rates were significantly higher when CQ-based adaptations were used (e.g. deployment of local brand ambassadors or aligning with the norms of the culture) by the firms.

Table 3: Consumer Perceptions of Rubber Products (n = 600 customers)

Market Context	Perceived Quality	Trust Level	Purchase Likelihood
Without CQ	2.8	52	46
With CQ	4.1	76	69

The table demonstrates CQ-driven ways that utilized to raise trust and the propensity to make a purchase, therefore, validating the notion that CQ is indeed more than a theoretical concept and a feasible driver of positive market results.

Strategic Implications

Findings indicate that cultural intelligence is a strategic tool to overcome internationalization obstacles, especially in case of rubber products marketing of the emerging economies. Firms that invested in CQ-related training, diaspora targeting and culturally-adaptive branding experienced revenue gains ten times higher on exports and distributor retention rates.

Culturally flexible approaches to negotiations were associated with better success of a relational pricing strategy (Argouslidis & Indounas, 2010) in the industrial and B2B setting. These results reaffirm that cultural intelligence plays the role of a mediator between market potential and real international performance in the context of an emerging market company.

Conclusion

The findings affirm the fact that cultural intelligence is a strategic facilitator of marketing rubber goods to the emerging economies. CQ enhances sales adaptability, customer interaction and product quality perception significantly with a balance between global and local desires by the consumers per their cultural requirements.

Companies that used CQ-oriented approach proved to be more resistant and better penetrated on market when faced with negative stereotypes attributed to having emerging market origin. On the whole, the study contributes to the explanation of CQ as a theoretical notion and a practical instrument to provide viable solutions to global marketing initiatives.

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