

Exploring Decision-Making in Cross-Cultural Management teams

BY

LOUISA KOORNHOF

Systems make it possible...
People make it happen.





Background of Study

Orientation

Decision-making is one of the most fundamental functions in any organisation. The study identified the barriers and enablers experienced by South African managers in cross-cultural teams.

Research purpose

- Exploring the different decision-making models and processes being utilised.
- Identifying and describing the barriers and enablers as experienced by managers in cross-cultural teams.
- Identifying key factors that lead to effective decision-making in cross-cultural management teams.

Motivation of Study

Effective decision-making is pivotal for business success, and therefore for South African organisations to thrive and survive in the competitive global market, they need to draw on South Africa's many cultures to create positive synergies for effective decision-making.

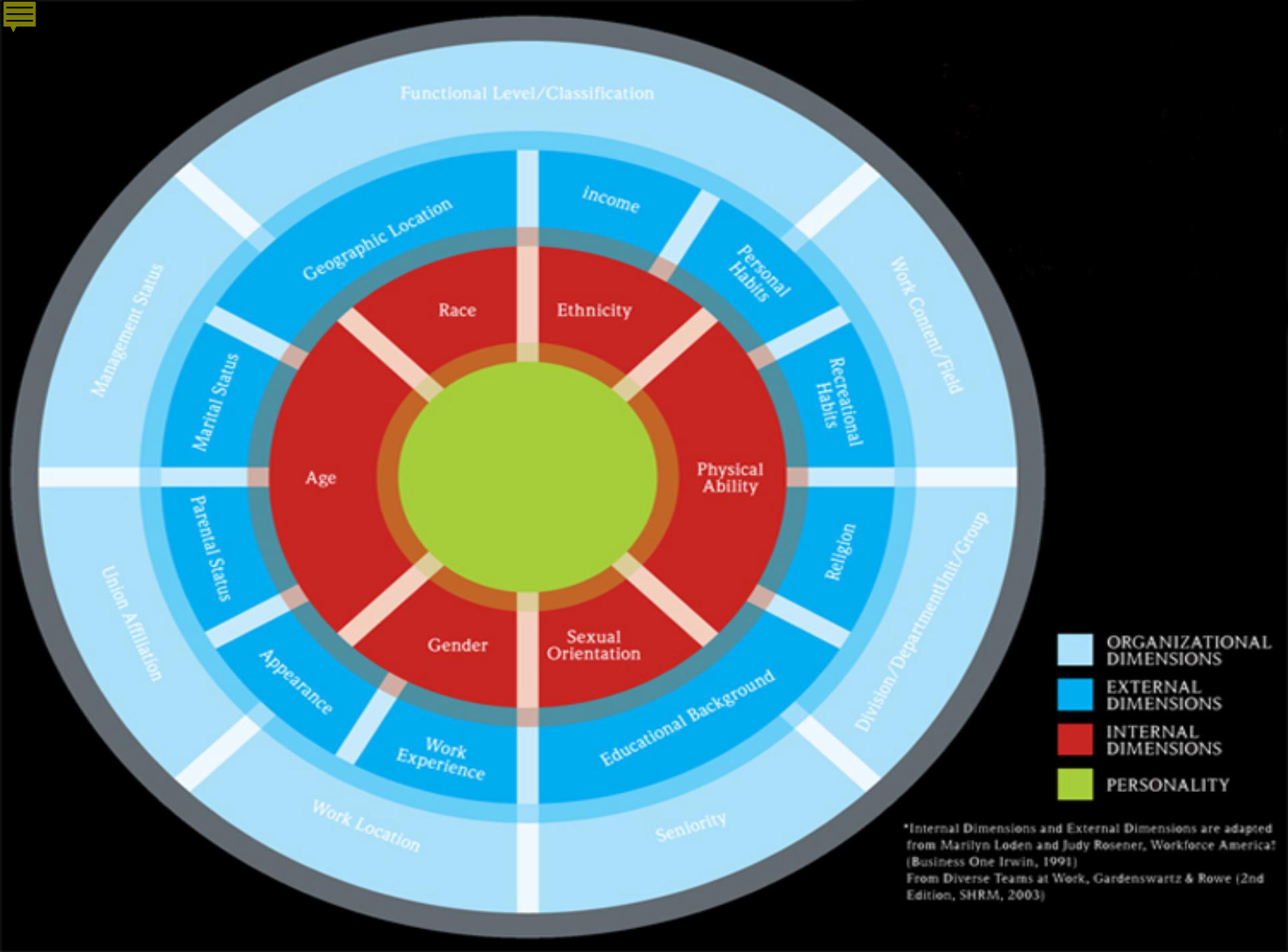
Main Findings:

Cross-cultural management teams do not generally use a fixed step-by-step approach when making decisions. Cross-Cultural teams are unique and therefore they will utilise different decision processes, face different barriers, and use different enablers to reach the decision outcomes.

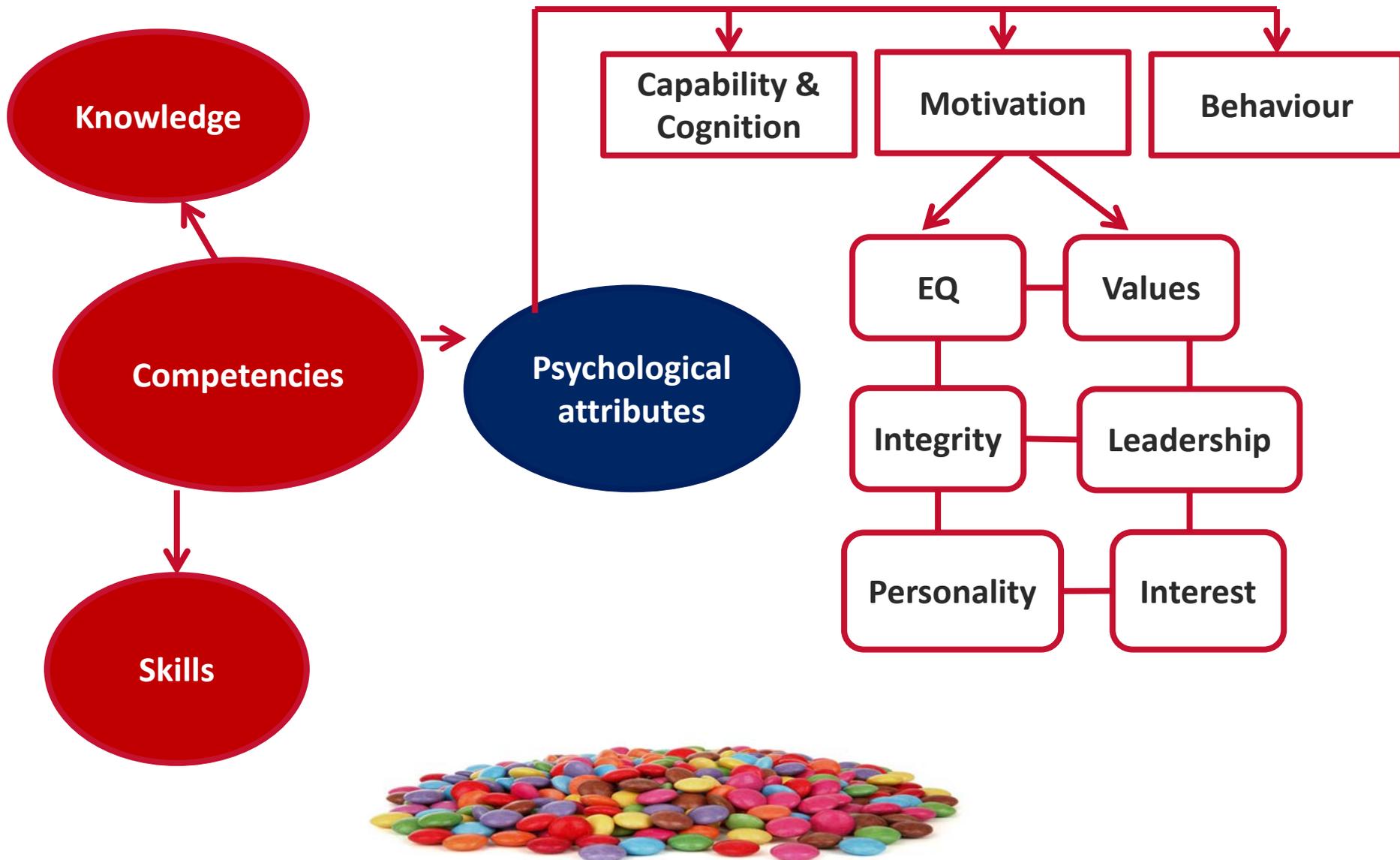
Research Questions and Themes

- **Research Question 1:** What decision-making models and processes are available and how are they being utilised in cross-cultural management teams in South Africa?
 - **Theme 1:** Decision-making models and processes in cross-cultural management teams
- **Research Question 2:** What are the barriers experienced and identified by managers in cross-cultural teams that affect the effectiveness of decision-making?
 - **Theme 2:** The barriers that cross-cultural management teams face during decision-making
- **Research Question 3:** What are the key factors and enablers experienced and identified by managers that will lead to effective decision-making in cross-cultural management teams in South Africa?
 - **Theme 3:** Key factors and enablers that will lead to effective decision-making in cross-cultural management team
 - **Theme 4:** Leadership in cross-cultural management teams





Cross-cultural team members



Going forward

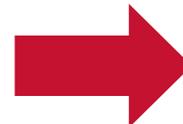
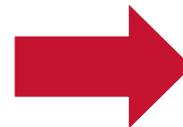
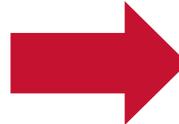
Findings

Evident that a defining theme in the success of cross-cultural teams was the leader of the decision-making team, as well as the leadership style

Strong element that arose - importance of building trust among cross-cultural team members

No “right” way to deal with a particular kind of cross-cultural problem as decision-making team is unique and therefore the combination of barriers, enablers and processes may vary from team to team.

Different types of cultural backgrounds in teams may have varying impacts - Challenge that arose, specifically in the South African context multilingualism of its population and the level of proficiency in English



Going Forward

Raised the issue as to whether leaders of cross-cultural teams could be **trained** and sensitised to the various issues before assuming such a responsible position.

Important question on whether **focused interventions** and the establishment of **guidelines** and rules to the process would facilitate and accelerate the establishment of trust.

Raises the opportunity to create a **mechanism** within each **cross-cultural** team to identify such unique enablers and barriers and the manner in which these will be created or addressed. (Culture Intelligence)

Upfront strategy on communication, an agreed list of terminology with definitions, and a focused strategy on dealing with miscommunications and misunderstandings.

Thank You



For enquiries :

Louisa Koornhof: louisa.koornhof@eoh.co.za