

International research collaborations: Some personal reflections

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My early experience in international collaborations

- 1995-1996: Recruited some 40 academics for local committee of recommendation for PhD
 - Lessons learned
 - Take your time, senior academics might not respond quickly
 - Get high-profile academics on board first, others will then be honoured to join the distinguished company
- 2000-2001: Recruited 50 country representatives for AoM IMD Membership Involvement Committee
 - Lessons learned
 - Everything takes longer than you expect
 - Most academics don't read emails very carefully
 - It becomes easier once you get better-known yourself
 - It is easier to engage people if there is something in it for them

Leading international research projects

- Language & culture project (2000-2002)
 - Data collection amongst UG students in some 25 countries
 - Translation done locally
 - Coordinator (me) verified (back-)translation
 - Country collaborator responsible for data collection, provided details on circumstances of collection
 - Coordinator supplied 10 page (single-spaced) instruction document for data collection
 - Fully coded SPSS data entry file & data entry instructions provided by coordinator
- Language in International business project (2005-2006)
 - Data collection amongst MBA students in some 25 countries
 - Translation done **centrally** by native speakers
 - Even more detailed instructions on data collection
 - Data entry done **centrally**
 - ARC funding made it possible to do work centrally

Some lessons learned (1)

- Even with detailed instructions it is impossible to avoid interpretation problems
 - Strictly matched samples didn't work out in France and Japan
- If you want high-quality data
 - You might need to centralise some aspects of the project
 - You might want to focus on just 4-6 countries
- Collaborators might have very different conceptions with regard to time management
 - With some exceptions these were pretty strongly related to general country "stereotypes"
- Collaborators might have different priorities in terms of publications
 - For most collaborators having publications quickly was more important than having high-level publications, so we produced lots of conference papers
 - Be generous with co-authorships if you want quality collaborators and agree on co-authorships at the start of the project
- Big international projects can be very enjoyable and a great learning experience, but do not often result in high-quality research outputs
 - That said, I have published quite a lot of papers out of these projects and most are fairly highly cited although not published in top journals

Some lessons learned (2)

- Communication is everything (thousands of emails)
 - Regular status reports even if there wasn't much to report
 - Create web pages for the project
 - Democracy: give collaborators the opportunity for input even if most do not use this
 - Using LinkedIn/Facebook group or Twitter might be a very good option now
- In the absence of face-to-face contacts, creating a cohesive group is even more important
 - Introductions document with personal stories; update this frequently
- How to deal with early versus late joiners?
 - Again: make it a group decision
- How to deal with collaborators who don't carry their weight?
 - Don't get too upset, there will always be free-riders
 - If the group is large enough, there will be enough input
 - However: don't let the project be delayed by just one person
- If you invest in your contacts new projects are easy to get off the ground
 - For 2nd project collaboration from 15+ countries in less than two weeks

Some resulting publications

Project 1

- Harzing, A.W.K.; Maznevski, M.; and country collaborators (2002) **The interaction between language and culture: A test of the cultural accommodation hypothesis in seven countries**, *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 2 (2): 120-139.
 - Harzing, A.W.K.; and country collaborators (2002) **The interaction between language and culture and its impact for cross-national mail survey research: A seven country study**, paper accepted for presentation at the ANZAM/IFSAM VIth World Congress, 10-13 July.
- Harzing, A.W.K.; and country collaborators (2004) **Does language influence response styles? A test of the cultural accommodation hypothesis in fourteen countries**, in: Setiadi, B.N.; Supratikny, A.; Lonner, W.J.; Poortinga, Y.H. *Ongoing Themes in Psychology and Culture*, IACCP
 - Harzing, A.W.K.; and country collaborators (2002) **The role of language in cross-national mail survey research: A test of the cultural accommodation hypothesis in fourteen countries**, paper presented at the 62nd Annual meeting of the Acad. of Management, Denver, 9-14 August.
 - Harzing, A.W.K.; and country collaborators (2002) **Does language influence response style? A test of the cultural accommodation hypothesis in fourteen countries**, paper presented at the XVth Congress of the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 15-19 July.
- Olivas-Luján, M.R.; Harzing, A.W.K.; McCoy, S. (2004) **September 11, 2001: Two quasi-experiments on the influence of threats on cultural values and cosmopolitanism**, *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 4(2): 211-228.
 - Olivas-Luján, M.R.; Harzing, A.W.K.; McCoy, S. (2003) **September 11, 2001: Two quasi-experiments on the influence of threats on cultural values and cosmopolitanism**, paper presented at the 63rd Annual meeting of the Academy of Management, Seattle, August 1-6.
- Harzing, A.W.K.; and 32 country collaborators (2005) **The use of English questionnaires in cross-national research: Does cultural accommodation obscure national differences?**, *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 5(2): 213-224.
 - Harzing, A.W.K.; and country collaborators (2003) **The use of English questionnaires in cross-national research: Does cultural accommodation obscure national differences?**, conference proceedings of the ANZIBA annual meeting, November 7-8, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Harzing, A.W.K. (2006) **Response styles in cross-national mail survey research: A 26-country study**, *The International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 6(2): 243-266. [reprinted in *Cross-Cultural Management* (in the Routledge series *Critical Perspectives on Business and Management*)

Some resulting publications

Project 2

- Harzing, A.W.K.; and 26 collaborators (2009) **Rating versus ranking: what is the best way to reduce response and language bias in cross-national research?**, *International Business Review*, 18(4) 417-432.
 - Harzing, A.W.K.; and 26 collaborators (2007) **Ranking and rating in native-language versus English-language questionnaires: A methodological comparison**, *conference proceedings of the EIBA annual meeting*, 13-15 December, Catania, Italy.
 - Harzing, A.W.K.; and 26 collaborators (2007) **Ranking versus rating: What is the best way to reduce response and language bias in cross-national research?**, *conference proceedings of the ANZIBA annual meeting*, 8-10 November 2007, Newcastle, Australia.
- Zander, L.; Mockaitis, A.; Harzing, A.W.K. et al. (2011) **Don't just say what you mean – contextualize it: A leadership study across 17 countries**, in press for *Journal of World Business*.
 - Zander, L.; Mockaitis, A.; Harzing, A.W.K. et al. (2009) **Don't just say what you mean - contextualize it: A leadership study across 17 countries**, *paper presented at the 68th Academy of Management Annual Meeting*, August 7-11, 2009 - Chicago, Illinois. [Nominated for the Carolyn Dexter award]
- Three further conference papers on leadership issues that never lead to journal articles
 - Zander, L.; Mockaitis, A.; Harzing, A.W.K.; et al. (2008) **Getting Closer to the Action: Examining Leaders' Behavioral Intent with Globe's Leadership Dimensions across 22 Countries**, *conference proceedings of the Australian New Zealand Academy of Management*, Auckland, 2-5 December 2008 [Winner of the all conference best paper award].
 - Zander, L.; Mockaitis, A.; Harzing, A.W.K.; et al. (2008) **Explaining cross-national differences in leadership behavior with cultural syndromes: a 22-country study**, *paper presented at the Academy of International Business Annual Meeting*, Milan, 30 June – 3 July 2008.
 - Zander, L.; Mockaitis, A.; Harzing, A.W.K. et al. (2009) **Why Do Leaders Do What They Do? A 22-Country Study on Leadership Behavioral Intent**, *paper presented at the 2009 Academy of International Business Annual Meeting*, June 27-30, San Diego, California.

Questions and tips

- Any questions on establishing and managing research collaborations?
- Any tips from your own experiences?

