



The development of
intercultural competencies
during a stay abroad:
Does cultural distance
matter?

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Zuyd
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A call for
global
citizenship



Global Citizen

“We all depend on
people we have never
seen and who have
never seen us”

(Martha Nussbaum)

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Intercultural competencies



- ✓ Central in the **21st century skills** framework
- ✓ Key goal in **stay abroad** and **exchange programs**
- ✓ Key goal in **internationalization at home** experiments (cfr. COIL)
- ✓ These warrant **Monitoring** of learning effects

Research questions

International exchange has a positive effect on intercultural development, but what are the main **facilitating conditions** to reinforce this effect?

Knowing them means focusing on those activities that are effective.....

Focus on **geographical and cultural distance**

- ✓ Western European vs. Non-Western European destinations
- ✓ Cultural distance (Hofstede, GLOBE)

Literature and hypotheses

Development of social attitudes

- ✓ Classic view on socialisation in adolescence: school-environment, peers, parents, voluntary associations in adolescence
- ✓ 18-25: crystallization, consolidation in 'impressionable years'
- ✓ The importance of life-changing events (moving, study)

Literature and hypotheses

Potential effects of study abroad

Scenario 1 – consolidation

- ✓ Student participates because of strong interest in other cultures
- ✓ Highly educated parents, multiple experiences abroad in childhood and adolescence, international social network
- ✓ '**Crystallization**' – 'preaching to the converted'

Scenario 2 – life-changing event

- ✓ Student is encouraged by university
- ✓ No earlier international experience
- ✓ No strong international social network
- ✓ **Life-changing** socialization event

Literature and hypotheses

Research puzzle

Not only correlate study abroad with intercultural competence development, also investigate the **circumstances** in which this learning effect is established

- Larger chance on experiencing a 'life changing event' when (cultural) distance is larger
- Geographical and cultural distance as moderators

Literature and hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

A study abroad experience has a positive effect on the development of (the different sub dimensions of) intercultural competencies

Hypothesis 2

The development of (the different sub dimensions of) intercultural competence during a stay abroad is stronger if the cultural distance between the student's home and his destination is large



Disclaimer:

Cultural distance is a complex construct

- Illusion of **symmetry**
- Illusion of **stability**

(Shenkar 2001)

Data: Global Mind Monitor 2015-2016



Welcome to the Global Mind Monitor home page, the non-commercial tool that helps students and professionals to become more effective in international and intercultural situations.

Please check out this page to get an impression of the Global Mind Monitor's possibilities, to discover who we are, to request a demo-version or to see users' experiences.

- ✓ **Gmm.international** (student evaluation tool)
- ✓ 2015-2016 pilot
- ✓ 320 students from 2 international faculties

Variables

Dependent variable: intercultural competencies

Cultural intelligence (CQ)

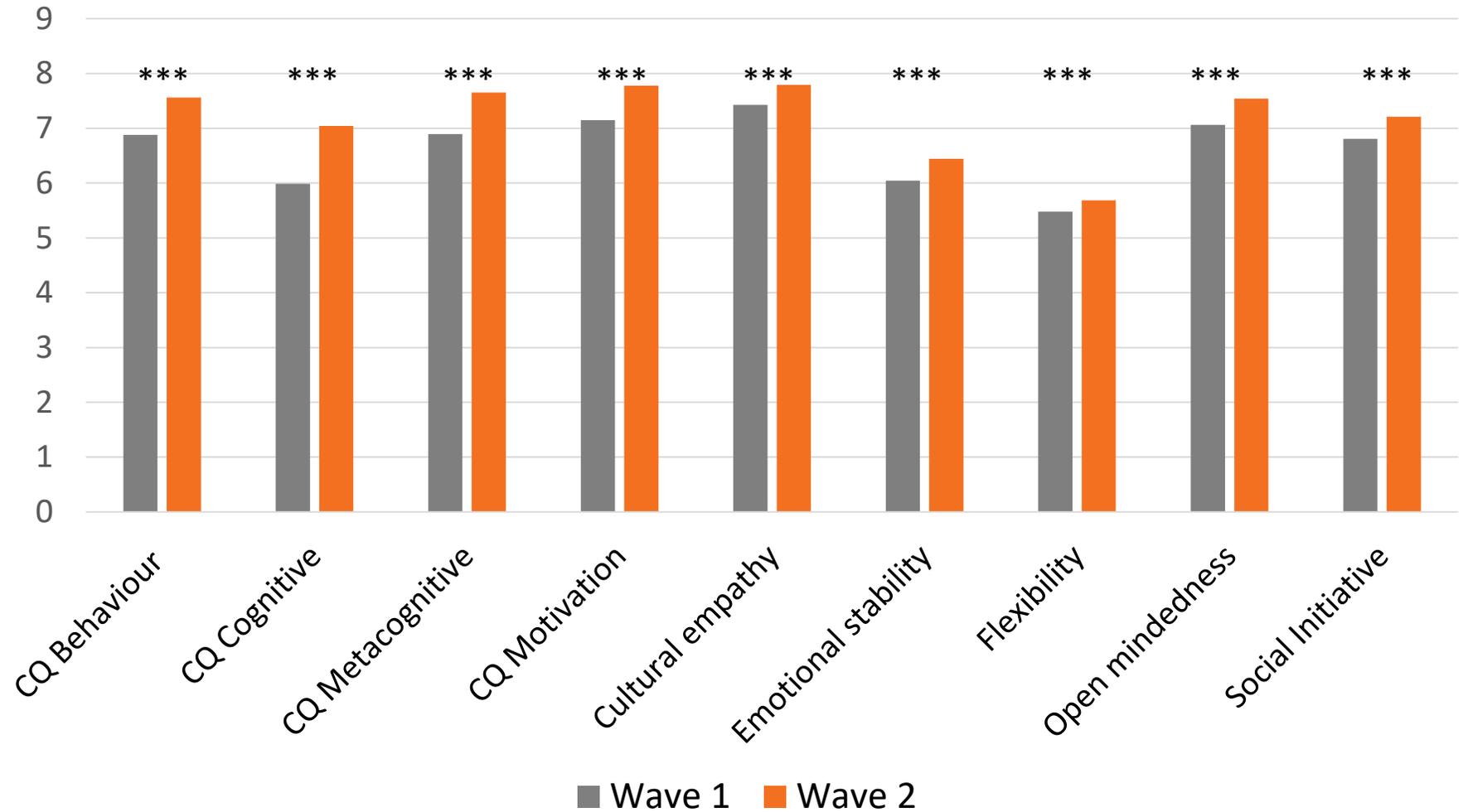
- Behavior
- Cognitive
- Metacognitive
- Motivation

Multicultural personality (MPQ)

- Cultural empathy
- Open mindedness
- Emotional stability
- Flexibility
- Social initiative

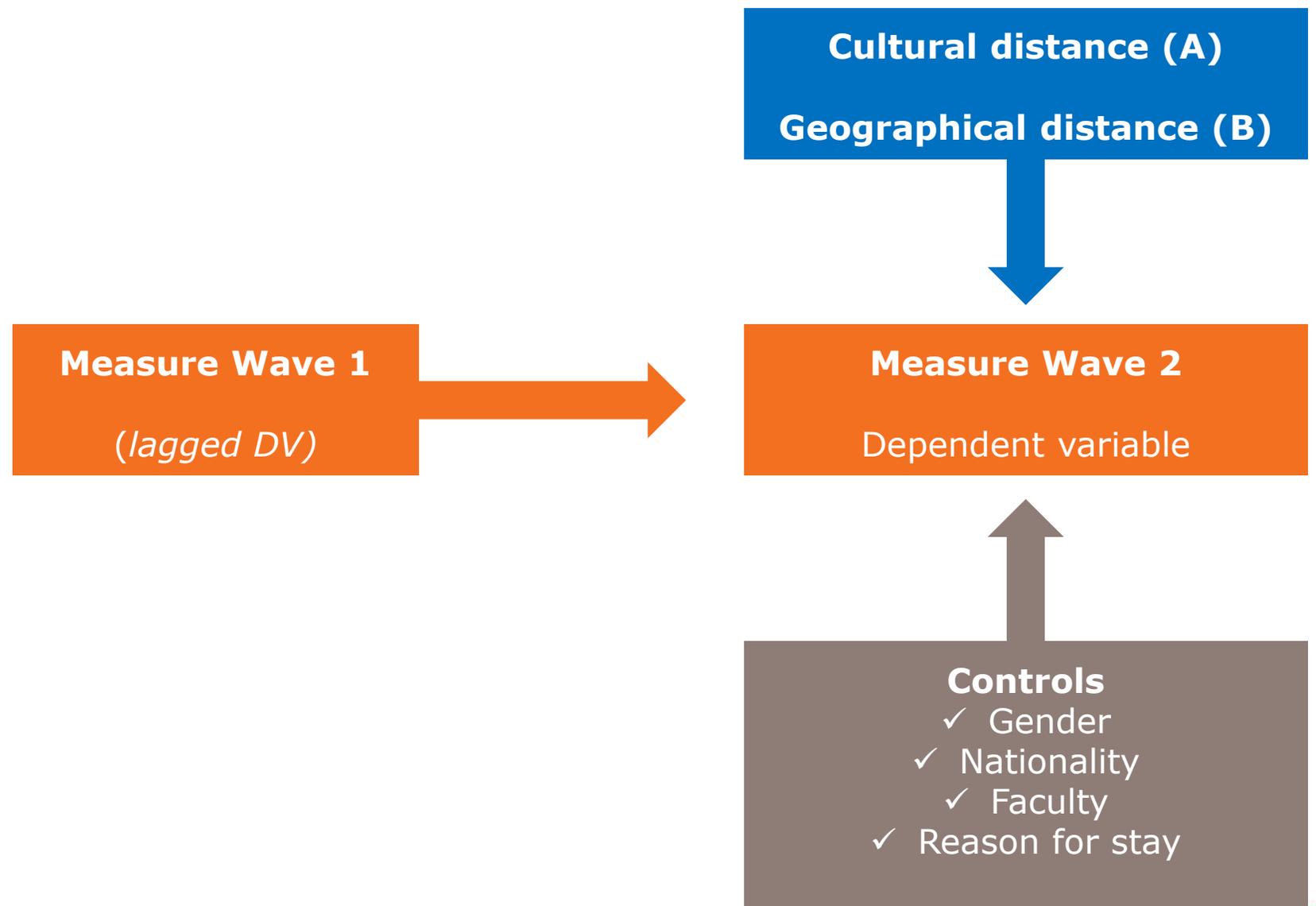
Evolution over time: mean scores

Figure 1. Mean scores sum scales Wave 1 and Wave 2



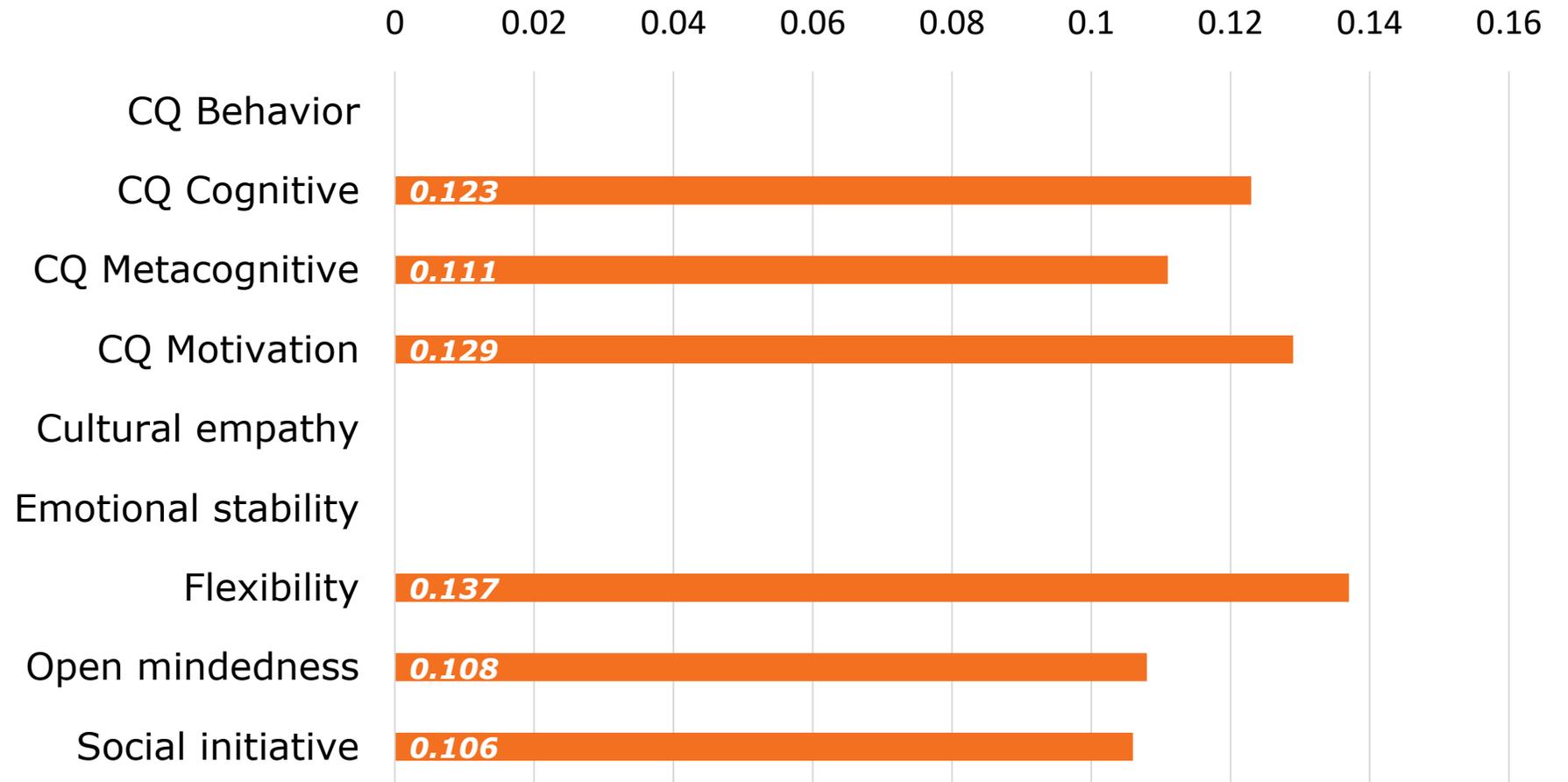
***: paired-samples t-test, $p < .001$

Explanatory factors:
analytical model



Linear regression output

Figure 2. Positive (significant) effects of cultural distance



Standardised linear regression coefficients (Betas)

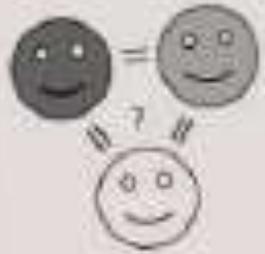
Conclusions

- ✓ Study stay abroad generally has a positive effect on all sub dimensions (H1)
- ✓ Cultural distance has a significant moderating effect on most sub dimensions (H2)
- ✓ Similar effects when we dichotomize Western-European vs. 'the rest'
- ✓ But: very strict quantification at aggregated country level of what is essentially a personal learning experience

Next steps

- ✓ Global Mind Monitor is developed further as a reflection tool for students and professionals
- ✓ Assessing a variety of intercultural experiences, both at home and abroad
- ✓ Longitudinal International Learning Outcomes study (Zuyd, Stenden, Saxion and the Hague, including benchmark other faculties, including alumni)
- ✓ The GMM will generate comparative data with many multi-level opportunities to compare programs, faculties, cities, countries and organizations

Ethnocentrism



Ethnocentrism



Behav

Attitude

Your multicultural personality

Openness

More information?

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Global Mind Monitor

<http://gmm.international>

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