

From Cultural Myths to Strategic Place Marketing, Integrating Knowledge and Intelligence

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Abstract:

Purpose

This work aims to discuss and suggest changes in political marketing in the Cali Baja region on the Mexico-US border. The work also evaluates changes in voting intentions among documented and undocumented Latinos, proving the strong power of fake news over people with little access to and desire for knowledge.

Design/methodology/approach

In order to understand the relationship between Culture (C), Knowledge (K), and Intelligence (I), the CKI model is constructed based on the results of interviews and used to empirically test 3 hypotheses through Structural Equation Modeling.

Findings

The main finding is that the American government must support literacy campaigns among Latino communities, facilitating access to educational institutions. The article also concludes that the cultural intelligence that Americans gain from Latinos can reduce American society's pressure on the government to enter wars.

Originality

The work is innovative not only amongst the literature on place branding on the border of US-Mexico, but also for applying the CKI model to improve the relationship between documented and undocumented Latinos in US.

Research limitations/implications

The questionnaire was carried out with only 12 students, which could harm statistical validity.

Practical implications

There is a need for a higher level of cognitive intelligence for Latinos and a higher level of cultural intelligence for Americans.

Social implications

It is possible to find a middle ground between a collectivist culture (Latino) and an individualistic culture (US) in order to improve the relationship between the more acculturated documented Latinos and the undocumented.

Key-words: American Election, Culture, Intelligence, Knowledge, Latin Culture.

I. Introduction

Latin culture is known for being collectivistic (particularly towards family), short-term and risk-averse and American culture is highly individualistic with relatively loose bonds with others (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004).

There is therefore a strong difficulty for Latinos in the acculturation process in the United States, which consequently generates difficulties within the Latino community itself.

Lara et al. (2005) found that the more acculturated Latinos (those who are highly acculturated) are more likely to engage in substance abuse and undesirable dietary behaviors and experience worse birth outcomes than their less acculturated counterparts.

Flores et al. (2023) interviewed Mexican immigrants [undocumented/documented] [women/men] who have lived in the United States for 10 years [with/without] proper authorization and found that documented Mexican immigrants perceived greater competitiveness than undocumented Mexican immigrants.

Ruisch and Ferguson (2023) found evidence suggesting that hate crimes increased substantially during Trump's presidency. For example, anti-Semitic incidents in the USA increased 86% in the first quarter of 2017 (post-election) compared with the same time period in 2016 (pre-election). These findings suggest that discrimination increased following Trump's election. These trends continued throughout Trump's presidency, with annual hate crimes remaining around 20% higher during his administration.

Other research specifically tied these increases in hate crimes to Trump himself, finding that counties that hosted a Trump rally showed hate crime rates almost double those of similar counties with no rally (Feinberg et al., 2022).

James Davison Hunter wrote a book “Culture Wars” (1991) where he explains that democracy is an agreement in which we will not kill each other because of our differences, but there are many justifications for violence based on cultural wars that are expanding through issues of religion and family culture to assume almost total control of politics, creating a dangerous sense of conflict in which the winner takes total control over the country’s future.

This work therefore shares strategies for Latinos’ access to knowledge in the United States, as well as the pursuit of knowledge, and its subsequent application (employment) .

The work is divided into four sections. The first section talks about the documented Latino’s identity crisis in the United States. Section 2 explains the relationship between the theory of Social Capital and the integration between Latinos and Americans. Section 3 shows the differences between Latin Culture and American Culture and the role of Cultural Intelligence. Section 4 presents the Culture-Knowledge-Intelligence model.

II. Place branding and Place Marketing on the Border between Mexico and the United States.

Boisen et al. (2018) recently proposed a conceptual framework, distinguishing place promotion (which is supply-driven and dedicated to communicating offers), place marketing (which is demand-driven and ensures matching between supply and demand), and place branding (which is identity-oriented and works towards the reputation of a place).

In theory, place branding should bridge the gap between a place’s identity (what the place actually is), its image (how it is perceived by outsiders) and its brand (how it is intended to be seen by the outside world). (Hospers, 2006).

Ocke and Ikeda (2014) explain that the concept of place marketing gained popularity as city marketing in the 1980s, however, due to its limitation to municipalities, it was later designated by Kotler, Haider, and Rein (1993) as place marketing, depending on its scope. Regardless of the nomenclature, its real meaning is related to the application of the exchange process established by the marketing concept between a given region, city, state or country and local inhabitants, visitors, organizations, and investors with the aim of generating value for the parties involved.

In particular, this work is interested in how the borders between the United States and Mexico are mobilized as a means of creating meaning. To examine how regional actors shape and use border images in their brands, this article employs social semiotics as a theoretical basis and methodological framework; that is, considering the meanings of “signs” to be made socially (Van Leeuwen, 2005).

The construction of a regional identity, an image of the region and an associated brand are distinct processes that interact with each other (Zimmerbauer, 2011). On the one hand, a well-recognized regional community can facilitate the construction of a regional image. On the other hand, a regional image can also strengthen regional awareness within a region. Branding marketing strategies have a performative dimension: the valorization of a place through the construction of a participatory image of the construction of that place (Vanolo, 2017). These strategies are, however, part of a complex process of social practices and power relations; since creating an image and identity of a place is an unstable process that is often contested and therefore not fully controllable.

This observation can be added to the critique of place branding as a neoliberal process of commodification that neglects the human dimension of a place (Vanolo, 2017). This is all the more important when creating regional images through branding strategies primarily targeting an audience outside the region (e.g., investors, talent, or tourists).

Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008) found that the most important issues for the future of place marketing are the need for a collective understanding and appreciation of place marketing, the achievement of wide cooperation and clear role allocation, the implementation of marketing as a long-term process and the expansion of marketing understanding to fields other than tourism development, even though the tourism development helps in other sectors.

According to Royo-Vela et al. (2008), five different areas can be the focus of a destination study (Ruiz, Olarte, & Iglesias, 1999): life cycle, contingent value, tourist experience, destination quality, and destination image. Of these, we believe that the destination image is the best basis for a management model due to its relative simplicity, dynamism, versatility, and capacity to integrate factors such as the tourist’s experience and location quality. As described by Morgan and Pritchard (1998), the image a tourist has about a destination directly influences the choice of destination, valued attributes, and the purchase process.

Alhemoud and Armstrong’s (1996) classification explains what is meant by a tourism offer. These authors classify tourist attractions into four categories: 1 – natural attractions (e.g., forests, rivers); 2 – historic attractions (ruins, castles, and other ancient architecture that offers a glimpse into the past); 3 – cultural

attractions (religious attractions, museums, modern architecture, fairs, festivals, handicrafts); and 4 – artificial attractions (e.g., theme parks).

Therefore, businesspeople interested in the Cali Baja region must come together with universities and public organizations to develop a tourism promotion strategy for the region which directly impacts the marketing of their products.

Cali Baja arises from the merger between the names of the state of California (USA) and the state of Baja California (Mexico). It was a marketing-economic strategy that started operating in 2010 through a form of awareness among local elites about the importance of cross-border cooperation and, therefore, the strategic nature of a partnership with the Mexican authorities.

Cali Baja is characterized by the presence of a wall and strict controls. In this way, it appears as an extreme case that offers new insights into how place branding can use borders, even when controlled or militarized, in order to promote certain attributes of the imagined cross-border region.

The region is made up of the counties of San Diego and Imperial Valley on the North American side, and the five municipalities of Baja California on the Mexican side: Tijuana, Tecate, Mexicali, Playas de Rosarito and Ensenada - a community of 7 million people divided by a border.

First, far from evoking the idea of a frictionless border, the militarization of the border instead points to an anxiety-provoking situation. It seems really difficult to show these places without evoking the issues of border security and the negative repercussions that this suggests for the competitiveness of the binational region: waiting times, meticulous inspections, ineffective bureaucracy, and the oppressive atmosphere of a militarized place.

According to the San Diego-SANDAG government alliance, wait times at the borders between Mexico and the United States cost the region \$6 billion in annual economic activity, and the equivalent of 51,000 full-time jobs (SANDAG, 2006).

The involvement of a multiplicity of actors, including the federal governments of both countries, means that project developments are particularly prolonged and uncertain.

For Andersson (2007), the main issues are the absence of a central decision-making authority and the presence of multiple identities.

Boisen (2015) argues that the resulting regions need to share a common denominator that should make the region distinct and reinforce its general proposal.

The Oresund region on the Danish-Swedish border has often been presented as an excellent example of place branding (Hospers, 2008; OECD, 2013). The cross-border bridge connecting Copenhagen and Malmö represents a symbol of an integrated region.

The image of the bridge connecting the two sides of the border denotes a creative center, a promise of achieving critical mass and an emerging shared regional identity (Hospers, 2006).

Sohn (2022) explores the ways in which borders can be used as a semiotic resource in cross-border place branding and comes to the conclusion that it is at the expense of the partial invisibilization of the border that the mega-region can be valued and promoted on the international level, but it is also the discrepancy with the identity of the binational region that precipitated the failure of this place branding initiative.

According to Pasquinelli (2013), borders challenge the credibility of the brand, as they tend to play the role of an administrative and regulatory barrier.

In their review of cross-border place branding, Witte and Braun (2015) also highlight that the presence of a border represents a challenge, as it is associated with different barriers (physical, legal and mental) that must be overcome for the image of an integrated region to emerge and the brand of a cross-border space to make sense.

The selective cross-border region envisioned as Cali Baja is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it was mainly intended for an audience outside the region, mainly multinational corporations, foreign investors, and business travelers. Thus, priority is given to its reputation as a competitive region conducive to innovation. The rich multicultural context that contributes to the attractiveness of this region, whether in the form of local practices in cuisine, arts, craft beer and winemaking, or in terms of art, architecture, and design, to name a few, are ignored. The singular logic of a megaregional discourse centered on economic competitiveness thus seems disconnected from the reality of the lived experience of inhabitants (Harrison and Hoyler, 2015).

In fact, investors in their marketing strategies are focused solely on their target audience, without considering the local community, workers, and other organizations, thus having individualistic behavior as is typical of American culture.

Wilden (2024) explains that unfortunately, the focus of the literature on the customers' perception as the sole driver of brand competitiveness does not allow us to understand the role of other key stakeholders, such as employees or other organizations, and their relationship with brand competitiveness.

It is true that the ability to develop and maintain good customer relationships facilitates the acquisition of valuable market information (Kaleka & Morgan, 2019). However, the marketing company cannot disregard the environment it is working in, and in particular the image of that environment and the role the community plays in improving that image.

Based on an entrepreneurial discourse valuing the economic competitiveness of the binational region, Cali Baja represents a spatial concept that helps to counter the negative aspects of the militarized border but remains disconnected from the everyday reality of the majority of inhabitants (Sohn, 2022).

Ultimately, Cali Baja contributes to perpetuating the situation of social, racial, and economic inequalities that structure the relationships between the two communities and their economies (Maher and Carruthers, 2021).

There is, however, an exception that allows Cali Baja to communicate the advantages of its border position while avoiding the anxiety induced by the images associated with or evoked by the border wall and control infrastructures. This is the innovative binational airport terminal, called Cross Border Xpress (CBX), which connects the Otay Mesa airport terminal, south of San Diego, to Tijuana International Airport in Mexico. This privately funded border crossing infrastructure opened in 2015. Very quickly, its success was met with a dizzying increase in the number of passengers (on average, 5,000 per day). The irony is that most of the passengers are from Los Angeles and Orange County, not San Diego. CBX also does not allow people to simply cross the border, as the bridge is reserved for air travelers only.

In fact, most inhabitants still see the border as a barrier, even a threat, and do not cross it. Yet the rapprochement between the two sides of the border remains limited by the lack of financial support and incongruous institutional frameworks at the federal level. Binational cooperation between San Diego and Tijuana therefore continues to be ad hoc and informal (Ganster and Collins, 2017). Unlike identification with place, regional identity has a collective basis, however, meaning that although the sense of identification is fundamentally personal and emotional, the idea and presence of the region is shared and understood in more or less the same way by a whole community (Anderson, 1991). However, people can remain passive due to a weak identification with the local culture, which is what happens to many Latinos who migrate to the United States.

Warren, Dilmeri and Dinnie (2021) consider that if practitioners are properly placed within the policy value chain in a city, and offered adequate strategic influence, all facets of urban planning – well beyond tourism considerations – might be positively affected, from parks to recreation, education, wayfinding, festivals/events, residential development, and retail, etc.

According to Zimmerbauer (2011), a fundamental part of the process of building a regional identity is the feeling of belonging and identification. At the individual level, identification simply means that a human being feels connected to a region and perceives it as distinct and with characteristics that are different from any other region. These regional characteristics can also become part of the individual and personal identity.

The administration at the national level can unite with the administration at the local level to build a new identity in the Mexico-United States border region, through the interest of a group of investors and a civil society organized according to this new image of the border, respecting cultural differences.

Research has shown that political ties facilitate some major competitive market actions, such as diversification and cross-border alliances (Siegel, 2007; Zhu & Chung, 2014). Nonetheless, the same political ties may buffer firms from external threats (Faccio et al., 2006; Zheng et al., 2015), reducing the need for firms to take market-based actions (Fernandez-Mendez et al., 2018).

Firms' use of nonmarket strategy—such as forming connections with the state—is a global phenomenon (Faccio, 2006; Marquis & Raynard, 2015; Rajwani & Liedong, 2015). Political ties provide benefits such as resources (Faccio, 2006; Hillman et al., 1999), influence (Bonardi et al., 2006), and legitimacy (Hillman, 2005). These benefits are particularly instrumental for firms in economies characterized by opportunities for business growth, underdeveloped market infrastructure, and strong government intervention (Rajwani & Liedong, 2015).

Unfortunately, Cali Baja was unable to expand its support base beyond the initial circle of “believers” who initiated the place branding project. A significant portion of the regional business community, showing little or no interest in the border, remaining passive.

Finally, the initiative received little support from local political actors who did not necessarily find something they liked on the mega-regional scale promoted. For the city of San Diego, the promotion of ‘San Diego-Tijuana’ seems to make more sense because these two cities are known abroad, unlike Cali Baja, which needs to be explained.

Maher and Carruthers (2021) argue that the border discourse also provides an identity for San Diegans, who have come to define themselves as superior, in contrast to a Tijuana stigmatized as impoverished, disorderly, corrupt, dirty, and dangerous. The local images of these cities are interconnected, so more positive representations of Tijuana will require a reimagining of San Diego. Ultimately, this chapter examines the

promises and constraints to the development of a more egalitarian shared regional future, a reduction in Tijuana's place stigma, and a less bounded regional concept.

III. Documented Latino identity crisis in the United States

The U.S. Hispanic population reached 62.1 million in 2020, accounting for 19% of all Americans and making it the nation's second largest racial or ethnic group, behind White Americans and ahead of Black Americans, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

A 2013 Pew Research report shows that 68% of Hispanics, ages 5 or older, speak only English at home (Krogstad, Lopez, & Rohal, 2015). The conventional wisdom that campaigns must primarily use Spanish to reach U.S. Hispanics is outdated, as the growth in the U.S. Hispanic population is no longer from immigration but from U.S. births. According to Advertising Age's Hispanic Fact Pack 2015, fully 52% of Latinos are younger than 30. In combination, these data reveal a shift in demographics and suggest that campaign managers may need to (1) focus on mobilizing younger and more acculturated Latinos, and (2) use different strategies than they have used in the past (Len-Ríos, 2017).

On U.S. census forms, 98% of Texas' Latino population marks their race as white. Nationally, 60% of US-born Latinos already identify as white – white Hispanic – in US census surveys.

In the 2020 elections, Donald Trump won 38% of the Latino vote – the highest percentage for a Republican since George W. Bush won 44% in 2004. .

Lopez & Fry (2013) highlight that although data indicate an increase in Latino students' college enrollment, Latino students continue to have a much smaller chance of actually earning a bachelor's degree. In 2012, more than one seventh (14.5%) of Latinos ages 25 and older had earned one, much lower than the one half of Asians (51%), one third of Whites (34.5%), and one fifth of Blacks (21.2%)

Arevalo et al. (2016) states that many factors have been found or hypothesized to cause a lower graduation rate among Latino college students. These factors can be summarized as (a) lower socioeconomic background, higher financial stress, and less college preparation; (b) an inadequate campus social climate; and (c) cultural differences in social capital and family support systems.

Barrera (2014) found that typically at least 20% of Latino students in any given semester have been assigned to "remedial" status in either English and/or math. Many have tremendous academic insecurities, a lasting remnant of interactions with previous educators and administrators who have told them that they cannot succeed. As a result, they frequently are reluctant to reach out for help. Many are satisfied if they earn a C–, and through the Spring 2008 semester, upward of 15% of students in the history course failed to do better. In fact, every semester, a portion of them would disappear after the first few weeks, never to be heard from again. In response to these low retention rates for Latino students, her department began a collaborative partnership with the Educational Opportunity Program. The most effective components of the mentor program include (a) a required one-on-one student meeting with the mentor within the first month of the semester; (b) a required office hour meeting with a faculty instructor to be fulfilled no later than the second month of the semester; (c) regular mentor office hours that greatly expand the days and hours of help available to students; (d) extra credit academic skills workshops on topics such as effective note taking, time management, and essay writing; and (e) community-building activities like movie nights and visiting local art exhibits related to course themes. Another problem that Latinos face is teenage pregnancy.

Latino youth have experienced a slower decline in teenage pregnancies and continue to experience disproportionately high pregnancy rates in the United States compared with the general population (Leftwich, 2017; Hamilton, 2020).

When examining Latino cultural values, it is important to acknowledge the context of acculturation (the adaptation to US culture) and enculturation (the retention of the culture of origin) (Killoren et al., 2016). Studies show different attitudes and varying cultural beliefs toward teen pregnancy depending on the level of acculturation and enculturation. Foreign-born, non-English-speaking Latinas had stronger views against premarital teen pregnancies compared with those who were US-born or English-speaking (Driver & Cready, 2019). Likewise, more acculturated Latinas were noted to be at greater risk for teen pregnancy than less acculturated Latinas (Rodriguez et al., 2020).

Latinos who identify as "black" hold different priorities, according to the Ipsos poll. While they are also most concerned with crime or gun violence, their next top concerns are racial injustice, discrimination, and education – priorities closer to those of African Americans more broadly.

The Democratic Party has long viewed immigration policy as a principal way to mobilize support from Latinos, but this is now a priority for a narrower subset of people – around a quarter of Latinos in the Ipsos study.

Sherman (2018) found that a recent analysis provided compelling evidence that the biggest difference maker in the 2016 Presidential election was white, working-class voters in key swing states (e.g., Florida, Pennsylvania,

Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin) who voted for Barack Obama in 2012, but switched to the Republican candidate in 2016 (Cohn, 2017).

Cadava (2016) found that in many places, Latinx radicalism and Hispanic conservatism evolved simultaneously and dialectically; in some cases, Hispanic conservatism could even be thought of as a reaction against Latinx radicalism.

The Republican National Hispanic Assembly is an American political organization founded in 1967 which seeks to promote Hispanic American issues and interests within the conservative Republican Party. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Cuba looms largest of all in the historical genealogy of Latinxs' involvement in U.S. conservative politics (Cadava, 2016).

According to Rosenau and Paehlke (1990), the conservative perspective includes traditional conservatives such as William Buckley, James Kirkpatrick, George Will, right of center Democrats who have moved towards the Republican Party over the last decades such as Irving Kristol, Jean Kirkpatrick and Daniel Bell, and the internationalist conservatives such as the Rockefellers. On the question of political participation of the disadvantaged ethnic minorities, most conservatives view them with 'cautious disdain,' as 'impulsive, irrational, emotional, unappreciative of the heritage of culture that only the elite could have preserved.'

According to Tenorio, Hill and Doucet (2024), in January 2017, President Trump signed the executive order on Improvements in Border Security and Immigration Enforcement, directing the fortification of the border between the United States and Mexico to prevent new unauthorized crossings. This led to construction to increase the height of the southwest border wall from 8 to 10 feet up to 30 feet, including in regions of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Despite the increase in the height and coverage of the wall by Customs and Border Protection (CBP), migrants continue to increase, and a record number of traumatic injuries resulted from falls at the border (Tenorio and Brandel, 2022).

Hospital costs from traumatic border fall admissions have risen 636% from \$11 million in the 2016–2019 period to \$72 million from 2020 to 2022 (Marshall et al., 2023).

Tenorio, Hill, and Doucet (2024) explain that a practical solution will require a multidisciplinary effort aimed at primary injury prevention, including addressing the root causes of immigration and expanding legal avenues of entry, appropriate allocation of resources, and advocacy. The ultimate goal must be safe, effective, and controlled migration. These 30-foot barriers are not the answer, and without action, our most vulnerable populations will continue to suffer.

The Biden administration announced measures to make it more difficult to enter without prior permission, along with a series of expanded paths to enter legally. Conservative Republican Party leaders responded with lawsuits, alleging that Biden was changing the system to flood the country with foreigners. Flores et al. (2023) assessed respondents' attitudes toward Mexican immigrants and found that they expressed greater competitiveness toward undocumented (vs. documented) Mexican immigrants. Overall, respondents had more negative perceptions about separated (vs. assimilated) and undocumented (vs. documented) Mexican immigrants and felt less positive toward Mexican immigrant women (vs. men).

In 2020, according to a report by the Mexico City-based Citizens Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice, seven of the ten "most violent" cities in the world were located in Mexico.

Barceló et al. (2022) found that expectations are not very sensitive to migratory and cross-border circumstances. On the other hand, parents' education, dedication to studies, having close relatives studying and knowing English are variables that seem relevant in shaping the expectations of young Latinos. It is concluded that demographic and socio-educational aspects, as well as dedication and family support, determine to a greater extent the aspirations of young people.

Len-Ríos (2017) states that through the lens of social identity theory, identity related to the acculturation status of immigrants appears to only come into play when predicting Latinos' perceptions of the importance of immigration reform. Specifically, less acculturated and more socially and economically liberal Latinos perceived immigration reform as an important issue.

Studies suggest that Latinos are more likely to back Democratic candidates, though research shows that the Latino vote can also depend on the individual candidate (Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, & Weisberg, 2008). For instance, in 2012, data showed that 71% of Latinos backed candidate Barack Obama for president versus Mitt Romney (López & Taylor, 2012), yet the gap is not always so large. In 2004, 40% of Latinos voted for George W. Bush (Republican) while 58% supported John Kerry (Democrat).

Thus, Latinos may vote more for the candidate than for the party and public relations practitioners really need to work on providing Latinos a reason to be interested in the political process (Len-Ríos, 2017).

This finding suggests, according to Len-Ríos (2017), that public relations practitioners who use social identity to persuade Latino voters need to understand that acculturation may only be a differentiator on specific issues.

Other issues, such as education, law enforcement, etc., may similarly affect Latinos differently depending upon acculturation status and should be explored.

IV. Differences between Latin Culture and American Culture and the role of Cultural Intelligence.

Martin (2002) considers culture as a distinctive or unique way of life of people of a geographic region, specific ethnicity, or country: that which members share, or values, beliefs, representations, meanings, and understandings that are shared.

Intelligence is broadly defined as an attempt to use one's cognitive skills to achieve a state of well-being within one's cultural context (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004).

Cultural intelligence refers to a general set of capabilities with relevance to situations characterized by cultural diversity (Ang et al., 2007). De Angelis (2024) states that cultural intelligence has a strong impact on the processes of knowledge creation and application. This occurs because by being connected to other cultures, one is also connected to other ways of thinking and acting, which increases the ability to create relevant knowledge and apply it in a collective way, given the greater integration in the new community when the first cultural barriers are overcome.

According to research by Ang and Van Dyne (2008), people with high Cultural Intelligence are more adept at fostering interpersonal trust in multicultural environments, which promotes information and skill sharing.

National culture has been defined in literature as "a fuzzy, difficult-to-define construct" (Triandis et al., 1986). National Culture - NC is defined as the values, beliefs and assumptions learned in childhood and that distinguish one group of people from another (Newman & Nollen, 1996). This definition is consistent with the notion of Hofstede (1991) of National Culture as the software of the mind.

Vazquez et al. (2024) explain that the region LATAM encompasses 33 countries and extends from the US-Mexican border to Tierra del Fuego in Chile, including the Caribbean. In combination, the countries in this region are important economic players due to their manufacturing capabilities and the control they have over important natural resources (e.g., iron, copper, and zinc; Nicholson, 2011). Although there are marked differences due to the patterns of immigration, their native population, and different diasporas, LATAM countries also share unique similarities in their values, beliefs, assumptions, religion, language, legal structures, and political environments (Aguinis et al., 2020; Botero et al., 2021; Cruz, 2020; Vázquez et al., 2021).

Vazquez et al. (2024) highlight that in Latin America, the institutional context makes family firms behave very differently than those in other parts of the world. On this special issue, Gomez-Mejia and colleagues suggest that a fitting way to characterize Latin American institutions is through the VUCA designation (i.e., Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, & Ambiguous). VUCA environments require the family business system to behave differently to be able to navigate the constantly changing environment (Vazquez et al., 2024). People in collectivist cultures see themselves as interdependent with their in-groups, which provide for them a stable social environment to which they must adjust. So, their personality is flexible, and their personality traits are not so clear. People in individualist cultures see the self as stable and the social environment as changeable, so they tend to shape the social environment to fit their personalities. In individualist societies people are autonomous and independent from their in-groups; they give priority to their personal goals over the goals of their in-groups, they behave primarily on the basis of their attitudes rather than the norms of their in-groups, and exchange theory adequately predicts their social behavior (Triandis, 2001).

Bailey (2023) found in South America extreme disparities correlate to sluggish economic growth, inefficient agricultural practices, weakened public institutions, income disparities, and sharp increases in environmental degradation. A related concern is the destruction of indigenous peoples' land in the Amazon and denial of access to land that is rightfully theirs.

One percent of farm owners in Latin America control more productive land than the other 99 percent who work the land (Guereña and Burgos 2016).

Previous research has shown that, as a whole, collectivism is a hallmark of the Latino population (Rinderle & Montoya, 2008; Segal, Gerdes, Mullins, Wagaman, & Androff, 2011).

Latinos, compared to non-Latinos, have a strong emphasis on family ties, known as familism, which is a collectivist hallmark of Latino culture (Elder et al., 2009; Fry, 2002; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000).

Silva and Campos (2019) explain that the study of familism has been controversial. Early work suggesting that familism was amoral and a cultural deficit came to be seen as stigmatizing specific groups, with real-world adverse consequences for members of those groups. For example, the stigmatization of Mexican-origin families based on their familism levels had long-lasting negative consequences. The idea that Hispanics favored family unity over education led to the creation of a pipeline from high school to the labor market (as opposed to higher education) that thwarted educational opportunities for Hispanics for decades. Familism

scholars sought to correct and undo the damage that Mexican-origin families suffered due to the perception of familism as a cultural deficit (Silva & Campos, 2019).

According to Watson, Sherbak, and Morris (1998), the standard elements of individualism, which represents American culture, include autonomy, assertiveness, freedom of choice, self-actualization, and a sense of personal uniqueness. In contrast, collectivism focuses on the interdependence of members within a collective group through the functioning of social roles, duties, and obligations rather than their personalities.

Espig et al. (2022) found that National culture affects innovation rates positively. The most favorable situation to boost innovation is when there is a low distance from power, high individualism, femininity characteristics, low aversion to uncertainty, long-term orientation, and a higher level of indulgence.

Employees of organizations in more individualistic countries have more freedom to develop or try new products (Van Everdingen & Waarts, 2003). Previous research merging national culture with innovation presented a positive relationship between individualism and innovation (Andrijauskienė & Dumciuvienė, 2017; Bresnahan & Greenstein, 2003; Herbig & Dunphy, 1998; Khan & Cox, 2017; Rinne et al., 2012; Williams & McGuire, 2005). Furthermore, Prim et al. (2017) explain that, in more independent cultures, citizens have greater autonomy to produce ideas and execute them, boosting innovation performance.

Mexico is similar to many Latin countries when Hofstede's Dimensions are compared and analyzed.

Mexico's highest Hofstede Dimension is Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) (82), indicating society's low level of tolerance for uncertainty. In an effort to minimize or reduce this level of uncertainty, strict rules, laws, policies, and regulations are adopted and implemented. The ultimate goal of this population is to control everything in order to eliminate or avoid the unexpected. As a result of this high Uncertainty Avoidance characteristic, society does not readily accept change and is very risk adverse.

Mexico has a low Individualism (IDV) ranking (30) but is slightly higher than other Latin countries with an average of 21. The score on this Dimension indicates that society is Collectivist as compared to Individualist. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member "group", be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships.

Another Dimension in which Mexico ranks higher than other Latin neighbors is Power Distance (PDI) with a rank of 81, compared to an average of 70.

This is indicative of a high level of inequality of power and wealth within society. This condition is not necessarily forced upon the population but rather accepted by the culture as a whole.

The results confirm the information presented in Table 1 and suggest that Americans have a higher orientation to the future in comparison to Mexicans.

National Culture Dimensions	United States	Mexico
Future Orientation	high	low
Uncertainty avoidance	low	high
Performance orientation	high	low
In-group collectivism	low	high
Power Distance	low	high

Table I. National culture dimensions in US and Mexico (Hofstede, 1991)

The reasoning behind the dimensions of NC found by Hofstede (1980, 1991) and House (1999, 2004) is based on the fact that national culture affects organizational and social behaviors that are persistent over time, influencing the way that people act in a certain situation. (Schein, 1985) and can also influence the organization and areas of commitment to organizational goals, values, and norms (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

V. The Culture-Knowledge-Intelligence Model

Choo (1996) explains that an organization possesses three kinds of knowledge: tacit knowledge embedded in the expertise and experience of individuals and groups; explicit or rule-based knowledge codified in organizational rules, routines, and procedures; and cultural knowledge expressed in the assumptions, beliefs, and norms used by members to assign value and significance to new information or knowledge.

New knowledge is created by knowledge conversion: the organization continuously creates new knowledge by converting between the personal, tacit knowledge of individuals who develop creative insight, and the shared, explicit knowledge by which the organization develops new products and innovations (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

The Culture - Knowledge - Intelligence (CKI) model explains the impact of culture on knowledge and intelligence, as well as the individualized impact of knowledge on intelligence.

This research empirically tests three hypotheses (Table II):

Hypotheses	Sources	Results and gaps to be filled
H1. Culture influences Knowledge	De Vita (2001), Kennedy (2002) and Tweed and Ledman (2002) suggested that by influencing the way individuals perceive, organize and process information, the way they communicate with others and the way they understand, organize and generate knowledge and solve problems, culture is inextricably linked to learning approaches and preferences.	SUPPORTED
H2. Culture influences Intelligence	The relationships between different aspects of intelligence can vary across cultures, with correlations that are positive in one setting proving to be negative in another. Can research provide an understanding of intelligence that is not so culturally constrained? (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004).	SUPPORTED
H3. Knowledge influences Intelligence	Intelligence is knowledge in action, and its three pillars are prediction, strategy, and action (Rothberg and Erickson, 2004).	SUPPORTED

Table II- Hypotheses in the CKI model

Culture impacts not only knowledge but also intelligence. For example, organizational culture also has a strong impact on organizational performance.

Organizational Culture influences the behavior of people and, thus, influences employees' performance (Ibrahim, Boerhannoeddin, & Kayode, 2017)

There are some authors who think that the transition from knowledge to intelligence is automatic, which is not true given that some countries have a large amount of knowledge and difficulty in applying it due to low levels of cultural intelligence due to historical and geographical reasons.

According to Choo (2001) shared meanings and purposes, as well as new knowledge and capabilities converge on decision making as the activity leading to the selection and initiation of action. However, it is important to note that knowledge is socially constructed with collaborative activities, but access to that knowledge does not mean success in decision-making (Rothberg and Erickson, 2004). Intelligence is knowledge in action, and its three pillars are prediction, strategy, and action (Rothberg and Erickson, 2004).

VI. Data collection

After a wide range review of theoretical and empirical research and survey methods, this research project adopted a web survey to obtain input from targeted respondents and achieve its objectives. The use of key informants from organizations for data collection has been a popular method in many research contexts (Huber and Power, 1985).

This research relies on a study performed at two Universities in Mexico - National Autonomous University of Mexico and Tecnológico de Monterrey - and one University in the United States - Michigan University - conducting semi-structured interviews with 27 questions across 3 dimensions (Cultural, Knowledge and Intelligence). In total 12 interviews with students were conducted online. The survey is available in Appendix 1.

The culture - knowledge - intelligence model (CKI) is presented in Figure 3.

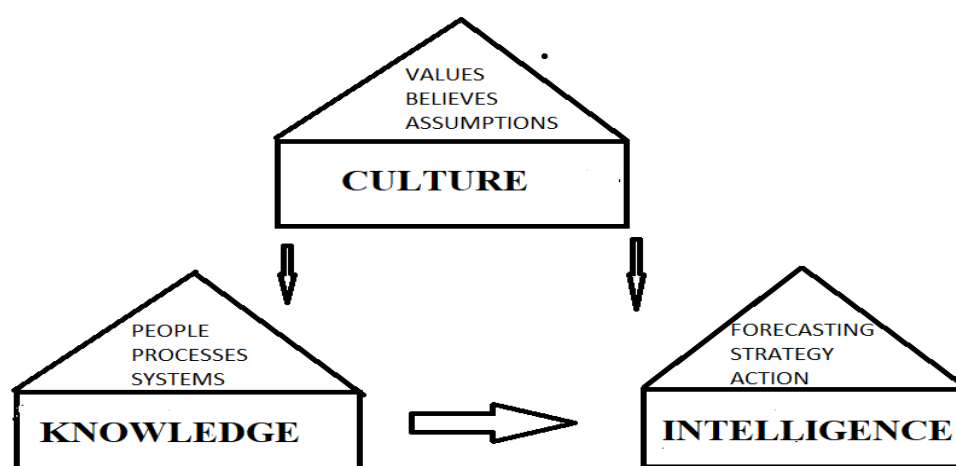


Figure4. The CKI model (own elaboration)

The CKI model shows that Culture impacts Knowledge and Intelligence. Furthermore, Knowledge impacts Intelligence.

VII. Data analysis

The evaluation of the reflective measurement model has the following elements:

- Internal consistency reliability: Composite reliability should be higher than 0.701 (in exploratory research, 0.60 to 0.70 is considered acceptable).
- Convergent validity: The average variance extracted (AVE) should be higher than 0.50 (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2005).
- Discriminant validity: Indicators with high loads (less than 0.7) in their latent variables (LV) and low loads in other LV (cross-load) indicate discriminant validity (Chin, 1998); Correlations between the latent variables are smaller than the square root of AVE (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table III shows the composite reliability and alpha values for the three dimensions of the CKI model.

Internal consistency is a method of reliability in which we judge how well items on a test that are designed to measure the same construct produce similar results (Struwig, M., Struwig, F.W., & Stead, G.B., 2001)

John and Benet-Martinez (2000) explain that Convergent validity and discriminant validity are commonly regarded as ways to assess the construct validity of a measurement procedure and Discriminant validity helps to establish construct validity by demonstrating that the construct you are interested in (e.g., anger) is different from other constructs that might be present in your study (e.g., depression).

Cronbach's alpha is a way of assessing reliability by comparing the amount of shared variance, or covariance, among the items making up an instrument to the amount of overall variance. The idea is that if the instrument is reliable, there should be a great deal of covariance among the items relative to the variance (Collins, 2007).

	Culture	Knowledge	Intelligence
Composite reliability	0,76	0,79	0,74
Cronbach's alpha	0,82	0,83	0,68

Table III. Composite reliability and alpha in the CKI model

All VLs (first and second orders) showed AVE greater than 50 per cent, which meets the criteria of Chin (1998) and Hair et al. (2005) for the indication of convergent validity.

The second criterion states that an indicator's loading with its associated latent construct should be higher than its loadings with all the remaining constructs (i.e., the cross-loadings). Indicators with high loads (less than 0.7) in their LV and low loads in other LV (cross-load) indicate discriminant validity (Chin, 1998). The cross-loading is presented in Table IV.

	Culture (C)	Knowledge (K)	Intelligence (I)
C1	0,879	0,298	0,270
C2	0,839	0,335	0,320
C3	0,798	0,339	0,580
C4	0,754	0,279	0,421
C5	0,767	0,267	0,342
C6	0,876	0,345	0,342
C7	0,679	0,323	0,452
C8	0,799	0,435	0,234
C9	0,871	0,213	0,245
K1	0,373	0,710	0,509
K2	0,523	0,783	0,489
K3	0,390	0,690	0,348
K4	0,432	0,891	0,360
K5	0,422	0,789	0,512
K6	0,522	0,830	0,232
K7	0,443	0,759	0,349
K8	0,343	0,738	0,580
K9	0,235	0,876	0,467
O1	0,475	0,331	0,987
O2	0,551	0,445	0,691
O3	0,329	0,255	0,788
O4	0,441	0,387	0,783
O5	0,325	0,378	0,708
O6	0,298	0,398	0,734
O7	0,349	0,589	0,933
O8	0,319	0,439	0,788
O9	0,456	0,256	0,876

Table IV- Cross Loadings

The discriminant validity analysis revealed that most indicators show adequate discriminant validity, indicating that the concepts are evaluated by respondents as representing different aspects of the phenomenon. Figures 5 and 6 present the relationships among the model's constructs (path coefficients) of the structural model for Mexico and US, respectively.

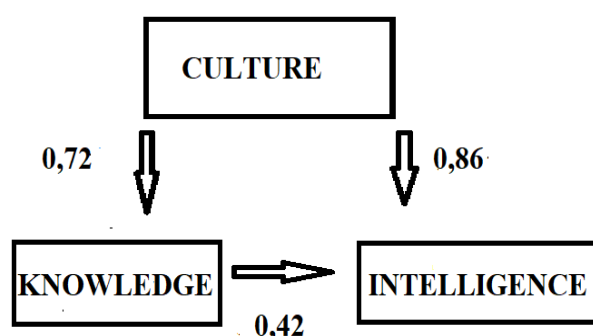


Figure 5 – Path Coefficients for Mexico

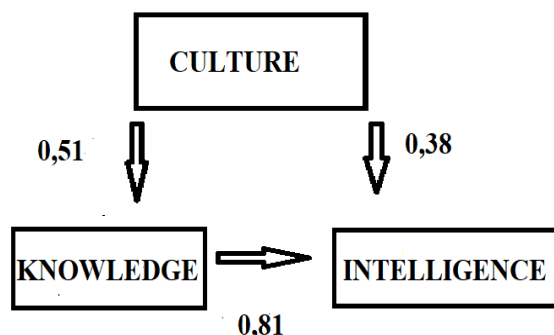


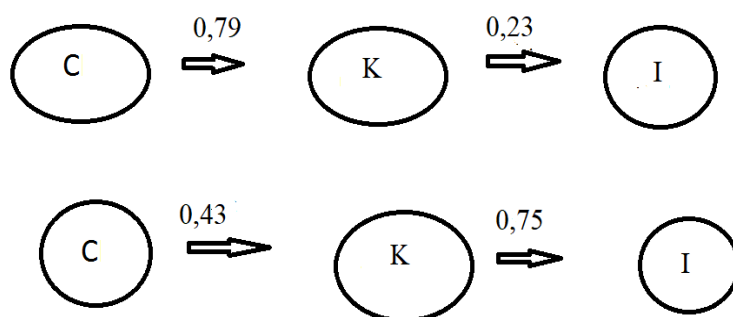
Figure 6 – Path coefficients for US

By analyzing Figures 5 and 6 (Mexico - M) and 4 (United States- US), it is possible to conclude that: In Mexico and United States, Culture has a positive influence on Knowledge (M=0,72 and US=0,51) and Intelligence (M=0,86 and US=0,38), while Knowledge has a positive influence on Intelligence (M=0,42 and US=0,81).

Culture is fundamental to explain changes in Knowledge (R2 Mexico: 0.71 and R2 US: 0.45) and in intelligence (R2 Mexico: 0.76 and R2 US: 0.38).

If the influence of Culture on Intelligence is removed, then it is possible to conclude, analyzing Figures 7 (Mexico) and 8 (US), that:

- In Mexico, Culture (C) is responsible for 79 per cent of changes in Knowledge (K), and K is responsible for 23 per cent of changes in Intelligence (I).
- In US, Culture (C) is responsible for 43 per cent of changes in Knowledge (K), and K is responsible for 75 per cent of changes in Intelligence (I).



Figures 7 and 8- Path coefficients without the influence of Culture on Intelligence (Mexico and US respectively).

VIII. Results and Discussion

The impact of culture on intelligence is much higher in Mexico (0,86) than in the US (0,38). This is related to the fact that American culture, in opposition to Mexico, is future- and performance-orientated, getting information from facts, books and statistics, instead of being people-oriented, getting the first-hand (oral) information. Besides that, the high level of uncertainty avoidance of Mexican people impacts their intelligence, without considering the interference of the intermediate variable (Knowledge).

Analyzing Figures 3 and 4, although the relationship between culture and knowledge has presented the direct effect with the higher structural load in both countries (Mexico:0.72 and the US: 0.51); the relationship between Culture and Intelligence was much higher in Mexico (0.86) than in the US (0.38), revealing that Culture has less impact on Intelligence in the US than in Mexico. This means that in opposition to the US, in Mexico, Intelligence is more influenced by culture (0,86) than by knowledge (0,38), since Mexicans have several difficulties to apply knowledge based on the lack of the habit of reading.

This is even clearer when the direct influence of culture on intelligence is eliminated from the analysis (Figures 5 and 6).

This conclusion is similar to that of the study conducted by De Angelis (2016): ““The impact of organizational/national culture on GI is much higher in Brazil than in Germany. In opposition to Germany, in Brazil, the GI is more influenced by culture than by knowledge. This is related to the fact that German culture, in opposition to that of Brazil, is future- and performance-orientated, getting information from facts, books and statistics, instead of being people-oriented, getting the first-hand (oral) information” (De Angelis, 2016).

Analyzing Figures 5 and 6, in Mexico Knowledge is responsible for 23% of changes in Intelligence, while in US, Knowledge is responsible for 75 per cent of changes in Intelligence.

In line with the previous literature, the results of this study suggest that the development of an organizational culture supports the application of Knowledge (Davenport and Prusak, 2000; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Gold et al., 2001; Janz and Prasarnphanic, 2003; Lee and Choi, 2003; Donate and Guadamillas, 2010).

Caloghirou et al. (2004) support this conclusion when affirming that the availability of knowledge will increase the ability of people to search, recognize and present a problem as well as assimilate and use new knowledge for problem-solving.

In the interview about Cultural Intelligence, the great majority of Mexican students answered that they share feelings and problems with friends in face-to-face conversations, indicating the impact of culture on tacit knowledge. They take the easiest path to enjoy life in the present and help others to do the same. .

Most Mexican and American students agreed that culture impacts the process of creation and sharing of knowledge, thus Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Mexicans agree with the importance to explore foreign cultures, a form of risk-taking and cross-cultural adjustment, to change culture and reach maturity - the entrepreneurship mind.

Interviews with participants demonstrated that Americans have more knowledge of technical matters, and they emphasized their experiences of other cultures as critical to their decisions, thus affirming Hypothesis 2.

The levels of English language skills in US are much higher than of students at Mexican Universities. English language skills help them to understand the world. In contrast there are few international universities in Mexico that welcome foreign students.

On the other hand, in the US there are also formal meetings with industry representatives, government bodies, etc. This indicates that Knowledge positively supports strategy and action thus lending support to Hypothesis 3.

In the interview about Knowledge with students from both countries it was clear that in opposition to the two universities in Mexico, in the American University (Michigan) there is a formal and disciplined process for ““environment exams,” i.e., a systematic review of the University environment to identify key trends, opportunities and threats. Because of these competences, students from Michigan University are successful in using the knowledge to make predictions and therefore better strategies and actions.

The learning of new beliefs, values, assumptions, traditions, and resilience (cultural intelligence) impacts the culture of sharing.

The sharing of information is higher in Mexico, but the application of knowledge, due to cultural and historic facts, is higher in the US.

Curricula for teacher training should incorporate and promote factors such as openness to intercultural interaction and intercultural learning, readiness to recognize and utilize multiculturalism and cultural diversity as a learning resource (Petrović, 2006) and also create international student exchange programs (Petrović & Zlatković, 2009), such as the ERASMUS PROGRAM in Europe.

One solution to reduce the high brain drain and economic crises in Mexico should be the interference of the government and university's leaders by opening more possibilities for student exchange programs. A very good example is the DAAD Program. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is an organization that promotes the exchange of students, teachers, and researchers. It is the largest institution financing academic and scientific mobility. They are a non-profit association made up of 241 higher education institutions and 104 student representations in the US. DAAD offers around 250 scholarship and research support programs, operates in more than 60 countries, and supports more than 100,000 exchange students (German and foreign) annually. Since its founding in 1925, DAAD has benefited approximately 2.6 million people. Additionally, in Mexico the government could open new public universities and promote campaigns to incentivise people to study. A good example is the Student and Academic Mobility Program of the "Alianza del Pacífico."

In Mexico, the Pacific Alliance Program Platform offers scholarships to carry out an academic exchange at the undergraduate level, for an academic period, as well as for doctorates and teaching internships, for periods ranging from three weeks to 6 months. It is a program that is developed in an area of strict reciprocity, defined in a Regulation. Four hundred scholarships will be awarded (100 per country) according to the following details: 69 for undergraduate students in professional modality, 6 for students in technical and technological careers, 25 for doctoral students, researchers, and guest professors.

This study tries to motivate the parents and professors, and also the governments of Mexico and the US to recognize the importance of cultural differences to reach the maturity needed to start-up companies.

Cultural differences should be recognized and addressed in creativity training where participants from different cultures have an equal chance to share their perspectives and experiences on creativity and innovation (Tang and Werner, 2017).

A student with a high level of experience and resilience has more willingness to apply what he/she learned in another culture (experience) and after returning to his/her home country with cultural skills and intelligence (knowledge in action) to make a difference. By the time that the students are living abroad they can participate in mentoring activities and also leverage best practices and lessons learned to help Mexico in reducing the brain drain and enhance the agriculture sector.

In conclusion, culture influences the intention to create, share and apply knowledge and experience.

IX. Conclusion

When examining Latino cultural values, it is important to recognize the context of acculturation and enculturation (immigration reform and the Democrats).

Less acculturated Latinos are less socially liberal, and this leads to lower teenage pregnancy rates, and some are interested in government education policies.

The article concludes that acculturation does not mean education, but rather greater fluency in the language and adaptation to American culture. The impact of Latino acculturation on education should be further explored by future research.

The government must support the habit of reading among Latinos by distributing books, appreciate local culture, particularly on the border with Mexico, and create jobs in the areas of knowledge of the Latino community. In parallel, it should facilitate and motivate access to educational institutions. Immigration centers should create courses to prepare Latinos to work in American companies, ending the image that Latinos only work in bars and restaurants.

On the other hand, Latinos can help Americans to develop cultural intelligence, an ability to understand others, and a more collective culture, and to learn from them, avoiding the feeling of superiority arising from the economic and military position of the United States.

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Survey about Culture, Knowledge, and Intelligence (Appendix 1)

In each question the participant must choose one of the following options:

☐ Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Agree

D1. Culture (9 questions)

- There is a positive, proactive, and fast attitude to sharing knowledge and solutions with other people
- There is a heightened sense of trust where I live.
- I am motivated and enthusiastic about US culture (Latin Culture).
- The orientation of my life is more focused on the long term, represented by values such as perseverance, ordering of relationships by status, observation of order and moderation, than on the short term, represented by values such as personal stability, the importance of appearances, the respect for tradition, reciprocity of greetings, favours, and gifts.
- I am curious and interested in learning about other cultures in order to develop a new awareness of myself and others.
- I have the ability to adapt my behavior to make it appropriate for different cultures.
- Globalization and interdependence increase intercultural interactions and also increase the likelihood of cultural misunderstandings and conflicts.
- Today's society (network society), which produces an avalanche of information without meaning, context and credibility, leads people to lose focus and have difficulty finding the truth of the situation.
- I am aware of my values and those of others, and the relationships between people's values, behaviors, and cultural backgrounds.

D2. Knowledge (9 questions)

- I am familiar with fake news, particularly during elections.
- I know how to transform information into knowledge.
- I love reading at least 10 books per year.
- I have evidence of a high level of Knowledge creation.
- I have evidence of a high level of Knowledge sharing.
- I know how to transform my tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge.
- I know the importance of cultural knowledge in the creation of relevant knowledge.
- I collect best practices in my life, and I remember it as relevant knowledge in different situations
- I am aware that the process of meaning construction manifests itself in and is mediated by cultural contexts.

D3. Intelligence (9 questions)

- I am able to analyze the environment and collect relevant and accurate information, contextualize it (knowledge) to make better decisions, and take calculated risks (intelligence).
- The culture and environment where I live has a strong impact on the way I think and act.
- Intelligent adaptive behaviors are culturally linked to the values and beliefs of a given society and culture.
- I have success in using knowledge to make predictions and make decisions.
- Information on good working and social practices, errors and/or defects, and lessons learned is used when making decisions.
- I have evidence of a high level of Knowledge application.
- I have evidence of a high level of adaptability.
- I have evidence of a high level of communication.
- I have evidence of a high level of capacity to change when necessary.