

Cross-Cultural (Comparative) Research



4 Types of Cross Cultural Studies

| | Hypothesis Testing | No Hypothesis Testing |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Contextual/ Cultural Factors | Contextual theory studies Test predictions about particular relationship between cultural variables and psychological outcome | Ecological Linkage Studies Meaning and cause of cultural differences with aid of contextual factors Lack of a-priori hypotheses, factors exploratory |
| No Contextual/ Cultural Factors | Generalizability studies Little or no reference to local cultural elements | Psychological Difference Studies Differences in psychometric properties across cultures Post-hoc rather than contextual or theoretical explanations |

Contextual theory studies

- ▶ Cultures selected in theory-guided fashion
 - Systematic sampling
- ▶ Berry (1967)
 - Agricultural vs. hunting societies
 - Agricultural – encourages conformity so... Field dependence (background)
 - Hunting – autonomous – less field dependence

Generalizability studies

- ▶ Schwartz
 - Universality of human value structure across many countries
 - Random sampling

Ecological Linkage Studies

- ▶ Bond (1991)
 - Relationship between health indices and values endorsed

Comparisons between countries during one time period can help social scientists identify the limitations of explanations based on single-nation research. These comparative studies may focus on a period in either the past or the present. Could be quantitative (!!!!) or qualitative

Exhibit 11.8 Percentage of Voters Who Participated in Elections, 1968-1993

| | | | |
|----------------|----|----------------|----|
| Australia | 85 | Germany | 81 |
| Austria | 80 | Hungary | 80 |
| Belgium | 81 | Italy | 76 |
| Canada | 80 | Japan | 76 |
| Denmark | 80 | United Kingdom | 76 |
| France | 80 | Netherlands | 76 |
| Germany | 80 | Spain | 71 |
| Italy | 76 | Sweden | 71 |
| Japan | 76 | Switzerland | 71 |
| United Kingdom | 76 | United States | 65 |
| Netherlands | 76 | West Germany | 65 |
| Spain | 71 | | |
| Sweden | 71 | | |
| Switzerland | 71 | | |
| United States | 65 | | |
| West Germany | 65 | | |

Source: Bond, 1991, 218

- Quantitative:
 - Which variables affect voter turnout?
 - Hypothesis 1: individual characteristics of people: wealth and education
 - Hypothesis 2: media campaign “get out and vote”
 - Hypothesis 3: institutional characteristics: +++ how easy it is to vote (compulsory, weekend) issue at hand
 - proportional representative vs. winner-take-all

- Qualitative
 - Comparing cases to learn something new
 - Example (M.Lemont, US vs. France):
 - Which groups in society tend to be more exclusionary (“racist”)?
 - Which cultural resources are used to fight racism?

A Historical-Comparative Example

Mill's Method of Agreement:
Revolutions

| Variables | CASES | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | France | Russia | China |
| Unsuccessful War | + | + | + |
| Fiscal Crisis of the State | + | + | + |
| Prior Economic Growth | - | + | - |
| Well-organized Revolutionary Party | - | + | + |

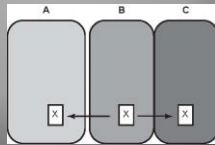
Comparative Research

Units being Compared

▶ Culture vs. Nation

▶ Galton's Problem

- When we compare units, units must be distinct and separate
- If units are subparts of a larger unit – spurious relationships
- <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00950/full>



Covariates

- ▶ Match samples on demographic variables
 - Or remove as covariate (father education factor in delinquent behavior)
 - Education may explain relationship between tolerance and Western countries
 - Earley (1989)
 - Individualism/collectivism accounted for differences in social loafing between American and Chinese samples



De-centered Approach

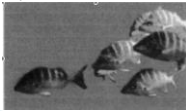
- ▶ Take culturally diverse perspective in design and conceptualization of study
- ▶ Schwartz – values – allowed input from researchers in other countries

Convergence Approach

- ▶ Design study as culturally distant as possible from existing studies
- ▶ See if results converge with existing results
- ▶ If convergence, then cultural origin is unlikely to have biased prior studies
- ▶ E.g., test personality structure in multiple cultural samples – see if same structure emerges:
 - 5 factor model of personality in Chinese sample – missing openness but included interpersonal relatedness

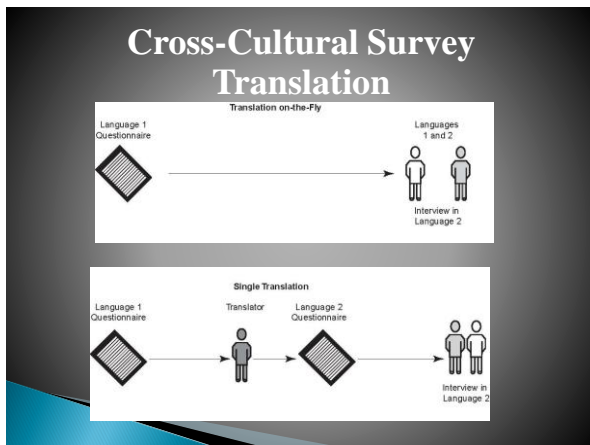
Cultural Manipulation Approach

- ▶ Manipulate cultural elements to see if manipulation shows intended effects
- ▶ Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martinez (2000)
 - Chinese – greater external attribution
 - Hong-Kong Americans primed with American icons (Superman) versus Chinese icons
 - Participants made more external attributions in Chinese icon condition
 - American culture (individualism) may cause internal attribution

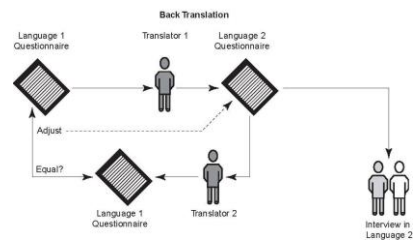


Questionnaires and multiple languages

- 1. “Ask the same question” approach
- **Safari research**
 - Imposing measures developed in one cultural-language context onto another culture
 - Instead, use multicultural research team
- 2. Design new question approach

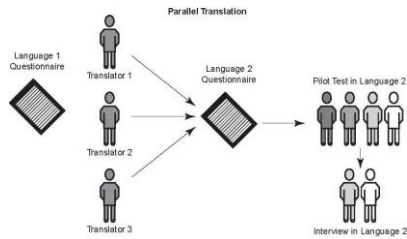


Cross-Cultural Survey Translation

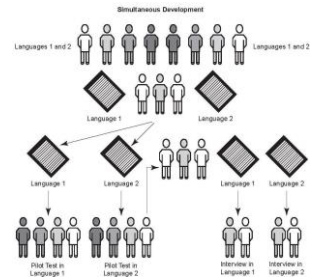


“Enjoy life in full trains”

Cross-Cultural Survey Translation



Cross-Cultural Survey Translation



Equivalence

- ▶ **Lexicon equivalence**
- ▶ **Contextual equivalence**
 - Correct application of terms in different historical or social context e.g. college over time
- ▶ **Conceptual equivalence**
 - Same psychometric properties in scales in different cultures
 - Same relationships with other variables
 - Income in noncash societies
- ▶ **Measurement equivalence**
 - Using same measures of the same concept in different settings (e.g., mirror test vs. use of personal pronouns)
- ▶ **Scalar equivalence**
 - Height and weight, ratio data, temperature

Challenges in Cross-National Survey Research

- Cultural sensitivity
 - Can't discuss extra-marital sex in all cultures
 - If punishment is taboo, what does it mean to say "no punishment?"
- Communication style
- Situational sensitivity
- Courtesy bias
- Access

Comparative Research

Data in Cross-Culture Research

- ▶ **Comparative field research**
- ▶ **Existing sources of qualitative data**
 - Human Relations Area Files (HRAF)
 - Field research reports (George Murdock)
 - Useful for topics such as relationships between sexual assault and patriarchy

