



Culturally Responsive Leadership's Dimensions as a Moderator in Relationship Between Culturally Responsive Leadership and School Effectiveness in Indigenous Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the moderating role of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) in the relationship between Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL) and School Effectiveness in indigenous schools of Peninsular Malaysia. Addressing a significant gap, this research highlights the urgent need for understanding and integration of culturally responsive leadership practices in leadership to enhance the effectiveness of indigenous schools. Through a stratified random sampling method, data were collected from 450 teachers using adapted scaled for CRL, CQ and School Effectiveness. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed that CQ significantly moderated the relationship between school environment, teacher development, community engagement, and school effectiveness. These findings underscore the important of CQ in fostering effective educational leadership in culturally diverse environments, suggesting that higher levels of CQ enhance school effectiveness by improving the interplay between leadership, environment, and community engagement.

Index Terms: *Culturally Responsive Leadership, Cultural Intelligence, School Effectiveness*

1. Introduction

Malaysia is an incredibly varied nation where many different races, cultures, and religions live in peace with one another. In addition to the several indigenous communities known as the *Orang Asli* in Peninsular Malaysia. Malaysian civilization is richly woven together by the ethnic Malays, Chinese, and Indians. A wide range of religious beliefs, cultural customs, and linguistic expressions all contribute to the country's colourful and dynamic nature. Concurrently, education is one of the tools to strengthen all the people here to live in harmony and unity by sharing the five major goals for the nation's educational system; access, quality, equity, unity and efficiency (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012). The ministry wants to ensure that all students are enrolled universally from preschool to upper school. It also focuses on raising the overall quality of education, tries to close the achievement gaps between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds and places, a strong sense of a national identity and encouraging tolerance and understanding of diversity, and makes sure the educational system runs smoothly and makes the best use of its resources (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012).

Persistent achievement gaps between mainstream and indigenous schools highlight significant challenges particularly in mathematics and reading literacy proficiency (MOE 2021; MOE 2022).

School leaders in indigenous schools are expected to be role models, equipped with relevant knowledge, ability and skills, have good relationships with the indigenous parents and community, sensitive with changes around, create a positive environment, prepare teachers with relevant knowledge of culture, language, arts and their customs through development programs or courses. One of the leaderships proposed in indigenous school is culturally responsive leadership which is basically based on the idea of culturally responsive pedagogy and it

refers to the leadership philosophies, practices, and policies that create inclusive schooling environments for students and families from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds (Khalifa, Gooden, Davis, 2016) Apart from the leadership, teachers also play a vital role in school effectiveness. Their knowledge, skill, and awareness about the background of their students will give advantage in transforming the schools. One needs to have cultural intelligence to understand the differences, seeing the students as a value, building empathy and struggling to include the different one (Cobanoglu, 2021). Cultural intelligence can be defined as a person's willingness to learn about cultures other than their own, their ability to approach different cultures with tolerance, and their quick adaptation when they are in a new culture setting (Cobanoglu 2021). Studies about culturally responsible leadership in education has been explored by few researchers in Malaysian schools like Azmi, Hamid, & Amat (2023), Mohd Razali, Hamid, Alias & Mansor (2024), Abdul Kadir, Mansor, Jamaludin, & Mohamed Idrus (2022) Tumin, Hamid & Mansor (2023) and Adam & Velarde (2020). Meanwhile cultural intelligence has very little research in educational settings but a vast number of studies in school effectiveness. The objectives of this study are to establish Cultural Intelligence as a moderator in the relationship between Leadership Behavior and School Effectiveness, and to identify its moderating role in the relationship between School Environment and School Effectiveness. Furthermore, this research aims to evaluate Cultural Intelligence as a moderating factor in the relationship between Teacher Development and School Effectiveness, while also determining its influence on the relationship between Community Engagement and School Effectiveness. Based on the objectives, hypotheses were developed

Hypotheses:

Ha1: Cultural Intelligence moderates the relationship between Leadership Behaviour Effectiveness.

Ha2: Cultural Intelligence moderates the relationship between School Environment and School Effectiveness.

Ha3: Cultural Intelligence moderates the relationship between Teacher Development and School Effectiveness

Ha4: Cultural Intelligence moderates the relationship between Community Engagement and School Effectiveness.

2. Material and Methods

This was a quantitative study; it has obtained data from 450 indigenous school teachers from Peninsular Malaysia. The questionnaire contents are related to demographics of the teachers in Part A, Culturally Responsive Leadership for Part B, Cultural Intelligence of the teachers in Part C and School Effectiveness in Part D. Stratified random sampling was utilized in this research. Data was obtained online using Google Form. In general, this study focuses on determining cultural intelligence as a moderator. In particular, this study puts forward four main objectives with cultural intelligence as a moderator.

Hierarchical moderator regression has been carried out using SPSS version 26 software. Before the analysis is carried out, the data cleaning process is carried out, reliability has been determined to ensure the data is normal. A two-step hierarchical multiple regressions analysis was carried out to look at the moderating effect of variables on the connection between each independent and dependent variable, as suggested by Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken (2003). The independent and moderator variables that reflected the primary effects were entered in the first phase. The second stage involved computing the moderation effects (Baron & Kenny, 1986), which are also referred to as interaction variables, by multiplying the independent and moderator variables in the equation. The following standards were used to determine the moderating effects:

Using SPSS hierarchical multiple regression, the moderation effect analysis was performed as described in (Coakes, Steed, & Price, 2008). It has been suggested that hierarchical multiple regressions are a better way to find out if a quantitative variable modifies the association between two other quantitative variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Cramer & Ebrary, 2003).

The dummy coding technique was used to code the categorical moderating factors for the hierarchical multiple regression. This made the process easy to implement and allowed for a relatively straightforward interpretation of the results (Aguinis, 2004). This strategy was based on theoretical or logical considerations, and the orders in which the independent variables are entered into the regression equation were known (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001; Yiing & Ahmad, 2009).

3. RESULTS

The research findings are as below;

3.1 Cultural Intelligence as moderator for the relationship between Leadership Behavior and School Effectiveness

Table 1, shows hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis involving diffusion factor variables of Culturally Responsive Leadership and Cultural Intelligence with interaction shows that 59.0% of the variance can be explained on dependent variable School Effectiveness $R^2=0.59$, $\Delta R^2=0.59$, $F(3, 446) = 219.732$, $P<.001$.

Findings show in Model 1, the variables Culturally Responsive Leadership ($\beta=.574, t=14.823, p=.000$) has a positive significant influence on the School Effectiveness which can explain 32.9% of the variance (R^2) on the School Effectiveness.

In Model 2, the moderator variable Cultural Intelligence was included with Leadership Behaviour which can explain 58.7% of the variance (R^2) on the School Effectiveness. The relationship between the variable Leadership Behaviour ($\beta=.326, t=9.644, p=.000$) is significant furthermore, Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=.565, t=16.729, p=.000$) with School Effectiveness is also significant because the p value of both variables is below than 0.05.

Finally, in Model 3, was developed with interaction of independent variable and moderator variable. The results of the interaction analysis between the moderator variable of Cultural Intelligence and the independent variable Leadership Behaviour show that R^2 has increased to 59.0%. The relationship between the variable Leadership Behaviour ($\beta= .324, t= 9.612, p=0.000$) and Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=.562, t=16.622, p=.000$) with School Effectiveness is still significant. However, the interaction between Leadership Behaviour and Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=-0.051, t=-1.692, p=.091$) is not significant because the p value is above 0.05. The Durbin Watson statistic was tested for autocorrelation in the residuals from the model in regression analysis. The Durbin-Watson value (1.285) indicates there is autocorrelation detected in the sample because the value is below 2.0.

Analysis reveals that Leadership Behaviour and Cultural Intelligence have a positive significant relationship, and the interaction between Leadership Behaviour and Cultural Intelligence is not significant with School Effectiveness. These findings indicate there is no moderation effect. Based on the result Hypotheses (H_{a1}) Cultural Intelligence moderate the relationship between Leadership Behaviour and School Effectiveness in indigenous schools is to be rejected. Alternative hypotheses was rejected that Cultural Intelligence does not moderate the relationship between Leadership Behaviour and School Effectiveness in indigenous school.

Table 1. Cultural Intelligence as Moderator for the relationship between Leadership Behaviour and School Effectiveness

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	SE	SE	SE
	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Beta (β)
Independent Variable			
Leadership Behaviour	0.574	0.326	0.324
t - Value	14.823	9.644	9.612
Significant	0.000	0.000	0.000
Moderator			
Cultural Intelligence		0.565	0.562
t - Value		16.729	16.622
Significant		0.000	0.000
Interaction			
Leadership Behaviour			
Cultural Intelligence			-0.051
t - Value			-1.692
Significant			0.091
R Square	0.329	0.587	0.590
Adjusted R	0.328	0.586	0.587
R Square Change	0.329	0.258	0.003
Significant F Change	0.000	0.000	0.091
Durbin-Watson			1.285

*Dependent Variable: School Effectiveness; Significant at level $p < 0.05^{**}$*

Figure 1, shows the slope of interaction between Leadership Behaviour and Cultural Intelligence on School Effectiveness. The findings show that there is no change in direction Leadership Behaviour and School Effectiveness when there is Cultural Intelligence entered as moderator in the model. The results of the slope analysis indicate that the sense of Cultural Intelligence does not change the direction and strength of the relationship between Leadership Behaviour and School Effectiveness. The steepness of the slope is aligned between both Cultural Intelligence and School Effectiveness. A higher sense of Cultural Intelligence is not associated with a level of School Effectiveness for indigenous schools of high levels of Leadership Behaviour.

Therefore, the level of Leadership Behaviour received by the teachers who have high Cultural Intelligence will show the same tendency to develop School Effectiveness of the teachers with low Cultural Intelligence.

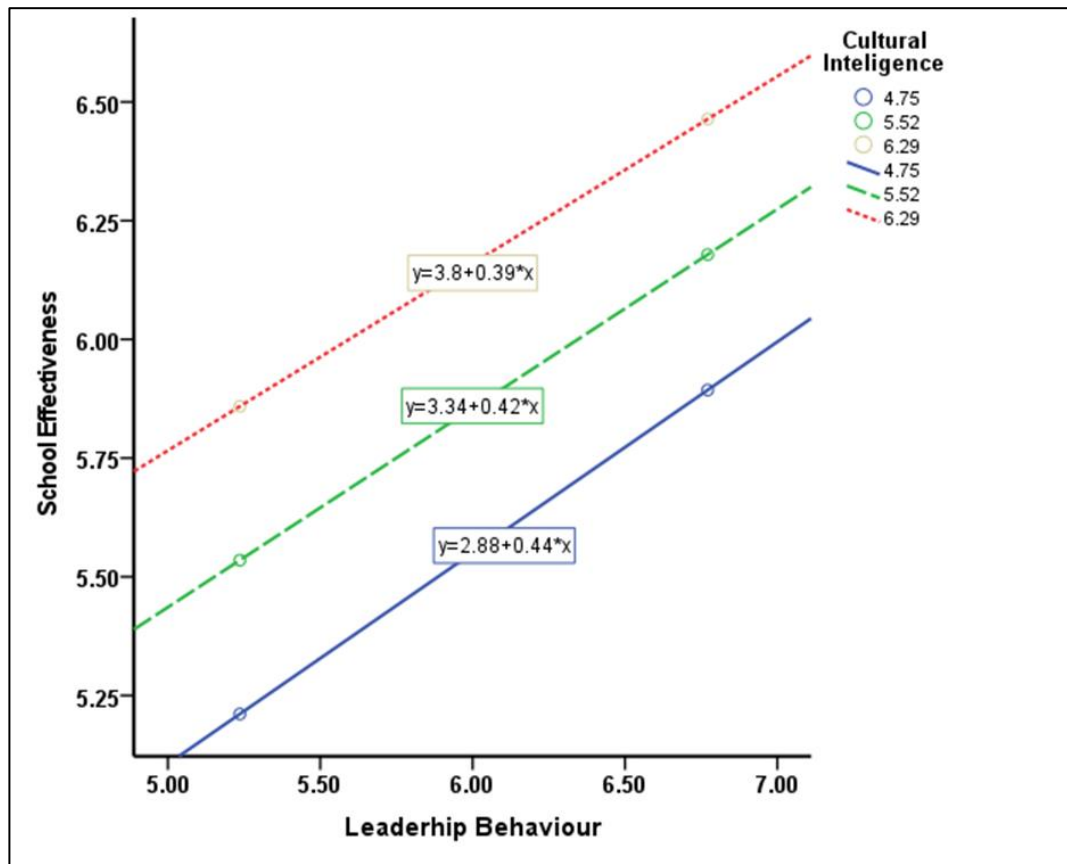


Figure 1: The impact of the sense of Cultural Intelligence on the relationship between the Leadership Behaviour and School Effectiveness.

3.2 Cultural Intelligence as moderator for the relationship between School Environment and School Effectiveness

Table 2, shows hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis involving diffusion factor variables of School Environment and Cultural Intelligence with interaction shows that 60.9% of the variance can be explained on dependent variable School Effectiveness $R^2=0.34$, $\Delta R^2=0.60$, $F(3, 446) = 231.418$, $P<.001$.

Findings show in Model 1, the variables School Environment ($\beta=.579$, $t=15.042$, $p=.000$) has a positive significant influence on the School Effectiveness which can explain 33.6% of the variance (R^2) on the School Effectiveness. In the Model 2, the moderator variable Cultural Intelligence was included with School Environment which can explain 60.3% of the variance (R^2) on the School Effectiveness. The relationship between the variable School Environment ($\beta=.349$, $t=10.689$, $p=.000$) is also significant, Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=.566$, $t=17.353$, $p=.000$) with School Effectiveness is found significant because the p value of both variables is below than 0.05.

Finally Model 3, was developed with interaction of independent variable and moderator variable. The results of the interaction analysis between the moderator variable of Cultural Intelligence and the independent variable School Environment show that R^2 has increased to 60.9%. The relationship between the variable School Environment ($\beta=.353$, $t=10.873$, $p=.000$) and Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=.558$, $t=17.135$, $p=.000$) with School Effectiveness is still significant. Furthermore, the interaction between School Environment and Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=-0.077$, $t=-2.584$, $p=.010$) is also significant because the p value is less than 0.05. The Durbin Watson statistic was tested for autocorrelation in the residuals from the model in regression analysis. The Durbin-Watson value (1.268) indicates there is autocorrelation detected in the sample because the value is below 2.0.

Analysis reveals that School Environment and Cultural Intelligence have a positive significant relationship, and the interaction between School Environment and Cultural Intelligence is also significant with School Effectiveness. These findings indicate that moderation effects occur. Based on the result Hypotheses (H_{a2}) Cultural Intelligence moderates the relationship between School Environment and School Effectiveness in among indigenous schools.

Table 2. Cultural Intelligence as Moderator in relationship between School Environment and School Effectiveness

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Beta (β)
Independent Variable			
School Environment	0.579	0.349	0.353
t - Value	15.042	10.689	10.873
Significant	0.000	0.000	0.000
Moderator			
Cultural Intelligence		0.566	0.558
t - Value		17.353	17.135
Significant		0.000	0.000
Interaction			
School Environment Cultural Intelligence			-0.077
t - Value			-2.584
Significant			0.010
R Square	0.336	0.603	0.609
Adjusted R	0.334	0.601	0.606
R Square Change	0.336	0.267	0.006
Significant F Change	0.000	0.000	0.010
Durbin-Watson			1.268

Dependent Variable: School Effectiveness; Significant at level $p < 0.05^{**}$

Figure 2, shows the slope of interaction between School Environment and Cultural Intelligence on School Effectiveness. The findings show that there is a positive high relationship between the variable School Environment and School Effectiveness when there is high Cultural Intelligence. The results of the slope analysis indicate that the sense of Cultural Intelligence highly changes the direction and strength of the relationship between School Environment and School Effectiveness. The steepness of the slope is higher for indigenous school’s teachers who are involved more in Cultural Intelligence. A higher sense of teachers’ Cultural Intelligence is associated with a higher level of School Effectiveness for indigenous schools with high levels of School Environment. Therefore, when the school environment increases, the moderating role of high Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has a greater effect on improving school effectiveness compared to when Cultural Intelligence is at a low level.

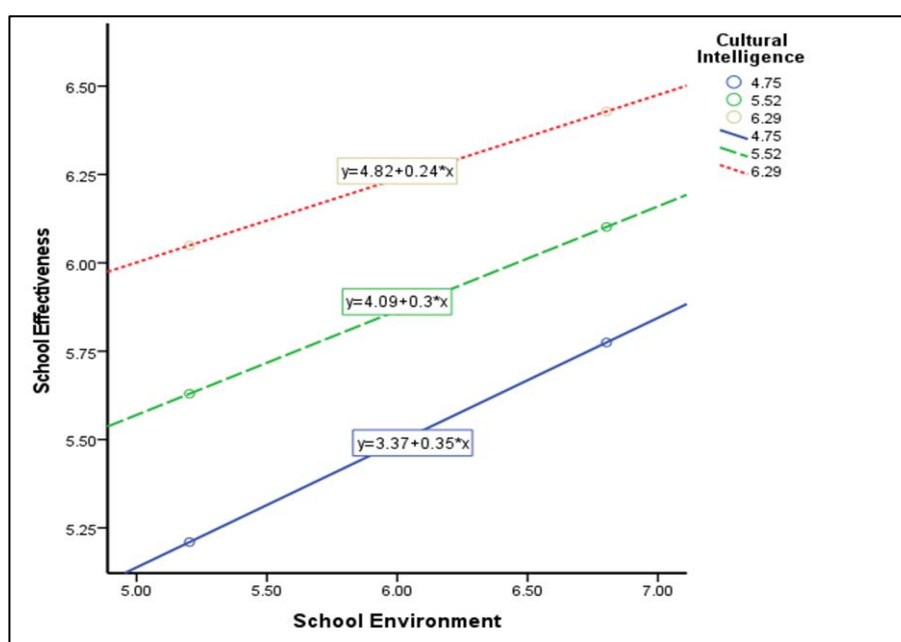


Figure 2: The impact of the sense of Cultural Intelligence on the relationship between the School Environment and School Effectiveness.

3.3 Cultural Intelligence as moderator in relationship between Teacher Development and School Effectiveness

Table 3, shows hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis involving diffusion factor variables of Teacher Development and Cultural Intelligence with shows that 64.0% of the variance can be explained on dependent variable School Effectiveness $R^2=0.39$, $\Delta R^2=0.63$, $F(3, 446) = 95.837$, $P < .001$.

Findings show in Model 1, the variables Teacher Development ($\beta = .624$, $t=16.899$, $p=.000$) has a positive significant influence on the School Effectiveness which can explain 38.9% of the variance (R^2) on the School Effectiveness. In the Model 2, the moderator variable Cultural Intelligence was included with Teacher Development which can explain 63.3% of the variance (R^2) on the School Effectiveness. The relationship between the variable Teacher Development ($\beta=.399$, $t=12.680$, $p=.000$) is also significant, Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=.543$, $t=17.252$, $p=.000$) with School Effectiveness is found significant because the p value of both variables is below than 0.05.

Finally Model 3, was developed with interaction of independent variable and moderator variable. The results of the interaction analysis between the moderator variable of Cultural Intelligence and the independent variable Teacher Development show that R^2 has increased to 64.0%. The relationship between the variable Teacher Development ($\beta=.403$, $t=12.914$, $p=.000$) and Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=.534$, $t=17.024$, $p=.000$) with School Effectiveness is still significant. Furthermore, the interaction between Teacher Development and Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=-0.084$, $t=-2.933$, $p=.004$) is also significant because the p value is less than 0.05. The Durbin Watson statistic was tested for autocorrelation in the residuals from the model in regression analysis. The Durbin-Watson value (1.343) indicates there is autocorrelation detected in the sample because the value is below 2.0.

Analysis reveals that Teacher Development and Cultural Intelligence have a positive significant relationship, and the interaction between Teacher Development and Cultural Intelligence is also significant with School Effectiveness. These findings indicate that moderation effects occur. Based on the result, Hypotheses (H_{a3}) that Cultural Intelligence moderates the relationship between Teacher Development and School Effectiveness in indigenous schools is accepted.

Table 3. Cultural Intelligence as Moderator for the relationship between Teacher Development and School Effectiveness

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Variables	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Beta (β)
Independent Variable			
Teacher Development	0.624	0.399	0.403
t - Value	16.899	12.680	12.914
Significant	0.000	0.000	0.000
Moderator			
Cultural Intelligence		0.543	0.534
t - Value		17.252	17.023
Significant		0.000	0.000
Interaction			
Teacher Development Cultural Intelligence			-0.084
t - Value			-2.933
Significant			0.004
R Square	0.389	0.633	0.640
Adjusted R	0.388	0.632	0.638
R Square Change	0.389	0.244	0.007
Significant F Change	0.000	0.000	0.004
Durbin-Watson			1.343

*Dependent Variable: School Effectiveness; Significant at level $p < 0.05^{**}$*

Figure 3, shows the slope of interaction between Teachers Development and Cultural Intelligence on School Effectiveness. The findings show that there is a positive high relationship between the variable Teachers Development and School Effectiveness when there is high Cultural Intelligence. The results of the slope analysis indicate that the sense of Cultural Intelligence highly changes the direction and strength of the relationship between Teachers Development and School Effectiveness. The steepness of the slope is higher for teachers in indigenous schools who are involved more in Cultural Intelligence. A higher sense of Cultural Intelligence among teachers is associated with a higher level of School Effectiveness for schools with high levels

of Teacher Development. Therefore, when Teachers Development increases, the moderating role of high Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has a greater effect on improving school effectiveness compared to when Cultural Intelligence is at a low level.

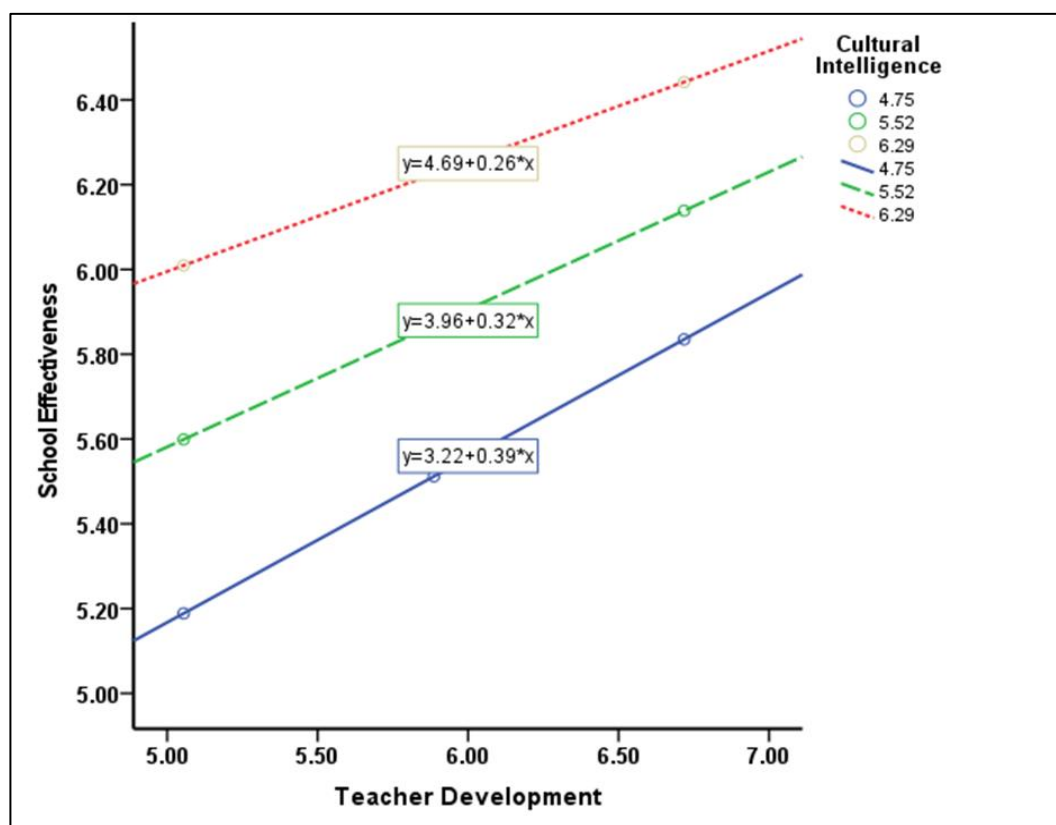


Figure 3: The impact of the sense of Cultural Intelligence on the relationship between the Teachers Development and School Effectiveness.

3.4 Cultural Intelligence as moderator in relationship between Community Engagement and School Effectiveness

Table 4, shows hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis involving diffusion factor variables of Community Engagement and Cultural Intelligence with interaction shows that 63.5% of the variance can be explained on dependent variable School Effectiveness $R^2=0.34$, $\Delta R^2=0.62$, $F(3, 446) = 261.120$, $P<.001$.

Findings show in Model 1, the variables Community Engagement ($\beta=.587$, $t=15.343$, $p=.000$) has a positive significant influence on the School Effectiveness which can explain 34.4% of the variance (R^2) on the School Effectiveness. In the Model 2, the moderator variable Cultural Intelligence was included with Community Engagement which can explain 62.4% of the variance (R^2) on the School Effectiveness. The relationship between the variable Community Engagement ($\beta=.376$, $t=12.057$, $p=.000$) is also significant, Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=.569$, $t=18.222$, $p=.000$) with School Effectiveness is found significant because the p value of both variables is below than 0.05.

Finally Model 3, was developed with interaction of independent variable and moderator variable. The results of the interaction analysis between the moderator variable of Cultural Intelligence and the independent variable Community Engagement show that R^2 has increased to 63.7%. The relationship between the variable Community Engagement ($\beta=.391$, $t=12.654$, $p=.000$) and Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=.549$, $t=17.645$, $p=.000$) with School Effectiveness is still significant. Furthermore, the interaction between Community Engagement and Cultural Intelligence ($\beta=-0.117$, $t=-4.050$, $p=.000$) is also significant because the p value is less than 0.05. The Durbin Watson statistic was tested for autocorrelation in the residuals from the model in regression analysis. The Durbin-Watson value (1.209) indicates there is autocorrelation detected in the sample because the value is below 2.0.

Analysis reveals that Community Engagement and Cultural Intelligence have a positive significant relationship, and the interaction between Community Engagement and Cultural Intelligence is also significant with School Effectiveness. These findings indicate that moderation effects occur. Based on the result Hypotheses (H_{04}) Cultural Intelligence moderates the relationship between Community Engagement and School Effectiveness in indigenous schools is accepted.

Table 4. Cultural Intelligence as Moderator for the relationship between Community Engagement and School Effectiveness

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Beta (β)
Independent Variable			
Community Engagement	0.587	0.376	0.391
t - Value	15.343	12.057	12.654
Significant	0.000	0.000	0.000
Moderator			
Cultural Intelligence		0.569	0.549
t - Value		18.222	17.645
Significant		0.000	0.000
Interaction			
Community Engagement Cultural Intelligence			-0.117
t - Value			-4.050
Significant			0.000
R Square	0.344	0.624	0.637
Adjusted R	0.343	0.622	0.635
R Square Change	0.344	0.279	0.013
Significant F Change	0.000	0.000	0.000
Durbin-Watson			1.209

Dependent Variable: School Effectiveness; Significant at level $p < 0.05^{**}$

Figure 4, shows the slope of interaction between Community Engagement and Cultural Intelligence on School Effectiveness. The findings show that there is a positive high relationship between the variable Community Engagement and School Effectiveness when there is high Cultural Intelligence. The results of the slope analysis indicate that the sense of Cultural Intelligence highly changes the direction and strength of the relationship between Community Engagement and School Effectiveness. The steepness of the slope is higher for teachers who are involved more in Cultural Intelligence. Therefore, when Community Engagement increases, the moderating role of high Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has a greater effect on improving school effectiveness compared to when Cultural Intelligence is at a low level. Therefore, when Community Engagement increases, the moderating role of high Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has a greater effect on improving school effectiveness compared to when Cultural Intelligence is at a low level.

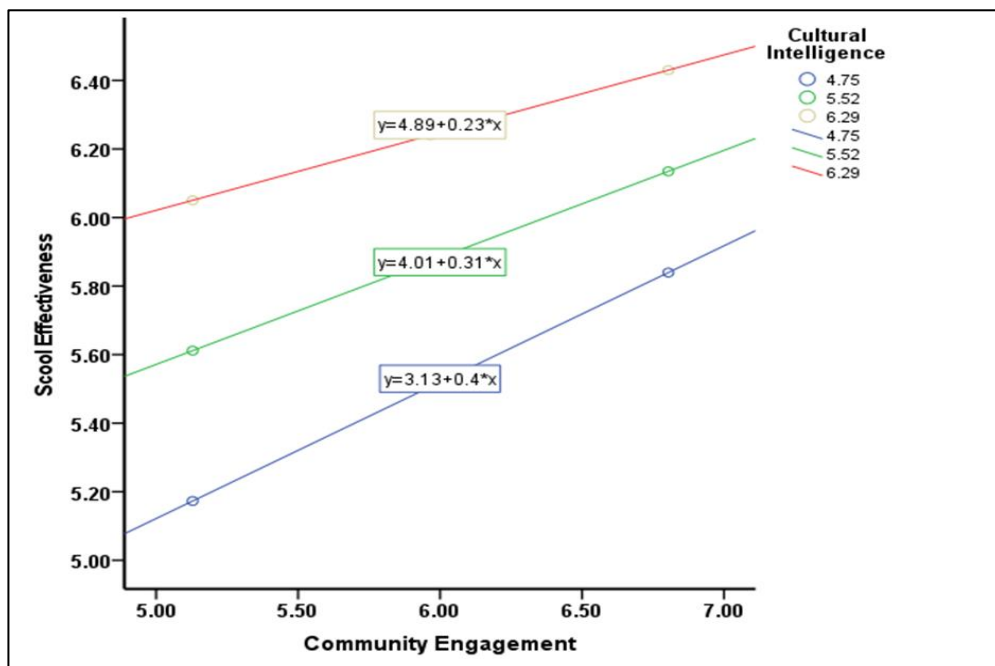


Figure 4: The impact of the sense of Cultural Intelligence on the relationship between Community Engagement and School Effectiveness.

4. Conclusion

This study investigated the moderating role of teachers' cultural intelligence (CQ) on the relationship between culturally responsive leadership, as exercised by school leaders, and school effectiveness in indigenous Malaysian schools. The findings highlight that while teachers' CQ does not significantly influence the effectiveness of Leadership Behaviour strategies—indicating that such approaches may have universally applicable benefits—it substantially enhances the impacts of school environment, teacher development, and community engagement on school effectiveness. The significance of interpersonal relationships and community integration in indigenous educational environment is highlighted by the fact that these areas profit from educator's profound comprehension and application of cultural nuances. The study highlights the necessity of professional development initiatives targeted at raising educator's CQ and indicates that it is imperative to incorporate cultural intelligence training into the framework of developing education leaders. Schools can be more effective overall by meeting the different needs of their students by cultivating a leadership that is responsive and culturally aware. In order to maximise educational outcomes through culturally responsive leadership, this study provides insightful information for establishing culturally aware educational practices in multicultural countries.

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