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The role of faculty members' cross-cultural competencies in their perceived teaching quality: Evidence from culturally-diverse classes in four European countries

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The Role of Faculty Members' Cross-Cultural Competencies in Their Perceived Teaching Quality: Evidence from Culturally-Diverse Classes in Four European Countries

Since the late 1980s, higher education (HE) institutions providing management studies (such as traditional universities and business schools) as well as other studies have experienced an increasing pressure to organize their teaching, research and service activities on an international scale (Beerkens & Derwende, 2007; Stone, 2006). The pressure to internationalize HE stems from at least two sources. First, it comes from the need to make "HE more responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalization of societies, economy and labour markets" (Kälvermark & Van der Wende, 1997, p. 19). Second, it arises from the fact that local budgets are decreasing (Stone, 2006). Hence, HE institutions are becoming increasingly dependent on grants for curriculum development or research activities offered by supra-national organizations such as the European Union, OECD, and UNESCO (Kehm, 2003). In particular, the European Union has a long tradition of promoting the internationalization of both students and faculty.

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To ensure continuity, HE institutions providing management studies have undertaken a wide range of initiatives to stimulate the international flow of both students and faculty. On the one hand, foreign students may be attracted through their institution's participation in exchange programs (for instance SOCRATES), by the supply of English-taught educational programs, and by joint activities with partner HE institutions or HE of a foreign origin (for example institutions in emerging countries such as China and India). On the other hand, HE institutions may also rely on foreign faculty of partner institutions to participate in local educational activities or seek foreign (local) personnel to staff their satellite campuses abroad (Schuerholz-Lehr, 2007).

To perform well in today's cross-cultural[1] business environment, management graduates should develop a high degree of cross-cultural competence, which may be defined as "the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures" (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, & Colby, 2003, p. 177). While some scholars in the field of HE have stressed the importance of management graduates developing cross-cultural competencies (Gacel-Ávila, 2005; Kumar & Usunier, 2001; Laughton & Ottewill, 2000), others have raised the issue of faculty's ability to adequately deal with a culturally-diverse group of students (Barmeyer, 2004; Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Duckworth, Levy, & Levy, 2005; Halse & Baumgart, 2000; Korhonen, 2002; Schuerholz-Lehr, 2007; Straffon, 2003; Teekens, 2003; Westrick & Yuen, 2007). Many authors have argued that faculty members with a high level of cross-cultural competence are better able to deal with the challenges and issues of culturally-diverse classes. Cross-culturally competent teachers operate simultaneously and effectively with students from multiple cultures (Korhonen, 2002, p. 32). They are unique in that they are able to overcome differences in cultural backgrounds, expectations, educational needs, and academic traditions (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Duckworth et al., 2005; Schuerholz-Lehr, 2007; Teekens, 2003). Cross-cultural competence is typically related to cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Cui & Awa, 1992; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). For instance, McAllister and Irvine (2000) defined an effective teacher (in a multicultural classroom) as someone "who has achieved an advanced level in the process of becoming intercultural and whose cognitive, affective and behavioral characteristics are not limited but are open to growth beyond the psychological parameters of only one culture" (p. 4).

An adequate way to build a high level of cross-cultural effectiveness is to participate in a well-designed cross-cultural training program. Prior

research has provided two distinctive orientations towards providing adequate cross-cultural training: a *culture-specific* approach and a *culture-general* approach (see Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000). In a culture-specific approach (Albert, 1983), trainees are being prepared to optimally interact with people from one particular target culture. To this end, they are confronted with puzzling cross-cultural interactions in the target culture and learn about the difference in the preferred course of action in the target culture as opposed to that one in their own culture. The culture-general approach (Brislin, Cushner, Cherrie, & Yong, 1986) aims to facilitate a trainee to move through the developmental stages of intercultural sensitivity (as described by Bennett, 1986). Hence, the trainee may evolve from a self-centered state to having a greater identification with society and thus experience being a member of a larger global community (McAllister & Irvine, 2000). As faculty members need to interact effectively with people from different cultures (within the context of a culturally-diverse classroom), we relied on a culture-general approach.

As a framework for studying cross-cultural competence we relied on work by Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) who distinguished between five personality traits that are relevant to successful functioning across cultures: *cultural empathy*, *open-mindedness*, *emotional stability*, *social initiative*, and *flexibility*. Cultural empathy refers to one's ability to empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of individuals from a different cultural background. Individuals who classify as being open-minded have an open and unprejudiced attitude toward different groups and toward different cultural norms and values. Individuals who are emotionally stable have a tendency to remain calm at all times, even when they are being confronted with a stressful situation. Individuals who are emotionally stable typically do not react emotionally. Next, individuals who score high on social initiative have a tendency to approach social situations in an active way and to take initiatives. Finally, flexible individuals have a tendency to regard new and unknown situations as a challenge, and they manage to adjust their behavior to the demands of such new and unknown situations.

To examine these personality traits empirically, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) introduced a self-report, survey-based instrument. Their instrument is known as the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) and has been found to have stable psychometric properties in different cultural settings (Leong, 2007). In addition, MPQ dimensions have been found to be predictive of key indicators of students' success in cross-cultural settings: academic performance, international orientation/aspirations, sociopsychological adaptation, and psychological health (see studies by Leong, 2007; Long, Yan, Yang, & Van

Oudenhoven, 2009; Mol, Van Oudenhoven, & Van der Zee, 2001; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). The predictive validity of the MPQ also extends to other groups of people such as job applicants and employees (see Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; Van der Zee, Zaal, & Piekstra, 2003).

Even though some research (Helms, 2004; Khistan, 1990) studied the extent to which faculty in HE possess cross-cultural competencies, no empirical research has linked those competencies to both foreign and domestic students' assessments of the learning experience (see Schuerholz-Lehr, 2007). Some authors (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Westrick & Yuen, 2007) have emphasized this lack of empirical research on the relationship between the cross-cultural competence of faculty and their performance when teaching in an international context. An empirical assessment of the relationship between faculty's cross-cultural competence and students' evaluations of faculty's teaching performance is of key importance in light of the increasing cultural diversity of both management students and faculty and the growing importance of having satisfied students (as required by accreditation bodies such as Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business [AACSB] and European Quality Improvement System [EQUIS]). At a practical level, evidence of a positive relationship between cross-cultural competence of faculty and teaching evaluations may have implications for faculty selection and training practices in HE. For instance, an assessment of job applicants' cross-cultural competence prior to being hired as a faculty member might be critical if cross-cultural competence were to be related to teaching performance. Additionally, tenured faculty with low levels of cross-cultural competence might be encouraged to sign up for cross-cultural training programs (Desphande & Viswesvaran, 1992). Therefore, the present paper addresses this key research need by examining the link between cross-cultural competence of faculty and their teaching evaluations using data collected in four countries: Belgium, France, Germany, and The Netherlands.

Impact of Cross-Cultural Competence on Teaching Performance

As indicated by Hofstede (2000), differences in value patterns within a class consisting of students and an instructor with diverse cultural backgrounds may, at least potentially, give rise to mutual misunderstandings, poor communication, and less effective cross-cultural interactions. If faculty members posses a high level of cross-cultural competence, which typically stems from their prior experience in managing the learning processes of culturally-diverse groups of students (Bhawuk

& Brislin, 1992), students will be more inclined to reflect positively on the learning experience, the nature of the cross-cultural interaction, and the faculty member's teaching performance (see Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). In turn, these faculty members are likely to receive good evaluations by all students, regardless of their cultural background. However, if faculty members lack cross-cultural competence and relevant cross-cultural experience, students belonging to a culturally-diverse group may be expected to provide poor evaluations of their learning experience, the nature of the cross-cultural interaction, and the faculty members' teaching performance. Given that the concept of teaching performance comprises multiple dimensions (see SEEQ instrument discussed in the Method section), the strongest empirical relationships are expected between the most critical dimensions of cross-cultural competence (i.e., cultural empathy and open-mindedness; see Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002) and those dimensions of teaching performance that indicate the (perceived) quality of cross-cultural interaction, in particular: the dimensions group interaction and individual rapport (see also SEEQ instrument as discussed in the Method section). Being sensitive to other people's feelings (i.e., being empathic) and having a genuine interest in other cultures (i.e., being open-minded) are two traits that are likely to stimulate a successful interaction and good relationship between the faculty member and the individual students.

In culturally-diverse classes, the necessity of having a relatively high level of cross-cultural competence (and thus also cross-cultural experience) in order to perform well as an instructor may be conditional on both the nature of the assessor (domestic or foreign student) and the one who is being assessed (domestic or foreign faculty member) (see Table 1). If a *foreign* faculty member is assessed by *domestic* students (being part of a culturally-diverse group of students), the faculty member's cross-cultural competence is expected to be a critical determinant of his/her teaching performance (see Table 1, Cell 2). In order to transfer knowledge and stimulate effective interactions as perceived by domestic students, a foreign faculty member needs to demonstrate a high degree of sensitivity to cultural issues (i.e., cross-cultural competence). If the faculty member respects the domestic students' norms and values, and uses teaching methods that are closely aligned with the learning styles preferred by students from that culture (Barmeyer, 2004; Yamazaki, 2005), the quality of teaching might be favorably assessed. Moreover, the domestic students (i.e., who are likely to form a majority group) may have high expectations regarding the cultural adjustment of a member of a minority group, the foreign faculty member. As the services

marketing literature (in particular the "confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm"; see Oliver, 1980) has shown, prior expectations are typically used as a benchmark to assess the quality of actual service delivery (e.g., education provided). Consequently, not meeting these (prior) expectations is likely to lead to poor performance ratings.

We concur with Bordie (1970) that there is a parallel between the case of a domestic faculty member being assessed by foreign students and the case of a foreign faculty member being assessed by domestic students (see Table 1, Cell 3). According to Bordie (1970), faculty members who stay in their home country (that is *domestic* faculty members) and who work with a culturally-diverse group of students (that is a group including *foreign* students), experience very much the same problems with intercultural interactions as faculty members who work in a foreign country and deal primarily with domestic students. Recent work by Zhou and Todman (2008) has demonstrated that both foreign students and domestic faculty members need to be prepared to adapt to the other culture(s). Their study showed that Chinese students and domestic faculty members in the UK had to adapt mutually to overcome their differing learning and teaching expectations effectively. In sum, we expect to find a positive relationship between faculty members' cross-cultural competence and their teaching evaluations in two types of cross-cultural situations, namely when foreign faculty is assessed by domestic students (see Table 1, Cell 2), and when domestic faculty is evaluated by foreign students (see Table 1, Cell 3). As an aside, when examining absolute levels of perceived teaching performance we expect to see the following pattern: teaching performance in Cell 3 systematically exceeds teaching performance in Cell 2. We anticipate that foreign students who typically belong to a minority group are somewhat less demanding regarding the cultural adaptation of a member of the majority group (e.g., a domestic faculty member) than students belonging to a majority group (i.e., domestic students) who are being instructed by a member of a minority group (i.e., a foreign faculty member). According to the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm (see higher), the relatively low expectations (in Cell 3) will lead to relatively higher ratings of teaching performance even if actual teaching performance does not differ between Cell 2 and Cell 3.

Another cross-cultural situation concerns the case in which foreign students assess a foreign faculty member (see Table 1, Cell 4). If both faculty and students are foreign, knowledge transfer and effective interaction will also be much more likely if the faculty member is cross-culturally competent and is able to identify potential cultural gaps that are present in class so that the learning process is not negatively affected.

TABLE 1
Typology of Cross-Cultural Settings

		Faculty member (F)	
		Domestic[a] faculty member	Foreign[a] faculty member
Student group (S)	Domestic[a] students (rather culturally homogeneous)	32 domestic faculty members assessed by 457 domestic students (Cell 1) Hypothesis H1: Cross-cultural competence of faculty — *0 association* — teaching performance	14 foreign faculty members assessed by 287 domestic students (Cell 2) Hypothesis H2: Cross-cultural competence of faculty — + *association*[b] — teaching performance
	Foreign[a] students (culturally-diverse)	32 domestic faculty members assessed by 344 foreign students (Cell 3) Hypothesis H3: Cross-cultural competence of faculty — + *association*[b] — teaching performance	14 foreign faculty members assessed by 131 foreign students (Cell 4) Hypothesis H4: Cross-cultural competence of faculty — + *association*[b] — teaching performance

Notes. [a] The labels *domestic* and *foreign* are relative to the home country of the HE Institution providing management studies. [b] As mentioned in the Method section, we expect the association of cross-cultural competence of faculty with teaching performance to be most noticeable when the assessment of teaching performance mainly emphasizes the quality of the interaction between student(s) and faculty (i.e., group interaction and individual rapport).

Failure to do so on behalf of the foreign faculty member is likely to lead to low performance evaluations by the foreign students attending his/her classes (see Table 1, Cell 4).

Finally, in situations in which both the faculty member and the students evaluating the faculty member's teaching performance belong to the same (domestic) culture (see Table 1, Cell 1), culturally endorsed norms and personal values as well as teaching and learning preferences are expected to be very similar. As a result, the cross-cultural competence of the faculty members is not considered to be particularly critical. As a matter of fact, we do not expect to find a significant relationship between cross-cultural competence of a domestic faculty member and their teaching evaluations as provided by domestic students (see Table 1, Cell 1). The situation in which a domestic faculty is evaluated by domestic students represents a natural baseline against which all other cross-cultural cases are evaluated.

Other Factors Determining Teaching Performance

To make sure the impact of a faculty member's cross-cultural competence on his/her perceived teaching performance is assessed adequately (i.e., as accurately as possible) our assessment needs to take into account other variables which are also known to influence teaching performance (e.g., see Baek & Shin, 2008). These variables are described below and will serve as covariates in our statistical models.

The literature on gender bias in students' assessments of teaching performance in higher education (for instance, see Basow, 1995; Feldman, 1993) has shown that such a bias may be present in students' assessments of teaching performance. Hence, to allow for the possibility of gender effects we aimed to correct for the gender of both student and faculty member.

Second, length of teaching experience of the faculty member is also known to have instrumental value in predicting teaching performance ratings collected from students (Feldman, 1983; McPherson, 2006).

At the faculty level, two additional variables were considered to be relevant, namely the extent to which a faculty member has traveled abroad, and whether or not the faculty member has obtained a formal educational qualification/degree. The decision to take into account data on a faculty's member frequency of traveling abroad is based on previous work by Khistan (1990). He found that *travel abroad* (see also Helms, 2004) increased the probability that a faculty member has a positive attitude towards teaching effectively in cross-cultural settings. As a positive attitude towards reaching a particular goal (in this case, teaching effectively in an international context) may increase the chance

that one actually reaches that goal, a faculty's frequency of traveling abroad was considered to be (potentially) relevant within the context of our study. Next, we expected that being formally trained in the didactical aspects of teaching may determine faculty members' ability to teach effectively in international education (just as in national education). For this reason we gathered data on having obtained a formal educational qualification/degree to be relevant within the context of our study.

At the student level, two additional variables were deemed to be relevant. The first variable expresses the extent to which the actual teaching methods used in the course resemble students' preferred teaching methods. The second variable provides a measure of the cross-cultural distance between the student and faculty member. The literature on learning styles (see Barmeyer, 2004; Yamazaki, 2005) provides the basis for our decision to include data on the extent to which actual teaching methods used in the course resemble students' preferred teaching methods. This literature has shown that preferred learning (or teaching) styles represent individual-level characteristics which are, at least to some extent, culturally determined. As argued by Felder (1993), students showing a close match with their teacher in terms of preferred learning/teaching styles are expected to have a more positive attitude towards their teacher. A more favorable attitude will result in higher ratings of their teacher's performance (Felder, 1993). In contrast, teachers who adopt teaching styles that do not match at all with their students' preferences are likely to get poor performance evaluations (Barmeyer, 2004; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Hativa & Birenbaum (2000) have shown that students tend to prefer those teaching methods (group discussions, student presentations, and so forth) that are a reflection of their preferred learning approaches. In the same way, faculty members are expected to show a tendency to use those teaching methods that closely match their preferred learning style (at least, if they have full discretion to decide on what teaching methods to use).

The second control variable at the student level concerns the cross-cultural "distance" between the student and faculty member. On the basis of the cross-cultural research literature (e.g., see the overview by Shenkar, 2001) one may reasonably expect that cross-cultural distance between student and faculty member is inversely related to that student's ratings of the faculty member's teaching performance.

Method

Sample

The data which have been collected for this study came from several HE institutions. Four clear criteria for inclusion were specified prior

to data collection. First, only HE institutions in Belgium (BE), France (FR), Germany (DE), and The Netherlands (NL) were included, all of which are member states of the European Union (EU), an institution that is heavily promoting international flows of faculty and students (see Introduction). These specific countries were chosen (a) because of reasons of convenience related to the geographical proximity of these four countries (i.e., close enough to also enable the collection of data on campus) and (b) because they represent a reasonable level of variability in terms of the degree of internationalization of (English-taught) management programs. The list of HE institutions providing data for this study is not included in the paper for reasons of confidentiality.

Second, HE institutions that did not offer a PhD track in economics and/or management were not considered for inclusion in this study. Thus, this study is limited to HE institutions providing academic rather than professional education. Third, only graduate-level (master's) courses that are part of a master's program in management were considered. The set of courses providing data for this study were homogeneous in that they were all dealing with domain-specific topics in various fields within management studies (for example marketing, organizational behavior, finance). Courses dealing with research methodology and statistics were not considered as they are typically perceived as being very distinct from management-oriented courses, the type of courses that best represent a master's program in management. Furthermore, methodology and statistics courses may be considered to be less susceptible to cultural differences. The last and fourth criterion relates to the language of instruction. All master's courses providing data for this study were taught in English as they were part of an English-taught master's program.

Information regarding these four criteria of inclusion was first collected through desk research involving exhaustive Internet searches and the consultation of published sources such as study guides. Through our initial interactions (by telephone and/or e-mail) with faculty members, we were able to supplement the data collected during our initial desk research. As explained earlier, we targeted only faculty members teaching a management-related course which meets all four criteria listed above. They were also asked whether the course under consideration (a) was attended by a culturally-diverse class consisting of at least eight domestic and at least eight foreign students (to ensure we get a *balanced* view on performance assessments as made by domestic and foreign students) and (b) was more than halfway through or, alternatively, was completed no longer than two months ago (that is to ensure students' assessments of teaching performance would be sufficiently accurate). Only when

these two additional criteria were met, did we collect relevant data on their master's course.

All data collection took place between 2007 and 2008. In total, based on our desk research we identified 440 faculty members who (after being contacted for the first time) confirmed that they provided a management-related master's course that fulfilled all criteria listed above. One should, however, realize that true population data on relevant faculty members or courses (i.e., adequate sampling frames) were not available in any of the four countries under study, implying that the 440 faculty members identified by means of our desk research only represent a (presumably sizable) subset of the entire population of faculty members providing the type of master's courses which qualify for inclusion in our study.

The 440 faculty members were invited to complete an Internet-based survey in English (see further on), and to provide e-mail addresses of domestic and foreign students taking their class (i.e., to collect data on their teaching performance). The faculty members were informed that the study would help to gain an understanding of students' perceptions on teaching performance and no further details were provided. They were also told that all answers provided would be dealt with in a confidential manner as individual-level data would not be reported.

Despite our best efforts (including sending multiple reminders) we could not avoid ending up with a relatively low number of courses in our dataset. Eventually, useful data on 46 master's courses were collected. All 46 master's courses (7 in BE, 11 in FR, 8 in DE, and 20 in NL) were taught by a different faculty member. The main reason for the high level of non response (i.e., 394 master's courses out of 440) in this study was the confidential character of students' contact information, as well as faculty's reluctance to provide personal data which would enable an assessment of their teaching performance. A comparison of the 46 master's courses included in our study with the type of master's courses typically offered by the 50 top business schools in the USA (see Navarro, 2008, who identifies five course categories) showed that the broad categories retrieved in the 46 master's courses included in our study were representative for a typical master's curriculum in management.

As indicated in Table 2, both foreign and domestic faculty in our sample are not significantly different in terms of age (the average age in both groups is in the mid-forties), gender (a male majority in both groups), the number of languages in which they can teach effectively (close to 1.5 on average in both groups), their experience with teaching in HE (slightly under or over 15 years), their formal training in

education (about 43% in both groups have obtained a formal teaching qualification), and their possession of a PhD degree (over 80% in both groups). However, in contrast to the group consisting of domestic faculty, the group of foreign faculty: (a) has a higher probability of having family members with a different nationality than their own (50.0% vs. 21.9%, $p = 0.057$) and (b) has a longer track record of living outside their country of origin (4.3 vs. 1.9 years on average, $p = 0.000$ denoting a highly significant difference). In sum, these figures show that, when compared to domestic faculty members, foreign faculty members have been exposed more intensively and for a longer period to other cultures either through their family composition or through their living and working situation.

After completion of the English Internet-based survey by a faculty member, the master's students who attended the master's course were also invited to complete a survey in English. The students were informed that the study would help the understanding of students' perceptions on teaching performance, and that all data would be treated confidentially (i.e., names of individual students would not be provided to any third party, including their teacher). In general, data were collected by emailing students and asking them to participate to a web-based survey. However, in some cases, the faculty member allowed us to travel to his/her institution to collect the data in person from the master's students on campus using a paper-and-pencil version of the web-based survey. Eventually 1,219 master's students (744 domestic students and 475 foreign students) provided useful data for our analyses. This sample includes on average 16.2 domestic students and 10.3 foreign students per course. Foreign students came from 81 different countries spread across the world.

Measures

Multicultural Personality Questionnaire. We made use of the (91-item) *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ), a self-report instrument to measure five important dimensions of cross-cultural competence (see Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). To measure these dimensions the MPQ includes the following scales: cultural empathy (18 items), open-mindedness (18 items), emotional stability (20 items), social initiative (17 items), and flexibility (18 items). The cultural empathy scale includes items such as "notices when someone is in trouble" and "understands other people's feelings" (both of which are positively phrased). The open-mindedness scale includes items such as "gets involved in other cultures" and "finds other religions interesting" (two items which are positively phrased). Sample items for the emotional

TABLE 2

Characteristics of Foreign and Domestic Faculty

	Foreign[a] (N = 14)	Domestic (N = 32)	Statistical difference test
Background characteristics	M (SD) or percentage	M (SD) or percentage	Student's t value (not assuming equal variances) or z value for two proportions [p value] (Cohen's d[b])
Age	45 (11)	44 (9)	t = 0.324 [0.748]
Male (gender)	64.3%	78.1%	z = -0.983 [0.325]
Partner, children, *and/or* parents have a different nationality	50.0%	21.9%*	z = 1.908 [0.057]
Number of foreign languages in which one can teach effectively	1.57 (0.85)	1.50 (0.72)	t = 0.270 [0.787]
Number of years lived outside their country of origin	4.29 (1.38)	1.91*** (1.71)	t = 4.983 [0.000]
Number of years teaching at HE institutions	15.43 (10.73)	13.19 (6.79)	t = 0.721 [0.481]
Percentage having a PhD	92.9%	81.3%	z = 1.008 [0.313]
Percentage having a formal teaching qualification	42.9%	43.8%	z = 0.548 [0.583]
Dimensions of cross-cultural competence:			
Cultural empathy (α = 0.89)	3.74 (0.61)	3.88 (0.40)	t = -0.782 [0.444] (0.036)
Emotional stability (α = 0.83)	3.27 (0.48)	3.27 (0.43)	t = 0.018 [0.986] (0.000)
Flexibility (α = 0.85)	3.59** (0.36)	3.28** (0.53)	t = 2.307 [0.027] (0.090)
Open-mindedness (α = 0.85)	3.76 (0.52)	3.83 (0.37)	t = -0.407 [0.688] (0.018)
Social initiative (α = 0.70)	3.80 (0.65)	3.74 (0.74)	t = 0.257 [0.799] (0.016)

Notes. [a] Foreign faculty originated from the following countries: Austria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Russian Federation, Switzerland, UK, and US.

[b] Values higher than 0.80 are large, inbetween 0.50 and 0.80 moderate, inbetween 0.20 and 0.50 small, and values smaller than 0.20 very small (Cohen, 1988).

One or multiple asterisks indicate a statistically higher mean score compared to the other faculty group using a maximum type I-error rate of 0.10 (***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10).

stability scale are: "can put setbacks in perspective" and "keeps calm at ill-luck" (both of which are positively phrased). The social initiative scale comprises items like "is inclined to speak out" and "is often the driving force behind things" (two positively phrased items). Finally, the flexibility scale includes items such as: "starts a new life easily" (positively phrased) and "avoids adventure" (negatively phrased). All items included in the MPQ were measured on a 5-point scale, and indicated the extent to which the respondent believed the items were applicable to him or her. The scale values and labels were: 1 = totally not applicable; 2 = hardly applicable; 3 = moderately applicable; 4 = largely applicable; and 5 = completely applicable.

As indicated in Table 2, all dimensions of cross-cultural competence show internal consistencies, that is Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging between 0.70 (social initiative) and 0.89 (cultural empathy).

Marsh's SEEQ. To collect students' assessments of teacher performance, the students were asked to complete an adapted version of Marsh's SEEQ questionnaire (Marsh, 1982). This adapted version included only performance dimensions which we assumed to be conceptually related to teaching in a cross-cultural context: *group interaction* (4 items), *individual rapport* (4 items), *learning* (4 items), and *organization* (4 items), as well as *overall performance* (2 items). These dimensions can be subdivided in three groups: (a) dimensions which mainly emphasize the teacher's approach to managing the learning process (organization, overall performance), (b) the individual learning by the student (dimension denoted learning), and (c) the quality of the interaction between one or more students and the teacher (group interaction and individual rapport). All items measuring dimensions of teaching performance were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from *very poor* to *very good*. Marsh's SEEQ instrument has been applied extensively in different academic and cross-cultural settings (Coffey & Gibbs, 2001; Marsh, 1986; Ryan & Harrison, 1995; Watkins, 1994), and many empirical studies have been conducted attesting to its adequate construct-related and criterion-related validity (Coffey & Gibbs, 2001; Marsh, 1982, 1984; Marsh & Hocevar, 1991; Watkins, 1994). As indicated in Table 3, all performance dimensions considered in this study show adequate levels of internal consistency (ranging between 0.76 and 0.86).

Faculty-level covariates. The covariates gender of faculty member and length of experience in teaching in HE were measured as a dichotomy (for gender; males having a value of 0 and females having a value of 1) or as a metric variable expressed in years (for length of experience in teaching). Even though we planned to include both gender of student and faculty member in our statistical analyses the sparse data on female

TABLE 3

Teaching Performance of Faculty as Assessed by Foreign and Domestic Master Students: Difference Tests and Effect Sizes

	Foreign students (N = 475) evaluating			Domestic students (N = 744) evaluating		
	Foreign faculty (14 faculty members) (Cell 4)	Domestic faculty (32 faculty members) (Cell 3)	Student's t test[a]	Foreign faculty (14 faculty members) (Cell 2)	Domestic faculty (32 faculty members) (Cell 1)	Student's t test[a]
	M (SD)	M (SD)	t value [p value] (Cohen's d[b])	M (SD)	M (SD)	t value [p value] (Cohen's d[b])
Group interaction (α = 0.86)	4.09 (0.48)	4.24 (0.43)	-1.01 [0.322] (0.035)	4.02 (0.42)	4.06 (0.46)	-0.22 [0.830] (0.010)
Individual rapport (α = 0.77)	4.00 (0.39)	4.21* (0.34)	-1.82 [0.082] (0.049)	4.15 (0.39)	4.06 (0.46)	0.637 [0.530] (0.022)
Learning (α = 0.82)	3.92 (0.46)	4.10 (0.43)	-1.25 [0.223] (0.043)	3.83 (0.53)	3.96 (0.36)	-0.83 [0.416] (0.032)
Organization (α = 0.76)	3.80 (0.50)	4.12** (0.38)	-2.14 [0.045] (0.077)	3.65 (0.51)	3.94* (0.38)	-1.91 [0.071] (0.073)
Overall performance (α = 0.85)	3.81 (0.60)	4.15* (0.45)	-1.91 [0.071] (0.082)	3.79 (0.71)	3.95 (0.44)	-0.74 [0.471] (0.040)

Notes. [a] We used a parametric modification of Student's t-test which does not assume equal variances in each group; the figures presented represent overall mean scores which have been calculated on the basis of the mean score obtained for each faculty member (as provided by students evaluating that faculty member).

[b] Values higher than 0.80 are large, inbetween 0.50 and 0.80 moderate, inbetween 0.20 and 0.50 small, and values smaller than 0.20 very small (Cohen, 1988).

One or multiple asterisks indicate a statistically higher overall (group) mean score compared to the other faculty group using a maximum type I-error rate of 0.10 (***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.10$).

faculty members in our sample did not allow including the covariate gender of faculty. As a consequence, our statistical analyses presented in the Results section will account only for one possible main effect, namely the difference in teaching performance ratings as provided by female and male students.

Travel abroad was measured as (an estimate of) the average number of job-related visits abroad per year.

Having obtained a formal educational qualification/degree was measured as a dichotomy. The dichotomous (0/1) variable capturing this effect showed a value of 0 if the faculty member did not obtain such a qualification or degree, and a value of 1 if he/she had obtained such a qualification or degree.

Student-level covariates. The covariate gender of student was also expressed as a dichotomous (0/1) variable expressing the effect of being a female student (i.e., females having a value of 1 and males having a value of 0).

To ensure adequate measurement of the covariate match in teaching methods (that is, the extent to which the teaching methods that are used are also the ones that are preferred by the student) we collected all necessary information for faculty members and students. Information on the actual teaching methods was collected from the faculty member who taught the course under study. Faculty members were expected to indicate which of the following teaching methods were actually integrated in the course plan: (classical) lectures by the faculty member, in-depth discussions of scientific papers, group discussions (for example on relevant actual themes in society), student presentations, case studies, reading assignments (self-study), role plays or simulations, and invited guest speakers making contributions to the course (multiple teaching methods are usually combined). Next, master's students were asked to provide data on their most preferred teaching methods, by indicating their top three (ranked data) from the same set of teaching methods. Based on their responses we computed an index per course (with values between 0 and 1) of the extent to which the teaching methods used in the course were also the ones that are preferred by the domestic and foreign students, respectively.[2]

A final covariate concerns the cultural distance between student and faculty member. As data on the country of origin of both the student and the faculty member were available, we were able to use available quantitative data on known cultural dimensions of both societies (countries) of origin. In particular, we used country-specific quantifications on the nine cultural dimensions of human values as included in a well-known GLOBE study (that is, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism,

future orientation, gender egalitarianism, humane orientation, performance orientation, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, assertiveness; for more details see House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; House, Javidan, & Dorfman, 2001). More formally, cultural distance is expressed as the total sum of nine absolute difference scores (that is, one for each value dimension) between the countries of origin of the student and the faculty member. The GLOBE project (see House et al., 2004), which comprises 62 societal cultures, is one of the most comprehensive and methodologically-sound studies that provide data allowing making quantitative comparisons between societies across the world (e.g., House et al., 2001, 2004).

This absolute difference score was used as an indicator of cultural distance between the student and the faculty member. Cultural distance varied per cell (see cell-specifications in Table 1). Cultural distance was always zero in Cell 1 ($M = 0.00$, $SD = 0.00$), higher in Cell 2 ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.27$), and highest in Cell 3 ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.71$) and Cell 4 ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.68$). This pattern of mean values as observed across the four cells (e.g., zero cultural distance in Cell 1; highest mean cultural distance in Cell 4) also provides an indication of the correctness of our categorization into the four cells.

Data Analysis

Our survey data have a two-level hierarchical structure with students at level-1 nested within faculty members at level-2. As a consequence, we used a two-level hierarchical linear modeling approach (that is, a *multilevel* modeling approach; see for instance Snijders & Bosker, 1999) to assess the associations between different dimensions of cross-cultural competence and dimensions of teaching performance. In the remainder of this paper, we refer to our analytical models as *two-level hierarchical linear models*. Using this approach, level-1 uncertainty (variations at student level) is taken into account when estimating the *causal effects* at level-2 (e.g., the *presumed* effect of a faculty member's cross-cultural competence on his/her teaching performance). As with all linear modeling approaches applied to cross-sectional data, our analyses reflect merely a form of *causal reasoning*. These analyses, however, are not adequate to *prove* the direction of causality between the factors under study. So, when discussing our statistical results (in the Results section) we cautiously interpreted the estimated effects as *associations* between dimensions of cross-cultural competence and teaching performance rather than as causal *effects* between these two concepts. Since we also included covariates in our hierarchical linear models, we adequately control for the associations with these covariates when exam-

ining the associations between dimensions of cross-cultural competence and teaching performance (see Table 4).

As we are comparing significant associations across four different situations (see Table 1, Cells 1 to 4), all two-level hierarchical linear models are based on survey data from one particular situation/cell. By testing cell-specific hierarchical linear models we control for the different situations/cells in a very natural way without adding significant complexity to the models. It would have been possible to use an alternative approach to estimate hierarchical linear models based on data from all four cells. This alternative approach was not followed because the evaluation of possible cell-specific intercept terms and slopes (within such an overall model) would require a large number of complex interaction effects making the interpretation of our statistical results unnecessarily complex. Moreover, the gain in degrees of freedom as a result of analyzing data from all four cells would not outweigh the loss of degrees of freedom due to the inclusion of many interaction effects for all covariates and dimensions of cross-cultural competence.

Throughout this paper we consistently used the more liberal two-tailed $p < 0.10$ rule instead of the $p < 0.05$ rule to define a significant association. This more liberal rule is expected to compensate (at least partially) for the loss of statistical power due to the limited number of foreign faculty providing data for Cell 2 and Cell 4. Because of the small number of degrees of freedom (in particular on level-2) it was technically not possible to estimate the *joint* effect of all five dimensions of cross-cultural competence on a particular dimension of teaching performance. Instead, we included each dimension of cross-cultural competence as a predictor in a separate two-level hierarchical linear model. Hence, in total we estimated 100 models, namely 25 models for each cell (that is 5 [number of dimensions of cross-cultural competence] × 5 [number of dimensions of teaching performance]). As such, our analysis strategy was based on replicating very similar two-level hierarchical linear models, and it looked for patterns of significant associations (between the concepts under study) across the four different situations/cells.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows that both groups of faculty (i.e., foreign and domestic) have a cross-cultural competence pattern that is very much alike. This is especially true for the following four dimensions of cross-cultural com-

TABLE 4

Overview of Factors Determining Teaching Performance as Derived from Two-Level Hierarchical Linear Models[a]

	Cell 1					Cell 2					Cell 3					Cell 4				
	OP	GI	IR	LE	OR	OP	GI	IR	LE	OR	OP	GI	IR	LE	OR	OP	GI	IR	LE	OR
Control Variables																				
Student is female (L1)																-			-	
Match in teaching methods (L1)					+			+	+	+		+							+	
Cultural distance between student and faculty (L1)											-									
Faculty has a teaching qualification (L2)							+	+												
Number of years in higher education (L2)							+	+					+							
Cross-cultural competence of faculty (MPQ):																				
Cultural empathy (L2)		+															+		+	
Emotional stability (L2)																				
Flexibility (L2)																				
Open-mindedness (L2)		+					+													
Social initiative (L2)		+																		

OP = overall performance
GI = group interaction
IR = individual rapport
LE = learning
OR = organization
L1 = level 1 (student)
L2 = level 2 (faculty member)

Note. [a] To save journal space this table only presents significant effects (using a + or – sign) as identified in our two-level hierarchical linear models; an overview table with all statistical details including non-significant effects is available from the first author; cell-specific sample sizes: $N = 457$ (Cell 1); $N = 287$ (Cell 2); $N = 344$ (Cell 3); $N = 131$ (Cell 4).

petence: emotional stability, social initiative, open-mindedness, and cultural empathy (see non-significant p values, that is $\alpha > 0.10$, and values for Cohen's d in Table 2). Only the group-specific mean scores for the MPQ dimension of flexibility turned to be significantly different across both groups of faculty ($p = 0.027$). More specifically, foreign faculty members were found to be somewhat more flexible than their domestic counterparts. Next, the reader may have noticed that the results in Table 2 show a clear pattern across Cells 2 and 3. This pattern reveals that teaching performance of domestic faculty as supplied by foreign students (Cell 3) is systematically higher than teaching performance of foreign faculty members as supplied by domestic students (Cell 2). This pattern is in line with our expectation, and reconfirms that students who belong to the majority group (i.e., domestic students) have relatively high expectations towards faculty members of a minority group (i.e., foreign faculty members).

Table 3 reveals that foreign faculty tend to receive somewhat lower performance ratings than domestic faculty regardless of the group of students making the assessment (foreign or domestic students). Even though this tendency is clear from the figures presented in Table 3, many differences in students' assessments of foreign and domestic faculty's performance are reported as not being statistically significant ($\alpha > 0.10$), that is six out of 10 tests produce non-significant results.

Obviously the lack of significant differences reported may also be caused by limited statistical power due to the relative small sample sizes of both groups (foreign faculty's and domestic faculty's mean scores are based on 14 and 32 individual mean scores, respectively). If one focuses exclusively on significant differences, then domestic faculty is perceived to perform better than foreign faculty when it comes to: (a) the organization of their course (according to both foreign and domestic students) and (b) individual rapport and overall performance (according to foreign students only). As a result, the patterns observed in the data have shown that foreign faculty seems to have greater difficulty than domestic faculty when it comes to obtaining high performance evaluations. In particular, foreign students seem to provide foreign faculty members with performance ratings which are systematically lower than the ones they provide to domestic faculty members.

Analysis of Covariates

As mentioned before, a number of possible covariates were selected for this study (see Method section). At level-1 (student level) the following covariates were considered: the degree of similarity between teaching methods used in the course and the student's preferred teaching

methods (i.e., match in teaching methods), cultural distance, and gender of student.

At level-2 (faculty member) the list of possible covariates included travel abroad, length of experience in teaching in HE (in years), and formal educational qualification or degree.

A series of two-level hierarchical linear models was estimated to assess the association of covariates and the dimensions of cross-cultural competence (one in each hierarchical linear model) on the one hand, with dimensions of teaching performance on the other hand. One covariate, namely average number of job-related visits abroad per year (i.e., travel abroad), turned out not to be significantly associated with any of the dimensions of teaching performance. So, we decided to exclude this covariate from our final hierarchical linear models summarized in Table 4. The decision to exclude this covariate in these final models was taken in order to avoid loss of statistical power due to the inefficient use of degrees of freedom. As indicated in the Method section, we also had to drop the covariate gender of faculty member as the data on female faculty members in our sample was too sparse to estimate the effect of this covariate. A complete overview of the nature of significant (positive or negative) relationships is shown in Table 4. The computational details concerning the results presented in Table 4 are available from the first author.

Empirical Relationship between Covariates and Teaching Performance Dimensions

Results presented in Table 4 show that a match in teaching methods (teaching methods as preferred by the student and used by the faculty member) was significantly and positively associated with various dimensions of teaching performance in all four cells included in this study. In Cell 1 (domestic faculty assessed by domestic students), a match in teaching methods was positively associated with performance ratings of course organization (see Table 4). In Cell 2 (foreign faculty assessed by domestic students), a match in teaching methods was positively associated with multiple performance dimensions, namely: individual rapport, learning, and course organization. In Cell 3 (domestic faculty assessed by foreign students), a match in teaching methods was positively associated with group interaction. Finally, in Cell 4 (foreign faculty assessed by foreign students) a match in teaching methods was positively associated with students' learning. In line with our expectations, these results provided sufficient empirical support for the positive association of a match in teaching methods as preferred by the student and used by the faculty member with students' evaluations of teacher performance.

Having earned a formal teaching qualification seems to be especially beneficial for foreign faculty who are being evaluated by domestic students (Table 1, Cell 2). Table 4 shows that, in Cell 2, a formal teaching qualification was positively associated with students' assessments of group interaction and individual rapport. Having a formal teaching qualification did, however, seem not to be (positively) associated with teaching performance in the other cells. We expected that being formally trained in the didactical aspects of how to deal with groups of students (as part of an educational program leading to a formal teaching qualification) may be positively related to dimensions of teaching performance such as (the quality of) group interaction and individual rapport. However, we anticipated that such a positive relation would also have occurred in the other cells (i.e., Cells 1, 3, and 4).

The number of years a faculty member taught in HE was found to be positively associated with some dimensions of teaching performance but typically only in Cell 2 and Cell 3. As shown in Table 4, the following dimensions of teaching performance were found to be involved in this association: group interaction (Cell 2), and individual rapport (Cell 2 and Cell 3). As such, our data seems to suggest that, especially in cross-cultural encounters in which one of the parties involved is domestic (i.e., Cell 2 and Cell 3), length of teaching experience of a faculty member is positively related to those dimensions of teaching performance that reflect the quality of interaction between one or more students and the faculty member.

Students' gender was found to be associated only with overall teaching performance and learning in Cell 4 (both students and faculty member are foreign). In both cases females provided somewhat lower ratings of performance/learning when compared to their male counterparts. Even though Table 4 indicates that a significant (negative) association is rarely found, its occurrence may indicate a lower level of appreciation of female students for the faculty members which, in our sample, are predominantly male. As such, our data does not completely exclude the possibility of a negative different-gender relation (that is, faculty member and student having a different gender).

In contrast to what we expected, our hierarchical linear models did not provide strong empirical support for the hypothesized negative association of cultural distance between student and faculty member with individual dimensions of teaching performance. Only the overall (teaching) performance was found to be negatively associated with cultural distance. This negative association was found in Cell 3 only.

Test of Hypotheses: Relationship between Cross-Cultural Competence and Teaching Performance

Table 4 informs us about the possible associations between dimensions of cross- cultural competence on teaching performance after correcting for possible associations between the dimensions of teaching performance and the covariates included in this study. As explained in Table 1 (see table notes), we anticipated that the associations involving core dimensions of cross-cultural competence (primarily cultural empathy and open-mindedness; see Leone, Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Perugini, & Ercolani, 2005) will be most noticeable when students rated the quality of group interaction and individual rapport.

Hypothesis H1 (see Table 1) stated that if domestic faculty is assessed by domestic students (Cell 1), cross-cultural competence of business faculty will not be associated with teaching performance. In contrast to our expectation, our two-level hierarchical linear models (see Table 4, results concerning Cell 1) showed that three out of five dimensions of cross-cultural competence (i.e., cultural empathy, open-mindedness, and social initiative) are significantly and positively associated with group interaction. In Cell 1, all other dimensions of teaching performance were, however, not associated with dimensions of cross-cultural competence. So, our study failed to provide full empirical evidence for Hypothesis H1. However, the significant positive associations found between cultural empathy, open-mindedness (the two core dimensions of cross-cultural competence), and social initiative on the one hand, and group interaction on the other hand (in Cell 1) may suggest that domestic students may be well aware of problems (if present) in the interaction between their domestic teacher and group members belonging to a different culture. Being aware of such problems, they may have decided not to provide high scores on the quality of interaction between their domestic teacher and the culturally-diverse group of students. Taking into account these findings we may infer that lower ratings for the quality of group interaction typically occur if the teacher lacks cross-cultural competence, and—in particular—cultural empathy, open-mindedness, and social initiative (see Table 4, Cell 1).

Hypothesis H2 and H3 (see Table 1) respectively, stated that in situations in which one of either parties involved is foreign (foreign faculty in Cell 2, foreign students in Cell 3), cross-cultural competence of faculty members will be positively associated with students' assessments of faculty member's teaching performance. As far as Hypothesis H2 is concerned, our analyses provided some evidence of such positive association in Cell 2 (faculty being assessed is foreign but the assessors

are domestic students). More specifically, the results for Cell 2 as presented in Table 4 show that one core dimension of the MPQ (that is open-mindedness, not cultural empathy) is positively associated with domestic students' assessments of the quality of group interaction with the foreign faculty member. So, we may conclude that our data provided only weak empirical evidence to support Hypothesis H2. If one looks at the results related to Hypothesis H3 (see Table 4, Cell 3) it is clear that Hypothesis H3 is not supported. None of the dimensions of domestic faculty members' teaching performance as assessed by foreign students is significantly (and positively) associated with the various dimensions of cross-cultural competence.

Before discussing the results related to Hypothesis H4, we re-examined the potential role of the covariate match in teaching methods. As match in teaching methods frequently popped up in Cells 2 and 3 as a variable which is positively associated with various dimensions of teaching performance (see Table 4), one may correctly state that one *possible outcome*[3] of cross-cultural competence, namely the adjustment of teaching methods to fit better with students' cultural preferences, is found to predict the level of one's teaching performance with respect to group interaction.

Hypothesis H4 (see Table 1) stated that in cases where foreign faculty are assessed by foreign students (Cell 4), cross-cultural competence of the faculty member will be positively associated with students' assessments of these faculty members' teaching performance. As shown in Table 4, two dimensions of teaching performance, namely: group interaction and learning were significantly and positively associated with cultural empathy, one of the two core dimensions of cross-cultural competence. These positive associations provide some empirical evidence to support Hypothesis H4.

Discussion

Our empirical study is unique in that it is the first (international) study which empirically examined the often claimed higher effectiveness/success of cross-culturally competent faculty when dealing with culturally-diverse groups of students. Given that HE institutions providing management studies are under a lot of pressure to attract international faculty and students and that they should strive for high levels of customer satisfaction (for instance to obtain accreditation), a verification of this claim is timely and of utmost importance.

At the more general level, our data revealed that when dealing with a culturally-diverse group of students (as in this study), faculty members

who are cross-culturally competent get higher scores on at least one dimension of teaching performance, namely (the quality of) interaction with the group of students. Based on our empirical results (as summarized in Table 4) we suggest narrowing the concept of being a cross-culturally competent faculty member down to being a faculty member that displays a high level of cultural empathy combined with a high degree of open-mindedness. Our suggestion to focus primarily on cultural empathy and open-mindedness (as the most important dimensions of a cross-culturally competent faculty member) is justifiable given that the strongest (positive) relationships between dimensions of cross-cultural competence and dimensions of teaching performance typically involved cultural empathy and/or open-mindedness on the one hand, and (the quality of) group interaction on the other hand. Prior MPQ studies (e.g., Leone et al., 2005; Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2001; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002; Van der Zee et al., 2003) have shown that cultural empathy and open-mindedness are those two dimensions of the MPQ scale that show the highest (positive) correlation, and may therefore be expected to show some similarity in terms of their correlations with dimensions of teaching performance.

Our study also provided more detailed insights in the possible association of faculty members' cross-cultural competence (or, in a more narrow sense: cultural empathy and open-mindedness) with their teaching performance in various cross-cultural situations. To this end, we made use of a research design in which we specified all combinations of a foreign or domestic faculty member (two levels) being assessed by either foreign or domestic students (i.e., leading to $2 \times 2 = 4$ different test conditions or cells). The association of cross-cultural competence with teaching performance was assessed for all cross-cultural situations (i.e., cells) separately.

Substantial evidence for the positive association of cross-cultural competence with teaching performance was found in the following two situations: when foreign faculty member's teaching performance was assessed by domestic students, or by foreign students (see Table 4, Cell 2 and Cell 4). In these two cross-cultural situations, our results suggested that the performance dimension group interaction in particular was positively associated with a faculty member's cross-cultural competence. In the other cross-cultural situation (foreign students assessing a domestic faculty member; i.e., see Table 4, Cell 3) cross-cultural competence was not found to be associated with teaching performance. The failure to identify a significant positive association of cross-cultural competence of domestic faculty members (but not foreign faculty members; see above) with their teaching performance as assessed by foreign

students may be due to limited expectations regarding cultural adjustment when the faculty member is domestic (but not when he/she is also foreign). As foreign students have chosen to study abroad, and are mentally prepared to adjust to the new cultural environment, they may have relatively low expectations regarding the "culturally-adequate" behavior of domestic faculty, but higher expectations when being confronted with foreign faculty (who are in a similar situation as themselves). Admittedly, these interpretations are, at least to some extent, speculative and are worth submitting to a further empirical examination in future studies.

Contrary to our initial expectations, our study showed that high levels of cross-cultural competence (in particular cultural empathy and open-mindedness) of a domestic faculty member were positively associated with performance scores on the dimension (quality of) group interaction as provided by students sharing the *same* culture, namely the domestic students. This strengthens our belief that domestic students (in addition to foreign students) easily pick up the problems that teachers with relatively low levels of cross-cultural competence typically experience when interacting with culturally-diverse groups of students.

From a practical perspective, our study results suggested that considering the cross-cultural competence of faculty members prior to recruiting them is worthwhile. This is especially true for those HE institutions promoting frequent group interactions among students and faculty (for example through the integration of case studies in management courses). In a similar vein, existing foreign faculty members with low levels of cross-cultural competence (as manifested by low levels of cultural empathy and open-mindedness) may benefit from participating in an effective cross-cultural training program.

This study has the following limitations. First, our study relied on cross-sectional data. Hence, our analyses of the data did not allow identifying the causal nature of the specified relationships between the main constructs under study (dimensions of cross-cultural competence, dimensions of teaching performance, and covariates included in the study). So, we decided to interpret estimated effects cautiously as evidence for associations between the concepts under study rather than causal effects between these concepts. Second, due to the nature of the selection criteria used (in particular: the number of foreign and domestic students) and faculty's reluctance to be evaluated by external researchers, our dataset comprised only 46 courses from four different countries. Obviously, these limitations have consequences for the statistical analyses. For instance, as males dominated our sample of faculty members

we were not able to study possible gender-interaction effects between students assessing the teaching performance of a faculty member. Since the type of data used in this study is extremely hard to obtain, a future challenge will be to devise alternative research designs which would lead to a richer dataset, preferably from a large number of countries worldwide. One possibility is to conduct a similar type of study within a large business school with many satellite campuses in various regions of the world. Systematic access to internal databases held in large business schools may enable researchers to make use of a much richer set of background characteristics and performance-related data of both faculty members and the individual students comprising the culturally-diverse classes under study.

A further limitation of this study is that our data did not allow conducting formal tests on the presence of possible self-selection effects among domestic and foreign faculty and students. Such tests are only feasible if one: (a) has sufficient background information to compare the profiles of faculty and students at sample level with their corresponding profiles at population level or (b) one has information on the profiles of respondents and non-respondents or, alternatively, early and late respondents. Unfortunately, such data were not available. However, if it were true that the results of our study have been affected by selection effects, one may reasonably expect those faculty members who have repeatedly been found to be well-performing teachers to be overrepresented in our sample. So, average levels of teaching performance as reported in Table 3 may be higher than the corresponding figures at population level. It is difficult to anticipate exactly how selection effects may have affected the nature of students' response to the survey, and whether possible self-selection effects have had a differential impact on teaching performance evaluations of domestic as opposed to foreign faculty. In any case, it is unlikely that the (structural) relationship between cross-cultural competence and teaching performance of faculty would be seriously affected if our sample of faculty members were slightly biased towards well-performing teachers. As our study aimed at examining the nature of this particular relationship, we do not anticipate any serious problems with the validity of results as presented in this study.

Last but not least, the study was entirely based on individual students' assessments of the teaching performance of their instructor. As such, assessments of teaching performance by a (culturally diverse) group of students were not examined. Future studies may examine whether groups of students make different judgments on faculty members' teaching performance than individual students.

In conclusion, this study has only begun to scratch the surface of the exact impact of faculty's cross-cultural competence on their teaching performance. Nevertheless, we believe that it adds value to the large number of conceptual papers in which a relationship between cross-cultural competence of faculty and their performance was anticipated but had not been empirically tested. Our results demonstrate that cross-cultural competence, and—in particular—cultural empathy and open-mindedness, is an important asset for business faculty whenever the educational program relies on (frequent) interactions between faculty members and students.

Notes

[1]Instead of using the term *cross-cultural* one may also refer to the term *intercultural*; see Stone (2006) for a detailed discussion of alternative terms.

[2]The value one was assigned to students whose three preferred teaching methods were also used in the course: the value two-thirds (0.67) was assigned to students who indicated that two teaching methods that were actually used are in their top three, the value one-third (0.33) was assigned to students who indicated that only one of the teaching methods that were actually used are in their top three, and a value zero was assigned to all other non-invalid cases.

[3]However, a match in teaching methods should not be interpreted as a *strong* indication of the teacher being cross-cultural competent. The match in teaching methods may be due to a (coincidental) match in the personal preferences of the teacher and his/her students also if the teacher is not cross-culturally competent. Furthermore, the educational policy may require the teacher to make use of very specific teaching methods such as Harvard-like case studies or experiential learning methods (see Navarro, 2008). In sum, a match in teaching methods may reflect a teacher's cross-cultural competence in some circumstances but certainly not in all circumstances.

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