

AI and the Role of Hybrid Managers in Constructive Intercultural Management

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1. Introduction

This report analyzes our reflections on whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) can assist CAEs (Constructive, Adaptive, Ethical managers) in replacing hybrid managers. The analysis is based on the framework of Professor Christoph Barmeyer's concept of **Constructive Intercultural Management (CIM)**, which emphasizes creating intercultural synergy through reflection, empathy, and integration of cultural differences. The data were drawn from responses to three guiding questions:

1. Does AI enable constructive communication?
2. Does AI provide accurate interpretation?
3. Does AI solve intercultural workplace problems?

2. Main Findings

2.1 General Overview

Overall, participants agreed that **AI can support but not replace** hybrid managers. AI is perceived as a **complementary tool** that enhances efficiency, facilitates communication, and assists in data interpretation. However, hybrid managers remain essential for cultivating **empathy, cultural understanding, and ethical reflection**—the human dimensions of intercultural synergy.

2.2 Does AI enable constructive communication?

Most participants believe that AI **partially enables constructive communication** by removing language barriers, offering real-time translation, and providing sentiment analysis. However, AI cannot build **trust, empathy, or nuanced understanding**—all of which are fundamental to constructive intercultural dialogue. We described AI as a **mediator rather than a communicator**: it can support human dialogue but cannot replace it. Some interesting reflections suggested that AI could even serve as a **training tool** for intercultural awareness, allowing managers to simulate conversations with different communication styles. Yet, many cautioned that excessive reliance on AI could reduce genuine **human engagement and empathy**.

“AI can support constructive dialogue by removing technical barriers, but the art of listening, respect, and adaptation remains a human responsibility.”

2.3 Does AI provide accurate interpretation?

Participants expressed **mixed opinions** on AI's interpretive abilities. Many acknowledged that AI delivers **linguistic and factual accuracy**, especially in translation and data processing. However, they emphasized that **accuracy is not the same as understanding**. AI often fails to capture **non-verbal cues, humor, irony, and cultural subtext**, and some noted that AI systems may reflect **algorithmic bias** or **Western-centric perspectives**. While AI can ensure **semantic precision**, hybrid managers achieve **cultural accuracy** through empathy and context-aware interpretation. Interpretation, in intercultural management, involves emotional intelligence and the ability to “read between the lines,” which remains beyond AI's reach.

“AI can offer precise words, but not the right meaning. Interpretation requires shared experience and trust—something only humans can build.”

2.4 Does AI solve intercultural workplace problems?

Nearly all participants agreed that AI can assist with **technical and procedural tasks**, such as coordination, scheduling, translation, and data organization. However, **relational and value-based conflicts**—rooted in different cultural norms, power dynamics, or communication expectations—require **human judgment, empathy, and negotiation**. Some participants saw potential in AI as a **diagnostic or analytical tool**, capable of identifying patterns of misunderstanding. Others warned that AI could **amplify problems** if it imposes standardized communication norms without cultural sensitivity. A small number of participants proposed that AI might function as a **neutral mediator** in conflict resolution, though this view was less widely shared.

“AI can help us see patterns of misunderstanding, but only people can rebuild trust.”

2.5 Comparative Summary

Aspect	AI's Potential Contribution	Hybrid Manager's Irreplaceable Role
Communication	Enhances translation and accessibility; detects tone	Builds trust, empathy, and moral connection
Interpretation	Provides semantic and linguistic accuracy	Ensures contextual, cultural, and emotional understanding
Problem-Solving	Automates logistics and identifies patterns	Negotiates values, resolves conflicts, and creates synergy

3. Theoretical Implications

In light of Professor Barmeyer's framework of **Constructive Intercultural Management**, we consistently portrayed AI as a **partner rather than a replacement** for hybrid managers. AI can facilitate reflection, provide analytical insight, and support cross-

cultural preparation. However, **true intercultural synergy** arises from **human empathy, ethical reasoning, and the creative integration of differences**—qualities that AI cannot replicate.

This aligns with Barmeyer's view of the hybrid manager as a *bridge-builder* who synthesizes cultural diversity into cooperative value creation.

AI may serve as a valuable enabler in this process, but the **interpretive and ethical dimensions** of management remain uniquely human.

4. Conclusion

Across all reflections, the consensus is clear: **AI can assist but cannot replace the hybrid manager**. AI strengthens the analytical, technical, and procedural sides of intercultural management. However, the heart of intercultural collaboration—**trust, meaning, empathy, and moral responsibility**—remains inherently human. In the spirit of Constructive Intercultural Management, technology should therefore be regarded as an **enabler of human synergy**, not as its substitute.

5. References

- Barmeyer, C., & Davoine, E. (2019). *Constructive Intercultural Management: Integrating Differences in the Global Workplace*. Routledge.
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