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**Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Cultural Adjustment
for Success in Global Assignments**

by

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Empirical model

Abstract

Globalization has turned the international assignment strategy by international companies into a widely used management tool in recent years. Understanding and determining the success factors in international assignment has become crucial for international assignment management and strategy. The exploratory approach in this paper posits that the construct of emotional intelligence is a "soft" factor that is a critical predictor for intercultural adjustment and thereby contributes to success.

This paper explores international assignment staffing issues in the context of the stressor-stress-strain theory. It also presents the empirical tests of a series of hypotheses about the relationships between Emotional Intelligence cross-cultural adjustment and the success of international managers' overseas assignments.

Due to the conceptual and operational complexity of defining success in an international assignment context, a series of independent and control measures were included. The research design comprises multiple data collection sources (surveys and interviews), multiple item measures, and both cross-sectional and quasi-longitudinal designs. Some concrete and practical considerations are discussed.

Introduction

Given the importance of success in international assignments (IA), researchers and practitioners alike are interested in determining the factors that can predict the success of "global managers" who can live and work successfully in a cross national setting and can manage businesses in various and complex environments while conveying their organization's unique knowledge (know-how) (Harvey, Speier and Novicevic, 1999, 2001; Caligiuri, 2000; Stroh and Caligiuri,1998; Stahl and Cerdin, 2004).

However, there is ample evidence that IA managers experience difficulties in terms of effectiveness and meeting organizational and personal expectations (Aycan, 1997; Caligiuri, 2000; Cerdin, 1999; Harvey, Novicievic and Kiessling, 2002; Ones and Viswesvaran, 1997; Windham International, 2000; Forster, 1997; Tung, 1998; Yan Zhu and Hall, 2002). IA failure results in significant direct and indirect costs (Osland, 1996; Harzing, 1995; Forster, 1997). In addition to IA failure, other problems arise when professionals increasingly refuse IAs for family-related reasons, like two-career couples (Harvey et al., 2001).

The meta–analysis conducted by Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005) of over 50 determinants and consequences of expatriate adjustment using data from 8,474 expatriates in 66 studies, indicates that although higher levels of adjustment are related to IA success or failure factors such as overall performance disengagement and withdrawal decisions, adjustment left around 90 per cent of the variance in performance unexplained. The authors suggest including traditional individual

difference variables, such as general mental ability and the big five personality dimensions, which have been profusely examined in the literature on domestic job performance.

When trying to determine what are the critical components in predicting and assessing the success of "global managers" in IAs viewed as a particular experience, this exploratory research focused on emotional intelligence (EI) as an individual "soft" skill, a factor often overlooked when studying IA. Our approach posits that EI might be a critical predictor of cross cultural adjustment which in turn should have an impact on successful outcomes of IA, including performance, satisfaction and withdrawal decisions. Additionally, cultural differences will moderate the relationship between EI and cross cultural adjustment. Nonetheless, organizational and individuals variables will be use as control variables.

EI in IA context

As part of the staffing strategy, the selection process aims at ensuring successful global managers in IAs (Caligiuri, 1997a, b; 2000). However, selection practices have also frequently been criticized for emphasizing "hard" technical skills and neglecting critical "soft" and tactical success factors such as relational skills and cross cultural competencies that are derived from the specific social skills required to be effectively competitive (Harvey, Novicievic & Kiessling, 2002; Mendenhall & Oddou, 2001; Selemer, 2001; Toh & DeNisi,2005). Recently, in the light of expatriate managers being viewed as "global team managers" (Harvey et al.,1999; Stahl & Cerdin,2004; Taylo, Beechker & Napier,1996), three main competencies have been considered when explaining aspects of success including cognitive and personality traits, as well as environmental variables (Eysneck,1998).

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is categorized with cognitive intelligence within the analytic skill category of multiple intelligence (Gardner, 1993, 1999; Cooper & Sawaf, 1997). In essence, EI is a psychological concept that seeks to describe the role and relevance of emotion for intellectual functions (Thorndike, 1920; Gardner, 1993; Salovey and Mayer, 1990). High social EI reflects a person's capacity to perform actions on his/her own, and with and through others (Bar-On, 1997; Early & Ang, 2003; Mayer and Salovey, 1997) and "constitutes a set of knowledge used to effectively face life" (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000, p.402).

In broad terms, there appear to be some differences in theories, constructs, and definitions of EI, as well as much criticism and debate about the popularizing concepts and what constitutes the proper domain of EI, its multiple concepts and terminology, the psychometric properties and the methods used to measure it, and its practical applications (Dulewichz & Malcolm, 2003; Matthews et al., 2002; Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2004). In an effort to help clarify this situation, the *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology* (Spielberger, 2004) recently suggested that there are currently three major conceptual models: (a) the Salovey-Mayer model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) which defines this construct as the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions to facilitate thinking, measured by an *ability-based tool* (Mayer et al., 2000, 2002); (b) the Goleman model (1998) which views this construct as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive managerial performance, measured as *competencies–based* by multi-rater assessment (Boyatzis et al., 2000); and (c) the

Bar-On model (1997b, 2000) which describes a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, behaviors, skills and facilitators that impact intelligent decision, measured through self-reporting (1997a, 1997b). However, there is some shared view of the place of an EI construct within an organizational context (Dulewichz & Malcolm, 2003; Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2000; Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Goleman,1996).

Due to the particular experience in IA, expatriate research typically has been based on a stressor-stress-strain formulation (Harrison, Shaffer, & Bhaskar-Shirnivas, 2004; Spector, Chen & O'Connell, 2000), highlighting the stressors as uncertainties and demands in a foreign environment that are mismatched with the expatriate's personal resources (Black & Gregersen,1991). It appears that the cultural and social discrepancy, as well as managerial differences, increase the stress experience of global managers (Berno & Ward,1998; Harrison et al., 2004). Thus, based on the stressor-stress-strain theory (Spector at el., 2000), strain as a reaction to a stress experience in IA (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992) may be handled by having the social and emotional skills needed for effective cognitive and behavioral success or else result in failure (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, Luk,2005; Black et al.,1991).

Current thinking has proposed a link between EI, stress and adaptive coping (e.g. Gerits, Deksen, Verbruggen & Katzko, 2005, Matthews & Zeidner, 2000; Salski & Cartwright, 2002). Matthews & Zeidner (2000) suggest that in demanding and challenging environments, EI influences the selection and control of coping strategies to be used in the immediate situation. It is argued that it is not just these demands that a person needs to cope with in stressful encounters, but rather the person needs to cope with the emotions evoked by the demands (Matthews, Zeidner & Roberts, 2002).

Furthermore, emotionally intelligent individuals cope more successfully because they "accurately perceive and appraise their feelings, and can appraise their emotional states, know-how and when to express their feelings, and can effectively regulate their mood states" (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler & Mayer, 1999, p.161).

Although studies exploring the relationship between EI and stress do not abound, some report a positive relationship between a high level of EI and less subjective and occupational stress (Salski & Cartwright, 2002; Gardner & Stough, 2003; Bar-On, Brown &Thorne, 2000).

Thus, EI may predict how successfully individuals will handle stressful environments and external pressures (Matthews at el., 2002). Therefore, EI viewed as an effective construct for handling stress may be a necessary quality of global managers.

Bar-On (1997, 2005) describes EI as *emotional-social intelligence* a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands. Bar-On (1997) has classified emotional capabilities in two main types. The first concerns basic capacities, while the latter refers to facilitating capacities divided up into a set of five main areas of EI. The author's distinction between inter- and intra-personal components is an important one, especially for research in managerial performance because interpersonal elements

are paramount if managers are to achieve results with or through colleagues (Dulewicz & Higgs,2004). Additionally, three components of EI were included, i.e. the ability to adapt to change and resolve problems of personal and social nature; the ability to both tolerate stress and keep personal drivers under control, as well as the ability to hold and convey a positive and optimistic view of life. In this sense, these five main components influence one's general ability to face pressures and daily demands, while they provide an estimate of an individual's emotional-social intelligence.

The approach of this study will be based on Bar-On's (1997) model which seems to be the most adequate to the IA context. However, it should in the first place be borne in mind that the Mayer & Salovey (1997) model places more emphasis on the cognitive processing of emotions and seeks to relate EI to specified information or the processing routines. On the other hand, the Goleman (1995,1998) model is based on various perspectives such as a biological and performance perspective. It appears that the Bar-On (1997) model is based on psychological well-being where emotionally and socially competent behavior is represented by five main components (such as stress management and adaptability) that may be the most adequate to predict the influence on one's general ability to face pressures and daily demands and how successfully the individual will handle stress and external pressures in the particular context of IA based on the stressor-stress-strain theory. Secondly, there is a shared recognition of the high level of content and the construct's validity as well as of the reliability of Bar-On's EQ-i measure application in different country, cultural, time, geographic and language settings, and thus of the EQ-i instrument's ability to predict EI despite differences in culture (Dawda & Hart, 2000; Matthews et al., 2002). Furthermore, the usefulness of the EQ-i in the assessment of emotions in a stressful framework has been demonstrated (Gerits et al., 2005).

Emotional Intelligence and outcomes success in IA

Much of the literature on EI in organizations assumes that it relates to overall performance and success in an occupational setting because it influences one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures (e.g. Abraham, 1999; Bar-On, 1997; Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Goleman, 1997, 1998; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000).

The importance of EI increases with the level of authority in organizations, as technical skills become less important than emotional control in the face of competing values that become critical to assert authority (Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee, 2000; Cooper & Sawaf,1997; Dulewichz & Malcolm, 2003, Matthews, Zeidner & Roberts, 2002). Emotional development and maturity are viewed as necessary to allow managers to effectively utilize their cognitive capabilities. This maps the way in which we can explain a higher proportion of variance in individual success to effectively accomplish all sorts of goals in various areas of human endeavor and bring intelligence to our emotions (Dulewichz & Malcolm, 2003; Matthews et al., 2002).

In the domestic work context, research shows that high levels of EI were associated to successful outcomes such as performance, job well being and satisfaction, interpersonal interactions, stress and cope management, commitment and job turnover (i.e. Bar-On, 1997, 2000, 2005; Gertis, Derdsen, Verbruggen & Katzko, 2005;

Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey,1997; Oginska-Bulik,2005; Slaski & Catwright, 2002).

Research points to considerable variation in the types of criteria used in the evaluation of success in IAs (Caligiuri, 2000; Caligiuri & Tung, 1999; Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall & Stroh, 1999). Caligiuri and Tung (1999) emphasize that IA success is a complex term that should be seen as multi-faceted and embracing various types of criteria. Recently as a reaction to stress in IA, affective, cognitive and behavioral outcomes such as job satisfaction, withdrawal cognition or premature termination and performance have been analyzed in a systematic way as critical criteria for IA successful outcomes (e.g. Kraimer, Wayne & Jawoski, 2001).

Withdrawal cognition is the most basic behavioral criterion for assessing the outcome of IA. Success according to this construct occurs when the IA is completed for a scheduled duration (Black & Gregresen, 1991; Caligiuri & Tung, 1999). Because of the difficulties involved in recording and accessing actual turnover data for global managers, most researchers have focused on intention to remain on the job, early return decisions or more inclusively withdrawal cognition (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). *Performanc*e on the assignment refers to evaluative behavior and outcomes that are relevant to the goal of the organization (Viswevaran, Ones & Schmidt 1996). Thus, high performance refers to successful results in task and responsibilities in IA. *Satisfaction* is presumed to create an affective or positive emotional attitude response to positions overseas and to the general context (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998). The concept of subjective well –being is related to general satisfaction consisting of people's own evaluation of their lives. Thus, those who experience a general positive satisfaction are likely to experience more events that are considered desirable, have a propensity to interpret and recall ambiguous events as good, and are more likely to perceive "neutral" events as positive (Diener & Lucas, 2000).

Thus, using EI as a predictor for occupational success could consistently help in predicting general success of international assignments.

Thus Hypothesis 1 is suggested as follows:

H1. EI is a significant predictor of successful outcomes, general satisfaction, withdrawal cognition and job performance in international assignments

EI and cross cultural adjustment as a mediate factor for IA success outcomes

Cross–cultural adjustment is one of the most vital constructs for success in IAs (Aycan & Kanungo, 1997; Ones & Viswesvaran, 1997; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Defined as the key process of change an individual undergoes to "fit into" the host society, as a form of individual satisfaction derived from perceived acceptance by the host, and the ability to function during everyday activities without severe stress (Brislin, 1981), this construct has been considered as an internal, psychological, emotional state and should be measured from the perspective of the individual experiencing the foreign culture (Black, 1990; Caligiuri, 2000).

Given such a broad definition, adjustment has been conceptualized and rendered operational as a multidimensional construct (Aycan, 1997). The multidimensional

adjustment model proposed by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) is the most influential and often–quoted model and it can be considered a context–specific reflection of the stressor-stress-strain sequence (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005, p.257). Adjustment compromises three dimensions: *general-cultural* (comfort linked to daily non-work general factors such as local food, transportation, entertainment, facilities, and health care services in the host country); *interaction* (comfort linked to interacting and engaging in harmonious relationship with members of the host society) and *work* (comfort associated to the assignment's job culture, policies, procedures and work requirements).   The model takes into consideration a wide scope of both anticipatory and in-country inputs to adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005).

In efforts to understand the cross-cultural adjustment construct, factors in the individual, cultural and organizational levels have been examined as patterns, inputs, antecedents and outcomes for cross-cultural adjustment (i.e. Aycan, 1997; Forster, 1997; Selmer, 1999).   Furthermore, Ones and Viswesvaran (1997) highlight that adjustment is not an end in itself, but rather part of process that allows the expatriate to focus on and carry through the task of the job.

Therefore, among an individual's analytical skills, EI may be the one capable of helping to predict the dynamic stage of adjustment and may explain the experience of stress following a response pattern that is expressed in adjustment or maladjustment, as well as better understanding of adjustment successful outcomes in IA (Jordan, Ashkanasy & Hartel, 2002; Jex & Beejr, 1991; Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler & Mayer, 1999).

This leads to the statement of H2:

H2. Emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of cross cultural adjustment leading to success in IA.
> H2a: Emotional Intelligence is a predictor of adjustment in general.

> H2b: Emotional Intelligence is a predictor in the adjustment mediated success of international assignments.

The role of cultural differences

People in any given nation share cultural denominators such as history, leaders, religion, literature and economic systems. These values often develop along national boundaries (Hofsted, 1980). The differences between host and home cultures have been called cultural toughness, cultural distance or country difficulty (Hofsted, 1980; Mendenhal & Oddou, 1985). However, the influence of cultural differences on the success of IAs is not clear. While some researchers argue that the greater the difference between cultures, the more difficult it would be to adjust and perform, others have found that there is no association between the difficulty in adjusting to the culture and IA success (Black et al.,1992; Mendenhall and Oddou,1985; Tung, 1997). However, Tung (1997) found that, where an expatriate adopted an open attitude toward interacting with people in the host society (including socializing with his/her hosts both during and after work, learning the host culture and adapting to norms in the host country), they were equally successful in countries with varying degrees of cultural difference.

Thus, to determine the role of cultural differences for success in IA, this study examined cultural value differences at work and in life in general as a moderating variable, and then hypothesized to determine the strength of the relationships between EI and cross cultural adjustment.

This leads to the statement of H3:

H3. The degree of differences between host and global manager's culture moderates the impact of emotional intelligence on adjustment.

Control variables

There is consensus among researchers that criteria for IA success should embrace four possible main dimensions: individual, cultural, social and organizational (Caligiuri, 2000; Dalton and Wilson, 2000; Black et al., 1999; Arthur & Bennet, 1995; Katz & Seifer, 1996; Hofsted, 1993).

Since the goal of this study is to understand the impact of EI on cross-cultural adjustment and thereby on IA success, some individual and organizational factors will be used as control variables. The organizational and personal characteristic variables are briefly described below.

The personal characteristics in this study refer to four variables: demographics, past foreign experience, language fluency and spouse adjustment. *Demographics,* including gender, marital status, and nationality, may have an adverse impact on adjustment, especially when there are major differences between the home and host countries and the experience of the family members (Aycan, 1997; Black & Gregersen, 1991). *Language fluency*, or knowledge of the host national language *is* generally necessary for interpersonal communication and relationship building, and effective functioning at home and work (e.g., Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Furthermore, beside facilitating communication with locals, it may also demonstrate an attitude of attempting to learn about the host culture, enabling one to be polite, and permitting cultural understanding not otherwise possible (Eschback, Parker & Stoeberl, 2001). *Past foreign experience* affects how confident an expatriate will feel in the new country and positively relates to success in a global assignment (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). *Length of time in the global assignment.* Given that it takes time for an individual to feel comfortable in a new culture, time in an IA should also affect its success. *Spouse adjustment* affects whether an expatriate completes his or her assignment and how successfully the expatriate performs on the assignment (e.g., Black & Gregersen, 1991). It has been clearly demonstrated that a supportive accompanying spouse can be a great source and encouragement for IA success as well as a reason for inadequate performance and premature return from the IA (Shaffer, Harrison & Gilley, 1999).
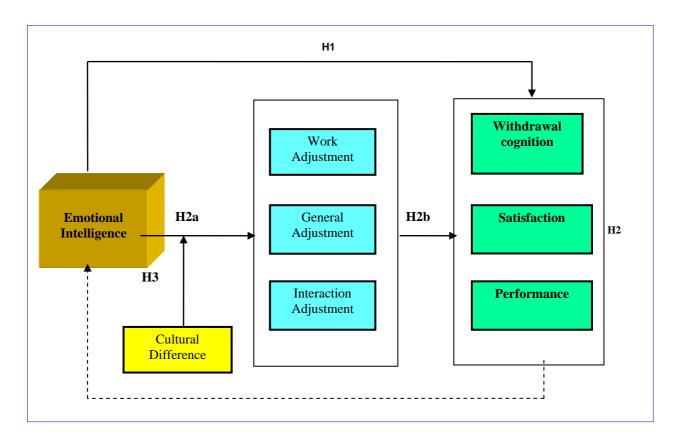
Organizational factors included organizational support and training**.** The *social and logistical support* from the parent organization can play an important role in facilitating adjustment (Guzzo, Noonan & Elron, 1994). Providing information about culturally suitable norms and behaviors in their work context and day-to-day life assists adjustment by making available a critical resource for IA. Also, c*ross cultural training*

aims at increasing the knowledge and skills of members of one culture to interact effectively with members of another culture, and predisposes them to rapid adjustment to their new positions e.g. Caliguiri et al., 2001; Selmer, 2005). Thus, this study will examine the predicting role of EI on cross cultural adjustment which may lead to success outcomes above and beyond these control variables.

The research model and the respective hypotheses

The hypotheses are illustrated in Figure 1-
Figure 1: The conceptual research model and respective hypotheses

Method

Sample

Data in this research will come from two different samples. The first sample will be made up of two types of participants in a survey on internationally assigned managers and their supervisors. Several criteria will be used in selecting sample participants, including their socio-demographic characteristics, their companies' profiles and the term of the assignment. The supervisors of international managers who decide to join will be asked to complete a performance appraisal instrument. Data thus collected will come from a complete survey from both internationally-assigned managers and their matched supervisors, as well as a non-complete survey of internationally-assigned managers without their matched supervisor.

The second sample will consist of interviews with two main groups. First, mid-level international managers who accept to complete the questionnaire will be asked to participate in face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The second group of interviewees will include very high level international managers (presidents, general managers, directors) with broad experience in international assignments and who accept to be interviewed. The interviews, that will last 45-60 minutes approximately, will be conducted within corporate premises.

Measures

Emotional intelligence: The original Bar-On EQ-i test includes 133 items that are rated on a Likert 5-point type scale. These items are structured around five factors; intrapersonal abilities, interpersonal abilities, adaptability, stress management, and general state of mind. In the EQ-i Spanish (Ugarriza, 2001) and English short versions, these five components are subdivided into 15 subcomponents measured in 60 items.

Adjustment: The adjustment scale for expatriate managers created by Black and Stephens (1989) will be used. The 14-item scale evaluates three dimensions of adjustment: general, interaction and work. The respondents are ranked on a 7 Likert - point scale (ranging from 1, or totally unsettled, to 7,or perfectly adapted).

Intention to leave the assignment early: Desire for an early end of the assignment, will be operational measure for Withdrawal cognition and be measure by Caligiuri(2000) scale. The four-item questionnaire is based on a 4-point Likert type scale and includes questions about intent to leave the assignment.

Job Performance: This component will be measured using the Caligiuri and Day (2000) instrument to assess four dimensions of the expatriate manager's performance. The supervisors will be asked to rate the performance of the expatriate on fifteen items, using a five point range from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Outstanding). The items include "motivation", "facilitating peer and team performance" and "establishing interpersonal bonds with host nationals".

Satisfaction: Subjective Well-Being (SWB) (Deiner & Lucas, 2000) will be applied to evaluate the expatriate managers' general satisfaction. SWB refers to how people evaluate their lives, and includes three primary components, namely satisfaction, pleasant affection, and low levels of unpleasant affection. These dimensions form a global factor of interrelated variables. SWB will be measured by self-reporting ranked on a seven point scale, from 1 (strong dissatisfaction) to 7(strong satisfaction).

Cultural differences: A cultural differences scale will be based on the first 12 items of Hofstede's cultural distance measure (Hofstede, 1993), and make up but one single factor as recommend by Spector et al. (2001). High scores on this scale point to cultural differences marked by a distancing away from the set of proposed values, and conversely.

Perceived organizational support: A short eight-item version of the original Eisenberger et al., (1986) scale will be used. Respondents are asked to rate on a 5-point scale from 1 (agree) to 5 (disagree) to a series of statements. Examples include

"this organization really cares for my well-being", "whenever they can, this organization takes advantage of me", or "this organization listens to my opinions".

Cross-cultural training: Three training metrics for cultural training will be used. The first measure comes from Ford and Noe's (1987) scale on the adequacy of training. The second measurement comes from Early's (1987) two-item scale that specifically deals with cross-cultural training for managers, including responses to questions like "how specific is the information you get about your destination country's culture?" Both items are ranked on a 5-point Likert type scale.

Spouse adjustment: This component will be measured similarly to global manager's adjustment. Specifically global managers were asked to respond to 9 of the 14 questions they were asked in Black and Stephens' (1989) questionnaire, i.e. excluding job-related items. This same procedure has been used by Black and Gregersen (1991).

Demographics: Age, nationality, sex, marital status, and previous experiences in international assignments will be ascertained by the questionnaire. Time in the organization, time in the assignment and type of position will be asked as part of the demographic data.

Design and procedures

Due to the conceptual and operational complexity of defining the international assignment's success—as well as the host of independent variables and the multiple linkages that might explain this phenomenon—three issues have been considered to be the most critical in this research, namely methodology, data collection procedures and the priority given to each stage of data integration in the case of the multiples data collecting method (Creswell, 1994; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

An approximation to this study's cases of success will result from its cross sectional design, employing currently working international managers as participants. The study will use a series of multiple-items measures, as well as multiple sources of data, thereby minimizing potential problems of "method-variance" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The multiple data collection will use simultaneously quantitative and qualitative measures (i.e. questionnaires and semi structured interviews). The results will be presented in two sections: preliminary quantitative results and illustrative qualitative for quantitative data interpretation. Due to the confirmatory character of the study, the quantitative data will be analyzed by Multiples regressions and Structural Equation Modeling (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, Black, 1999). The qualitative data will be analyzed using coding system classification (Creswell, 2004).

Because the participants in this study will also include Spanish speaking individuals and the original instrument is in English, a translation/back-translation technique was used to ensure reliability (for more information, see Behling & Law, 2000). Then the EQ-i (Bar-On, 1997) Spanish short version (Ugarriza, 2001) was also included in the questionnaire.

Surveys will be sent to international assignment managers who currently fill international assignment positions. The participants' data base was obtained from HR departments of international companies. The immediate supervisor will be identified by the HR departments and by asking the global manager for his immediate supervisor details. Participation in the survey will be voluntary, and stress the overall confidentiality of the responses.

In parallel, a series of semi-structured interviews with international managers of international companies who operate in Peru will be conducted. The first key theme in the interviews will be to define the measures of success of an internationally assigned manager. Next, the focus shifts to the related factors that influence the success level of international assignee managers. Finally, the interviewer will be asked to define the profile of a successful internationally-assigned manager and the elements to take in consideration in selecting an international assignee manager. All the interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

Discussion

The approach to international assignment's success, from the viewpoint of staffing issues and the stressor-stress-strain theory (Spector et al., 2000), provided the main framework for this study. The literature reports high level of difficulty in terms of effectiveness and organizational and personal expectations in international assignment management. This, at the individual level, is mainly reflected in difficulties in adjustment, management and performance across cultural settings (Caligiuri, 2000; Cerdin, 1999, 2002).

The study aims at testing a new framework for predicting success in international assignment, pertaining to the relationships between EI as a non-technical factor, and its impact on cross cultural adjustment of global managers, thereby having an impact on the international assignment's success. The core hypothesis is that the EI of the globally assigned managers is a decisive variable in explaining cross-cultural adjustment and thereby individual success. Due to the particular design of our research, the target of the study will include a fairly large sample of internationally-assigned managers and collection of multiple data. Furthermore, the results intend to illustrate quantitative data by using qualitative data in order to examine the relevance of the model and obtain a better explanation for the quantitative results.

The research aims at empirically testing the wide range of scales and variables that will be used in the model, and report their psychometric qualities. This is the first time this has been done in the Spanish language.

Conclusions might be drawn in relation to the proposed model. The findings may support the propositions made by numerous scholars who emphasize the importance of non –technical factors in explaining the effectiveness of IA (e.g. Caligiuri, 1997a, b; 2000). More specifically, the findings may suggest that EI plays an important role in explaining the cross-cultural adjustment and thereby success of internationally assigned managers. Thus, it might reflect the fact that EI is indeed a major skill in IAs. It will explain the extent to which its presence contributes to adjustment and thereby to success in the assignment. In that sense, a strong ability to adjust to new work and cultural and social environments among global managers may be predicted by introducing EI as a criterion for selection and consequently for predicting overall cross cultural adjustment and success in IAs (Eysneck, 1998; Harvey et al., 2002).

Cultural differences between the host and home cultures may act as a moderator and will have important influence on the intensity of relationship between EI and cross cultural adjustment. Thus EI may help to diminish the cultural differences between the host and home cultures of global managers, and thereby increase the possibilities for better cross –cultural adjustment. Furthermore, by isolating some important individual

and organizational variable, it will permit to examine the predicting role of EI on cross cultural adjustment which may lead to successful outcomes above and beyond these control variables and simultaneously permit to evaluate the role that play those variables in the model context.

Limitations and future direction

This research is not without limitations. Our model is limited by the present status of cultural intelligence theories, and will require modifications, as new findings and new theories come to light (for more information, see Cerdin & Dubouloy; Early & Ang, 2003). Although there is no consensus on the dimensions that make up cultural intelligence, our model suggests that EI should be examined in relationship with cross-cultural adjustment and success on international assignments.

This is the first time EI is used as a predictor for cross cultural adjustment and success in an IA context. However, due to present debate about the multiple conceptualizations and terminologies, and the psychometric properties and methods used to measure EI (e.g. Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts 2004), this study will adopt Bar-On EI perspective and measurements (Bar-On, 1997, 2000). However, it is stressed that this study does not intend to prove the "right" conceptual model and measure EI in general. In addition, given the present debate, future research is needed to determine if this model or other alternative perspectives of EI will provide more valid evidence for EI constructs in an IA context.

Scholars stress the importance of longitudinal design in IA success, viewing the global manager's success as a dynamic process between success criteria and their predictors (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Time on the IA has an important influence on adjustment process, and success is determined differently through various stages. Thus, a second phase to this study may add a significant value in providing a better understanding of how the process evolved (Aycan, 1997). In this context, one should add that success criteria are interrelated at particular points in time, and their influence is felt at different points during the manager's IA. This relationship can only be fully appreciated if evaluated over time (Caligiuri, 1997a, b; Aycan & Kanungo, 1997).

A few considerations should be made with respect to the way in which the predictors and variables will be measured in the quantitative data collections. The self–report questionnaires should be treated with caution due to the possibilities of "method-variance". Nonetheless, the cross-validation of data will be generated through interviews might mitigate this potential problem. The supervisor are mostly global managers, thus supervisor-subordinate similarity may present a potential bias and may influence on the objective performance scores. In addition, future studies should further examine whether performance rating will be affected by multi-rater type tools, when ratings are conducted by supervisors who are also in IA positions or by local supervisors, as well as by including multiple raters such as peers, supervisors and subordinates (Caligiuri, 1997, 2000; Ones & Viswesvaran, 1997).

Practical considerations

In a practical sense, the key question this study will attempt to answer is whether EI could be used to predict cross cultural adjustment thereby leading to success in IA. If so, by providing some preliminary validity evidence, EI will be recommended to be used in the selection process and encouraged to be assessed accordingly to improve the possibility of high cross cultural adjustment and the success in IA. In addition, assessing a potential candidate for an IA career might in turn materialise into career

decision and development (e.g. Cerdin, 1999; Cerdin & Bird, n.d.) and cross cultural training will be made available through HR interventions to improve the likelihood of global manager success (e.g., Black at al., 1999).

In this research, we partially integrate the voluminous cross-cultural adjustment and EI literature in order to provide a predictive model of adjustment and expatriate's success. When studying expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment and success, it is important to examine individual competencies such as EI. We hope that our research will help organizations to improve the recruitment of their global managers and global managers to better understand individual competencies conducive to the success of an international assignment, both from the organizational and individual perspectives.

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