

A REVIEW ON INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

In the pace of globalization, it is crucial that individuals have the knowledge and skills to effectively face the challenges and requirements of a “global village”. It is believed that cultural intelligence (CQ) explains why some individuals are more capable at navigating culturally diverse environments than others. Prior research has indicated that CQ role is highly significant in predicting cross-cultural effectiveness among expatriates. However, as a new and quickly growing area of research factors that influence CQ is still under researched. This article proposes the influence of stable dispositions and dynamic competencies as the antecedents of CQ. The theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Key Words: individual differences, cultural intelligence

Introduction

Globalization is quickly becoming a permanent fixture in today's business environment. Accordingly, employment expatriates has become common feature of the international movement of labor. The abroad assignment is becoming crucial for many executives of multinational corporations (MNCs) for their career advancement (Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & Lepak, 2005) since international experience is considered as ultimate resources (Carpenter, Sanders, & Gregersen, 2001), and also valuable assets of competitive advantage (Spreitzer & McCall, 1997) for multinational corporations. In addition to the expatriate being the best person for the job, drivers for using expatriates range from labor shortages in the host country, ethnocentrism in the organization's international human resource management orientation, and short-term vision of the venture (Pires, Stanton, & Ostefeld, 2006). Other strategic purposes include the launching of new ventures, providing international exposure to promising managers, maintaining an international image, and facilitating organizational coordination and control (Torbiorn, 1994; Phatak, 1989; Mendenhall et al., 1987; Tung, 1982).

While the employment of expatriates remains operationally and strategically important for organizations, the rate of failure of expatriate assignments does not appear to have abated over time (Pires, Stanton, & Ostefeld, 2006). As reported in Sims and Schraeder (2004), 16 to 70 percent of expatriate assignments have been estimated to fail, depending on the host country (Black & Gregersen, 1999; Naumann, 1992; Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991). The average cost of expatriate failure varies between parent firms. Cost estimates range from \$250,000 to \$1 million (Hill, 2001) depending on the level of the manager concerned and the speed with which a replacement must be found. In addition to the quantifiable costs of expatriate failure, there are additional costs associated with lost opportunities, reduced productivity, and damaged relationships that, in the long run, could cost the company much more (Storti, 2001). One of the major reasons of expatriates failure was that expatriates not able to adjust themselves effectively into host country's environment (Caligiuri, 2000; Shaffer & Harrison, 1998). As a result, considerable amount of attention has been given to identify the factors that influence expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment and successful completion of their assignments (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer & Harrison, 1998).

Despite abundant interest have been paid to expatriate management over the past few decades, a large gap remains in understanding the diverse factors affecting expatriate effectiveness in international assignment. One underdeveloped yet promising research area in cross-cultural management that holds great promise for better understanding the expatriate effectiveness is CQ. Researchers are now examining this construct more closely to determine why some people interact more

effectively in foreign cultures than others, beyond just an ability to understand the language of a culture. CQ is defined as “a person’s capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts” and therefore refers to “a form of situated intelligence where intelligently adaptive behaviors are culturally bound to the values and beliefs of a given society or culture” (Earley & Ang, 2003, p. 26). Accordingly, because individuals higher in CQ can more easily navigate and understand unfamiliar cultures, theoretically, they are expected to be more successful when working and living in countries other than their own. Despite promising evidence on its predictive ability on cross-cultural effectiveness (e.g., cross-cultural adjustment, job performance, intention to return early), however, due to the newness of the CQ construct, the factors that could predict CQ construct are still limited in the literature. Thus, in acknowledging the potential roles of CQ in a cross-cultural context, this article theoretically explores how the individual difference factors influences CQ.

Theoretical development and propositions

Earley and Ang (2003) conceptualized a multifactor concept of CQ that includes mental (meta-cognitive and cognitive), motivational, and behavioral components. Meta-cognitive CQ reflects the processes individuals use to acquire and understand cultural knowledge, including knowledge of and control over individual thinking process relating to the culture (Ang, Van Dyne, & Koh, 2006). While meta-cognitive CQ focuses on higher-order cognitive process, cognitive CQ reflects knowledge of the norms, practices and conventions in different cultures (Ang et al., 2007). This includes knowledge of the economic, legal, and social systems of different cultures and subcultures (Triandis, 1994) and knowledge of basic frameworks of cultural values. Motivational CQ reflects magnitude and direction of energy applied toward learning about and functioning in cross-cultural situations (Ang et al., 2006). Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, and Ng (2004) conceptualized motivational CQ as a specific form of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985) in cross-cultural situations. Lastly, behavioral CQ is the capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people from different cultures (Ang et al., 2006). Those with high behavioral CQ exhibit situational appropriate behaviors based on their broad range of verbal and nonverbal capabilities, such as exhibiting culturally appropriate words, tone, gestures and facial expressions (Gudykunst et al., 1988, cited in Ang et al., 2007, p.338).

Despite the newness of the construct, empirical research on CQ is promising. Ang et al. (2007), found CQ significantly explain the variance in performance and adjustment over and above effects of demographic characteristics and general cognitive ability among international executives and foreign professionals.

Specifically, Ang et al. (2007) demonstrated that mental (meta-cognitive and cognitive) CQ significantly predicts cultural judgment and decision making and task performance; motivational CQ significantly predicts general adjustment in intercultural environments, while behavioral CQ related to task performance and general adjustment in intercultural environment. Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar (2006) found that motivational CQ significantly predicts cross-cultural adjustment of foreign professionals, over and above pre-job assignments interventions such as realistic job previews and realistic living conditions preview.

Although it is important to understand outcomes of CQ, it also important to examine antecedents of CQ in its broader nomological network. To date, it is not fully understood why some individuals might experience greater CQ than others. A diverse set of individual difference constructs could be related to CQ (Ang et al., 2006). Drawing on Leiba-O'Sullivan's (1999) model of cross-cultural competence and Shaffer, Gregersen, Harrison, Black, and Ferzandi's (2006) model of expatriate effectiveness, we propose stable dispositions and dynamic competencies as the individual differences factors in predicting CQ construct. Leiba-O'Sullivan (1999) framed her investigation within the context of Black and Mendenhall's (1990) study and made a distinction between stable and dynamic competencies as well as added new dimensions to the framework. Leiba-O'Sullivan argues that stable competencies are essential for the acquisition of dynamic competencies, and therefore, she emphasizes their interdependence. Knowledge and skills represent dynamic competencies, because they may be acquired through training, be it training on or off the job. Ability and personality represent stable competencies because they are relatively fixed and may constrain the potential to develop a skill. Leiba-O'Sullivan argues that stable competencies are essential for the acquisition of dynamic competencies. Further stable competencies may be "must-have's" for cross-cultural adjustment, as opposed to dynamic competencies, which may simply be "nice-to-have's". Acquiring of these competencies is necessary for cross-cultural effectiveness. Shaffer et al.'s (2006) model of expatriate effectiveness which is build based on Leiba-O'Sullivan's model examined stable dispositions and dynamic competencies as the predictors of cross-cultural effectiveness. In both models, the Big Five personality traits are maintained as the construct constitute both the stable competencies (Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1999) and stable dispositions (Shaffer et al., 2006). Ang et al. (2006) contends that CQ is a state-like individual differences (specific to certain situations or tasks and tend to be malleable over time), thus it is possible the stable dispositions and dynamic competencies serve as predictors of proximal state-like individual differences like CQ.

3.0 Stable dispositions and CQ

Personality traits are relatively stable, enduring patterns of how individuals feel, think, and behave. Recent research has focused on the “Big Five” or five-factor model, which contends that most personalities can be classified in terms of a few general traits: conscientiousness, emotional stability, agreeableness, openness to experience, and extraversion (Digman, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987). According to evolutionary personality psychology, personality traits are universal adaptive mechanisms that have developed and evolved in humans over time as mental solutions to preserve life and reproduction (Buss, 1991). Thus, individuals’ way of behaving in various contexts and situations have developed and adapted over time to ensure survival. According to Caligiuri (2000) this theory can be applied to predicting expatriate success, in that the variations in personality traits which allow individuals to fill different positions in society translates into the adaptive requirements needed for success in expatriate assignments. In a similar vein, it was expected that since cultural intelligence involves the ability to effectively adapt to culturally diverse contexts (meta-cognitively, cognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally); certain personality traits should be related to certain factors of CQ, and should be able to predict levels of CQ among individuals. Thus Caligiuri’s analysis of evolutionary personality psychology could be used to study the relationship between personality and CQ

3.1 Conscientiousness and CQ

Conscientiousness has been defined as being purposeful, strong-willed, and determined, as well as being capable of controlling impulses prudently, reliably, and in conformity with the situation (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Hogan, 1992). Conscientiousness individuals strive for achievement, take initiative in solving problems, and are thorough in their work (Witt, Burke, Barrick, & Mount, 2002). Caligiuri (2000) cites studies of personality and performance in the domestic arena that have established a relationship between conscientiousness and work performance (e.g. Barrick & Mount, 1991; Day & Silverman, 1989) in her study of expatriates identified a similar positive link between the trait and supervisor-rated performance of expatriates. In thinking about conscientiousness and the four factors of CQ, we assert that conscientiousness is related to meta-cognitive CQ. Meta-cognitive CQ refers to ones knowledge and control over cognitions, and meta-cognitive CQ capabilities include self-regulation and awareness, which is a key aspect of the conscientiousness trait. In addition, the strategic thinking, planning and questioning characteristic of high meta-cognitive CQ is also dominance in conscientious individuals.

Proposition 1: Conscientiousness will be positively related to meta-cognitive component of CQ.

Researchers also contended that conscientious individuals perform more effectively because the ability to monitor their progress; and if situation demands, make relevant adjustments to their behaviors. This self regulation represents the flexibility and adaptiveness characteristic of behavioral CQ. Individuals high in behavioral CQ are flexible in performing appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people who differ in their cultural backgrounds (Earley & Ang, 2003), which relate to the compliant tendencies of conscientious individuals.

Proposition 2: Conscientiousness will be positively related to behavioral component of CQ.

3.2 Agreeableness and CQ

Individuals with high levels of agreeableness tend to be friendly, good-natured, cooperative, soft-hearted, nonhostile, helpful, courteous, and flexible (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Goldberg, 1981; McCrae & Costa, 1985; Witt et al., 2002). They strive for mutual understanding in conflicting situations (Mount, Barrick, & Steward, 1998), less competitive, and are interpersonally competent (Witt et al., 2002). Based on evolutionary personality psychology, Caligiuri (2000) asserts that individuals form reciprocal social alliances to preserve their social positions achieved through the agreeableness personality trait. She found that agreeableness was negatively related to expatriates desire to terminate their overseas assignment; thus reflects the role of agreeableness in predicting cross-cultural effectiveness in expatriates. Black (1990) similarly found that agreeable expatriates experience greater cross-cultural adjustment.

In thinking about agreeableness and four factors of CQ, we posit that agreeableness is related to behavioral CQ and not to mental (meta-cognitive or cognitive) or motivational CQ. Agreeableness primarily focuses on interpersonal skills, which suggests a relationship to behavioral component of CQ, which also reflects interpersonal competencies.

Proposition 3: Agreeableness will be positively related to behavioral component of CQ.

3.3 Emotional stability and CQ

Neuroticism is characterized by excessive worry, pessimism and tendency to experience negative emotions. Emotional stability is the opposite pole of neuroticism-

which reflects calm and even-tempered in the way they cope with daily life (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; Ones & Viswesvaran, 1997). Those who are emotionally stable usually do not express much emotion. They tend to be less anxious, depressed, angry, embarrassed, worried and insecure.

Caligiuri (2000) contends that evolutionary personality psychology labels emotional stability as a universal adaptive mechanism that enables humans to deal with stressful situations in their environment. Thus emotional stability is a vital characteristic for those individuals who live and work in unfamiliar environments considering the levels of stress they may be experienced. Failure to cope and handle such stress, then, most likely would result in withdrawal behaviors, reflecting neurotic characteristics. Motivational CQ consists of self efficacy, self concept, and goal setting and embraces the intrinsic motivation in cross-cultural situations (Ang et al., 2004). The tendency for neurotic behavior to be expressed in pessimism and lack of self-confidence suggests a negative relationship between neuroticism and motivational CQ.

Proposition 4: Neuroticism will be negatively related to motivational component of CQ.

Just as with agreeableness, emotional stability focuses on interpersonal competence i.e. behavioral skills in interacting with others in social situations. Research on personality in international arena has proposed emotional stability as important personality characteristics for expatriate adjustment to the host country (Black, 1988; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Research has shown that those with high emotional stability are less likely to experience self-consciousness when faced with unfamiliar intercultural encounters (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Those high in emotional stability should be able to deal with novel and unfamiliar intercultural interactions because of their ability to respond to uncertainty with greater patience, and even temper, and without emotion. Ang et al. (2006) suggests that those who are emotionally stable should be better able to display flexible verbal and nonverbal behaviors that put others at ease in cross-cultural situations.

Proposition 5: Emotional stability will be positively related to behavioral component of CQ.

3.4 Extraversion and CQ

Extraverts are people who are assertive, ambitious, talkative, energetic, bold, adventurous, and expressive (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1992). Introverts are the opposite pole of extraverts and tend to demonstrate characteristics such as timid, submissive, unassured, silent, and inhibited. Therefore, an individual who exhibits a

high level of extraversion may be considered to prefer interactions with others. Caligiuri (2000) concludes that extraverted individuals are able to effectively assert themselves and learn the social culture of the host country, thus allows them to perform better. Extraverts tend to be more physically and verbally active, and to be more friendly and outgoing around others than most people. According to Hogan (1986), extraverts are highly social individuals who are likely to have a number of friends and acquaintances through which they have master the cultural differences. The adventurous and ambitious nature of extraverts implies a tendency to be curious about other cultures and to expose themselves to novel situations, thus providing a motivation to seek out and participate in culturally diverse environments.

Motivational CQ is an individual's drive and interest in adapting to cultural differences (Earley & Ang, 2003). Extraverted individuals on the other hand, are bold, forceful, and self confident. Thus they are more likely to try new things, expose themselves to novel situations, and ask questions.

Proposition 6: Extraversion will be positively related to motivational component of CQ.

In addition, extraverted individuals prefer the company of others and enjoy interpersonal interactions (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Ones & Viswesvaran, 1997). Their characteristics of expressive, gregarious, bold, spontaneous and less inhibited nature should allow them to vary their behavior more effectively than those are less extraverted. Those who are highly extraverts have tendency to display more flexible behaviors, therefore, more likely to deal with novel and unfamiliar intercultural interactions more effectively than those introverts.

Proposition 7: Extraversion will be positively related to behavioral component of CQ.

3.5 Openness to experience and CQ

This Big Five dimension entails broad-mindedness, curiosity, creativity, having wide interests, flexibility of thoughts, inventiveness, cultured, and artistically sensitive (McCrae, 1996). To date, this dimension is the least understood aspect of personality in the literature on the Big Five model (Digman, 1990). Research findings utilizing openness to experience trait some how disappointing in the literature being the only factor in the Big Five that often is not related to work outcomes (Barrick & Mount, 1991; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). Evolutionary personality theory addresses the utility of this trait through its contention that "perceiving, attending to, and acting upon differences in others is crucial for solving problems of survival and reproduction"

(Buss, 1991, p.471, cited in Caligiuri, 2000, p.74). This is translated to intercultural experiences through the ability to correctly assess the social environments as a matter of self-preservation, which, combined with the tendency toward flexibility in thought and action, suggests potential significant relationships with all components of CQ.

Ang et al. (2006) contended that openness to experience will be related to meta-cognitive CQ because those who are curious and high in openness spend time “thinking about thinking”. In other word, they adopt meta-cognitive strategies when thinking about and interacting with those who have different cultural backgrounds. Openness to experience individuals is also likely to question their own cultural assumptions, analyze the cultural preferences and norms of others, and reexamine their mental models when interacting with others from different culture (Ang et al., 2006).

Proposition 8: Openness to experience will be positively related to meta-cognitive component of CQ.

Cognitive CQ is an individual’s knowledge of specific norms, practices, and conventions in different cultural settings (Earley & Ang, 2003). Cognitive CQ plays a significant role in facilitating individuals acquire the knowledge of cultural universals as well as knowledge of cultural differences; thus allows individuals to assess their similarity to others who have different cultural backgrounds. Given the characteristics of curiosity and broad-mindedness, therefore, it is contended that those individuals high on openness to experience should be more knowledgeable about specific aspects of other cultures.

Proposition 9: Openness to experience will be positively related to cognitive component of CQ.

Motivational CQ relates to one’s desire to adapt to unfamiliar cultural environments, whether it originates through self efficacy motivations, from intrinsic interests, or from some other driving force. According to Ones and Viswesvaran (1997) openness to experience individuals willing to experience and enjoy new and unfamiliar environments since they are inherently curious.

Proposition 10: Openness to experience will be positively related to motivational component of CQ.

Behavioral CQ involves one’s ability to actually engage in the desired adaptive behaviors required of a culturally different context. The curious and imaginative tendencies of openness trait suggest that individuals will seek out, act on new experiences, and extend their repertoire of behaviors beyond the daily habits.

Proposition 11: Openness to experience will be positively related to behavioral component of CQ.

4.0 Dynamic competencies and CQ

In addition to general dispositions, expatriate researchers have identified specific competencies that may facilitate the understanding and implementation of new behaviors needed in a foreign cultural environment (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). In contrast with stable personality traits, these competencies are dynamic (Bell & Harrison, 1996); they represent knowledge and skills that can be acquired through training (Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1999; Peters, Greer, & Youngblood, 1997). In this study, we focus on five dynamic competencies especially relevant to expatriates: flexibility (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000), cultural empathy (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000), social initiative (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000), ethnocentrism (Shaffer et al., 2006), and stress tolerance (Hammer et al., 1978).

4.1 Flexibility and CQ

Flexibility can be defined as “the tendency to regard new and unknown situations as a challenge and to adjust one’s behavior to the demands of new and unknown situations” (Herfst, Van Oudenhoven, & Timmerman, 2008). Several scholars have stressed the importance of this dimension (Arthur & Bennet, 1995; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Hanvey, 1976; Ruben & Kealey, 1979; Smith, 1966; Torbion, 1982). The international assignee has to be able to switch easily from one strategy to another, because the familiar ways of handling things will not necessarily work in a new cultural environment. Flexibility seems particularly important when the assignee's expectations of the situation in the host country do not correspond with the actual situation. Elements of flexibility, such as the ability to learn from mistakes and adjustment of behavior whenever it is required, are particularly associated with the ability to learn from new experiences. This ability to learn from experiences seems of critical importance to multicultural effectiveness (Spreitzer et al., 1997).

Meta-cognitive refers to one's knowledge and control over cognitions, and meta-cognitive CQ capabilities include self-regulation, which is a key aspect of the flexibility trait. In addition, the strategic thinking and planning characteristics of high meta-cognitive CQ is also represented in flexible individuals. Thus, it is proposed that:

Proposition 12: Flexibility will be positively related to meta-cognitive component of CQ.

Research also shows that flexible individuals learn and perform more effectively because they monitor their progress and, if needed, make adjustments to their behavior. This self-regulation, or compliance, is driven by an intrinsic need to achieve goals. On the other hand, individuals high in behavioral CQ engage in behaviors that are appropriate for a given situation, which relates to the compliant tendencies of flexible individuals. Therefore, it was expected that:

Proposition 13: Flexibility will be positively related to behavioral component of CQ.

4.2 Cultural empathy and CQ

Cultural empathy, also referred to as “sensitivity” (e.g., Hawes & Kealy, 1981), is the most frequently mentioned dimension of multicultural effectiveness (Arthur & Bennet, 1995; Cleveland, Mangone, & Adams, 1960; Ruben, 1976). Ruben (1976) defined it as “the capacity to clearly project an interest in others, as well as to obtain and to reflect a reasonably complete and accurate sense of another’s thoughts, feelings, and/or experiences”. In other words, this dimension refers to the ability to empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of members of different cultural groups (Mol et al., 2001), in particular the local people.

Cultural empathy was found strongly related to the Big Five factor Agreeableness (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Based on evolutionary personality psychology, Caligiuri (2000) asserts that individual form reciprocal social alliances to preserve their social positions, which is achieved through the agreeableness personality trait. Similar to agreeableness, the focus of the cultural empathy trait is primarily focused on interpersonal skills, which suggests a relationship to the behavioral component of CQ, which also reflects interpersonal competencies. Given this the following proposition was presented:

Proposition 14: Cultural empathy will be positively related to behavioral component of CQ.

4.3 Social initiative and CQ

Social initiative is defined as “a tendency to stand out in a different culture, to establish contact and to be active” (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Several researchers have pointed at the relevance of the ability to establish and maintain

contacts (Hawes and Kealey, 1981; Kets de Vries and Mead, 1991). Hawes and Kealey (1981), for example, stress the importance of interaction with people from the host country and of making friends among the locals.

Social initiative was found strongly related to the Big Five factor Extraversion (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Similar to Big Five factor Extraversion, an individual who exhibits a high level of social initiative could therefore be expected to prefer interaction with others. The adventurous and ambitious nature of social initiators implies a tendency to be curious about other cultures and to expose themselves to novel situations, thereby providing a motivation to seek out and participate in culturally different experiences. Motivational CQ involves one's desire and drive to adapt their behaviors to fit in with culturally different environments. The mental capabilities and actual ability to act out these motivations do not necessarily appear related to social initiative. Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed:

Proposition 15: Social initiative will be positively related to motivational component of CQ.

4.4 Ethnocentrism and CQ

Ethnocentrism is the propensity to view one's own cultural traditions and behaviors as right and those of others as wrong (Black, 1990). The opposite pole of ethnocentrism is cosmopolitanism, which has generally been defined as the tendency to view one's own traditions, culture and patterns of behavior as no better than other distinct traditions, cultures, and behaviors (Shaffer et al., 2006). From a socioanalytic perspective (Hogan & Shelton, 1998), such attitudes will perpetuate the ambiguities and uncertainties associated with cross cultural social situations and inhibit the expatriate's ability to get along with others and to find meaning in the foreign environment (Church, 1982; Stening, 1979). In addition, ethnocentric attitudes may generate feelings of prejudice, mistrust, and insecurity (Gouttefarde, 1992), leading to less motivation to develop relationships with colleagues, poorer adaptation to the general environment, and stronger desire to return to one's home country (Shaffer et al., 2006).

In thinking about relationship between ethnocentrism and CQ, we propose that ethnocentrism will be negatively associated with all four factors of CQ as unified, multidimensional construct. According to Neuliep (2003), ethnocentrism attitude is conditioned by one's cultural background, thus influence people how to think (metacognitive and cognitive CQ), how to feel (motivational CQ), and conditions people how to act (behavioral CQ) (Neuliep, 2003).

Proposition 16: Ethnocentrism will be negatively related to CQ.

4.5 Stress tolerance and CQ

Stress tolerance is the ability to engage in goal-oriented activities despite the existence of pressures such as a demanding workload or time pressures (Brezinska & Kofta, 1974). Individuals who work and live in unfamiliar environment in foreign assignments face many stress provoking factors, such as uncertainty and ambiguity (Black, 1988). Moving into a new cultural environment may also produce a feeling of not having control over the situation and as Hofstede (1980) has stated “the forced exposure to alien cultural environment can put people under heavy stress”.

Previous work in the area of intercultural adjustment and culture shock (Brein & David, 1971; Adler, 1975; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Ones and Viswesvaran, 2001; Holopainen & Björkman, 2005) clearly supports the finding of this study that the ability to deal with psychological stress is important to a sojourners’ effective functioning in a foreign culture. The sojourner who is able to effectively manage the stress associated with living and/or working in a foreign culture will experience a considerable amount of personal growth and increased cultural self-awareness. On the other hand, the sojourner who is unable to psychologically deal with intercultural stress may experience frustration, disorientation, and an inability to cope with change (Hammer et al., 1978). Stress tolerance has also been suggested as an important predictor for expatriate selection (Haslberger & Stroh, 1992), and competence dealing with stress has been implicated by expatriates themselves as one of the characteristics best able to distinguish average from excellent international workers (Hammer, et al., 1978; Ratin, 1983).

According to Walton (1990), stress management skills in those individuals high on stress tolerance includes the capability to monitor one’s cognitions and emotions, the capability to recognize what variety of social support strategies will be helpful for self-preservation in particular situations, and the willingness to request social support when necessary. It also included rehearsing various coping behaviors, and practicing them in progressively more stressful situations. By learning how to modify the response, one eventually learns adaptive responses for a variety of stressful situations and becomes more resilient in the face of failure.

The ability to cope with change and adaptiveness to stressful situations suggests a positive relationship between stress tolerance and behavioral component of CQ. Behavioral CQ refers to an individual’s flexibility in performing appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people who differ in their cultural backgrounds (Earley & Ang, 2003). According to Lustig and Koester (1999),

behavioral norms vary across culture in three ways: (a) the specific range of behaviors that are enacted; (b) the display rules for when specific nonverbal expressions are required, preferred, permitted, or prohibited; and (c) the interpretation of particular nonverbal behaviors. The ability to deal effectively with frustration, ability to deal effectively with stress, ability to deal effectively with different political system, and ability to deal effectively with anxiety among the skills identified in individuals high on stress tolerance (Stening & Hammer, 1992), thus should allow one to handle novel and unfamiliar intercultural interactions. In sum, those who are high on stress tolerance should be better able to display flexible verbal and nonverbal behaviors that put others at ease in cross-cultural situations.

Proposition 17: Stress tolerance will be positively related to behavioral component of CQ.

Conclusion

This article extends CQ literature and the research on expatriate management in several ways. First, it contributes to the ongoing development and validations of CQ construct. Researchers in this area has consistently suggested for more research to address both the measurement issues as well as substantive issues to the pursuit of CQ construct validity (see Ang et al., 2004). Second, this article contributes to the understanding of how CQ might be predicted and/or explained. To date, researches on antecedents of CQ are tended to focus more on conceptual theoretizing without much empirical evidence. Third, this article provides a compelling theoretical support in identifying the individual difference factors that could predict CQ in individuals by drawing on previous models of intercultural effectiveness. Fourth, related to international assignments, CQ research may provide organizations with valuable direction and tools in terms of expatriate selection, placement, and training and development. On the whole this article intended to stimulate more research attention on how CQ can enhance expatriate effectiveness in its broader nomological network by examining various antecedents, moderators, and outcomes of CQ.

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