



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE,
PERSONALITY, CROSS CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND JOB
PERFORMANCE AMONGST EXPATRIATES IN MALAYSIA**

SUBRAMANIAM A/L SRI RAMALU

GSM 2010 2

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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By

SUBRAMANIAM A/L SRI RAMALU

**Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Management, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

September 2010

Dedication

To my beloved wife, children and parents for their endless love, support and encouragement throughout my lifetime.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of University Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairman: Professor Raduan Che Rose, Ph. D

Faculty: Graduate School of Management

Many studies have been conducted by researchers either academia or practitioner to understand factors contributing to expatriate effectiveness in the international assignments. However, the absence of reliable individual factors contributing to expatriate effectiveness in international assignments has remained the gap in the literature. The present study fills the gap by examining the relationship between individual differences consist of cultural intelligence and personality and expatriate effectiveness in terms of cross-cultural adjustment and job performance using a sample of 332 expatriates working in Malaysia. Sample list of the study drawn from 24 directories of foreign Business Chamber of Commerce in Malaysia. Data was collected using the survey method consist of mail and online questionnaire. The nine research questions and eight research objectives of the study answered by performing appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The eight main hypotheses of the study tested using the hierarchical and multiple regression analyses.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between (i) cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment; (ii) cultural intelligence and job performance; (iii) personality and cultural intelligence; (iv) personality and cross-cultural adjustment; (v) personality and job performance; and (vi) cross-cultural adjustment and job performance. In this study, motivational and behavioural dimension of cultural intelligence and personality factors of agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness found to be positively related to most of the dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment and job performance. The findings imply that the motivational and behavioural dimension of cultural intelligence and personality factors of agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness are more significant in predicting cross-cultural adjustment and job performance among expatriates in Malaysia. Findings of this study also revealed that cross-cultural adjustment mediates the relationship between individual differences and job performance, implying that cultural intelligence and personality explains the variance in job performance indirectly, mediated through cross-cultural adjustment. The mediating role played by cross-cultural adjustment helps to explain the underlying process that is responsible for the relationship between individual differences and job performance of expatriates.

The findings of this study have significantly contributed to the advancement of knowledge in cross-cultural management field evident that cultural intelligence and personality factors are vital cross-cultural competency that facilitates expatriates cross-cultural adjustment and job performance in international assignments. With the evidence on the usefulness of cultural intelligence and personality factor to facilitate expatriate cross-cultural adjustment and job performance, the findings of this study

also have practical implications to the expatriating firms in the area of selection, training and development of candidate for international assignments.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**HUBUNGAN DI ANTARA KEPINTARAN BUDAYA, PERSONALITI,
PENYESUAIAN SILANG BUDAYA DAN PRESTASI KERJA DI
KALANGAN EKSPATRIAT DI MALAYSIA**

Oleh

SUBRAMANIAM A/L SRI RAMALU

September 2010

Pengerusi: Profesor Raduan Che Rose, Ph. D

Fakulti: Sekolah Pengajian Siswazah Pengurusan

Para penyelidik sama ada ahli akademik atau pengamal industri telah melakukan banyak kajian untuk memahami faktor yang menyumbang ke arah keberkesanan ekspatriat dalam tugas antarabangsa. Namun begitu, ketiadaan faktor individu yang kukuh menyumbang ke arah keberkesanan ekspatriat dalam tugas antarabangsa masih kekal sebagai jurang literatur. Kajian ini memenuhi jurang tersebut dengan mengkaji hubungan di antara perbezaan individu terdiri daripada kepintaran budaya dan personaliti dan keberkesanan ekspatriat dari segi penyesuaian silang budaya dan prestasi kerja dengan menggunakan sampel 332 ekspatriat yang bekerja di Malaysia. Senarai sampel kajian diambil daripada 24 direktori Dewan Perniagaan Asing di Malaysia. Data telah dikutip menggunakan kaedah tinjauan terdiri daripada soal-selidik pos dan dalam talian. Sembilan persoalan dan lapan objektif kajian ini telah dijawab dengan menjalankan analisis statistik diskriptif dan inferens yang sesuai. Lapan hipotesis utama kajian ini telah diuji menggunakan kaedah regresi hierarki dan berbilang.

Dapatan kajian ini memperlihatkan adanya hubungan positif yang signifikan di antara (i) kepintaran budaya dan penyesuaian silang budaya; (ii) kepintaran budaya dan prestasi kerja; (iii) personaliti dan kepintaran budaya; (iv) personaliti dan penyesuaian silang budaya; (v) personaliti dan prestasi kerja; dan (vi) penyesuaian silang budaya dan prestasi kerja. Dalam kajian ini, dimensi motivasi dan gelagat kepintaran budaya dan faktor personaliti kepersetujuan (agreeableness), keterbukaan terhadap pengalaman (openness to experience) dan berhati-hati (conscientiousness) didapati telah berhubung secara positif dengan kebanyakan dimensi penyesuaian silang budaya dan prestasi kerja ekspatriat. Dapatan ini menandakan bahawa dimensi motivasi dan gelagat kepintaran budaya dan faktor personaliti kepersetujuan, keterbukaan terhadap pengalaman dan berhati-hati adalah lebih signifikan dalam meramal penyesuaian silang budaya dan prestasi kerja di kalangan ekspatriat di Malaysia. Dapatan kajian ini juga memperlihatkan penyesuaian silang budaya mengantara hubungan di antara perbezaan individu dan prestasi kerja, menandakan bahawa varian di dalam prestasi kerja diterangkan oleh kepintaran budaya dan personaliti secara tidak langsung, dipengantara oleh penyesuaian silang budaya. Peranan pengantaraan yang dimainkan oleh penyesuaian silang budaya membantu menerangkan proses yang bertanggungjawab mendasari hubungan di antara perbezaan individu dan prestasi kerja ekspatriat.

Dapatan kajian ini telah menyumbang secara signifikan ke arah pemajuan pengetahuan dalam bidang pengurusan silang budaya memandangkan faktor kepintaran budaya dan personaliti didapati kompetensi silang budaya yang penting untuk memudahkan penyesuaian silang budaya dan prestasi kerja ekspatriat dalam tugas antarabangsa. Bersandarkan bukti manfaat faktor kepintaran budaya dan

personaliti dalam memudahkan penyesuaian silang budaya dan prestasi kerja ekspatriat, dapatan kajian ini juga mempunyai implikasi praktikal kepada firma yang mengekspatriat dalam pemilihan, latihan dan pembangunan calon untuk tugas antarabangsa.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise due to God, for giving me the strength, courage and determination to complete this study.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation to the Government of Malaysia, Ministry of Higher Education and Universiti Utara Malaysia for granting me a scholarship and an opportunity to complete this study.

I would also like to thank my chair of the supervisory committee, Prof. Dr. Raduan Che Rose, for his invaluable guidance, encouragement and constructive criticisms throughout the study period, and for giving me total freedom to explore my research. Both his wisdom and knowledge have been invaluable to my academic maturation. I also truly appreciate his strong positive attitude and pragmatic outlook.

I am also very grateful to Dr. Naresh Kumar, from the Faculty of Economics and Management, UPM and a member of my supervisory committee, for his advice, guidance, critical assessment and useful suggestions during the entire course of this study. My grateful appreciation also goes to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jegak Uli, from the Faculty of Educational Studies, UPM a member of the supervisory committee, for his advice and supervision.

My heartfelt appreciation and gratitude also goes to the staff members of the Graduate School of Management, for their generous guidance and help during the entire length of my study in UPM. A special thank you is extended to my fellow

doctoral students. Daily interaction with these talented people provided me with a great deal of inspiration. I would like to thank all of them for their friendship and support.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the unquestioning support of my family. I am forever grateful for my great wife, children and parents, and my deepest appreciation is given to them. Words are not adequate to express my gratitude to them.



I certify that an Examination Committee met on September 24, 2010 to conduct the final examination of Subramaniam a/l Sri Ramalu on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Relationships between Cultural Intelligence, Personality, Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Job Performance amongst Expatriates in Malaysia” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or any other institutions.

SUBRAMANIAM A/L SRI RAMALU

Date:

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