

## **The Moderating Role of Influence Tactics on Cultural Intelligence and Expatriate Success**

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### **ABSTRACT**

As a result of globalization, expatriate numbers have increased significantly, making expatriation failure one of the top concerns of International Human Resource Managers to curb. This study looks at the potential of using Cultural Intelligence and Influence Tactics in explaining expatriate success. Eighty three expatriates, mainly from Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, and Korea, working with a US-based MNC in the Klang Valley, Malaysia, participated in this study. At least four interesting findings were discovered: First, evidence that expatriates that are culturally intelligent in motivational and behavioural aspects, tended to perform better in their work; Second, high CQ expatriates, who used more Upward Appeal influence tactic, seemed to achieve lower Job Performance; Third, expatriates, who were culturally intelligent motivationally, were found to adjust to Malaysia more effectively. Finally, those high CQ expatriates who used more Rational Persuasion Influence Tactics adjusted to work and social life better in Malaysia.

*Keywords:* Cultural intelligence, expatriate success, influence tactics, job performance, adjustment

### **INTRODUCTION**

Due to a lack of research on expatriate management since the 1980s, expatriate failure issues have not been successfully addressed (Collings, Scullion, & Morley, 2007). Factors reported as being responsible

for assignment failures included spouse/partner dissatisfaction, inability to adapt, other family concerns, poor candidate selection, poor Job Performance, and jobs not meeting expectations (Global Relocation Trend, 2010). These failure factors could be due to improper pre-departure training and selection processes. In fact, only a small number of respondent companies (33%) admitted having a proper expatriate management programme, as reported by

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Global Relocation Trend (GRT, 2010).

Other predictors of expatriate success noted in the literature include pre-departure training (e.g., McCabe, 1993; Tucker, Bonial, & Lahti, 2004), previous overseas experiences (e.g., Crown, 2008), personal fit (Jun & Gentry, 2005), organizational selection tools (Cheng & Lin, 2009; Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud, 2006; McCabe, 1993), and individual skills (Ang, Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2007; Tucker *et al.*, 2004). Even though Cultural Intelligence and Influence Tactics have separately been found to bring about positive results in the workplace or adjustment, their joint potential in cross-cultural research has not been explored. This paper intends to close this gap in the literature.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

As explained by previous researchers (see McGinley, 2008; Okpara & Kabongo, 2011), there are significant economic and social costs associated with expatriates' adjustment failure. McGinley (2008) defines expatriate failure as the inability to perform effectively, resulting in either being fired or recalled home, including those who return from overseas assignments prematurely and those who subsequently leave the company upon completion of their assignment. McGinley (2008) estimated that expatriate failure rates ranged from 25 to 70%, which is higher than that predicted by Brookfield Global Relocation Services of 7 to 17% (GRT, 2010). This was probably due to the differences in the definition of failure. Both

ranges of percentage are alarming as they significantly increased both tangible (e.g., financial) and intangible (e.g., low moral) costs to MNCs. As a result, expatriate management research continues to receive increasing attention to address the issue (e.g., Okpara & Kabongo, 2011).

In the efforts to combat expatriate failure issues, various expatriate management models have been proposed. First, Jun and Gentry (2005) used cultural similarity and personal fit in their model and measured expatriate success using a Job Performance indicator. They found that cultural similarity between home and host country did not predict Job Performance, while personal fit did. Second, Collings *et al.* (2007) called for an alternative assessment of expatriate research, since new forms of international assignments such as short-term assignments, commuter assignments, international business travel and virtual assignment had emerged. They proposed that a more holistic model should be introduced. Third, Ang *et al.* (2007) empirically tested a model including multiple categories of predictors such as demographics, personalities, emotional intelligence, and cultural intelligence to predict expatriate success. They empirically showed that besides having job-related technical skills, expatriates needed CQ skills to succeed in overseas assignments.

Numerous subsequent studies validated CQ's relevance in international business research (Elenkov & Manev, 2009; Dagher, 2010; Imai & Gelfand, 2010). Elenkov and Manev (2009) used CQ to study how expatriate's leadership style and CQ

interacted to predict senior expatriate's success in achieving organization outcomes. They found that CQ moderated the relationship between leadership traits and Organizational Innovations. Dagher (2010) surveyed Arab expatriates and validated CQ's applicability in explaining expatriate adjustment level. Similarly, Imai and Gelfand (2010) reported that CQ effectively explained the variation in negotiation strategy used by their subjects. Meanwhile, CQ seems to evolve as central antecedents to understand international business phenomenon, especially in the expatriate area. Thus, the present study continues to capitalize on CQ's ability, and uses it as the main predictor in this study.

CQ was popularized by Early and colleagues (Early, 2002; Early & Ang, 2003; Early, Ang, & Tan, 2006) and has been used by many subsequent researchers (e.g., Templer *et al.*, 2006; Crowne, 2008), where it measures a person's capability to adapt to new cultural contexts effectively. Early and Ang (2003) conceptualized CQ into four components; namely, meta-cognition, cognition, motivation, and behaviour. Numerous empirical evidence have confirmed this 4-component conception of CQ, including those of Dagher (2010) and Imai and Gelfand (2010). Dagher (2010) assessed two aspects of CQ to understand the three dimensions of Cross Cultural Adjustment, using an Arab expatriate sample and found support for a four-factor structure of the CQ construct. Also, the Motivational aspect of CQ was found to predict all the three dimensions of adjustments -

General, Interaction, and Work, while the Behavioural aspect of CQ only predicted the first two dimensions of Adjustments (i.e., General and Interaction). Imai and Gelfand (2010) used CQ to understand intercultural negotiation processes and outcomes, while controlling emotional intelligence. They found that CQ did indeed influence negotiation strategy, and in more specific, motivational CQ strongly drove the tendency of adopting effective negotiation strategies such as cooperatives and epistemics. The four dimensions of CQ were defined by Early and colleagues (Early, 2002; Early & Ang, 2003; Early *et al.*, 2006), and are elaborated below.

#### **META-COGNITIVE CQ**

Meta-cognitive (Ang *et al.*, 2006, 2007) intelligence is the capability to control cognition in the process of individuals acquiring and understanding knowledge on culture. Meta-cognitive CQ is analogous to the mind of individuals and measures the individuals' ability to make sense of their inter-cultural experiences. This includes their ability to see beyond cultural similarities and differences and pick up cultural cues immediately. It occurs when judgments are made about their own thought processes and also those of others, and it then adjusts their mental maps when actual experiences differ from the individuals' expectations, strategizing future inter-cultural encounters, as well as checking on the home and host's assumptions during the intercultural encounter (Ang *et al.*, 2006).

### **COGNITIVE CQ**

Cognitive CQ (Ang *et al.*, 2006, 2007; Ward *et al.*, 2009) captures the knowledge structures of a specific foreign country in terms of their norms, practices, conventions, economic, legal, and social systems (Triandis, 1994). This aspect of knowledge and understanding on a specific host country's culture helps individuals to look at the 'big picture' and appreciate cultural differences at a higher level, and thus, making individuals more receptive to the host culture and promote a greater cultural openness. It also allows individuals to manoeuvre within a host country, with some level of confidence that they may not make big cultural blunders. This also likely leads to the promotion of cross-cultural understandings and respect (Brislin *et al.*, 2006).

### **MOTIVATIONAL CQ**

While cognitive CQ refers to a person's knowledge of other cultures' ways of doing things, motivational CQ refers to the person's curiosity and interest to learn the host culture's ways of doing things. Motivational CQ is said to influence individuals' belief in their capabilities to understand people from different cultures (Early *et al.*, 2006). It captures the individuals' extent of interest and drives to test one's potential in a new and diverse culture. In more specific, Motivational CQ is defined as the magnitude (Ang *et al.*, 2007; Ward, Fischer, Lam, & Hall, 2009) and direction of energy that is being applied towards learning about, and functioning in, cross-cultural situations. The driving force

behind Motivational CQ factor includes the intrinsic reward that the individual expected to earn from culturally diverse interactions such as a sense of fulfilment at successfully handling cross-cultural challenges. This then increases their sense of confidence in cross-cultural settings and encourages them to continue experimenting for more fulfilling experiences.

### **BEHAVIOURAL CQ**

Behavioural CQ is defined as an explicit display of actions (Sternberg, 1986), which includes the capability to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds using verbal and non-verbal behaviours effectively (Early *et al.*, 2006). The Behavioural CQ component is needed to complement mental capabilities captured by meta-cognitive, cognitive, and motivational aspects (Hall, 1959). Individuals with high Behavioural CQ are flexible in their behaviour and more effective at portraying positive impressions like using culturally acceptable words, tones, gestures, and facial expressions (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988). Those with high Behavioural CQ are able to mimic locals' accents, gestures, eating habits, etc., and thus, they blend more effectively with them.

### **CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND JOB PERFORMANCE**

Mol, Born, Willemsen, and Van Der Molen (2005) suggest that cultural sensitivity skill, which is captured by CQ measure, has a positive relationship with Job Performance. Within a home country, Alon and Higgins

(2005) suggested that the emotional intelligence of leaders influences their behaviours, which then affects their success. Outside of the home country, in order to perform well in a foreign culture, one would need to adjust and react effectively according to host cultural expectations, and thus, CQ is needed to bring about Job Performance (Ang *et al.*, 2007). People who are culturally intelligent expect a certain degree of misunderstanding in cross-cultural encounters; and therefore, allow themselves some learning time to understand the new settings better, and be able to meet expectations at work more accurately (Brislin *et al.*, 2006).

Although the researchers expected all four aspects of CQ to predict task performance positively, only two CQ components (metacognition and behavioural) were found to empirically support this contention (Ang *et al.*, 2007; Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2006). It was explained that the job structure of the respondents in their studies were very well structured and specific, resulting in very little room for cross-cultural misunderstandings on work-related issues. This renders cognitive and motivational CQ irrelevant in the context of respondents working in a technical-related industry.

Cultural values are said to influence role expectations. Thus, with a higher level of metacognitive cultural intelligence (CQ) that stresses awareness on role expectation differences, one would be able to apply their cultural knowledge in a more appropriate manner (Templer *et al.*, 2006);

thus, resulting in higher performances. However, high behavioural CQ helps expatriates to perform better at work, and this is due to their ability to develop close relationships with locals via mimicking (e.g., using similar non-verbal language), and therefore, were given necessary support to get their jobs done. This is especially true in a Malaysian context, as Malaysians are generally relationship-oriented (high in the Femininity Index), as reported by Hofstede (1980). Since this study employed expatriate respondents working in an information technology firm, in technical positions with detailed job descriptions, the same CQ aspects (metacognitive and behavioural) found by Ang *et al.* (2007) are expected to predict Job Performance. Thus, two hypotheses were developed, as follows:

H1a: There is a positive relationship between meta-cognitive CQ and Job Performance

H1b: There is a positive relationship between behavioural CQ and Job Performance

## **CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND ADJUSTMENT LEVEL**

Some measure expatriate effectiveness/success through Job Performance, while others use indicators like cross-cultural adjustment (e.g., Dagher, 2010; Okpara & Kabongo, 2011). Cross-cultural adjustment refers to the ability to adjust to a host country's environment, and socio-cultural and work aspects, which enables expatriates to experience satisfaction and a sense of acceptance from the host nationals; and

therefore, allows them to function in daily activities without severe impairments (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011). Or, it can also be understood as “the individual’s affective psychological response to the new environment” (Black & Mendenhall, 1990, p. 122) that requires expatriates’ to process unfamiliar cues.

Cross-cultural adjustment is generally agreed as being a multidimensional construct. However, the proposed dimensions vary from two to six. First, Ward and Kennedy (1993) divided intercultural adjustment into two levels, namely, psychological adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment, where “psychological adjustment is interwoven with stress and coping processes, and socio-cultural adaptation is predicated on culture learning” (Ward & Kennedy, 1993, p. 222). Similarly, Selmer (1999) used the same two dimensions to understand the coping strategies adopted by Western expatriates in China. Second, a three-dimension cross-cultural adjustment was conceptualized by Black (1988) and has been used by many (e.g., Dagher, 2010; Okpara & Kabongo, 2011; Selmer & Luring, 2009). These dimensions are Work, Interaction, and General Adjustments. Work adjustment relates to the adjustment to job responsibilities, supervision, and performance expectations. Interaction adjustment concerns with adjustment to socializing and communicating with the host people, while general adjustment refers to the adjustment to the daily life domain such as housing, food, and shopping. Despite its popularity, Black’s (1988) conception

was said to inherit flaws, which include being merely a statistical construct with elements that are not well-defined or discrete (Selmer & Luring, 2009). Finally, Tucker *et al.* (2004) developed a six-factor adjustment construct, capturing Acceptance, Knowledge, Affect, Lifestyle, Interaction, and Communication components.

However, psychology literature captured adjustment level through impairment aspects like problematic responses to intercultural stress such as emotional distress and anxiety, depression and difficult interpersonal relations (Bock, 1970; Savicki, Downing-Burnettea, Hellerb, Binderb, & Suntingerb, 2004). For example, Bock (1970) defines the cross-cultural adjustment concept as being the inverse of culture shock that measures individual’s inability to understand, control, and predict the behaviour of others in a foreign culture (Bock, 1970). This line of thought coincides with the impairment scale developed by Mundt, Marks, Shear, & Greist (2002), which measures adjustment as the extent of impairment to function effectively on a day to day basis. Although this measure has not yet been used in expatriate research, the impairment method of adjustment level seems appropriate to apply in an expatriate context as it holistically measures the survivability of expatriates. Thus, this study uses the psychology measure to capture cross-cultural adjustment in an expatriate context, where adjustment is defined as the extent to which expatriates are able to function on daily basis in the host country, without severe impairments.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) indicated

that acculturative (which is very close to adjustment) stress affects expatriates when they are forcibly exposed to, and are expected to comply with, foreign cultural practices. Similar adjustment stress was also elaborated by Selmer (1999) whose study investigated the coping strategies used by Western expatriate managers in China to assess how this mechanism was employed by expatriates to cope with and affect their socio-cultural and psychological adjustment. Selmer (1999) reported that expatriates, who adjust effectively in a new environment, feel that they are able to manage work demands and interact effectively with host country nationals.

CQ generally captures a person's cultural skill in meta-cognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural aspects. Thus, CQ should logically impact adjustments positively. However, some components of CQ were said to more effectively predict adjustment than others. For example, Ang *et al.* (2007) found that only Motivational and Behavioural CQ positively predicted Adjustment (interactional and work adjustment). Similar results were also reported by Dagher (2010). High Behavioural CQ is associated with better adjustment, as the individual has the ability to adjust verbally and non verbally to host cultures (Ang *et al.*, 2007). Similarly, Motivational CQ drives persistent learning and experimentation with a host culture, with a belief in their ability to overcome cultural obstacles and finally win the hearts of locals, assists expatriates to adjust themselves better in a culturally

diverse environment (Templer *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, these two components of CQ are predicted to positively affect the adjustment of expatriates in Malaysia in a similar way.

H2a: There is a positive relationship between motivational CQ and adjustment level.

H2b: There is a positive relationship between behavioural CQ and adjustment level.

## **INFLUENCE TACTICS AND JOB PERFORMANCE**

Influence is used by managers to get things done through people since workers needed to be motivated through the use of influence (Daft, 2010). This construct was not explicitly conceptualized until the 1980s, when Kipnis *et al.* (1980) proposed seven strategies of influence from their seminal work. Kipnis *et al.* (1980) asked managers to explain the strategies that they used to change the behaviours of people at work; either subordinates, peers, or superiors, and translated these strategies into a questionnaire to understand the frequency of managers using those influence strategies. They found seven dimensions of influence strategies, namely, Reasoning, Friendliness, Coalition, Bargaining, Assertiveness, Higher authority, and Sanctions. They argued that these seven strategy dimensions were more comprehensive than influence classification, based on the power-based theory, which only covered the five dimensions of Rewards, Coercion, Legitimate, Referent, and Expert.

Subsequently, Yukl *et al.* (Fu & Yukl, 2000; Yukl, 1998; Yukl & Tracey,

1992) converted these influence strategy questionnaires into a scenario format to reduce the items' abstraction. Based on five scenarios of task-related requests and two scenarios of personal benefit requests, Fu and Yukl (2000) uncovered 11 influence tactic options, namely, Rational persuasion, Exchange, Coalition, Upward Appeals, Ingratiation, Pressure, Consultation, Inspirational appeals, Personal appeals, Gift giving and Informal. The last two tactics (Gift giving and Informal) were created as a result of focus group suggestions from Chinese Nationals, while the other nine were identified from the Western samples of earlier studies by Fu and Yukl (2000).

In a different study, Branzei (2002) included nine Influence Tactics and compared Influence Tactics usage differences across three countries (i.e., United States, Romania, and Japan). Eight of their tactics are similar to those of Fu and Yukl (2000) and one is

dissimilar (Legitimation). In a more recent study, Fu *et al.* (2004) used a slightly different set of 11 tactics in their paper, with two new tactics (persistence and socializing). In conclusion, influence tactic categories introduced into literature seem to change or adapt according to the research issue. A total of 10 Influence Tactics were found to consistently appear in the literature (as summarized in Table 1).

Influence Tactics can be defined as individuals' perceived effective strategies to sell their ideas, gain acceptance of their policies, and motivate others to implement their decisions (Fu & Yukl, 2000). Thus, Influence Tactics are performed to get others to do things such as execute orders, carry out requests, complete tasks, and support proposals (Berson & Sosik, 2007). It is therefore a goal-directed behaviour that individual's use to obtain the desired outcomes (Castro *et al.*, 2003). Influence is

TABLE 1  
Influence Tactics

1 Exchanges	offering an exchange of favors or reciprocations at a later time or a promise in terms of benefit sharing upon task completion.
2 Rational Persuasion	presenting a set of logical arguments and factual evidence using expert power.
3 Upward Appeal	involving higher authority to get the target to comply.
4 Gift Giving	providing gifts or personal favors before influencing the target to comply.
5 Helpful	providing constructive suggestions on career development and opportunity of interest to target
6 Pressure	resorting to the use of demands, threats, or persistent reminders to influence a target.
7 Consultation	seeking the participation of target in the planning stage to include the target's concerns or suggestions.
8 Ingratiation	enhancing the mood of the target by expressing confidence in target or assisting the target to believe that the agent thinks of the target favorably and positively before proceeding to ask for a task to be done.
9 Coalition	involving other parties to persuade the target to comply.
10 Informal	inviting the target out for a discussion while having an activity that is not related to work or visiting the target in a place that is outside the workplace.



the essence of leadership (Yukl, 1998), in that its use needs to be consistent with social norms and context expectation (Yukl, Falbe, & Youn, 1993), where the use of appropriate Influence Tactics in a host country would result in a higher expatriation success.

Previous research (Fu & Yukl, 2000; Branzei, 2002; Castro *et al.*, 2003) demonstrated empirically how the use of Influence Tactics created an impact on Job Performance. First, Castro *et al.* (2003) using a U.S. sample, found that females who used more Upward Appeals and Coalitions Influence Tactics, tended to receive higher Job Performance ratings. However, a similar pattern was not found in the male sample. Second, more attention to Influence Tactics has been suggested for cross-cultural research as differences in culture (i.e., differing values and ways of doing things), which spells out different sets of acceptable Influence Tactics, implying that Influence Tactics' influence on Job Performance also differs accordingly to country (Howell & Higgins, 1990). Similarly, Smith and Peterson (1988) identified the ability to understand cultural differences and the ability to use influence in a foreign culture as the two most important competencies that a global manager must possess to be successful in an international arena. Expatriates experiencing cultural differences when moving to a host country for job assignments may have problems influencing locals to get jobs done, as Influence Tactics that are effective at home may not be effective in a foreign land.

Third, Fu and Yukl (2000) reported that American managers preferred using rational persuasion, consultation, or exchange, while Chinese managers preferred using coalition, Upward Appeal, Giving Gifts, and personal appeal. They proposed that those who selected Influence Tactics (IT) that are best suited to their organization or national values are more effective within their organization. This implies that knowledge of Influence Tactics complement by cultural skills result in greater expatriate success. Thus, it is proposed that those with high CQ coupled with the use of "best-suited" Influence Tactics, or the avoidance of certain "ill-fitted" Influence Tactics, are more successful in international assignments. In other words, IT moderates the relationship between CQ and expatriate success in Job Performance and adjustment:

H3a: Influence Tactics moderate the effect that CQ has on Job Performance

H3b: Influence Tactics moderate the effect that Motivational CQ has on Adjustment level

## DATA COLLECTION

In 2010, one hundred and thirty questionnaires were distributed to expatriate respondents working in an American-based MNC located in Malaysia. A total of 110 questionnaires were returned, generating a response rate of 85%. However, only 83 of them were usable and included in the analysis.

## MEASURES

Four measurement scales were included in this study to measure CQ, Job Performance, Adjustment, and Influence Tactics. First, CQ was measured using a 20-item scale, developed by Early *et al.* (Ang *et al.*, 2007; Early, 2002; Early & Ang, 2003), where a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) was used. Four components of CQ were measured; Meta-cognitive CQ (e.g., “I am conscious of the cultural knowledge that I use when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds”), Cognitive CQ (e.g., “I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures”), Motivational CQ (e.g., “I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures”), and Behavioural CQ (e.g., “I change my verbal behaviour (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it”).

Second, Job Performance was measured using a 6-item scale, developed by Babin and Boles (1998), based on a similar 5-point Likert scale. The sample items were “I am a top performer” and “I get along better with customers.” Third, Adjustment was measured using WSAS (Work and Social Adjustment Scale) developed by Mundt, Marks, Shear, and Greist (2002). It consisted of 5 items, where respondents were asked to rate each statement using a 9-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (No Impairment) to 8 (Severe Impairment). It also covers adjustments to work ability, home management, social, private activities, and personal relationships. A sample item was “Because of my inability to adjust to

the current culture, my ability to work is impaired.”

Lastly, a scenario based scale, developed by Yukl *et al.* (Fu *et al.*, 2004; Fu & Yukl, 2000; Yukl & Tracey, 1992), was adopted to measure Influence Tactics in this study. Each scenario consisted of several influence tactic options, where the respondents were required to rate each tactic using a 5point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Completely Ineffective) to 5 (Very Effective). A total of seven scenarios were included in the questionnaires. For example, a scenario explains the attempt of a task assignment to a target by an agent, where the target was reluctant to accept due to overwhelming current job responsibilities. The influence tactic options listed for the respondents to rate their effectiveness are:

- Explain why the task is important for the department and organization (rational persuasion);
- Offer a financial incentive for doing the additional task (exchange);
- Get help in persuading him/her from one of his co-workers (coalition);
- Get someone with higher authority to tell him/her to do the task (Upward Appeal);
- Express confidence in his/her ability to accomplish the task successfully (ingratiation);
- Demand that he/she must do the task (pressure).

## RESPONDENTS PROFILE

As shown in Table 2, approximately an equal number of male and female respondents participated in the study (52% versus 48%). The respondents were from Asian countries with a higher number from Thailand, the Philippines, and Japan (16 to 25%). Meanwhile, smaller percentages came from Korea (13%), Indonesia (10%), and Singapore (6%). The majority of the respondents were highly educated individuals (93%) with a Bachelor's Degree. A substantial number of them fell under 25-34 and 35-44 age groups (89%). Finally, most of the respondents had been working between 4 to 9 years (62%).

## RELIABILITY OF THE CONSTRUCTS

All the five items of the Adjustment scale were reverse-coded before reliability testing was performed so that a high score reflected better adjustment. Cronbach's Alpha Test for internal consistency was performed on all concepts and the results are shown in Table 3. All the Alpha values were greater than 0.6 (Nunnally, 1978), indicating an acceptable internal consistency, except for coalition and informal. As a result, they were dropped from further analysis.

Means and the correlation matrix of the variables are shown in Table 4. Adjustment was the only variable measured using a 9-point scale (after being reverse-coded, 0= Severe Impairment and 8= No Impairment),

TABLE 2  
Respondents Profile

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	43	52
	Female	40	48
Nationality	Singaporean	5	6
	Thais	21	25
	Philipino	15	18
	Indonesian	10	12
	Japanese	13	16
	Korean	11	13
	others	8	10
Education	High School and below	1	1
	Certification/ Diploma/Professional cert	5	6
	Bachelor Degree/ Master and above	77	93
Age	18-24	4	5
	25-34	30	38
	35-44	40	51
	45-54	4	5
	Missing	5	100
Working Experience	Below 1 year	2	2
	1-3 years	17	21
	4-6 years	24	29
	7-9 years	27	33
	10-12 years	10	12
	13-15 years	1	1
	15 years and above	2	2
TOTAL		83	100

and a mean of 5.73 seemed to suggest that on average, the expatriate respondents did not experience difficulties adjusting to Malaysian culture. Also, the respondents seemed to rate themselves above average (i.e., greater than 3) for Job Performance. As for Influence Tactics, the most effective tactics perceived by the respondents were Rational Persuasion, Exchange, and Helpful (all about 3.8), followed by Consultation

TABLE 3  
Reliability

Constructs		Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Influence Tactics	1.Exchange	0.71	4
	2.Rational Persuasion	0.86	8
	3.Upward Appeal	0.66	5
	4.Gift Giving	0.85	4
	5.Helpful	0.76	6
	6.Pressure	0.68	7
	7.Consultation	0.65	2
	8.Ingratiation	0.81	11
	<b>9.Informal</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>10.Coalition</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>3</b>
Cultural Intelligence	1. MetaCognitive	0.79	4
	2. Cognitive	0.88	6
	3. Motivational	0.86	5
	4. Behavioral	0.83	5
Adjustment		0.91	5
Job performance		0.89	6

TABLE 4  
Mean, Standard Deviation and inter-corelations

	Mean	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
1 Job Performance	3.90	.70	0.60**	0.36**	0.35**	-0.14	-0.30**	0.34**	0.04	0.32**	0.07	0.34**	0.57**	0.72**	0.64**	
2 Adjustment (9-pt, 0-8)	5.73	1.48		0.15	0.21	-0.28**	-0.41**	0.10	-0.21	0.24*	-0.09	0.32**	0.35**	0.62**	0.50**	
3 IT_Exchange	3.91	.84			0.83**	-0.08	-0.27*	0.76**	0.12	0.39**	0.33**	0.35**	0.51**	0.41**	0.31**	
4 IT_RationalPersuasion	3.94	.83				-0.09	-0.30**	0.85**	0.21	0.66**	0.42**	0.44**	0.57**	0.48**	0.38**	
5 IT_UpwardAppeal	2.89	.64					0.51**	0.15	0.308**	-0.11	0.47**	-0.21	-0.15	-0.21	-0.04	
6 IT_Giftgiving	2.16	.96						-0.19	0.42**	0.02	0.35**	-0.39**	-0.31**	-0.26*	-0.30**	
7 IT_helpful	3.88	.67							0.16	0.59**	0.52**	0.43**	0.56**	0.41**	0.35**	
8 IT_Pressure	2.72	.51								0.19	0.36**	-0.16	0.25*	0.01	0.10	
9 IT_consultation	3.63	.70									0.64**	0.37**	0.35**	0.47**	0.30**	
10 IT_Ingratiation	3.19	.57										0.04	0.12	0.10	0.10	
11 CQ_metacognitive	4.20	.60											0.52**	0.59**	0.45**	
12 CQ_cognitive	3.64	.69												0.60**	0.62**	
13 CQ_motivational	4.16	.65													0.62**	
14 CQ_behavioral	3.84	.59														1

(3.63), and Ingratiation (3.19). Less effective Influence Tactics were Upward Appeal, Pressure, and Gift giving (less than 2.9). As for CQ, the respondents seem to score high on Metacognitive and Motivational CQ and average for Cognitive and Behavioural CQ.

**HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

Various analyses were performed to test the three hypotheses. First, two multiple regression analyses were performed to test H1 and H2. Then, multiple moderated hierarchical regression analyses were performed to test H3.

**REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF JOB PERFORMANCE**

A regression analysis was performed to understand how well various aspects of CQ explained the variance in the first indicator of expatriate success (i.e., Job Performance). Besides the four CQ components, some demographic variables (i.e., Gender, Education, Age, and Working Experience) were also entered as independent variables and Job Performance was entered as a

dependent variable. The regression equation is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Job Performance} \\ &= a + b_1 * (\text{Gender}) + b_2 * (\text{Edu}) \\ &+ b_3 * (\text{Age}) + b_4 * (\text{Work\_Exp}) \\ &+ b_5 * (\text{CQ\_Metacog}) + b_6 * (\text{CQ\_Cog}) \\ &+ b_7 * (\text{CQ\_Moti}) + b_8 * (\text{CQ\_Beha}) \end{aligned}$$

As shown in Table 5, the regression model was found to be significant ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $F = 13.66$ ). The adjusted  $R^2$  was 0.57, indicating that 57% of the variance in Job Performance was predicted by a combination of all the independent variables. On the contrary, the regression coefficient for Metacognitive CQ was -0.18 and deemed as insignificant ( $p > 0.05$ ); thus, H1a was not supported. The regression coefficient for Behavioural CQ was positive (0.31) and deemed as significant ( $p < 0.01$ ); thus, H1b was supported. Although not hypothesized, Motivational CQ was found to significantly predict Job Performance among the expatriates working in Malaysia, with a high regression coefficient of 0.53 ( $p < 0.01$ ).

TABLE 5  
Regression for Job Performance

Independent variables	Std Coefficient
Gender	0.13
Education	0.04
Age	0
Working Experience	0.01
CQ_Metacognitive	-0.18
CQ_Cognitive	0.12
CQ_Motivational	0.53**
CQ_Behavioral	0.31**
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.57
F	13.66
Sig	<0.01

\*\*p < 0.01, \* p < 0.05

**REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF ADJUSTMENT**

Similar sets of independent variables were also entered to assess the predictive ability of the second expatriate success indicator (i.e., Adjustment). The regression equation is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Adjustment} &= a + b_1*(\text{Gender}) + b_2*(\text{Edu}) \\ &+ b_3*(\text{Age}) + b_4*(\text{Work\_Exp}) \\ &+ b_5*(\text{CQ\_Metacog}) + b_6*(\text{CQ\_Cog}) \\ &+ b_7*(\text{CQ\_Moti}) + b_8*(\text{CQ\_Beha}) \end{aligned}$$

As shown in Table 6, the regression model is significant ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $F = 8.57$ ), with an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.44. The regression coefficient for Motivational CQ was also positive (0.53) and deemed as significant ( $p < 0.01$ ); thus, H2a was supported. Although regression coefficient for Behavioural CQ was positive, as hypothesized (0.13), it was insignificant ( $p < 0.01$ ); thus, H2b was not supported. Although not hypothesized, Working experience was found to significantly predict Adjustment among expatriates working in Malaysia,

with a regression coefficient of 0.29 ( $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that those who had longer work experiences tended to adjust better.

**MODERATED HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF JOB PERFORMANCE**

Eight moderated hierarchical regression analyses were performed to assess whether the moderation effect of each Influence Tactic significantly explained the first success expatriate indicator (i.e., Job Performance). First, the main effects (Influence Tactic, Metacognitive CQ, Cognitive CQ, Motivational CQ, and Behavioural CQ) were entered as the first block of independent variables so that their effect was either controlled or removed. Next, four interaction variables were entered as the second block of independent variables to understand the remaining variance ( $R^2$  change) explained by them after removing the main effect.

As shown in Table 7, the  $R^2$  of the main effect models (Model 1) was found to be very similar across all eight hierarchical regressions, explaining 61 to 62 % of the variations in Job Performance. As for Model 2 (M2), with interaction effects,  $R^2$  increased slightly by around 1 to 5%. Only two models (M2) produced a significant  $R^2$  change (0.05,  $P < 0.05$ ) from M1 (main effects) to M2 (main and moderator effects), indicating the presence of a moderator. However, this provides limited support to H3a. Although the Gift Giving model produced a 5% significant increase in  $R^2$ , its overall effect on Job Performance was nullified; the

TABLE 6  
Regression for Adjustment

Independent variables	Std Coefficient
Gender	-0.01
Education	0.07
Age	-0.11
Working Experience	0.29*
CQ_Metacognitive	0
CQ_Cognitive	0.06
CQ_Motivational	0.53**
CQ_Behavioral	0.13
Adjusted $R^2$	0.44
F	8.57
Sig	<0.01

\*\*p < 0.01, \* p < 0.05

positive effect of Gift Giving was enhanced in Cognitive CQ (1.12,  $P < 0.05$ ) on JP offset the negative effect (-2.02,  $P < 0.05$ ), it brought to Motivational CQ on Job Performance. However, Upward Appeal was found to reduce Motivational CQ's effect on Job Performance, suggesting that Upward Appeal was not a suitable Influence Tactic to use in Malaysia, particularly in an American MNC organization context.

### MODERATED HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR ADJUSTMENT

Similarly, eight moderated hierarchical regression analyses were performed to assess whether the moderation effect of each Influence Tactic was significant in explaining the second expatriate success indicator (Adjustment). As shown in Table 8,  $R^2$  of the main effect models (Model 1) was shown to be very similar to all eight

hierarchical regressions, explaining 40 to 49% of the variations in Adjustment. As for Model 2 with interaction effects,  $R^2$  increased slightly by around 1 to 8%. Similarly, the two models produced a significant  $R^2$  change (0.08,  $P < 0.05$ ); Rational Persuasion and Upward Appeal Influence Tactics, providing limited support to H3b. Although the Upward Appeal model produced an 8% significant increase in  $R^2$ , its overall effect on Adjustment was nullified. The positive effect of Upward Appeal was enhanced in Behavioural CQ (3.82,  $P < 0.05$ ) on JP offset the negative effect (-3.13,  $P < 0.05$ ) was reduced in Motivational CQ on Adjustment. However, Rational Persuasion was found to enhance Motivational CQ's effect on Adjustment, suggesting that Rational Persuasion is a suitable Influence Tactic to use in adjusting to Malaysian work and social life.

TABLE 7  
Moderated Hierarchical Regression for Job Performance

Regression Models	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	IT_Exchange	IT_Rational Persuasion	IT_Upward Appeal	IT_Gift Giving	IT_Helpful	IT_Pressure	IT_Consultation	IT_Ingratiation
M1 $R^2$	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.62	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61
M2 $R^2$	0.64	0.65	0.66	0.67	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.62
Change in $R^2$	0.03	0.04	<b>0.05*</b>	<b>0.05*</b>	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.01
<i>Main Effects</i>								
IT	0.73	-1.54	1.68**	0.24	-0.15	0.03	-1.01	0.08
CQMetacog	0.54	-0.28	-0.1	-0.17	-0.44	0.24	-0.13	-0.33
CQCog	0.03	0.99	-0.2	-0.51*	1.35	-0.81	0.36	1.04
CQMoti	-0.38	-0.77	2.09**	1.48**	-0.67	1.11	-0.33	0.54
CQBeha	0.97*	0.15	0.27	-0.05	0.85	0.23	0.22	-0.13
<i>Interaction Effects</i>								
CQMetacog*IT	-1.58	0.21	-0.11	-0.19	0.4	-0.79	-0.23	0.21
CQCog*IT	0.28	-1.47	0.38	<b>1.12*</b>	-1.79	1.68*	-0.27	-1.26
CQMoti*IT	1.97*	2.89*	<b>-2.29*</b>	<b>-2.02*</b>	2.15	-0.85	1084	0.01
CQBeha*IT	-1.51	0.28	0.14	0.71	-0.95	0.13	0.14	0.71

TABLE 8  
Moderated Hierarchical Regression for Adjustment

Regression Models	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	IT_Exchange	IT Rational Persuasion	IT_Upward Appeal	IT_Gift Giving	IT_Helpful	IT_Pressure	IT_Consultation	IT_Ingratiation
M1 R <sup>2</sup>	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.49	0.44	0.48	0.42	0.44
M2 R <sup>2</sup>	0.48	0.5	0.48	0.5	0.49	0.51	0.43	0.51
Change in R <sup>2</sup>	0.06	<b>0.08*</b>	<b>0.08*</b>	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.06
<i>Main Effects</i>								
IT	-1.74	-1.96	-0.27	-1.19	-2.18	-1.61	-0.23	-0.44
CQMetacog	0.2	0.02	-0.44	-0.27	0.47	-0.77	0.46	-0.68
CQCog	-0.98	-0.85	0.64	-0.02	-0.46	0.63	-0.76	1.64*
CQMoti	0.04	-0.79	2.5**	0.4	1.07	0.82	0.02	1.6
CQBeha	0.11	0.9	-1.98**	0.08	-0.1	0.01	0.62	-1.68*
<i>Interaction Effects</i>								
CQMetacog*IT	-0.45	-0.1	0.59	0.21	-0.88	0.84	-1.16	1.11
CQCog*IT	1.55	1.51	-0.99	-0.15	0.79	1.07	1.1	-2.56*
CQMoti*IT	1.16	<b>2.92*</b>	<b>-3.13**</b>	0.55	2.9*	-0.38	1.21	-1.71
CQBeha*IT	0.32	-1.4	<b>3.82**</b>	0.25	0.53	0.34	-0.39	3.18*

**DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS**

As predicted, Behavioural CQ positively predicts Job Performance, providing support to the findings of Ang *et al.* (2007). This result also suggests that expatriates who were high in Behavioural CQ tended to perform better when assigned to work in Malaysia. This is likely due to their ability in mimic locals' verbal and non-verbal communications, which results in them being well-received by locals; and thus, they are given the necessary support to work effectively. In contrast to Ang *et al.*'s (2007) research, Meta-cognitive CQ does not significantly predict Job Performance in this study. The contradictory result could be attributed to perceived cultural similarity factors. The expatriate respondents of this study came from Asian countries with high cultural similarities to Malaysia, where Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) classified their countries and Malaysia under the same Asian cluster, with similar cultural assumptions (e.g., high Power Distance, high Collectivism). Thus, this possibly causes expatriate respondents

to less consciously check or adjust to cultural assumptions (meta-cognitive CQ characteristics), making the meta-cognitive CQ skill irrelevant in this context.

However, motivational CQ, which was not found to predict task performance in Ang *et al.*'s (2007) research, recorded a significant influence on Job Performance in this study. This seems to suggest that those who are high in Motivational CQ, and have an intense interest to learn about Malaysian culture, tend to perform better at work. This is probably due to the fact that Malaysians are high in face-saving and reciprocity (Abdullah, 1996). When expatriates were found to respect and show interest in learning the Malaysian culture, pride level rose significantly (as a result of face-saving tendency), leading them to reciprocate by giving full cooperation, which translates to better Job Performance.

As for Adjustment, only the Motivational CQ component was found to positively predict Adjustment. This once again suggests that those who show pure



interest and humbly learn the Malaysian culture, adjust better to both work and social environment in Malaysia, which is consistent with Dagher's (2010) research. Although Behavioural CQ was found to positively impact Job Performance in Dagher's (2010) study, this was not the case here. This means that talking and behaving like a Malaysian (mimicking verbal and non-verbal behaviours) is effective at work, but not appropriate when extended to social domains in the process of adapting to Malaysian culture.

Finally, the moderating effects of Influence Tactics found in this study were different from those based on a non-expatriate sample reported earlier, and therefore, introduce interesting insights into Influence Tactics literature. First, none of the Tactics found was effectively used in the Chinese Manufacturing plant (Upward Appeal and Giving Gifts) reported by Fu and Yukl (2000), moderate the role that CQ has on expatriate success. To the surprise of the researchers, the usage of Upward Appeal Tactics decreases CQ's impact on Job Performance. Upward Appeal refers to the use of a higher authority to get compliance from a target and may seem consistent with the Malaysian culture characterized by high Power Distance, where lower authority individuals are expected to take instruction from higher authority managers. However, this is not the case in this study. Organization culture may be responsible for this discrepancy. The sample respondents worked for an American-based MNC and obviously practiced strong American culture

at work, which rendered the non-American way (i.e., Upward Appeal) irrelevant in this context. However, if this speculation is true, the tactics reported as preferred by American managers such as rational persuasion, consultation, and exchange, should enhance CQ's impact on Job Performance. Ironically, none of these tactics was found to be significant here. Thus, it is likely that the blend of conflicting cultural assumptions between organization culture (Western) and host national culture (Eastern) may have created a situation where all the parties are consciously trying to avoid hard feelings and downplay all tactics by not using any of them excessively at the workplace.

#### **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of this study should be of interest to employers or practitioners who intend to send expatriates to Malaysia. This study provides at least three useful implications. First, since those who are culturally intelligent in the motivational aspect were found to adjust and perform well in Malaysia, CQ can be used as a screening tool to shortlist expatriate candidates. Prior to expatriation, adjustment and performance information of candidates is usually unknown. In which case, cultural intelligence score can be used as a proxy to predict the candidates' future performance and adjustment level. Those who score highly in Motivational CQ may have a higher expatriation potential and should be shortlisted for further assessments.

In addition, international human resource managers are proposed to provide

Influence Tactic training to successful candidates. The soon-to-be expatriates to Malaysia are advised to avoid using Upward Appeal while working in Malaysia even though the country's cultural tendency (i.e., high Power Distance) may seem to suggest that it is a preferred tactic amongst Malaysians. Practitioners should at least be warned about the danger of generalizing cultural preferences based solely on country score indicators (Hofstede, 1980). The blended effect between country and organization culture may suggest a totally different set of Influence Tactics that are effective in Malaysia. Nevertheless, in solving work or social adjustment related issues, the Rational Persuasion Influence Tactic is a good option to use in Malaysia. Finally, since those with longer years of experience are found to adjust better in Malaysia, International Human Resources managers may want to consider sending more-senior staff to Malaysia, rather than less-senior ones.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

Despite the best efforts of the researchers, there are some limitations in this present study. First, the sample was taken from a single organization. Even though this has allowed us to hold organization factors constant, its generalizability to other contexts is limited. Second, the expatriation arrangement, whether self or organization initiated, was not differentiated between, even though it was acknowledged as a current

international assignment trend (Collings *et al.*, 2007; Johnson *et al.*, 2006). Finally, no measurement of organization and national culture was incorporated, thus, limiting empirical evidence to assess culture's effect on Influence Tactic preferences.

The above limitations readily point to several interesting recommendations for future researchers. First, future studies are recommended to include wider expatriate samples, attached with various Multinational Companies of different countries in order to increase generality. Second, the expatriation arrangement variable (self or organization initiated) proposed by Collings *et al.* (2007) may be a potential variable that determines expatriate success, and thus, should be included in future studies. Third, future researchers are also suggested to use WSAS (Work and Social Adjustment Scale) in cross-cultural studies as it is shorter and possesses similar reliability. Lastly, future researchers may want to explicitly measure organization and national culture to understand their effects on Influence Tactics use.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This research proposed assessment tools and training materials to help reduce expatriation failure rate. It employed 83 expatriate respondents who are working with a US-based MNC in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Using two expatriate success indicators (Job Performance and Adjustment), this study found that CQ is indeed a central predictor of the expatriate success model. Coupled with "appropriate" Influence

Tactics, expatriates achieve higher success. Thus, CQ and Influence Tactics are useful tools that can be used for Assessment and Training in the process of identifying and preparing candidates for expatriation assignments.

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