



**DETERMINANTS OF INTERCULTURAL ADJUSTMENT:
EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS ON WORK AND NON-
WORK ENVIRONMENT**

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Summary

Building on international assignments literature, expatriate assignees represent an asset in the international business network.

This thesis explores the contemporary context and the reasons for the international assignment in order to frame the emergence of these international missions, among other things, the knowledge transfer, recruitment of qualified personnel, skills and structural specificities in international missions and global careers.

Exploring and documenting these expatriate experiences is important, both organizational and individually.

This article aims to broaden the understanding about the importance of intercultural interaction, both in the work and non-work field through social interactions and social support what leads to the adjustment or the reverse the failure of the expatriate's mission. The research reported here also explores the effects of the country images on expatriates adjustment and withdrawal cognitions.

Data from 511 expatriates working abroad revealed the magnitude of qualitative differences in the experiences of intercultural interaction among expatriates. Results show's that while positive interactions have a reverse effect on withdrawal cognitions and seek to contribute to the positive psychological adjustment of the expatriate, negative interactions combined with other predictors such as perceived cultural distance and lack of linguistic proficiency are the cause of withdrawal cognitions and consequently international mission failure. The success of the expatriate mission may, however, be achieved through cross-cultural motivation when positive intercultural interaction is initiated with other expatriates, co-workers or even HCN's. In addition, we found that intergroup friendships and social support consistently showed deep or shallow support between the three dimensions of adjustment. Also, three significant image patterns in the country seemed to play a special role in the adjustment of expatriates.

Keywords: expatriation, adjustment, withdrawal cognitions, intercultural interaction, intergroup friendship, social support, country image

Abbreviations:

HCNs' - Host Country Nationals

Sumário

Com base na literatura de atribuições internacionais, os expatriados representam um ativo na rede internacional de negócios.

Esta tese explora brevemente o contexto contemporâneo e as razões para a atribuição internacional no sentido de enquadrar a emergência destas missões internacionais, entre outras coisas, a transferência de conhecimento, recrutamento de pessoal, competências e especificidades estruturais em missões internacionais e carreiras globais.

Explorar e documentar essas experiências dos expatriados é importante, tanto do ponto de vista organizacional quanto individual.

Este artigo tem o intuito de ampliar a compreensão da importância da interação intercultural, tanto do domínio do trabalho quanto do não-trabalho e sobretudo entender o que leva ao ajustamento ou o inverso o fracasso da missão do expatriado. A pesquisa aqui relatada também explora os efeitos da imagem dos Países nas cognições de adaptação e retirada.

Dados de 511 expatriados trabalhando no exterior revelaram a magnitude das diferenças qualitativas nas experiências de interação intercultural dos expatriados. Enquanto as interações positivas têm um efeito reverso na retirada e procuram contribuir para o positivo ajuste psicológico do expatriado, as interações negativas combinadas com outros preditores como distância cultural percebida e a falta de proficiência linguística são a causa de cognições de retirada e fracasso da missão internacional. O sucesso da missão dos expatriados pode no entanto ser alcançado à medida que a motivação transcultural surge quando uma positiva interação intercultural é iniciada seja com outros expatriados, colegas de trabalho ou mesmo locais nacionais. Além disso, descobrimos que as amizades entre grupos e o apoio social mostraram de forma consistente uma ajuda profunda ou superficial entre as três dimensões de ajustamento. Também três padrões de imagem do País pareciam desempenhar um papel especial no ajustamento de expatriados.

Palavras-chave Expatriação, ajustamento, cognições de retirada, interação intercultural, amizades entre grupos, apoio social, imagem do País

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I. Introduction

The global spread of markets and geographical expansion of international corporations has gained a lot of importance across the globe and makes it increasingly necessary to send professionals abroad to fill an immediate business need in a foreign country (Eccher U., & Duarte H., 2016; Haslberger, A., Brewster, C. 2009). This growing trend of sending professionals to international missions is accompanied by the need to know what needs to be done for expatriates to adjust successfully and as quickly as possible in order to carry out their day-to-day tasks. Expatriates are expected to go beyond market pressure or competitors to generate new knowledge for the organization while interacting and struggling to adjust to a new cultural diversity and teams formed by employees of different nationalities (Przytuła, S., et al., 2014). Globalization requires cross-cultural literacy and successful management of diversity.

For the individual employee, the success of international missions depends, among other things, on good and positive adjustment to the new social, cultural and working environment (Przytuła, S., et al., 2014). Social interactions with HCN's can be a source of positive and negative experiences. Social interaction with HCN's and third-country nationals is an invaluable source of information on culturally acceptable norms and behaviors and reduces the uncertainties associated with work and non-work situations (Selmer, J. & Fenner, C.R. Jr. 2009; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002). Expatriate networks have been predominantly characterized to identify impacts on adjustment and performance (Osman-Gani and Rockstuhl, 2008).

Social relationships are beneficial to emotional support and mental health as they can provide the individual with the knowledge of which belongs to a group. Friendships and social support systems contribute to a sense of self-esteem and personal well-being. This can have a positive impact on the workplace (Kraimer, L., Wayne, J., 2004; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002).

For the organizational point of view, HR managers shall have a winning track record process for global assignment's in capturing strategic opportunities in order to increase expatriates knowledge creation and global leadership development and minimize expatriates dysfunctional performance in interpersonal relationships, which result in the failure of a mission (Stroppa, C., Spieß, E., 2011; Przytuła, S., et al., 2014 cf. Kraimer and Wayne, 2004; Wang, M., & Takeuchi, R. 2007; Takeuchi, 2010).

Many international organizations underestimate the complex nature of expatriates management issues in the international field and that business failures may often be linked to the poor performance of expatriates (Rishbha et al., 2015).

The literature of expatriates primarily focused on the process of adaptation and living in a foreign country in four stages: honeymoon, culture shock, adjustment, and mastery (Y. Li. 2016 cf Torbion 1988). Furthermore, scholars developed an expatriate adjustment scale focusing on three specific facets of expatriate adjustment: general adjustment, interaction adjustment and work adjustment Y. Li. 2016 cf Black and Stephens 1989). Overall as a degree of psychological comfort during the length of the assignment (Shaffer, M. A., et al, 2006), studying the lack of performance at work that leads to withdrawal cognitions as expatriates plans to prematurely quite their assignment (Shaffer, M. A., et al, 2006). Subsequent research examined three new dimensions to understand the nature of expatriate adjustment such as cognitions (withdrawal cognitions), moods (feelings) and behaviours (job performance) (Haslberger, A., et al. 2013).

Based on this literature, our research focus mainly on one of the three facets of adjustment, interaction adjustment, and the reasons that leads to cross-cultural adjustment or withdrawal cognitions. The relevance of conducting such a study is threefold:

- ❖ First goal: while no known study investigated the effects of expatriates with different backgrounds on informal social networks and friendships between groups in expatriate adjustment, this study, suggested by researchers (Haslberger, A. et al., 2014), that future research should be able to reflect more accurately the reality of the expatriate experience, sought to understand the effects of social networks on expatriates living abroad and the impact of these connections on their fit dimensions in the workplace.
- ❖ Second goal: despite the abundant and growing research on cross-cultural adjustment, we know surprisingly little about the effects of social support, friendships between groups and their relation to psychological well-being in the context of work and non-work and/or reverse withdrawal cognitions. This investigation will allow companies to gain a better understanding of how expatriates develop their social network, how they use social support and the impact that those have on overall adjustment. Working in a foreign country involves significant changes for expatriates in various areas for which they must be prepared and supported during their overseas assignment. If this does not happen, there is a risk that the employee will be stressed, unable to work

effectively and, at worst, have to finish his job prematurely (Stroppa, C., Spieß, E., 2010).

- ❖ Third goal, since previous research indicates that expatriate adjustment can be a difficult and stressful process (Stroppa & Spieb 2010), day-to-day studies of expatriates in the work environment per se are not abundant (Selmer, J., 2001). It is useful to understand the dynamics of adjustment in the host countries by examining the day-to-day experience in which employees live abroad in the short or medium term. As mentioned above, social interactions can influence the adjustment dimensions and can enable withdrawal cognitions if the expat is not psychologically well adjusted. How exactly expatriates establish social interactions with local cultural differences and how social interaction influences their intercultural, psychological, and withdrawal cognitions is less clear.

II. Literature Review

The cross-cultural adjustment literature traditionally assumes that adjustment is a precondition for successful expatriation, which means better adjustment, less failure, if this failure is measured in terms of minor performance, job dissatisfaction or early return (Pinto, LH, et al., 2012).

Cross-cultural adjustment is generally defined as the process of adjustment by living and working in a foreign culture. It is the perceived degree of psychological comfort and familiarity that a person has with the new host culture, new environment (Palthe, J., 2004, Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991) and contains three related but conceptually distinct facets: work (job adjustment); related to interaction with others at work and out (adjustment of interaction); and related to general living conditions (general adjustment) (Black, J. S., 1988).

The concept of socio-cultural adjustment of expatriates shows the extent to which expatriates are well integrated into daily life and work in the host location, such as the ability of expatriates to "fit in" or negotiate interactive aspects of host culture, as measured by the amount of difficulty experienced in managing everyday situations (Selmer, J. & Luring, J., 2011).

As expatriates are among the most expensive people that companies employ, there is pressure to ensure that they are managed efficiently. This involves ensuring that they adjust to the new environment as quickly as possible and that the proficiency time is short (Pinto, A., et al., 2012). Subjectively, expatriates may consider themselves adjusted if the various aspects of the new culture are sufficiently clear. Interaction with host country members and the information obtained through these networks will have a considerable impact to better emphasize how expatriates experience the country they are in and how comfortable they are, or feel overly stressed or experience a preponderance of negative states and if you experience a satisfactory level of effectiveness in your new environment. This will influence expats understanding of the correct way to act in certain situations (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009; Haslberger, Brewster & Hippler, 2014). Expats are not simply adjusted or not adjusted to their new situation. Whenever they understand and interpret their surroundings to a greater or lesser extent, they feel better or worse about it, and they interact more or less with their hosts (Haslberger, A., et al., 2013).

Psychological adjustment connotes subjective well-being or mood states (eg, depression, anxiety, tension and loneliness), emphasizing the attitudinal factors of the adjustment process (Gudykunst, W.B. 2005; Selmer, J., 2004). Previous studies have found a positive relationship between the integration of an expatriate into a social network and its adjustment, whether in terms of psychological well-being or frequency of contact (Przytuła, S., et al., 2014; Wang, M., & Takeuchi, R. 2007). However, their impact may vary across cultures. Contextual factors, such as geographic proximity and cultural differences between the country of origin and the host country, play important roles in the process of adjustment of expatriates (Wang, X & Nayir, D.Z., 2006).

When expatriates leave their country of origin to undertake a mission abroad, the previously established network disappears and a new one is needed in the local environment to feel safe and secure (Wang, X & Nayir, DZ, 2006 cf Wang and Kanungo, 2004).

Expat socialization process may require considerable interaction with locals in the host country. However, if an expatriate feels uncomfortable in interacting with the HCN's, he or she may also develop a negative attitude toward work. In other words, if the issues in interacting with the locals in general create stress and frustrations, such feelings can easily overflow into the work situation. Conversely, if expatriates experience minor difficulties in interacting with HCN's in general, they may also have an easier time adjusting to work

(Selmer, 2006). In the context of social interactions, expatriates face several challenges as they approach their work in an unfamiliar social environment. Social differences require expatriate managers to be flexible and adapt their knowledge and interaction skills to local cultures.

Expatriates should adapt to the culture of each country and behave in a way that social rules are respected, ie an expatriate on mission in Brazil should behave differently if he were in India where on the one hand the personal approach may be legitimate, effective and the informal conversations are seen as normal on the other hand these behaviours may be inadequate and disrespectful and even have disastrous consequences in another culture (Selmer, J., 2006). From the recent increase in research on social support, it is clear that this is an important and timely topic for research (Froese et al., 2011; Stroppa & Spieß, 2010; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) when it was discovered that the acquisition of social support through various social networks is a necessary component in expatriates' daily lives and is particularly significant in the context of adjustment and integration within a foreign country (Wang, M., & Takeuchi, R. 2007). One of the sources of this social support is the establishment of close social bonds and the development of friendships in the workplace (Stroppa, C., & Spieß, E., 2010).

Withdrawal cognitions happen when expatriates face difficulties to adjust to their new work environment, new relationships and new environment in the host country and doubt their ability to fit in (Plake J., 2016). They begin to entertain thoughts of leaving the assignment, plans to seek another job, consideration of giving up, intentions to quit (Froese, 2012 c.f. Shaffer & Harrison, 1998) or leaving current employment in the near future, although they may remain in the same organization (Pinto L, Cabral-Cardoso C, Werther J., 2012 cf., Carmeli, 2005).

Withdrawal cognitions can be defined as a multidimensional concept encompassing three distinct dimensions: intentions to withdraw from work; intentions to withdraw from the employer or organization; and intentions to leave the selected career or occupation. (Pinto L, Cabral-Cardoso C, Werther J., 2012 cf., Blau, 2000; Carmeli, 2005). Intention to premature return or intention to leave the task was pointed out in previous studies (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998; Wang and Takeuchi, 2007). In fact, expatriate failure has often been defined in terms of whether the expatriate has completed his/her assignment (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998).

Job dissatisfaction is an important direct determinant of the withdrawal cognitions of expatriates (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998). The constraints faced by expatriates are initially

related to a negative image of the situation in the host country and with the desire to escape the constraints of private life. This then spreads to the work domain and increases the desire to leave the current job (Bader, K., Reade C., & Froese F., 2016). Poor adjustment manifests itself in job dissatisfaction, as well as the intention to prematurely quit a task (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al 2005). Well-adjusted expatriates reveal fewer intentions to return before completion of the task (Pinto L, Cabral-Cardoso, Werther, J., 2012, cf. Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Black&Stephens, 1989; Black&Gregersen, 1990; Takeuchi, R., et al., 2005).

Many expatriates experience a form of uncertainty, which has been termed as social uncertainty. This form of uncertainty is felt when expatriates are cut off from previous social support networks, such as friends, family and colleagues in the country of origin, and feel socially isolated and lonely in the host country (Fahr, Bartol, Shapiro, & Shin, 2010; Hattingh et al., 2012). Expatriates can overcome many of the challenges associated with expatriation by developing a social support network in the host country (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). They may be able to develop their own personal coping with adjustment strategies during expatriation. A social network refers to the relational ties that connect individuals and is the basis for an individual's social life and career development (Li and Rothstein, 2009; Wang, M., & Takeuchi, R. 2007). Online networks are not treated autonomously. The strength of these ties varies according to how much they consume time, the intensity, if it is reliable and reciprocal. In the context of international mobility, social networks refer to the relational links between expatriates and other individuals, such as family members, expatriate colleagues, local work partners or local friends (Hattingh, M., et al 2012; Osman-Gani and Rockstuhl, 2008).

III. Theoretical background and hypothesis development

3.2 Main Concepts

3.2.1 Adjustment of expatriates and positive/negative interactions

Intercultural communication specialists suggest that frequent social interactions with HCN's facilitate adjustment between cultures for two reasons. First, frequent social interactions with HCN's indicate that expatriates are motivated to participate in the host country's culture and society. Second, motivation and positive attitudes towards interactions with HCN's are important aspects of successful intercultural communication (Froese et al., 2012 cf Martin & Hammer, 1989; Haslberger, A., et al., 2014 cf Gudykunst, W.B. 1986) and cross-cultural adjustment (Takeuchi et al., 2005). For example, social interactions allow expatriates to create more positive perceptions and gain support from HCN's. From a socio-analytical point of view, foreign workers are motivated to interact with HCN's to get along, find meaning and move on. On the other hand, foreign workers who have mainly negative experiences tend to have negative attitudes and avoid interactions with HCN's, which is a shame that foreign workers who are willing to engage in social interactions can correct their negative attitudes and stereotypes about HCN's and to obtain a new cultural perspective to better manage various obstacles in the Host Country (Froese et al., 2012 cf Jun et al., 1997). Frequent interactions with HCN's can facilitate intercultural adjustment through information acquisition and learning. In addition, interactions with HCN's may allow foreign workers to improve their language proficiency and can also help reduce uncertainties and anxieties both inside and outside the workplace. Likewise, frequent interactions with HCN's can facilitate cross-crop matching and minimize turnover intentions (Froese F, Peltokorpi V, Ko K. 2012). Some evidence of positive work relationships between expatriates and locals, together with background and positive results of these interactions can be identified based on the general expatriation literature. Expatriates play specific roles that help build positive interpersonal relationships in multicultural teams. The frequent interactions of expatriates with local residents, as well as their self-efficacy, had a positive impact on their adjustment (Froese et al., 2012). An interaction affects an expatriate's job satisfaction negatively, if the cultural distance between him/her and the locals is substantial (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2011). The interaction between expatriates and HCN's can promote the adjustment and application of diverse expertise in a local environment. In general, the literature assumes that building social

ties between expatriates and HCN's favors the success of the international mission (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005) and makes the adjustment smoother (Farh et al., 2010; Przytuła, S., 2014). Individuals with a high level of open-mindedness present more positive attitudes toward host citizens. Cultural empathy is a motivational construct that represents the capacity for better understanding of the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of people from different cultures (Przytuła, S., et al., 2014).

The adjustment of the expatriate occurs both in the workplace and outside the workplace. The quantity and quality of social interactions that expatriates have with HCN's, family members, mentors, colleagues and other expatriates will greatly affect their cross-cultural adjustment (Black, J., et al 1991; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002).

Positive feedback linked to social support directly affects self-confidence and, therefore, other components of mental well-being (Stroppa & Spieß, 2010) and expatriate adjustment (Kraimer, L., Wayne, J., 2004). In this learning process, the expatriate will replace inadequate elements of the mental picture with new elements.

Frequent social interactions with HCN's had a positive influence on overall adjustment, interaction adjustment and job satisfaction. This indicates that participants who had frequent interactions with HCN's probably had positive attitudes toward HCN's and were willing to better understand cultural differences allowing foreign workers to establish and maintain better communicative interactions with HCN's, facilitating cross-cultural adjustment and job satisfaction in foreign countries. The interaction of the expatriates and the general adjustment correlated positively with the intentions of the expatriates to stay (Pinto L, Cabral-Cardoso C, Werther J., 2012 cf. Black and Stephens (1989). Therefore, we expect that:

Hypothesis 1a: Positive interactions have a positive impact on (a) expatriate adjustment, (b) psychological adjustment and have a negative effect on (c) withdrawal cognitions.

Hypothesis 1b: Negative interactions have a negative influence (a) on expatriate adjustment, (b) psychological adjustment and have a positive impact on their (c) withdrawal cognitions.

3.2.2 Expatriates adjustment and the effects of cross-group friendships and social support

Social support received through social networks (from family members, colleagues and other expatriates) helps mobilize psychological resources and serves to provide feelings of

reinforcement, recognition and affirmation that can greatly enhance expatriate cross-cultural adjustment (Rujiprak, V. 2016; Lee, L., Kartika, N., 2014; Wang, M., & Takeuchi, R. 2007; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002). An expatriate performs particularly well if he receives support from a co-worker (Stroppa, C., & Spieß, E., 2011), friends, family and others in the host country (Rujiprak, V., 2016; Lee, L., Kartika, N., 2014). A relationship with nationals of the host country is a feature of successful adjustment (Stroppa, C., & Spieß, E., 2011) and psychological adjustment (Rujiprak, V., 2016). Co-worker social support help in reducing strain and has a positive influence on employee work attitudes and non-work uncertainty (Farh, B., et al., 2010; Selmer, J. & Fenner, C.R. Jr. 2009; Shrinivas, H., et al., 2005). As social support can reduce emotional disorders in the workplace, in turn, it can also improve expatriates work attitudes (Lee, L., Kartika, N., 2014).

Family support can help expatriates mobilize their psychological resources to deal with emotional issues and increase their confidence so they can successfully manage cross-cultural transition. The acquisition of social support and the development of social networks are closely related (Lee, L., Kartika, N., 2014; Stroppa & Spieß, 2010; Wang, M., & Takeuchi, R. 2007). Repeated interaction with host nationals enhances expatriates' understanding of local culture (Haslberger, A., et al., 2013 c.f., Y. Y. Kim, 2001). Friendships and social support systems contribute to a sense of self-worth and personal wellbeing. This can have a positive spill-over into the workplace. These networks can offer employees emotional sustenance and can act as a buffer when dealing with workplace stress or relationship problems. Positive interactions outside the workplace can be role for good relationships with colleagues and can improve performance in the workplace. The existence of social ties between co-workers affects many aspects of the worker behavior, but it is unlikely that workers who have few opportunities to interact with one another are unlikely to form social ties (Bandiera et al., 2008). Employees who share more information with each other are more likely to trust, cooperate and produce when their formal contacts are accompanied by informal links (Bandiera et al., 2008).

Expatriates support each other, bringing assistance to each other as they adjust to new circumstances and reduce the feeling of isolation and uniqueness. Higher levels of emotional support may be needed to help expatriates overcome the frustrations associated with working, life and interaction aspects in the host country that are particularly difficult to adjust (Farh, Bartol, Shapiro & Shin, 2010). In fact, empathic-based emotional support has been shown to be more effective in reducing psychological distress (Farh, Bartol, Shapiro & Shin, 2010). Socio-emotional support can help them to overcome negative feelings, so that they

experience these feelings as a normal part of the task and the process of intercultural adjustment (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002, Stroppa & Spieß 2010). HCN's provides mainly expatriate information support in the Host Country; peer expatriates primarily provide emotional support because of their greater empathy for cultural adjustment challenges and cultural similarity to the expatriate (Farh, Bartol, Shapiro & Shin, 2010). A previous study on expatriates in Turkey and China found that social interactions had an impact on the psychological well-being of expatriates in these two countries. In the measurement of social network, there was no difference between friends of expatriates at work and those outside of work (Selmer, J. & Fenner, C.R. Jr. 2009; Wang, M., & Takeuchi, R. 2007). Frequent social interaction with other expatriates and host nationals provides expatriates with an invaluable source of information on culturally acceptable behavior and norms and reduces uncertainties related to work and non-work related issues (Selmer, J. & Fenner, C.R. Jr. 2009; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002). Interactions with HCN's in social settings are a way for newly arrived expatriates to become aware of appropriate behaviors in the Host Country, as HCN's can act as sources of information and help bridge the gap between the two cultures. It facilitates an appreciation and sensitivity of cultural differences and promotes adjustment (Selmer, J. & Luring, J., 2011). The social network and accompanying social support of family, friends and co-workers are of imminent importance to eliminate the risk of failure of the foreign designation (Wang, M., & Takeuchi, R. 2007). In addition, the spillover theory suggests that work and non-work experiences will be positively correlated (Lee, L., Kartika, N., 2014; Selmer, J. & Luring, J., 2011; Selmer, J. & Fenner, C.R. Jr. 2009). Overall, there is a positive regression between social networking and expatriate outcomes and well-being (Li and Rothstein, 2009, Osman-Gani and Rockstuhl, 2008, Stroppa and Spieß, 2011).

Frequent social interactions with HCN's have a positive influence on the work adjustment (a) of foreign workers, (b) interaction adjustment, (c) overall adjustment, and (d) job satisfaction and a negative influence on their turnover intentions (Froese F., et al., 2012). Therefore, we suggest that:

Hypothesis 2a: Cross-group friendships are positively associated with (a) expatriate adjustment, (b) psychological adjustment and negatively associated with (c) withdrawal cognitions.

Hypothesis 2b: Social support is positively associated with (a) expatriate adjustment, (b) psychological adjustment and negatively associated with (c) withdrawal cognitions.

3.2.3 Cross-cultural adjustment and country image

The difference between country of origin and country of destination has led to much research exploring cultural distances and processes, times and methods, and how expatriates adjust emotionally and intellectually to the new environment (Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall 1992, Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Shaffer and Luk, 2005). Contextual factors, such as geographical proximity and cultural differences between the country of origin and the host country, may play important roles in the expatriate adjustment process (Wang, X., & Nayir, D. Z., 2006; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002).

Three approaches to non-geographical transnational distance permeate literature: psychic distance, national cultural distance, and institutional distance.

- Psychic distance is the managers' perception of the differences in business conditions between the country of origin and the country of destination and reflects the perceived cost, uncertainty and risk of doing business in the host country.
- National cultural distance is a country-level construct, based on the Hofstede culture model as the software of the mind. It consists of norms and values about how things are done in the country, measured in its four or five dimensions.
- Institutional distance is a country-level construction based on relatively objective measures of the country's commercial, social, political, economic, and demographic conditions.

Geographic location was found to have a moderate influence to accept expatriation (Stahl et al., 2009). However, recent research states the degree of importance of locational factors is far from clear since may be greater barrier to accepting expatriation missions than financial or career considerations (Eccher U., & Duarte H., 2016) such as country image (socio-economic and political conditions, express themselves in the local language, etc.) which plays an important role in the expatriate's acceptance of the international mission in a foreign country (Eccher U., & Duarte H., 2016) as to their importance for the adjustment of expatriates in the host country and their effects on the withdrawal of cognitions.

Language proficiency will help expatriates in establishing new social relationships (Selmer & Luring, 2011) for the reason that social interaction has been demonstrated as a major predictor of expatriate adjustment (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002).

A number of researchers conclude that the novelty of culture (eg, national cultural differences) is negatively associated with cross-cultural adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer and Luk, 2005; Black & Stephens 1989; Black et al., 1991).

A study among expatriates in Korea and Turkey showed that those who lived in Korea were better adjusted in terms of general and interaction adjustment and showed lower levels of turnover intentions (Froese F., Peltokorpi V, Ko K., 2012). It is clear that the destination influences expatriate psychological well-being. In principle, the extent of cultural differences determines the quality and degree of difficulty experienced by people who are engaged in intercultural interactions (Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. 2001). These culture-based differences in work-related values and behavior are likely to increase anxiety and stress among expatriates and decrease their job satisfaction (Froese, F., & Peltokorpi, V., 2011; Gudykunst, W.B. 2005). Moreover national culture distance had a negative impact on expatriate job satisfaction. Researchers found that a (non) developing country involve challenges associated with poor infrastructure, and a lack of goods, services, and medical care (Eccher U., & Duarte H., 2016). As such, we formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3a: A non developing country is negatively associated with (a) expatriate adjustment, (b) psychological adjustment and positively associated with (c) withdrawal cognitions

Hypothesis 3b: A developing country is positively associated with (a) expatriate adjustment, (b) psychological adjustment and negatively associated with (b) withdrawal cognitions.

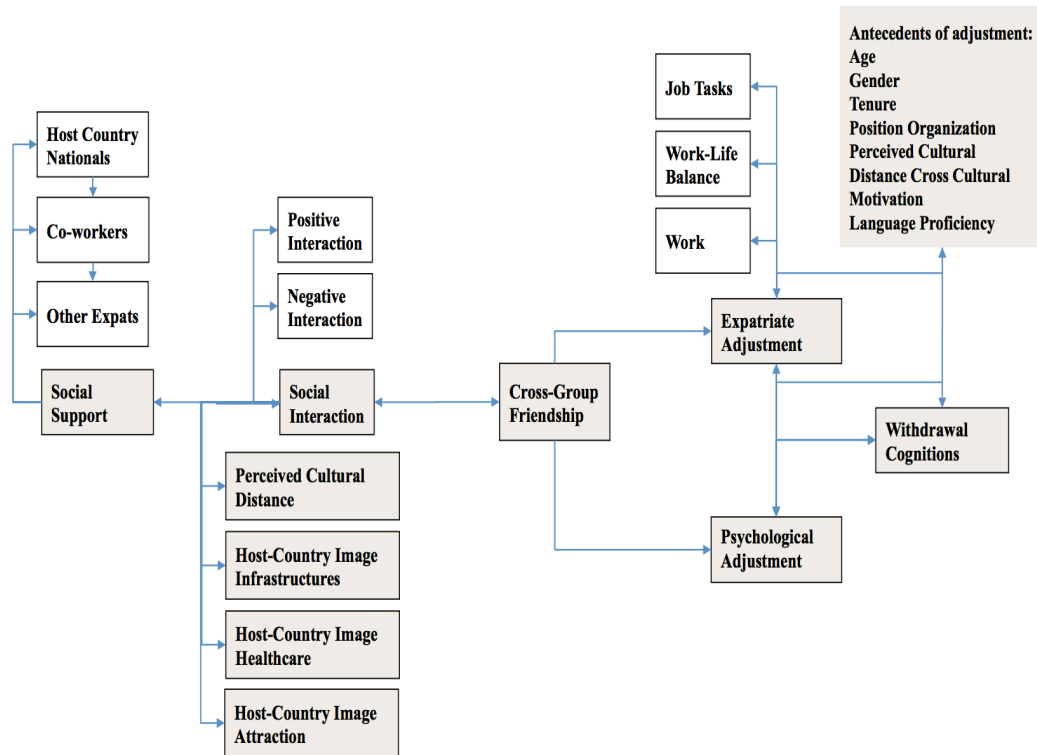


Fig. 1. Theoretical model. International Assignment's: Social and emotional subjects on work, non-work environment

IV. Methodology

4.1 Data collection and sampling

The sample for the present study was drawn from expatriates on a foreign assignment. The data were gathered online by developing a questionnaire in English and translated in French and in Portuguese and conducted an online international survey. The questionnaire took approximately 30min to complete. We approached companies by calling or writing to them, personal contacts and by Internations data bases. We received usable questionnaires from 511 expatriates.

On average, the expatriates were 30 years old. Respondents were well educated with 48,2% having masters or higher degree, 36,5% a bachelor's degree, and the rest 15,3% having attended either college or high school. Most of expatriates were male, 63,7% and 63,3% had a partner. 74,3% said they had no children; only 25,4% had children. 64,2% of them held managerial positions. On average duration of their current assignment were 3 months and 3 to 6 months of prior experience as expatriate in total. 47,9% of the respondents was Europeans and 27,2% were Americans representing more than 25 different nationalities. In total, the

most common destinations were UAE, USA, Luxembourg, Germany, China, Japan, Canada, Italy, Spain, Angola.

4.2 Measures

4.2.1 Dependent Variables

Expatriate adjustment was measured using Thomas Hippler, Paula M. Caligiuri, Johanna E. Johnson & Nataliya Baytalskaya (2014) to measure work environment, language, job or task characteristic, leisure time, urbanity, work–life balance, living quarters, family life, local friendships and contact to those left behind. Respondents were asked to consider their work/life in their home country (or last assignment) as compared to their current work/life now that there are on assignment in which they have experienced a change or difference (-) negative, (0) neutral and (+) positive; (1= insignificant in my life; to 4= very significant in my life). For our study we used the items related to work environment, job or task characteristic and work–life balance. Cronbach's alpha was .92.

Psychological adjustment scale was measured by using (scale from?) which assesses the extent to the respondent is “Excited about being in this country”; “Out of place, like I don't fit into this country culture”. Questions were asked on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=Never; to 7=Always) Internal consistency reliability of the measure was found to be .82 in that study.

Withdrawal Cognitions was measured using Hom, Griffeth, & Sellaro (1984), one item from Shaffer & Harrison (1998), and two items from Caligiuri (1997). Respondents indicated their agreement or disagreement with each item on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated “strongly disagree” and 5 indicates “strongly agree.” Slightly different wording was used for professor vs. non-professor subsamples (e.g., “I think often about leaving my position” vs. “I think often about quitting my assignment early”). Cronbach's alpha for the 5-item scale was .83.

4.2.2 Independent variables

Intergroup friendship was measured using Brown et al.'s (1999), quantity of contact with friends was assessed by two questions study. The two items were “How many friends do you have among the colleagues of work, local expatriates and virtual communities?” on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated “none” and 5 indicates “10 or more”; “How often do you

spend time with them?” on a scale from 1 “rarely” to 5 “very often”. Cronbach’s alpha was .89.

Social support was measured with 4-item measure developed by Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison and Pinneau (1980), which assesses the extent to the respondent is (1) willing to make worklife easier for the expatriate, (2) easy to talk to, (3) willing to help when things get tough and (4) willing to listen to personal problems. Questions were asked on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Internal consistency reliability of the measure was found to be .84 in that study.

Positive contact and negative contact were measured via single items adapted from Barlow and colleagues (2012): “How often do you have positive/good interactions with foreigners?” and “How often do you have negative/bad interactions with foreigners?”. Cronbach’s alpha was .69.

Country image variables - To measure the ‘socio-economic and political’ dimension, we enquired about the level of safety, evaluated along a scale ranging from 1 = ‘very unsafe’ to 5 = ‘very safe’ and political stability, rated from 1 = ‘very unstable’ to 5 = ‘very stable’ (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2012). The quality of infrastructure (i.e. transport, water, energy and telecommunication), together with the quality of health care were quantified on a scale ranging from 1 = ‘very poor’ to 5 = ‘very good’. Likewise, to compute the more symbolic ‘cultural and relational’ aspects, we used a five-point scale measuring the ‘openness of host country nationals towards foreigners’ (from 1 = ‘not at all open to foreigners’ to 5 = ‘very open to foreigners’) and ‘attraction to host country culture’ (from 1 = ‘not at all attracted’ to 5 = ‘very attracted’). Cronbach’s alpha was .83.

4.2.4 Control Variables

Several control variables was used to determine the influence on independent variables as follows:

Age will be measured in years;

Gender will be dummy coded (0=female, 1=male);

Marital Status was dummy coded (0=no; 1=yes);

Children was dummy coded (0= None; 1= One; 2= Two; 3=Three or more);

Tenure will be measured in months;

Prior international experience will be measured in months;

Location of the foreign assignment was coded in continents, because of a number of different countries, by one question referring “the country in which the foreign assignment takes place”. The location of the foreign assignment was primarily Europe 53%, 18% of the assignments were in Asia, 4,9% in Africa, 2,9% in America and 1,4% in Australia.

Cross-cultural motivation was measured by using Ang et al.’s (2007) five-item motivational cultural intelligence (“CQ”). Questions were asked on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha was .86.

Perceived Cultural distance was measured by using Chen, G., Kirkman, B. L., Kim, K., Farh, C. C., & Tangirala, S. (2010). Expatriates were asked to rate six items pertaining to the extent to which various cultural attributes (i.e., religions and rituals, values, beliefs, norms, customs, ways of conducting business in their host country/foreign subsidiary were similar to or different from those in their home country (1 = “highly similar,” 5 = “not at all similar”). Cronbach’s alpha was .90.

Language Proficiency. Expatriates were asked to rate six using the host country's local language in general; Writing in the local language; Speaking the local language; Reading and understanding the local language; Listening to the local language (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha was .94.

V. Results

Table 1, 2 and 3 shows the means, standard deviations and correlations for the study variables. The results of the regression analysis for the three facets of expatriate adjustment (work environment, work-life balance, tasks), psychological cognition and withdrawal cognition provide general support for the hypotheses in which each control and independent variables had a statistically significant influence on the dependent variables.

To test the hypotheses, five linear regression models were considered in three stages. In the first step, we enter the individual control variables. In the second step, we inserted external control variables. In the third step, we inserted the independent variables.

Table 1 shows the results of regression analysis for positive and negative interactions. Table 2 shows the results for inter-group friendship and social support, and Table 3 shows the results for the country image. Although the control variables have substantial predictive power, the addition of independent variables increased the variance explained in 9- 15% for various expatriate adjustments, 12-27% for psychological adjustment and 12% -15% for withdrawal cognitions.

Table 1 summarizes the main results of regression analysis for positive and negative interactions.

Together, control variables (Gender, Present Total Month, Current Position in Organization, Intercultural Motivation, Perceived Cultural Distance and Language Proficiency) were considered significant and positive predictors of the dependent variables. However, marital status, Organization size and Cultural distance do not predict dependent variables; age ($\beta = -1.17$, $p < 0.05$) and Total Month ($\beta = -1.24$, $p < 0.05$) have a negative regression with psychological adjustment, but age correlates inversely with cognitions of withdrawal ($\beta = -1.70$, $p < 0.05$); number of children has negative regression with life-work adjustment ($\beta = -1.11$, $p < 0.05$); Designation of Circumstance has a negative regression with the working adjustment ($\beta = -0.90$, $p < 0.05$);

Hypothesis 1a postulates that positive interactions are positively related to (a) expatriate adjustment, (b) psychological adjustment and negatively associated with (c) withdrawal cognitions.

Regression analyzes suggest that positive and significant regression was detected between positive interactions with other expatriates ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$), co-workers ($\beta = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$), and psychological adjustment positive ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$). In addition, negative regression was found between positive interactions with HCN withdrawal cognitions and ($\beta = -0.94$, $p < 0.05$) in the expected direction, but had no effect on the expatriate adjustment. Therefore, positive interactions cannot be considered a predictor of expatriate adjustment, providing partial support for hypothesis 1a (b, c).

Hypothesis 1b states that negative interactions are negatively associated with (a) adjustment of expatriates (b) psychological adjustment and have a positive impact on (b) withdrawal cognitions of expatriates. Regression analyzes suggest that there is a negative and significant association between negative interactions with HCN's ($\beta = 1.71$, $p < 0.05$), co-workers ($\beta = 2.42$, $p < 0.05$) and withdrawal cognitions, but not with the adjustment of the expatriate and psychological adjustment. Thus, only hypothesis 1a (c) is supported.

Table 2 presents the results of the regression analyzes for intergroup friendship and social support.

In all, the control variables (age, sex, Total Present Month, Current Position Organization,

Transcultural Motivation, Perceived Cultural Distance and Language Proficiency) were considered significant and positive predictors of the dependent variables. However, marital status, Organization size and Cultural distance do not predict dependent variables; number of children has negative regression with life-work adjustment ($\beta = -1.11$, $p < 0.05$); Total allocation of the month ($\beta = -1.24$, $p < 0.05$) has a negative regression with the psychological adjustment; Designation of Circumstance has a negative regression with the working adjustment ($\beta = -0.90$, $p < 0.05$);

Hypothesis 2a postulates that intergroup friendship is positively associated with (a) adjustment of expatriates, (b) psychological adjustment and negatively associated with (c) withdrawal cognitions.

The results show that intergroup friendship with other expatriates - non-work informal conversations are positively related to positive psychological adjustment ($\beta = 1.96$, $p < 0.05$). The time spent with friends and intergroup colleagues is positively related to the adjustment of the work-life balance ($\beta = 1.61$, $p < 0.05$), work task adjustment ($\beta = 1.67$, $p < 0.05$) and negatively associated with withdrawal cognitions ($\beta = 2.38$, $p < 0.05$). Intergroup friendship with co-workers in informal conversations not related to working on the Internet is positively associated with the adjustment of work tasks ($\beta = 1.50$, $p < 0.05$). Intergroup friendships visiting other expatriates houses negatively related to withdrawal cognitions ($\beta = 1.58$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, intergroup friendship with co-workers in non-work informal conversations predicts a negative adjustment in work ($\beta = -1.65$, $p < 0.05$) and adjustment in work tasks ($\beta = -1.94$, $p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 2b states that social support is positively associated with (a) adjustment of expatriates, (b) psychological adjustment and negatively associated with (c) withdrawal cognitions.

The results show that the social support of HCN's is positively related to the adjustment of work tasks ($\beta = 1.67$, $p < 0.05$) and withdrawal cognitions ($\beta = 1.72$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 3 shows the main results of the regression analysis for the country's image.

Together, control variables (Gender, Present Total Month, Current Position Organization, Intercultural Motivation, Perceived Cultural Distance and Language Proficiency) were considered significant and positive predictors of the dependent variables. However, marital status, Organization size and Cultural distance do not predict dependent variables; age ($\beta = -1.17$, $p < 0.05$) and Total Month ($\beta = -1.24$, $p < 0.05$) have a negative regression with

psychological adjustment, but age correlates inversely with cognitions of withdrawal ($\beta = -1.70$, $p < 0.05$); number of children has negative regression with life-work adjustment ($\beta = -1.11$, $p < 0.05$); Designation of Circumstance has a negative regression with the working adjustment ($\beta = -0.90$, $p < 0.05$);

Hypothesis 3a postulates that a non-developing country is negatively associated with (a) adjustment of expatriates, (b) psychological adjustment and positively associated with (c) withdrawal cognitions

Regression analyzes suggest that there is a negative and significant regression between attention to the country, adjustment in the life / work balance ($\beta = -1.81$, $p < 0.05$) and adjustment in work tasks ($\beta = -1.40$, $p < 0.05$). A negative association was also found between the political stability of the country and the positive psychological adjustment ($\beta = -1.33$, $p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 3b states that a developing country is positively associated with (a) adjustment of expatriates, (b) psychological adjustment and negatively associated with (b) withdrawal cognitions.

Regression analyzes suggest that the attraction by country is positively associated with work adjustment ($\beta = 1.34$, $p < 0.05$), adjustment of work life balance ($\beta = 1.27$, $p < 0.05$), adjustment of tasks ($\beta = 1.13$, $p < 0.05$) partial support to hypotheses 3a and 3b.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix

Variable	Adjust Work			Adjust Work-Life Balance			Adjust Job Tasks			Positive Psychological Adjust.			Withdrawal Cognitions		
Mean/SD	M= 16.14 ; SD= 2.28	M= 27.48 ; SD= 2.1	M= 19.73 ; SD= 2.1	M= 16.24 ; SD= 2.86	M= 27.51 ; SD= 2.73	M= 21.08 ; SD= 2.73	M= 10.13 ; SD= 2.34	M= 26.76 ; SD= 2.15	M= 20.00 ; SD= 2.15	M= 2.22 ; SD= 1.38	M= 14.18 ; SD= 1.18	M= 11.28 ; SD= 1.15	M= 8.67 ; SD= 1.15	M= 7.48 ; SD= 1.07	M= 8.7 ; SD= 0.1
Models	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Age											-.117*	-.104*		-.170*	-.122
N°Children >=15 years				-.111*	-.151*	-.149*									
Marital Status															
Gender	.170*	.115*	.114*	.110*			.136*								
Total Month Assign.											-.124*	-.159*			
Total Month Present Assign.												.118*			
N° Employees Organizat.															
Current Position Org		.135*	.134*		.160*	.151*		.134*	.123*						
Circumstance Assign.								-.090*							
Cross Cultural Motivation		.335*	.312*		.204*	.242*		.352*	.330*		.452*	.423*		-.230*	-.132
Perceived Cultural Distance														.261*	.202
Cultural Distance															
Language Proficiency					.129*	.116*					.096*			.170*	.143
Positive Interaction HCN's															-.094
Positive Interaction other Expats												.165*			
Positive Interaction Expats Co-Workers												.103*			
Negative Interaction HCN's															.171
Negative Interaction other Expats															
Negative Interaction Expats Co-Workers															2.42
Δ R ²		15%	0%		9%	0%		15%	0%		27%	4%		12%	15%
F Change	3.11	7.40	.665	1.99	4.34	.96	1.85	7.39	1.16	1.17	14.09	3.8	6.60	6.03	12.2
Adjusted R ²	3%	18%	17%	1%	10%	10%	1%	16%	17%	0%	27%	31%	7%	18%	33%

N=511

*p<.05.

**p<.01.

Determinants of intercultural adjustment

Table 2
Means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix

Variable	Adjust Work				Adjust Work-Life Balance				Adjust Job Tasks				Positive Psychological Adjust.				Withdrawal Cognitions			
Mean/SD	M= 16.14 ; SD= 2.28	M= 27.48; SD= 2.1	M= 16.01; SD= 2.10	M= 15.07; SD= 2.07	M= 16.24 ; SD= 2.86	M= 27.51; SD= 2.73	M= 16.46; SD= 2.75	M= 14.43; SD= 2.76	M= 10.13 ; SD= 2.34	M= 26.76; SD=2.15	M= 17.29; SD=2.13	M= 15.24; SD= 2.12	M= 2.22 ; SD= 1.38	M= 14.18; SD= 1.18	M= 9.72; SD= 1.11	M= 8.01; SD= 1.12	M= 0.47 ; SD= 1.14	M= 3.86; SD= 1.07	M= 3.86; SD= 1.02	M= 5.04; SD= 1.0
Models	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
Age																				
N°Children >=15 years					-.111*	-.151*	-.152*	-.154*						.117*			-.305*	-.170*		-.104*
Marital Status																				
Gender	.170*	.115*	.100*		.110*				.136*											
Total Month Assign.																				
Total Month Present Assign.																				
Current Position Org																				
N° Employees Organizat.																				
Circumstance Assign.																				
Cross Cultural Motivation		.335*	.309*	.302*		.204*	.172*	.186*		.352*	.314*	.315*		.452*	.362*	.364*		-.230*	-.244*	-.226
Perceived Cultural Distance																		.261*	.181*	.149*
Cultural Distance																				
Language Proficiency						.129*	.105*							.096*				.170*		
Interg. Friendship HCN Spend Time																				
Interg. Friendship HCN Informal Convers non-work																				
Interg. Friendship HCN Internet																				
Interg. Friendship HCN Visit homes																				
Interg. Friendship Other Expats Spend Time																				
Interg. Friendship other Expats Informal Convers non-work																				
Interg. Friendship other Expats Internet																				
Interg. Friendship Visit homes other Expats																				
Interg. Friendship Expats co-workers Spend Time							.161*				.167*	.149*						.158*	-.238*	-.242*
Interg. Friendship Expats co-workers Informal Convers non-work																				
Interg. Friendship Expats co-workers Informal Conversations Internet																				
Interg. Friendship Expats co-workers Visit homes																				
S. Support HCN's													.167*							.172*
S. Support Other Expatriates																				
S. Support Expatriates Co-workers																				
S. Support Friends HCN's																				
S. Support Friends Other Expatriates																				
S. Support Friends Expatriates Co-workers																				
Δ R ²	3.11	15%	-1%	2%	1.97	9%	-2%	0%	1.9	15%	2%	1%	1.17	27%	8%	0%	6.6	12%	8%	1%
F Change	3.11	7.40	0.81	2.61	1.97	4.34	0.591	0.784	1.9	7.4	1.6	1.5	1.17	14.08	3.94	0.70	6.6	6.0	3.6	1.4
Adjusted R ²	3%	18%	17%	20%	1%	10%	8%	8%	1%	16%	18%	19%	0%	27%	35%	34%	7%	18%	26%	26%

N=511

*p<.05.

**p<.01.

Table 3
Means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix

Variable	Adjust Work			Adjust Work-Life Balance			Adjust Job Tasks			Positive Psychological Adjust.			Withdrawal Cognitions		
Mean/SD	M= 16.14 ; SD= 2.28	M= 27.48; SD= 2.1	M=19.62 ; SD= 2.1	M= 16.24 ; SD= 2.86	M= 27.51 ; SD= 2.73	M= 21.56; SD= 2.72	M=10.13 ; SD= 2.34	M=26.76; SD= 2.15	M= 19.30 ; SD= 2.15	M= 2.23 ; SD=1.38	M= 14.18 ; SD= 1.18	M=10.02 ; SD= 1.17	M=8.67; SD= 1.15	M=7.47 ; SD=1.07	M=5.15; SD=1.08
Models	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
Age															
N°Children >=15 years					-.111*	-.151*	-.154*				-.117*	-.125*		-.170*	-.171*
Marital Status															
Gender	.170*	.115*	.119*		.110*		.136*								
Total Month Assign.															
Total Month Present Assign.															
N° Employees Organizat.															
Current Position Org															
Circumstance Assign.															
Cross Cultural Motivation		.335*	.328*		.204*	.195*		.352*	.337*		.452*	.452*		-.230*	-.221*
Perceived Cultural Distance														.261*	.250*
Cultural Distance												.094*			
Language Proficiency					.129*	.131*					.096*			.170*	.161
Country Safety															
Country Healthcare							-.181*		-.140*						
Country Infrastructures															
Country Political Stability													-.133*		
Country Openess Host Citizens															
Country Culture Attraction															
Country Similarity			.134*			.127*			.113*						
Δ R ²		15%	0%		9%	1%		15%	0%		27%	1%		12%	-1%
F Change	3.11	7.40	1.15	1.99	4.36	1.42	1.85	7.39	1.18	1.17	14.08	1.68	6.60	6.03	.72
Adjusted R ²	3%	18%	18%	1%	10%	11%	1%	16%	17%	0%	27%	28%	7%	18%	18%

N=511

*p<.05.

**p<.01.

VI. Discussion

This study aimed to expand the empirical understanding of social interactions, friendships and social support as well country images influence on expatriates adjustment and withdrawal cognitions.

Some challenging findings were obtained. There is evidence for the buffer hypothesis that the relationships between these variables when social interactions and friendship is high and country images differences are lower then the adjustment is smoother (Brewster et al., 2014) and the intention to leave is low (Caliguiri, L., 2002). On the one hand, the results concerning social interactions indicate the quality contacts of social interactions as the most important predictor of expatriate adjustment and withdrawal cognitions than the number of contacts established in the host country. Only positive interactions with HCN's has a positive influence on psychological adjustment (Froese et al., 2012; Frese, M.,1999) and a negative influence on expats withdrawal cognitions which is consistent with previous studies (Stroppa, C., Spieß, E., 2011; Shaffer et al.,1999; Frese, M.,1999) according to which social interactions enable expatriates to create more positive perceptions and gain support from HCN's and social support is of eminent importance in eliminating the risk of foreign assignment failure (Stroppa, C., Spieß, E. 2011). High support protects individuals from the negative effects of work stressors and may produce positive feelings that lead to less reporting of stressors. Motivation and positive attitudes toward interactions with HCN's are important aspects of successful cross-cultural adjustment (Froese et al., 2012 cf. Takeuchi et al., 2005). Indeed, in the current study, data also indicates that cross-cultural motivation predicts expatriate adjustment and highlights the spillover effects on withdrawal cognitions. These results suggest that younger motivated expatriates don't intend to leave the assignment earlier even though they don't feel comfortable in the host country.

Also, the traditional form of expatriation, professionals who are sent by their organizations on international assignments has been widely used by multinational corporations but adjustment issues have indeed been found to be an issue for assigned expatriates (AEs) (Selmer, 2002).

64% of expatriates, from our study, were sent to the host country by a company they had a previous work relation and they seemed to have issues on job adjustment. As self-initiate expatriates (SIEs) have been found to possess strong cross-cultural skills and knowledge about local environments that could be very valuable to organizations (Peltokorpi, 2008) maybe the combination of having both host country and international business competencies

may be a solution for AEs to establish social ties with these increasingly common type of expat.

In the other hand, negative interactions has a negative direct effect on withdrawal cognitions and do not predict expatriates adjustment. Surprisingly, perceived cultural distance predicts withdrawal cognitions than cultural distance (Hofstede, G. 1980).

There are several possible reasons for these findings. On the one hand, social interactions with HCN's can be a source of positive as well as negative experiences. Expatriate literature reveals social interactions as the main predictor of some facets of expatriate adjustment (Froese et al., 2012; Wang, X., & Nayir, D. Z., 2006; Shaffer et al., 1999). Inversely, since negative interactions have main effect on withdrawal cognitions maybe personal initiative may play an important role for reducing intention to leave because foreign workers who have mostly negative experiences tend to have negative attitudes toward and avoid interactions with HCN's, which is unfortunate in that foreign workers who are willing to participate in social interactions are likely to correct their negative attitudes and stereotypes about HCN's and obtain a new cultural perspective to better manage various obstacles in the host country (Froese et al., 2012 cf Jun et al., 1997). Another explanation is that the impact of social interaction on expatriate adjustment may vary for those in different cultures.

Consistent with the hypotheses, country images also predict expatriate adjustment but do not predict withdrawal cognitions. Only the perceived cultural distance predicts the intention to leave the assignment.

The lack of relationship between these variables is unexpected. It is difficult to understand how expatriates can be in a country with low political stability which affects their psychological adjustment, have poorly healthcare which affects their work-life and job adjustment, and yet don't intend to leave the assignment in the host country. In principle, the extent of cultural differences determines the quality and the degree of difficulty that is experienced by people who are engaged in intercultural interactions (Ward et al., 2001). Those individuals who were attracted by the host country drew satisfaction from social interactions with both locals and foreigners (Brewster et al, 2014).

These country differences may be reduced by the pre-departure training of expatriates as well as the on-site training of both expatriates and HCN's. Pre-departure training enhances expatriate job satisfaction because it ensures that expatriates have the needed knowledge, skills, and abilities to function efficiently during their assignments (Froese, F., Peltokorpi, V. 2011).

In the operationalization of expatriate adjustment and effectiveness, several criteria

(performance at the expected level of quality and quantity, endurance until the end of the assignment, ability to develop constructive relations with the members of the new society, moderate level of stress to function effectively, and positive attitudes towards work) have been identified. Taken together, these criteria of successful adjustment encompass both work and non-work domains of expatriation experience (Selmer, J. & Fenner, C.R. Jr. 2009). While indicators such as adequate performance, completed duration of the assignment and positive work attitudes are relevant to work-related adjustment, participation in the social life, satisfaction with living conditions and psychological well-being are relevant to adjustment in the general cultural milieu (Zeynep Aycan, 1997).

VII. Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to fill a gap in the expatriate literature regarding t expatriates adjustment in a foreign Country by highlithing the expatriate experience through the interaction established in both work and non work environment.

511 expatriates shared their international experience by filing an online survey. Whilst a greater number of respondents testified that their international experience was in general very positive, there were a few that experienced in a slightly pessimistic tone for negative interactions perhaps lack of social support and friends or even negative attitude towards the host Country.

We found that the social networks are the most important key for a successful international mission and withdrawal cognitions. Along side with positive interactions within HCN's social interactions enable expatriates to create more positive perceptions and gain support from HCN's and social support is of eminent importance in eliminating the risk of foreign assignment failure.

High support protects individuals from the negative effects of work stressors and may produce positive feelings that lead to less reporting of stressors.

Motivation and positive attitudes toward interactions with HCN's are also important aspects of successful cross-cultural adjustment.

Cross-cultural motivation predicts expatriate adjustment and highlights the spillover effects on withdrawal cognitions.

VIII. Practical Implications

This research also holds practical implications. Several measures can be taken by organizations and international workers to avoid negative experiences in the host country and minimize withdrawal cognitions. First, it is considered that positive interactions are likely to facilitate the psychological well-being of expatriates and will have reverse withdrawal cognitions both inside and outside the workplace. Thus, expatriates should enhance their personal interactional skills. Secondly, third-parties support can act as a mentor by enrolling expatriates to assess cultural differences, to have a more open mind about intercultural interactions, and to establish close social bonds that facilitate the psychological adjustment of expatriates. Third, support provided by third parties is essential when it comes to work because they have a broader and more technical knowledge of national laws and obligations, making it easier for newcomers to easily adjust to work. Fourth, the significant relationship between the country image and expatriates adjustment suggests that more focus should be placed on screening this country differences because expatriates shows attraction to the host country even if they provide lower levels of healthcare and political stability.

IX. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study contributes to the international literature on the expatriates adjustment by questioning the great influence of social interactions, intergroup friendships and social support, as well as the country images on expatriates adjustment and their withdrawal cognitions. The findings should be interpreted in light of the limitation associated with this study to the fact that this research is based on expatriates from more than 25 countries around the world.

Future studies can show to what extent the findings are generalizable to specific contexts.

This limitation of the present study takes a significant step forward and sheds some interesting light onto the complexity of expatriate adjustment and withdrawal cognitions. At the same time, it underscores the need for more empirical work in this area.

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