

CROSS-CULTURAL CODE-SWITCHING: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF ADAPTING BEHAVIOR IN FOREIGN CULTURAL INTERACTIONS

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Previous research on cultural adaptation has focused on the challenges and outcomes associated with long-term adaptation to a foreign culture. Little has focused on the dynamics of cultural adaptation within single interactions, which are the building blocks of these long-term patterns. I fill this gap by introducing the concept of cross-cultural code-switching and providing an account of the psychological challenges people face in successfully adapting their behavior in foreign cultural interactions.

A critical practical challenge that organizations face in the increasingly interdependent global economy is the ability to function effectively across national cultural boundaries. Instead of operating exclusively within the cultural setting in which they were born and raised, individuals must now be capable of functioning appropriately in a wide variety of foreign cultural situations, many of which have different cultural norms for appropriate behavior that may conflict with their core values and beliefs. In response to this challenge, a growing number of management scholars have examined the antecedents and consequences of successful long-term adaptation to a foreign culture. Researchers have identified the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and technical skills required for long-term expatriate success (Black & Gregersen, 1999; Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Researchers have also documented the importance of pre-departure training (Black & Mendenhall, 1990) and previous overseas experience (Black, 1988) for successful adjustment abroad, identifying skills (Black & Gregersen, 1999; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) and personality characteristics such as cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003) that are critical for long-term success in a foreign culture. Finally, researchers have

examined the antecedents and determinants of effective repatriation to one's native culture following a long-term assignment abroad (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992; Sussman, 2001). As in psychological research on cultural adaptation (Berry, 2003; Church, 1982; Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1999; Oberg, 1960; Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998), the focus of this body of research has been on adaptation over time.

While it is clearly worthwhile to examine the determinants and outcomes of long-term adaptation, it is also critical to understand short-term cultural adaptation as it occurs in single interactions. Interactions are the micro building blocks of long-term adjustment to a foreign setting. As individuals learn the rules for appropriate behavior in a foreign setting, they repeatedly face discrete situations involving cultural differences that test their ability to function successfully in the new setting and their comfort with new cultural rules (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). The way they react to these situations and navigate cultural differences influences their own effectiveness, as well as the organization's performance (Black & Gregersen, 1999).

The management literature documents numerous examples of interactions with culturally variable norms, including seeking feedback (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Walsh, Wang, & Xin, 1999), giving feedback (Earley, Gibson, & Chen, 1999), delivering constructive criticism (Osland, 1995; Takeuchi, Imahori, & Matsumoto,

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2001), conducting a performance review (Shaw, 1990), participating in a business meeting (Hall & Hall, 1989), interviewing for a job (Steiner & Gilliland, 1996), negotiating (Adler, Brahm, & Graham, 1992; Brett & Okumura, 1998; Francis, 1991; Tinsley, 2001), resolving a conflict (Black & Mendenhall, 1993; Morris et al., 1998), and "schmoozing" at a cocktail party (Earley, 1987). To act appropriately in these interactions, foreign managers or employees must be capable of deviating from their intuitive, culturally ingrained behavior (Berry, 1997; Graves, 1967).

The benefits of cultural adaptation in interactions with culturally variable norms are well-established. Adaptation can help individuals avoid the negative consequences of norm violation and its associated stereotypes (Earley & Ang, 2003; Francis, 1991; Osland, Bird, Delano, & Jacob, 2000; Pornpitakpan, 1999; Thomas & Ravlin, 1995; Thomas & Toyne, 1995). It can also increase the likelihood of positive impression management outcomes (Leary, 1995; Montagliani & Giacalone, 1998; Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992), such as fitting in, being well-liked, and winning the respect, trust, and friendship of clients, colleagues, and subordinates while also sparking a positive spiral of interpersonal communication within a given professional relationship—for example, subordinate and superior (Earley & Ang, 2003: 165; Leary, 1995). In the case of an important client meeting or a high-level negotiation, successful adaptation can have an immediate, positive impact on an organization's success.

Alongside the benefits of cultural adaptation in single encounters, however, is a corresponding set of psychological challenges (Mak, Westwood, Ishiyama, & Barker, 1999; Sanchez, Spector, & Cooper, 2000). Foreign managers and employees may lack cultural skills, or feel that they lack cultural skills, to successfully produce the required appropriate behavior for the foreign interaction, resulting in performance anxiety (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Wood & Bandura, 1989), or even embarrassment (Keltner & Buswell, 1997), in front of a critical, evaluative audience from the native culture (Edmondson, 1999). The required behavior in the foreign setting may also conflict with an individual's deeply ingrained values and beliefs from the native cultural setting, resulting in psychological distress (Leong & Ward, 2000; Sanchez et al., 2000; Ward & Searle, 1991) or guilt (Sheldon &

Elliot, 1999). Because of these psychological challenges, an individual may be unable to produce the culturally appropriate behavior in a situation with culturally discrepant norms, despite the instrumental benefits of doing so. As I detail below, these challenges can weigh heavily as an individual attempts to adapt effectively.

Despite the importance of understanding the microprocesses of cultural adaptation in single business interactions, in little research have scholars examined cultural adaptation at the level of the interaction. Here I present a theory of the challenges entailed in cultural adaptation in single encounters. In doing so, I introduce the concept of "cross-cultural code-switching"—the act of purposefully modifying one's behavior, in a specific interaction in a foreign setting, to accommodate different cultural norms for appropriate behavior.

I borrow the term *code-switching* from sociolinguistics (Heller, 1988), where *linguistic* code-switching entails bilingual speakers alternating between languages in interaction with other bilinguals. Both linguistic and cross-cultural code-switching share the notion of changing from one form of behavior (or word choice) to another for the purpose of creating a desired social impression (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Yet whereas linguistic code-switching describes the act of switching from one language to another, cross-cultural code-switching describes the task of moving between culturally ingrained systems of behavior.

Through socialization in a particular cultural setting, individuals internalize norms for appropriate behavior in specific interactions (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Craig, 1996; Hetherington & Baltes, 1988). Encoded in the form of scripts or event-based schemas (Abelson, 1981; Gioia & Poole, 1984; Meziar, Chen, & Murphy, 1999), these norms are then primed when an individual steps into a particular role in a particular interaction (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Cross-cultural code-switching forces an individual to consciously override this dominant, culturally ingrained response (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1991; Feldman, 1984); it entails deviating from accustomed behavior in one's native culture in order to engage in behavior appropriate to a foreign culture. This focus on purposeful, conscious effort stands in contrast to prior research on nonconscious mimicry (LaFrance, 1979; Sanchez-Burks, 2002; Schefflen, 1964), in

which an individual involuntarily produces culturally consistent behavior.

Central to my theory are two psychological challenges people face while code-switching. First, code-switchers must proficiently execute a novel and possibly complex set of behaviors in a manner that will be judged appropriate by an evaluative audience native to the "new" (or "foreign") culture. This is the *task performance* dimension of cross-cultural code-switching (Van Maanen, 1979). Second, individuals must grapple internally with the personal meaning of the behavior they are producing, especially in terms of how the new behavior might conflict with internalized values and beliefs. This is the *identity* dimension of cross-cultural code-switching (Van Maanen, 1979). I show how emotions generated from these twin challenges influence the psychological toll associated with attempting to switch codes in an interactive encounter. An assumption of my model is that individuals are willing to attempt a switch when presented with the opportunity. I relax this assumption in the discussion section when discussing future research directions.

I begin by defining the cross-cultural code-switching concept and outlining the key personal and contextual variables in the model (see Figure 1). I then outline the relationships between these variables and the degree of psycho-

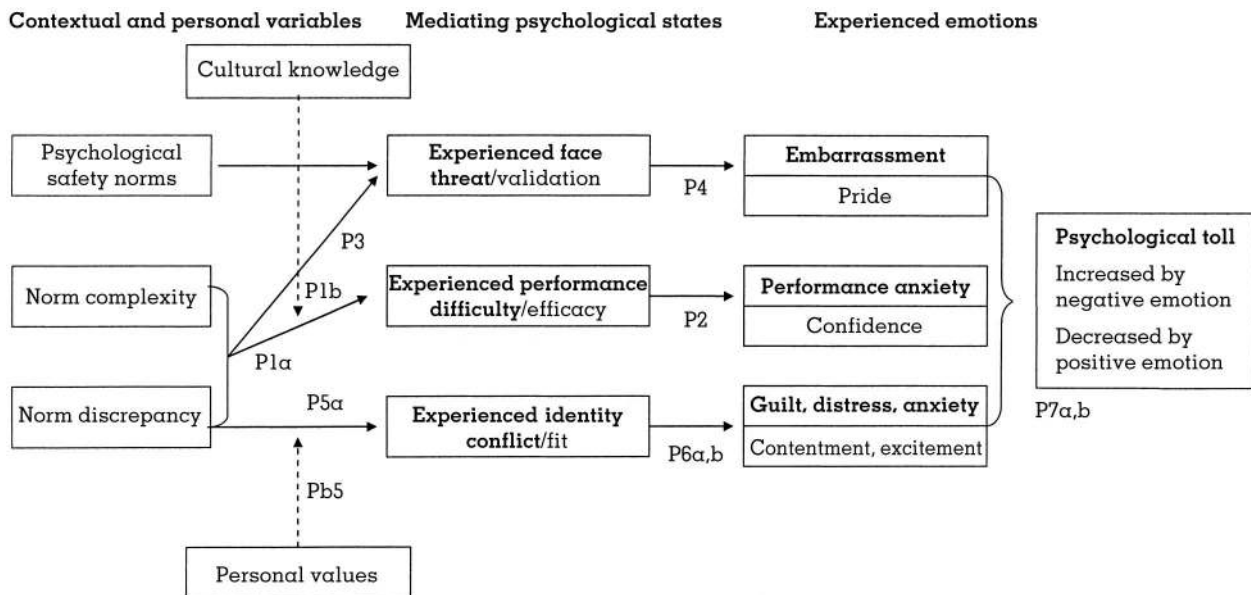
logical toll an individual experiences while switching. Psychological toll refers to the depleting and burdensome feeling a person experiences when the act of switching elicits high levels of negative emotion. This negative emotion can tax a person's available psychological resources, making it more difficult to execute a switch successfully. After describing the determinants of psychological toll, I discuss theoretical and practical implications of the approach for cross-cultural interactions and international management.

THE CROSS-CULTURAL CODE-SWITCHING CONSTRUCT

Defining the Construct

Cross-cultural code-switching is *the act of purposefully modifying one's behavior in an interaction in a foreign setting in order to accommodate different cultural norms for appropriate behavior*. An interaction refers to a specific, bounded unit of interpersonal communication, as brief as giving feedback to a superior in the office corridor or as long and complex as a negotiation. Interactions occur in behavior settings (Barker, 1968), such as a country park or a corporate boardroom. The same type of interaction can have different norms, depending on the be-

FIGURE 1
Determinants of Psychological Toll



havior setting in which it takes place; for example, the norms for an employment interview in rural Vermont will likely be different from the norms for an employment interview at corporate headquarters in midtown Manhattan. Expectations for appropriate behavior within an interaction depend not only on the norms for the type and setting of the interaction but also on the role the individual plays within the interaction (e.g., in a job interview, the individual might be the interviewee or the interviewer; Schmitt, Dube, & Leclerc, 1992). To produce a successful cross-cultural code-switch, an individual must act in a role-appropriate manner for the particular interaction.¹

To qualify as a cross-cultural code-switching situation, a situation must have norms that are either unfamiliar to the switcher or in conflict with values central to the switcher's identity (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). A switching situation can also have both features. As an example, consider the case of an Iranian businesswoman shaking hands with her Western male counterparts. In Iranian culture, shaking hands with a male colleague is neither customary nor appropriate. This situation entails behavior that is unfamiliar and also in conflict with deeply ingrained cultural values, fulfilling both criteria for a switching situation. Were the businesswoman highly familiar with the norms from several years' experience in the West, shaking hands would still entail switching for her if she experienced these norms as in conflict with her deeply ingrained cultural values. Were the norms highly familiar and the businesswoman experienced no value conflict when engaging in them because she did not personally adhere to Iranian cultural values regarding male-female interactions, the situation would no longer qualify as a switching situation.

Contextual and Personal Variables Influencing Psychological Toll

A core assumption of organizational scholarship is that individual behaviors and emotions are shaped by both features of the context and

features of the person (e.g., Ostroff, 1993; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Roberts, Hulin, & Rousseau, 1978; Schneider, 1983). Accordingly, in this next section I introduce a core set of five contextual and personal variables that influence the degree of psychological toll individuals experience while attempting a switch. These contextual and personal features influence toll by shaping the twin challenges individuals face while switching: the *performance* challenge entailed in successfully producing a novel set of behaviors in front of an evaluative audience and the *identity* challenge of behaving in a manner that is potentially in conflict with their core values.

Contextual variables. A first contextual variable is the *complexity of the norms* for the interaction in the new culture (Bandura, 1997; Hackman, 1970; Wood, 1986). Previous research has examined the notion of complexity at the cultural level (Church, 1982; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Triandis, 1996); however, the focus here is on the complexity of norms at the level of an interaction. Interaction norms are complex when expectations for appropriate content, style, and timing of behavior vary significantly across different subcomponents of the same interaction. The employment interview in the United States is an example of an interaction with complex norms. It is an event comprising multiple sub-episodes (e.g., greeting and small talk, formal questions by the interviewer, interviewee's opportunity for questions, closing), each of which demands a different style of behavior (Buckley, Norris, & Wiese, 2000; Gumperz, 1992; Liden, Martin, & Parsons, 1993). An interaction with comparatively less complex norms would be greeting a colleague in the office corridor. Here, the expectations for appropriate content, style, and timing of behavior remain more consistent throughout the interaction than in the employment interview.

A second contextual variable is the degree of *discrepancy* between the norms for the situation in the new culture and the norms for the same situation in the native culture. When switching behavior in a foreign culture, a nonnative must often carry out behaviors that are unfamiliar. Norm discrepancy refers to the degree of difference between the native norm and the new norm in terms of the content, style, and timing of expected behavior for the situation in question. As an illustration, consider the case of a Chinese

¹ I assume that the native audience is not itself switching in the interaction. Although mutual switching (when both sides switch) and reverse switching (when the native audience switches but the nonnative individual does not) are certainly possible, I exclude them from the model.

student attempting to participate in an American MBA classroom discussion. The norms for appropriate behavior within this setting in the United States encourage and require students to express themselves, as well as reward them, even when their opinions are controversial or conflict with those of another student or even with the professor (Arbaugh, 2000). Norms for classroom participation in China are quite different (Chan, 1999; Liberman, 1994). Having been socialized to respect the "wisdom, knowledge, and expertise of parents, teachers, and trainers" (Chan, 1999: 298), Chinese students are discouraged from voicing personal opinions in class discussion (Liberman, 1994). American norms for classroom participation, therefore, are quite discrepant from Chinese norms for the same situation; these norms demand a significantly different type of behavior than what the typical Chinese student is used to.

The *psychological safety norms* (Edmondson, 1999) created by the native audience in the interaction constitutes a third contextual variable influencing an individual's experience while switching. Switching can occur in an atmosphere that is safe for interpersonal risk taking (Edmondson, 1999; Goffman, 1956; Lim, 1994); it can also occur in a psychologically "unsafe" atmosphere, in which cultural faux pas are not tolerated. For example, an MBA classroom setting in which the professor sharply criticizes less-than-perfect student comments would be "unsafe"; a psychologically safe version of this setting would be one in which a professor fosters a classroom culture in which mistakes and faux pas are not only tolerated but seen as a critical part of the learning process. In both the psychologically safe and unsafe contexts, the norms for behavior are the same (one must participate actively in class to receive a high grade). The difference is the degree of psychological safety created by the professor, which, as previous research suggests (Edmondson, 1999), will impact the experience of the individual engaging in the unfamiliar behavior.

Personal variables. *Cultural knowledge* is an important personal variable influencing an individual's code-switching experience. Past research suggests that individuals vary in their level of cultural knowledge and that cultural knowledge, developed implicitly (Reber, 1993) through experience living in a foreign culture or explicitly through cross-cultural training, is pos-

itively associated with cultural adjustment (see Black & Mendenhall, 1990, for a review). To switch effectively, individuals must possess knowledge of the norms for appropriate behavior in a new culture. They must also possess metacognitive ability (Earley & Ang, 2003) to diagnose a switching opportunity—namely, that the norms for behavior in a situation in the new culture are different from the norms for appropriate behavior in that same situation in one's native culture.

An individual's *personal values* also play an important role in influencing how the individual experiences a cross-cultural code-switch. Personal values are an individual's "internal moral compass" (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004: 362), shaped in part by the native culture in which the individual is raised (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). There is growing consensus among researchers (e.g., Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Javidan & House, 2001; Schwartz, 1992; Triandis, 1996) that a set of core cultural values or syndromes (Chen, Chen, & Meindl, 1998; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Triandis, 1996), such as power distance, individualism-collectivism, assertiveness, and honor, is deeply ingrained in individuals through the process of socialization. These core values are both reflected in and reinforced by a person's behavior, beliefs, and attitudes (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000; Schein, 1991) and constitute an important part of a person's collective identity (Brewer, 1991; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Leong & Ward, 2000).

Although national culture influences personal values, so, too, do parents, peer groups, and one's professional environment (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Rokeach, 1973; Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Consequently, individuals can vary in terms of their personal adherence to the values characteristic of their native cultural background (Brockner, 2003). For example, a Korean subordinate of an American boss in the United States may not subscribe to the core Korean cultural values of collectivism and power distance and, thus, may experience giving upward feedback in the American cultural context differently from a colleague from Korea who does subscribe to core Korean values (Brockner, 2003).

DETERMINANTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL

Now that the personal and contextual factors in the code-switching framework have been de-

fined, I turn to the role of these factors in predicting psychological toll. Psychological toll refers to the depletion of psychological resources (Hobfoll, 2002) available to an individual for handling the interpersonal and intrapersonal demands of performing a cross-cultural code-switch. Performing a switch can be draining and depleting in two ways: (1) it can threaten an individual's face and sense of efficacy, resulting in embarrassment and performance anxiety and (2) it can conflict with a person's values, eliciting feelings of guilt, distress, and anxiety. Although negative emotions deplete a person's psychological resources (Morris & Feldman, 1996), recent research suggests that positive emotion may counteract this effect (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001; Isen, 1999). Instead of draining energy and resources, positive affect has been shown to broaden a person's psychological perspective (Isen & Baron, 1991), increasing capacity for creative action, problem solving, and flexible responding (Ashby, Isen & Turken, 1999). Positive affect also has been shown to be a source of resilience against the depleting effects of negative emotion (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003), augmenting an individual's psychological resources (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005).

In determining the level of psychological toll an individual experiences while code-switching, therefore, I consider both negative emotion (such as embarrassment, performance anxiety, guilt, distress, and anxiety) and positive emotion (such as pride, confidence, contentment, and excitement). These negative and positive emotions result from the individual's subjective experience and appraisal (Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1984) of the performance and identity challenges inherent in the code-switching situation. I capture this subjective experience and appraisal in three psychological states—(1) experienced performance difficulty, (2) experienced face threat, and (3) experienced identity conflict—all of which mediate the relationship between personal and contextual variables and the positive and negative emotions an individual experiences while switching (see Figure 1). Although these three psychological states may, in practice, be correlated, I describe them here independently in terms of their antecedents and consequences for experienced emotion and psychological toll.

Mediating Psychological State 1: Experienced Performance Difficulty

Experienced performance difficulty is the extent to which an individual experiences the task of producing a cross-cultural code-switch as a challenge to his or her cultural knowledge and skill (Earley & Ang, 2003). It is a function of two features of the code-switching encounter: (1) norm complexity and (2) norm discrepancy. Some interactions pose a greater set of performance challenges than others. For example, as noted earlier, the employment interview in the United States is a highly complex interaction with multiple subepisodes, each with distinct norms (Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002).

Holding complexity constant, the degree of discrepancy between the new norms and the native norms for the situation also impacts the level of performance difficulty an individual experiences. When the new norms are highly discrepant from the native norms for the situation, the individual will experience the act of switching as more difficult than when the norms are less discrepant. A job candidate from Canada in the United States will experience American interviewing norms as less discrepant from native interviewing norms than will a candidate from a culture with very different norms for the employment interview interaction (Gumperz, 1992).

Moderating the relationship between norm complexity and discrepancy and performance difficulty is the nonnative's level of cultural knowledge. Individuals with high levels of cultural knowledge will experience the new norms as less difficult to perform, even if they are complex and discrepant from the native norms. This discussion suggests the following propositions.

Proposition 1a: The more complex and discrepant the norms are in the new culture, the greater the individual's experienced performance difficulty will be while attempting a cross-cultural code-switch.

Proposition 1b: Cultural knowledge moderates the relationship between norm complexity and discrepancy and performance difficulty such that the greater the cultural knowledge, the weaker the effect of norm discrepancy and complexity will be on performance difficulty.

Experienced performance difficulty impacts the level of performance anxiety an individual experiences while performing a cross-cultural code-switch. When a cross-cultural code-switch outstrips a person's level of knowledge and skill, the code-switcher will experience performance anxiety, the unsettling sensation of self-doubt that occurs when one's skills and abilities are insufficient to meet the demands of a task (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Individuals do not, of course, always experience performance difficulty while switching. They can also experience performance efficacy. When the new norms are not highly discrepant from native cultural norms and when the interaction is not particularly complex, the individual can experience the act of switching to be within, as opposed to outside, the range of his or her skills and knowledge. In cases such as this, where the individual possesses sufficient cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003) to manage the interaction, he or she will experience confidence (Bandura, 1977, 1979; Gist, 1987; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). I therefore propose a link between experienced performance efficacy (or difficulty) and the amount of confidence (or performance anxiety) an individual will experience while performing a cross-cultural code-switch.

Proposition 2: The greater an individual's experienced performance efficacy (difficulty), the more confidence (anxiety) the individual will experience while attempting a cross-cultural code-switch.

Mediating Psychological State 2: Experienced Face Threat

In addition to challenging or outstripping an individual's skill, a switching situation can also pose a second type of performance challenge: it can threaten an individual's face. Face is the image that one presents in social interaction with relevant others (Earley, 1997; Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). The concept of face has a long history in the social sciences. Goffman is generally cited with having coined the term, suggesting that face is "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (1955: 213), and that

a person will experience embarrassment if his or her face is discredited in a particular encounter.

Experienced face threat results from four features of the cross-cultural code-switching encounter: (1) the complexity of the norms for the interaction in the new culture, (2) the degree of discrepancy between the new norms and the native cultural norms, (3) the psychological safety norms created by the audience, and (4) a person's cultural knowledge. Three of the four factors (norm complexity, norm discrepancy, and the person's level of knowledge) are also eliciting conditions for experienced performance difficulty; the added ingredient for face threat is the level of psychological safety created by the native audience in the immediate interaction. When the audience is unforgiving of cultural mistakes in a complex interaction with highly discrepant norms, the individual will not only experience performance anxiety—the feeling of being incapable of handling the performance demands of the task—but also a threat to his or her face. When the atmosphere created by the native individual or individuals in the interaction is psychologically safe, however, the non-native will likely experience a validation rather than a threat to face (Earley, 1997; Goffman, 1967). This discussion suggests the following proposition.

Proposition 3: The more complex and discrepant the norms are in the new culture, and the lower the level of psychological safety created by the native audience, the higher the individual's level of experienced face threat will be while attempting a cross-cultural code-switch. Conversely, the less complex and discrepant the norms are in the new culture, and the greater the level of psychological safety created by the native audience, the higher the individual's level of experienced face validation will be.

Prior research in psychology indicates that experienced face threat is a key eliciting condition for embarrassment (Goffman, 1956; Miller, 1996). On the one hand, when an individual behaves in a socially inappropriate manner in front of a critical audience, the individual will experience embarrassment (Goffman, 1967; Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Klass, 1990; Miller, 1996)—an

emotion “associated with violations of social conventions and the heightened concerns of social exposure and evaluation” (Keltner & Buswell, 1997: 258). On the other hand, when an individual experiences a validation of face, rather than a threat to face, the specific positive emotion is pride (Eid & Diener, 2001; Lazarus, 1991; Mascolo & Fischer, 1995), which has been defined as “the enhancement of personal worth as a result of an accomplishment” (Lazarus, 1991: 5). I therefore propose a link between face threat and embarrassment and face validation and pride.

Proposition 4: The more an individual's face is threatened (validated) from the code-switching experience, the more embarrassment (pride) the individual will feel while attempting a cross-cultural code-switch.

Mediating Psychological State 3: Experienced Identity Conflict

Alongside the task performance-based challenges an individual can experience while switching, the effect that switching has on an individual's values and identity presents a second source of emotion that influences psychological toll. According to Baumeister, Shapiro, and Tice (1985: 408), an identity conflict arises when the behavioral demands of a situation make it impossible for an individual to behave both appropriately and in accordance with his or her core system of values. Applied to cross-cultural code-switching, an experienced identity conflict occurs when the norms for a particular interaction in the new culture make it impossible for an individual to act both in a culturally appropriate manner and in a manner that honors his or her internalized system of values from the native setting—a system of values that, in part, has been shaped by the individual's native culture (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001) but that also has been shaped by other socializing forces in the person's life (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998).

Norm discrepancy sets the stage for identity conflict. The more unfamiliar and discrepant the new norms are, the more likely some aspect of these new norms will be in conflict with an individual's identity and values. The norms by which people are socialized in their native culture help shape their values and identities

(Bardi & Schwartz, 2003). When interacting with an authority figure in China, for example, a Chinese manager who subscribes to the Chinese values of high power distance and collectivism will feel comfortable and natural enacting role-based expectations of the interaction (being deferential), because engaging in these familiar behaviors reinforces the core cultural themes deeply ingrained into the person's values, beliefs, and identity. As a counterexample, consider the case of a Taiwanese manager giving her Canadian boss frank, constructive criticism as part of a 360-degree performance review. The norms for interacting with a boss in Taiwan discourage, rather than encourage, frank, open discussion of a boss's flaws and weaknesses. From a Taiwanese cultural perspective, therefore, Canadian norms for this situation would be experienced as highly discrepant from the native cultural norms and in conflict with Taiwanese cultural values regarding power distance (Hofstede, 1980; Javidan & House, 2001), communication directness/indirectness (Morris et al., 1998; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000), and assertiveness (Javidan & House, 2001).

An individual's *personal values* moderate this relationship between norm discrepancy and identity conflict. When the switcher's personal values are highly inconsistent with the new cultural norms—that is, when the behavior the individual must enact in order to act appropriately in the new setting strongly conflicts with deeply held personal values—the individual will experience high levels of identity conflict. If, however, the individual's personal values are not inconsistent (or less inconsistent) with new norms, the degree of identity conflict will decrease. If the Taiwanese manager in the previous example had *personal values* consistent with *Canadian*, rather than *Taiwanese*, cultural values (of power distance, communication directness, and assertiveness), the situation would pose less of an identity conflict than if the individual had personal values consistent with her native Taiwanese cultural background (Brockner, 2003; Brockner et al., 2001). This discussion suggests the following propositions.

Proposition 5a: The greater the norm discrepancy, the higher the likelihood of experienced identity conflict.

Proposition 5b: An individual's personal values moderate the relation-

ship between norm discrepancy and identity conflict such that when the new norms are not only discrepant but also conflict with the individual's personal values, the level of experienced identity conflict will be higher than when the norms do not strongly conflict with the individual's personal values.

Experienced identity conflict is an eliciting condition for such negative emotions as personal distress and anxiety (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Research suggests that behaving in a manner discrepant from one's self-beliefs (Elliot & Devine, 1994) or from core aspects of one's identity (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993) or personality (Little, 2000; Moskowitz & Côté, 1995) elicits internal dissonance and personal distress. Similarly, research on emotional labor has shown that being forced to publicly express emotion different from how one genuinely feels generates internal distress and anxiety (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Glomb & Tews, 2004; Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Experienced identity conflict is also an eliciting condition for guilt (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Research in psychology (Eisenberg, 2000; Ferguson & Stegge, 1998; Tangney, 1995) and organizational behavior (Folger & Skarlicki, 1998; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997) suggests that guilt results from the experience of having violated one's own internal standards (Eisenberg, 2000: 667), which here means acting in a way that conflicts with one's internalized values. Recent research on regulatory fit shows that individuals also experience guilt when they behave in a manner that violates their ingrained regulatory orientation (Carmacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003). Identity conflict experienced by an individual will therefore result in a bundle of negative emotions, including, but not necessarily limited to, guilt, anxiety, and resentment.

Even if norm discrepancies exist, the new norms do not, of course, always conflict with one's values. Consider the case of a Saudi Arabian woman engaging in a brainstorming session with male Western colleagues (Nydell, 2002). Switching behavior in this situation would entail behaving in a public, demonstrative manner that conflicts with traditional Saudi values of power distance and masculinity/femininity (Hofstede, 1980). Imagine, however, that the par-

ticular Saudi businesswoman in question does not personally adhere to these core Saudi values (and, in fact, has personal values that are more "Western" in terms of power distance and masculinity/femininity). In this case, the individual will experience more identity fit than identity conflict and, as a result, will experience herself as having to perform less of a code-switch in order to act appropriately. She will also tend to feel positive rather than negative emotions.

The specific positive emotion will depend on the level of arousal at which the affect is experienced (Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1998). At moderate levels of arousal, the specific positive emotion will be contentment, an emotion characterized by positive valence and moderate arousal. Individuals will feel contentment from the fact that their ingrained values are congruent with this new behavior rather than incongruent and dissonant. At higher levels of arousal, individuals may even experience excitement from experienced identity fit, an emotion in the positive valence/high arousal quadrant of the circumplex theory of emotion (e.g., Fredrickson, 1998, 2001; Russell & Feldman Barrett, 1999). One could imagine such a highly aroused, positive response to a situation in which an individual feels constrained in his or her native culture but in a new culture is suddenly free to behave in a manner congruent with his or her true self. I therefore propose a link between experienced conflict or fit and the level of identity-based positive and negative emotions an individual experiences while switching.

Proposition 6a: The greater an individual's experienced identity conflict, the more distress, guilt, and anxiety the individual will feel while attempting a cross-cultural code-switch.

Proposition 6b: The greater an individual's experienced identity fit, the more contentment and excitement the individual will feel while attempting a cross-cultural code-switch.

The combined set of positive and negative emotions resulting from identity conflict (or fit), face threat (or validation), and performance anxiety (or efficacy) determines the "net" level of psychological toll the individual experiences while performing the switch. Following recent

research suggesting that negative emotion and positive emotion do not lie at opposite ends of the same spectrum (e.g., Watson, Wiese, Vaidya, & Tellegen, 1999; see also Gable, Reis, & Elliot, 2003), I consider their effects independently on psychological toll.

In terms of the negative side of the equation, negative emotion, especially when experienced at high levels of arousal, is burdensome and depleting, thereby increasing psychological toll (Morris & Feldman, 1996). I therefore posit that the more negative emotions a person experiences from identity conflict, face threat, and performance anxiety, the greater the psychological toll the person will be forced to endure when attempting a switch.

Proposition 7a: The more negative emotion a person experiences while attempting a cross-cultural code-switch, the greater the psychological toll will be.

In contrast, positive emotions resulting from identity fit, face validation, and performance efficacy lessen psychological toll by augmenting, rather than depleting, a person's psychological resources (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Fredrickson et al., 2003; Isen, 1999). I therefore posit that psychological toll will be lessened as a person experiences more positive emotions.

Proposition 7b: The more positive emotion a person experiences while attempting a cross-cultural code-switch, the less the psychological toll will be.

DISCUSSION

Previous research has documented the long-term patterns and process of cultural adaptation to a foreign setting. What has received less attention, however, is a systematic analysis of the challenges people face when attempting to culturally adapt within the context of single interactions. This work contributes to such research by introducing the concept of cross-cultural code-switching and providing a framework of the psychological challenges entailed in producing a cross-cultural code-switch in an interaction characterized by different cultural norms. I have identified what I believe to be critical elements of an individual's emotional experi-

ence when attempting a switch and have articulated a model of the personal and contextual factors affecting the level of psychological toll an individual experiences while switching.

A main contribution of this approach is highlighting the important role that emotion plays in the cultural adaptation process, especially within the context of single interactions. Despite the importance of understanding the dynamics of cultural adaptation in single interactions and how emotions influence the process, little research has examined cultural adaptation at the level of the interaction or through the lens of experienced emotion. The most closely related work has been Black and Mendenhall's (1990) application of Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977, 1979, 2001) as a framework for understanding why cross-cultural training works—the argument being that individuals learn new behavior through modeling and mimicry. When faced with the demands of an actual cross-cultural interaction, individuals draw on their cognitively encoded knowledge to produce the culturally appropriate response.

Researchers have also recently applied cognitive script (Abelson, 1981) and schema (Fiske & Taylor, 1991) theory to understand why cross-cultural negotiators achieve lower joint gains (Brett & Okumura, 1998) and to describe how foreign managers perceive local subordinates and vice versa (Shaw, 1990). While the cognitive behavioral lens is clearly useful for understanding certain facets of cultural adaptation, it offers an incomplete picture of the comprehensive challenges individuals face when adapting their behavior in foreign cultural interactions. Indeed, in describing limitations of his own cognitive behavioral training approach, the Cultural Assimilator (Bhawuk, 1998, 2001; Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis, 1971), Triandis has suggested that "if the interaction is anxiety producing, then the trained subject may fall back upon old responses with a new tenacity" (Weldon, Carston, Rissman, Slobodin, & Triandis, 1975: 309). Other commentators have acknowledged the limits of a cognitive behavioral approach, arguing that even with a mastery of foreign scripts and schema, individuals can still resist cultural adaptation (Bird, Osland, Mendenhall, & Schneider, 1999) because of "psychological limitations" (Selmer, 2000, 2001; Torbiorn, 1988) or because of the "devastating psychological consequences" (Sanchez et al., 2000: 100) that

can result from mutual identification with dual systems of cultural meaning. In this paper I have attempted to offer a fresh yet complementary perspective to the management literature on cultural adaptation by joining the cognitive behavioral side of adaptation emphasized in previous research with a focus on the emotional dynamics of cultural adaptation, an angle emphasized in recent work on decision making (Anderson, 2003; Folger & Skarlicki, 1998; Loewenstein, 1996; Loewenstein, Weber, Hsee, & Welch, 2001; Mellers, 2000) and behavior (Ashkanasy, Zerbe, & Hartel, 2002; Fineman, 2000; Huy, 1999; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

In highlighting the important role that emotions play in determining an individual's experience in attempting to switch cultural behavior, I also contribute to, as well as distinguish myself from, recent discussions of cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley & Peterson, 2004). According to Earley and Ang (2003), cultural intelligence refers to a person's capacity to successfully adapt to new cultural contexts. A person's degree of cultural intelligence is a function of three different sets of capabilities: (1) cognitive capabilities (cognitive awareness of cultural differences and the metacognitive ability to understand that one is in a situation of cultural difference), (2) motivational capabilities (the magnitude and direction of energy applied toward learning about and functioning in cross-cultural situations), and (3) behavioral capabilities (having the aptitude to perform new skills properly in a foreign cultural setting). Whereas the cultural intelligence approach is an individually focused construct, capturing individual differences in the capacity to adapt successfully to new cultural contexts, cross-cultural code-switching refers to a behavioral act—an act whose difficulty increases or decreases as a function of such individual differences as cultural intelligence but also as a function of various contextual features of the code-switching encounter.

By focusing on the emotional challenges entailed in adapting behavior in specific foreign interactions, the cross-cultural code-switching framework complements the cultural intelligence approach by examining a facet of cultural adaptation in specific interactions—the emotional challenges of cultural adaptation—that is not an explicit part of the cultural intelligence framework. An individual might have a cogni-

tive awareness of cultural differences, be motivated to use them, and, ordinarily speaking, have a high level of ability at adapting behavior across cultures but be unable to cope with the emotional challenges of switching behavior in a particular encounter. Interestingly, although cultural intelligence researchers make a point to distinguish the cultural intelligence construct from other forms of intelligence, such as emotional intelligence (see, for example, Earley & Ang, 2003: 7–8), my discussion of the emotional challenges entailed in cross-cultural code-switching suggests that there may be an important intersection between the two intelligence constructs. In order to benefit from one's cultural intelligence in a highly emotional intercultural interaction, individuals may need emotional intelligence. Only by coping with threats to competence and identity, and the emotions they generate, can an individual successfully produce culturally appropriate behavior that will achieve the interpersonal benefits associated with successful cultural accommodation.

In addition to highlighting the important role that emotion plays in the cultural adaptation process, my approach makes a second contribution in its distinct focus on the interaction as the unit of analysis. Although organizational researchers have long been interested in understanding patterns and processes of cultural adaptation over time, few have examined the phenomenon at the level of the interaction. In constructing a model of the emotional challenges involved in producing an effective cultural code-switch, I join a short list of researchers interested in the importance of single interactions in the cultural adjustment process (Adair, Okumura, & Brett, 2001; Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Brett & Okumura, 1998; Shaw, 1990).

A third contribution of this approach is that it offers a blueprint for organizations to understand the psychological challenges that individuals face in adapting behavior in business interactions and therefore to make more informed choices for training and selection, as well as for individuals to strategically intervene to influence the cultural adaptation process and outcomes. Acknowledging the importance of understanding the processes and dynamics of cultural adaptation over the long term, I suggest that it is also important for organizations and individuals to understand the challenges and dynamics of cultural adaptation in single interactions. Not

only do single interactions have great importance in and of themselves for organizational and individual welfare but they also compound over time to affect long-term success of an expatriate assignment. Understanding interaction-specific dynamics of cultural adaptation is also critical for organizations to make informed choices about selection for cross-cultural assignment and for training individuals to overcome challenges of cultural adaptation that, as my model suggests, vary not only across individuals but also across interactions. By using this model as a conceptual blueprint for targeting interventions and for guiding selection, organizations can make more informed choices about their international investments in human capital.

Future Research

The model and perspective developed here suggests many exciting directions for future research. One avenue would be to test the dynamics of the model outlined in this paper, assessing how each set of variables impacts a performer's experience and examining the interaction among the variables and the relative weight each bears in determining the level of psychological toll an individual experiences while switching. In addition, future work should empirically examine the relationships between the psychological toll experienced during an attempted switch and the effectiveness of that switch, by which I mean behavior that accommodates expectations for appropriate behavior in the new setting. Understanding this relationship is important for understanding the conditions under which code-switchers can achieve the benefits associated with cultural accommodation that I outlined at the beginning of the paper.

I assumed here that an individual is willing to attempt a switch in a given cross-cultural situation, which, of course, is not always the case. Future research should examine the conditions under which an individual will be willing to attempt a code-switch in the first place when presented with the opportunity to do so. Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), both of which argue that choice or intention is shaped by a combination of motivation and ability, would be useful guides for variable selection and hypoth-

esis generation. For example, it is likely that individuals will be more motivated to attempt a switch when they perceive that the instrumental and psychological benefits of switching outweigh the costs. Individuals also will likely be more motivated to attempt a switch when they perceive the situation to be one that requires switching (as opposed to one in which switching is optional). Furthermore, individuals will likely be more willing to attempt a switch when they perceive themselves as having the ability to do so successfully.

The connection between switching in single events and long-term patterns of cultural adaptation is another interesting direction for future research. Mischel and Shoda (1995) have provided a useful guide for such analysis; in an empirical test of their situation-specific theory of personality, they found that behavioral patterns surfaced for individuals in like situations—that is, interactions with shared dimensions. Future research on cross-cultural code-switching and cultural adjustment could fruitfully adopt a similar methodological strategy in order to assess individuals' distinct situation-specific profiles of cultural adjustment over time.

Understanding the ways in which individuals learn to cope with the psychological toll entailed in switching over time is another promising direction for future research. For instance, individuals can expend so much emotional energy and resources during a switch that the available capacity for handling subsequent interactions is compromised—even when the actual switch itself is performed successfully. This ironic effect is reminiscent of Hackman's (1987) work on team effectiveness, in which teams could perform well during a given task but, in the process, reduced their ability to work together in the future. These long-term effects of psychological toll are especially important when the switching situation is part of a larger interaction (e.g., one of many negotiations, one of several client meetings). For example, an American manager may successfully switch behavior within the context of a formal negotiation in Japan, but the act of doing so may deplete the individual's psychological resources, ironically handicapping effective functioning in subsequent phases of the interaction. Such an arduous switching experience may also reduce the

chances the individual will attempt a switch in that situation the next time around.

Future research might also explore the ways in which additional individual differences affect how an individual subjectively experiences the act of cross-cultural code-switching. Two individual differences stand out as particularly relevant: self-monitoring and self-efficacy. *Self-monitoring* refers to the extent to which an individual observes, regulates, and controls his or her public appearance (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). High self-monitors tend to strategically cultivate their public appearances (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000: 530), whereas low self-monitors tend to display consistent behavior across social contexts. High self-monitors may experience the act of cross-cultural code-switching differently and have different assessments of switching's costs and benefits, resulting in a potentially lower threshold for attempting a switch than that for low self-monitors. Individual differences in *self-efficacy* beliefs (Bandura, 1997; Gist, 1987; Gist & Mitchell, 1992), especially within the circumscribed domain of cross-cultural interactions, may also impact an individual's decision to switch, as well as the individual's actual experience of switching, particularly the performance side of switching. Both self-efficacy and self-monitoring have been shown to impact the experience of cultural adjustment over time (Harrison, Chadwick, & Scales, 1996), and future research should test their effects within interaction-specific cultural adaptation.

Future research might also examine the influence of other personality variables, such as neuroticism, on code-switching processes and outcomes. For example, because of greater anxiety about uncertain situations, individuals high in neuroticism are likely to experience more anxiety in the code-switching process than individuals low in neuroticism. In addition, future research might examine whether cultural variation in the propensity to experience face threat influences a person's experiences switching cultural codes. It is possible that people with an interdependent self-construal may be particularly sensitive to face threat and may experience shame in addition to embarrassment from face violations in the code-switching realm (Kim & Nam, 1998).

Future research might also examine the interesting phenomenon of bicultural code-switch-

ing, particularly among individuals with oppositional versus integrated cultural identities (cf. Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002). Biculturals who experience their dual cultural identities as oppositional may exhibit psychological reactance (Brehm, 1966) when faced with a situation demanding cultural adaptation away from their "preferred" identity. In contrast, biculturals with integrated identities may easily and seamlessly switch from one to the other, with little effort or complication.

Finally, future research might also explore how the model of cross-cultural code-switching at the national level developed here applies to code-switching across organizational cultures, or even across functional cultures within the same organization (e.g., from marketing to R&D). Although developed for the case of crossing national cultures, the construct and the model here would likely apply to a variety of other instances in which individuals from one culture (national, regional, organizational, functional) must learn to function effectively outside their "native culture" and outside their behavioral and emotional comfort zone.

Implications for Practice

For organizations, the cross-cultural code-switching framework can be a useful tool for personnel selection. Certain interactions in a foreign culture may be more or less challenging for certain expatriates, given their particular skills, tendencies, and values. For example, in selecting staff to fill an expatriate sales position, an organization could consider the fit between the demands of the interaction in the new culture and the characteristics of the employee (Bagozzi, Verbeke, & Gavino, 2003), since the same interaction type that poses performance-based and identity-based challenges for one individual may not pose these challenges for another individual. Further, for the same individual, different types of interactions may pose different identity-based and performance-based challenges. The cross-cultural code-switching approach therefore offers a useful lens for staffing expatriate assignments, alongside traditional means of staffing selection, such as general personality attributes, skills, and competencies (see, for example, Jordan & Cartwright, 1998, and Tung, 1987).

The cross-cultural code-switching framework can also help organizations tailor cross-cultural training to meet an employee's specific needs. Recent work has emphasized the importance of specificity in cross-cultural training, such as training individuals about a foreign culture as they experience it rather than before (Mendenhall & Stahl, 2000). The cross-cultural code-switching perspective developed here suggests that training can be more efficient if it is focused more specifically on training interventions that help individuals navigate the dynamics of specific interactions (e.g., interacting with a boss) or classes of interactions of the same ilk (such as interacting with authority figures). Training can also be tailored to individuals according to the challenges they face with the identity or performance aspects of switching, since each individual's profile will differ. By using the framework described here as a blueprint for intervention and learning, organizations will have a mental map for doing so in a targeted fashion that accounts for the emotional dynamics set forth in this paper.

CONCLUSION

It has become axiomatic that, in order to reap the benefits of a global economy, organizations need to be able to function smoothly and successfully across cultural boundaries. Yet organizations themselves are not the entities participating in business meetings, delivering constructive criticism, managing conflicts, forging international networks, managing international teams, and conducting cross-national negotiations. In order for organizations to succeed, the individuals who work on their behalf must be adept at functioning successfully in foreign cultural settings, particularly in foreign cultural interactions. By providing insight into the emotional side of adapting behavior in foreign business interactions, the model presented here offers a framework to help guide research and practice in this important area.

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