

WHEN DOES CROSS-CULTURAL MOTIVATION ENHANCE EXPATRIATE EFFECTIVENESS? A MULTILEVEL INVESTIGATION OF THE MODERATING ROLES OF SUBSIDIARY SUPPORT AND CULTURAL DISTANCE

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Departing from the emphasis on individual-level stress processes in prior expatriate research, we develop a multilevel model of expatriate “cross-cultural motivation and effectiveness” (motivation and effectiveness pertaining to cross-cultural contexts) that incorporates the influences of foreign subsidiary-level attributes. Analyses of multi-source and multilevel data collected from 556 expatriates in 31 foreign subsidiaries indicated that expatriate cross-cultural motivation was more positively related to work adjustment—and that work adjustment was more likely to mediate the positive relationship between cross-cultural motivation and job performance—when expatriates were assigned to foreign subsidiaries characterized by lower levels of subsidiary support and cultural distance.

The continuing globalization of the 21st century economy has led work organizations to rely heavily on managerial international assignments to better compete in the global marketplace (Harrison, Shaffer, & Bhaskar-Shrinivas, 2004). However, international assignments require expatriates to adapt to novel and complex work and nonwork contexts (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991; Shin, Morgeson, & Campion, 2007), and such challenging assignments are often associated with low levels of expatriate adjustment (i.e., psychological comfort and familiarity with a new environment) (Black, 1990: 122) and concomitant financial and personnel costs (Sanchez, Spector, & Cooper, 2000). It is

therefore not surprising that a plethora of research has focused on the antecedents of expatriate adjustment (for reviews, see Harrison et al. [2004] and Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, and Luk [2005]). However, despite progress, many questions regarding drivers of expatriate effectiveness remain. According to Harrison et al., the bulk of expatriate theories and research “tend to revolve around the stress of adjustment, and they tend to concentrate exclusively on expatriates themselves, rather than other elements of their social environment” (2004: 236).

In other words, the focus of prior expatriate research on individual-level and stress-related phenomena shows two key limitations. First, stress-focused research has primarily examined factors that reduce the threats inherent in global assignments and enhance expatriates’ well-being and adjustment. However, to more fully understand expatriates’ effectiveness, it is important to also consider their motivation to proactively pursue international assignment goals and opportunities. Although recent research has begun to explore the role of expatriate motivation (e.g., Harrison & Shaf-

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fer, 2005; Wang & Takeuchi, 2007), more research is needed to clarify whether, how, and when motivation processes contribute to expatriate effectiveness beyond stress-oriented processes. Second, the individual-level focus adopted by most prior expatriate research has resulted in a limited understanding of the complex ways in which person and situation factors combine to influence expatriate success. Thus, *multilevel* research can better address questions such as whether different expatriates adapt and perform differently within similar foreign subsidiaries,¹ and whether subsidiary-level attributes exert unique contextual influences on expatriate-level processes (cf. Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Because firms often assign multiple expatriates to each foreign subsidiary (cf. Kraimer & Wayne, 2004), understanding how individual- and subsidiary-level factors together influence expatriate effectiveness should thus help organizations to better manage their expatriate selection and assignment processes. Accordingly, the present research extends prior work by adopting a *multilevel, motivation-oriented approach* to delineate factors that influence two important indicators of expatriate effectiveness: *work adjustment* (i.e., the extent to which expatriates become psychologically comfortable handling different aspects of their work assignments) and, consequently, *job performance* during the assignments.

Our study contributes to the existing expatriate literature in three ways. First, our focus on motivation departs from the dominant emphasis on stress and well-being in prior research (Harrison et al., 2004). Although previous expatriate research has examined motivational constructs such as work self-efficacy (i.e., belief in task-specific capabilities [Harrison et al., 2004]), there is little research on the role of motivational processes in intercultural encounters (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007; Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008). Moreover, the limited amount of research on expatriate motivation to date has focused on adjustment and attitudinal outcomes (e.g., Harrison, Chadwick, & Scales, 1996). Addressing this gap, we based our conceptualization of “cross-cultural motivation” (motivation pertaining to cross-cultural contexts) on recent research by Ang and colleagues (Ang et al., 2007; Earley & Ang, 2003) and delineate mediating and

moderating mechanisms that explain *how* and *when* cross-cultural motivation promotes expatriate effectiveness.

Second, following trait activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000), we develop a *cross-level* model in which contextual boundary conditions moderate the extent to which expatriate motivation promotes expatriate effectiveness. According to trait activation theory, a trait is more likely to be activated—and therefore expressed—in “trait-relevant” situations, which signal to individuals that expressing the focal trait is both important and appropriate (Tett & Burnett, 2003: 502). Thus, a trait is more likely to translate into meaningful differences in work behaviors, and hence performance, in situations that are more amenable to, and accepting of, the expression of the trait. Although trait activation theory focuses mainly on personality traits, Tett and Burnett (2003) indicated that the theory is also applicable to motivational attributes and their resulting motivational expression and thus can serve as a useful framework for delineating contextual moderators of the relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment.

Using trait activation theory as a framework, we examine the contextual influences on expatriate outcomes of (1) a foreign subsidiary’s *support*, defined as the extent to which the subsidiary helps expatriates adapt to their assignments and provides them with career and financial support (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004), and (2) the foreign subsidiary’s *cultural distance*, defined as the extent to which the culture of the host country in which the subsidiary is located is novel or different from expatriates’ home countries (Shenkar, 2001). To date, most studies have examined support and cultural distance as individual-level perceptions of stressors (e.g., Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). On the one hand, this individual-level focus is reasonable because individuals’ perception and appraisal of stressors can exert strong influences on stress-related outcomes (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Kasl, 1987). On the other hand, individuals’ perceptions can confound individual attributes (e.g., emotional stability) with situational attributes of stressors and fail to capture the broader contextual influences emanating from situational attributes (Bliese & Jex, 2002; Johns, 2006). Although we recognize that other situational variables can also impact expatriate outcomes (cf. Black et al., 1991), drawing on trait activation theory, we argue that foreign subsidiary-level support and cultural distance are especially likely to serve as contextual boundary conditions for individual-level motivational effects, because they capture dif-

¹ We use the term “foreign subsidiary” to mean a standalone establishment or branch of a firm located in a country different from an expatriate’s home country (cf. Osterman, 1994). Since our study examines one foreign subsidiary per host country, we treat the host country and foreign subsidiary levels interchangeably.

ferent aspects of the complexities and challenges inherent in international assignments.

Finally, we also propose that a multilevel perspective can help to further explain how motivational and stress processes uniquely contribute to expatriate effectiveness. From a stress perspective, prior research has shown that individual-level perceptions of support and cultural distance are most likely to directly relate to expatriate work adjustment. In contrast, the new motivation perspective we develop here suggests that subsidiary-level support and cultural distance are most likely to serve as boundary conditions that moderate the extent to which expatriate cross-cultural motivation relates to work adjustment and performance. Thus, we seek to demonstrate how the motivation perspective we advance contributes to the understanding of expatriate effectiveness above and beyond explanations based on stress-related processes.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

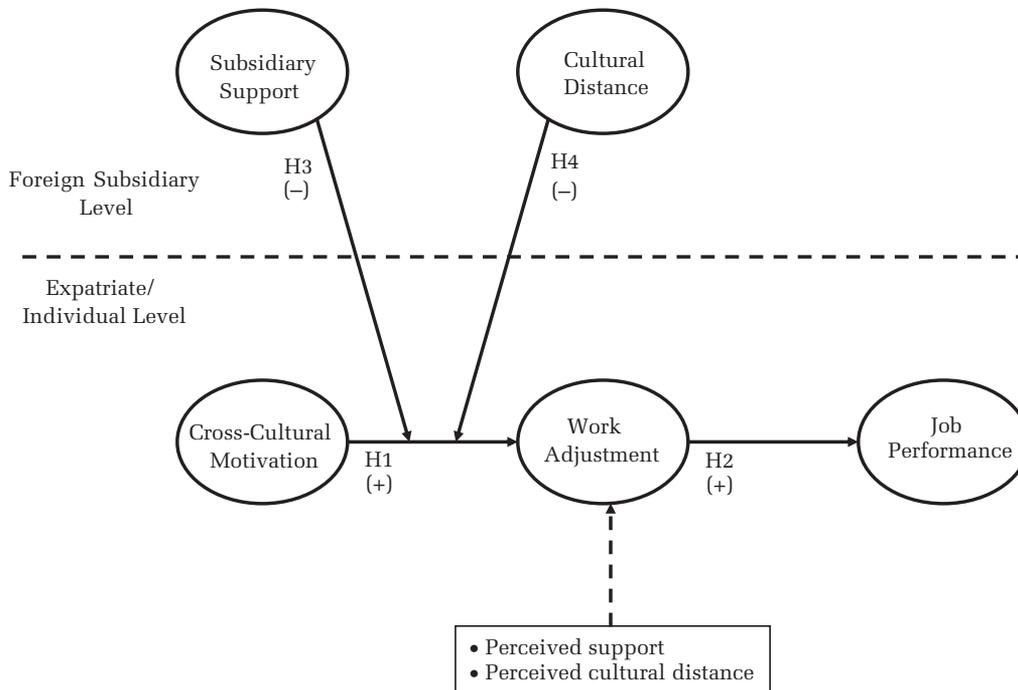
In the sections that follow, we delineate a multilevel model of expatriate effectiveness. As shown in Figure 1, we propose that work adjustment mediates the individual-level relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and job performance. We also propose that two contextual attributes—foreign subsidiary-level support and cultural distance—moderate the relationship between

expatriate cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment. Finally, our model also controls for the direct relationships of individual-level perceptions of both support and cultural distance with work adjustment, which have been theorized and supported in prior stress-focused expatriate research (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005), to tease out our proposed motivational processes from stress processes.

Expatriate Effectiveness

Although previous research has focused on multiple indicators of expatriate effectiveness, two of the most critical indicators are expatriate work adjustment and job performance (Harrison et al., 2004; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006). These two indicators represent distinct facets of expatriate effectiveness. Specifically, work adjustment captures the extent to which expatriates subjectively feel comfortable handling assignment duties (e.g., facilitating work meetings, negotiating with vendors). By contrast, expatriates' job performance captures the extent to which expatriates actually carry out their work assignments and duties in an effective manner. Arguably, from the perspectives of both expatriate and organization, overall job performance is the most important and direct measure of expatriate effectiveness. However, as we explain below, work adjustment

FIGURE 1
Hypothesized Model



can also serve as an intermediate index of expatriate effectiveness, which holds the potential to promote expatriate job performance and, further, mediate the relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and job performance.

Expatriate Cross-Cultural Motivation and Effectiveness

International assignments are quite challenging and require expatriates to devote substantial effort to adapt and perform effectively, in part because of the different cultural context of the foreign operation. As such, an expatriate's motivation pertaining to cross-cultural contexts may play an important role in adjustment and performance in an international assignment. Motivation consists of the psychological processes that determine the direction, intensity, and persistence of action (Kanfer, 1990), and it involves the processes by which individuals marshal personal resources (e.g., skills, time, attention) to choose and accomplish work-related goals. The work motivation literature has identified proximal cognitive predictors of motivational processes, such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and intrinsic motivation (i.e., interest in a task) (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989). More specifically, employees who are both more efficacious and intrinsically interested in their tasks are more likely to actively engage in work-related tasks as well as devote more effort and time toward task accomplishment (Kanfer, 1990; Kanfer et al., 2008).

Drawing on work motivation theories, Earley and Ang (2003; Ang et al., 2007) developed the concept of *motivational cultural intelligence*, which captures both cross-cultural self-efficacy (i.e., belief in the ability to be effective in culturally diverse environments) and cross-cultural intrinsic motivation (i.e., intrinsic interest in other cultures). Although our conceptualization of cross-cultural motivation follows this work on motivational cultural intelligence, we use the term "cross-cultural motivation" to refer to this construct to be consistent with our theoretical focus on motivation, rather than actual capabilities. Indeed, cognitive theories of motivation (e.g., Bandura, 1997), on which motivational cultural intelligence is based, have made explicit distinctions between how people conceive of their task environment and perceive their ability to handle tasks on the one hand, and actual task-related capabilities on the other.

Ang et al. (2007: 338) proposed that more cross-culturally motivated individuals "direct attention and energy toward cross-cultural situations based on intrinsic interest . . . and confidence in their

cross-cultural effectiveness" (2007: 338). That is, the self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation dimensions of cross-cultural motivation combine to produce motivational effects in cross-cultural situations. In this regard, our conceptualization of cross-cultural motivation is similar to that of other multidimensional motivational constructs (e.g., psychological empowerment [Spreitzer, 1995]), in which related motivational dimensions have been combined together into "whole" constructs, rather than treated separately as their parts, to increase both conceptual parsimony and predictive validity. Our conceptualization, drawing from previous motivation research, implies that individuals' motivation to pursue challenges in cross-cultural environments are more completely and cogently represented when cross-cultural self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation are considered together.

In line with prior work on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1989), and motivational cultural intelligence (Ang et al., 2007), we propose that expatriates with higher cross-cultural motivation will be more likely to proactively direct and sustain efforts toward adjusting and adapting to their international assignments. For example, expatriates with higher levels of cross-cultural motivation are more likely to marshal the needed personal resources to overcome challenges likely to arise during the assignments and achieve their assignment goals. In addition, because of their greater efficacy and interest in adapting to another culture, cross-culturally motivated expatriates are likely more willing to engage in different ways of working in their host country job (e.g., getting accustomed to different work hours or adopting different leadership styles). As such, we expect expatriate cross-cultural motivation to be positively related to work adjustment in international assignments. Although there exists the possibility that work adjustment also reciprocally influences subsequent expatriate motivation (e.g., Harrison & Shaffer, 2005), given that cross-cultural motivation is not specific to a particular international assignment or any one cultural context, it is less likely to be influenced by work adjustment in a single international assignment. In contrast, there is evidence that motivational attributes similar to cross-cultural motivation that generalize across task settings can positively promote adjustment processes (Chen & Klimoski, 2003). Further, there is more specific empirical evidence that motivational cultural intelligence positively relates to expatriates' work adjustment (Ang et al., 2007). Thus, we predict:

Hypothesis 1. Expatriate cross-cultural motivation positively relates to expatriate work adjustment.

Beyond initial evidence that cross-cultural motivation related positively to work adjustment, Ang et al. (2007) also found that cross-cultural motivation related positively to job performance. However, prior research has yet to empirically examine the mediating mechanisms through which expatriate cross-cultural motivation might promote expatriate job performance. Although researchers have proposed that work adjustment might mediate between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and job performance (e.g., Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Kim, Kirkman, & Chen, 2008), such mediated relationships have yet to be empirically verified.

According to Black et al. (1991), expatriates experience greater work adjustment when they have a clear understanding of their work roles and are able to recognize linkages among multifaceted demands of their international assignments. That is, relative to expatriates with lower work adjustment, expatriates with higher work adjustment have adapted to work-related requirements posed by their international assignments as well as better learned how to carry out their assignments more efficiently and effectively. Further, better-adjusted expatriates are more likely to perform more effectively, because they are more comfortable with various aspects of their jobs (Cohen, 1980) and therefore are less fatigued and have more personal resources available to devote to accomplishing work tasks (Harrison & Shaffer, 2005; Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001). Thus, work adjustment is likely to be a key reason why expatriates with higher cross-cultural motivation perform their jobs more effectively.

Although no study to date has tested whether or not work adjustment mediates between cross-cultural motivation and expatriate job performance, Ang et al. (2007) did find that work adjustment was more strongly related to performance than was cross-cultural motivation. In addition, Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis showed that work adjustment is one of the most proximal predictors of overall expatriate performance ($\rho = .49$). Also, Wang and Takeuchi's (2007) study of expatriates in China provides indirect support for our expectation that work adjustment mediates between cross-cultural motivation and job performance in that they showed that work adjustment mediated between broader motivational traits (i.e., goal orientations) and expatriates' job performance. Accordingly, we predict:

Hypothesis 2. Expatriate work adjustment mediates the positive relationship between expa-

triate cross-cultural motivation and expatriate job performance.

When Is Cross-Cultural Motivation Most Beneficial?

Hypotheses 1 and 2 serve as a basis for our more important contribution, namely, the delineation of cross-level contextual moderators of the relationship between expatriates' cross-cultural motivation and their effectiveness—an aspect that has received almost no attention in the expatriate literature to date. In particular, building on trait activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000), we posit that certain contextual aspects of foreign subsidiaries can moderate the extent to which expatriate cross-cultural motivation promotes work adjustment, and therefore job performance.

According to Hypotheses 1 and 2, cross-cultural motivation triggers effort and proactive behaviors that enable expatriates to deal effectively with the challenges inherent in international assignments. However, these hypotheses rest on an assumption that (1) substantial effort on the part of expatriates, through which personal resources get allocated, is needed to overcome assignment challenges, and (2) expatriates have the appropriate resources and capabilities to meet assignment challenges (i.e., they know how to behave in a manner consistent with host country cultural norms). Following trait activation theory, we argue below that subsidiary support and cultural distance represent situations that affect the extent to which the effort triggered by expatriate cross-cultural motivation is needed or appropriate, respectively, and hence capture situations that differ in their relevance to the expression of cross-cultural motivation. Moreover, we propose that subsidiary support and cultural distance represent different aspects of the challenges international assignments pose to expatriates and that the effort triggered by cross-cultural motivation can help expatriates overcome some contextual challenges (i.e., low subsidiary support), but not others (i.e., high cultural distance). To more appropriately capture the contextual influences proposed in trait activation theory, we focus on subsidiary support and cultural distance as foreign subsidiary-level attributes, as opposed to individual-level perceptions of these situational variables (cf. Bliese & Jex, 2002; Johns, 2006).

Moderating Role of Subsidiary Support

Given the complexity inherent in international assignments, it is not surprising that some expatriate theories and research have addressed the role of

organizational support in expatriate effectiveness (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Black et al., 1991; Harrison et al., 2004). According to Kraimer and Wayne (2004), three dimensions of organizational support are most relevant to expatriate success: (1) *adjustment support* (i.e., helping expatriates and their families adapt in their international assignment), (2) *career support* (i.e., offering career-related guidance), and (3) *financial support* (i.e., providing monetary incentives and assistance). Kraimer and Wayne (2004) found that individual perceptions of adjustment, career, and financial support are directly and positively related to expatriates' adjustment and commitment. Accordingly, we conceptualize subsidiary support as a multidimensional construct consisting of adjustment, career, and financial support dimensions. That is, the three dimensions more fully capture overall subsidiary support than does each dimension individually.

However, we depart from prior research by conceptualizing and operationalizing support at the subsidiary level, as opposed to the individual level, of analysis. This focus on subsidiary-level support is consistent with previous research showing that employee perceptions of organizational support can emerge to form organization- (McAllister & Bigley, 2002) and subsidiary-level (Takeuchi, Chen, & Lepak, 2009) *support climate*. Employees in the same subsidiary likely share similar perceptions of organizational support because they are exposed to common management practices that shape perceptions of support, which often differ across work units and subsidiaries—even those belonging to the same organization (Guzzo, Noonan, & Elron, 1994; Takeuchi et al., 2009). When expatriates share the perception that their subsidiary is supportive, they are also more likely to adopt norms that reinforce mutual support as well as share the expectation that supporting others in their subsidiary will be both valued and rewarded by management (cf. Takeuchi et al., 2009). Thus, a shared sense of subsidiary support among expatriates may capture a broad network of “support providers” that includes formal support-related policies, practices, and procedures provided by the organization, as well as more informal support from other expatriates and local staff. Such a broad network of support can influence expatriate motivation and adjustment processes beyond individual-level perceptions of support, which may not necessarily be shared among members of a subsidiary.

Following trait activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003), we propose that less supportive subsidiaries increase the salience of trait-relevant cues and represent situations that are more relevant to cross-

cultural motivation because they require expatriates to exert greater effort to overcome lack of support from the subsidiary. That is, in line with the first assumption behind Hypotheses 1 and 2 (that the greater amount of effort allocated by more motivated expatriates is needed for better work adjustment), we propose that expatriates in an unsupportive subsidiary must allocate greater effort in order to adjust. Conversely, expatriates in highly supportive subsidiaries can adjust more easily, irrespective of how much effort they put forth.

For example, expatriates in supportive subsidiaries receive both formal and informal career- and adjustment-related assistance well into their assignments, which helps them troubleshoot or even avoid problems (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Moreover, expatriates in more supportive subsidiaries have access to greater financial resources for managing work and nonwork problems (e.g., they can hire better local staff, purchase better equipment or materials, offset additional personal costs associated with their relocation). Highly supportive contexts may also reduce the number of cues that signal to the expatriate that adaptation-facilitating behaviors and personal effort are necessary. In contrast, expatriates in less supportive subsidiaries must exert substantially more personal effort to handle assignment challenges, as they receive less assistance from their organization and colleagues. Thus, in effect, higher subsidiary support can substitute for the effort expatriates otherwise would have to exert to adjust more effectively to their jobs.

It is possible that higher levels of subsidiary support can also serve as a stress-buffering mechanism, enabling expatriates to allocate more effort toward accomplishing job-related tasks (cf. Bacharach, Bamberger, & Doveh, 2008), thus enhancing the relationship between cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment. However, all expatriates, irrespective of their level of cross-cultural motivation, may come to realize they need to devote less effort to adjust effectively in more supportive subsidiaries. Hence, differences in expatriate cross-cultural motivation are less likely to matter or lead to rewarding outcomes when foreign subsidiaries are more supportive. Accordingly, we posit that, by reducing the amount of effort needed for expatriates to meet assignment tasks and goals, more supportive subsidiaries provide fewer opportunities for the expression of individual differences in cross-cultural motivation. Thus, higher levels of subsidiary support are likely to attenuate the positive relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment. Although we are not aware of prior empirical research examining the moderating influence of supportive contexts,

the theoretical rationale stated above leads us to hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3. Foreign subsidiary support moderates the relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and expatriate work adjustment in such a way that cross-cultural motivation relates more positively to work adjustment when a foreign subsidiary is less, rather than more, supportive.

Moderating Role of Subsidiary Cultural Distance

Researchers have recognized that foreign subsidiaries differ in the extent to which they require expatriates to adapt to novel cultural environments (Harrison et al., 2004). These differences are captured in what has been termed *cultural distance* (Shenkar, 2001), a construct that denotes differences between a host and home country in basic aspects of culture, including core values, beliefs, customs, and rituals, as well as legal, political, and economic systems (Adler, 2008; Hofstede, 1980). According to models of expatriate adjustment, adjustment is more challenging when the host country is more culturally distant (Black et al., 1991; Ronen & Shenkar, 1985). In the current study, we conceptualize cultural distance as a foreign subsidiary-level construct to capture the collective consensus of expatriates that the host country in which their subsidiary resides is culturally different from their own home countries.

Collective consensus regarding subsidiary-level cultural distance can emerge via two mechanisms. First, the unique, idiosyncratic cultural attributes of a host country can make it very distinct from other countries in the world, causing expatriates from even a disparate set of home countries to agree that the host country is culturally quite different from their own. For instance, the prevalence of *guanxi* in China (Chen & Peng, 2008) might be so unique that most expatriates (irrespective of their place of origin) might agree that China is culturally distinct from their respective home countries. Second, the composition of the expatriates in the host country might be such that the majority are from home countries that are culturally quite distinct from the host country (e.g., a majority of expatriates in a subsidiary located in collectivistic South Korea might be from individualistic home countries such as Canada and the U.S.), leading to a shared collective sense of high cultural distance among the expatriates in that subsidiary.

This emergent subsidiary-level cultural distance created by such potential combinations of facilitating conditions captures the novelty or uniqueness

of a host country's culture through the collective lens of the expatriates in a subsidiary. When subsidiary-level cultural distance is high, it indicates not only that the expatriates in that subsidiary are working in a culturally novel work environment that is inherently difficult for them to comprehend, but also that they lack easy means of learning the nuances of that culturally unique work environment from other expatriates. This is likely because those other expatriates are also potentially struggling with the cultural novelty of that environment. Thus, we argue that subsidiary-level cultural distance captures the cultural novelty facing an expatriate more comprehensively than do individual perceptions of cultural distance. That is, given that individual perceptions only represent the idiosyncratic situation of one expatriate, they might not represent the cultural context in the subsidiary in ways that subsidiary-level cultural distance does.

Unlike the moderating influence of subsidiary support, the moderating influence of cultural distance suggests two competing hypotheses. On the one hand, it is possible that cultural distance amplifies the relationship between cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment (cf. Ang et al., 2007), because the greater cultural challenges inherent in more culturally distant subsidiaries require more cross-cultural motivation. This argument is similar to our arguments pertaining to subsidiary support. For instance, more cross-culturally motivated expatriates would likely work harder to overcome the greater cultural challenges posed by more culturally distant subsidiaries (e.g., adapt their leadership style to fit local cultural norms), which, in turn, would promote adjustment in such subsidiaries.

On the other hand, recall that the second assumption behind our first hypothesis is that expatriates have the appropriate personal resources needed to meet assignment challenges, and hence allocating more personal resources toward adjustment is beneficial for them. In line with this assumption, we submit that expatriates in more culturally distant subsidiaries are *less* likely to possess the appropriate cultural knowledge and skills needed to meet cultural norms and expectations, and, therefore, expatriate cross-cultural motivation may not be sufficient to overcome the challenges inherent in more culturally distant subsidiaries. That is, cultural distance is more likely to *attenuate*, rather than amplify, the relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment.

Specifically, when encountering a more culturally distant situation, expatriates are less likely to know how to behave in a culturally appropriate

manner, and thus the expression of cross-cultural motivation might not always yield desired results. For example, a highly motivated expatriate from a “lower power distance” culture (i.e., one in which status and hierarchy are considered only moderately important), such as the United States, in an ardent but misplaced attempt to perform well on the job, may inadvertently bypass higher-level authority when gathering information from and assigning tasks to local employees. Such actions would violate cultural norms in subsidiaries located in a high power distance culture such as Brazil (Javidan, Dorfman, de Luque, & House, 2006). In contrast, such behaviors by a similarly motivated and enthusiastic U.S. American expatriate may be seen as highly appropriate—and hence will be more valued and rewarded—in subsidiaries located in other lower power distance cultures such as Canada. Thus, from a trait activation perspective (Tett & Burnett, 2003), we argue that the higher levels of effort allocated by more cross-culturally motivated expatriates are less likely to result in culturally appropriate behavior that elicits positive feedback that promotes higher levels of work adjustment in more rather than less culturally distant subsidiaries. Note that we do not suggest that cross-cultural motivation becomes detrimental for adjustment in more culturally distant subsidiaries, but, rather, that it is merely less likely to positively promote adjustment in such subsidiaries.

The expectation that cultural distance attenuates the relationship between cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment is also consistent with Kanfer and Ackerman’s (1989) resource allocation model, according to which motivational processes involving the regulation of effort in pursuit of goals are more likely to translate into effective behavior when individuals are performing more familiar tasks, as opposed to more novel or less familiar tasks. Specifically, the resource allocation model postulate is that “trying hard [to perform a task] will not help if the individual does not know how to perform the task” (Yeo & Neal, 2004: 232). In support is evidence that motivational interventions (e.g., goal setting) have a greater positive impact on learning and performance on simpler and more familiar, rather than more complex and less familiar, tasks (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989; Wood, Mento, & Locke, 1987). Likewise, a comprehensive meta-analysis on the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance indicated that self-efficacy has a more positive relationship with simpler, rather than more complex, performance tasks (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Thus, cross-cultural motivation may be less positively related to effective behavior that promotes work adjustment in

more culturally distant subsidiaries, because such subsidiaries pose less familiar task requirements on expatriates, which render the effort triggered by cross-cultural motivation less relevant. Hence, we predict:

Hypothesis 4. Foreign subsidiary cultural distance moderates the relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and expatriate work adjustment in such a way that cross-cultural motivation relates more positively to work adjustment when cultural distance is lower, rather than higher.

Integrative Model

Thus far, we have proposed that (1) expatriate cross-cultural motivation is positively associated with job performance via its relationship with work adjustment (Hypotheses 1 and 2) and (2) expatriate cross-cultural motivation is more strongly related to work adjustment in foreign subsidiaries characterized by lower levels of subsidiary support (Hypothesis 3) and cultural distance (Hypothesis 4). In line with trait activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003), which positions work behavior as an antecedent of job performance, Hypotheses 3 and 4 focus on work adjustment (which captures expatriates’ subjective evaluation of their work behaviors) as opposed to job performance as the focal outcome. However, by extension, the theorizing behind Hypotheses 1–4 also suggests that the indirect (i.e., mediated) effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance varies as a function of the two cross-level moderators. Specifically, subsidiary support and cultural distance, owing to their moderating influence on the relationship between cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment, hold the potential to enhance or diminish the indirect effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance (via work adjustment). Thus, to more fully evaluate our theoretical model (Figure 1), we also examine whether cross-cultural motivation is more likely to indirectly relate to job performance (via work adjustment) in situations in which the relationship between cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment is stronger (i.e., when cultural distance is low and when subsidiary support is low).

METHODS

Sample and Procedures

Our sample consisted of expatriates from a *Fortune* 500 U.S.-based multinational company in the energy industry that dispatches expatriates around

the world. Using a company-provided list of all expatriates who were on assignment at the time of the study, we contacted 1,082 expatriates via e-mail and asked them to complete a web-based survey containing questions about their attributes and experiences with international assignments. The firm also provided expatriates' actual 2006 and 2007 job performance appraisal ratings. Our study's surveys were collected nine months after the 2006 performance appraisals were completed and three months prior to completion of the 2007 performance appraisals.

Complete data were available from a total of 556 expatriates, yielding a response rate of 51 percent. The participating expatriates represented 50 different nationalities and were located in 31 different foreign subsidiaries (there was only 1 subsidiary per 31 different host countries). As shown in Table 1, foreign subsidiaries were located in host countries with highly diverse cultures. Additionally, the firm tended to assign expatriates from similar national cultures into the same foreign subsidiary (e.g., 31 out of 44 expatriates in the Indonesian

subsidiary were from Western and Anglo countries. Specifically, 13 were from the U.S.; 8 were from the U.K.; 4, from Canada; 2, from Australia; 2, from France; 1, from Italy; and 1, from the Netherlands). As noted earlier, this relative similarity in home countries increases the likelihood that expatriates would share perceptions of cultural distance. The average expatriate age was 44 years (s.d. = 9 years, range = 23–64 years; 95 percent were male, and 85 percent were married. Average assignment tenure was 2.64 years (s.d. = 2.39 years); 80 percent had assignment tenure of less than 4 years. Expatriates held various managerial positions, such as accounting manager, product coordinator, and business development manager. Importantly, interviews we conducted with human resource (HR) managers from the firm's headquarters indicated that local HR departments in each foreign subsidiary had a fair amount of autonomy in how they managed and supported expatriates and their families. In fact, subsidiaries employed company policies pertaining to managing and supporting expatriates quite differently (e.g., they provided different levels of assistance with taxes, moving expenses, and career guidance to expatriates). This characteristic justifies our focus on subsidiary-level, as opposed to firm-level, support.

TABLE 1

Number of Expatriates Assigned to Each Host Country/Subsidiary Represented in Sample

Country	Expatriates
Angola	13
Argentina	8
Azerbaijan	5
Brazil	24
Brunei	4
Canada	8
China	15
Congo	9
Ecuador	13
Egypt	31
England	8
India	12
Indonesia	44
Italy	4
Kazakhstan	12
Kuwait	19
Libya	11
Malaysia	42
Mexico	40
Netherlands	15
Nigeria	16
Norway	9
Oman	10
Qatar	13
Russia	17
Saudi Arabia	40
Singapore	10
Thailand	17
United Arab Emirates	36
United States	32
Venezuela	19

Measures

Surveys were administered in English, as all expatriates employed in this firm were fluent in English and all business was conducted in English. Unless otherwise noted, the measures were rated on a scale ranging from 1, "strongly disagree," to 5, "strongly agree." Table 2 shows the correlations and reliabilities for all variables in the study.

Expatriate cross-cultural motivation. Ang et al.'s (2007) five-item motivational cultural intelligence ("CQ") scale was used to measure expatriate cross-cultural motivation. To verify that this measure captured both the self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation dimensions of cross-cultural motivation, we asked nine subject matter experts (researchers familiar with cross-cultural management theories and measurement principles) to sort the five items into either a self-efficacy or intrinsic motivation dimension on the basis of a match between items and dimension definition. With 100 percent agreement, the experts sorted three items into the self-efficacy category (e.g., "I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me") and two items into the intrinsic motivation category (e.g., "I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures"). In addition, confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) indicated that the

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations^a

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Age	43.72	8.66														
2. Marital status ^b	1.13	0.34	-.22*													
3. Prior international experience	4.08	3.42	.35*	-.08												
4. Assignment tenure in years	2.64	2.39	.13*	-.04	.02											
5. Language proficiency	2.98	1.45	-.05	-.02	-.08	.12*	(.98)									
6. Openness to experience	3.63	0.39	-.08	.07	.03	-.03	.08	(.74)								
7. Emotional stability	3.45	0.49	.13*	-.01	.09*	-.08	.07	.18*	(.80)							
8. Job performance, 2006	4.40	0.72	-.13*	-.01	-.07	.01	.02	.02	.04							
9. Perceived support	3.10	0.63	-.09*	-.01	-.18*	-.02	.20*	.01	.05	.06	(.89)					
10. Perceived cultural distance	3.17	1.00	.11*	.03	.10*	-.06	-.48*	-.04	-.09*	-.02	-.32*	(.91)				
11. Cross-cultural motivation	4.24	0.53	.04	.04	.13*	-.01	.09*	.31*	.27*	.10*	.09*	-.08	(.85)			
12. Work adjustment	4.02	0.65	.00	-.04	.03	.06	.13*	.29*	.35*	.06	.13*	-.16*	.30*	(.90)		
13. Subsidiary support ^c	3.10	0.21	-.08	-.02	-.08	.03	.25*	.01	.06	.05	-.15*	.61*	.04	.05	(.89)	
14. Cultural distance ^c	3.17	0.61	.08	.04	.08*	-.05	-.52*	-.08	-.08	-.03	.33*	-.27*	-.10*	-.11*	-.45*	(.91)
15. Job performance, 2007	4.42	0.63	-.16*	.12*	-.03	.10*	.06	.04	-.01	.22*	.09*	-.07	.12*	.17*	.11*	-.04

^a $n = 556$, Internal consistency reliability (alpha) estimates are on the diagonal.

^b 1 = "married," 2 = "single."

^c Subsidiary/country-level means assigned down to individual expatriates.

* $p < .05$

Two-tailed test.

two-factor model, in which the two items identified by experts as self-efficacy loaded on one factor, and the three items identified by experts as intrinsic motivation loaded on a second factor, fit the data well ($\chi^2_{df=4, n=556} = 45.50$, CFI = .98, SRMR = .04) and significantly better than an alternative model in which all five items loaded on a single factor ($\Delta\chi^2_{\Delta df=1, n=556} = 77.18$, $p < .01$; CFI = .94, SRMR = .06).

Although the content validation and CFAs confirmed that the motivational CQ scale captured separate self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation dimensions of cross-cultural motivation, as expected (cf. Ang et al., 2007), the two dimensions were highly correlated ($r = .63$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, each dimension exhibited similar relationships with outcomes (these results are available upon request). Also, when entered simultaneously, the two dimensions exhibited a pattern of results suggestive of multicollinearity, as some estimates were opposite in direction to the respective estimates obtained without the other dimension in the model, and the standard errors enlarged (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2007). Thus, given these results and our con-

ceptualization of cross-cultural motivation as a multidimensional construct containing both self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation dimensions, we averaged and aggregated all five motivational CQ items into a single, overall cross-cultural motivation score ($\alpha = .85$).

Expatriate work adjustment. Expatriates' work adjustment was measured by Black and Stephens's (1989) three-item measure. Expatriates were asked to rate how they were adjusting to specific job and supervisory responsibilities and performance standards and expectations in their current assignment (1 = "poor," 5 = "excellent"; $\alpha = .90$).

Expatriate job performance. Expatriate job performance was measured by performance appraisal ratings from company records. At the end of each year, the employees were assessed by their primary manager in performance areas such as performance expectations, development expectations, performance against position/assignment, technical skills, and behaviors. We used the overall performance rating of the company (5 = "superior," 4 = "exceeds expectations," 3 = "met all expectations," 2 = "met most expectations," and 1 = "did not

meet expectations"). As noted earlier, we obtained both 2006 and 2007 job performance scores. The 2006 performance scores were treated as a control variable (i.e., prior performance), and the 2007 scores were the focal performance outcome in the study.²

Subsidiary support. Expatriates completed Kraimer and Wayne's (2004) 12-item expatriate-specific perceived organizational support scale, which captures financial support (e.g., "The financial incentives and allowances provided to me by the company are good"), career support (e.g., "The company considers my goals when making decisions about my career"), and adjustment support (e.g., "The company provides me with many opportunities to ease the transition to the foreign country"). CFAs indicated that the three-factor model (one factor per support dimension) fit the data well ($\chi^2_{df=51; n=556} = 247.39$, CFI = .97, SRMR = .06), and significantly better than an alternative model in which all support items were loaded on a single factor ($\Delta\chi^2_{\Delta df=3; n=556} = 2,801.85, p < .01$; CFI = .76, SRMR = .14). However, average correlation among the dimensions was .45 ($p < .01$), and substantive results were highly similar when the data were analyzed with each dimension separately.³ Thus, because our focus was on overall subsidiary-level support, we averaged and then aggregated the 12 items to form a single subsidiary support score ($\alpha = .89$). Combining items from the three dimensions into an overall score was also consistent with prior research on overall support climate (McAllister & Bigley, 2002; Takeuchi et al., 2009). Both intermember reliability indexes (ICC1 = .06, ICC2 = .55, $F_{30, 555} = 2.20, p < .05$) and interrater agreement (median $r_{wg(j)} = .95$) provided support for aggregating individual support scores to the subsidiary level.

Cultural distance. In international management research, cultural distance is typically measured using the average difference between a home country and a host country on cultural values, such as those developed in large-scale cultural studies (e.g.,

Hofstede [1980] and the GLOBE project [House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004]). However, of the 31 foreign subsidiaries in our study, only 23 were included in either Hofstede or House et al. Cultural distance measures of this type have also been criticized because uniform cultural scores and values are assumed for everyone from a particular country (Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006). Therefore, following the conceptual definition of cultural distance (Shenkar, 2001), we developed a new, more direct measure of cultural distance. 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 [cf. Adler, 2008]) 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"). We then averaged and aggregated the six items using the mean within-subsubsidiary score to form a foreign subsidiary-level (or host country-level) cultural distance score ($\alpha = .91$). Intermember reliability strongly supported the aggregation of scores to the subsidiary level (ICC1 = .34, ICC2 = .90, $F_{30, 555} = 10.32, p < .05$), as did intermember agreement (median $r_{wg(j)} = .86$ [cf. Bliese, 2000]). Providing additional validity evidence, factorial analysis of variance indicated that subsidiary/host country (partial $\eta^2 = .41$) accounted for nearly twice as much of the variance in individual cultural distance ratings as did expatriates' home country (partial $\eta^2 = .23$), and that the host country by home country interaction effect on individual ratings was nonsignificant ($F_{136, 555} = 1.22, p > .05$). This analysis suggests that expatriates' ratings of cultural distance were based primarily on the host country they were assigned to, as opposed to their home country.

Furthermore, using data from 23 countries represented in the GLOBE project, we calculated cultural difference scores based on cultural values from the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004), following the procedures developed by Kogut and Singh (1988). This procedure provides a summary score of how each pair of countries differs on a set of 11 core cultural values (e.g., assertiveness, future orientation, power distance, etc.). The subsidiary-level, self-rated cultural distance measure we developed correlated highly with the respective GLOBE measure of cultural distance ($r = .73, p < .01$), providing additional validity for our measure. We use the cultural distance measure developed for this study in the analyses because there were 31 foreign subsidiaries with available data for this measure, compared to only 23 subsidiaries with available data for the GLOBE measure. However,

² The relatively low correlation between the 2006 and 2007 performance scores ($r = .22, p < .05$) was likely because 30 percent of the expatriates began their international assignments after the 2006 performance evaluations.

³ When the three support dimensions were entered simultaneously into the models, results were suggestive of multicollinearity problems, as some parameter estimates switched direction and standard errors became larger. This further reinforced our decision to combine the three dimensions into an overall subsidiary support score.

we also report analyses that replicate findings using the GLOBE cultural distance measure in the Results section.

Controls. We included several control measures to remove the influences of other variables related to outcomes in our model. First, as noted in our introduction, we controlled for individual-level perceptions of support and cultural distance, to more clearly tease out the distinct levels at which these variables operated in our proposed motivation-oriented model, as opposed to prior stress-focused models (cf. Black et al., 1991). Second, we also controlled for expatriate age because age may impact motivation and adaptation (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). Third, we controlled for marital status, prior international experience (i.e., number of previous international work assignments), and assignment tenure (i.e., years on assignment) because previous studies have shown that work-family conflict (which is more likely to occur for married expatriates), prior experience, and assignment tenure can relate to expatriate adjustment (see Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & Lepak, 2005). Fourth, we also controlled for expatriates' local language skill, using a five-item self-reported scale developed by Takeuchi et al. (2005), because local language skill has been found to predict expatriate adjustment and performance (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Takeuchi et al., 2005).

In addition, we controlled for the personality traits of openness to experience and emotional stability—measured by Goldberg et al.'s (2006) international personality item pool scales—because, relative to other personality traits, these have been found to more strongly relate to expatriates' work adjustment (Shaffer et al., 2006) and because these personality traits have also been associated with employee motivation (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2004). Controlling for openness to experience and emotional stability thus allowed us to demonstrate that the relationship of expatriate cross-cultural motivation to work adjustment and performance goes above and beyond those of more general motivational traits. Lastly, expatriates' job performance in the previous year, which was collected from company records, was controlled to help discount the alternative possibility that job performance drives expatriate cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment.

Confirmatory Factor Analyses

We conducted CFAs in LISREL (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993) on the seven measures collected from expatriates. To form the measurement models, we

randomly created three parcels of items each for language proficiency, openness to experience, emotional stability, cross-cultural motivation, work adjustment, subsidiary support, and cultural distance. The hypothesized seven-factor measurement model fit the data well ($\chi^2_{df=168, n=556} = 342.21$, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .98). Relative to the hypothesized seven-factor model, a one-factor model in which all factors were set to correlate at 1.0 fit the data significantly ($\Delta\chi^2_{\Delta df=21, n=556} = 7,564.01$, $p < .05$, RMSEA = .25, CFI = .45). These results strongly support the discriminant validity of the measures collected from expatriates.

Analysis Strategy

Because our data were multilevel, we tested the hypotheses using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) (Raudenbush, Byrk, & Congdon, 2004). HLM partitioned the variance of individual-level outcomes into level 1 (i.e., individual-level) and level 2 (i.e., subsidiary-level) components and then regressed the level 1 variance component on individual-level predictors and the level 2 variance component on subsidiary-level predictors. We then tested cross-level interactions by regressing level 1 slopes (i.e., relationships between level 1 predictors and outcomes) onto level 2 predictors. Level 1 variables included controls, expatriate cross-cultural motivation, work adjustment, and job performance, and level 2 variables included subsidiary-level support and cultural distance.

We first tested Hypotheses 1 and 2, following Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation procedures, and then tested the hypothesized cross-level interaction effects (Hypotheses 3 and 4) following Hofmann, Griffin, and Gavin (2000). In all analyses, we grand-mean-centered the predictors; however, similar cross-level interaction results were obtained when we group-mean-centered the level 1 predictors (cf. Hofmann et al., 2000). To overcome limitations associated with a stepwise approach to testing a conceptual model in which there is both mediation and moderation (cf. Edwards & Lambert, 2007), we independently reconfirmed our results utilizing an integrative approach in which mediated (i.e., Hypotheses 1 and 2) and moderated (i.e., Hypotheses 3 and 4) relationships in our model were examined simultaneously, following the multilevel procedures proposed by Bauer, Preacher, and Gil (2006; see also Bacharach et al., 2008). This integrative approach allowed us to accurately estimate how the relative sizes of the indirect effect of our independent variable on the dependent variable via the mediator varied under differing levels

of our two moderators. Finally, although it is difficult to estimate precise effect sizes in cross-level models, we report Snijders and Bosker's (1999) overall pseudo R^2 ($\sim R^2$) for the models; these estimates are based on proportional reduction of level 1 and level 2 errors owing to predictors in the model.

RESULTS

Hypothesis Tests

Table 3 summarizes the results of HLM analyses for Hypotheses 1–4. Control variables (including expatriates' age, marital status, prior international experience, assignment tenure, language proficiency, openness to experience, emotional stability, and 2006 job performance) and the individual- and subsidiary-level main effects of both subsidiary support and cultural distance were included in all analyses. We first tested whether expatriate cross-cultural motivation positively related to work adjustment (Hypothesis 1) and whether work adjustment mediated between expatriate cross-cultural

motivation and job performance (Hypothesis 2). As shown in model 1, individual-level perceptions of support ($b = .09, p < .05$) and cultural distance ($b = -.06, p < .05$) significantly related to work adjustment, replicating prior findings from stress-focused expatriate research (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Still, as shown in model 2, expatriate cross-cultural motivation positively related to work adjustment ($b = .21, p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Expatriate cross-cultural motivation accounted for 1 percent of variance in work adjustment above and beyond that accounted for by controls (total $R^2 = .20$). Further, expatriate cross-cultural motivation uniquely and positively related to job performance ($b = .12, p < .05$; see model 5), and, when added to the job performance model (model 6), work adjustment positively and significantly related to job performance ($b = .15, p < .05$), whereas cross-cultural motivation was no longer significantly related to job performance ($b = .09, n.s.$). Thus, in support of Hypothesis 2, work adjustment fully mediated the relationship between

TABLE 3
Results of Hierarchical Linear Modeling Analyses of Expatriate Work Adjustment and Job Performance^a

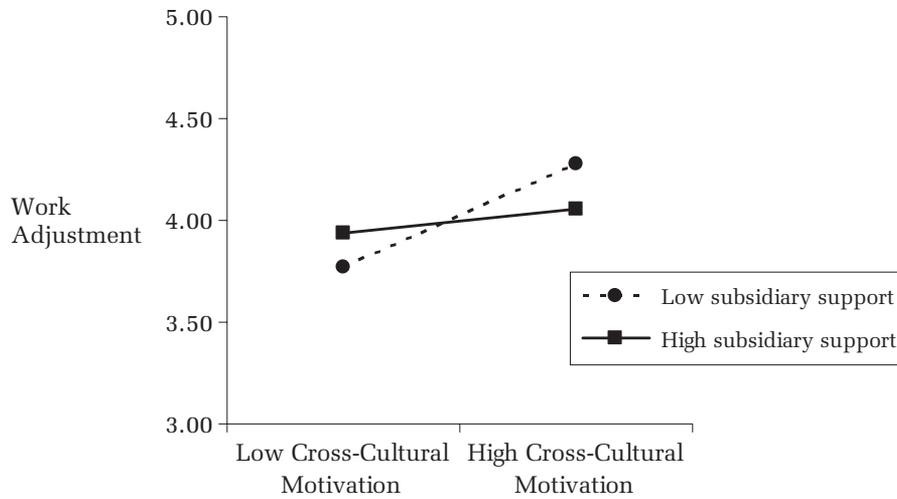
Variables	Work Adjustment			Job Performance		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<i>Level 1 main effects</i>						
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.01* (.00)	-.01* (.00)	-.01* (.00)
Marital status	-.07 (.08)	-.07 (.07)	-.07 (.07)	.20* (.08)	.19* (.08)	.20* (.08)
Prior Intl. experience	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Assignment tenure in years	.02* (.01)	.02* (.01)	.02* (.01)	.03* (.01)	.03* (.01)	.03* (.01)
Language proficiency	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Openness to experience	.38* (.06)	.31* (.07)	.30* (.06)	.04 (.07)	-.01 (.07)	-.05 (.07)
Emotional stability	.39* (.05)	.35* (.05)	.33* (.05)	-.01 (.05)	-.03 (.06)	-.09 (.06)
Job performance, 2006	.03 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.17* (.04)	.17* (.04)	.17* (.04)
Perceived support	.09* (.04)	.07 (.04)	.05 (.04)	.05 (.05)	.04 (.05)	.03 (.05)
Perceived cultural distance	-.06* (.03)	-.06* (.03)	-.06* (.03)	-.02 (.04)	-.02 (.03)	-.01 (.03)
Cross-cultural motivation		.21* (.05)	.27* (.06)		.12* (.05)	.09 (.05)
Work adjustment						.15* (.04)
<i>Level 2 main effects</i>						
Subsidiary support	-.09 (.16)	-.06 (.16)	-.04 (.17)	.27 (.15)	.28 (.15)	.28 (.15)
Cultural distance	.01 (.06)	.02 (.07)	.00 (.07)	.04 (.06)	.05 (.05)	.05 (.06)
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>						
Cross-cultural motivation × subsidiary support			-.66* (.23)			
Cross-cultural motivation × cultural distance			-.24* (.06)			
Pseudo R^2	.19	.20	.22	.09	.10	.11

^a $n = 556$ expatriates (level 1) in 31 host countries/foreign subsidiaries (level 2). Unstandardized estimates (based on grand-mean centering) are reported, with standard errors in parentheses. Pseudo R^2 values estimate the amount of total variance (both level 1 and level 2) in the dependent variable captured by predictors in the model.

* $p < .05$

Two-tailed test.

FIGURE 2
Interaction Effect of Cross-Cultural Motivation by Subsidiary Support on Work Adjustment

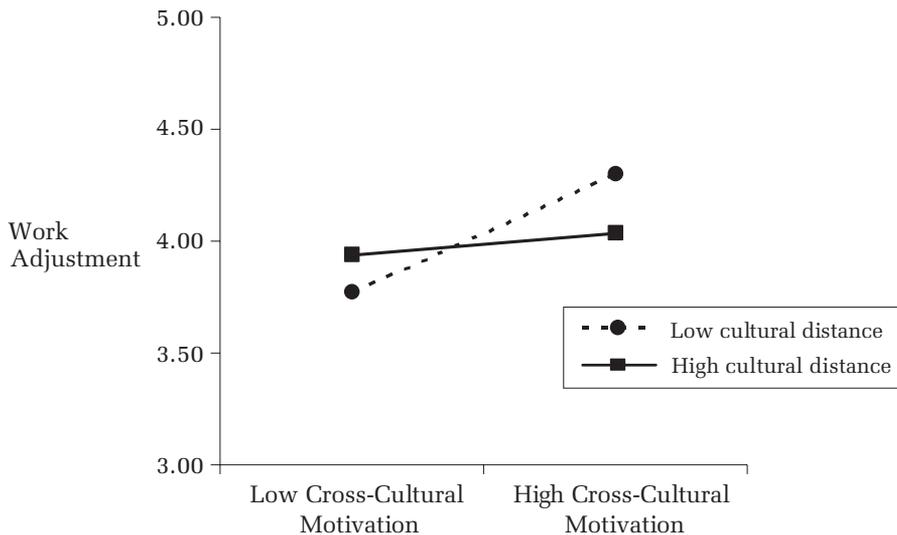


expatriate cross-cultural motivation and job performance. Expatriate cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment explained 2 percent of the variance in job performance above and beyond that accounted for by controls (total $R^2 = .11$).

Our model suggests further that the positive relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment will be more positive when subsidiary support is lower (Hypothesis 3) and when cultural distance is lower (Hypothesis 4). As shown in Table 3 (model 3), the cross-level effects of the subsidiary support by expatriate cross-cultural motivation interaction ($\gamma = -.66, p < .05$) and the cultural distance by expatriate cross-cultural motivation interac-

tion ($\gamma = -.24, p < .05$) on work adjustment were both statistically significant and negative. The two interaction terms accounted for 2 percent additional variance in work adjustment above and beyond that accounted for by controls and cross-cultural motivation (total $R^2 = .22$). To further probe these results, we plotted the interaction effects using Aiken and West's (1991) procedures. As shown in Figure 2, expatriate cross-cultural motivation related more positively to work adjustment when subsidiary support was lower (dashed line) rather than higher (solid line), supporting Hypothesis 3. Figure 3 further illustrates that expatriate cross-cultural motivation related more positively to work adjustment

FIGURE 3
Interaction Effect of Cross-Cultural Motivation by Cultural Distance on Work Adjustment



when cultural distance was lower (dashed line) rather than higher (solid line), supporting Hypothesis 4.

Tests of the Integrative Model

Thus far, our analysis suggests that (1) cross-cultural motivation is positively related to job performance via its relationship with work adjustment (Hypotheses 1 and 2) and (2) the relationship between cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment is stronger in foreign subsidiaries characterized by lower levels of support (Hypothesis 3) and lower cultural distance (Hypothesis 4). Taken together, these findings suggest that the indirect (i.e., the mediated) effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance may vary as a function of the two cross-level moderators: subsidiary support and cultural distance. To more directly test the level and variance of the indirect effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance and our overall model more completely, we examined the direct and indirect effects of expatriate cross-cultural motivation on job performance using the simultaneous multilevel regression procedure that Bauer et al. (2006) adapted for HLM.

Results based on Bauer et al.'s (2006) procedures indicated that the unconditional indirect effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance (via work adjustment) was .06 (s.e. = .03; 95% confidence interval = .005, .108). This indirect effect constituted 36 percent of the total (direct + indirect) effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance (.16; s.e. = .06; 95% confidence interval = .035, .275). Although these results provide further support for Hypothesis 2, in that the *average* indirect effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance via work adjustment was significant, there was significant variation in this indirect effect across foreign subsidiaries (variance = .001; $p < .05$). In accordance with our conceptual model, this variability in the indirect effect was a result of the significant between-group variance in the slope of the relationship between cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment (variance = .06, $p < .05$) and not of any between-group variance in the slope of the relationship between work adjustment and job performance (variance = .02, $p > .05$).⁴ Hence,

we proceeded to model cross-level moderators of the relationship between cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment.

Addition of the two moderators (i.e., subsidiary support and cultural distance) indicated that the indirect effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance through work adjustment significantly differed as a function of those moderators. That is, the conditional indirect effect was positive and significant at *low levels* (-1 s.d.) of both subsidiary support (.10, $p < .05$) and cultural distance (.10, $p < .05$), but nonsignificant at *high levels* ($+1$ s.d.) of both subsidiary support (.02, $p > .05$) and cultural distance (.03, $p > .05$). In other words, the indirect effect of cross-cultural motivation (via work adjustment) on job performance was 4.99 times stronger at low, rather than high, subsidiary support levels, and 3.46 times stronger at low, rather than high, cultural distance levels. Further, with the addition of the two moderators, the residual between-group variance in the slope of the individual-level relationship between cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment was no longer significant (variance = .04, $p > .05$), indicating that those two cross-level moderators significantly accounted for the between-group variance in that relationship and, consequently, for the total variance of the indirect effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance. In sum, this integrative analysis of both our mediation and moderation hypotheses provided additional support for our overall model (Figure 1) and provided specific estimates of the indirect effect of cross-cultural motivation on job performance (via work adjustment) at different levels of our two cross-level moderators.

Auxiliary Tests

We conducted a few supplementary analyses to further strengthen the validity of our findings. First, additional analyses of model 3 (Table 3) conducted using the GLOBE-based measure of cultural distance instead of the cultural distance measure developed for this study ($n = 392$ expatriates in 23 foreign subsidiaries) yielded similar results, showing that the unique relationships of the cultural distance by expatriate cross-cultural motivation interaction ($\gamma = -.22$, $p < .05$) and the subsidiary support by expatriate cross-cultural motivation interaction ($\gamma = -.82$, $p < .05$) with work adjustment were again statistically significant and negative. Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were supported when different measures of cultural distance were used.

In addition, we also explored whether individual-level perceptions of support and cultural distance also moderated the expatriate cross-cultural

⁴ Additional analyses also showed that foreign subsidiary-level support and cultural distance did not significantly moderate either the direct cross-cultural motivation–job performance relationship or the work adjustment–job performance relationship ($p > .10$), further supporting the positioning of the two moderators in our model.

motivation–work adjustment relationship by adding these two variables as additional moderators in the level 1 portion of model 3. Results showed that the *individual-level* perceived support by cross-cultural motivation ($b = -.07$, n.s.) and perceived cultural distance by cross-cultural motivation ($b = .07$, n.s.) interactions did not significantly predict work adjustment; in contrast, in the same model, the *cross-level* subsidiary support by cross-cultural motivation interaction ($\gamma = -.54$, $p < .05$) and cultural distance by cross-cultural motivation interaction ($\gamma = -.29$, $p < .05$) remained significant predictors of work adjustment. Thus, these results strongly support our expectation that subsidiary-level—but not individual-level—support and cultural distance moderate the relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we examined the role that expatriate cross-cultural motivation plays in expatriate effectiveness, and whether or not the extent to which cross-cultural motivation contributes to expatriate effectiveness varies depending on two contextual moderators, subsidiary support and cultural distance. Supporting our hypotheses, we found that expatriate cross-cultural motivation relates to job performance through work adjustment, but that work adjustment is more likely to mediate the positive relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and job performance in less supportive and culturally distant foreign subsidiaries. We next discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of our study's findings.

Theoretical Implications

Our findings contribute to the expatriate and work motivation literatures in three ways. First, this study enhanced understanding of the function of expatriate cross-cultural motivation. Extending previous expatriate research, we delineated and tested mediating and moderating mechanisms that explain *how* and *when* expatriate cross-cultural motivation is more and less likely to promote job performance. Although previous research has been suggestive of work adjustment as a mediator between expatriate motivation and performance (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Wang & Takeuchi, 2007), our multisource and lagged design allowed us to more clearly demonstrate that cross-cultural motivation predicts expatriate job performance *through* work adjustment, even when more general motivational traits (i.e., openness to experience and

emotional stability), perceived stressors (i.e., perceptions of support and cultural distance), and previous job performance and international experience are controlled for. Thus, our results advanced better understanding of *how* cross-cultural motivation plays a unique and important role in models of expatriate effectiveness.

Second, answering calls for studying the role of context in models of expatriate effectiveness (Harrison et al., 2004), our findings indicated that subsidiary support and cultural distance serve as important contextual boundary conditions for cross-cultural motivation effects. Indeed, taking a multilevel approach that explicitly includes the role of contextual influences helped to more fully capture the inherent complexity typically associated with understanding expatriate job performance. In line with trait activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000), findings supported our theorizing that higher levels of subsidiary support and cultural distance both capture less relevant situations for the expression of expatriates' cross-cultural motivation, albeit for different reasons. That is, higher subsidiary support renders expatriate motivation and effort less necessary, whereas higher cultural distance makes expatriate motivation and effort necessary yet not sufficient. Furthermore, our findings suggested that, indeed, subsidiary support and cultural distance capture distinct aspects of the challenges inherent in international assignments and that cross-cultural motivation can help expatriates overcome some, but not all, aspects of their international assignments. In particular, although higher levels of cross-cultural motivation contributed to improved expatriate effectiveness in general, the findings supported our theoretical expectations that cross-cultural motivation is more likely to help expatriates overcome the challenges inherent in low subsidiary support, but not those inherent in higher cultural distance.

Findings pertaining to the moderating influence of cultural distance also supported aspects of Kanfer and Ackerman's (1989) resource allocation model, which, to date, has been studied almost exclusively in laboratory studies of skill acquisition (e.g., Chen & Mathieu, 2008; DeShon, Brown, & Greenis, 1996; Yeo & Neal, 2004). Extending the validity and applicability of this model to the context of expatriate effectiveness, we found that cross-cultural motivation related more positively to expatriate adjustment in less culturally distant contexts, where assignments were arguably less complex owing to greater cultural familiarity. This extension of the resource allocation model further supports our broader contention that studying mo-

tivational processes can contribute unique insights to understanding of expatriate effectiveness.

Finally, our study also promoted better understanding of how stress- and motivation-related processes may contribute differently and uniquely to expatriate effectiveness. In particular, in line with prior stress-focused research, we found that individual-level perceptions of support and cultural distance related directly to work adjustment (see Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). In contrast, the motivation-related processes we delineated and tested extended this research by showing that foreign subsidiary-level support and cultural distance moderated the relationship between expatriate cross-cultural motivation and work adjustment. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the direct relationship between perceived support and work adjustment became nonsignificant after we introduced expatriate cross-cultural motivation (see models 1 and 2, Table 3), suggesting that work adjustment is based more on expatriates' cross-cultural motivation than on their perceived support. Although these results are preliminary and focused on only few possible motivational and situational variables, they suggest that situational variables may operate differently in stress versus motivation processes. Furthermore, they suggest that the multilevel motivational processes advanced in this study exceed the variables offered in prior theories of expatriate stress and adjustment in contributing to researchers' understanding of expatriate effectiveness. Ultimately, we hope that the multilevel motivational approach we have advanced in this research will stimulate research that moves beyond an individual-level focus on expatriate well-being (cf. Harrison et al., 2004) toward broader consideration of how person and situational factors combine to contribute to expatriate performance and success.

Managerial Implications

Our study also offers three insights pertaining to practices directed at enhancing expatriate effectiveness. First, our findings suggest that cross-cultural motivation can play an important role in promoting expatriate work adjustment and job performance. Because cross-cultural motivation is a dynamic competency that transcends cross-cultural situations and yet is somewhat malleable (Ang et al., 2007), managers may consider developing expatriates in cross-cultural motivation prior to their assignments (e.g., by emphasizing benefits associated with international assignments and other global experiences), as well as placing more cross-culturally motivated expatriates in foreign assignments.

A second important managerial implication suggested by our study is that cross-cultural motivation is likely to be more beneficial when expatriates are sent to subsidiaries that are less supportive and less culturally distant. Our finding that higher levels of subsidiary support reduced the influence of expatriate cross-cultural motivation on work adjustment—and hence performance—suggests that enhancing subsidiary support can protect against limited expatriate motivation. One approach by which organizations can enhance subsidiary support is establishing high-performance work systems, in which human resource management systems (e.g., staffing, training, and compensation) explicitly target the improvement of workforce competence, attitudes, and motivation (see Takeuchi et al., 2009). Other approaches for enhancing subsidiary support include training local managers to provide better support and mentoring to expatriates, as well as assigning new expatriates to experienced mentors.

Although we found that expatriate cross-cultural motivation was less likely to promote expatriate effectiveness in more culturally distant subsidiaries, it also did not impair effectiveness in such subsidiaries. This suggests that, in addition to cross-cultural motivation, other expatriate attributes may also be necessary for optimal expatriate effectiveness in more culturally distant subsidiaries. Extrapolating from Kanfer and Ackerman's (1989) resource allocation model and Ang et al.'s (2007) work on cultural intelligence, perhaps cross-cultural knowledge and skill, in addition to motivation, are needed for expatriates to adjust and perform effectively in more culturally distant environments. However, empirical research is needed to verify this theoretical proposition.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite several strengths, our study has some notable limitations offering fruitful avenues for future research. First, despite our multisource and lagged design, we employed an observational (i.e., survey) design, which precluded any inference of strong causality. We also did not track expatriate adjustment and performance over time. Indeed, Harrison et al.'s (2004) review noted a lack of longitudinal research on expatriates. Modeling expatriate adjustment and performance over time, beginning with the start of an international assignment, could serve as an important extension of our findings by shedding more light on possible influences of expatriate motivation and expertise as well as the social and cultural environment on cross-

cultural adaptation processes that likely evolve over time.

A second limitation of our study is that, despite our assumption that expatriate cross-cultural motivation promotes the allocation of more effort to adaptation and performance, we did not actually measure self-regulation of effort in this study. However, in line with more basic research on motivation and self-regulation (e.g., Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989), findings support our hypothesized contextual influences on the utility of expatriate effort. Nonetheless, more process research on the role of expatriate self-regulation is needed. Our study could be extended further by broadening understanding of likely outcomes of cross-cultural motivation including, for example, criteria such as assignment turnover and expatriates' interpersonal and citizenship behaviors.

Finally, although our findings pertaining to contextual influences were promising, additional powerful contextual influences on expatriate effectiveness may well reside at various levels of analysis, such as direct interactions with leaders, group climate, or the extent to which expatriates work in culturally diverse teams. In line with our proposed motivation-oriented, multilevel approach, it would be especially important to identify additional contextual variables that may enhance expatriate performance, either directly or via interactions with expatriate motivation. Furthermore, although our main focus in this study was on identifying conditions under which cross-cultural motivation is more beneficial for expatriate effectiveness, researchers should also consider conditions under which higher levels of cross-cultural motivation might actually harm expatriate effectiveness (e.g., via complacency), such as when expatriates perform more ambiguous tasks (see Schmidt & DeShon, 2010). Thus, although our study shows that the sociocultural context expatriates are exposed to matters when it comes to their success, additional work is needed to expand understanding of the confluence of contextual influences that likely impact expatriate adaptation and effectiveness.

Conclusion

Departing from the dominant paradigm of expatriate management research, in which individual-level analysis and stress have been the main foci, we attempted to contribute to the literature by delineating and examining factors in expatriates' contexts that might affect the extent to which cross-cultural motivation affects work adjustment and performance. We hope that our unique theoretical contributions—that work adjustment helps to ex-

plain the relationship between cross-cultural motivation and job performance and that both subsidiary support and cultural distance attenuate the motivation-adjustment relationship—will stimulate additional multilevel, motivation-oriented research to help better explain the myriad influences on expatriate adjustment and performance.

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