

The Relationship between Cultural Intelligence and Cross-cultural Adjustment

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Abstract

The paper advances knowledge in the field of international human resource management (HRM) by elaborating on the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment, which has important implications for the productivity of an organisation whose employees form multicultural teams or operate in foreign locations and thus its international competitiveness. The basic axis of the relationship is extended into a complex model in which three categories of factors are reflected in parallel: the mental adjustment of the individual (expressed by the variables of life satisfaction and ethnocentrism), the contextual influence of the environment (operationalised as a cultural novelty), and time (in the form of culture shock). The indirect effects of these three mediators and the direct effect of ethnocentrism on these mediators are simultaneously examined. Using the PLS-SEM statistical technique on a sample of 120 foreigners working in the Czech Republic, a robust relationship was confirmed between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment, best explained by the mediator of life satisfaction. A significant specific indirect effect was also found of the mediator of culture shock on the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment. However, our data did not support the variable of cultural novelty as a mediator of the relationship.

Keywords

cultural adjustment, cultural intelligence, perceived cultural novelty, satisfaction with life, culture shock, ethnocentrism

1 Introduction

The process of cross-cultural adjustment of employees sent by a company to work abroad is a frequent subject of research (Liao and Thomas, 2020). If this adjustment is successful, it contributes to companies' competitiveness. In principle, it can be said that adaptation to the local culture and the conditions prevailing in the host country take place differently for different individuals in terms of time and difficulty. Previous cross-cultural experiences help to improve the adjustment and performance of employees working in a new (unfamiliar) cultural environment. An individual is able to adapt better overall (not only at work but also in everyday life) if he/she knows the language of the country he/she is in or has previous foreign experience in a similar job (Jyoti and Kour, 2017).

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is defined as a set of competencies that facilitate adaptation to different cultural situations and facilitate understanding (interpretation) of unfamiliar cultural patterns and behaviours. Based on previous research (Chen, 2015; Sousa and Gonçalves, 2017),

it can be stated that CQ is a very important variable for adaptation and adjustment in different and unfamiliar cultures. Individuals (in everyday life and in the workplace) with higher cultural intelligence are more flexible, more open to change, more likely to consider the unfamiliar a challenge rather than a stressor, and less likely to experience distress from a long-term stay in a different culture (Bücker et al., 2014); they are also more comfortable communicating and feel greater confidence when interacting in an unfamiliar culture (Earley and Ang, 2003).

There is a body of empirical evidence supporting a positive relationship between the cultural intelligence of individuals working in a foreign country and their adjustment (along with its individual components, i.e., general, interactional, and professional) to the customs of the new culture (Shaffer and Miller, 2008). However, there is still much scope for exploring the mediating factors that would explain what contributes to, or hinders, this relationship. Our article contributes to existing knowledge in the

following way: first, it develops a comprehensive theoretical model of the underlying relationship between CQ and the cross-cultural adjustment of employees working in a foreign country (expats), incorporating three new variables as mediators – individuals' subjective assessment of their satisfaction with life abroad, perceived cultural novelty, and culture shock, which are subject to the direct influence of the individual's ethnocentric mindset about the interrelationship between his or her culture and the foreign culture (ethnocentrism); secondly, the influence of these mediators is analysed simultaneously as part of a multiple mediation model, as this process is more appropriate and accurate than a separate analysis of the model with only one mediator. Last but not least, to permit a comprehensive investigation, mediators were selected that combine the three factors crucial for a successful process of adaptation and adjustment in a foreigner working abroad. Namely, his/her characteristics (i.e., what is he/she like?), contextual variables (i.e., where is he/she located?), and timing (i.e., when or at what stage of his/her foreign sojourn has the adjustment process been assessed and examined?).

2 Definition of basic terms

2.1 Cross-cultural adjustment

Cross-cultural adjustment is defined as "the degree of psychological comfort and sense of familiarity that an individual has with his or her new environment" (Templer et al., 2006:p.157). Culturally adjusted foreigners tend to be more open to the cultural stimuli of the host country, and are able to add new behaviours, norms, and rules to their portfolio of cultural knowledge (Zhang and Oczkowski, 2016). Hussain and Zhang (2022) even found that adjustment is positively related to innovative work behaviour.

Adjustment is a complex, multi-layered concept. It (Fitzpatrick, 2017) consists of three dimensions:

1. general adjustment, i.e., adapting to the host country's culture and living conditions of the local population,
2. social adjustment, i.e., seamlessly establishing interpersonal relationships with members of the host country (culture), and
3. professional adjustment, i.e., blending in with the work culture, expectations, and requirements in the local organisation.

Since cultural differentiation is the pivotal feature of the entire process of adaptation and interpersonal relationships, this can be discussed under the heading of cultural

adjustment, which is related to cultural intelligence (Guðmundsdóttir, 2015).

2.2 Cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence measures cross-cultural competence (Schlaegel et al., 2021). In this study, cultural intelligence is defined as "a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts" (Andresen and Bergdolt, 2017:p.184). CQ is a multidimensional construct (Taras, 2020). In empirical research, a 20-item scale (Ott and Michailova, 2018) is most often used, which incorporates four dimensions: metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioural CQ (Liao and Thomas, 2020).

Cultural intelligence has a number of beneficial effects on people who live (not just work) abroad. Cultural intelligence (CQ) has a positive impact on how an individual perceives their inclusion in culturally diverse contexts (Alexandra et al., 2021). It has also been empirically demonstrated that high CQ helps improve the quality of workplace relationships in the sense of greater trust between members of a culturally mixed team. Individuals with higher CQ also perceive the cultural differences of their colleagues less negatively. This reduces the potential for workplace conflict. Well-developed cultural intelligence fosters trust and understanding even among virtual teams that have been forced to form and cooperate together in international businesses affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The CQ performance of an employee posted by a company to its foreign office is influenced by a number of contextual variables (such as formal and informal openness to foreigners) that affect his/her work engagement with the organisation in the host country (Stoermer et al., 2021). Not only overall CQ but also its facets have a number of positive impacts. For example, a well-developed cognitive and metacognitive facet of CQ positively influences the emotional intelligence (emotionality) of budding entrepreneurs, which in turn has a desirable effect on their entrepreneurial creativity (Altınay et al., 2021). The behavioural facet of CQ is a good predictor of the effectiveness of virtual team collaboration (Mangla, 2021).

3 Material and methods

3.1 Hypothesis

3.1.1 Cross-cultural adjustment and cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence as an overall construct has a positive impact on outcomes associated with working abroad or in a multicultural environment (Ott and Michailova, 2018; Rockstuhl and Van Dyne, 2018). The same conclusions

can be drawn from the combined effects of two or three different dimensions (facets) of CQ (Schlaegel et al., 2021). Previous research has shown that CQ significantly affects cross-cultural adjustment (Jyoti and Kour, 2015; Zhang and Oczkowski, 2016). It has been shown (Sambasivan et al., 2017) that culturally intelligent employees sent abroad for work by their companies are able to cope relatively well with the states of anxiety and uncertainty that a foreign (unfamiliar) environment brings; as a result, they are able to adapt better and are more productive at work. Due to their higher CQ, foreign employees working in culturally heterogeneous environments are not afraid (or are not reluctant) to share their ideas, experiences, and working knowledge, with the result that they are better able to blend in with the workforce of a multinational (in its foundations) or multicultural company (Jiang et al., 2018). Such employees generally approach work tasks more creatively (Darvishmotevali et al., 2018).

H1: There is a direct positive relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment.

3.1.2 First mediator: life satisfaction

Satisfaction expresses an attitude and a positive emotional state manifested in an affective response, reaction, or personal evaluation of a given experience, event, or occasion perceived as successful (Ramsey and Lorenz, 2016). Success in any activity (e.g., from work) brings a certain degree of satisfaction. Job satisfaction spills over into overall (life) satisfaction. Life satisfaction is defined (Le et al., 2018) as the cognitive appreciation of one's own quality of life. It is the outcome of psychological adjustment in a cross-cultural environment (Wang et al., 2017). CQ equips individuals with the disposition to better adjust to a different cultural environment. This gives such individuals the resources necessary to better cope with negative phenomena such as culture shock, stress, or anxiety. Therefore, individuals with higher cultural intelligence experience greater well-being in unfamiliar cultural environments (are more satisfied in life), and thus adapt and adjust more easily, (Schlaegel et al., 2021; Sousa and Gonçalves, 2017).

H2: The positive relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment is mediated by the variable of life satisfaction.

3.1.3 Second mediator: culture shock

Culture shock is viewed as the beginning of the adjustment process in an unfamiliar environment (Pedersen, 1994). It is a state of unspecified uncertainty; one does not know

what to expect from one's surroundings, nor does one know what is expected of oneself. The specific experiences and behaviours of an individual experiencing culture shock include confusion about what to do, anxiety, frustration, feelings of isolation and depression, an inability to establish natural business relationships, and inappropriate social behaviour. The process of cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation takes place in waves/stages (Pedersen, 1994). The phases of culture shock (from the honeymoon period to the beginning of adaptation) are regularly interspersed with mood swings - from positive to negative and back (Black and Mendenhall, 1991). Since culture shock (and the process of adaptation) is related to change rather than to the novelty of the situation and environment, anyone entering one cultural environment from another is exposed to culture shock.

Job success or failure abroad is the connection of the variable of culture shock is joined to the variable of cultural intelligence. The effect of cultural intelligence on job performance through the mediator of cultural intelligence has been empirically confirmed (Chen et al., 2011). It can be expected that an individual with higher CQ can suffer from lower level of culture shock. He/she does not lose as much energy, which can be devoted to solving work tasks to the benefit of the individual and the entire organisation. All these attributes contribute to better cross-cultural adjustment (Lai et al., 2020; Presbitero, 2016; Sozbilir and Yesil, 2016).

H3: The positive relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment is mediated by the variable of culture shock.

3.1.4 Third mediator: perceived cultural novelty

Perceived cross-cultural novelty refers to the perception of new or unfamiliar cultural practices, customs, or ideas that are perceived to be different from one's own culture. It occurs when individuals encounter cultural practices that are different from what they are accustomed to and may not fully understand. Perceived cross-cultural cultural novelty can arise when people from different cultures come into contact with each other, whether through travel, migration, or communication. It can lead to a sense of curiosity, intrigue, or even confusion, as people try to make sense of unfamiliar cultural practices (Stoermer et al., 2020).

Perceived cross-cultural novelty can be both positive and negative. On the one hand, it can broaden one's understanding of other cultures and foster a sense of cultural diversity and appreciation. On the other hand, it can also

lead to misunderstanding, stereotypes, and even discrimination, as people struggle to reconcile their own cultural values with those of others.

Intuitively, it can be anticipated that a foreigner working abroad will find it harder to adjust to the local conditions and a new situation, the more culturally different and novel he/she perceives the host country to be. Thus, we can reasonably assume that there is a negative relationship between cultural novelty and work adjustment for foreigners in an environment culturally removed from their customs and value anchoring. Due to a low level of interest in the new culture, its typical patterns of behaviour may not be sufficiently absorbed and imitated by the foreigner. The more often an individual experiences negative feedback due to inappropriate behaviour, the more difficult he/she finds it to adjust in a new and completely unfamiliar environment. However, higher cultural intelligence reduces perceived cultural novelty. Persons with more developed (higher) CQ better understand cultural differences, are able to behave according to different rules. This ability improves their cross-cultural adjustment.

H4: The positive relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment is mediated by the variable of perceived cultural novelty.

3.1.5 The direct effect of ethnocentrism on CQ and the mediators

Ethnocentrism is an important concept in the social sciences. It coincides with strong identification with a particular socio-cultural, ethnic, or national group and represents the very opposite of cultural relativism; it is an important component of modern nationalism and is related to the formation of prejudice. It is the tendency to evaluate and interpret the world around us only from the perspective of one's own culture (Průcha, 2004). Association with another (to another) occurs through perceptions of oneself, and in the case of ethnocentrism, the frame of reference is primarily one's own culture. An accompanying feature of ethnocentrism is its destructive effects on harmonious intergroup relations. Ethnocentrism is a barrier to communication (Browaeyns and Price, 2015) and leads to misperception and misinterpretation of the behaviour of people from other cultures. It has been asserted that humans are fundamentally ethnocentric creatures (Miele and Nguyen, 2020), and many researchers (Lee et al., 2018) consider ethnocentrism to be a universal tendency among humans that manifests itself in all cultures. Many theories claim that ethnocentrism is caused by various types of

threats and insecurities (Bizumić, 2012). When a person faces certain threats and insecurities (as conceived through an ethnocentric mindset and behaviour), then he or she cannot feel completely comfortable and internally satisfied when surrounded by cultural otherness that he or she cannot comprehend. It can also be assumed that a person's inner frustration will increase with the degree of strangeness and otherness of the cultural environment in which he or she is – perhaps temporarily – operating. From this logic, it follows that there will be a negative relationship between ethnocentrism and life satisfaction, or a positive relationship between ethnocentrism and cultural novelty, i.e., the more pervasive the perceived novelty (in the sense of otherness) of a culture, the more lost the ethnocentrically-minded individual may feel; such a person's negative feelings will intensify towards whatever the other culture entails and he or she will feel less happy there.

Empirically, subjectively perceived ethnocentrism has been found to have a negative impact on work adjustment and loyalty in workers sent by a company to a foreign branch office (Furnham, 2020). Based on the above-mentioned, we predict:

- H5a: There is a negative relationship between ethnocentrism and life satisfaction.
- H5b: There is a positive relationship between ethnocentrism and culture shock.
- H5c: There is a positive relationship between ethnocentrism and cultural novelty.

3.2 The model of the relationships between cross-cultural adjustment and cultural intelligence

Our theoretical model of the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment incorporates mediators (life satisfaction, culture shock, and cultural novelty) that represent three variables that influence professional adaptability (but also others, e.g., general adaptability, due to the spillover effect) of employees working in culturally foreign environments. We assume that adjustment is affected by three continuous influences: first, what the person is like in terms of his or her own adjustment, i.e., personality type or psychological profile; second, the extent of change to which he or she is exposed (i.e., the similarity or dissimilarity of the new environment to what the individual is used to and familiar with); and third, the stage of adjustment he or she is in. In general, these influences can be characterised as internal (directly related to the individual's person), external or contextual (related to the unfamiliar environment to which they must adapt), and

temporal (the aspect timing). Specifically, the following are the deciding factors for an individual's adjustment: life satisfaction, which is defined (Pavot and Diener, 2008) as the cognitive evaluation of one's own life; cultural novelty, perceived as the difference (change) of the home and foreign environment; and the culture shock phase. Moreover, these three influences are under the direct influence of another variable in our model, which represents the worldview of the individual with regard to other cultures compared to his/her own culture, i.e., a kind of input or equipment that the individual brings along from home. This influence is operationalised in this study by the variable of ethnocentrism.

Fig. 1 defines our structural model. Since CQ consists of several dimensions, a hierarchical component model (HCM) or higher-order model was developed in reflective mode (Schlängel and Sarstedt, 2016). The dependent variable of cross-cultural adjustment was modelled in the same mode. The exogenous variable CQ exerts its influence on the endogenous variable cross-cultural adjustment through several mediators (cultural novelty, life satisfaction, culture shock) that are themselves influenced by another variable: ethnocentrism. This is therefore a multiple mediation analysis with ethnocentrism directly influencing the mediating variables. The model consists of a number of direct effects (e.g., between CQ and life satisfaction, ethnocentrism and life satisfaction, etc.) and specific indirect effects (e.g., the effect of CQ on the endogenous variable of cross-cultural adjustment through the mediator of culture shock). Simultaneous analysis of all mediators in one model allows us to obtain a more complete picture of the mechanism

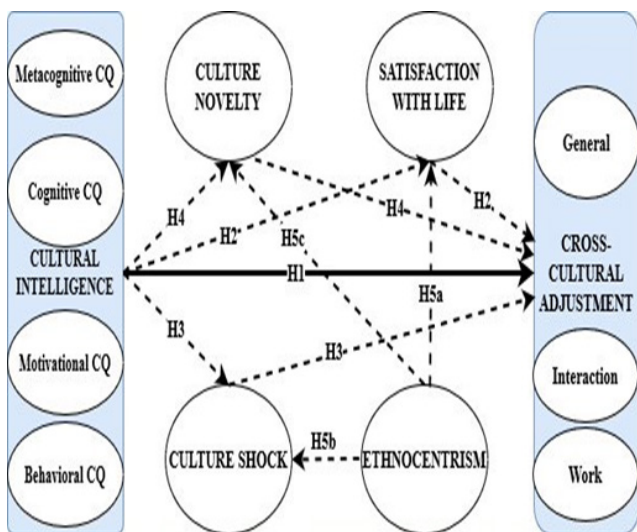


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework of the relationships between cultural intelligence, cross-cultural adjustment, culture novelty, culture shock, satisfaction with life and ethnocentrism (Source: authors)

by which the exogenous variable CQ exerts its influence on the endogenous variable of cross-cultural adjustment (Hair et al., 2014). In this model, the specific indirect effect of the exogenous variable (CQ) on the endogenous variable (ADJ) can be interpreted through a particular mediator while controlling for all other mediators (included in the model). The bootstrapping technique was used to test mediation effects, rather than the standard Sobel test, which is not applicable in the context of PLS-SEM.

3.3 Data collection and sample

The data that evaluated our hypotheses was collected in several rounds. First, international students studying in programs conducted in English (Bachelor, Master, MBA) at the University of Finance and Administration, a Czech private university, were contacted by university e-mail and asked whether they were working or employed in parallel with their university studies. If they met the basic selection criterion (foreign students working in the Czech Republic), they were then asked to complete an online questionnaire. As the authors of the study were conducting seminars and lectures in all English programs at this university, they repeatedly encouraged students to complete the questionnaire. However, participation in the survey was completely anonymous and voluntary; it was not associated with any positive motivation (e.g., the possibility of receiving credit).

A total of 121 respondents completed the questionnaire. Due to missing data and the incompleteness of certain responses, one respondent's answers were discarded. A total of 120 responses were analysed. The questionnaire was completed by 37% males and 63% females. 40% of the respondents were under 25 years of age and 33% were between 25 and 34 years of age. Given the relatively young age of the respondents, most were of them single (75%). 69% of respondents held a university degree (Bachelor's or Master's/MBA). Respondents of 14 different nationalities participated in the survey; the majority (79%) were of Chinese nationality and 9% were Turkish. 36% of the respondents were employed in the Czech Republic, 3% were sent there by their companies, 10% of the respondents worked part-time in the Czech Republic, and 20% were self-employed. They predominantly worked in commerce (32%) and services (23%) in small companies with less than 20 employees (35%) or in medium-sized companies with 20 to 249 employees (26%). Their work experience abroad tended to be medium to long term, i.e., more than one year (46%). Respondents were mostly working as

ordinary employees (58%), but 21% were in senior management positions. 47% of respondents had been in their current position for more than 1 year. In 63% of cases, this was the respondents' first work experience abroad. 19% of the respondents had undergone work preparation (in the form of training) organised by the dispatching organisation. In their new job assignment abroad, 31% of respondents were in daily contact with foreigners, 23% very often, and 24% occasionally. Most often they were in contact with customers (38%) or company management (17%). Relatively few (3%) respondents had come into contact in the workplace with company employees or colleagues who were of a different cultural background. Many more (more often or all the time) had cross-cultural contacts with local residents, namely Czechs (68%). Since relatively few respondents had an excellent, very good, or good level of Czech (27%), it can be concluded that they communicated with locals mainly in a foreign language as part of their non-work interactions. 28% of the respondents reported having knowledge of a foreign language at a conversational level or better.

3.4 Measurement

To ensure content validity (conceived as whether what is being measured is really what is desired to be measured) and face validity, measures used in our study have been empirically validated and are based on the literature (Luu, 2017). Table 1 summarises the used measurements.

The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) measures a person's proficiency in situations of cultural diversity (Kaleramna et al., 2019). The goal of the creators of the CQS (Ang et al., 2007) was to create a measurement instrument that contained a reasonable number of items (to prevent or avoid respondent boredom and fatigue) while maintaining satisfactory reliability. After the pilot study, the

questionnaire was left with 20 items expressing the best psychometric properties of general cultural exposure, measured by self-assessment on a seven-point Likert scale (Starčević et al., 2017). Cross-cultural adjustment was measured on a 5-point scale using a widely-used measure with proven high reliability (Black and Stephens, 1989). This measure is composed of three dimensions: general, interactive or social, and work adjustment; it consists of 14 items.

The Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener et al., 1985) consists of five items that measure one's life satisfaction using a 7-point Likert scale. The measurement applies more to cognitive rather than affective perceptions of various aspects of one's own life. A number of previous studies (see, e.g., Sharma and Hussain, 2019) have confirmed the good internal consistency of the measure. Culture shock is measured using an adapted version of the questionnaire developed by D. B. Mumford in 1998 (Mumford, 1998). For the purposes of this study, only the first part of the original culture shock measure was used, i.e., items directly related to culture shock (7 items in total), which were measured using a three-point Likert scale. The perceived cultural novelty was measured using the scale previously applied (Black and Stephens, 1989). Respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale (1 = not at all similar, 5 = very similar) the extent to which their country is similar (or dissimilar) to life in the Czech Republic (in various aspects).

To measure ethnocentrism (or cultural relativism), respondents were asked how they generally feel about themselves and their own group to which they belong culturally. They were asked on a four-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree, 4 = completely agree) to express (intuitively guided by first impressions) whether they agreed (or disagreed) with statements such as "I believe my culture offers the best lifestyles compared with other cultures". Measurements implemented in previous studies were used (Barbuto et al., 2015).

3.5 Data analysis

The data was analysed in SmartPLS (v.3.3.2) (SmartPLS GmbH) using the second-generation PLS-SEM technique, which is used by researchers in a variety of disciplines. This analytical technique was chosen given the key characteristics of PLS-SEM and the nature of our data (Hair et al., 2021). PLS-SEM makes it possible to achieve a high level of statistical power even with a small sample size (however, it is still true that as the sample size increases, the accuracy of the estimated model parameters increases); no assumptions about the distribution of the

Table 1 Items for the individual constructs and their measurements

Construct/factor	N items	Reference
Cross-cultural adjustment	14	Black and Stephens (1989)
Cultural intelligence	20	Ang et al. (2007)
MC COG MOT BEH	4 6 5 5	
Life satisfaction	5	Diener et al. (1985)
Culture shock	12	Mumford (1998)
Cultural novelty	8	Black and Stephens (1989); Stoermer et al., (2022)
Ethnocentrism	10	Barbuto et al. (2015)

Source: authors

data need to be met (as with other analytical techniques), as PLS-SEM is a non-parametric method. PLS-SEM can cope well with missing data, e.g. using the mean value replacement method, which is incorporated into SmartPLS and is recommended for use when no more than 5% of the data is missing (Hair et al., 2021), as in this study. In addition, it is suitable to use PLS-SEM for the analysis of very complex models (such as our model).

The use of PLS-SEM algorithm generally requires metric data on a ratio or interval scales. Since PLS-SEM can work with metric, quasi-metric, and categorical (i.e., dummy-coded) scaled data with certain limitations (Hair et al., 2021), it was decided not to include in our conceptual model (see Fig. 1) variables such as age, gender, education, nationality, previous work abroad and others that were controlled in CQ research (Ramsey and Lorenz, 2016; Zhang and Oczkowski, 2016).

The inverse square root method (Kock and Hadaya, 2018) was used to determine the minimum sample size for analysis in PLS-SEM. Based on this method, the minimum sample size at a statistical power of 80% and a significance level of 1%, 5%, and 10% should be 251, 155, and 113 respondents respectively for a minimum path coefficient level of 0.11–0.2 (Hair et al., 2021). Given our sample size, and for the statistical testing of certain relationships (adjustment – culture shock, cultural intelligence – life satisfaction), the significance level is between 5–10%; for other relationships the sample size is sufficient to test the relationships at an entirely acceptable significance level below 5%.

The general recommendations were followed (Hair et al., 2021) for assessing the measurement of the reflective model. All indicators whose loading is greater than 0.708 show that the constructs explain more than 50% of the variance in the values of indicators, thereby providing acceptable reliability of the indicators. Indicators with very low loadings (below 0.40) were removed from the measurement model. Indicators with loading between 0.40 and 0.708 were retained if the indicators of convergent validity or internal consistency reliability reached acceptable values. The internal consistency reliability of the measurements was determined by three indicators: Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability coefficient rhoC and reliability coefficient rhoA. The former is rather conservative, the latter too liberal; the true reliability lies between these extremes and is expressed by the indicator rhoA. The values of these indicators should be between 0.70 and 0.90 as recommended by (Hair et al., 2021). Values above 0.90 (and certainly above 0.95) are

problematic because they suggest that some indicators are redundant and reduce construct validity. To assess convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) is used by default for all indicators of each construct. The minimum acceptable value is 0.50 or higher, which indicates that the construct explains 50 percent or more of the variance of the indicators that comprise it (Hair et al., 2021). Two indicators are typically used to assess discriminant validity, which measures the extent to which the constructs used in the structural model differ from one another: Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait) ratio. It has recently been shown (Radomir and Moisesescu, 2020), however, that the Fornell-Larcker criterion does not reveal discriminant validity well and it is presently falling out of use. The second criterion is more appropriate in this respect (for determining discriminant validity). For conceptually similar constructs, the HTMT should be less than 0.90; for conceptually different constructs, the HTMT should be less than 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015).

The coefficients of the structural model, i.e., the relationships between the constructs, were assessed by estimating a series of regression equations. These structural model regressions had to be examined in terms of collinearity using the variance inflation factor (VIF). VIF values greater than 5 signal a possible collinearity between predictive constructs. Since collinearity at times appeared to be a problem in our case (theoretical model), it was resolved by creating higher order constructs. Using the bootstrapping technique, *t*-values of path coefficients were calculated; all of these values were found to be statistically significant in the structural model at a confidence interval of 95%. The assessment of explanatory power adhered to the following guidelines: substantial for $R^2 = 0.75$, moderate for $R^2 = 0.50$, and weak for $R^2 = 0.25$ (Hair et al., 2011). Since R^2 increases with the number of explanatory variables, R^2 adjusted is reported. The bootstrapping technique in SmartPLS version 3.3.2 was used to test the results of the multiple mediation analysis (i.e., the testing of the hypotheses) and, in particular, to determine the significance of each (specific) indirect and direct effect between the exogenous variable (cultural intelligence) and the endogenous variable (cross-cultural adjustment).

4 Results

From the perspective of the internal measurement model, all indicators (except for three items) reach satisfactory loading values, indicating a high degree of reliability of the measurement indicators. In terms of the internal

consistency of the measurement, it appeared that certain indicators for two measures in particular (cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment) may be redundant; therefore, both constructs were treated as higher order constructs. The composite reliability indicator for the construct of cross-cultural adjustment was 0.92; it reached a completely satisfactory value of 0.90. for the construct of cultural intelligence. All HTMT values for conceptually distinct constructs were less than 0.85. However, there were HTMT values greater than 0.90 for conceptually similar constructs, which was resolved by treating the constructs of CQ and cross-cultural adjustment as high order constructs, as previously stated. Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that the measurement of the constructs reaches acceptable levels in terms of validity and reliability. After the constructs of cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment were analysed as higher order constructs, all VIF values were less than the recommended value of (Hair et al., 2021) equal to five, indicating that collinearity is not a problem for the structural model created.

Table 2 presents the results of direct effects and multiple mediation analysis. All path coefficients are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). We see that CQ (as an exogenous variable) has a strong positive (direct) impact on ADJ (0.404), life satisfaction (0.514), and cultural novelty (0.355). It also has a significant (negative) impact on the variable of culture shock. The results suggest that the greater (more developed) the cultural intelligence, the

better the individual will adjust to new cross-cultural situations, the more satisfied the individual will be with life abroad, and the more similar the host country will seem to the individual's own country, i.e., he/she will not notice the cultural differences and otherness as much. It is also logical that a person adjusts more easily if one does not perceive the new cultural environment as being so different from one's own. CQ reduces the level of culture shock and so contributes to better cross-cultural adjustment. We found that cross-cultural adjustment depends (albeit weakly) on the stage of culture shock: there is a weak negative relationship (-0.151) between the two variables, i.e., a person experiencing culture shock is less likely to adjust in a cross-cultural environment. At the same time, culture shock is stronger the more ethnocentric the individual's mindset and behaviour.

However, paradoxically, even a person affected by ethnocentrism can feel comfortable in a new cultural environment. The relationship between ethnocentrism and life satisfaction was surprisingly found positive (0.226). Thus, the results of our study did not confirm the assumption that ethnocentric individuals may have difficulty feeling satisfied abroad because they tend to view their own culture as superior to others and they may be critical of the culture and customs of the country they are visiting and may feel uncomfortable with the difference they encounter. Supposedly, our respondents were open-minded and willing to learn about and appreciate the culture they are

Table 2 Bootstrapping results

HYP.		Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	95% Confidence Interval	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P-Values
Direct effects	H1 CQ -> ADJ	0.404	0.076	[0.250;0.543]	5.340	0.000
	H2 CQ -> SWLS	0.514	0.088	[0.304;0.655]	5.850	0.000
		SWLS -> ADJ	0.359	0.066	[0.224;0.481]	5.432
	H3 CQ -> Culture shock	-0.288	0.096	[-0.477;-0.097]	2.981	0.003
		Culture shock -> ADJ	-0.151	0.052	[-0.257;-0.051]	2.905
	H4 CQ -> CNOV	0.355	0.100	[0.125;0.533]	3.549	0.000
		CNOV -> ADJ	0.168	0.067	[0.038;0.112]	2.490
	H5a ETN -> SWLS	0.226	0.091	[0.036;0.386]	2.501	0.012
	H5b ETN -> Culture shock	0.513	0.069	[0.359;0.630]	7.484	0.000
	H5c ETN -> CNOV	0.206	0.099	[-0.023;0.372]	2.087	0.037
Specific Indirect Effects	H2 CQ -> SWLS -> ADJ	0.185	0.047	[0.104;0.287]	3.974	0.000
	H3 CQ -> Culture shock -> ADJ	0.044	0.02	[0.013;0.093]	2.179	0.029
	H4 CQ -> CNOV -> ADJ	0.060	0.035	[0.012;0.143]	1.708	0.088

Source: authors

visiting although this requires a willingness to let go of their preconceptions and assumptions about the culture, and to approach the experience with curiosity and a desire to understand. Furthermore, if an ethnocentric person is able to find a community of people from their own culture abroad, they may feel more comfortable and satisfied or this can provide a sense of familiarity and a connection to home, which can be important for some individuals. Taking into consideration the sample of our respondents (mostly composed of the Chinese nationality) this is the most probable explanation of our findings.

Next, it was found that the strongest positive relationship (i.e., the greater one exogenous variable, the greater the other endogenous variable) is between cultural intelligence and life satisfaction, or between ethnocentrism and culture shock. In other words, it can be argued that cultural intelligence is a relatively good predictor of life satisfaction, or that ethnocentrism is a predictor of culture shock. In this respect, it is to be expected, and is logically well understood, that an individual will experience a harsher clash with another cultural world the more ethnocentric his or her mindset. The exogenous variables of cultural intelligence, culture shock, and cultural novelty explain 61.8% of the variance in the endogenous variable of cross-cultural adjustment. This explanatory power can be assessed as moderate.

Of the three specific indirect effects of the relationship between cultural intelligence and adjustment, only two are statistically significant. While our data did not confirm that the cultural novelty variable explains the relationship between cultural intelligence, the other two variables examined (life satisfaction and culture shock) explain (mediate) the relationship. This consists of a complementary partial mediation.

It can be summarised that H1-H3 are confirmed by our data, i.e., there is a direct positive relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment ($\beta = 0.404$, $t = 5.340$, $p < 0.01$), and this direct relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment is partially mediated by the variables of life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.185$, $t = 3.974$, $p < 0.01$) and culture shock ($\beta = 0.044$, $t = 2.149$, $p < 0.05$). Hypothesis H4, that the mediator cultural novelty explains the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment, was not confirmed at a 95% significance level ($\beta = 0.060$, $t = 1.708$, $0.05 < p < 0.1$). The hypothesis H5a was not confirmed: even though the variable of ethnocentrism has a direct

effect on life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.226$, $t = 2.501$, $p < 0.05$) this is the opposite than assumed originally. Hypotheses H5b-H5c were confirmed: the variable of ethnocentrism has a direct effect on the two mediators examined in this study, i.e., culture shock ($\beta = 0.513$, $t = 5.340$, $p < 0.01$), and cultural novelty ($\beta = 0.206$, $t = 2.087$, $p < 0.05$).

5 Discussion

People with higher CQ can generally adapt to a new culture quickly, without much difficulty or stress (Brislin et al., 2006). A higher CQ offers a broader range of opportunities, which contribute to greater comfort (and therefore satisfaction) in the new cultural environment. Individuals with higher CQ are able to acquire new information more efficiently and act accordingly (Earley and Ang, 2003). In addition, they are better able to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships with foreigners. In keeping with spillover theory, these skills are transferable to everyday life outside the workplace. The abilities measured by CQ contribute to satisfaction not only at work but also in personal life (Jiang and Hu, 2016; Le et al., 2018) and consequently to better cross-cultural adjustment, as demonstrated by the results of our study.

An individual who can adjust to the local context will clearly benefit at work and in his/her personal life (Shu et al., 2017). The extent to which he or she succeeds in this depends on a number of factors and circumstances: language skills, previous international experience, cross-cultural skills training received, and perception of cultural differences between his or her home country and the environment to which he or she has been temporarily posted. However, cultural intelligence is an important regulator of culture shock (and hence cross-cultural adjustment), as the results of this study confirm. Four steps are described (Livermore, 2015) to work on in order to become culturally intelligent: learning foreign languages and mastering them at an advanced level, travelling abroad regularly and gaining experience of interacting with foreigners, or interacting more frequently with people from other cultures (Urnaut, 2014). It can be seen that much depends on the individual in this respect, but the organisation should also strive in its own interest to become more culturally competent through its employees and take appropriate measures and steps in this direction (e.g., regular evaluation and monitoring of progress in the development of the organization's cultural competence in the form of self-assessment questionnaires completed by the organisation's employees).

Interesting results were obtained from the analysis of relationships related to cultural novelty. Direct effects were confirmed; and yet cultural novelty is not a good explanatory variable for the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment. The positive direct relationship between CQ and cultural novelty signals that high CQ to some extent neutralises cultural differences because the individual views the new culture (and all that it entails) with understanding and can better discern what connects the two diverse worlds. Nor is it surprising that adjustment will be easier the more the individual sees the two different worlds as having similar connotations. It can be said that cultural intelligence relativises diversity. This suggests that organisations should focus more on developing CQ and not worry so much about the destination where they intend to send their employees for an extended work trip, as an individual with high CQ is more likely to be able to cope well in different cultural environments.

The results of this study have shown that the variable of ethnocentrism certainly belongs in a model examining the influences determining employee adjustment in culturally diverse environments because ethnocentrism is a certain type of cultural attitude, an individual perception of a particular culture; it is a dynamic and evolving state, under constant influence by its context, rather than something that has been previously created and fixed in place (Young et al., 2017). Ethnocentrism as a preference for one's own cultural group over members of another cultural group manifests as discomfort, unpleasant feelings in a new environment full of contradictions where many things often seem incomprehensible through the prism of one's own cultural background (Barbuto et al., 2015). Ethnocentrism is related to an individual's success in interacting with others who come from different cultures (Harrison, 2012). Ethnocentrism is a predictor of CQ (Ang et al., 2007) and influences variables (life satisfaction, culture shock, and cultural novelty) associated with the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment. In this study, we examined only the direct effect of ethnocentrism on selected variables; future research may build on the results of this study to examine ethnocentrism in the role of a moderator.

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To overcome or minimise ethnocentrism, it is critical to develop cultural awareness (Pocovnicu and Vasilache, 2012), which is related to the openness of the individual to the idea of a possible change in cultural attitudes. An individual (like an organisation) becomes culturally competent if he or she can work effectively in a cross-cultural environment and produce better outputs. This requires expanding cultural knowledge (about the history, values, beliefs, and behaviours of other cultural groups), cultural awareness, and cultural sensitivity (i.e., awareness that there are differences between cultures, but where these differences are not viewed in terms of better/worse, right/wrong).

6 Conclusion

Despite its limitations (e.g., responses were predominantly from respondents of Chinese nationality), the paper contributes new insights to the field of international human resource management (HRM). Using a sample of migrants who came to the Czech Republic (for the most part) primarily for university studies, but are simultaneously working and employed, a comprehensive model has been developed of the internal, contextual, and temporal factors affecting the adjustment of foreigners in a new cultural environment. The basic axis of the research, the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment, is examined in the effect of three mediators (life satisfaction, culture shock, and cultural novelty) and the direct effect of ethnocentrism. The results of the study show that individuals' internal well-being and life satisfaction are not as influential (compared to contextual and external influences such as cultural novelty or inevitable culture shock) provided that cultural intelligence has been developed. Cross-cultural adjustment is most effective and job performance most efficient when a person can maintain a good frame of mind in a foreign environment (with help from his/her cultural intelligence) and derive satisfaction from life there as well.

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