

Chapter 43

The Interactions Between Cultural Intelligence, Job Burnout, and Task Performance of Expatriates

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, cultural intelligence, one of the most crucial capabilities of employees for overcoming the cultural obstacles of different countries, is figured out in depth. This is attained by checking out the relationships between cultural intelligence, job burnout and task performance of expatriates who are employees sent by their company to a host country for a period. Since expatriates are the employees who face actual barriers in adapting and living in different cultures, a quantitative research was conducted among 156 expatriates working at the marketing department of different multinational companies, operating in Turkey. According to the results, expatriates with high cultural intelligence face burnout less at the workplace. Moreover, task performance of these employees tends to increase because of their cultural intelligence. Consequently, with the help of this chapter, a paramount empirical study on cultural intelligence and its correlates is added to the literature.

INTRODUCTION

Stemming from the latest developments in the communication and information technologies as well as transportation services, the earth is becoming smaller in terms of geography. By contrast it is developing at a rate, which has been experienced before recently. According to IMF (2017) total Gross Domestic Product of 190 countries around the world is expected to be more than 83 trillion American dollars by the end of 2018. Owing to this economic setup around the world, companies are operating beyond their

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origin countries as a necessity. Trying to achieve their best, they can either hire employees from the host country or they can send their own employees from the origin country to the host country. These employees are mostly named as ‘expatriate’ or ‘expat’ in short.

Expatriates are the employees who face the difficulties of cultural and language barriers in host countries. They are exposed to survive in a different environment in terms of language, rules, traditions and customs. That is why ‘working in a diverse environment’ or ‘managing diverse workforce’ is up to date issues in both general and human resources management. But sadly, not all the employees are lucky to overcome cultural and language barriers easily. As a result they may have burnout syndrome or they can be dissatisfied with their job as well as their job performances may deteriorate. To overcome these negative results, diversity management should be effective in terms of supplying the help, which expatriates need to adapt to the new work atmosphere. If there is an ineffective adaptation process for expatriates, after a while they lose their self-confidence, dissatisfied with the conditions offered and lastly burnout occurs. But if it is in the opposite way, they feel more satisfied and happier, and they tend to exert extra performance in their company.

The main aim of this study is to find out how the cultural intelligence and linguistic intelligence of expatriates overcome the diversity barriers and investigate whether these intelligences play role in eliminating their job burnout and fostering their task performances. To achieve this, using the most reliable scales in the literature, a quantitative research technique was applied among sufficient number of expatriates working in marketing departments of subsidiary companies operating in Turkey. The results will put forth the links between cultural and linguistic intelligence and job burnout and task performance, which form the scope of this study. So in this chapter, it is intended to both fill a gap in the related literature and to supply valuable information and insight to the practitioners.

BACKGROUND

It is unquestionable that nowadays globalization gains more and more power than it did before. Every day companies search for new opportunities outside their origin country to maximize their profits. They search for new markets as well as penetrating in existing ones abroad. According to United States Bureau of Economic Analysis, US foreign direct investment raised from 1.32 to 6.01 trillion dollars in the period between 2000 and 2017. And sending employees for their operations abroad helped these types of companies to increase their foreign direct investments. From the human resources perspective, these employees who are sent by their parent companies to other countries in order to live and work at these host countries for a time period between two years and seven years, in general, are called as ‘expatriates’ (Caligiuri, 2000).

Throughout this process companies give emphasize on their expatriates’ adjustments to host countries. This is because when employees have difficulties in getting used to working at a host country, their job performance tends to deteriorate which in turn causes a decrease in organizational effectiveness (Liu and Shaffer, 2005). Besides there being many factors affecting an expatriate’s adjustment to a new country, at this point, cultural factors take the head. The rationale behind this is, expatriates’ facing these cultural factors firstly, and then learning and adjusting to them, since there are important differences from one country to another among the components of culture such as; values, attitudes, beliefs and norms (Van Vianen, De Pater, Kristof-Brown & Johnson, 2004).

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