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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL DISTANCE AND EXPATRIATE BURNOUT: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between cultural distance and expatriate burnout and to reveal the moderating effect of cultural intelligence in this relationship. No study has been found to examine the relationship between cultural distance and expatriate burnout and the effect of cultural intelligence on this relationship. This study will fill this gap in the literature. Through questionnaires, data were collected from hotels, universities, and logistics, construction, architecture, aviation, and tourism companies in different parts of the world. Three hundred sixty-three questionnaires were analyzed. According to the findings of the study, as the distance between the native cultures of expatriates assigned to foreign missions and the culture of the host country increases, their level of burnout also increases. Moreover, it was identified that the effect of cultural distance on expatriate burnout is lower in expatriates with high cultural intelligence and vice versa in expatriates with low cultural intelligence.

Keywords: Cultural distance, cultural intelligence, burnout, expatriate

1. INTRODUCTION

The literature on expatriates and foreign missions indicates that early repatriations are considered as a frequently experienced problem (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2006). Even though the studies conducted on the subject mark a proportional decline in early repatriations with respect to previous periods, the rate has never fallen below 7%, despite meticulous selection procedures and training programs. Even more importantly, 33% of expatriates do not repatriate, despite being unsuccessful (Silbiger and Pines, 2014). Expatriates and their families may return to their homelands for a wide range of reasons. These reasons may include simply a strong homesickness, as well as severe adaptation problems due to cultural nuances such as those related to housing conditions, healthcare facilities, and leisure activities, or even more severe problems related with the work itself, the business environment, or with cultural circumstances in a much wider sense (Bhanugopan and Fish, 2006).

One of the major sources of the problems highlighted above is the relationship between culture and burnout. There is a given distance between the culture of expatriates' home countries and the culture of the host country.

One of the most significant outcomes that may arise as this distance increases is an increase in expatriates' level of burnout. Cultural distance, which is indicated as the level of difference of two cultures, is among the significant determinants of the ability to adapt to different cultures and to feel at home. It can be asserted that as this distance increases, the challenges experienced by expatriates also increases (Zhang, 2012; Demes and Geeraert, 2013). As the cultural difference between two countries increases, the need to adapt to the host country increases as well. When expatriates fail to adapt to their environment, they also fail to carry on their businesses, and their work may become insignificant and worthless to them, to an extent that it does not make any difference in their lives, which in turn increases their burnout level.

On the other hand, studies on the subject revealed that there is a significant relationship between expatriates' cultural intelligence levels and their ability to adapt to cultural differences (Ramalu et al., 2011; Evans, 2012; Huff et al., 2014). The faculty to adapt to different cultures and to manage a network of relationships with people from different cultures depends on a set of abilities. The fact that some individuals can adapt better to intercultural environments might be explained in terms of these abilities (Ang et al., 2006; Ang et al., 2007; Shannon and Begley, 2008). As a result of studies conducted on the subject, the current conception on the concept of intelligence is that an individual's success in daily life does not only depend on her/his cognitive abilities (IQ), but also on her/his emotional and social intelligence (Şahin and Gürbüz, 2012). In general, cultural intelligence is defined as an individual's ability to function effectively and to be successful in her/his daily life as well as in her/his professional life under different cultural environments (Ang et al., 2007).

With reference to the definition mentioned above, the impact of cultural intelligence level on the relationship between cultural distance and expatriate burnout is an issue of concern. This study intends to explain this relationship. To this end, the concepts of cultural distance, cultural intelligence, and burnout were examined in general with regard to expatriates. The relationships between these variables were explained in terms of *Cognitive Appraisal Theory*, and the model developed as a result was tested with an empirical research.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Cultural Distance

The concept of cultural distance, which can be conceptualized as the differences between national cultures, can be defined as the level of difference of shared norms and values in a country with respect to another country (Beugelsdijk et al., 2015). Cultural distance can also be expressed as the barriers that arise as a result of adaptation to another country due to differences (Beugelsdijk et al., 2015). While cultural distance between countries is expressed as the differences between stable value systems such as customs and traditions, norms and local business environment according to one definition (Chua et al., 2015); yet another definition of the concept highlights the differences between two cultures in terms of social and physical characteristics (Babiker et al., 1980; Suanet and Vijver, 2009). In addition to this, numerous studies used the concepts of cultural and physical distance interchangeably (Sousa and Bradley, 2008). Furthermore, factors that lead to cultural distance also vary to a large extent. Many factors such as climate (temperature and precipitation levels, humidity, etc.), natural environment (vegetation, wildlife, population density, landscape, etc.), social environment (population size, pace of life, noise level, etc.), life (hygiene, sleeping habits, how secure people feel, etc.), social practices (going on a walk, using public transport vehicles, shopping, etc.), dietary patterns (types of food consumed, types of cooking, mealtimes, etc.), family life (the level of intimacy between family members, the time spent together, etc.), social norms (behavioral patterns in society, dressing styles, things that are considered funny, etc.), values and beliefs (people's opinions on the relationship between religion and politics or right and wrong, etc.), human characteristics (the level of friendliness, stress or complacency, attitudes towards foreigners, etc.), friendships (companionship, the level of social interaction, things people do to relax, etc.), and language (a learnable language, ability to understand people, ability to express oneself, etc.) vary from culture to culture (Demes and Geeraert, 2013).

Cultural distance is among the most significant determinants of the ability to adapt to different cultures and to feel at home under unfamiliar environments (Demes and Geeraert, 2013; Huff et al., 2014). It can be claimed that especially when the distance between two cultures increases, the challenges experienced by expatriates also increases (Zhang, 2012; Demes and Geeraert, 2013). Therefore, the level of cultural distance between the expatriate's home country and the host country would determine the level of the need to adapt, and as differences increase, the need to adapt will intensify. Hence, it is possible to say that there is a significant relationship between cultural distance and acculturation (Demes and Geeraert, 2013).

However, the literature has frequently indicated that cultural distance affects business performance negatively, as managing the similarities is easier for organizations than managing the differences (Sousa and Bradley,

2008). In this context, there are numerous studies in the literature asserting that businesses show the best performances in foreign markets that are most similar to their home markets (Sousa and Bradley, 2008).

2.2. Cultural Intelligence

Owing to the effects of globalization, the diversity of organizations has been increasing consistently; products designed in a country are manufactured in another country and marketed in hundreds of other countries. This inevitably leads numerous bilateral relations to arise between employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers, and other organizations from different cultures (Ang et al., 2006; Triandis, 2006). Such situation brings various challenges that must be tackled. As these different cultures set barriers, they reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of the interaction between parties. At this juncture, understanding how some individuals cope better with situations where cultural differences prevail has become crucial for employees, managers, and organizations (Ang et al., 2006; Ang et al., 2007; Shannon and Begley, 2008).

It has been realized that in today's multicultural organizations, having cognitive, emotional, and social intelligence is not sufficient on its own for individuals to be effective and successful; it is necessary for them to have cultural intelligence, as well, in order to cope with differences they are faced with in new cultural environments (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). The concept of cultural intelligence was introduced in the literature by Earley and Ang (2003) based on Stenberg and Detterman's (1986) theory of multidimensional intelligence, and defined as all capabilities that ensure an individual to function effectively in different cultural environments (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Ang et al., 2011). Cultural intelligence is yet another supplementary type of intelligence as cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and practical intelligence (Van Dyne et al., 2012; Ang et al., 2011); it is domain-specific, since norms related to social interaction vary from culture to culture (Van Dyne et al., 2012), and can be developed through trainings, trips, foreign missions and other intercultural experiences (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Ng et al., 2009; Kim and Van Dyne, 2012; Van Dyne et al., 2012). The classification developed by Earley and Ang (2003) on the aspects of cultural intelligence has received wide acceptance in the literature (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). Accordingly, cultural intelligence consists of four aspects including *metacognitive*, *cognitive*, *motivational*, and *behavioral cultural intelligence* (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008).

Metacognitive CQ includes an individual's capabilities to know and control culture-related processes of thought s/he employs during recognition and comprehension of situations that contain cultural differences. Metacognitive capabilities include capabilities such as planning, monitoring, and reviewing mental models. Individuals with high metacognitive intelligence are deliberately aware of both their own and others cultural preferences and norms before and in the course of interaction. They question their cultural assumptions and may adapt their mental models during and after interaction (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Ng et al., 2009; Ang et al., 2011).

While metacognitive intelligence is related to rather higher cognitive processes, *cognitive cultural intelligence* includes norms, practices, and customs of different cultures gained by the individual through education and experience. This type of intelligence involves economic, judicial, and social systems of different cultures. Individuals with high cognitive intelligence levels are capable of predicting and understanding similarities and differences between cultures (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Ng et al., 2009).

While cognitive capabilities (metacognitive cultural intelligence and cognitive cultural intelligence) provide the power to grasp different cultures to individuals, *motivational cultural intelligence* includes capabilities related to orienting attention and energy to coping with uncertain and strange environments. Individuals who possess this aspect of cultural intelligence have the inner motivation and trust in their ability to adapt themselves environments where cultural differences prevail (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Ng et al., 2009).

Behavioral cultural intelligence indicates individuals' behavioral flexibility to adapt themselves to different cultural environments. This intelligence type is a crucial part of cultural intelligence. This is mainly due to the fact that actions are the most explicit properties of social interactions. Metcognitive, cognitive, and motivational cultural intelligence should be completed with behavioral cultural intelligence. Individuals with high behavioral cultural intelligence are capable of exhibiting behaviors compliant with the conditions caused by cultural differences. They employ culturally appropriate words, intonations, gestures and mimics (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Ng et al., 2009; Ang et al., 2011).

2.3. Expatriate Burnout

Expatriate burnout, and the reasons and results of burnout, is one of the most important issues that has been discussed in organizations since the 1970s (Maslach et al., 2001; Pines, 2005; Huang et al., 2010). The concept

of burnout was introduced by *Greene (1961)* (Maslach et al., 2001). *Freudenberger (1977)* viewed burnout as a phenomenon that can be experienced by all occupational groups, characterized it as an occupational hazard, and defined it as failure, fatigue, or exhaustion due to excessive demands related to energy, stamina, or resources. *Maslach and Jackson (1981)*, in turn, defined burnout as a syndrome that occurs as a result of the reflection of feelings such as physical exhaustion, long-term fatigue, despair, and hopelessness observed in people who are exposed to intense emotional demands and in a position to constantly be in face-to-face communication due to their work on negative attitudes towards one's job, daily life, and other people.

Different classifications have been made in the literature with regard to the aspects of burnout. In this context, *Maslach et al. (2001)* approached burnout in three different aspects including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced sense of personal accomplishment. In this classification, *emotional exhaustion* indicates the exhaustion of energy or emotional resources (*Bakker et al., 2000*); *depersonalization* refers to insensitive behavior towards colleagues with whom the individual interacts and people to whom s/he provides services for (*Hayter, 2000*), disregarding the presence of other persons, ignoring the peculiar characteristics of these persons or attempting to distance herself/himself from these individuals treating them as objects (*Çalgan et al., 2009*); and *low personal accomplishment* characterizes the individual's perception of herself/himself as professionally unqualified, sense of failure in her/his job, and having the idea of inadequacy of all efforts s/he makes in meeting the demands (*Schwarzer et al., 2000; Çalgan et al., 2009*). Another classification was proposed by *Pines and Aronson (1981)*. The authors defined burnout as "a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding" (*Enzmann et al., 1998*). Here, physical exhaustion indicates low energy, chronic fatigue and weakness; emotional exhaustion characterizes feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and entrapment; and mental exhaustion refers to the development of negative attitudes towards one's self, one's work, and life itself (*Enzmann et al., 1998*).

3. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CULTURAL DISTANCE, CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE, AND EXPATRIATE BURNOUT

3.1. Relationship Between Cultural Distance and Expatriate Burnout

Cognitive Appraisal Theory comprised the theoretical basis of our study. Therefore, this theory will be utilized in explaining the relationships between cultural distance, cultural intelligence, and burnout. *Cognitive appraisal theory* focuses on whether an environmental stimulus constitutes a problem (threat) for the individual's well-being, and if so, how the individual evaluates whether s/he can cope with this situation (*Folkman et al., 1986*). In other words, according to this theory, individuals assess environmental demands, their impacts on themselves, and the resources they have to cope with these demands, and give an emotional response as a result of this appraisal (*Lazarus and Folkman, 1984*). According to the theory, individuals make two types of assessments on environmental demands and the resources they have to manage them: *primary appraisal* and *secondary appraisal*. In the *primary appraisal*, individuals evaluate the effects of the environmental stimulus on their well-being as irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful. If the stimulus is evaluated by individuals as a situation that would not cause a loss or a gain, it would be categorized as *irrelevant*; if it is evaluated as a situation that would maintain or improve well-being, it would be categorized as *benign-positive*; and if it is evaluated as a situation that would generate a threat, challenge, or harm/loss, then it would be categorized as a *stressor* (*Lazarus and Folkman, 1984*). *Secondary appraisal* is related with individuals' feelings about their ability to cope with the stimulus. In this appraisal, individuals evaluate the resources they have regarding their capability to cope with the threats and losses or to take advantage of the opportunities the stimulus generates (*Folkman et al., 1986*). These two appraisals interact with each other, and determine the degree of the resulting stress and emotional response (*Lazarus and Folkman, 1984*).

A comprehensive review of the literature on burnout reveals that these studies focus on the discrepancy between individual and environment (*Jia et al., 2009*). In other words, when employees fail to adapt to their environments, they may be faced with burnout. In this context, culture is one of the crucial environmental precursors that has an effect on burnout in general (*Yip et al., 2005*). When there is a discrepancy between personal and cultural values, burnout may arise (*Jia et al., 2009*). Considering this situation from the perspective of cognitive appraisal theory indicates that when expatriates arrive in the host country, they will be faced with cultural differences, i.e. stimuli, at various degrees. These stimuli expressed as cultural distance will have an impact on expatriates' well-being. As the difference between two cultures increases, the impact of these differences on the well-being of the individual will also be higher. At this point, expatriates will make primary and secondary appraisals on the stimuli and their well-being, and consider whether the cultural distance pose a threat or provide an opportunity, the resources they have, and whether they can cope with these

stimuli or not. Expatriate burnout will increase or decrease according to the strength of the stimulus and the expatriate's ability to cope with it. Although no study conducted directly on this issue has been found, the results of studies regarding variables similar to cultural distance and burnout support our assessments. Babiker et al. (1980) found a significant positive effect of cultural distance on anxiety among international students at a British University in their study. Tatar and Horenczyk (2003) suggested that stress and challenges experienced in an environment that contains students from different cultures would cause occupational burnout among teachers. This suggestion coincides with the view that burnout is one of the cumulative and long-term chronic effects of occupational stress. Leiter and Maslach (2004), in turn, revealed in their study, which covered 8,339 expatriates in the US, Canada, Italy, and Finland that factors such as control, reward, community, and fairness had a role on burnout due to value conflicts. Galchenko and Vijver (2007) identified in their study on first-year exchange students who came from different countries to study at various Russian universities that perceived cultural distance increased stress. In their research covering 400 Belgian expatriates, *Bouchenooghe et al.* (2005) found that value and value conflicts, which are significant cultural factors, were significant sources of stress (Jia et al., 2009). Similarly, the study conducted by Pan et al. (2007) indicated that cultural differences among Chinese students studying in Hong Kong had caused negative emotions to increase. In the study conducted among students studying in Russia once again, Suanet and Vijver (2009) identified that perceived cultural distance had a significant effect on stress. Based on these suggestions, the following hypothesis can be developed:

H1: Cultural distance will be positively related to expatriate burnout.

3.2. Relationship Between Cultural Intelligence and Expatriate Burnout

As mentioned above, within the scope of their secondary appraisal in terms of the relationship between cultural distance and burnout, expatriates assess to what extent they can cope with the impacts of cultural distance. To this end, they review the resources they have. In this context, owing to the awareness of their own and others' cultural preferences and norms before and during cultural interaction, the ability to question their cultural assumptions during and after cultural interaction; the ability to adapt their mental models; the ability to predict and comprehend the similarities and differences between cultures; having the necessary internal motivation to adapt themselves to environments where cultural differences prevail and being self-confident regarding their capability of doing so; and the ability to carry out the verbal and non-verbal actions suitable to environments where cultural differences prevail (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008; Ng et al., 2009; Ang et al., 2011), expatriates with high cultural intelligence may easily cope with the conditions due to cultural differences. Therefore, it can be suggested that the level of burnout would decrease or increase according to the expatriates' level of cultural intelligence (Kodwani, 2012). The studies conducted on this matter support this suggestion. In their study on short-term business travelers, Tay et al. (2008) identified that cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral intelligence reduced burnout. Similarly, Stokes (2013) revealed in her study on college students in the US that motivational CQ reduced burnout. Based on these suggestions, the following hypothesis can be developed:

H2: Cultural intelligence will be negatively related with expatriate burnout.

3.3. The Moderating Effect Of Cultural Intelligence On The Relationship Between Cultural Distance And Expatriate Burnout

It can also be suggested that cultural intelligence would have a moderating effect on the relationship between cultural distance and burnout. In other words, depending on the cultural intelligence levels of expatriates faced with different cultural characteristics than their own in the host country, it can be claimed that expatriates may manage these differences and cope with the problems they are faced with more easily. From this perspective, it can be suggested that cultural intelligence has a mitigating effect on the negative impact of cultural difference on burnout (Figure 1). In other words, the effect of cultural distance on burnout in individuals with a high level of cultural intelligence would be less than those with a low level of cultural intelligence. Based on these suggestions, the following hypothesis can be developed:

H3: Cultural intelligence will have a moderating effect on the relationship between cultural distance and expatriate burnout.

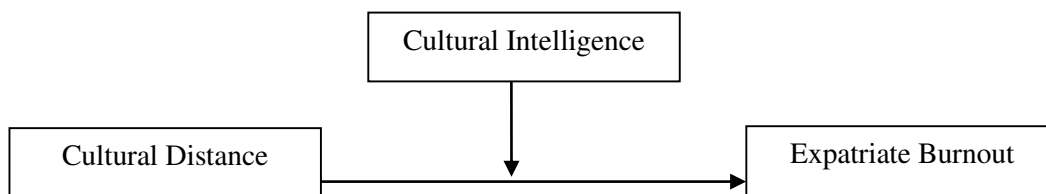


Figure 1. Research Model

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Data Collection and Sample

Data were collected from 363 expatriates (Appendix 1) working at hotels, hospitals, restaurants, universities, and in logistics, oil, construction, architecture, aviation, and tourism companies in different parts of the world. In order to reach expatriates as culturally diverse as possible, electronic research link was shared in “expatriate groups” on social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), online interviews were conducted with participants, and they were ensured to complete the questionnaires. It was identified that the expatriates who participated in the research were working in production, training, library, management, human resources, quality control, project management, sales, marketing, customer services, information processing, distribution, software, risk management, nutrition, and engineering departments of the companies in which they were employed. Sixty-eight point three percent (248) of the expatriate participants were female, 31.7% (115) were male; 51% (185) were married, 49% (178) were single; the mean age was 36.37, and average term of employment was 4.4 years.

4.2. Measures

Cultural Distance: The 12-item scale developed by Demes and Geeraert (2013) was employed. The mentioned scale asks the subjects to compare their home country with the host country, and to give scores according to a 5-point Likert scale with (1) being “there is no difference at all” and (5) being “there is a large difference” to statements related to characteristics such as climate, social environment, and social norms. The reliability coefficient of the scale was estimated as 0.905.

Cultural Intelligence: Cultural intelligence was measured according to the 20-item scale developed by Ang et al. (2007). The scale consists of four sub-dimensions including metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral CQ. It includes statements such as, “I am aware of the cultural background I utilize while communicating with individuals from different cultures” and “I am aware of the religious beliefs of other cultures.” Responses were given on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The alpha coefficient of reliability was 0.869.

Expatriate Burnout: In order to measure expatriate burnout, the short version of Pines and Aronson’s (1988) scale abbreviated by Pines (2005) was employed. The Pines and Aronson (1988) scale is one of the most frequently employed scales in the literature to measure burnout (Enzmann et al., 1998; Pines, 2005). It is a unidimensional scale developed to measure the burnout levels of all occupational groups, even groups without an occupation (Pines, 2005). The items of the scale were transformed into statements that would reveal the burnout of expatriates for being in the host country. The sample items were, “I feel tired due to working in that country” and “I feel trapped due to working in that country.” The alpha reliability for this scale was 0.940.

Data were collected with scales drawn up in English.

4.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed with Lisrel 8.54 and SPSS 20.0 statistical data analysis package software. While a correlation analysis was employed to measure the relationship between variables, a hierarchical regression analysis was employed to detect the effects of cultural distance and cultural intelligence on expatriate burnout.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the measurement model. The measurement model consisted of six factors: cultural distance (one factor), cultural intelligence (four factors -metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ), and expatriate burnout (one factor) items. The results showed that six-factor model provided a good fit to the data, (X^2) 2277.15, (df) 804, (X^2/df) 2.833, (RMSEA) 0.071, (CFI)

0.99 ve (NFI) 0.98. The measurement model was compared to three alternative models (Table 1). According to the chi-squared test of association/independence test, measurement model has the best fitting value when compared the model 2 (the structural empty model which is the relationships between variables is fixed to zero) ($\Delta X^2 (15) = 2434.44, p < 0.01$), Model 3 (one factor model which is that all factors are installed on a single factor) ($\Delta X^2 (15) = 3919.37, p < 0.01$) and Model 4 (three factors model which is include of one factor of cultural distance, one factor of cultural intelligence and one factor of expatriate burnout) ($\Delta X^2 (12) = 1096.30, p < 0.01$). Harman's one factor test which shows at model 3 was used to determine whether there is common method variance in the study or not (Podsakoff et.al., 2003 as cited in Bolat, 2011). It seems that one factor model has worse fitting value when compared with the measurement model ($X^2 = 6197.12, df = 819, p < 0.01, RMSEA = 0.135, CFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.95$). According to these values, it can be said that there isn't possibility of the common method variance.

Table 1. Comparisons of measurement models for variables

Models	X^2	df	X^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	X^2_{diff}	df_{diff}
Model 1 Six factors model	2277.75**	804	2.833	0.071	0.99	0.98		
Model 2 Null model	4712.19**	819	5.753	0.115	0.96	0.95	2434.44	15**
Model 3 One factor model	6197.12**	819	7.566	0.135	0.96	0.95	3919.37	15**
Model 4 Three factors model	3374.05**	816	4.134	0.093	0.98	0.97	1096.05	12**

$N = 363, ** p < 0.01$

5.2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and reliabilities of the study variables.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations of variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Cultural distance	3.268	0.787	(0.905)		
2. Cultural intelligence	3.696	0.466	0.153**	(0.869)	
3. Expatriate burnout	2.023	0.805	0.330**	-0.086	(0.940)

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed); reliability estimates (Cronbach's alphas) are in parentheses; $n = 363$.

5.3. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

We used hierarchical linear regression analysis to assess the hypotheses. Following the recommendation of Cohen and Cohen (1983) and Aiken and West (1991), the predictor variables were centered to reduce multicollinearity among the interaction terms. The results of regression analysis are provided Table 3. Model 1 indicates that cultural distance is positively and significantly related to expatriate burnout ($B = 0.338, p < 0.01$). This result supports *Hypothesis 1*. Model 2 shows that cultural intelligence is significantly and negatively related to expatriate burnout ($B = -0.241, p < 0.01$). This result supports *Hypothesis 2*. Model 3 shows that cultural distance x cultural intelligence interaction is significantly and negatively related to burnout ($B = -0.230, p < 0.01$).

Table 3. Moderating effect analysis of cultural intelligence

Variables	Expatriate Burnout		
	B	B	B
Model 1			
1.Cultural distance	0.338**		
<i>F</i>	44.253		
<i>R</i> ²	0.109		
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	0.107		
Model 2			
1.Cultural distance		0.360**	
2.Cultural intelligence		-0.241**	
<i>F</i>		26.500	
<i>R</i> ²		0.128	
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²		0.123	
Model 3			
1.Cultural distance			0.326**
2.Cultural intelligence			-0.262**
3.Cultural distance x Cultural intelligence			-0.230**
<i>F</i>			19.656
<i>R</i> ²			0.141
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²			0.134

Note: $N = 363$, ** $p < 0.01$, used unstandardized coefficients.

The plot of interaction between cultural distance and cultural intelligence for expatriate burnout is shown in Figures 1. As presented in the figure, there was a stronger positive relationship between cultural distance and expatriate burnout for those with low cultural intelligence. We performed simple slope analyses (Aiken and West, 1991). These analyses showed that the effect of cultural distance on expatriate burnout much more with low cultural intelligence ($B = 0.433$, $p < 0.01$) than high cultural intelligence ($B = 0.219$, $p < 0.01$). These results support *Hypothesis 3*.

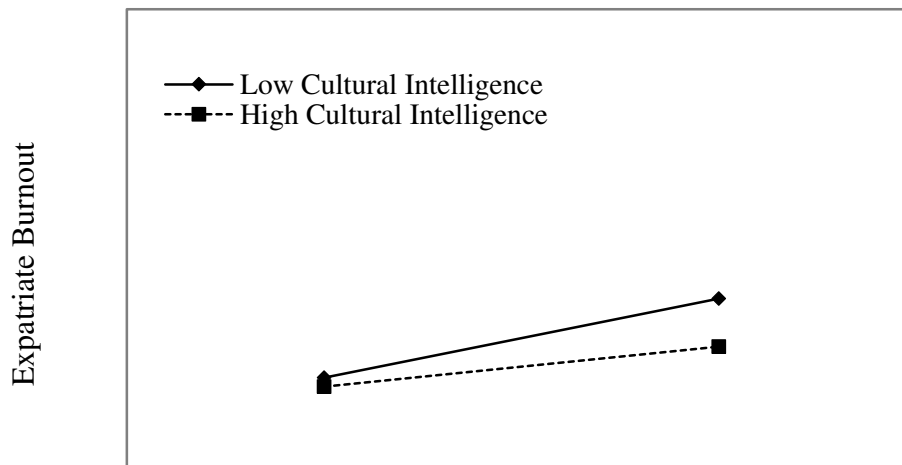


Figure 2. The plot of cultural distance and cultural intelligence interaction

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Theoretical Implications

Even though there are no studies in the literature on expatriates regarding cultural distance and burnout, there are findings on negative moods such as stress, psychological pain, uneasiness, discomfort, to a limited extent. Experiencing such moods consistently and at increasing severity might be regarded as suffering from the signs of burnout. Therefore, although the keyword of our study is “expatriate burnout,” the data obtained from these

studies were also assessed as a point of departure. In other words, although the issue was addressed indirectly, expatriate burnout was examined to a very limited extent in the literature. On the other hand, cultural intelligence was referred to as a cultural adaptation tool in the study, while investigating the relationship between cultural distance and expatriate burnout. The perspective that cultural intelligence has an impact while eliminating the negative effects of intensifying cultural differences on expatriates -the reduction of burnout- was a predominant theme of the study. Another literary distinctness was the aspect of cultural differences and adaptation addressed in this study. The issue was examined with respect to three dimensions including work adjustment, interaction adjustment and general adjustment in the literature. In our study, in turn, work adjustment was not taken into consideration at all, while the external dimension of interaction adjustment and general adjustment were taken into account.

Based on the data that could be obtained within the framework of this study, no study on the relationship between cultural distance, expatriate burnout, and cultural intelligence could be detected in the relevant literature as mentioned above. Identifying whether cultural intelligence has a moderating effect on the relationship between cultural distance and expatriate burnout, the study intended to fill this gap in the literature. More elaborately speaking, primarily, we detected a significant and positive relationship between cultural distance and expatriate burnout. According to this result, as the difference between expatriates' own cultures and the culture of the host country increase, their burnout levels also increase. While the issues of cultural differences, acculturation levels, the predecessors and outcomes of acculturation, and the subjective stress experienced by expatriates have been extensively addressed in the literature, expatriate burnout and its levels have hardly ever been investigated (Takeuchi et al., 2005; Bhanugopan and Fish, 2006; Silbiger and Pines, 2014). However, there are a limited number of studies on phenomena such as negative emotions, stress, and anxiety in expatriates due to the lack of adaptation to cultural differences, which can be considered to be similar to burnout. For instance, Oberg (1960), who developed the concept of cultural shock, claimed that when individuals are faced with unfamiliar cultural norms and standards, they feel puzzled and nervous. According to Wild et al. (2000), when people enter a new cultural environment that is entirely different than their own culture, they may experience cultural shock, and feel confused, unhappy, irritable, homesick, harassed, and furious (Ghafoor et al., 2011). Dissimilar to authors who viewed the issue in terms of cultural shock, Fisher and Hutchings (2013) referred to the concept of "cultural disconnects," and defined it as a type of incongruence. They indicated that it could lead to severe psychological problems for expatriates. According to these authors, when a conflict arises between the values of the host culture and the values of individuals who are in a strange cultural environment, it may result in psychological stress. Another study highlighted that the stress experienced by expatriates is a reflection of cultural incongruity (living conditions, local food habits, transportation, entertainment, healthcare services, etc.) in the course of serving in a foreign mission (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Regardless of how it was expressed in the abovementioned studies, the concept in question is the difference between two cultures. Adaptation to cultures that are more dissimilar is harder with respect to adaptation to cultures that have more similar traits. Wang and Kanungo (2004) indicated that working as an immigrant is already stressful, and the psychological comfort of expatriates are negatively affected by environmental and cultural ambiguities. The research on the subject focused more on the ability/failure of students studying at foreign countries to adapt to the host culture rather than the expatriates. Babiker et al. (1980) found a significant positive effect of cultural distance on anxiety among international students at a British University in their study. Galchenko and Vijver (2007) identified in their study on first-year exchange students who came from different countries to study at various Russian universities that perceived cultural distance increased stress. Similarly, in the study conducted among students studying in Russia, Suanet and Vijver (2009) identified that perceived cultural distance had a significant effect on stress. The study conducted by Pan et al. (2007) indicated that cultural differences among Chinese students studying in Hong Kong caused negative emotions to increase. Based on the findings mentioned above, it can be suggested that, in an analogy to foreign students experiencing psychological problems due to cultural distance, expatriates would also experience similar problems in all aspects of life as well as in organizations.

Another relationship addressed in our study was the relationship between cultural intelligence and burnout. In this respect, the findings of the study revealed that there was a negative relationship between burnout and the cultural intelligence levels of expatriates. There were similar findings in the reviewed literature, as well. In their study on short-term business travelers, Tay et al. (2008) identified that cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral intelligence reduced burnout. Similarly, Stokes (2013) revealed in her study on college students in the US that motivational CQ reduced burnout.

The findings of our research showed that cultural intelligence had a moderating effect on cultural distance and expatriate burnout. As mentioned above, this is an original contribution to the literature. Accordingly, as the

cultural intelligence levels of expatriates increase, the level of burnout due to cultural distance decreases. This finding is in line with Caligiuri's (2000) findings, though in an indirect way. Namely, individuals who are more open to a new culture -those who have a higher cultural intelligence- can adapt to the cultural norms, behavioral patterns and roles of the host country more easily, and vice versa.

6.2. Managerial Implications

One of the main findings of our study was that, as cultural distance increases, the level of expatriate burnout also increases. Burnout brings various personal, organizational, and social problems with it, irrespective of the occupational group in question. Studies conducted on this issue showed that burnout leads to numerous problems including extreme fatigue, sleep problems, low energy, constant anxiety, reduction in self-respect, absenteeism, increase in the intentions to leave, labor turnover, low efficiency and productivity, decline in performance, job satisfaction, and commitment to work and the organization, and disregard of and lack of attention towards customers and family members (Maslach et al., 2001; Ardiç and Polatçı, 2008). Another finding of the present study indicated that cultural intelligence may alleviate the problem of burnout. Therefore, particularly the managers of organizations that experience/may experience burnout problems in their expatriate employees should take the cultural intelligence levels of their employees into account. This, in turn, requires the functions of human resources management to be addressed in this respect. In other words, it would be useful to regard aspects of cultural intelligence as a competence criterion and take them into consideration in managerial decisions and practice in all human resources management functions from the recruitment process to training and development, from performance review to wage-setting and career management.

6.3. Limitations and Further Research

The present study has certain limitations as is the case for any research. First of all, the data of this study were collected online and via social networking sites to which expatriates are believed to be subscribers. It was assumed that the subscribers of these websites were expatriates. Hence, this point constitutes a limitation of the study. Secondly, the scale employed in the study was prepared in English. Speaking English, which is accepted as a universal language, may create an advantage for the individuals who comprised the sample to adapt to different cultures. This can be accepted as a limitation as well. In order to overcome these limitations, it can be recommended that data are collected directly from businesses employing expatriates and scales are drawn up in the native language of expatriates in prospective studies. Another limitation of our study is related to the data collection process. Data were collected on the basis of the "self-assessment" method. As mentioned above, this may cause common-method variance. It was established through Harman's single factor analysis that this problem did not occur for our study. However, in prospective studies, data can be collected from the colleagues, subordinates, or superiors of employees rather than employees themselves.

In prospective studies, particularly the aspects of cultural distance that were not addressed in this study (work adjustment, interaction adjustment-internal) can be included within the scope of the study, and the effects of organizational and national cultural differences on burnout can be examined. Thereby, the relationship between expatriate burnout and cultural distance can be addressed from a much wider and more elaborate perspective. Secondly, another research question that can be investigated is whether cultural difference have the same effect on expatriate burnout when home and host countries are culturally identical, i.e. when cultural distance does not change, what the nature of differences and their impacts would be in case there are certain differences.

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Appendix 1

Home Country	Host Country	Number of Participant
Angola	Denmark	1
Argentina	Turkey	1
Australia	Kenya	1
	Denmark	2
	Germany	1
	Ghana	1
	Jordan	1
	Malaysia	1
	Vietnam	1
	France	1
	Singapore	5
	Azerbaijan	Germany
Belarus	Czech	1
Belgium	Ghana	1
	Poland	2
Bolivia	Russia	1
	Panama	1
Bolivia	South Sudan	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Libya	1
Brazil	Ireland	1
Bulgaria	Ghana	1
	The Netherlands	1

Home Country	Host Country	Number of Participant	
Holland	Turkey	1	
Hong Kong	China	1	
Hungary	Hong Kong	1	
	Hungary	1	
India	Saudi Arabia	1	
	Germany	2	
	Ghana	2	
	Hong Kong	1	
	The Netherlands	2	
	Poland	1	
	Kenya	1	
	Singapore	1	
	Turkey	1	
	USA	1	
	Indonesia	South Korea	1
		The Netherlands	1
Iran	Denmark	1	
	Poland	1	
Iraq	Malaysia	1	
Ireland	Vietnam	2	
Israel	Hong Kong	1	
Italy	Germany	2	
	The Netherlands	4	
	Hungary	1	
	United Kingdom	1	

Home Country	Host Country	Number of Participant
Scotland	Singapore	1
	Malaysia	1
Senegal	Senegal	1
South Africa	Malaysia	1
	Ghana	4
	Peru	1
Spain	UK	1
	Czech Republic	4
	Germany	3
	Jordan	2
	The Netherlands	1
	Malaysia	1
Switzerland	Saudi Arabia	1
	Panama	1
Syria	Ghana	1
	Uzbekistan	1
Turkey	Germany	2
	The Netherlands	2
	UK	1
	Ireland	1
	Abu Dhabi	1
	Pakistan	1
	Spain	1
	U.S.A.	4
Uruguay	Cambodia	1
Wales	Peru	1

Home Country	Host Country	Number of Participant	
Canada	Bermuda	1	
	Denmark	1	
	Holland	1	
	Kazakhstan	1	
	Mexico	1	
	South Korea	1	
	Vietnam	1	
	Ghana	1	
	Malaysia	3	
	Philippines	1	
	China	Germany	1
	Colombia	Belgium	1
		Germany	1
		Malaysia	1
The Netherlands		1	
Costa Rica	Germany	1	
Croatia	The Netherlands	1	
Czech Republic	Ireland	1	
Denmark	USA	1	
	Turkey	1	
	The Netherlands	1	
Finland	Belgium	1	
	Denmark	1	
	South Korea	1	

Home Country	Host Country	Number of Participant	
Italy	Belgium	1	
	Denmark	1	
	Ghana	1	
Kenya	Malaysia	1	
Latvia	Denmark	1	
	The Netherlands	1	
Libya	Philippines	1	
	Malta	1	
Lithuania	Denmark	1	
Macedonia	The Netherlands	1	
Malta	Malta	2	
Mexico	Mongolia	1	
	The Netherlands	2	
	The Netherlands	Belgium	1
		Jordan	1
France		1	
Ireland		1	
Denmark		1	
Hong Kong		1	
Malaysia		4	
New Zealand		Korea	1
	PERU	2	
	Singapore	2	
Nicaragua	USA	1	
Nigeria	Dubai	1	

Home Country	Host Country	Number of Participant
United Kingdom	Czech Republic	2
	Denmark	3
	Germany	3
	Ghana	4
	Hong Kong	2
	Hungary	1
	Jordan	3
	Kazakhstan	1
	Korea	2
	The Netherlands	3
	Panama	2
	PERU	2
	Singapore	5
	Turkey	13
	Uganda	1
	Malta	1
	Dubai	1
	France	1
	Malaysia	2
	Tunisia	1
Saudi Arabia	1	
USA	Belgium	2
	Belize	1
	Czech Republic	3
	Denmark	6
	France	1

Home Country	HostCountry	Number of Participant	
France	Denmark	3	
	Germany	1	
	Hong Kong	2	
	Ireland	2	
	Mongolia	1	
	The Netherlands	1	
	Vietnam	1	
	Ghana	1	
	China	1	
	Jordan	1	
	Saudi Arabia	1	
	Singapore	2	
	Germany	Czech Republic	1
		Denmark	2
Ghana		1	
Hong Kong		2	
Jordan		2	
The Netherlands		1	
Singapore		1	
Uganda		1	
Greece	USA	1	
	Germany	2	
	The Netherlands	2	
	Poland	1	
	Denmark	1	

Home Country	HostCountry	Number of Participant
Pakistan	Denmark	1
	Hong Kong	2
	Turkey	1
	Norway	1
Palestine	Belgium	1
	Germany	1
Peru	The Netherlands	1
	Bahamas	1
Philippines	US	1
	Denmark	1
	Czech Republic	1
Poland	Czech Republic	2
	Germany	1
	The Netherlands	1
	Hungary	1
	Ireland	1
Portugal	Denmark	3
Quebec	Poland	1
Romania	Czech republic	2
	Germany	1
	Hungary	1
Russia	Denmark	2
	Germany	1
	Singapore	1
Turkey	Turkey	1

Home Country	HostCountry	Number of Participant
USA	Germany	5
	Ghana	3
	Hong Kong	3
	Jordan	5
	Korea	3
	Mexico	5
	The Netherlands	3
	Panama	3
	Peru	6
	Poland	1
	Singapore	4
	South Africa	2
	South Korea	4
	South Sudan	1
	Vietnam	4
	Mexico	1
	Philippines	1
	Saudi Arabia	1
	Turkey	8
	Vietnam	1
Equator	1	
Italy	1	
Malaysia	1	
Tunisia	4	
TOTAL	363 Participants	