

# The Determinants of Cultural Intelligence and Expatriates' Entrepreneurship

Christina Yu-Ping Wang and Bih-Shiaw Jaw

Department of International Business, National Dong Hwa University Taiwan.

[cywang@mail.ndhu.edu.tw](mailto:cywang@mail.ndhu.edu.tw)

Institute of Human Resource Management, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan.

[bsjaw510@mail.nsysu.edu.tw](mailto:bsjaw510@mail.nsysu.edu.tw)

## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is for multinational corporations to understand the predictors of expatriate's entrepreneurship in cross-cultural contexts. Hence, this research investigates the relationships among expatriate's personality, cultural intelligence (CQ), expatriate adjustment, and international entrepreneurship, and cultural distance as a moderator. The results are outlined as follows.

1. Expatriate-oriented personality has positive influences on expatriate's CQ and international entrepreneurship.
2. CQ has positive influences on expatriate adjustment and international entrepreneurship.
3. Expatriate-oriented personality has positive influences on expatriate adjustment and international entrepreneurship through the mediating effect of CQ.

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※ This paper was summarized from the original research completed by Jaw, Wang, and Yu (2009).

## Introduction

To survive and compete successfully in a global economy, organizations have found it essential to send their workers abroad on international assignments to formulate and implement global strategies and to coordinate resources in multiple countries (Earley & Ang, 2003). However, if the expatriates are unable to adjust to the novel cultural context, the result of such inability to understand and adapt to local culture is a significant cost to organizations (Earley & Ang, 2003; Selmer, 2001). Notwithstanding, research on individual's capabilities for intercultural effectiveness is scarce and unsystematic (Ang et al., 2007).

Responding to this need, Earley and Ang (2003) have developed a conceptual model of cultural intelligence (CQ) – defined as “the capability of an individual to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity”. CQ is a specific, statelike, and individual capability that should be associated to other antecedents of intercultural competence, and CQ should predict relative outcomes in multicultural situations (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). However, primarily due to the newness of CQ construct, empirical research on CQ has been sparse and limited in this domain (Ang et al., 2007). Fortunately, the field of international entrepreneurship, which is associated this issue, is rich with possibility and opportunity, and the full extent of its scope is still undefined (Mcdougall & Oviatt, 2003).

This research aims to understand why some expatriates in management level can better achieve their international assignments of managing overall subsidiary operations than others. We will testify the relationships between expatriate’s international entrepreneurship and personality, CQ and expatriate adjustment. Thus, we may contribute to offer and testify the new framework which link personality, CQ, adjustment and entrepreneurship in culturally diverse settings.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Big-Five Personality***

Most researchers have tested the effects of the Big-Five personality characteristics, which strongly and stably anticipate work behavior across time, contexts and cultures, on various expatriate outcomes (Ang, Van Dyne, & Koh, 2006; Shaffer & Miller, 2008).. Primarily based on Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) proposed by Costa and McCrae (1995) and added the perspectives of expatriation and entrepreneurship literatures (Ang et al., 2006; Huang et al., 2005; Zhao & Seibert, 2006), the definitions of five personality dimensions are as follows.

### ***Neuroticism/ Emotional Stability***

Neuroticism is associated with negative motional stability, representing characteristics of anxiety, nervousness, angry hostility, depression, moodiness, vulnerability, and temperamental nature. On the other hand, emotional stability is associated with calm and even-temper, and people high in emotional stability (i.e., low on neuroticism) tend to be calm, self-confident, and relaxed.

### ***Extraversion***

Extraversion is the degree to which a person is sociable, active, outgoing, talkative, gregarious, and assertive, and individuals who score high on extraversion are sociable, bold, energetic, cheerful and expressive.

### ***Openness to Experience***

Openness to experience is the extent to which a person is open-minded, aesthetically sensitive, imaginative, adventurous, intellectually curious, and non-judgmental, and people who score high on openness to experience are creative, original, broad-minded, reflective, and untraditional.

### ***Agreeableness***

Agreeable is the tendency of a person to be trustful, cooperative, straightforward, courteous, altruistic, caring, and compliant. Individuals high on agreeableness can be described as friendly, helpful, good-nature, cooperative, and they tend to adhere to the norms of other people to seek other's acceptance and friendships.

### ***Conscientiousness***

Conscientiousness is the degree to which a person is responsible, dependable, achievement-oriented, self-disciplined, efficient, deliberate, and industrious. People high on conscientiousness are characterized as reliable, persistent, and hardworking, and they conduct tasks in an orderly and well-planned manner and pursue goal accomplishment.

Based on Big-Five personality traits, for instance, the results of Ones and Viswesvaran's research (1999) demonstrated that conscientiousness was recognized to be the most important personality factor for completion of overseas assignment, adjustment, interpersonal relations with host-country nationals, and overseas job performance. Emotional stability and agreeableness played the second important roles in adjustment, interpersonal relations with the locals, and job performance. In terms of completion of overseas assignment, openness to experience was perceived to be the second significant factor. Additionally, in Caligiuri's (2000) research, it was suggested that extroversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability were negatively related to expatriate's withdrawal cognition, and that conscientiousness was positively associated to the supervisor-rated performance on the expatriate assignment. Likewise, the results of Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black and Ferzandi (2006) study also indicated that expatriates who were outgoing, agreeable, and high in emotional stability and openness to experience appeared to function better than others.

In spite of the previous studies concerning personality and expatriate success, it is suggested that much work remains to be done to better clarify and identify specific personality traits as antecedents of expatriate success (Huang, Chi, & Lawler, 2005). This research defined "expatriate-oriented personality" as the tendency of a set of stable characteristics that can facilitate expatriates in management level to function and adapt effectively to cultural diverse contexts, including emotional stability, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Black et al., 1991; Caligiuri, 2000; Costa & McCrae, 1995; Earley & Ang, 2003; Ones & Viswesvaran, 1999; Pearson & Chatterjee, 2001; Shaffer et al, 2006).

## ***Cultural Intelligence***

Earley and Ang introduced the model of cultural intelligence (CQ) in 2003. CQ refers to an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in cultural diverse settings. The main purpose of this model is to discuss various factors of intercultural adjustment by looking at three aspects of a person's CQ: cognition, motivation, and behavior (Earley & Ang, 2003). Concept of each aspect in CQ will be elaborated as follows.

### ***Cognitive CQ***

Cognitive CQ represents general cognitive skills that people are able to obtain and comprehend about a new culture on the basis of various types of cues provided as well as culture-specific knowledge (Earley & Ang, 2003) Ang and Van Dyne (2008) divided Cognitive CQ into two aspects: metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ. Metacognitive CQ refers to an individual's level of conscious cultural awareness during cross-cultural interactions. People with high metacognitive CQ consciously question their own cultural assumption, reflect and adjust their cultural knowledge when interacting with those who are from other cultures. Cognitive CQ means knowledge of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultures which has been acquired from education and personal experiences.

### ***Motivational CQ***

Motivational CQ therefore represents one's propensity and commitment to act on the cognitive facet, persevere with acquiring knowledge and understanding of a new culture, and overcome difficulties and failures. That is, motivational CQ is a drive and interest in learning about and functioning in novel and different cultural settings. (Earley & Ang, 2003)"

### ***Behavioral CQ***

Behavioral CQ refers to the capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions as interacting with people from different cultures. It is believed that cultural intelligence is not meaningful unless an individual is able to generate the behaviors which can properly reflect cognition and motivation. Therefore, without effective execution, a person's CQ is not realized (Earley & Ang, 2003).

In other words, cognitive CQ (metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ), motivational CQ and behavioral CQ are different capabilities that together form overall CQ (Ang et al., 2007). In light of its nature of dealing with culturally diverse contexts, CQ is conceptually distinct from personality characteristics, other intelligences and other intercultural competencies (Ang et al., 2007).

It is suggested by Ang and Van Dyne (2008) that existing intercultural competency constructs lack coherent theoretical foundations and often mix ability and nonability

characteristics, which raising the question of construct validity. Contrastively, CQ anchors in the multiple intelligence literature to be posited clearly as a set of capabilities. Accordingly, on the ground of its theoretically, comprehensive and coherent framework, CQ is a clarified construct which assesses multiple facets of intercultural competence in a single instrument. In sum, the model of CQ can offer a systematic rationale to organize and integrate existing studies on intercultural competencies (Ang et al., 2007).

### ***Relationship between Personality and CQ***

The relationship between personality and CQ is one of the core issues on CQ research (Ward & Fischer, 2008).

It is presumed by Ang et al. (2007) that since temperament has the impacts on choice of behavior and experience, some personality traits should be related to CQ. It is indicated by Earley and Ang (2003) that a person with high CQ will be able to adapt and perform more effectively in international assignments, especially if he or she meets the general profile of high levels of the Big-Five personality. It is also proposed by Kumar, Rose, and Subramaniam (2008) that personality has considerable influence on expatriate CQ. It is expected that certain personality traits should be associated to specific factors of CQ, and that certain personality traits should be able to anticipate and explain the various levels of CQ among individuals.

Ang, Van Dyne, and Koh (2006) tested a model of personality characteristics (trait-like individual differences that reflects broad and stable predispositions) as predictors of CQ (state-like individual differences that means the capabilities which can be flexible and changed to interact effectively with people from different cultures). As expected, this study provided important insights on the relationships between specific aspects of personality and specific aspects of CQ: (1) conscientiousness was positively related to metacognitive CQ; (2) agreeableness was positively related to behavioral CQ instead of cognitive or motivational CQ; (3) extraversion was perceived to be positively related to motivational CQ, behavioral CQ, and cognitive CQ; (4) openness to experience was related to all aspects of CQ; (5) consistent with expectations, emotional stability is not related to cognitive and motivational CQ; however, contrary to expectations, emotional stability was negatively related to behavioral CQ (perhaps the calm and even-tempered nature of emotional stability inhibits suitable exhibition of verbal and nonverbal behavioral CQ).

Moreover, in Lee and Sukoco's (2007) study, based on the sample from the expatriates of Taiwanese MNC firms, the empirical results demonstrated that: (1) cognitive CQ (Metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ) was positively influenced by extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness; (2) motivational CQ was positively influenced by openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness; (3) behavioral CQ was positively influenced by extraversion and conscientiousness. Accordingly, individual with

high CQ can also be more tolerant and flexible toward different cultural settings instead of ethnocentrism, which is negatively related to expatriate effectiveness (Shaffer et al. 2006).

### **Expatriate Adjustment**

Based on the review of the international and domestic adjustment literature, Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou (1991) proposed a comprehensive theoretical model of expatriate adjustment that combined individual factors, environmental factors, and cultural differences as predictors. According to Black et al. (1991) model, expatriate adjustment is composed of three dimensions: Work adjustment: comfort associated with the assignment tasks or job. Interaction adjustment: comfort associated with interacting with host country nationals both inside and outside of work. General/ Cultural adjustment: comfort associated with various nonwork factors such as general living conditions, local food, weather, transportation, entertainment, facilities, and health care services in the host country.

#### ***Personality and Expatriate Adjustment***

As noted earlier, the results of Ones and Viswesvaran's research (1999) demonstrated that conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness were perceived to be significant personality traits for adjustment and interpersonal relations with host-country nationals. According to Ward and Fischer (2008), social initiative (the tendency to approach social situations in a proactive manner and to take initiative; hence, the concept of social initiative is similar to extraversion) and emotional stability exerted direct effects on the adaptation outcome.

Kumar et al. (2008) argued that expatriate's personality has significant impact on expatriate adjustment as well. Based on the samples from expatriates from many nations in Hong Kong, Japanese expatriates, and Korean expatriates, the empirical results of Shaffer et al.'s (2006) study showed that: (1) conscientiousness and extraversion had positive effect on general adjustment; (2) emotional stability and agreeableness had positive influence on interaction adjustment; (3) emotional stability, openness to experience and extraversion had positive effect on work adjustment; whereas, agreeableness had negatively effect on work adjustment.

Additionally, in Lee and Sukoco's (2007) study, the empirical results manifested that: (1) work adjustment was positively affected by extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness; (2) social cultural adjustment was positively affected by emotional stability, extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness; (3) general living adjustment was positively affected by emotional stability, extraversion, and openness to experiences Kumar et al. (2008) offer the explanation from the perspective of social learning theory. It is argued that certain personality traits predispose individual to engage in interaction with local people, learn about new culture, and in turn it may lead to better expatriate adjustment. For instance,

expatriates with greater openness to experience are more interested in the new culture, take more opportunities to learn about it from interacting with host country nationals, and then adapt to the host country culture better than others.

### ***CQ and Expatriate Adjustment***

From the perspective of CQ, it is proposed that CQ is positively related to the three facets of adjustment: work, social cultural and general living adjustment (Kim, Kirkman, & Chen, 2008; Kumar et al., 2008; Shaffer & Miller, 2008). According to Ang et al. (2007), CQ can predict three aspects of intercultural effectiveness (cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaptation, and task performance), and these findings highlight the value of aligning specific CQ capabilities with specific facets of intercultural effectiveness. For example, results showed that motivational CQ and behavioral CQ had positive influences on expatriate adjustment (Ang et al., 2007; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Besides the effects of motivational CQ and behavioral CQ, Lee and Sukoco's (2007) study also indicated that Metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ had positive influence on work, social cultural and general living adjustment.

Additionally, CQ and personality traits are necessary but not sufficient components for expatriate performance. Thus, some researchers have posited that expatriate adjustment play a mediated role in the relationship between personality, CQ and expatriate job performance (Kim et al., 2008; Kumar et al., 2008; Shaffer et al., 2006).

### ***International Entrepreneurship***

McDougall and Oviatt (2000) defined that "international entrepreneurship is a combination of innovative, proactive, and risk-seeking behavior that crosses national borders and is intended to create value in organizations", and that "international entrepreneurial behavior may occur at the individual, group, or organizational levels". In addition, international entrepreneurship is also defined as "a process of creatively discovering/identifying and exploiting opportunities in markets that lie outside the firm's domestic operations (Zahra & George, 2002)." Likewise, international entrepreneurship refers to "the discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities across national borders to create future goods and services (Drori, Honig, & Ginsberg, 2006; McDougall & Oviatt, 2003)". It follows, therefore, that the research of international entrepreneurship examines and compares how, by whom, and with what outcomes those opportunities across national borders are acted upon (McDougall & Oviatt, 2003).

### ***Personality and International Entrepreneurship***

According to Peterson, Smith, Martorana, and Owens (2003), people with stable emotion were likely to face uncertainty and ambiguity calmly and engaged in innovation, and were

less likely to have conflict with others. People with openness to experience were more likely to tolerate uncertainty and risk, so it is highly probable that they were engaged in innovation and take risk to earn high return. People with higher agreeableness tended toward cooperation, sharing critical information and generating a team solution. People with higher conscientiousness were inclined to be structure-oriented and control over their environment, so they were less likely to take risking decisions.

Additionally, proactive people take initiative, scan opportunities, and maintain action to directly change their surrounding environment, and in the long term, individuals who are characterized by proactive behavior are likely to engage in innovative activities (Betaman & Crant, 1993; Major, Turner, & Fletcher, 2006). Besides, from the perspective of dispositional approach, proactiveness was positively associated with extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness.

Those who possessed risk propensity to start a new venture were high in emotional stability, extraversion and openness to experience, and low in agreeableness and conscientiousness (Nicholson, Fenton-O'Creedy, Soane, & William, 2005).

### ***CQ and International Entrepreneurship***

Likewise, people with greater metacognitive CQ and cognitive CQ enable them to develop more accurate assumption, attribution, and understanding of parent and host cultures, so they can gain more trust from their multicultural team members and establish positive relationship (Rockstuhl & Ng, 2008).

It is also proposed by Mannor (2008) that executives with higher level of CQ are more likely to engage in alliances, provide larger equity stakes to their strategically valuable foreign partners, and obtain higher quality of investment decisions and then get better performance. Due to executive's high CQ capabilities, executives can draw on the local expertise and hedge overall business risks without fear of opportunistic behaviors, such as decisions about when to expand operations or launch new products (Mannor, 2008; Rockstuhl & Ng, 2008). Because executives with CQ are better able to understand the dynamics of culturally diverse contexts in which their organizations are considering investments, such executives will be better capable of choosing good risk situations from bad risk situations to take smarter risks.

### ***Expatriate Adjustment and International Entrepreneurship***

According to Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005), expatriates who adjust to living, work, and social environment well were able to develop and maintain the relationship with host country nationals effectively and make contributions to organizations. Similarly, Kraimer, Wayne, and Jaworski (2001) argued that expatriates comfortable with the cultural norms in host countries were perceived to build quality networks with employees and host nationals. Hence, those

who adjusted better were inclined to support new ideas and consider the potential benefits of innovation. In addition to work adjustment, harmonization can facilitate people to express ideas, communicate, and engage in innovation as well (Shipton, West, Parkes, Dawson, & Patterson, 2006).

It is also argued that expatriate adjustment played a mediated role in the relationship between personality, CQ and expatriate job performance (Kim et al., 2008; Kumar et al., 2008; Shaffer et al., 2006). Hence, it may be presumed the possibility that the relationship between personality, CQ and international entrepreneurship is mediated by expatriate adjustment as well.

## Data Analyses & Result

### *Integrative Model*

Model fit statistics from the analysis of AMOS software were  $\chi^2/df = 2.844$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ,  $RMR = 0.022$ ,  $GFI = 0.893$ ,  $CFI = 0.896$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.090$ , and these model statistics indicated good overall model fit.

**Table 1 Measurement Model of Integrative Model**

Parameters		Beta coefficient	P
Expatriate-oriented personality	Conscientiousness	0.838***	***
	Agreeableness	0.665***	***
	Extraversion	0.749***	***
	Neuroticism	- 0.246***	***
	Flexibility & empathy	0.535	- <sup>a</sup>
CQ	Motivational CQ	0.774	-
	Behavioral CQ	0.635***	***
	Cognitive CQ	0.066	0.369
Expatriate adjustment	Social cultural adjustment	0.879	-
	Work adjustment	0.550***	***
	General living adjustment	0.533***	***
International entrepreneurship	Local internal initiative	0.909***	-
	External market exploitation	0.855***	***
	Venture exploration	0.595***	***

Note: a: the regression weight was 1, so P did not exist.

\* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $P < 0.001$ .

### *Measurement Model*

The path coefficient (beta coefficient, or termed standardized regression weight) and P-value of observed and latent variables in each construct were shown in Table 1. Except for

the non-significance of cognitive CQ and negative significance of neuroticism, generally speaking, the observed variables had positively significant relationships with the latent variables in the integrative model. That is, the scores on the observed variables were able to measure the underlying constructs (i.e., the latent variables).

### ***Structural Model***

The path coefficient (beta coefficient, or called standardized regression weight) and P-value of linear structural relationships in the integrative model were exhibited in Table 2.

**Table 2 Structural Model of Integrative Model**

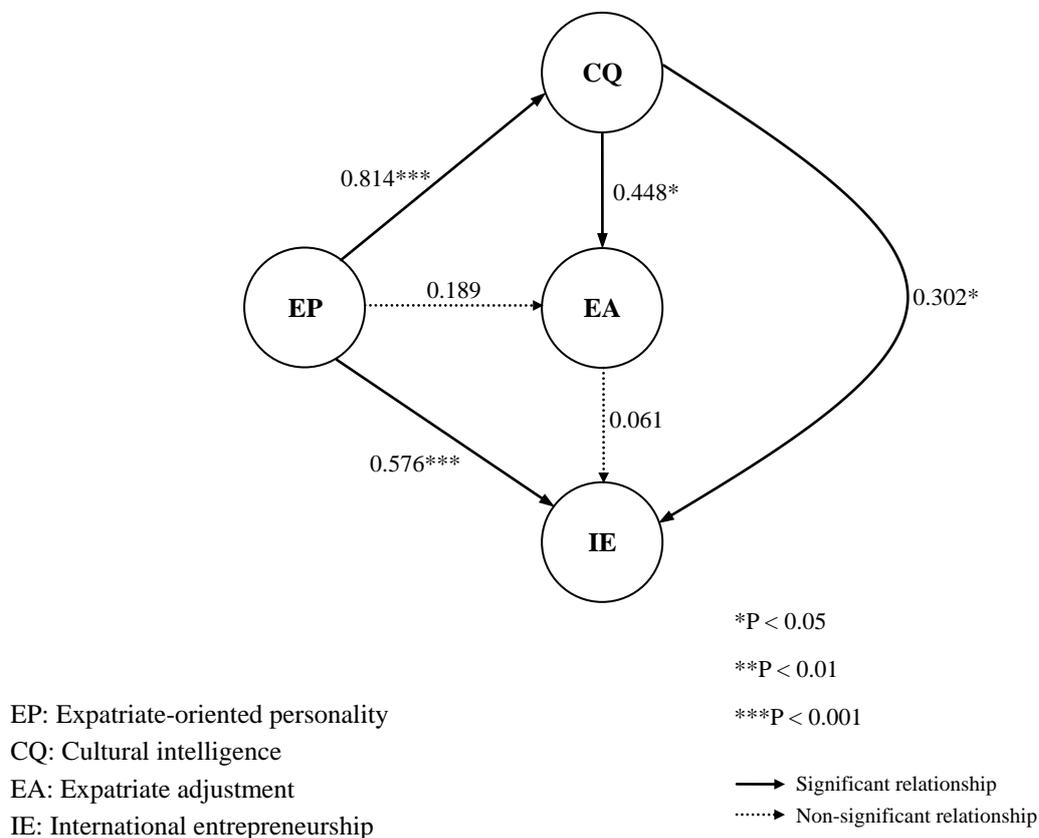
<b>Path</b>	<b>Beta coefficient</b>	<b>P</b>
EP → CQ	0.814***	***
EP → EA	0.189	0.320
CQ → EA	0.448*	0.029
EP → IE	0.576***	***
CQ → IE	0.302*	0.047
EA → IE	0.061	0.399

*Note:* EP: Expatriate-oriented personality, CQ: Cultural intelligence, EA: Expatriate adjustment, IE: International entrepreneurship.

\*P < 0.05, \*\*P < 0.01, \*\*\*P < 0.001.

According to Table 3, the relationship between expatriate-oriented personality and CQ was strongly significant (beta coefficient = 0.814, and P-value < 0.001). Hence, expatriate-oriented personality had positive influences on CQ. The relationship between expatriate-oriented personality and expatriate adjustment was not significant (beta coefficient = 0.320, and P-value > 0.05, = 0.320). Thus, expatriate-oriented personality had no direct influence on expatriate adjustment. The relationship between CQ and expatriate adjustment was significant (beta coefficient = 0.448, and P-value < 0.05, = 0.029). That is, CQ had positive effects on expatriate adjustment. The relationship between expatriate-oriented personality and international entrepreneurship was strongly significant (beta coefficient = 0.576, and P-value < 0.001). Namely, expatriate-oriented personality had positive influences on international entrepreneurship. The relationship between CQ and international entrepreneurship was significant (beta coefficient = 0.302, and P-value < 0.05, = 0.047). Hence, CQ had positive influences on international entrepreneurship. The relationship between expatriate adjustment and international entrepreneurship was not significant (beta coefficient = 0.061, and P-value > 0.05, = 0.399). Namely, expatriate adjustment had no direct influences on international entrepreneurship. This integrative model was depicted as Figure 2

Additionally, in terms of mediating effects, as illustrated in Figure 2, although expatriate-oriented personality had no direct effect on expatriate adjustment, expatriate-oriented personality was able to indirectly impact expatriate adjustment through CQ. Therefore, expatriate-oriented personality had positive influences on expatriate adjustment through the mediating effect of CQ. Further, in addition to the direct effects on international entrepreneurship, expatriate-oriented personality was able to indirectly affect international entrepreneurship through CQ as well. However, since there was no significant relationship between either expatriate-oriented personality and expatriate adjustment or expatriate adjustment and international entrepreneurship, the mediating role of adjustment in this integrative model was not supported, which was different from the expectation based on previous researchers' statement (Kim et al., 2008; Kumar et al., 2008; Shaffer et al., 2006). Therefore, expatriate-oriented personality had positive influences on international entrepreneurship through the mediating effect of CQ.



**Figure 2 Integrative Model**

### Conclusions and Implications

Drawing from the previous literature and research results, this research redefined and rearranged the dimensions under the constructs of expatriate-oriented personality.

Expatriates whose positions are in management level have high propensity toward

conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability (i.e., low neuroticism), and flexibility and empathy. Additionally, as expatriates possess the above mentioned personality characteristics, they are inclined to exhibit higher level of international entrepreneurship, namely local internal initiative, external market exploitation, and venture exploration.

In the cross-cultural context, expatriate's personality is related to his or her performance of CQ. In terms of motivational and behavioral CQ, except for the characteristic of neuroticism, the remaining four personality traits have positive effects on CQ, especially extraversion. Hence, expatriates with high propensity of conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability, and flexibility and empathy are able to persistently commitment to exhibit suitable verbal and nonverbal behaviors when interacting with people from different cultures.

Expatriate's personality and CQ can facilitate their performance of entrepreneurship when they confront a foreign culture. With respect to personality, except for the negative effects of neuroticism, the remaining personality characteristics have positive influences on international entrepreneurship, especially conscientiousness and extraversion. Hence, expatriates who are achievement-oriented, active, sociable, curious, cooperative, helpfulness, emotionally stable, flexible, and empathic are able to perform better local internal initiative, external market exploitation, and venture exploration.

With respect to CQ, expatriates with higher CQ tend to have more entrepreneurial behaviors in different cultures, particularly motivational and behavioral CQ. Consequently, expatriates in management level who are motivated to behave properly according to the cultural contexts are able to take initiative to respond locals' demands, establish local network, exploit external market to strengthen competitive advantages, and take calculated risks to explore potential opportunities.

Expatriate-oriented personality has positive influences on expatriate adjustment and international entrepreneurship through the mediating effect of CQ. From the perspective of cross-cultural competencies, expatriate's personality can facilitate their CQ performance, and then high CQ enables them to adjust well to social activities, work conditions, and living conditions in a novel culture.

Moreover, from the perspective of entrepreneurship, expatriate's personality characteristics are able to enhance their exhibition of CQ, and then their CQ can help them to perform more entrepreneurial actions in cross-cultural settings. It is also important for MNCs to figure out the factors concerning why some expatriates tend to perform entrepreneurship more effectively to facilitate the operations of subsidiaries in host countries than others.

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