

The relationship between multicultural personality, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy



Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

Master Thesis

The Relationship Between Multicultural Personality, Foreign Language Mastery and Self-efficacy in Germany

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Date: 05. 08.2016

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Abstract

In a globalised world, employees are needed who can adapt to and communicate effectively in intercultural situations. Several factors have been shown to influence an employee's job performance in intercultural situations positively, by facilitating cross-cultural adjustment, dealing with uncertainty and cultural differences. One of these factors are individual personality traits (cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social-initiative, emotional stability and flexibility), which can be measured with the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) by Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000). On the one hand research has shown that, to some extent, the MPQ dimensions can predict whether an employee works nationally or internationally (Korzilius et al., 2011). On the other hand it has been posited that foreign language mastery is essential for the development of intercultural competence (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013). Next to the MPQ dimensions and amount of foreign languages spoken, the present study assumed self-efficacy as a predictor for international group membership, as self-efficacy has been shown to be a mediator in cultural intelligence development (MacNab & Worthely, 2012), which also facilitates cross-cultural adjustment. The present research therefore has explored if the three variables (foreign language mastery, MPQ dimensions, self-efficacy) should be taken into consideration when selecting an employee for an international job, by analysing the relationships between the variables, the differences between the employee groups (international and national) in the variables and the predictive value of the variables for group membership. A survey was set up measuring the three variables of internationally and nationally working employees, in several multinational companies in Germany. Results showed that foreign language mastery and some of the MPQ dimensions as well as self-efficacy and the MPQ dimensions are related, while self-efficacy and foreign language mastery were not. The findings also demonstrated that the two groups differ in the amount of foreign languages spoken, social initiative and amount of weeks spent on working abroad. Only the amount of foreign languages spoken was a significant predictor for group membership. Hence, social initiative and amount of foreign languages spoken were shown to be important factors in the selection process for an international job.

Keywords: foreign language mastery, MPQ, self-efficacy

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Finding the right employee

One of the key principles of all organisations is success. In order to execute all the different tasks which are necessary to compete successfully in the globalised market, companies need the right personnel. Nowadays, globalisation has added complexity and demands intercultural skills from the employees. According to Anderson, Spataro and Flynn (2008) the Person-Organization (P-O) fit is essential for a company's success, as a good match between the work environment and the candidate leads to a more effective job performance. Kristof-Brown, Zimmermann and Johnson (2005) define the P-O fit as "the compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well matched" (p. 281). In order to achieve effective job performance, companies want to select those candidates that fit to the organisation.

However, finding the right personnel in the quantity of candidates is not an easy goal, since not only skills, but also personality (Sekiguchi, 2007) and shared values (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2011) are important factors of a P-O fit. As a consequence, companies set up lists of competences, skills and characteristics, which the perfect candidate should own to execute the job successfully. Every job demands different criteria, thus different tools have been developed to test if the candidate has the right characteristics for this job and can use them effectively when fulfilling the working tasks.

Furthermore, globalisation brought a new complexity into the process of finding the right personnel. As the strength and frequency of intercultural contacts is constantly increasing, high intercultural communication skills and the ability to adapt to intercultural situations are demanded of an increasing amount of employees. This also means that candidates have to offer different competences and characteristics when working in an international job in comparison to a national one. The list of desired characteristics is long, but typical criteria in job advertisements for international jobs are: foreign language proficiency (mostly English), initiative, team spirit, communicative talent, creativity and ambition (taken from monster.de, consulted 17.3.2016). Hence, for companies it is important to get insights into the characteristics to make sure that the candidate is the best fit for a national or an international job. Researchers have been studying skills as well as personal attributes that predict and facilitate people's ability to adjust to intercultural situations.

In the following, this study will present the findings about the relation between foreign language skills, as well as, Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) dimensions (cultural

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empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability and flexibility) and intercultural competence. Next, the concept of self-efficacy will be introduced as another personal attribute that might facilitate cross-cultural adjustment through enhancing cultural intelligence learning. The study continues by assuming that foreign language skills, the MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy are predictors of international employment, as international employees are exposed to intercultural situations more frequently and therefore need the ability for cross-cultural adjustment, which is assumed to be facilitated through these three factors.

Literature review

Intercultural competence

Working internationally means dealing with a multinational environment, which implies cultural differences in values, beliefs, practices, as well as foreign languages, uncertainty and psychological adjustment problems (Dewaele & Stavans, 2012; Korzilius, Hooft, Planken & Hendrix, 2011). Dealing with different cultures means adjusting the own behaviour in order to adapt to the new system of interacting of the other culture, also defined in terms of psychological comfort and familiarity with the aspects of a culturally different environment (Harrison, Chadwick & Scales 1996). Based on the research by Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001), Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013) describe that people differ in the way they experience the intercultural interaction as stressful and threatening (*affect*), in their ability to overcome cultural differences through cultural learning (*behaviour*) and in their perception of a role conflict or social identification when adapting to a different culture (*cognition*). This means that people with a higher level of intercultural competence adjust more easily to a multinational environment. According to Johnson, Lenartowicz and Apud (2006), intercultural competence¹ can be defined as “an individual’s effectiveness in drawing upon a set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural

¹ The present study refers to the term intercultural competence or intercultural situations as the definition given by Johnson et al. (2006) uses the term in the sense of interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds, while the term cross-cultural research is focused on “cross-cultural comparisons that document the existence of differences across cultural groups” (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006). As this research looks at the characteristics of employees needed to be effective in the interaction with different cultures, rather than comparing communicative interactions between cultures, the term intercultural is more adequate for the present study.

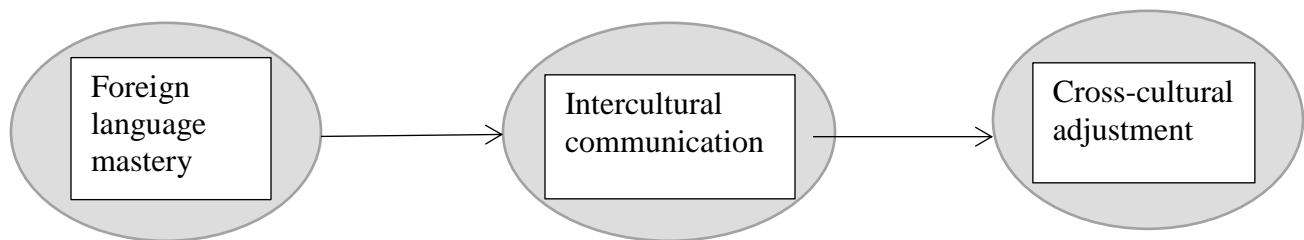
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backgrounds at home or abroad” (p.530). Consequently, cross-cultural adjustment² can be achieved through developing intercultural competence.

Foreign language mastery

One important skill of intercultural competence is foreign language mastery, as it supports people in their cultural learning process. Korzilius et al. (2011, p. 545) have defined foreign language mastery as (a.) the amount of foreign languages spoken and (b.) the foreign language proficiency. As illustrated in figure 1, both variables have been shown to influence cross-cultural adjustment. Froese and Peltokorpi (2013) have stated that foreign language proficiency facilitates interaction adjustment, which means that language proficiency helps to get in contact with members of other cultures and maintain a relationship through interaction. Furthermore, Korzilius et al. (2011) suggest that during the process of language acquisition, people also learn the cultural implications and intercultural communicative competences. Alon and Higgins (2005, p. 508) state that “Language provides the basis for cultural understanding, intercultural communication and possible immersion in a foreign culture.”

Figure 1. Influence of foreign language mastery on cross-cultural adjustment via intercultural communication



²It was chosen to use the term cross-cultural adjustment as most of the articles cited in this paper use cross-cultural adjustment in order to refer to the result of acquiring intercultural competence (Korzilius et al., 2011; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2012). It is referred to as being “psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of foreign environment” (Black, 1988).

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Korzilius et al. (2011) declare that the amount of foreign languages spoken could predict if an employee works internationally (international contacts, working abroad) or nationally (focused on home country activities) in their sample with employees of a Dutch agricultural multinational company. Still, they found no evidence for the assumption that the foreign language mastery level predicts group membership. Until now, little research has been done about the predictive value of the amount of languages spoken and foreign language proficiency for international group membership. Nevertheless, speaking different languages and being competent in those languages can be assumed to be an important selection criterion for international jobs, due to the necessity of effective international communication. However, foreign language competences have been said to be insufficient to predict overall intercultural competence (Matsumoto, 2000 as cited in Korzilius et al., 2011). Thus, other factors might also play a role in developing cross-cultural adjustment.

Being an international personality

Being successful in an international environment means more than just being able to communicate in a foreign language. Next to the behavioural aspect of cultural adjustment, people also differ in the affective and cognitive aspects of cross-cultural adjustment. Therefore, it is necessary to gain insights into the factors that help people to adjust affectively and cognitively to the multicultural environment. As Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martínez (2015) state, intercultural competence “is the –largely personality based – ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures” (p.48). Apart from the language skills a person can acquire, his or her personality therefore seems to be another important factor to be able to adjust to intercultural settings. Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013) confirm this assumption, as they found that some personality traits, to some extent, predict the way people deal with the three aspects of cultural adjustment (affect, behaviour, cognition).

A common assumption is that behaviour is linked to core personality traits (Digman, 1990). This assumption follows the reasoning that our behaviour is a response to a certain situation and that this response follows a typical behavioural pattern, which is influenced by the composition of our personality traits (Digman, 1990). According to Funder (1997), personality can therefore be defined as an “individuals characteristic patterns of thought emotions and behaviour” (as cited in Anderson et al. 2008, p. 704). Personality traits are observable and

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therefore also measurable, which means that predictions can be made by measuring a person's score on a certain trait (Kenny, 1994; Wiggins, 1979 as cited in Anderson et al., 2008, p.704). As a consequence researchers have developed different scales to measure certain personality traits through indirect self-reporting.

One example of a scale for measuring personality in terms of behavioural traits are the Big Five personality traits: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience (Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne & Ilardi, 1997). The Big Five are often used to predict behaviour in work related contexts, like job performance (Witt, Burke, Barrick and Mount, 2002) and cooperative behaviour (LePine & van Dyne, 2001). However, according to Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013), the Big Five personality traits are “not attuned to the behavioural tendencies that are relevant in intercultural situations” (p. 929). They found that the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) can predict intercultural success better than the Big Five, as the total of MPQ traits (cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability and flexibility) explain more of the variance in professional performance, personal adjustment and social integration than the Big Five in an intercultural setting. Nevertheless, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013) state that the MPQ traits are related to the Big Five, in the way that the Big 5 can predict the scores on the MPQ dimensions to some extent.

The first dimension of the MPQ, cultural empathy refers to the ability to develop empathy for the way people from different cultures feel, experience and behave under certain circumstances (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). People with higher cultural empathy can adapt more easily to the conventions of other cultures. Open-mindedness is the “open and unprejudiced attitude toward cultural differences” (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013, p. 929). Social initiative drives people to engage in social interaction, leading to a proactive rather than a passive behaviour (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). Emotional Stability “refers to a tendency to remain calm in stressful circumstances versus a tendency to show strong emotional reactions under stressful circumstances” (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2001, p. 279). Flexibility is the ability to adapt to new situations easily and to experience these as challenges instead of threats (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013).

Research has shown that the traits (especially open-mindedness, social initiative and emotional stability) measured by the MPQ discriminate between people with and without the

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ability for cross-cultural adjustment (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). A study by Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002) showed that cultural empathy and open-mindedness were most important in predicting the intercultural effectiveness of international students in terms of mental and physical health. This means that some of the MPQ dimensions are indeed able to predict intercultural competence in a certain degree. Consequently, they can be seen as intercultural traits which “refer to enduring personal characteristics that determine an individual’s typical behaviors in intercultural situations” (Leung, Ang & Tan, 2014, p. 490). A review done by Matsumoto (2013) also emphasizes that the construct and ecological validity of the MPQ has been demonstrated by several studies.

The MPQ as a predictor of cross-cultural adjustment

According to Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013), emotional stability and flexibility are stress-buffering intercultural traits, helping people to adapt to new situations and cope with the identity threat caused by developing several cultural identities. Furthermore, they state that open-mindedness, cultural empathy and social initiative are social-perceptual intercultural traits which enable people to perceive intercultural situations as a challenge rather than a threat, develop creativity and interest during intercultural interaction and connect the different cultural identities (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). Figure 2 shows, that a person scoring high on these traits would therefore be more suitable for an international job as these traits facilitate the development of intercultural competence and predict intercultural success (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). This also means that the traits measured by the MPQ might predict whether a candidate fits to an international job.

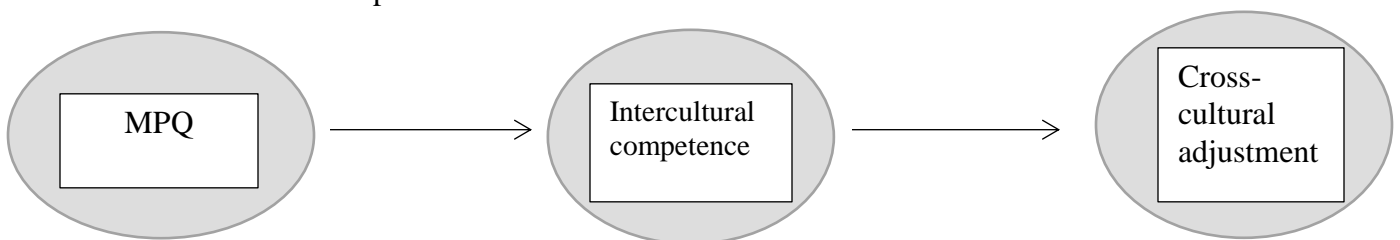
Evidence for the predictive value of the MPQ dimensions for cross-cultural adjustment was found as it was shown that emotional stability and social initiative are positively correlated with physical and mental health, as well as with the well-being of international and national students (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). Furthermore, they have found higher correlations of the MPQ dimensions with mental health, subjective well-being and social support for international students than for national students. Scoring higher on the dimensions meant being mentally healthier, feeling better and more socially supported. However, emotional stability was negatively correlated with academic performance; students that were less emotionally stable got better grades (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). Van Oudenhoven

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and Van der Zee (2002) explained this result by stating that feeling more anxiety would lead to a better preparation.

Another research has shown that the MPQ dimensions directly and indirectly influence cross-cultural adjustment (Yakunina, Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovac & Elsayed, 2012). Especially cultural empathy, flexibility and open-mindedness have been shown to influence adjustment while flexibility and open-mindedness indirectly influence adjustment via increased openness to diversity (Yakunina et al., 2012). A research about expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment in Japan showed that open-mindedness helped expatriates to conform to cultural differences, while emotional stability and cultural empathy reduced perceived stress and enabled expatriates to make sense out of their lives in the new environment (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2012). Research by Ali, van der Zee and Sanders (2003) underlined the importance of the personality traits by showing that the MPQ dimensions had the most influence on the cross-cultural adjustment of the expatriate's spouse compared to family and work characteristics. Peltokorpi and Froese (2012) conclude that the personality traits measured by the MPQ should be considered as selection criteria for expatriate candidates in order to enhance intercultural effectiveness. Generalising this finding, it can be assumed that this holds also true for the selection of employees for an international job.

Figure 2. Influence of MPQ dimension on cross-cultural adjustment via intercultural competence



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Predicting group membership with MPQ

A research that looked at the actual composition of internationally and nationally working employees in a Dutch organization has shown that participants with international jobs differed from non-international employees in emotional stability, open mindedness and number of foreign languages spoken (Korzilius et al., 2011). Furthermore, they (Korzilius et al., 2011) have found that the scores of a participant on the scales of the MPQ predict the membership in the international working or national working group. Internationally working employees were found to be more open-minded and flexible and spoke more languages than the non-international working group. Research by Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2001) has shown that the scores on the MPQ dimensions discriminated between students with and without the intention to go abroad. A summary of the predictive value of the MPQ dimensions and foreign languages is provided in Table 1. This means that the MPQ can, to some extent, be used as an instrument to find out if a potential candidate is suitable for an international or national oriented job or activity. At the same time it shows that intercultural competence is to some extent influenced by personality traits that cannot be acquired easily through training.

However, training can change a person's behavioural pattern that is based on personality (Anderson et al., 2008). As stated earlier, learnable skills like foreign language mastery are also important aspects of intercultural competence, meaning that intercultural training plays an important role. Recently, researchers have focused on 'cultural intelligence' (CQ) as a new learnable skill of intercultural competence. It was found that cultural intelligence learning is facilitated through self-efficacy (MacNab & Worthely, 2012). Self-efficacy might therefore be another predictor of cross-cultural adjustment.

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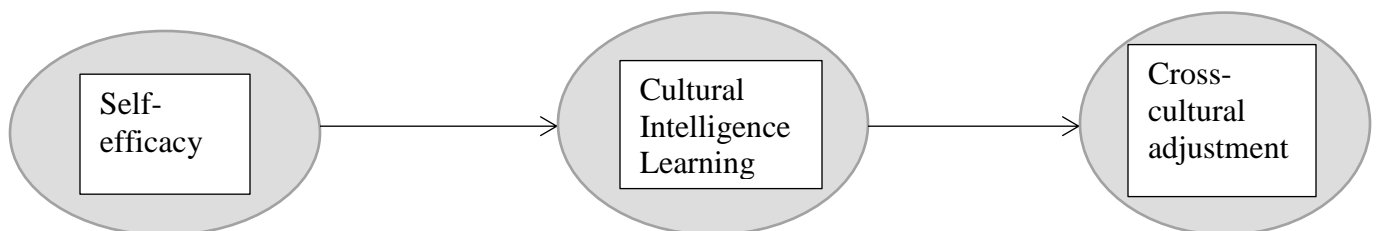
Table 1. Summary of significant predictors of cross-cultural adjustment and international group membership

Literature	Cultural empathy	Open-mindedness	Social-initiative	Emotional stability	Flexibility	Amount of languages spoken	Language proficiency
Korzilius et al., 2011	n.s	n.s.	n.s	$p < .05$	n.s	$p < .05$	n.s
Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2002	n.s	$p < .01$	$p < .05$	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	-	-
Yakunina et al., 2012	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .01$	-	-
Peltokorpi & Froese, 2012	$p < .01$	$p < .05$	$p < .05$	$p < .05$	-	-	$p < .001$
Ali et al., 2003	n.s	$p < .01$	n.s	$p < .01$	-	-	-

Self-efficacy as a mediating factor in cultural intelligence learning

According to MacNab and Worthley (2012), cultural intelligence can be defined as “an individual capacity, allowing one to more effectively interact with a variety of cultural settings; thus representing an advancement that can help to better situate individuals for a variety of intercultural interactions” (p.62). Their findings suggest that self-efficacy leads to an enhanced cultural intelligence learning, which in turn leads to better cross-cultural adjustment (see figure 3).

Figure 3. Influence of self-efficacy on cross-cultural adjustment via cultural intelligence learning



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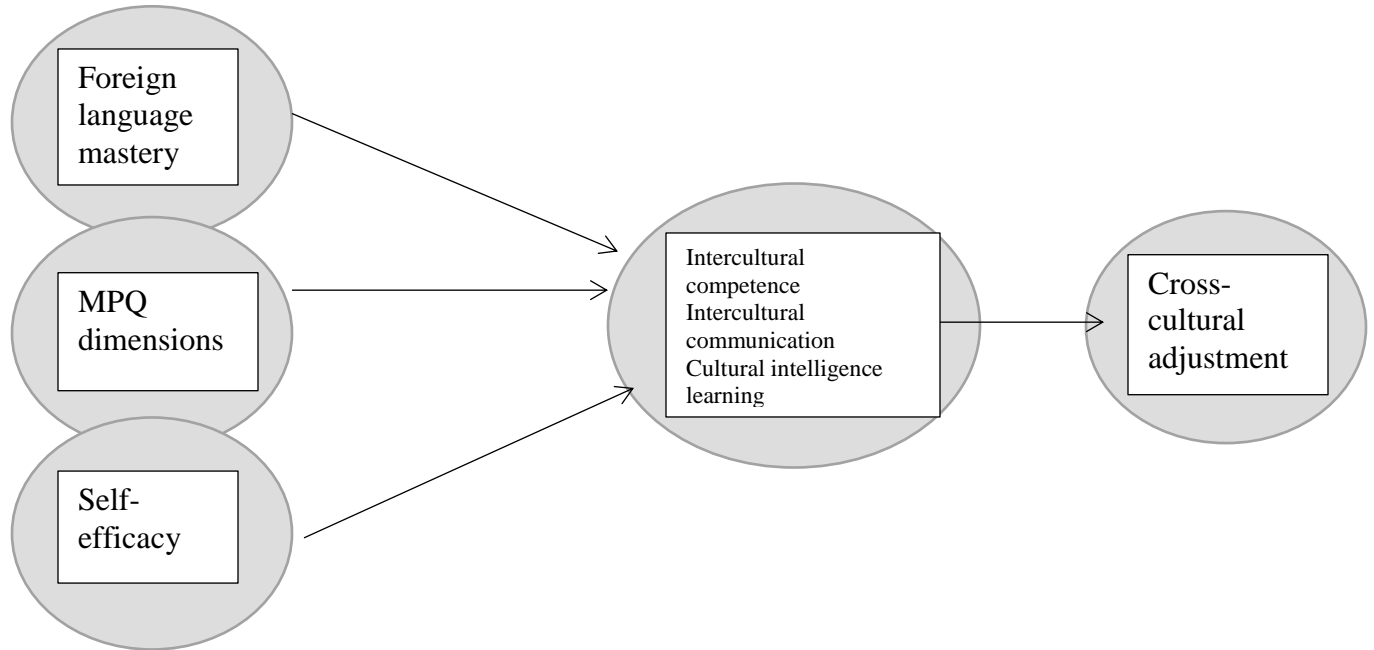
They defined self-efficacy as the “judgment of one’s capability to accomplish a certain level of performance” (MacNab & Worthely, 2012, p.64). Self-efficacy has been shown to be a strong predictor and mediator of interpersonal communication competence, through reducing anxiety and the impact that previous negative experiences or a lack of social experiences had on interpersonal communication outcomes (Rubin, Martin, Bruning and Powers, 1993).

In the context of intercultural competence, self-efficacy is also seen as a set of skills, including dealing with stressful situations, the ability to communicate effectively and the ability to show interpersonal behaviour and adjust to intercultural situations (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is developed through performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and physiological state, meaning that different life experiences lead to a different capacity for cultural intelligence development. Therefore, MacNab and Worthely (2012) assumed that international travel, work and management experience may influence cultural intelligence learning. However, none of the factors showed a significant influence on cultural intelligence learning, except self-efficacy. Thus, MacNab and Worthely (2012) suggest taking self-efficacy into consideration during the employee selection process. Besides being a mediating factor in cultural intelligence learning and interpersonal communication outcomes, self-efficacy apparently also is related to psychological adjustment (Fenner & Selmer, 2008) and linked to cross-cultural adjustment (Harrison et al., 1996). Harrison et al. (1996) found that expatriates with high self-efficacy reported to be well adjusted to the new cultural surrounding to a greater extent than expatriates with low self-efficacy. The present study therefore assumes that self-efficacy is also a predictor of international employment, next to foreign language skills and the MPQ dimensions, as all influence cross-cultural adjustment positively, which is assumed to help international employees perform effectively in an international work environment.

Figure 4 shows the combination of the three previously explained models, illustrating the relationships between foreign language mastery, the MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy with intercultural competence, intercultural communication and cultural intelligence learning, which in turn lead to cross-cultural adjustment.

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Figure 4. Combined model of the factors that influence cross-cultural adjustment



To conclude, personality traits and the amount of foreign languages have been investigated as factors that discriminate between national and international employees (Korzilius et al., 2011). A higher degree of open-mindedness and flexibility, as well as a greater amount of foreign languages spoken predicted the belongingness to the international employee group (Korzilius et al., 2011). Furthermore, it has been shown that the amount of foreign languages spoken can be predicted by some of the personality traits (emotional stability and open-mindedness) (Korzilius et al., 2011). Additionally, it has been found that in the case of young men, at least foreign language proficiency is associated with open-mindedness, cultural empathy and social initiative (Grin & Faniko, 2012). Moreover, research has shown that self-efficacy enhances cultural intelligence learning which enables employees to adapt to intercultural situations (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013; MacNab & Worthely, 2012). Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002) have shown that all MPQ dimensions are correlated positively with self-efficacy. Nevertheless, self-efficacy did not seem to have additional predictive value for cross-cultural adjustment success above and beyond the MPQ dimensions (Oudenhoven & van der Zee, 2002). However, Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002) only used one item “I always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough” (p.685) to measure self-efficacy. Using several items might increase the reliability of the measurement.

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Thus, research has shown that the amount of foreign languages spoken and the MPQ dimensions could be used in the selection process (Korzilius et al., 2011; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013), to predict the fit between a candidate and an international job. Additionally, MacNab and Worthely (2010) state that self-efficacy should also be included as a predictor in the selection of the right candidate. As language mastery is not enough to be intercultural effective (Matsumoto, 2000 as cited in Korzilius et al., 2011), research about other factors like the MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy is needed. Therefore, self-efficacy was measured by a more extensive scale to get a more reliable construct (MacNab & Worthely, 2012), which has been used to test participants self-efficacy after they participated in intercultural training. The scale is therefore assumed to be tailored more to an intercultural setting than the work related scales provided in Pepe, Farnese, Avallone and Vecchione (2010).

The present study thus partially replicated the research by Korzilius et al. (2011) and adds the construct self-efficacy as a potential factor to discriminate between national and international employees. People that do not hold an adequate personality profile in terms of cultural competence, measured by the MPQ, might still be suitable for an international job if they show a high level of self-efficacy, because they have the ability to enhance their cultural intelligence and language skills through training. As the three factors help people to adjust to intercultural situations, the present study hypothesizes that international working employees will score higher on the MPQ dimensions, amount of foreign languages spoken and self-efficacy. Following the line of reasoning by Korzilius et al. (2011), it is assumed that these three factors also have a predictive value for group membership (international or national).

Additionally, little research has been published using professionals as respondents. Using professionals instead of students (as done by Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002; Yakunina et al., 2012) gives a more realistic view on what to expect from an international employee, as they are already exposed to an international work environment. To get more externally valid results, professionals from several companies were targeted. In order to test the generalisability of the results found by Korzilius et al. (2011) in a Dutch company, the research was conducted in Germany, using professionals from different industries, to enhance the cross-cultural validity of the results. The present study therefore contributes to multiple disciplines (intercultural communication, personnel management, psychology, foreign language), by providing insights into the reality of workforces and results might indicate that the MPQ dimensions, foreign

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language and self-efficacy can be used as selection criteria for candidates who are applying for an international job.

In order to make this contribution, the following research questions were formulated:

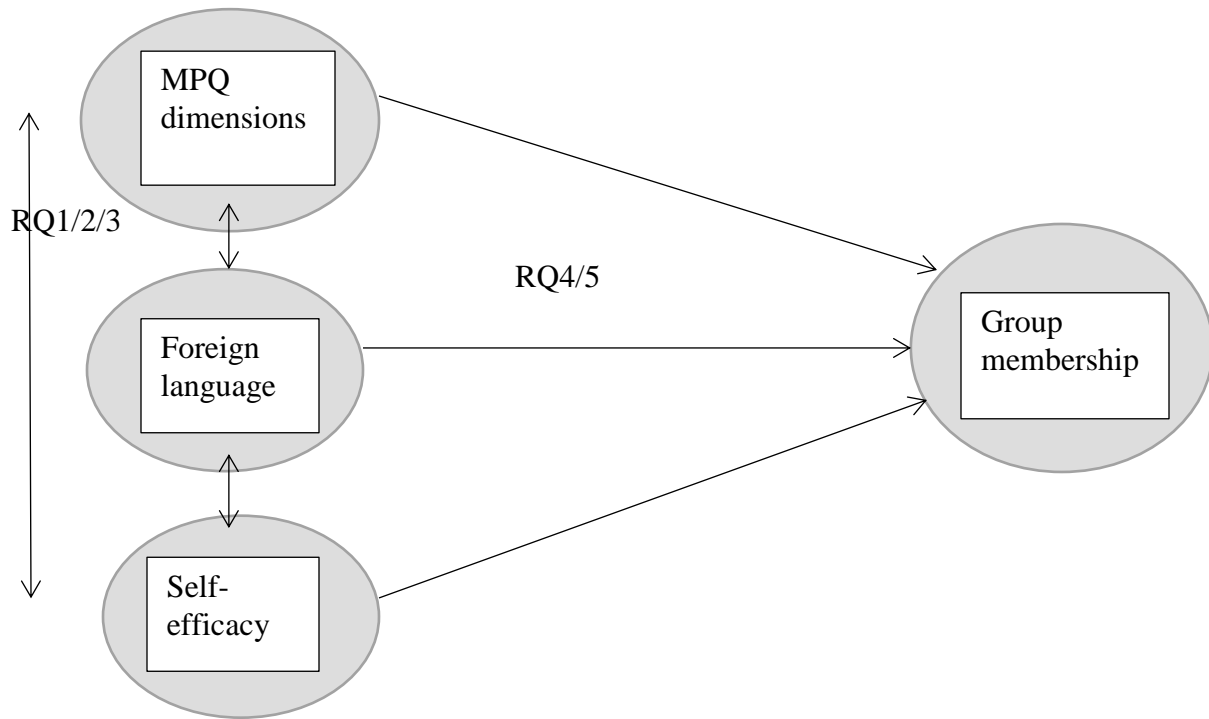
Research question

- 1. To what extent is there a relationship between the MPQ's dimensions and foreign language mastery?*
- 2. To what extent is there a relationship between the MPQ's dimensions and self-efficacy?*
- 3. To what extent is there a relationship between self-efficacy and foreign language mastery?*
- 4. To what extent do stakeholder groups display differences in the MPQ's dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy?*
- 5. To what extent do the MPQ's dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy predict stakeholder group membership?*

Figure 5 shows the conceptual model, which illustrates the five research questions. Research question one to three dealt with the relationships between the three variables (Foreign language mastery, MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy), while research question four and five are related to the difference in the variables between the two employee groups (international and national) and the predictive value of the variables for group membership.

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Figure 5. Conceptual Model



Method

Instruments

First of all, the present study tested the relationship between the MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy. Subjects were tested on each of the five dimensions (cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social-initiative, emotional stability and flexibility) using the MPQ by Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2000), consisting of 78 items, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from: 1 “totally not applicable” to 5 “totally applicable”. As the reliability of the flexibility scale was lower than for the other scales, in the study of Korzilius et al. (2011), the items “Seeks challenges” and “Enjoys unfamiliar experiences” were added. Consequently, the reliability of the scales for the five dimensions was sufficient: Cultural empathy $\alpha = .76$, open-mindedness $\alpha = .87$, social-initiative $\alpha = .91$, emotional stability $\alpha = .85$ and flexibility $\alpha = .82$

As this research was based on the study by Korzilius et al. (2011), their operationalization of foreign language mastery was kept. Foreign language mastery therefore consisted of the subject’s self-assessment of number of foreign languages spoken and the proficiency level of each foreign language they spoke: “How many foreign languages do you speak?”, “Which

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foreign languages do you speak?” (Maximum 6) and “Please indicate the level of proficiency of each of the foreign languages you speak” (1 “poor” to 7 “excellent”).

Self-efficacy was measured using the scale proposed by MacNab and Worthely (2012), as they were able to show a mediating influence of self-efficacy on cultural intelligence learning. The scale consists of 10 items, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-“total agreement” to 5- “total disagreement”, for example “I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.” and “I am confident that I could deal effectively with unexpected events.”. The reliability of the scale was good : $\alpha = .88$

To find differences in the variables between the groups and the predictive strength of MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy regarding group membership, it was necessary to define a last variable, which was stakeholder group. Stakeholder group consisted of two levels: internationally working employees and nationally working employees. Respondents had to indicate whether they see their employment as internationally or nationally directed. Furthermore, they indicated to which extent their current job was internationally oriented in percentage.

Based on Korzilius et al. (2011) subjects also self-assessed the number of international contacts, the number of weeks they worked, lived, studied and spent their holidays abroad. However, those questions were not used to determine the stakeholder group that a participant belonged to.

At last some demographical questions were asked including, the size and industry of the company they were currently working for, gender, age, educational level and nationality. The whole survey was distributed in English and German to make sure that the respondents could answer the questions in the language they were familiar with.

Procedure and Respondents

To gather the data, an online survey was created using Qualtrics. Employees of multinational companies were targeted, however only few responses per company were collected, leading to responses coming from a variety of different companies. Respondents were contacted via an e-mail which contained the link to the online survey. They were informed that they could choose freely to participate in the survey. Respondents were asked to complete the survey, stating that their responses are anonymous. They could choose between the English and German version of

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the survey. After filling in the survey, the respondents were thanked and informed that the companies would be provided with the results of the study. The survey was online from the third of May until the 31st of May of 2016.

In total, 92 employees participated, but only 72 completed the survey, leading to a drop-out rate of 22 %. Thirty-eight of the respondents were male and 33 were female. The average age was 43 ($SD= 13.97$), with a range of 57. 25 % had a Master's degree, 22,2 % a High School degree, while 38 % indicated having another kind of degree. Most of the respondents worked for companies with over 1.000 employees (29,2 %), were mainly German (93,1 %) and worked for example in industrial construction (12,5 %) or health care (17,8 %). As stated earlier, nationally and internationally working employees were targeted. Based on the respondent's indication of the orientation of their job, two groups were created for the ones who worked nationally (40) and internationally (32). To establish whether a respondent belonged to the national or international group, the following procedure was used. All respondents indicating an international orientation were included in the international group, plus those employees stating a national orientation in the first question ("Please indicate the orientation of your current job") and a high or very high degree of international orientation in the second question ("Please indicate the extent to which your current job is internationally oriented"). All other employees were counted as national employees. The independent-sample t-test for age with as factor group membership showed no significant effect of group membership on age ($t(69) = .53, p = .598$). The Chi-square analysis for gender, educational level, nationality and sector showed no significant difference between the two groups ($\chi^2(1) = .29, p = .590$), ($\chi^2(4) = 5.45, p = .244$), ($\chi^2(2) = 1.87, p = .393$), ($\chi^2(50) = 55.73, p = .268$). The Chi-square analysis for size of the company showed a significant difference between the two groups ($\chi^2(4) = 14.65, p = .005$). International employees more frequently worked in bigger companies ($M = 3.59, SD = 1.34$) than national employees ($M = 3.25, SD = 1.37$). As only the analysis for the scale of the company showed a difference between the two groups, they are still considered as equal. The potential influence of the unequal distribution of the scale between the stakeholder groups is elaborated in the discussion of this article.

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Statistical treatment

In order to analyse the data statistically, SPSS version 21 was used. Research question one to three were analysed by calculating descriptive statistics and correlations to find relationships between the MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy.

For research question four, independent-samples t-tests were carried out in order to detect differences in the three variables between the two employee groups.

To give an answer to the fifth research question, a logistic regression analysis was run in order to measure the predictive strength of the MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy regarding group membership.

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Results

Relationships between the MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy (RQ 1-3)

Table 2 shows the results of the correlations between the variables MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy.

Table 2. Correlations between the foreign language mastery, MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy

Variable	Amount of foreign languages spoken	Proficiency of foreign languages spoken	Cultural empathy	Open-mindedness	Social initiative	Emotional stability	Flexibility	Self-efficacy
Amount of foreign languages spoken		.47	.11	.25*	.15	.06	.31**	.23
Proficiency of foreign language spoken	.47		.26*	.40**	.22	.19	.35**	.17
Cultural empathy	.11	.26*		.43**	.22	.21	.29*	.25*
Open-mindedness	.25*	.40**	.43**		.57**	.52**	.55**	.61**
Social initiative	.15	.22	.22	.57**		.65**	.63**	.69**
Emotional stability	.06	.19	.21	.52*	.65**		.60**	.70**
Flexibility	.31**	.35**	.29*	.55**	.63**	.60**		.54**
Self-efficacy	.23	.17	.25*	.61**	.69**	.70**	.53**	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

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No significant correlation was found between amount of foreign languages spoken and proficiency of the foreign languages spoken ($r(71) = .05, p = .694$). It was shown that the amount of foreign languages spoken was not related to the proficiency in those languages.

No significant correlation was found between amount of foreign languages spoken and cultural empathy ($r(71) = .11, p = .375$). It was shown that the amount of foreign languages was not related to cultural empathy.

A significant small³ positive correlation was found between amount of foreign languages spoken and open-mindedness ($r(71) = .25, p = .032$). It was shown that the amount of foreign languages spoken was related to open-mindedness.

No significant correlation was found between amount of foreign languages spoken and social initiative ($r(71) = .15, p = .204$). It was shown that the amount of foreign languages spoken was not related to social initiative.

No significant correlation was found between amount of foreign languages spoken and emotional stability ($r(71) = .06, p = .608$). It was shown that the amount of foreign languages spoken was not related to emotional stability.

A significant medium positive correlation was found between amount of foreign languages spoken and flexibility ($r(71) = .31, p = .009$). It was shown that the amount of foreign languages spoken was related to flexibility.

A significant small positive correlation was found between proficiency of foreign languages spoken and cultural empathy ($r(71) = .26, p = .029$). It was shown that the proficiency in the foreign languages spoken was related to cultural empathy.

A significant medium positive correlation was found between proficiency of foreign languages spoken and open-mindedness ($r(71) = .40, p < .001$). It was shown that the proficiency in the foreign languages was related to open-mindedness.

No significant positive correlation was found between proficiency of foreign languages spoken and social initiative ($r(71) = .22, p = .066$). It was shown that the proficiency in foreign languages spoken was not related to social initiative.

³ The classification used is based on Cohen (1992). .10 = small effect size, .30 medium effect size, .50 large effect size

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No significant correlation was found between proficiency of foreign languages spoken and emotional stability ($r(71) = .19, p = .106$). It was shown that the proficiency in foreign languages spoken was not related to emotional stability.

A significant medium positive correlation was found between proficiency of foreign languages spoken and flexibility ($r(71) = .35, p = .003$). It was shown that the proficiency in foreign languages spoken was related to flexibility.

A significant small positive correlation was found between self-efficacy and cultural empathy ($r(72) = .25, p = .033$). It was shown that self-efficacy was related to cultural empathy.

A significant large positive correlation was found between self-efficacy and open-mindedness ($r(72) = .61, p < .001$). It was shown that self-efficacy was related to open-mindedness.

A significant large positive correlation was found between self-efficacy and social initiative ($r(72) = .69, p < .001$). It was shown that self-efficacy was related to social initiative.

A significant large positive correlation was found between self-efficacy and emotional stability ($r(72) = .70, p < .001$). It was shown that self-efficacy was related to emotional stability.

A significant large positive correlation was found between self-efficacy and flexibility ($r(72) = .53, p < .001$). It was shown that self-efficacy was related to flexibility.

No significant correlation was found between proficiency of foreign languages spoken and self-efficacy ($r(71) = .17, p = .154$). It was shown that the proficiency of foreign languages spoken was not related to self-efficacy.

No significant correlation was found between amount of foreign languages spoken and self-efficacy ($r(71) = .23, p = .054$). It was shown that the amount of foreign languages was not related to self-efficacy.

There were also 8 significant correlations found between the five MPQ dimensions with coefficients ranging from .29 to .65. It was shown that the MPQ dimensions are related to each other. Only the correlations between cultural empathy and social initiative as well as cultural empathy and emotional stability were not significant.

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Differences between international and national employees in the MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy (RQ 4)

Table 3 shows the results from the independent-samples t-test for the MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy with as factor group membership.

Table 3. Means and Standard deviation for foreign language mastery, MPQ dimensions, self-efficacy and international characteristics (1 =low, 5= high for MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy; 1= low, 6= high for amount of foreign languages, 1= low, 7= high for proficiency)

Variable	<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>		<i>n</i>
	National	Intern.	National	Intern.	
Amount of foreign languages spoken	1.60*	2.06*	.84*	1.06*	71
Proficiency of foreign languages spoken	3.93	4.33	1.30	1.01	71
Cultural empathy	3.86	3.88	.39	.36	72
Open-mindedness	3.57	3.71	.48	.53	72
Social initiative	3.38*	3.66*	.65*	.44*	72
Emotional stability	3.27	3.43	.52	.43	72
Flexibility	3.19	3.38	.58	.41	72
Self-efficacy	3.57	3.66	.55	.43	72
Holiday abroad	3.08	2.88	4.54	1.39	72
Study abroad	.13	1.83	.71	8.15	56
Work abroad	.33**	45.61**	1.74**	7.73**	61
Life abroad	.00	4.33	.00	11.66	56

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

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The independent-samples t-test for amount of weeks spent on holiday abroad with as factor group membership did not show a significant effect of group membership on amount of weeks spent on holiday abroad ($t(70) = .24, p = .811$). This means that the employees in the international group ($M = 2.88, SD = 1.39$) did not spend more weeks on holiday abroad than the employees in the national group ($M = 3.08, SD = 4.54$). The amount of respondents used for this test was 72.

The independent-samples t-test for amount of weeks spent on studying abroad with as factor group membership did not show a significant effect of group membership on amount of weeks spent on studying abroad ($t(23,260) = -1.02, p = .317$). This means that the employees in the international group ($M = 1.83, SD = 8.15$) did not spend more weeks on studying abroad than the employees in the national group ($M = .13, SD = .71$). As the Levene's test was significant the results for equal variances not assumed are reported. The amount of respondents used for this test was 56.

The independent-samples t-test for amount of weeks spent on working abroad with as factor group membership showed a significant effect of group membership on amount of weeks spent on working abroad ($t(29,337) = -3.54, p = .001$). This means that the employees in the international group ($M = 5.61, SD = 7.73$) spent more weeks on working abroad than the employees in the national group ($M = .33, SD = 1.74$). As the Levene's test was significant the results for equal variances not assumed are reported. The amount of respondents used for this test was 61.

The independent-samples t-test for amount of weeks spent on living abroad with as factor group membership did not show a significant effect of group membership on amount of weeks spent on living abroad ($t(23) = -1.82, p = .082$). This means that the employees in the international group ($M = 4.33, SD = 11.66$) did not spend more weeks on living abroad than the employees in the national group ($M = .00, SD = .00$). As the Levene's test was significant the results for equal variances not assumed are reported. The amount of respondents used for this test was 56.

The independent-samples t-test for amount of languages spoken with as factor group membership showed a significant effect of group membership on amount of languages spoken ($t(69) = -2.06, p = .043$). This means that employees in the international group ($M = 2.06, SD =$

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1.06) spoke more foreign languages than employees in the national group ($M = 1.60, SD = .841$). The amount of respondents used for this test was 71.

The independent-samples t-test for proficiency level with as factor group membership did not show a significant effect of group membership on proficiency ($t(69) = -1.41, p = .162$). This means that employees in the international group ($M = 4.33, SD = 1.01$) were not more proficient in their foreign languages than the employees in the national group ($M = 3.93, SD = 1.30$). For the proficiency level a composite average of all languages was calculated for each participant. The amount of respondents used for this test was 71.

The independent-samples t-test for cultural empathy with as factor group membership did not show a significant effect of group membership on cultural empathy ($t(70) = -.25, p = .805$). This means that employees in the international group ($M = 3.88, SD = .36$) did not show more cultural empathy than employees in the national group ($M = 3.86, SD = .39$). The amount of respondents used for this test was 72.

The independent-samples t-test for open-mindedness with as factor group membership did not show a significant effect of group membership on open-mindedness ($t(70) = -1.20, p = .233$). This means that employees in the international group ($M = 3.71, SD = .53$) were not more open-minded than employees in the national group ($M = 3.57, SD = .48$). The amount of respondents used for this test was 72.

The independent-samples t-test for social-initiative with as factor group membership showed a significant effect of group membership on social initiative ($t(70) = -2.06, p = .043$). This means that the employees in the international group ($M = 3.66, SD = .44$) showed more social initiative than employees in the national group ($M = 3.38, SD = .65$). The amount of respondents used for this test was 72.

The independent-samples t-test for emotional stability with as factor group membership did not show a significant effect of group membership on emotional stability ($t(70) = -1.40, p = .167$). This means that the employees in the international group ($M = 3.43, SD = .434$) were not more emotionally stable than the employees in the national group ($M = 3.27, SD = .52$). The amount of respondents used for this test was 72.

The independent-samples t-test for flexibility with as factor group membership did not show a significant effect of group membership on flexibility ($t(70) = -1.52, p = .132$). This means that the employees in the international group ($M = 3.38, SD = .41$) did not show more

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flexibility than the employees in the national group ($M = 3.19, SD = .58$). The amount of respondents used for this test was 72.

The independent-samples t-test for self-efficacy with as factor group membership did not show a significant effect of group membership on self-efficacy ($t(70) = -.80, p = .429$). This means that the employees in the international group ($M = 3.66, SD = .43$) did not show more self-efficacy than the employees in the national group ($M = 3.57, SD = .55$). The amount of respondents used for this test was 72.

Predictive value of the MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy (RQ 5)

Table 4 shows the results of the logistic regression, testing the predictive value of the MPQ dimensions, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy for group membership.

Table 4. Results of logistic regression predicting group membership

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	Odds ratio
Number of foreign languages	.65	.31	1.91*
Proficiency	.30	.26	1.40
Cultural empathy	-.23	.76	.79
Open-mindedness	-.08	.77	.92
Social-initiative	1.26	.79	3.52
Emotional stability	.80	.86	2.20
Flexibility	-.45	.76	.63
Self-efficacy	-1.09	.90	.34
<u>Model</u>			
Likelihood ratio test	$\chi(9) = 11.00, p = .276$		

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R ² Cox and Snell	.14
R ² Nagelkerke	.19
Correct-classifications: <i>n</i> group, <i>n</i> correct, % correct	
National employees	40, 30, 75
International employees	32, 15, 51,6

* $p < .05$

A logistic regression was performed to ascertain the effects of foreign language mastery (number of languages and proficiency), the MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy on the likelihood of the membership in the international or national employee group. The logistic regression model was not statistically significant $\chi(9) = 11.00, p = .276$. The model explained 14,4 % of the variance in group membership and correctly classified 64,8 % of the cases. No variable besides number of languages ($b = .74, \text{Wald } \chi^2(1) = 4.24, p = .040$) has been shown to be a significant predictor of group membership (all $p > .111$). For each unit that the number of languages spoken increases, the change in the odds of belonging to the international group (rather than belonging to the national group) is 2.09. This means that the more foreign languages one speaks, the more likely it is that one belongs to the international group.

Conclusion and discussion

The present study aimed to contribute to the knowledge about the fit between certain personality characteristics (foreign language mastery, MPQ dimensions, self-efficacy) and an international or national job by adding self-efficacy as a less researched variable in the field. Unexpectedly, the overall results showed no major differences in the two employee groups (international and national) and only the number of foreign languages spoken could predict group membership significantly. But, still correlations between the different variables were found. First, the results are discussed per research question and potential explanations are presented. Second, limitations and the resulting indications for future research are given.

Research question one to three dealt with the relationships between the variables foreign language mastery (amount of foreign languages spoken, proficiency of foreign languages

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spoken), the MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy. Regarding the relationships between foreign language mastery and the MPQ dimensions, a small positive correlation was found between the amount of foreign languages spoken and open-mindedness. The findings were in line with Korzilius et al. (2011). Additionally, flexibility had a medium positive relation with the amount of foreign languages spoken, meaning that the amount of foreign languages a person speaks is related to the degree of open-mindedness and flexibility the person demonstrates. Regarding the proficiency level of the foreign languages, it was found, in agreement with Korzilius (2011), that the proficiency is positively related to cultural empathy. In contrast to Korzilius (2011), also open-mindedness and flexibility were positively related to the proficiency level. These positive correlations emphasize the idea that by learning a foreign language one does not only learn the rules of the language, but also the underlying cultural rules (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Korzilius et al., 2011). Not only the number of languages a person speaks might help to develop a feeling for the cultural system, but also the proficiency level has influence on the understanding of the cultural rules that are implemented in the language. Therefore, the positive relationships might indicate that the more a person masters a foreign language, the more open-minded, flexible and cultural empathetic one becomes, due to a deeper understanding of other cultures. However, this causal relationship has to be investigated, first. Based on the present study, no causal conclusion can be made. The relationship could also be vice versa, meaning that the more open-minded, flexible and cultural empathetic a person is, the more one will master a foreign language. However, based on the ideas about foreign language learning (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Korzilius et al., 2011) the first option seems to be more probable.

Contrary to the expectation, no relationship was found between the amount of foreign languages spoken and the proficiency in those languages. This means that being proficient in a foreign language does not consequently mean that a person speaks more languages and vice versa. A rational assumption would be that if one is highly proficient in a foreign language, one would have the capability to learn more languages, than a person that is not as proficient in a foreign language. However, the results of the present study show that the two variables are independent from each other, which is also in line with the findings by Korzilius et al. (2011). A possible explanation would be the high average age (43 and 46,2 in Korzilius et al., 2011) in both studies. Both samples included a generation (1973) in which foreign language learning was not as promoted as nowadays. Especially, in Germany English was the focus of the schools

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regarding to foreign language learning. This might mean that during school they were only focused on one language in which they are fairly proficient, now, but did not have the opportunity to learn other languages. Or they knew a variety of languages, through an intercultural work environment, but the proficiency in all languages is low, as they only learned the basic communication at work.

Regarding the relationships between the MPQ dimensions and the new introduced variable self-efficacy, the results were in line with the findings by Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002). With four of the MPQ dimensions (open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, flexibility) self-efficacy showed a large positive relationship, while self-efficacy and cultural empathy had a small positive relationship with each other. Those positive correlations were also found by Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002). These results show that self-efficacy seems to be largely associated with the MPQ dimensions, which is not surprising as self-efficacy was found to facilitate communicative competence (Rubin et al., 1993) and psychological and cross-cultural adjustment (Fenner & Selmer, 2008). As the MPQ dimensions also measure the ability of a person to interact effectively in intercultural situations (Van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martinez, 2015) both scales, MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy, measure similar constructs and are therefore likely to be related.

Focussing on the relationships between the MPQ dimensions itself, it was found that they are strongly related to each other. Exceptions are the non-significant relationships between cultural empathy and social-initiative, as well as cultural empathy and emotional stability. In comparison to Korzilius et al. (2001), the dimensions showed stronger relationships, meaning that the construct of a multicultural personality was measured well by the MPQ dimensions in this sample of respondents.

Regarding the relationships between self-efficacy and foreign language mastery, no significant correlations were found. This means that even if self-efficacy is defined as a set of skills in order to adjust to intercultural situations (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002), these skills are independent from foreign language mastery. Based on the findings of MacNab and Worthely (2012), that self-efficacy enhances cultural intelligence learning, it was expected that self-efficacy would also enhance foreign language mastery. Based on the definition by MacNab and Worthely (2012, see page 11 of the present article) foreign language mastery could be seen

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as a part of cultural intelligence learning. However, the results of the present study show that self-efficacy does not enhance foreign language mastery or vice versa.

Research question four dealt with the differences in the three variables between the two employee groups (national and international). Differences between the groups were found in the amount of weeks spent on working abroad, the amount of foreign languages and social initiative. Korzilius et al. (2011), in contrast, also found differences in the amount of foreign languages, open-mindedness and emotional stability. Apparently, the results differ between the Netherlands, studied by Korzilius et al. (2011) and Germany, studied in the present research. An explanation for the fact that the present study could only identify one MPQ dimension to be different between the employees groups could be the differences in the sample. On the one hand respondents came from several sectors in the present study, while only one sector, the agricultural sector was studied by Korzilius et al. (2011). On the other hand Korzilius et al. (2011) focused on one big company, while respondents from the present sample came from various companies. Also, it was not asked if those companies were export or non-export companies, which might also be a difference to the sample used in Korzilius et al. (2011).

Furthermore, the unequal distribution of the scale of the companies between the two stakeholder groups might have influenced the results and led to the differences between the two studies. Additionally, the high average of 43 years means that the respondents grew up in an environment that was less influenced by globalisation and internationalisation than nowadays. Hence, their personality was shaped less by an international environment.

Finally, culture might be a factor that has to be considered in the interpretation of the results. On the one hand each company has a unique company culture that influences how people behave, interact and perceive. On the other hand the culture of the countries the Netherlands and Germany might differ, leading to differences in the results. If the scores, found by Geert Hofstede (1980; <https://geert-hofstede.com/germany.html>, consulted 17.06.2016), for the different cultural dimensions, also hold for the samples used in the present study and the research by Korzilius et al. (2011), the differences found might be due to the difference on the masculinity/femininity dimension.

As respondents had to self-assess their personality and foreign language mastery, the data might not be based on the real personality but how the respondents want to see themselves. Research by MacDonald, Spence and Brown (2013) showed that respondents from a masculine

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culture, like the German (based on the scores by Hofstede: 66, <https://geert-hofstede.com/germany.html>, consulted 17.06.2016) showed a higher preference for the ego-defence motive when searching for feedback than respondents with origin in a feminine culture, like the Dutch (based on the scores by Hofstede: 14, <https://geert-hofstede.com/netherlands.html>, consulted 17.06.2016) . Ego-defence was defined as protecting the ego against discount feedback and keeping a positive self-image (MacDonald et al., 2013). For this reason, it might be that all respondents gave answers that according to them were the positive answers to protect their self-image, leading to a more homogenous data sample without differences between the two employee groups in the German sample. However, no conclusion can be made regarding the influence of culture, as it was not investigated as a factor in the present research.

That no differences could be found between the employee groups in the amount of weeks spent on studying abroad might be due to the fact that the average age was 43. This means that most of the respondents were from a generation in which studying abroad was not as common as nowadays. Furthermore, the results showed no difference in the amount of weeks spent on holidays abroad. This can be explained through the fact that the German middle class can afford holidays abroad. Also Germany is one of the countries with a large touristic history meaning that Germans frequently travel to other countries in their holidays. For example, Germany was on top of the statistics for outbound holidays 2014 ([http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Top_10_Member_States_of_origin_for_outbound_holidays,_2014_\(million_nights_spent_abroad_by_residents_of_the_country\)_YB16.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Top_10_Member_States_of_origin_for_outbound_holidays,_2014_(million_nights_spent_abroad_by_residents_of_the_country)_YB16.png), consulted: 21.06.2016).

Research question five investigated the predictive value of the three variables (foreign language mastery, MPQ dimensions, self-efficacy) for group membership. As the results of research question four already suggested, only the amount of foreign language mastery was found to be a significant predictor of group membership. The more languages one speaks the more likely it is that one belongs to the international employee group. Comparing the findings of the present research with the study by Korzilius et al. (2011), it has to be mentioned that the researchers also found open-mindedness and flexibility to be predictors of group membership.

Again, the limitation of the self-assessment has to be taken into consideration when comparing the two studies. Self-assessment, regardless of the cultural background, might influence the results, as it is not always congruent with reality.

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Additionally, the definition of an international employee plays a role when interpreting the results. In the present study employees were categorized based on two questions: “Please indicate the orientation of your current job” and “Please indicate the extent to which your current job is internationally oriented”. All employees stating international in the first question and all employees stating to be national at the first question but were indicating a high or very high degree of international orientation at the second question were counted as international employees, while the rest were national employees. Surprisingly, a lot of respondents stated to be national with a high or very high degree of international orientation. This might indicate that employees themselves are not certain about the orientation of their job. Another problem with the definition of an international employee was that only a small number of respondents came from within the same company, leading to a variety of companies participating. Hence, it might be that each company has had a different definition of an international job, leading to an inexact definition of the international employee group.

In line with Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002) self-efficacy was not found to be a significant predictor of group membership, even though an extended scale by MacNab and Worthely (2012), that was adapted to intercultural situations, was used. This means that self-efficacy does not seem to have additional predictive value for group membership. Therefore, it would not be necessary to include measuring self-efficacy of the candidates during the selection process. However, as stated before, the fact that only one variable was found to be a predictor, might be due to the fact that the definition of the international group was not good enough. Additionally, an explanation for the result would be that the scale is still not precise enough and needs to be more tailored to intercultural situations, as no item contained a reference to a multicultural situation.

The present research tried to give more insights into the characteristics of an international employee, which can be considered during the employee selection process. Only the characteristic social initiative was found to discriminate between the international and national employee group, besides the amount of foreign languages spoken and the amount of weeks spent on working abroad. For the selection process this means that the social initiative of an employee might indicate a good fit between the international job and the employee. German recruiters should therefore select candidates that show a high degree of social initiative, speak several foreign languages and have worked abroad. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that these

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results can only be interpreted in the German context. Korzilius et al. (2011) have shown that different results were found for the Dutch culture. This might mean that for candidates from different backgrounds, different criteria should be considered during the selection process.

Furthermore, only the amount of foreign languages spoken could predict if an employee belongs to the international or national employee group. Therefore, also the number of foreign languages a candidate speaks should be taken into consideration when looking for an international employee.

Although the MPQ dimensions, besides social initiative, were not found to discriminate between and predict the employee groups, they showed strong relationships. These findings might also indicate that Germans have a more or less similar personality regarding these characteristics, as the respondents from different sectors and company scales did not differ in the MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy. Taking into consideration the success of German multinational companies, this might mean that the average German personality (regarding MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy) fits well to an international environment. However, due to the small scale of this research no generalisations about the characteristics of German employees, can be made and future research should investigate if German employees indeed share the same characteristics regarding the MPQ dimensions and self-efficacy. Earlier research has shown that the MPQ dimensions did indeed discriminate between international and national employees. Further research, that goes beyond the scale of the present study, needs to be conducted, in order to get a deeper understanding of the characteristics of an international employee.

Limitations and future research

As stated above the present research had several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings. In the following the limitations will be discussed and resulting indications for future research will be given.

First, the characteristics of the sample might have influenced the results. Especially, the unequal distribution of the company scale between the employee groups has to be mentioned. When comparing the present study to the research by Korzilius et al. (2011) the sector and the amount of companies studied differed. Future research should therefore target two or three big multinational companies that are similar in scale and compare different sectors (also export and non-export), to enhance the generalizability of the results.

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Second, a factor that has not been studied, but might have had influence on the results, is culture. As differences between the study conducted in the Netherlands and the present study with German respondents were found, future research should investigate if the characteristics of international and national employees differ between cultures.

Third, the strategy of self-assessment never fully reflects reality. Hence, respondents might have answered in a socially accepted way, avoiding agreeing to statements that might be more negative than others. Follow-up studies should avoid using self-assessment, if possible, by asking supervisors or co-workers to rate the personality of the employees.

Another factor that limited the conducted research was the rather high average age of 43 years of the respondents. Those respondents belong to a generation, in which internationalisation and globalisation was at its beginning. In consequence, little was known about the characteristics of international employees, and international vacancies were given to candidates that might not have fitted well to this position. Also their personality was less shaped by the international environment and there were fewer opportunities for the generation to make international experience during high school or university. To get relevant results for the next employee generation, future research should focus on a younger employee group.

Finally, no clear definition of the two employee groups could be found. The two questions used showed that the respondents were not sure about the orientation of their job. A lot of the employees stated having a national job, but then with a high international orientation. Due to the fact that a lot of different companies participated and only a small number of respondents per company could be gathered, it can be assumed that a lot of different definitions of an international job reduced the explicitness of group membership. Future research should therefore focus on finding a clear definition for employees to hold on to when indicating the orientation of their job.

Big scale studies should be conducted in order to enhance the generalizability of the results, for example by investigating several cultures and younger generations. As the German employees showed a more or less homogenous pattern regarding the characteristics tested (MPQ-dimensions and self-efficacy), future research should also focus on the German employees, in order to get a deeper understanding of the characteristics of German international and national employees. It would also be interesting to research if people from multicultural families

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consequently have a multicultural personality or not, as due to globalisation the amount of culturally mixed families is rising.

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Appendix A

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study into intercultural competence in global business context, being conducted by the department of Communication and Information Sciences at the Radboud University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. You will need about 10-15 minutes to answer all the questions in this questionnaire.

Confidentiality

The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary, you may decline to participate without penalty.

Procedure

The questionnaire consists of three parts: first you assess a number of statements that relate to your views of yourself, subsequently we will ask you some questions about your language competence and lastly we ask some demographic questions. Please note that there are no false answers. We ask you to fill out the questionnaire with as much as accuracy possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Alina Kortmann

Lara Wolff-Hagdon

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If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact either Alina Kortmann, MA Candidate on alina.kortmann@student.ru.nl or Lara Wolff-Hagdon, MA Candidate on lara.wolff@student.ru.nl or Dr. Andreu van Hooft, Chief Investigator/Supervisor on a.v.hooft@let.ru.nl or Brigitte Planken Chief Investigator/Supervisor on b.planken@let.ru.nl

The following statements are related to the views you have about yourself; to what extent do they apply to you? Please take your time to answer the statements openly and truthfully. (1- “totally not applicable”; 2- “not applicable”; 3- “neutral”; 4- “applicable”; 5 “totally applicable”)

Cultural Empathy

Understands other people's feelings
Tries to understand other people's behavior
Takes other people's habits into consideration
Finds it hard to empathize with others
Sympathizes with others
Has problems assessing relationships
Is attentive to facial expression
Asks personal questions
Enjoys other people's stories
Remembers what other people have told
Is able to voice other people's thoughts
Is a good listener
Notices when someone is in trouble
Has good insights into human nature

Open mindedness

Is interested in other cultures
Is fascinated by other people's opinions
Is looking for new ways to attain his/her goal

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Is curious

Finds (other) religions interesting

Tries out various approaches

Is intrigued by differences

Starts a new life easily

Gets involved in other cultures

Has a feeling for what is appropriate in another culture

Seeks contact with people from different backgrounds

Has a broad range of interests

Puts his or her own culture in perspective

Is open to new ideas

Social initiative

Takes initiative

Makes contacts easily

Finds it difficult to make contacts

Keeps to the background

Is inclined to speak out

Waits for others to initiate contacts

Takes the lead

Is a slow starter

Is always busy

Is easy-going in groups

Easily approaches other people

Knows how to act in social settings

Likes to speak in public

Tends to wait and see

Likes action

Is often the driving force behind things

Leaves things as they are

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Emotional stability

Is nervous
Is not easily hurt
Is troubled by conflict with others
Is afraid to fail
Remains calm in misfortune
Takes it for granted that things will turn out right
Radiates calm
Considers problems solvable
Is timid
Is under pressure
Can put setbacks in perspective
Is sensitive to criticism
Has ups and downs
Forgets setbacks easily
Is self-confident
Gets upset easily
Worries
Is apt to feel lonely
Is insecure
Has a solution for every problem

Flexibility

Likes low-comfort holidays
Avoids adventure
Changes easily from one activity to another
Avoids surprises
Likes to work on his/her own
Dislikes travelling
Wants to know exactly what will happen
Functions best in a familiar setting

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Works mostly according to a strict schedule

Feels uncomfortable in a different culture

Works according to plan

Likes routine

Has fixed habits

Seeks challenges

Enjoys unfamiliar experiences

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. (1- “totally disagree”; 2- “disagree”; 3- “neutral”; 4- “agree”; 5- “totally agree”)

Self-efficacy

I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

I am confident that I could deal effectively with unexpected events.

If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.

I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.

I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.

If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.

I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.

When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.

Please indicate how you evaluate your own current levels of job performance in each of the following areas (1 - “Poor”; 2- “reasonable”; 3- “good”; 4- “very good”; 5- “Outstanding”)

- Knowledge of procedures
- Interaction with coworkers
- Dedication to work
- Quality of work
- Overall rating of job performance

How many foreign languages do you speak (maximum 6)?

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Which foreign languages do you speak?

Please indicate the level of proficiency of each of the foreign languages you speak? (1- “Poor”; 7- “excellent”)

Please indicate the orientation of your current job:

- national
- international

Please indicate the extent to which your current job is internationally oriented. (1- “not at all”; 2- “Small degree”; 3- “Moderate degree”; 4- “High degree”; 5- “Very high degree”)

Please indicate the number of weeks you spent on the following activities:

- Holiday abroad
- Studying abroad
- Working abroad
- Lived abroad

How big is the company you are currently working for?

- 0-10 employees
- 11-50 employees
- 51-100 employees
- 100-1000 employees
- Above 1.000 employees

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your age?

What is your highest educational level?

- Doctoral
- Master’s degree
- Bachelor’s degree
- High School

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What is your nationality?

- German
- Dutch
- British
- Spanish
- Italian
- French
- Other

In which industry are you currently working?

Thank you for your participation. If you want to be informed about the overall results of the study please enter your e-mail below.

German Survey

Lieber Teilnehmer,

Sie sind dazu eingeladen, an einem Forschungsprojekt über interkulturelle Kompetenz im globalen Berufskontext teilzunehmen, durchgeführt durch die Abteilung für Kommunikations- und Informationswissenschaften der Radboud Universität in Nijmegen, den Niederlanden. Für die Beantwortung der folgenden Fragen benötigen Sie 10-15 Minuten.

Vertraulichkeit

Sämtliche Informationen werden absolut vertraulich behandelt. Alle Daten werden sicher verwahrt und sind nur zugänglich für die Personen die an diesem Forschungsprojekt beteiligt sind. Sie oder Ihr Arbeitgeber werden in schriftlichen oder mündlichen Präsentationen dieses Projektes nicht erwähnt, die Ergebnisse sind also nicht auf Sie zurückzuführen, es sei denn, eine Veröffentlichung ist explizit gewünscht. Ihre Teilnahme an diesem Forschungsprojekt ist freiwillig und kann zu jeder Zeit abgebrochen werden.

Verfahrensweise

Der folgende Fragebogen besteht aus den drei Teilen Selbsteinschätzung, Fremdsprachenkenntnis und Demographie. Bitte bedenken Sie, dass es keine falschen Antworten gibt. Wir bitten Sie alle Fragen ehrlich zu beantworten.

Vielen Dank!

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

The relationship between multicultural personality, foreign language mastery and self-efficacy

Alina Kortmann
Lara Wolff-Hagdon

Wenn Sie Fragen haben oder mehr Informationen erhalten möchten, wenden Sie sich gerne an Alina Kortmann (alina.kortmann@student.ru.nl), Lara Wolff-Hagdon (lara.wolff@student.ru.nl), Dr. Andreu van Hooft, Begleiter (a.v.hooft@let.ru.nl) oder Brigitte Planken, Begleiterin (b.planken@let.ru.nl)

Die folgenden Aussagen beziehen sich auf Ihre Selbsteinschätzung. In wie weit treffen die folgenden Aussagen auf Sie zu? Bitte nehmen Sie sich die Zeit um die Aussagen offen und wahrheitsgemäß zu beantworten. (1-“trifft überhaupt nicht zu”; - trifft überwiegend zu; 3- trifft teilweise zu; 4- trifft überwiegend zu; 5-“trifft völlig zu”)

Cultural Empathy

Versteht die Gefühle anderer Menschen
Versucht das Verhalten anderer Menschen zu verstehen
Nimmt Rücksicht auf die Gewohnheiten anderer Menschen
Findet es schwierig sich in andere hineinzusetzen
Hat Verständnis für andere
Hat Probleme soziale Beziehungen einzuschätzen
Achtet auf Gesichtsausdrücke
Stellt persönliche Fragen
Genießt die Geschichten anderer Menschen
Merkt sich was andere gesagt haben
Kann die Gedanken anderer in Worte fassen
Ist ein guter Zuhörer
Merkt es wenn andere in Schwierigkeiten sind
Hat Einsicht in die Natur der Menschen

Open-mindedness

Interessiert sich für andere Kulturen
Begeistert sich für die Meinung anderer Leute

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Sucht nach neuen Wegen sein/ihr Ziel zu erreichen

Ist Neugierig

Findet andere Religionen interessant

Probiert verschiedene Herangehensweisen

Findet Unterschiede interessant

Beginnt mühelos ein neues Leben

Lässt sich auf andere Kulturen ein

Weiß sich zu verhalten in bestimmten Kulturen

Sucht Kontakt mit Menschen anderer Herkunft

Hat ein breites Interesse

Hat einen Blick für seine/ihre eigene Kultur

Steht offen für neue Ideen

Social initiative

Ergreift die Initiative

Schließt leicht Kontakte

Findet es schwierig Kontakte zu schließen

Hält sich im Hintergrund

Sagt gern seine Meinung

Überlässt anderen die Initiative Kontakte zu schließen

Übernimmt die Führung

Ist ein Spätzünder

Ist immer beschäftigt

Fühlt sich wohl in Gruppen

Geht gern auf andere Leute zu

Weiß sich in sozialer Umgebung zu verhalten

Spricht gern in der Öffentlichkeit

Wartet ab was auf ihn/sie zukommt

Mag Action

Ist oft die treibende Kraft

Lässt die Dinge so wie sie sind

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Emotional stability

Ist nervös
Ist nicht leicht zu kränken
Leidet unter Streit mit anderen
Hat Angst zu versagen
Lässt sich durch Pech nicht aus der Ruhe bringen
Ist überzeugt, dass die Dinge gut ausgehen werden
Strahlt Ruhe aus
Betrachtet Probleme als lösbar
Ist schüchtern
Steht unter Druck
Kann mit Rückschlägen umgehen
Reagiert sensibel auf Kritik
Hat Höhen und Tiefen
Vergisst Rückschläge schnell
Hat Selbstvertrauen
Verliert leicht die Fassung
Macht sich Sorgen
Neigt zur Einsamkeit
Ist unsicher
Hat für jedes Problem eine Lösung

Flexibility

Macht gern Urlaub ohne viel Komfort
Meidet Abenteuer
Kann leicht von einer Aktivität zur anderen wechseln
Vermeidet Überraschungen
Arbeitet gern allein
Geht nicht gern auf Reisen
Will genau wissen was geschehen wird

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Funktioniert am besten in gewohnter Umgebung

Arbeitet meist nach einem striktem Schema

Fühlt sich unwohl in einer anderen Kultur

Arbeitet nach Plan

Mag Routine

Hat feste Gewohnheiten

Arbeitet nach strikten Regeln

Braucht Veränderung

Sucht Herausforderungen

Macht gern neue Erfahrungen

Braucht Regelmäßigkeit im Leben

Bitte geben Sie an in wie weit Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen (1- "trifft überhaupt nicht zu"; 2- trifft überwiegend nicht zu; 3- trifft teilweise zu; 4- trifft überwiegend zu; 5- "trifft völlig zu")

Self-efficacy

- Ich bin in der Lage ruhig zu bleiben wenn ich mit Schwierigkeiten konfrontiert werde, weil ich mich auf meine Bewältigungsstrategien verlassen kann.
- Ich bin mir sicher, dass ich mit unerwarteten Ereignissen effektiv umgehen kann.
- Wenn sich mir jemand widersetzt, finde ich Mittel und Wege um das zu bekommen was ich will.
- Ich kann normalerweise mit allem umgehen was sich mir in den Weg stellt.
- Es fällt mir leicht meine Ziele zu verfolgen und zu erreichen.
- Dank meines Einfallsreichtums weiß ich wie ich mit unvorhergesehenen Situationen umgehen muss.
- Ich kann die meisten Probleme lösen wenn ich den nötigen Einsatz aufwende.
- Wenn ich in Schwierigkeiten bin, fällt mir normalerweise eine Lösung ein.
- Ich kann schwierige Probleme immer lösen, wenn ich es stark genug probiere.
- Wenn ich mit einem Problem konfrontiert werde, kann ich normalerweise mehrere Lösungen finden.

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Bitte geben Sie an wie Sie Ihre aktuelle berufliche Leistung in diesen verschiedenen Bereichen einschätzen. (1- schwach; 2-annehmbar; 3-gut; 4- sehr gut; 5- herausragend)

- Kenntnisse über Handlungsabläufe
- Interaktion mit Arbeitskollegen
- Hingabe und Engagement bei der Arbeit
- Qualität der Arbeit
- Insgesamte Einschätzung der beruflichen Leistung

Wie viele Fremdsprachen sprechen Sie (maximal 6)?

Welche Fremdsprachen sprechen Sie?

Bitte geben Sie an wie gut Sie diese sprechen (1- schlecht, 7- exzellent)

Bitte geben Sie die Orientation Ihres aktuellen Jobs an.

- National
- International

Bitte geben Sie an in wie weit Ihr aktueller Job international orientiert ist. (1-überhaupt nicht; 2- in geringem Masse; 3- in mittlerem Masse; 4- in hohem Masse; 5- in sehr hohem Masse)

Bitte geben Sie an wie viele Wochen Sie mit den folgenden Aktivitäten im Jahr verbringen.

- Urlaub im Ausland
- Studium im Ausland
- Arbeit im Ausland
- Wohnen im Ausland

Wie groß ist die Firma in der Sie aktuell arbeiten?

- 0-10 Arbeitnehmer
- 11-50 Arbeitnehmer
- 51-100 Arbeitnehmer
- 101-1000 Arbeitnehmer
- Über 1.000 Arbeitnehmer

Was ist Ihr Geschlecht

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- Mann
- Frau

Wie alt sind Sie?

Was ist ihr höchstes abgeschlossenes Ausbildungsniveau?

- Doktor
- Master
- Bachelor
- Abitur

Was ist Ihre Staatsangehörigkeit?

- Deutsch
- Niederländisch
- Britisch
- Spanisch
- Italienisch
- Französisch
- Anders

In welcher Industrie arbeiten Sie aktuell?

Danke für Ihre Teilnahme. Wenn Sie über die Resultate der Studie informiert werden wollen, geben Sie bitte Ihre E-Mail Adresse hierunter ein.