

Career adaptability and Cross-cultural adjustment: A Study on Indian Self-Initiated Expatriates

ABSTRACT

Contemporary changes like globalization, technological advancements, job restructuring, and fluctuating economic conditions have impacted the labor market. It has significantly boosted the unprecedented mobility of individuals across nations. Conversely, MNCs expand their global operations and employment opportunities across nations by taking up new international assignments. MNCs rely heavily on their expatriate (especially third-country nationals) workforce for their global expansion and to be more competitive and thriving in the worldwide market. Since career patterns have become more diversified, non-linear, disintegrated, global, and boundaryless, it has been indicated that efficacious career development necessitates individuals to develop skills and to adapt and navigate their self-improvement under a new occupational context and work environment. The diversified cultural background and its linked challenges calls for researches on 'Career adaptability and Cross-cultural adjustment' especially in the context of self-initiated expatriates. While career adaptability in the workplace is considered a self-regulatory ability, it denotes the capabilities or skills to adapt or adjust that are significant to expedite the dynamic process of adapting, which results in a successful adaptation outcome. The need for the present study is to examine the individual level, micro-level, resources, and behaviors that could facilitate matching processes between SIEs and their jobs. The current research work makes a unique contribution by positioning varied factors from international human resource literature into the career construction model of adaptation (CCMA) continuum, such as career ambition, protean career orientation, and grit under the adaptive readiness, career adaptability under adaptability resources, a cross-cultural adjustment under adapting responses, and work-life balance, turnover intention, and work engagement under adaptation results. It proposes the integration theoretical frameworks of CCMA with social exchange theory to examine expatriates' adaptability and adjustment process while working overseas. The study also examines the mediation effects of career adaptability and cross-cultural adjustment and moderating impact of leader-member exchange (LMX). Chain-referral convenience sampling and purposive sampling techniques were utilized for data collection, and the data was collected from

278 self-initiated Indian expatriates employed in the various sectors. Subsequently, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 22) and covariance-based structural equation modeling (CBSEM) with analysis of moment structure (AMOS version 24) was employed to test the proposed models. Consistent with the CCMA, this present study provides confirmation of career adaptability resources as a self-regulatory resource that might stimulate self-initiated expatriates' (SIEs') adaptation results. Specifically, it establishes positive relationships between adaptive readiness (career ambition, protean career orientation, and grit), adaptability resources (career adaptability), adapting responses (cross-cultural adjustment), and adaptation results (work-life balance, turnover intention, and work engagement). Zooming into the context of self-initiated professionals from India, the present study elucidates the understudied relationship between adaptive readiness and adapting behaviors and, furthermore, the relationship between career adaptability to adaptation results. Supporting result was achieved for the moderating impact of sources of support (i.e., leader-member exchange) on the relationship between career adaptability and cross-cultural adjustment. The findings of the present study are expected to facilitate individuals who aspire to move overseas for employment reasons and multinational corporations that recruit third-country nationals.

Keywords: *Career ambition, protean career orientation, grit, career adaptability, cross-cultural adjustment, leader-member exchange, work-life balance, turnover intention, work engagement.*