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Intercultural Readiness Assessment for Pre-departure Candidates

Carley H. Dodd, Abilene Christian University

Abstract

To enhance an intercultural performance, intercultural educators, trainers, and managers, have looked toward a growing body of data explaining intercultural expatriate effectiveness. While the past 25 years of research uncovered thorough and insightful theories regarding culture, cultural communication, and cultural sensitivity, this data asset does not answer provocative questions asked in many organizations regarding how to best anticipate candidates' adjustment, changes in behavior, and intercultural performance competencies. If we can assume is an outcomes-based approach to intercultural communication effectiveness, then testing for an adequate performance prediction remains a highly desirable concept for organizations sending expatriates. Many studies identify correlates of adjustment and some aspects of performance, but a comprehensive assessment of intercultural candidates that predicts a complex combination of intercultural effectiveness expectations has been elusive. The research presented here represents a paradigm in intercultural communication research which presents the best set of pre-departure predictive variables to explain expatriate effectiveness.

Theoretical Grounding Related to Intercultural Effectiveness

The provocative question about which candidates are best suited for expatriate assignments has proven arduous. Most experts agree that if a predictive set of variables were available, such a measure can offer assigning agencies, the expatriate candidates, and their families an improved selection process. This need is critical in light of increasing difficulty with early return rates and failed overseas experiences. This research presents the results of several years of investigation culminating in a series of predictive studies of various groups of short-term (2 years or less) expatriates.

Imahori & Lanigan (1989) and Kim (1988) affirmed that intercultural competence involves knowing the appropriate communicative behavior used to reach the outcome, while intercultural effectiveness applies communication to match the expected outcome of an intercultural exchange. This view, analogous to a traditional linguistics distinction of linguistic competence as knowing the language and linguistic performance as actually using the language effectively, finds support with Brinkmann and Weerdenburg's (2003) assertion of both cognitive competencies as well as behavioral effectiveness, a view that matches Kim's (1991) perspective. Lustig & Koester (2006) notes situational competence and effectiveness, underscoring how a person may be highly competent in one situation and only moderately competent in another.

Ultimately, intercultural effectiveness and competency research must answer to a higher calling which agencies and expatriate candidates encounter: achieving a positive outcomes-based approach. They want to know what makes the best candidate and how to

assess such candidates. Consequently, this writer defines intercultural communication effectiveness as “communication processes leading to outcomes of developed co-meanings associated with performance expectations.” Foremost, this definition reminds intercultural educators and trainers to consider not only understanding culture and communication, but also skills and behavioral activities most associated with established intercultural outcomes as Bhawuk (1998) has affirmed.

Competence and effectiveness constructs form a foundation for moving toward an important next step: a model and paradigm of assessing and anticipating potential effectiveness for an intercultural expatriate. This step raises the question of pre-departure instrumentation that predicts a reasonable potential for intercultural effectiveness. By such an assessment model, intercultural education and training can focus specific needs and particular coaching applied to enhance expected performance.

To uncover if not to develop the most useful set of intercultural pre-departure variables is a journey that begins with clarifying most common measures of successful outcomes. The research is clear on effectiveness, that is, when an expatriate/sojourner is successful. Among many studies examined this author finds Hammer’s (1987) parsimonious approach the most useful. He agreed with other researchers from foundational research studies (i.e., Hawes & Kealey, 1981; Harris, Moran, & Moran (2004) indicating the dependent measures most associated with intercultural effectiveness outcomes are: (1) intercultural relationship effectiveness, (2) cultural adjustment (including family adjustment), and (3) task/job performance.

Each of these categories can be defined operationally for a specific situation. For example, among study abroad sojourners, the task would be learning the culture and developing cultural sensitivity. For a trainer, the task may be transferring software technology. In any case, pre-departure assessment techniques designed to predict common cultural performance expectations require adequate measurement and testing of potential of performance. Before we turn to the assessment literature, let us review variables usually associated with intercultural communication effectiveness.

Correlates of Intercultural Effectiveness

The variables associated with effectiveness are numerous. For ease of analysis, this section categorizes the correlates into three clusters, matching the most commonly occurring intercultural outcomes expected.

Variables Related to Interpersonal Relationship Effectiveness

Various interpersonal variables include sojourner expectations (Tucker & Baier, 1982; Weissman & Furnham, 1987), openmindedness (Tucker & Baier, 1982), respect for other beliefs (Tucker & Baier, 1982; Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989), trust in people (Tucker & Baier, 1982), tolerance (Tucker & Baier, 1982), personal control (Tucker & Baier, 1982; Meyers, 1990; Dodd, 1998), flexibility, patience, adaptability, self-confidence/initiative, interpersonal interest, and interpersonal harmony (Tucker & Baier, 1982). Other predictors include ethnocentrism (Brinkmann and Weerdenburg, 2003; Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989), empathy (Dodd, 1987), self-efficacy, and self-monitoring ((Harrison, Chadwick, & Scales, 1996; Dodd, 1987).

Appropriate interpersonal relationship development has been a central factor in studies of intercultural effectiveness/competence and adjustment. Kealey (1989), Abe and

Wiseman (1983), Chen (1989), Hammer (1987), Martin and Hammer (1989), Norton (1984), Thongprayoon (1988), and Lakey and Hill (1991) all find strong predictive values for interpersonal involvement regarding sojourner adjustment. Such overwhelming support has been found for interpersonal involvement that most intercultural effectiveness researchers assume interpersonal involvement to be a measure of their model (Hawes and Kealey, 1981; Chen, 1989; Abe and Wiseman, 1983; Hammer, 1987; Hammer, Nishida, and Wiseman, 1996; Imahori and Lanigan, 1989; Kim, 1991; Martin, 1987; Martin and Hammer, 1989; Meyers, 1990; Anderson, 1994; Spitzberg, 1989).

In addition to interpersonal skills, related constructs embrace empathy, language skills, and listening. Hawes and Kealey (1981) included interpersonal variables such as interpersonal flexibility, respect, relationship building, self-control under stress, and sensitivity to host country issues. Kealey later (1989) measured interpersonal skills along the lines of caring, self-centeredness, and activity. Chen's (1989) variables included self-disclosure, message skills, social skills, and interaction management. Abe and Wiseman's (1983) measure focused on the abilities to deal with different communication systems, deal with different educational systems, deal with communication misunderstanding, enter into meaningful dialogue, and deal with unforeseen problems. Norton (1984) measured interpersonal comfort to predict effectiveness. Brinkmann and Weerdenburg (2003) referred to sustaining interaction ability, such as working short term as in customer service or long-term such as in team building in specific cultures.

Variables Related to Cultural Adjustment Effectiveness

Fontaine (1993) found that the strongest motivations for people to travel overseas include career motives, getting away from home, recreation, exploration, and a chance to seek out identity. Ultimately, expatriates must be able to adjust personally and with their families (if applicable) as a part of an effectiveness model (Bradford, Allen & Beisser, 1998). Support for this point emerges from a sample of sources. Harris, Moran, and Moran (2004) offer an extensive list including cultural flexibility, patience, adaptability, self-confidence/initiative, and cultural curiosity. Cultural adjustment also expands to include spouse/family communication (Tucker & Baier, 1982; Hammer & Clarke, 1987; Dodd, 1998; Dodd, 2005). In addition, Brinkmann and van Weerdenburg (2003) identify emotional stability (as mapped in their MPQ instrument), cultural empathy, sensitivity, managing uncertainty, and building commitment (these are also found in their IRC Intercultural Readiness Check).

Adjustment to a new culture also depends on cultural distance (Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989), knowledge of the specific culture (Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989), personal attributes, cultural awareness (Chen, 1989), ability to understand others, and ability to deal with different social systems (Abe and Wiseman, 1983). In addition, the reasons for the length of the sojourn assignment contribute to adjustment (Hawes & Kealey, 1981; Kealey, 1989; Chen, 1989; Hammer, 1987; Dunbar, 1992; Tanaka, Takai, Kohyama, & Fujihara, 1994; Searle & Ward, 1990; Harrison, Chadwick, & Scales, 1996; Hsiao-Ying, 1995). The adjustment goals also affect acculturation, as in the case of student sojourners who may not work at creating a type of third culture (Dodd, 1998), but rather focus on learning and sometimes survival and homesickness.

Violation of expectations can result in poor sojourner adjustment (Tucker and Baier, 1982). Martin, Bradford, and Rohrlich (1995) found that the location of a sojourn has a strong effect on whether a student's expectations are fulfilled or violated. Their study showed

that sojourners to England had their expectations affected most negatively of the sample. Students expected that England was not too culturally distant from the United States and found their expectations violated. Martin *et al.* suggested, “that it is not just the cultural difference or similarity between the host and home culture that influences how sojourns are experienced, but also corresponding expectations” (p. 103).

One of the most important predictive factors for successful adaptation to a new culture is contact with host nationals (Zimmerman, 1995; Stephan & Stephan, 1992; Lakey & Hill, 1991). Students who avoid interaction with host nationals tend to experience more intense culture shock than those students who seek out interaction with host nationals do. Positive interaction with host nationals helps reduce uncertainty (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988) and decreases anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 1992). This need for positive interaction also stresses the necessity of language skills (Fantini, 1995). If sojourners have inadequate language skills, they tend to have less satisfying interaction and more stressful experiences than those with exceptional language skills do (Brown, 1998).

Sojourners encounter other difficulties and uncertainties than just those found in the foreign society they visit. Many sojourners, including students in a study abroad program, also must adjust to the organization in which they work. Okoll (1994) demonstrates the parallel adjustments made when a student enters a foreign school setting. Students face not only societal rules and customs but also organizational rules and customs. The socialization into an organization is similar to the adjustment to a country.

Variables Related to Intercultural Task Effectiveness

While significant attention has focused on interpersonal variables, task outcomes also figure into effectiveness. Meyers (1990) found that task effectiveness is interdependent with competencies of intercultural adaptability and intercultural interpersonal interaction. If the worker is ineffective in these other two competencies, then the task performance is also likely to suffer. Cui and Awa (1992) found that interpersonal skills were correlated significantly with effective job performance. Their study established a strong correlation between sojourner adjustment and job performance, concluding that future studies should include both variables. The Overseas Assessment Inventory (OAI), first presented in Tucker and Baier (1982), presented evidence that the set of 14 variables when correlated with the performance of expatriates in their studies predicted 42% of the variance (R -squared = .65).

Expatriate Performance and the Need for Assessment

Intercultural consultants and trainers indicate a significant need to identify pre-departure preparation levels for potential expatriates and to identify other individuals who are in a more development mode regarding intercultural effectiveness skills (Dodd, 2006). This next step, called for in many organizations that send expatriates abroad is to provide assessments for potential intercultural communication performance. In response, a highly developing yet growing literature base explores intercultural assessment and selection, or what we are calling intercultural readiness assessment. The search for the best fit of predicted effectiveness variables, which link with host cultural performance expectations, defines intercultural readiness. Moreover, the term “selection technology” applies to expatriate research that best predicts intercultural performance (Dodd, 2005). This quest revolves around candidate selection instrumentation that demonstrates high internal reliable and predictive validity associated with optimal intercultural expatriate effectiveness. Thus, we define

intercultural readiness assessment as pre-departure predictors of potential effectiveness associates with frequent intercultural effectiveness outcomes, typically articulated as intercultural relationships, cultural adjustment, and task performance.

Advancing an organization's global goals also presents accelerated expatriate failure risks. Such limits and risks include poor cultural contacts, loss of face, poor managerial performance, a collapse of goals and assignments, lost negotiations, loss of organizational morale, early return rates, and a negative impact on a trailing spouse or family members. In response, intercultural specialists and expatriate sending organizations continue to request assistance with pre-departure assessment and training as intervention strategies to curb such losses (Dodd, 2006).

Early return or failed overseas performance occurs from 37% to 61% as classic studies and recent training company interviews suggest (Dodd, 2005; Harris, Moran, & Moran, 2004; Dodd, 2006). The losses include immediate costs of moving, relocation, and initial training, as well as the stunning long-term costs related to productivity loss, morale loss, loss of organizational face, loss of future markets, hostility and conflict, and the vast human costs to spouses and family. Most organizations indicate a desire to recruit, assess, and develop a higher level of expatriate candidates for their overseas operations and short-term deployments (gmacglobalrelocation.com). Research indicates that 50% of organizations seek a better ROI regarding their human capital in overseas environments and respond with a serious interest in intercultural assessment and training (Harris, Moran, & Moran, 2004).

Researchers who investigate intercultural relations indicate the importance of selection and training to improve intercultural performance for employees and managers. For instance, Harris, Moran, & Moran (2004) report relocation studies indicating a 40% higher divorce rate among expatriates and their children having a 50% higher high school dropout rate than children who are not expatriates. Furthermore, research from Cendant International Assignment Services and the American Training and Development Society report that two-thirds failed their foreign assignments. A decade-long trend analysis from GMAC Services surveying large numbers of companies in their annual Global and Global Relocation Trends, along with the National Foreign Trade Council, revealed 2003-2004 results (noted in gmacglobalrelocation.com, 2005):

- 60% of firms offer formal intercultural training, but only 26% make it mandatory
- 73% of the respondents indicates these programs had great or high value
- To improve ROI, 81% relied on improved candidate selection or assessment and 50% relied on mandatory cross-cultural preparation

To address pressing organizational needs for pre-departure assessment, an intercultural training and development service industry has emerged with the goal of reducing high losses and improving performance. The exact number of assessment instruments is difficult to gauge, since many companies use them occasionally or have propriety holdings. However, recent reports have identified some 49 different instruments which in one way or another purport to measure expatriate candidate readiness (SIETAR, 2006; Table 1 presents a sample of the SIETAR research).

Table 1 Examples of Intercultural Effectiveness Scales (see SIETAR, 2006 for author references)

OAI	(Prudential's Overseas Assessment Inventory; used by several groups)
IDI	(Intercultural Development Inventory, Hammer)
COI	(Cultural Orientations Indicator, by Training Management Corporation)
GTPQ	(Global Team Process Questionnaire, ITAP international)
HPI	(Hogan Personality Inventory, Hogan Assessments) Insights Discovery System (Insights world)
INCA	(Intercultural Competence Assessment, Dorn & Cavalier)
BASIC	(Behavioral Assessments Scale Intercultural Communication, Olebe & Koester)
CCAI	(Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory, Kelley & Meyers)
CCCI	(Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory, LaFromboise, Coleman, & Hernandez)
CCSS	(Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Scale, Pruegger & Rogers)
CCSAQ	(Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Questionnaire, Mason)
FAST	(Foreign Assignment Success Test, Black)
GAP	(Test-Global Awareness Profile, Corbitt)
ICS	(Intercultural Competency Scale, Elmer)
CONFLICT	(Intercultural CONFLICT Style Inventory, Hammer)
IDI	(Intercultural Development Inventory, Bennett & Hammer)
IOR	(Intercultural Orientation Resources, Iorworld)
IRC	(Intercultural Readiness Check, Brinkmann)
ICSI	(Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (Bhawuk & Brislin)
ISS	(Intercultural Sensitivity Survey, Towers)
Living and Working Overseas Predeparture Questionnaire (Kealey)	

MCAS	(Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale, Ponterotto)
MCI	(Multicultural Counseling Inventory, Sadowsky, Taffe, Gutkin & Wise)
POI	(Personal Orientation Inventory, Uhes & Shybut)
PCSI	(Peterson Cultural Style Indicator, Peterson)
PCAT	(Peterson Cultural Awareness Test, Peterson)
Prospector	(Spreitzer, McCall, & Mahoney)
SRI	(Selection Research International, various readiness tools)
TCO	(TCO International, various competencies measured)
TICS	(Test of Intercultural Sensitivity, Weldon, Carlston, Rissman, Slobodin & Triandis)
ICE	(International Candidate Evaluation, Tucker)
EED	(Evaluaton of Expatriate Development, Tucker)
IMA	(International Mobility Assessment, Tucker)
EPS	(selection tool by window on the world)
MPQ	(Multicultural Personality Questionnaire, see references for Brinkmann & Weerdenburg, 2003)

One detailed example of pre-departure candidate readiness is illustrated with Tucker and Baier's (1982) work from several studies which formed the basis of the OAI, or Overseas Assessment Inventory. This pre-departure assessment reveals 13 significant correlations with intercultural effectiveness: expectations, open-mindedness, respect for other beliefs, trust in people, tolerance, personal control, flexibility, patience, adaptability, self-confidence/initiative, interpersonal interest, interpersonal harmony, and spouse/family communication. The strongest predictors from this list are, in order, spouse/family communication, expectations, interpersonal interest, and open-mindedness. Prudential's acquisition and development of a Prudential Relocation Services offers training and licensure using the OAI (Overseas Assessment Instrument).

Research Focus

Finding a reliable and predictable set of variables useful in pre-departure assessment is the goal of this study. Predicting actual performance has relatively little research that is accessible or in a useful format. The OAI, Tucker's IMA, and Hammer's IDI

and CONFLICT scale exemplify instruments accessible for education as well as for business organizations. To discover a variable set that offers still more unique variables is an important quest in the field, a quest represented in the present study. After the pioneering work in the E-model (Dodd, 1998), an improved instrument is being tested called the Intercultural Readiness Assessment (IRA). The central question asks if the IRA as a predictive set significantly predicts expatriate effectiveness as measured by defined dependent variables.

Method

Respondents

The study represents a composite of eight different samples representing 232 individuals, 49% males and 51% females, ages 20-60 with an average age of 27. Among the total expatriates in the sample 8.5 % were business, 24.5% military, 50% humanitarian workers, and 17% student study abroad sojourners. Collectively, they went to some 20 countries in Europe, Latin American, Africa, and Asia.

Procedures

The respondents' Intercultural Readiness Assessment (IRA) scores regarding their expatriate or sojourn experience were compiled after completing the 59-item instrument. The researcher tested the variables for reliability, factor analysis, and then examined multiple correlations of independent and dependent variables to determine significant predictive validity of the IRA. After the first three samples, which involved expatriates to Oxford, Kuwait, and another group to Oxford, the instrument was configured as a web-based online survey with immediate score reports through programmed statistical analysis and textual paragraphs.

Independent Variables Comprising the IRA

The 16 variables chosen for the IRA model were considered a "predictive set" of intercultural effectiveness which were then correlated with various dependent outcomes, related to outcomes of task, relationship, and cultural adjustment. Each 5-point Likert style variable was constructed based on the theories and results indicated in the review of literature, the E-model scale (Dodd, 1998), Dodd, Pryor, & Williams (2000), and outlined in Table 2 (Dodd, 2005). In addition to the interpersonal relationship potential variables and the cultural adjustment potential variables from the E-model, items from additional scales were used: 10 items from the personal communication world view (PCWV, Dodd & Garmon, 1987), the IPC scale (Interpersonal Comfort Scale, Norton, 1984), State Self-Esteem items adapted from Heatherton & Polivy, 1991), family adaptability and openness items constructed, and previous cultural experiences as items constructed (see Table 2 beginning on the next page).

Dependent Variables Measuring Expatriate and Sojourner Effectiveness

Cultural adjustment and satisfaction. Cultural adjustment/satisfaction was measured in two ways. First, a supervisory report of adaptation assessed each participant on a 3-point scale answering the question "Did the person seem to adjust well to the culture?" The inter-rater reliability was .98 for the assessment. Second, a self-report perception of satisfaction responded on a five-point scale to the statement, "Overall, I am satisfied with the program here."

Table 2 Summary of IRA Reliability: Factor and Total Sample Reliability

Variables in the Scale	Concepts and Items Measured	Reliability
Interpersonal Relationship Effectiveness Domain		.89
1. Relationship effectiveness motivation	Like meeting strangers; making friends Friendships with people from other countries important Interpersonal effectiveness	.56
2. Trust	Feeling trusted and trusting others Patience with international people	.58
3. Initiating communication	Like to initiate conversations Empathy with problems	.19
4. Openness	Relations with others open Relationships formed quickly Considerate during negotiations	.46
5. Comfort with strangers	Comfort with strangers from different social classes Interpersonal effectiveness across social classes Good conversation skills in meetings	.87
6. Ethnic inclusion	Avoid ethnocentrism Non-judgmental about others' cultures	.92
7. Communication control	Able to overcome luck or circumstances Belief in appropriate control of communication situation	.71

8. Self-worth in a new culture	Value self in situations; self-accrual Not overly concerned about others' views of me Feel competent and confident in new situations	.80
Cultural Adaptation Effectiveness Domain		.81
9. Flexibility	Need to learn foreign language Glad to embrace new lifestyle	.59
10. Transition ease	Comfort around international people Handle anxiety and transition regarding change	.78
11. Acculturation motivation	Eager to live internationally and make transitions easily Positive management of potential stresses in new culture	.78
12. Adaptability	Can handle disorganization Manage indirectness and vagueness	.61
13. Risk and innovation	Enjoy different thought patterns and ideas Willing to risk and trust with international people	.49
Family Relationship Domain		.64
14. Family adaptability	Family supportive of leaving home Spouse/children willing to adapt	.73
15. Family openness	Comfortable with spousal self-disclosure Communication with spouse and family	.71
Previous Experience Domain		.82
16. Previous travel	Travel experience has taught me Like international travel	.82

Frequency of international travel

*Reliability tested using Chronbach's alpha.

Interpersonal relationship development. Interpersonal relationship development was measured in two ways: supervisory report and self-report. The supervisory report responded to a 1-3 rating scale "Did the participant get involved with other participants in the program?" (inter-rater reliability .975). The participant self-reports responded to a 5-point scale to the statement, "I feel as if I adapted well to the cultures experienced in this program."

Task effectiveness. Task effectiveness was measured in two ways: supervisory report and self-report. The supervisor responded to a 1-3 rating scale asking, "Did the participant perform well at the assigned tasks?" The participant self-report question responded to the statement on a 5-point scale, "I thought we worked well as a group." The second study, conducted in Kuwait among military sojourners, also included modifications such as supervisory along with self-reports of task performance.

Studies four through eight narrowed the dependent variables to include (1) self-report of interpersonal relationship effectiveness asked, "When I meet strangers, I am interpersonally effective in my relationships with them" and (2) self-report of cultural adaptation raised the question, "I consider my previous travel experience to demonstrate by ability to adapt to new cultures."

The method of data analysis relies on Chronbach alpha analysis to determine internal reliability, factor analysis using unweighted least squares, and multiple regressions with expected outcomes variables to determine the predictive validity of the IRA.

Results and Discussion

The combined data set revealed important overall details. For ease of organizing the data, the 16 IRA variables are grouped into thematic clusters based on factor analysis: (1) interpersonal relationships, (2) cultural adaptation, (3) family adaptability and support, and (4) previous experience. These groupings are supported by factor analysis (using unweighted least squares) where the Eigen values of 1.0 or greater indicate that these 16 variables explain 71.23% of the total variance in the factor analysis. Second, the total sample showed loadings on the factors as illustrated also by the Chronbach alpha average for these variables that cluster under four domains, illustrated in table 2 as .89, .81, .64, and .82 respectively for each of the domains.

The reliabilities across the 16 IRA variables were relatively consistent and stable for this total sample. However, within some of the samples, some discrepancies occurred. The most erratic variables are initiating communication which revealed a high of .79 in study eight, but averages in the total sample at only .19. Risk and innovation averaged only .49 reliability, although two studies produced .66 and .67 (studies four and eight). Finally, openness has a wide reliability range with a low of only .08 but the highest at .55 and .77 with an average of .46. These range anomalies bear further research.

The biggest question surrounds the IRA as a meaningful predictor instrument for interpersonal relationships, adaptation to the culture, and task effectiveness. The data indicate

significant multiple R values across the eight studies (Table 3). For self-report of interpersonal relationship effectiveness with strangers, $R = .746$, $R^2 = 55.6\%$, $p = .029$. For self-report of cultural adaptation, $R = .792$, $R^2 = 62.8\%$, $p = .006$. The overall multiple regression coefficients range from .68 to .91 for an average R of .854 and an average R^2 of 72.8%.

Table 3 Average Multiple Regression Across the Eight Samples

Sample:

One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Mean R	R^2
.91	.74	.68	.90	.90	.88	.91	.91	.854	72.8%

Only the first three studies had a task measure in addition to interpersonal and cultural adaptation effectiveness measures both by supervisors and by self-evaluation. The other five studies only contained self-evaluation interpersonal and cultural adaptation effectiveness measures. However, modest evidence exists that self-evaluation and supervisor evaluation are correlated and thus valid ($r = .455$, $p = .033$). While significant minimally, this area of dependent measurement will bear further work.

In sum, this research presents compelling evidence that these 16 predictors indeed explain almost two-thirds of the self-report outcomes related to interpersonal relationship effectiveness and cultural adaptation effectiveness. This finding is important in several ways. First, pre-departure selection technology can be said to be more advanced with improved predictors as evidenced by high reliability predictive validity related to the IRA. Second, access online is becoming a crucial ingredient in selection technology.

When the entire model is pictured (Figure 1 on the next page) readers can visualize the nature of the instrument. One advantage of the IRA over other instruments is its high predictive validity, since averaging over 72% appears to be one of the highest we can detect in the pre-departure assessment literature. Another advantage is the IRA's ease of use, since by accessing the website, respondents can take the instrument online and receive the full report immediately within a few seconds. A third advantage is that the IRA contains items not always assessed in other instruments. Various organizations and users who have taken the scale so far have complimented these constructs: family variables, self-accrual, innovation/risk potential, communication world view/control of circumstances, conversational comfort with strangers, and acculturation motivation. A final advantage is that norms now established allow the researcher to produce online instant feedback through the extensive textual and numerical report for each of the IRA 16 variables. Ultimately, a final score presents the test-taker with a low, moderate, or high readiness index. These norms and

categorizations of low, moderate, and high, are based on averages and standard deviations for each of the 16 variables.

Figure 1. A visual model of the IRA predicting intercultural effectiveness outcomes of task, relationship, and cultural adaptation. Together the 16 variables account for 72.8% of the variance.

As a selection and training technology, the IRA is a promising instrument. However, the IRA should be viewed as one of several indicators in a decision to send someone into another culture: (1) task competence (Is this person qualified for the job?), (2) personal motivation and desire to go, (3) physical and mental health clearance (Are there unresolved physiological or psychological questions which places anyone at risk?), (4) feedback and coaching regarding one's IRA scores; (5) family supportiveness, and (6) adequate financial resources. Access to the IRA is arranged through the host web site

(edcrg.com), but a person must secure a pass code and username (from the author or his corporate partner, EDC Communications, before accessing the instrument online.

As in other studies in the ICS journal, researchers and practitioners seek an optimal experience for students, training partners, and for self. While many of these studies reveal findings linked with cultural awareness, sensitivity, boundaries, the nature of culture, and interpersonal models, intercultural communicators will benefit from a predictive and user-friendly instrument like the IRA.

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