

There are two sides to every coin? Elucidating the effects of emotional intelligence on expatriates' attitudes and behavior

Abstract

In this paper we test the positive influence of emotional intelligence (EI) on different outcomes in organizations (adjustment, engagement, satisfaction, performance). Focusing on the EI of expatriates on international assignment, we show that different EI abilities can have both positive and negative effects on expatriates' attitudes. In this way our analysis challenges the dominant symmetrical assumption in the literature concerning exclusively positive outcomes of so-called positive emotions in the workplace. More specifically, we find that whereas a higher EI ability to regulate emotions leads to positive attitude outcomes (i.e., higher job involvement); higher EI abilities to appraise and utilize emotions relate more to negative attitude outcomes (i.e., lower job and life satisfaction). Our analysis suggests that (i) beneficial organizational outcomes achieved by high EI individuals often incur psychological costs for these individuals and (ii) the role of employees' emotions in organizations is likely to be contingent on the organizational and occupational context within which these employees operate. Overall, the analysis provides further support for the need to identify and examine asymmetries in workplace emotional outcomes.

Keywords

Emotional intelligence, expatriation, emotional labor, cross-cultural adjustment, job involvement, satisfaction

Introduction

Recently, a growing body of knowledge has appeared problematizing the idea of symmetrical association of emotions and its outcomes in the organizational setting (i.e. that so-called positive emotions lead to positive outcomes and negative to negative outcomes), which has taken a strong hold in contemporary management research (see Dasborough, 2006; Lindebaum, 2012; Lindebaum & Fielden, 2011; Winkel et al., 2011).

For instance, the widely studied and applied concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has consistently been argued in the past to lead exclusively to positive psychological outcomes in the workplace such as better health, wellbeing, and life satisfaction (e.g. Carmelli, Yitzhak-Halevy, & Weisberg, 2009; Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008). However, recently several authors questioned this argumentation with some supporting evidence. Winkel et al. (2011) empirically found that besides traditionally assumed positive outcomes, EI could also have unanticipated consequences, such as deviant behaviors at work. Lindebaum (2012) conceptually argued that possessing high levels of EI can motivate employees towards non-conformist behaviors in the organizational arena, undertaken to act against or defend themselves from the standardization or commodification of emotions at work.

Thus, a growing body of literature appears to emerge indicating that the effects of presumably positive emotions can be a mixture of both positive and negative outcomes. It also suggests that to further advance research on emotions in organizations, the symmetrical assumption concerning effects of emotions in the organizational setting needs to be challenged and re-evaluated. In this light and considering the novelty of this emerging research area, we see it as important for further advancement of this research (1) to provide additional evidence to either verify or refute the dominant symmetrical assumption; if refuted, then (2) to explicate what other negative outcomes can be discerned in addition to the ones identified or conceptually suggested in the literature (e.g. Winkel et al., 2011; Lindebaum, 2012); and (3) to establish conditions, under which these negative outcomes are likely to emerge.

To shed some light on the three issues outlined above, in this study we test the role of employees' EI has on their attitudes and behavior in the context of expatriates on international assignments. We

conceive of expatriation as a type of emotional labor, which up to now has been largely overlooked in psychology research that mostly focused on examining nurses, flight attendants, and service workers as examples of emotional labor. Yet, this omission is unfortunate for, in our view, expatriation is a very demanding type of emotional labor that consumes a lot of emotional energy and puts significant pressures on emotional abilities of expatriates.

Whereas some studies have documented that EI is generally conducive to successful expatriate assignments (e.g. Gabel, Dolan, & Cerdin, 2005; Lii & Wong, 2008), this view can be too simplistic and one-sided. In particular, by focusing excessively on the adjustment and performance aspects of the expatriation process, studies in this stream have overlooked other important psychological aspects of expatriates' experience such as job involvement, life satisfaction, and job satisfaction. These latter aspects of expatriates' assignment experience may fall prey to high levels of role strain and emotional dissonance, which, as our argument goes, will be more prominently felt and suffered by higher EI expatriates (cf. Chiva & Alegre, 2008; Lindebaum, 2012).

Adopting our core constructs from the expatriate work performance framework recently proposed by Lazarova, Westman and Shaffer (2010), our findings challenge the idea that EI is a cognitive resource for expatriates on assignment. In line with the job demands-resources (JDR) theory (Demerouti et al., 2001; Llorens et al., 2006), when conceived as a cognitive resource, EI is to be expected to be instrumental in achieving goals in question, i.e. succeeding on international assignment. On the contrary, if EI was conceived as a cognitive demand, then it should function as a stressor that requires sustained mental effort and thus incurs certain psychological costs. Indeed, our results show that EI can simultaneously be a cognitive resource and a cognitive demand for expatriates and different facets of EI have different effects on expatriates' job involvement and job / life satisfaction.

Thus, our analysis contributes to the literature on emotions in organizations by challenging further the symmetrical assumption that currently dominates this research area. Complementing extant studies that focused on unanticipated consequences of EI for organizations such as increased deviant behavior among employees (e.g. Austin et al., 2007; Lindebaum, 2012; Winkel et al., 2011), it identifies the

individual-level psychological costs of high EI in the form of lower job and life satisfaction. Further, our analysis improves the understanding of the complex effects that employees' EI may have on their attitudes and behavior by distinguishing between different attitudinal effects of the three constitutive facets of EI. Finally, with our analysis we contribute to the JDR theory by exploring the possible dual nature of employees' personal cognitive attributes, such as EI. Such a duality would presuppose that these attributes can simultaneously serve as workplace cognitive resources *and* cognitive demands.

Literature review and hypotheses

Emotional intelligence and workplace outcomes

Research on EI has grown substantially in recent years (see meta-reviews by Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Joseph & Newman, 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2011; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) have divided it into three main streams: (1) self-report instruments based on the Mayer-Salovey model; (2) a four-branch abilities test based on the model of EI defined in Mayer and Salovey (1997); and (3) commercially available tests (often referred to as the mixed model) that go beyond the Mayer-Salovey definition of EI. It was argued, and also shown empirically, that among these three the self-report measures of EI appear to better capture the emotions that employees are actually feeling in the workplace (see Joseph & Newman, 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2011). Furthermore, whereas all three types of EI measures were shown to exhibit incremental validity for explaining vital organizational outcomes, such as job performance and satisfaction, over and beyond the Big Five personality characteristics and cognitive ability, the largest incremental validity was found to pertain to self-report measures of EI (e.g. Joseph & Newman, 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2011).

Following these results, in this paper we build on self-report measures of EI to examine the effects of EI on expatriates' attitudes and behavior. We define EI as an enduring personal trait which underlines a person's ability to adaptively identify, understand, manage, and harness emotions of both self and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Schutte et al., 1998) and to use emotion to facilitate cognitive processing to successfully cope with environmental demands and pressures (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). As such, EI comprises three categories of adaptive

abilities: appraisal and expression of emotions (self and others); regulation of emotion (in self and others); and utilization of emotions in solving problems (i.e. flexible planning, creative thinking, redirected attention, and motivation) (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

As already mentioned, previous literature has found EI to be related to predominantly positive workplace outcomes (e.g., Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Carmelli et al., 2009; Mayer et al., 2008). At the same time, some authors have speculated that the importance and the influence of EI are likely to be contingent on the cognitive complexity of the job being performed (e.g. Cote & Miners, 2006) and on the context where EI is being used (e.g. Jordan et al., 2010; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2012). In fact, Joseph and Newman (2010) found some initial support for the claim that EI is a better predictor of performance for jobs that require emotional labor than for jobs overall. However, they, as well as others (e.g., O'Boyle et al., 2011), also noted that more research is needed to better understand how job complexity and job context influence the nature of EI effects on workplace outcomes. To address these calls, in this paper we examine the effects of EI on attitudes and behavior of expatriates on international assignment.

Expatriation as emotional labor

“It is generally acknowledged, for example, that employees do emotional labor: they use their emotional abilities to actively manage physical and emotional displays, as well as those of colleagues and service recipients, using a range of complex and sophisticated abilities, while also conforming to regulated feeling rules that are determined by an employer” (Vincent, 2011, p. 1371).

In agreeing with the quote above, we could add that, whereas all employees at least to some extent engage in emotional labor, some of them do it more than others. In our view, an emotional-labor-intensive dimension of contemporary careers that transcends different occupations, but which has remained relatively unexplored up to now by scholars interested in the role of emotions in organizations, is expatriation (for rare exceptions see Gabel et al., 2005; Lii & Wong, 2008). Expatriation is emotionally demanding due to at least two reasons.

First, upon arrival in the new country, expatriates need to deal with new work and life environments. Cross-cultural adjustment, which reflects the extent to which expatriates feel

psychologically comfortable in relation to a variety of aspects of their new work and life environments (e.g. Caligiuri, 1997), is *per se* a challenging and complex process (e.g. Aycan, 1997; Caligiuri, 2000; Tung, 1998; for review see Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2003). To adjust to new cultural norms and expectations, to establish and maintain new social contacts, and to accommodate the new working environment's rules and behaviors requires a great deal of psychological and emotional energy and effort from expatriates.

Second, expatriates need to make sure that they achieve the goals and expectations of their expatriation project, which are oftentimes very challenging and, moreover, closely monitored by expatriates' employers. An additional pressure to achieve these goals stems from the fact that expatriation assignments oftentimes serve as career gateways for expatriates: being successful in a current assignment can launch a career, whereas not achieving set goals may jeopardize an entire career and have long term negative psychological consequences (e.g. Adler, 1991). Therefore, to succeed expatriates have to be adaptable, sociable, resourceful and result-oriented in their behavior when on assignment.

Considered together, these factors indicate that expatriates carry a heavy load of psychological pressure on their shoulders. Therefore, we argue that expatriation can be seen as a type of emotional labor, which requires a great deal of emotional effort from expatriates in order to handle successfully the psychological stress, associated with assignments themselves and the changes that they trigger and, at the same time, act as effective boundary spanners between two organizational units and two national / cultural environments.

A model of expatriate performance

To examine whether EI, in line with the symmetrical assumption about positive emotions, acts exclusively as a cognitive resource in the case of expatriates on assignment, we draw on the core elements of the theoretical framework recently proposed by Lazarova et al. (2010). Building on the JDR theory (Demerouti et al., 2001; Llorens et al., 2006), the authors construed expatriate

performance as comprising four consecutive and interdependent stages of cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioral elements.

Cognition refers to the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through perceptions and interpretations about an event or experience (Huitt, 1999). In their model, Lazarova et al. (2010) suggest that cognition, among other things, comprises personal attributes of an expatriate. It imposes distal influences that indirectly determine expatriate performance through its direct effect on expatriate affect and conation. In the present study, we focus on the role of EI as potentially both a cognitive resource and a cognitive demand influencing expatriate affect and conation.

Affect refers to the emotional response to an individual's cognitions (Huitt, 1999). Following Lazarova et al. (2010), we conceptualize it as expatriate adjustment, defined as the extent to which an expatriate feels psychologically comfortable in relation to a variety of aspects of his / her new work and life environments. In line with extant research (e.g. Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluk, 2002; Takeuchi, Wang, & Marinova, 2005; Takeuchi et al., 2005), we focus on two facets of adjustment: cultural and work. The former is non-work related and the latter is work related.

Conation concerns motivation and links cognition and affect to behavior (Bagozzi, 1992; Huitt, 1999). In the present study, this stage is represented by two constructs: job involvement and satisfaction that, in turn, comprises both job and life satisfaction. Job involvement refers to the cognitive belief that a job satisfies one's needs and represents the degree to which an individual identifies strongly with that job both when at work and when outside of work (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Kanungo, 1982). Job / life satisfaction are defined as positive (or negative) evaluative judgments one makes about one's job / life situation (Christian et al., 2011; Weiss, 2002).

Finally, in Lazarova et al.'s (2010) model, as well as in the present study, the behavioral component is represented by expatriate performance. Similarly, we define it as the degree to which work-related obligations and expectations are attained.

Hypotheses development

In developing our hypotheses, we test the idea that EI serves exclusively as a cognitive resource for expatriates on assignment. Thus, in line with the most of the research on the role of EI in the organizational setting, we conceptualize EI as a personal cognitive resource that presumably, like any other resource, serves three main purposes (see Bakker & Demerouti, 2007): it helps in achieving work goals, reducing job demands, and stimulating personal growth and development. We now turn to developing our hypotheses.

Emotional intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment

Concurring with extant research, we hypothesize a positive relationship between EI and cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates on assignment (see also Gabel et al., 2005; Lii & Wong, 2008). Cross-cultural adjustment can be seen as the key factor in determining assignment success (e.g. Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Hechanova et al., 2003). Expatriates, who adjust better to their new work and life environments, can be expected to focus more effectively on attaining their actual professional and assignment-related goals. Being well adjusted also means that expatriates can count on support from a local organization and its employees and benefit from local networks and local resources.

Therefore, it is to be expected that expatriates would be willing to spend time and effort to ensure their successful cross-cultural adjustment and EI can be of great help in this process. Being skillful in appraising and expressing emotions of self and other, regulating emotions of self and others, and utilizing emotions for problem solving are likely to be conducive to expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment in both non-work related and work-related contexts. Extant research has been generally supportive of this idea (e.g. Gabel et al., 2005; Lii & Wong, 2008). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Emotional intelligence, as a cognitive resource, is positively related to cross-cultural adjustment.

Emotional intelligence and job involvement

Extant research also shows that employees possessing high levels of emotional resources, such as EI, can be expected to be more proactive in engaging with different organizational issues and situations, which require emotional labor but, at the same time, can potentially be beneficial for maximizing (meaningful for these employees) goals' attainment (e.g. Bond & Bunce, 2003). Feeling emotionally resourceful is likely to harness employees' feelings of self-efficacy and potency to handle job demands thus motivating these employees to take on more emotionally challenging tasks, invest energy and get involved in more emotionally complex situations (cf. Bakker, van Emmerik, & Euwema, 2006; Grandey, 2003; Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005).

Judge and Hurst (2007) argued that individuals who feel more resourceful appraise demands more positively, have greater ability to cope with these demands efficiently and are more willing to get involved in their work roles. Thus, high EI employees can be expected to be more involved in and identified with their jobs. Supporting this argument, other than EI personal cognitive resources, such as extraversion, self-efficacy and optimism, were found to predict job involvement (see Langelan et al., 2006; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). One's ability to control emotions was found to lead to more job involvement as well (Hirschfeld & Thomas, 2008).

In their model for expatriates on assignment, Lazarova et al. (2010), based on existing empirical research, conceptually postulated that resources that expatriates possess are likely to be motivational in their nature thus leading to higher job involvement and more extensive extra-role behavior. Therefore, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 2: Emotional intelligence, as a cognitive resource, is positively related to job involvement.

Emotional intelligence and job / life satisfaction

EI has generally been found to lead to positive behaviors and outcomes in a workplace, such as increased wellbeing (Austin, Saklofske, & Egan, 2005), optimism (Schutte et al., 1998), positive mood

and high self-esteem (Schutte et al., 2002) and decreased depression (Schutte et al., 1998). In interpersonal relations, EI has been shown to result in higher social skills, self-monitoring in social situations and in more cooperative responses towards others (Schutte et al., 2001).

Research in occupational contexts other than expatriation has found EI to be positively associated with job satisfaction (Chiva & Alegre, 2008; Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008; Law, Wong, & Song, 2004; Law et al, 2008; Sy, Tram, & O'Hara, 2006; Wong & Law, 2002). Thus, using the JDR theory's terms, extant research tends to suggest that EI serves as a cognitive resource for employees, enhancing their performance and sustaining their wellbeing and sociability. Extending these findings to the context of expatriates on international assignment, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Emotional intelligence, as a cognitive resource, is positively related to job / life satisfaction.

The overall model tested in this study is shown in Figure 1 below.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Method

Sample

To collect data, we approached 340 French expatriates working for Alliance Française - an international organization that operates in 135 countries promoting French language and culture abroad. The data was gathered through a web-based questionnaire. The overall response rate was 91 percent. After excluding missing values, the final sample analyzed in the study consisted of 196 responses. The average age of the respondents was 41 years (std = 11.25) and the average experience in expatriation was around 9 years (std = 7.77). The sample was composed of 115 men (59%) and 81 women (41%).

Measures

The questionnaire was administered in French. With the exception of the emotional intelligence measure, for which we used the translation developed and validated by Haag and Laroche (2009), all the measures' items have been translated into French by Alliance Française. The psychometric properties of the translated measures are detailed in the next section. Unless indicated otherwise, the respondents were asked to express their agreement with the items on a six-point scale, ranging from 1 for “*completely disagree*” to 6 for “*completely agree*”.

Emotional intelligence. We measured the cognitive element in our model, EI, using the 33-item construct from Schutte et al. (1998). This construct has been widely used in the literature (e.g. van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). It is composed of three dimensions that were theorized by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and empirically validated by Schutte et al. (1998): (1) appraisal and expression of emotions (self and others) (13 items, such as “I like to share my emotions with others”, $\alpha = 0.80$); (2) regulation of emotions (in self and others) (10 items, such as “When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last”, $\alpha = 0.81$); and (3) utilization of emotions in problem solving (10 items, such as “When I am in a positive mood solving problems is easy for me”, $\alpha = 0.71$). Following other empirical studies (e.g. Austin et al., 2004; Besharat, 2007; Schutte et al., 2001), the three-dimensional structure of the construct was validated ($\chi^2(349) = 570.15$; $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.891; CFI = 0.874; NFI = 0.814; RMSEA = 0.046). These results also confirmed the reliability of the adopted French translation of the construct.

Cross-cultural adjustment. The affective element in our model, cross-cultural adjustment, was measured using two facets of cross-cultural adjustment originally developed by Black and Stephens (1989): general living adjustment (seven items measuring adjustment to cost of living and entertainment, recreation facilities and opportunities; $\alpha = 0.86$) and work adjustment (three items measuring adjustment to performance standards and expectations; $\alpha = 0.89$). The scale ranged from 1 for “*very unadjusted*” to 6 for “*perfectly adjusted*”. Although the original Black and Stephens' construct included also a third facet of adjustment – interactional adjustment, we concur with a

growing consensus among scholars in favour of truncating this facet from the construct due to its potential conceptual overlap with the other two facets (e.g. Lazarova et al., 2010; Takeuchi et al., 2002, 2005). The French version of cross-cultural adjustment proved to be reliable: (χ^2 (34) = 94.03; $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.903; CFI = 0.863; NFI = 0.878; RMSEA = 0.052).

Job involvement. The first conative element in our model, job involvement, we measured using the Kanungo's (1982) 10-item scale. The psychometric properties of the French translation of the construct were satisfactory: χ^2 (35) = 113.58; $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.884; CFI = 0.885; NFI = 0.835; RMSEA = 0.051. The reliability was confirmed with $\alpha = 0.76$.

Job / life satisfaction. We used the 5-item measure of life satisfaction developed by Diener (1984) and the 3-item measure of job satisfaction developed Mottaz (1985) for the second conation element in our model. The psychometric properties of the French translations of both measures were validated. The reliability was confirmed with $\alpha = 0.90$ for life and $\alpha = 0.88$ for job satisfaction.

Expatriate job performance. The final, behavioral, element in our model, expatriate job performance, was measured using a self-perceived performance evaluation, obtained using a construct developed internally by the international human resource management department at Alliance Française. We believe that not using a well-established and / or objective measure of individual performance, but relying on a self-perceptual and an internally developed one instead, is justifiable in our case.

There is an inherent difficulty in measuring objectively the level of expatriate performance in such an organization as Alliance Française. It is a public interest foundation set up to promote French culture and language abroad by working in a close collaboration with French and foreign partners. This organization does not have measurable sales or turnover figures to assess expatriates on. Instead, expatriate performance is better captured by how influential and proactive a particular expatriate is in organizing social events, establishing relations with significant others, and exciting the curiosity of foreigners in French culture and language. Moreover, all foreign offices of Alliance Française are very idiosyncratic and different from each other due to very different and incomparable features of their

operational locations (i.e. countries), in terms of cultural, socioeconomic, societal, and political characteristics. In these circumstances, the measure that we use was developed internally by the HR department of Alliance Française to measure expatriate performance in a way, which appears to be the most meaningful, informative and relevant for the organization itself.

The construct consists of ten items, using which a respondent self-evaluates his / her performance (such as e.g. “The extent and the quality of my personal network that I was able to develop locally are sufficient to succeed on my assignment” or “My communication skills are adequate to succeed on my assignment”; $\alpha = 0.85$). The analysis confirmed the unidimensional structure and the reliability of the measure: $\chi^2(35) = 92$; $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.904; CFI = 0.849; NFI = 0.864; RMSEA = 0.042.

Data analysis

We used structural equation modeling (SAS 9.2) to test our hypotheses. Structural equation models with latent variables are used to test specific hypotheses on relationship among constructs of a well-defined structure, which is imposed a priori (MacDonald and Ho, 2002). Partial disaggregation approach (Bagozzi and Heatherton, 1994) was chosen to preserve a ratio between parameters of our model and observations acceptable.

Conducting self-report questionnaires may imply a risk of common method variance (CMV; Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Podsakoff, et al, 2003). In order to minimize the potential bias, we followed the recommendations of Chang, van Witteloostuijn, and Eden (2010). Chang et al. (2010) collected ex ante approaches to try to avoid CMV at the research stage that we applied in our study. First, anonymity and confidentiality of the study have been clearly mentioned. Second, aware of social desirability issues, we explained that questions could be answered sincerely as no specific answers were expected. Third, our measurements use scales well-established in the literature, simply formulated, with randomly ordered items.

We also used ex post approaches to test for CMV. We performed Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Podsakoff et al., 2003) by including all items of the six constructs (emotional intelligence, cross-cultural adjustment, job involvement, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and expatriate performance). The test returned nine distinct factors with eigenvalue greater than 1 that together accounted for 72% of the total variance. The first factor did not account for the majority of the variance (24%) and did not show any evidence of unidimensionality in our data. Furthermore, the items were loaded onto one factor to examine the fit of the confirmatory factor analysis model and showed that the single-factor model did not fit the data well ($\chi^2(2345) = 3338$, $p < 0.001$, GFI = 0.50; CFI = 0.02; NFI = 0.03; RMSEA = 0.09). Following Podsakoff et al.'s (2003) approach to control an unmeasured latent factor, we also conducted a confirmatory factor analysis where we let items load on both their theoretical constructs and on a latent common method variance factor. All item loadings were still significant after we included the latent factor.

At last, the CFA marker technique was used (Williams, Edwards & Vandenberg, 2003; Williams, Hartman, & Cavazotte, 2003). This detection and correction technique has been shown as the most appropriate (see details and demonstration in Richardson, Simmering, & Sturman, 2009) compared to the correlational marker (Lindell & Whitney, 2001) and the unmeasured latent method construct (Williams, Cote, & Buckley, 1989). We estimated a series of model as described in Williams, Hartman, et al. (2003) and Richardson, et al. (2009): a baseline model, method-C model, method-U model, and method-R model (see description in Table 1, and Williams et al., p. 494, for a detailed explanation of the specification of these models). The comparison of the change in fit between these models is assessed as a statistical test for detecting CMV.

Insert Table 1 about here

As method-C is not significantly better than the baseline model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.27$, ns), method-U than method-C either ($\Delta\chi^2 = 17.65$, ns), and as method-R is not significantly worse than method-U ($\Delta\chi^2 = 12.59$, ns), there is no evidence of CMV or bias because of CMV in our data. Thus, based on the overall conclusions of the tests presented above, we can conclude that common variance bias is not a serious threat for the interpretation of the following analyses.

After we assessed the validity of each construct separately, we used a confirmatory factor analysis to check for the convergent and discriminant validity of our measurements and to verify that our latent constructs (three dimensions of EI, two dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment, job involvement, two dimensions of satisfaction, and job performance) fitted our data adequately. The convergent validity was verified ($\chi^2 (2079) = 2823$; $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.86; CFI = 0.86; NFI = 0.83; RMSEA = 0.04).

To assess the discriminant validity of our measures, we ran three other model specifications (see Table 2 for the summary). We tested whether a model without distinguishing multidimensionality in our measurements (five-factor model), a model where conation would be a single latent factor (four-factor model), or a one-factor model, in which all items loaded on one latent construct, would fit the data better than our hypothesized measurement model. The results showed that our hypothesized model fitted our data the best.

Insert Table 2 about here

Results

Table 3 presents means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations among the variables. All the bivariate correlations show significant positive signs. Emotions are correlated from 11% (for utilization of emotions and job satisfaction) to 52% (for regulation of emotions and life satisfaction).

Insert Table 3 about here

Having screened the validity of the measurement model, we tested our hypotheses with our structural model. Results of this model are presented in Table 4. We specified direct and indirect paths (through cross-cultural adjustment) from the EI dimensions to the conational measures of job involvement and job / life satisfaction.

Insert Table 4 about here

The results indicate that our structural model fits the data well ($\chi^2(116) = 133.38$; $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.88; CFI = 0.82; NFI = 0.82; RMSEA = 0.05). The paths between the three dimensions of EI and general living adjustment were all significant and positive (appraisal of emotions: $\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$; regulation of emotions: $\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$; utilization of emotions: $\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.1$). Significant and positive estimates were also found for the three dimensions of EI and work adjustment (appraisal of emotions: $\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$; regulation of emotions: $\beta = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$; utilization of emotions: $\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, our Hypothesis 1 was confirmed for EI appears to be significantly and positively related to cross-cultural adjustment.

As for job involvement, the results revealed both positive and negative relationships between EI and job involvement. Whereas the path between appraisal of emotions and job involvement was marginally significant and negative ($\beta = -0.02$, $p < 0.1$), the path between regulation of emotions and job involvement was significant and positive ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$). Although the path between utilization of emotions and job involvement was also positive, yet it was non-significant ($\beta = 0.04$, $p = 0.26$). Therefore, our Hypotheses 2 was not confirmed because EI appeared to have both positive (through regulation of emotions) and negative (through appraisal of emotions) effects on job involvement, thus acting not only as a cognitive resource but also as a cognitive demand.

Concerning job satisfaction, the results also showed both positive and negative relationships between EI and job satisfaction. For instance, whereas the direct effect of regulation of emotions on job satisfaction was significant and positive ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$), the direct effect of utilization of emotions on job satisfaction was significant and negative ($\beta = -0.11$, $p < 0.05$). The path between

appraisal of emotions and job satisfaction was also negative though not significant ($\beta = -0.04$, $p = 0.62$).

Very similar effects were found for life satisfaction. The effect of regulation of emotions on life satisfaction was significant and positive ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$), and the effects of both appraisal of emotions and utilization of emotions were marginally significant and negative (appraisal of emotions: $\beta = -0.08$, $p < 0.1$; utilization of emotions: $\beta = -0.06$, $p < 0.1$). Thus, our Hypotheses 3 was not confirmed: EI has both positive (through regulation of emotions) and negative (through appraisal of emotions and utilization of emotions) effects on job and life satisfaction. Therefore, EI can be interpreted as both a resource and a demand.

Finally, the paths between cross-cultural adjustment, job involvement, job / life satisfaction, and performance were all significant and positive (general living adjustment: $\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$; work adjustment: $\beta = 0.07$, $p < 0.1$; job involvement: $\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$; job satisfaction: $\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$; life satisfaction: $\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

The analysis tested the validity of the symmetrical assumption concerning positive emotions and their outcomes in the workplace by examining the effects that employees' EI - as a form of positive emotions as it has traditionally been framed in the literature - has on their attitudes and behavior. In fact, our results show that at least in the case of expatriates this assumption does not hold: we find that whereas higher levels of the EI ability to regulate emotions have positive outcomes, such as higher job involvement, higher levels of the EI abilities to appraise and utilize emotions appear to trigger more negative consequences, such as lower job involvement, job and life satisfaction.

Thus, our analysis seems to support the idea that, while being a cognitive resource, EI can also act as a cognitive demand that requires sustained physical and/or emotional effort and is therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs, such as fatigue or exhaustion, which ultimately lead to lower job and life satisfaction. Moreover, it shows that the two effects of EI (as a cognitive resource and a cognitive demand) appear as not mutually exclusive but coexisting.

There are several possible explanations for our results. First, it may be so that being constantly under heavy pressure from their employers to achieve success on their assignments makes it necessary for expatriates, at least to a certain extent, to conform to rules and norms set by others (i.e. employer or new colleagues and superiors) which can cause both a loss of personal control and self-alienation (Hochschild, 1983; Lindebaum, 2012). To conform, expatriates can often be forced to engage in what is known as *surface* and *deep acting* that both involve deliberate efforts to align felt emotions with expected emotional displays (e.g. Biron & Veldhoven, 2012). Although, the two are different in terms of their impacts' severity, it is generally recognized that both are stressful, are likely to drain energy if practiced for longer times, thus contributing to burnout, stress, and resource loss, and giving rise to feelings of inauthenticity (see Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Grandey, 2003; Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005; Hochschild, 1983).

Further, expatriates may experience emotional dissonance caused by a conflict between expressed and experienced emotions (Hochschild, 1983; Biron & Veldhoven, 2012; Morris & Feldman, 1996) that ultimately was shown to be negatively related to job satisfaction (e.g. Abraham, 1998, 1999; Lewig & Dollard, 2003). Moreover, some scholars (Lawrence, 2008; Zapf, 2002) point out that the suppression of negative emotions (which is often seen as one of the advantages of high EI individuals) is responsible for inducing toxic events in individuals in the form of depression, low life satisfaction, and low wellbeing. Even if individuals can succeed in suppressing their negative emotions, the argument goes, it does not alleviate the negative subjective experience that accumulates and can convert into psychological strain.

Second, the negative outcomes of EI can possibly be explained using the depletion theory (e.g. Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Rothbard, 2001), which is rooted in the role conflict theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Merton, 1957). It states that people have fixed amounts of psychological and physiological resources to utilize because resources are finite and people need to make tradeoffs in deciding how to apply them. Those people who are engaged in several roles simultaneously have to cope with strain that demands from one role create for functioning in the other role (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). The theory argues that multiple demands (e.g. different work situations, different

workplace roles, family role) are detrimental for an individual, invoking stress and resulting in emotional strain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). It also postulates that not being able to meet one's own expectations attached to a role can lead to a negative emotional response to that role, thus causing stress and strain (e.g. Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992).

Applying this theory to expatriates, it can possibly be argued that high level EI individuals, assuming that they engage more actively in different workplace situations and in extra-role activities, although having more emotional resources in their possession than low level EI individuals (assuming they are not as proactive), can be expected to experience more emotional strain. Engaging more actively in a wider range of situations and roles may also make it more complicated for high level EI individuals to meet the expectations attached to all of these roles and situations.

Theoretical contributions

Overall, we think that our analysis and results make several contributions, which can be summarized in the following points.

First, by uncovering the dual consequences of EI in the context of expatriation, we concur with Winkel et al. (2011) in challenging the symmetric assumption underlying research on the role of EI in organizations. However, an additional value of our contribution stems from the juxtaposition of the positive effects of higher EI, which are beneficial for organizations, namely improved job involvement and performance, and the negative consequences that it has for expatriates themselves, in terms of lower job and life satisfaction. It points out that beneficial organizational outcomes achieved by high EI individuals often incur certain psychological costs for these individuals. Whereas unanticipated consequences of EI for organizations have been argued for and tested empirically in the literature (e.g. Lindebaum, 2012; Winkel et al., 2011), possible individual level psychological costs of EI remained unexplored up to now.

Furthermore, even though in the end the positive effects of the ability to regulate emotions appear to outweigh the negative effects of the abilities to appraise and utilize emotions on job involvement and job / life satisfaction, it seems to us that the negative effects that our analysis detected are

important to be noted for they illustrate the conflicting nature of the abilities comprising EI. It appears that only the ability to regulate emotions confirms the symmetrical assumption concerning the effects of emotions on workplace outcomes. The other two abilities do not do that. Although we theoretically discussed why high levels of EI abilities can have negative effects on employees' conations, more in depth theoretical and empirical work is needed to increase our understanding of the complexity and the nature of effects that EI has on employees' emotional outcomes.

Second, our analysis suggests that the role that employees' emotions play in organizations is likely to be contingent on the type of organizational and occupational context, within which these employees operate. This point was recently raised by some scholars (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2012; O'Boyle et al., 2011), who have called for the need to consider the utility of emotions as they relate to varying organizational contexts. There is extant research that suggests that an employee's EI is positively related to his / her job satisfaction and performance (e.g. Chiva & Alegre, 2008; Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008; Law et al., 2004; Law et al, 2008; Sy et al., 2006; Wong & Law, 2002).

However, we would argue that most of these studies examined the relationship between EI and its outcomes in organizational and occupational contexts where emotional labor demands are comparably low, such as undergraduate and part-time MBA students, cigarette factory employees, public sector employees, nonteaching university employees, workers from ceramic tile factories, and scientists in computer firms. It seems likely that different from most of the examined contexts, the context of expatriation is a more emotionally-demanding and emotional energy-consuming one. Therefore, although we do not compare directly across different contexts in this particular study, we think that the discrepancy between our results and the results of the extant literature can be attributed to the difference in the examined organizational and occupational contexts. This arguably underscores the importance for future research to examine in more detail the role of contexts in explaining the effects of emotions in organizations.

Our third contribution lies in extending the scope of the JDR theory by examining the role of a personal cognitive resource, namely EI, in predicting important organizational and individual outcomes, such as job involvement, job and life satisfaction, and performance. Taking on recent calls for more research on how personal resources facilitate the job demands-resources relationship (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Biron & Veldhoven, 2012), our analysis illustrates the complex nature of this facilitation. We find that complex and multifaceted personal cognitive resources, such as EI, can have complex effects that, depending on a perspective, which these effects are evaluated from, can be classified as being either positive or negative. Our results provide some evidence of that.

Taking the organizational point of view, EI can be seen as a cognitive resource, for it clearly improves expatriates' job involvement and performance. However, from the expatriate's point of view, it is also a cognitive demand, which at least to some extent impacts negatively his / her job and life satisfaction. Whereas extant, but still rather limited, research found that such personal resources as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism have positive effect on work engagement (Mauno et al., 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), our analysis underscores the possibility of asymmetric relationship between personal resources and their effects. It means that resources can also have negative effects, ultimately leading to lower job and life satisfaction.

Limitations and future research

Our analysis has several limitations that should be taken seriously when interpreting our results. First, although our model draws on the theoretical framework of Lazarova et al. (2010), we did not integrate the family dimension into our model and did not examine how the possession of a spouse (assumed as a resource) or children (assumed as a demand) can affect our model. Going on assignment often involves relocating the expatriate's entire family. In these cases expatriates need to make sure that their 'significant others' adjust well to the new context also. The boundaries between work and home contexts become more 'permeable' and problems in one context can easily spillover into another (Lazarova et al., 2010). This poses additional psychological demands that consume physical and emotional energy and can be very stressful for expatriates (see Takeuchi et al., 2005). Going beyond

our analysis, future research is clearly needed to empirically test how the presence of family would influence expatriate's conations and performance.

Second, for parsimonious purposes, we did not hypothesize for indirect effects of EI on job involvement and job/life satisfaction. A more detailed mediational analysis is called for to shed more light on how cross-cultural adjustment potentially mediates the relationships between EI and job involvement and job / life satisfaction.

Third, our study focuses on expatriates assigned by their company thus limiting our findings to this one specific category of expatriates. At the same time, for instance, self-initiated expatriates can be expected to experience their expatriation slightly differently because they often have a different kind of motivation, opportunities and support in their host workplace. Furthermore, all our respondents come from the same organization and from the same country. Considering these two limitations, it would be desirable for future research to verify our findings in other organizational and national contexts and on other categories of expatriates.

Finally, our data is obtained from a self-reported questionnaire. Although some authors claim that the magnitude of common method variance bias is over-exaggerated (e.g., Crampton & Wagner, 1994; Malhotra, Kim, & Patil, 2006; Spector, 1987), we conducted a number of robustness checks, which showed that common method variance bias is not likely to affect the quality of our results or their interpretations. It should also be noted that we used self-reported measures, because we deliberately focused on how an expatriate himself / herself feels adjusted on his or her new assignment, involved in his / her job, satisfied with his / her job and the new life, succeeding in performing his / her duties and tasks. These measures were then combined with the self-reported measures of his or her own EI abilities. Using external, not self-reported, measures instead could have potentially biased our results due to the possibility that being on international assignment, expatriates can behave publicly as being well adjusted and satisfied in front of their colleagues and superiors without actually feeling so in reality. Having said that, future research using more objective measures of the variables tested in this study is needed to further validate our findings.

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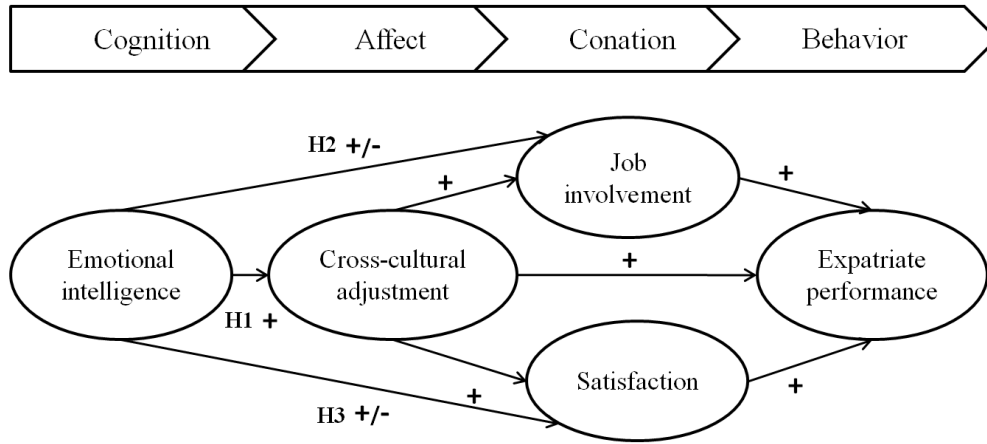


Figure I Hypothesized model

Notes: Simplified

Table I CFA marker technique results

Model	Chi-Square	df	CFI
CFA	2546	2646	0.82
Baseline Model	2589	2666	0.80
Method-C Model	2586	2665	0.76
Method-U Model	2603	2596	0.77
Method-R Model	2615	2640	0.80
Chi-Square Model Comparison Tests	Δ Chi-Square	Δ df	Critical value, $\alpha = 0.05$
Baseline Model vs Method-C Model	3.27	1	3.84
Method-C Model vs Method-U Model	17.65	69	>79
Method-U Model vs Method-R Model	12.59	44	>56

Baseline model: Correlations between the marker construct and the constructs are forced to zero.

Method-C: From the baseline model, factor loadings from the marker construct to each construct item are added and constrained to be equal (noncongeneric perspective).

Model-U: From the baseline model, factor loadings from the marker construct to each construct item are added and freely estimated (congeneric perspective).

Model-R: From the baseline model, the independent–dependent construct correlation was constrained to its unstandardized value from the baseline model.

Table II Convergent and discriminant validity

Model	χ^2	df	p	GFI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Hypothesized measurement model	2823	2079	0.01	0.86	0.86	0.83	0.04
Four-factor (conation together)	2863	2079	0.01	0.65	0.32	0.22	0.05
Five-factor (no dimensions)	2864	2079	0.01	0.56	0.21	0.10	0.07
One-factor	3338	2345	0.01	0.50	0.02	0.03	0.09

Notes: n = 196;

Table III Means, standard deviations and correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Appraisal of emotions	4.38	0.57	(.80)								
2. Regulation of emotions	4.89	0.52	0.17	(.81)							
3. Utilization of emotions	4.27	0.75	0.24	0.26	(.71)						
4. General living adjustment	4.95	0.74	0.35	0.28	0.36	(.86)					
5. Work adjustment	5.08	0.74	0.31	0.26	0.39	0.62	(.89)				
6. Job involvement	3.50	0.70	0.16	0.29	0.15	0.11	0.19	(.76)			
7. Life satisfaction	4.32	0.88	0.25	0.52	0.16	0.32	0.45	0.21	(.90)		
8. Job satisfaction	4.87	0.97	0.26	0.50	0.11	0.26	0.47	0.39	0.62	(.88)	
9. Performance	4.53	0.74	0.27	0.45	0.35	0.27	0.31	0.29	0.34	0.38	(.85)

Notes: n = 196;

Scale reliabilities are on the diagonal in brackets.

Correlations are significant at $p < 0.05$.

Table IV Hypotheses tests

Relationships		Estimates
Cross-cultural adjustment (affect)		
<i>General living adjustment</i>		0.24a
H1.	Appraisal of emotions → General living adjustment	0.12**
	Regulation of emotions → General living adjustment	0.40***
	Utilization of emotions → General living adjustment	0.12*
<i>Work adjustment</i>		0.34a
H1.	Appraisal of emotions → Work adjustment	0.16***
	Regulation of emotions → Work adjustment	0.53***
	Utilization of emotions → Work adjustment	0.13***
Job involvement (conation)		0.19a
H2.	Appraisal of emotions → Job involvement	-0.02*
	Regulation of emotions → Job involvement	0.27***
	Utilization of emotions → Job involvement	0.04
	General living adjustment → Job involvement	-0.08*
	Work adjustment → Job involvement	0.09*
Satisfaction (conation)		
<i>Job satisfaction</i>		0.31a
H3.	Appraisal of emotions → Job satisfaction	-0.04
	Regulation of emotions → Job satisfaction	0.45***
	Utilization of emotions → Job satisfaction	-0.11**
	General living adjustment → Job satisfaction	-0.12**
	Work adjustment → Job satisfaction	0.33***
<i>Life satisfaction</i>		0.35a
H3.	Appraisal of emotions → Life satisfaction	-0.08*
	Regulation of emotions → Life satisfaction	0.47***
	Utilization of emotions → Life satisfaction	-0.06*
	General living adjustment → Life satisfaction	0.01
	Work adjustment → Life satisfaction	0.22***
Performance (behavior)		0.18a
	General living adjustment → Performance	0.12**
	Work adjustment → Performance	0.07*
	Job involvement → Performance	0.18***
	Life satisfaction → Performance	0.12**
	Job satisfaction → Performance	0.17***

Notes: $n = 196$;

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.5$; *** $p < 0.01$

a. variance explained in endogenous variables