Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Psychosocial Issues of Humanitarian Staff Care

"SELECTION & ASSESSMENT IN A CROSS CULTURAL CONTEXT"
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SELECTION OF STAFF FOR CROSS-CULTURAL WORK

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OUTLINE

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- The Selection Model & Process
- Job Analysis
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Globalisation of work and worker movement has placed new demands on selection procedures and measurement instruments.

Many companies base their selection decisions purely on technical competence (Aryee, 1997 cited Hough & Oswald, 2000) and do not typically evaluate the cross-cultural aspects.

Selection and management practices impact upon subsequent job performance, intercultural adjustment (Parker & McEvoy, 1993) and psychological wellbeing.
Purpose:

Selection and training based on competencies specific to cross cultural work to:

- Identify candidates likely to meet position requirements in a cross-cultural setting
- Reduce costs of expatriate assignment failure (Nicholls, Rothstein & Bourne, 1992)
- Minimise risk of adverse consequences for employees in humanitarian work by assessing psychological health, coping mechanisms and motivations (Ehrenreich, 2004)
- Reduce high expatriate failure rate of between 15% and 40% (Shackleton & Newell, 1997 cited in Hough & Oswald, 2000)
SELECTION MODEL & PROCESS

1. Strategic Job Analysis
2. Design Selection Methodology
3. Online Screening
4. Online Psychometric Assessment
5. Assessment Centre
6. Final Client Interview
7. Reference Checking
8. Hiring Decision

EVALUATE THE SELECTION PROCESS
JOB ANALYSIS

- Interview key job experts regarding tasks and the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform them
- Observe workers on the job (if possible)
- Review current job description
- Examine Industry Standards
- Comprehensive review of academic research literature and other industry relevant information
Literature Review: Predictors Of Cross-cultural Success

**Global Criteria**

**Hough & Oswald (2000)**
- Interpersonal skill
- Open-mindedness
- Adaptability

**Harvey, Novicevic & Kiessling (2002)**
- Empathy, respect, flexibility, tolerance, initiative, open-mindedness, sociability
- Positive self-image
- Interest in local culture
- Cultural adaptability
- Previous cultural assignments and extensive foreign travel
- Technical skills
Specific Criteria (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1999)

- Cross-cultural (or psychological) adjustment
  - “[the ability to] adjust behaviour to function appropriately within a host culture” (Harrison, Chadwick & Scales, 1996)
  - “the extent to which individuals are psychologically comfortable living outside their home country (Black, 1990; Black/Gregersen, 1991 cited in Caligiuri, 2000 p. 63)
- Intercultural effectiveness/ interpersonal relations with locals
- Job performance/vocational effectiveness
- Completion of service
Cross-cultural/Expatriate Adjustment

- Self-monitoring and self-efficacy (Harrison et al, 1996)
- Openness and sociability (Caligiuri, 2000)
- Open-mindedness, cultural empathy, creativity and sense of humour, integrity and sincerity, stress tolerance and self-efficacy (review by Parker & McEvoy, 1993)
- Cognitive closure (comfort with ambiguity and uncertainty) (Nicholls, Rothstein & Bourne, 1992)
- Emotional stability (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1999)
Cross-cultural/Sociocultural Adaptation

- Interpersonal communication skills (empathy, respect, role behaviour flexibility, orientation to knowledge, interaction posture, interaction management and tolerance for ambiguity) (Ruben & Kealey, 1979)

- Length of residence in the host culture, cultural distance and identity, and psychological wellbeing (internal locus of control) (Ward, & Kennedy, 1992)
Cross-cultural/Sociocultural Adaptation

- Ability to cope with stress (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993)
  - Communication effectiveness
  - Adaptation
  - Social integration

- Adaptability to environmental change as a function of general intelligence (g) (Harvey, Novicevic, & Kiessling, 2002)
  - Higher level of abilities (problem solving and reasoning)
  - Higher speed of learning
  - Faster capacity to understand what society values
  - Capacity to adapt in response to environmental demands
Intercultural Effectiveness

- Cultural empathy (Cui & Van Den Berg, 1991)
- Communication behaviour (Cui & Van Den Berg, 1991)
- Ability to deal with psychological stress (Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1978)
- Ability to establish interpersonal relationships (Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1978)
Intercultural Effectiveness Cont...

- Intercultural Communication Competence
  - Effective cross-cultural adaptation (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989)
  - Dyadic interactions in intercultural relationships (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989)
  - Culture-specific and general understanding of other (Wiseman, Hammer & Nishida, 1989).
  - Positive regard for other (Wiseman, Hammer & Nishida, 1989).

- Cross-cultural Communication and Interaction
  - Adapt to novel situations; interact with others different from self; tolerate ambiguity; maintain sense of self in different surroundings (Pearson Reid London House, 2004)
Job Performance

- Ambition and aspects of openness to experience were predictive of job performance
- Intercultural adjustment (Tucker, Bonial & Lahti, 2004)

Completion Of Service

- Well adjusted employees are generally more effective and poorly adjusted employees often return prematurely (Harrison et al., 1996)
**COMPETENCY PROFILING**

*Individual characteristics that have been shown to relate to effective performance in a cross-cultural context*

**SUMMARY**

Psychological wellbeing -  
ability to deal with ambiguity, uncertainty and psychological strain

Personal qualities –  
intelligence, adaptability and open-mindedness

Interpersonal relationship & communication skills -  
cultural empathy and understanding

Technical vocational competence  
- Skills & knowledge oriented

Cross-cultural competence  
- Skills oriented interactive competence  
- Outcome oriented cultural adjustment competence (Todd)
Intercultural Communication Competence

Integrates behaviour (skill), motivation (attitude) and knowledge (cognition)

Adopts Appropriateness (skills oriented interactive competence)

Effectiveness (outcome oriented cultural adaption)
Psychometric candidate assessment is “a process for measuring a person’s [abilities] and personal style to evaluate characteristics and behaviour that are relevant to (predictive of) successful job performance” (Jeanneret & Silzer, 1998, p.3)

- Selection methods to be considered in terms of validity, fairness, applicability and cost as assessment tools
- Screening information and reference checking contains some evidence of competence derived from application process, however,
- More objective tools- intelligence assessment, structured behavioural interviews, personality inventories and work samples are essential
SELECTION ISSUES

- Validity and reliability of selection tools measuring expatriate characteristics
- Measurement of the impact of external factors on expatriate success e.g. “reality shock”, job, company and cultural change, spouse and family etc.
- Lack of standardised candidate preparation processes
- Ambiguity regarding the prediction of adjustment competence and vocational effectiveness

(Harvey et al., 2002)
INSTRUMENTS

- Structured Behavioural Interviews
- Cognitive Abilities Assessment (online and pencil and paper tests)
- Emotional Intelligence Assessment
- Personality Assessment
- Simulations and Role Plays
- Case Studies
- In-basket Exercises
- Group Discussions
The Selection Matrix—competence assessment across multiple evaluation methods

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<th>Selection Method</th>
<th>Behavioural Interview</th>
<th>Personality Inventory</th>
<th>Cognitive Ability</th>
<th>Work Sample/Exercise</th>
<th>Reference Check</th>
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<td>Technical Job Skills and Knowledge</td>
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The NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1997) is a systematic assessment of emotional, interpersonal, experimental, attitudinal, and motivational styles (reference).

Provide a measure of:
- Neuroticism
- Extroversion
- Openness
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness
PERSONALITY

- The NEO-PI-R strength and limitations in four major areas:
  - Problem-solving skills (organise thought, solve problems, make decisions)
  - Planning, organising and implementation skills (action oriented, conscientiousness, openness to new ideas, leadership behaviour)
  - Style of relating to others (accommodation, openness, ability to trust), and
  - Personality style (primary values and approach to life, temperament, degree of emotional self-control)
The Personality Assessment Scale (PAS) (Ref) and provides a measure of:

- Emotional intelligence
  - Emotional management
  - Emotional control
- Conscientiousness
An online testing suite called e-ibilities®, (Lewis Cadman Group) assesses a range of cognitive abilities as described by the theory of fluid and crystallized intelligence.

- Fluid intelligence - ability to reason and solve problems in novel, unfamiliar situations that is not dependent on culture, education or experience.
- Crystalised intelligence - reflects knowledge of facts and procedures acquired through education, training and experience.
ABILITIES

- General Intelligence tests provide a combined measure of both crystalised and fluid intelligence
- Other specific intelligence tests include measures such as
  - Verbal reasoning
  - Abstract reasoning
  - Quantitative reasoning
  - Critical thinking
PSYCHOLOGIST’S ROLE

- Establish criteria based on the competencies required for effective job performance
- Select the methods/instruments required for valid and reliable measurement of the criteria
- Interpret and evaluate the results
- Integrate the data derived from the assessments and application process
- Provide client and candidate feedback
- Evaluate the process
REFERENCES


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- Further information about the e-ilities® testing system is available on request at [www.eilities.com](http://www.eilities.com) or by contacting Lewis Cadman Consulting Pty Ltd, Level 31, 88 Phillip Street, Sydney, 2000.