

# **Responsible leadership during international assignments: A novel approach toward expatriation success**

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## **Abstract**

Adopting a responsible leadership (RL) lens and drawing on intergroup behavior and social identity theory, we analyze a sample of 111 expatriates using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Our findings indicate that RL enacted by host-country supervisors is positively associated with international assignees' cross-cultural adjustment and affective well-being at work, in turn leading to better expatriate performance. RL may thus facilitate adjustment and well-being in the host country. We emphasize the support potential when expatriates' supervisors are guided by a strong values foundation and exhibit stakeholder engagement. In this way, we aim to provide a perspective for studying leadership dynamics in the expatriation context that goes beyond leader-follower dyads within organizations. We believe that expatriation research can benefit from adopting a broader stakeholder view on leadership that considers business-society interrelations and outline some direction that might take.

**Keywords:** Responsible Leadership, Affective Well-being at Work, Cross-cultural Adjustment, Expatriate Performance, International Assignments

## **Introduction**

International assignments have been crucial for many companies building and developing global talent, both to enhance business strategy and opportunities, and to foster knowledge transfer (McNulty & Brewster, 2020; McNulty, De Cieri, & Hutchings, 2012). Baruch, Altman, and Tung (2016) anticipated a steady future increase in expatriation, but only for top echelons – for mid-level managers the opposite may prove true. This projection requires more consideration of the role that leadership might play in facilitating expatriation processes. Even if the COVID-19 pandemic circumstances of 2020-21 imply lower expatriation levels in future, those dispatched abroad will need to achieve greater success, even faster (Caligiuri et al., 2020). This stresses the continued importance of sound leadership during international assignments.

While experiences gained from expatriation have been linked to the development of global leaders (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016), the actual leadership dynamics relevant during international assignments remain relatively under-researched. Traditionally, the expatriation literature addresses supervisor support alongside perceived organizational and spousal or communal support as among several aspects facilitating expatriate adjustment and performance (e.g., Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001). In fact, van der Laken et al. (2019) identified supervisor support, as part of the work domain of social support, as a salient antecedent of expatriate success. Due to the strong relationship of such support to expatriate adjustment, commitment, performance, and retention, they suggested establishing high-quality leader-member relations as a top priority for organizations involved in dispatching and hosting personnel.

However, generally the attention paid to leadership processes in expatriation research is rather limited. It is most frequently expressed through transformational leadership (Bass, 1985),

focusing on joint leader-follower relationships to develop higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978), and leader-member exchange theory (LMX) (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), which may be defined as the quality of the exchange relationship between employee and supervisor (Hooper & Martin, 2008). In light of the enhanced interest in the potentially positive impact of expatriate interactions with host-country nationals (HCNs) (van Bakel, 2019) – i.e. outside the traditional work context – and due to the increasing relevance of the wider impact of international assignments on business and society (Baruch et al., 2016), we believe the conceptualization of leadership in an expatriation setting requires consideration of these aspects. Specifically, we suggest that local supervisors' intergroup behavior vis-à-vis various stakeholders inside and outside the organization shapes international assignees' self-identification. In this way, responsible leadership (RL) offers a vital perspective to incorporate the broader stakeholder context where expatriation takes place.

RL has received considerable attention during the last few years, reflecting the enhanced relevance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development (Bansal & Song, 2017), as well as “societal grand challenges” (George et al., 2016, p.1880). Its basic notion is that business leaders should be driven by desirable principles and virtues, which they enact in interaction with numerous stakeholders inside and outside companies (Maak & Pless, 2006). RL is considered to create value and ‘positive organizations’ (Antunes & Franco, 2016; Frangieh & Yaacoub, 2017), and to have the ability to influence employees' attitudes and behaviors (Doh, Stumpf, & Tymon, 2011). Therefore – and addressing what can be thought as a rather restricted conceptual consideration of leadership dynamics during international assignments – we argue for RL as a crucial leadership approach applicable to expatriation research.

Thus, we adopt a RL lens and draw on both intergroup behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1974) to analyze a sample of 111 expatriates using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Our findings indicate that RL is positively associated with expatriates' affective well-being at work, which in turn leads to increased performance. Similarly, we find that RL positively affects expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment, which equally enhances performance. While we do not identify direct effects of RL on expatriate performance, our study suggests that RL may play an important role during the expatriation cycle, particularly in areas of facilitating adjustment and well-being, which affect performance. Our intended contribution is to show that the normatively-oriented stakeholder view that RL entails, beyond the narrow leader-follower dyad within organizations, can facilitate international assignments. In this way, through a RL lens we connect traditional micro-focused considerations in expatriation, such as adjustment and success, with the growing relevance of societal and macro-oriented issues outside the immediate work domain (van Bakel, 2019) as well as the "dark side" of expatriation (e.g., Lu et al., 2017; Wurtz, 2018).

## **Literature review**

Expatriation research tends to fall short in analyzing the role of leadership processes through the various stages of international assignments, and we identified few distinct leadership approaches in such research outside transformational leadership and LMX. Clearly, research into international assignments constitutes one foundation for global leadership literature (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016), and has advanced the definition and measurement of intercultural competencies (Bird et al., 2010). In turn, several studies adopting an expatriation lens have emphasized the need for global leadership development and cross-cultural training (Wood & St.

Peters, 2014), in particular with regard to expatriate adjustment and performance (cf. Herman et al., 2010).

In contrast, transformational leadership theory supports a number of studies focusing on expatriation itself. For instance, Elenkov and Manev (2009) consider how visionary-transformational leadership among senior expatriates influences the rate of innovation adoption; Van Woerkom and De Reuver (2009) examine the influence of multicultural personality and transformational leadership on expatriate performance; and Lee, Veasna, and Wu (2013) reveal the effects of social support and transformational leadership on expatriate adjustment and performance. Transformational leadership has also been linked to commitment (Nguyen, Felfe, & Fookun, 2013) in the setting of international assignments.

LMX has a similar approach, but homes in particularly on leader-subordinate relationships. On the one hand, LMX has been applied in relation to diversity and gender issues in expatriation contexts (Baruch et al., 2016), such as with regard to selection and career advancement (e.g., Varma & Stroh, 2001; Varma, Stroh, & Schmitt, 2001). On the other hand, some studies (Kraimer et al., 2001; van der Laken et al., 2019) make a case that leader-member relations increase commitment, adjustment, and performance. Generally, in relation to international assignments, LMX encompasses various expatriation aspects. For example, Pattie et al. (2013) examined the quality of the relationship between sending supervisors and expatriates as regards turnover and performance, while Liu and Ipe (2010) analyzed the impact of organizational and leader-member support on expatriate commitment. Based on LMX, Sher and colleagues (2019) studied the effects of home and host country leader-member exchange on expatriate voice, and in relation to organizational support. Also, comparisons between Western

and Chinese employees in expatriation settings (Law et al., 2000; Nie & Lämsä, 2015) have been made, based on LMX foundations.

Collectively, the understanding of how leadership becomes relevant in the expatriation context is rather scattered, and contingent on underlying theoretical conceptualizations and assumptions. While both transformational leadership and LMX are clearly insightful, they are usually equally limited to dyadic relationships inside the organization. In contrast, global leadership, due to its emphasis on cross-cultural complexities, tends to adopt a broader perspective. Yet given the increased relevance of business-society interrelations (Baruch et al., 2016), we argue that a more encompassing approach toward leadership is required, i.e. to include RL. In fact, initial conceptual work on RL has started in the context of the liabilities of foreignness arising from over-reliance on expatriate managers and under-reliance on local managers (Berger, Choi, & Kim, 2011). Such work adopts a lens beyond the immediate work setting and aligns with calls for more consideration of the broader context in which international assignments take place, and of the stakeholders involved (cf. Doherty & Dickmann, 2012; Takeuchi, 2010). Correspondingly, this shift needs to be reflected in the leadership conceptualization appropriate for expatriation.

RL may be defined as “a values-based leadership approach that through stakeholder and systems orientation caters for the needs of constituencies directly and indirectly impacted by organizations” (Marques & Miska, 2021, p.1), and is considered “a relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in social processes of interaction with those who affect or are affected by leadership and who have a stake in the purpose and vision of the leadership relationship” (Maak & Pless, 2006, p.103), “based on a sense of justice, a sense of recognition, a sense of care and a sense of accountability for a wide range of economic, ecological, social, political and

human responsibilities” (Pless, 2007, p.451). Thus, business leaders are accountable for distinct ethical relationships to a broader set of stakeholders (Marques & Gomes, 2020). Consequently, leadership occurs in a “global stakeholder society” where leaders are expected to take an active role as citizens (Antunes & Franco, 2016), being challenged to engage with multiple stakeholders ranging from employees to clients, suppliers, shareholders, communities, NGOs, and government (Maak, 2007). Consequently, RL advocates an active “global citizen” outlook (Stahl & Sully de Luque, 2014), thereby moving beyond the dyadic leader-follower relationship of traditional leadership.

It is generally self-evident that organizations need responsible leaders. However, besides RL’s grounding in stakeholder theory, according to which responsible leaders possess characteristics including ethical values and virtues as a basis from which they perform particular roles vis-à-vis different stakeholders (Maak & Pless, 2006), Cameron (2011) has suggested further associations, including responsibility as synonymous with accountability and dependability in performance. In addition, RL is associated with freedom of action and empowerment, meaning that those who are responsible have discretion and necessary authority. Furthermore, responsibility embraces virtuousness, which means leadership oriented toward being and doing good. Consequently, RL relates to desirable outcomes for followers inside and outside organizations.

Essentially, due to its broad conceptual focus, RL outcomes can be considered at three major levels of analysis (Voegtlin, Patzer, & Scherer, 2012), ranging from the macro level (concerned with external stakeholders and society) to the meso (the organizational environment) and micro (followers inside the organization) levels. These multi-level outcomes of RL imply that responsible leaders act as boundary-spanners among different stakeholders with diverse



demands and expectations (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018; Voegtlin et al., 2012). Thus, responsible leaders naturally engage in intergroup behaviors, which is “behavior displayed by one or more actors toward one or more others that is based on the actors' identification of themselves and the others as belonging to different social categories” (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p.283). They draw from their values and principles to promote fair, inclusive, and productive intergroup relations (cf. Hogg & Abrams, 2003) among all stakeholders, including employees. For the latter specifically, RL may help attain positive self-identities (cf. Haque, Fernando, & Caputi, 2019a), which relates to SIT as a social psychological theory explaining group processes and intergroup relations (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Therefore, both the concept of intergroup behavior and SIT serve as explanatory mechanisms of how a host-country supervisor through stakeholder engagement shapes an expatriate’s social self. Based on these foundations, we present below arguments on how RL may positively affect expatriate performance as well as affective well-being at work and cross-cultural adjustments.

### *Expatriate performance*

Research into expatriation effectiveness shows the continuing importance of expatriate performance (e.g., Kraimer, Bolino, & Mead, 2016). Low performance during an international assignment is often considered a sign of expatriate failure (Harzing & Christensen, 2004), which may have enormous costs for companies (Sims & Schraeder, 2004). Hence, assessing expatriate performance is highly relevant in that it allows the organization to receive feedback about the potential success or failure of an international assignment, and to adjust and improve future assignment cycles (Harzing & Christensen, 2004).

Despite the relatively scarce empirical research on RL in the expatriation context and based on several scholars’ suggestions, a positive influence on employee performance (Lynham

& Chermack, 2006; Shi & Ye, 2016; Voegtlin et al., 2012) is likely. RL rests on concern for all stakeholders and on making decisions that aim to align the interests and needs of the corporation and a broader set of stakeholders. In this way, RL considers employees too to be important stakeholders (Doh & Quigley, 2014). Conceptually, this is reflected in the roles model of RL (Maak & Pless, 2006), according to which responsible leaders assume prototypical roles toward stakeholders in order to address their needs. With regard to expatriates, particularly relevant roles are ‘coach’ (a leader who supports relational processes, collaborative interaction, and constructive conflict resolution, recognizing and respecting people from different backgrounds so as to contribute to their highest potential) and ‘meaning enabler’ (a leader who establishes shared systems of meaning, through sensemaking and dialogue). As these roles indicate, RL may, through its relational and integrative nature, be crucial to enhancing expatriate performance.

For host-country supervisors, RL represents a different frame of reference with regard to distinguishing between in- and out-groups. Thus, the collaborative and inclusive intergroup behavior that responsible leaders seek to engage in may well reduce their potential to be subject to the principle of meta-contrast (Turner, 1985), according to which they increase similarity with in-group and increase differentiation between out-group stakeholders (cf. Luring & Selmer, 2009). Consequently, they may equally be naturally more inclusive of expatriates from abroad and support them to be successful rather than considering them as outsiders. This aligns with SIT with regard to expatriates’ self-identification with supervisors who demonstrate RL. Generally, being part of a corporation led by a responsible leader may increase perceptions of belongingness and in consequence can improve performance (cf. Van Knippenberg, 2000). Specifically, aspects such as collaborative interaction beyond the organizational context and in view of meaningful societal challenges are likely to contribute to expatriates’ self-identification with host-country supervisors. Thus, both an inclusive approach toward expatriates on the part of host-country

supervisors and the self-identification afforded may support performance. We therefore argue that responsible leaders, by adopting an integrative approach rooted in virtue ethics, will support international assignees and influence their job performance by stimulating pro-work behaviors.

Hypothesis 1: RL is positively associated with expatriate performance.

The nature of RL as a values-based multi-stakeholder approach makes it relevant not only with regard to expatriate performance but also in terms of aspects crucial for effectiveness and success: cross-cultural adjustment and affective well-being at work. Hence, we propose that RL affects not only performance directly, but also its important prerequisites.

#### *Cross-cultural adjustment*

Cross-cultural adjustment refers to an individual's ability to effectively interact and get along with host nationals, a new culture, and a new environment. This embraces different types of adjustment in an international context (Black, 1988; Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991), such as work adjustment (work-related issues), interaction adjustment (both inside and outside the work setting), and general adjustment (factors of the host cultural environment that are not work-related). The importance of studying cross-cultural adjustment can be evidenced through the extant expatriation literature that has traditionally focused on the adjustment issues faced by foreign workers in a host country, and how these may impact on performance (e.g., Ravasi, Salamin, & Davoine, 2015; Shay & Baack, 2006).

Across cultures, fundamental values and virtues are likely to differ (Szócs & Miska, 2020), making cross-cultural adjustment even more challenging. Correspondingly, Bader et al. (2019) pointed to important unanswered questions in global mobility research, such as to what extent an individual's values and ethics might change when abroad or how expatriates are

affected by and deal with value clashes. These issues are particularly apposite when considering the “dark” side of expatriation, where value dissimilarities may incline expatriates toward unethical practices in host countries. They are also relevant with regard to the occurrence of fit-dependence crises (McNulty et al., 2019), where crises are triggered by maladjustment or acculturation stress, including a mismatch of values. RL rests on the contrasting assumption that business leaders are guided by robust core values and virtues (Maak & Pless, 2006), while at the same time they are embedded in national systems and embrace societal values (Schneider, Barsoux, & Stahl, 2014). Therefore, RL is likely to represent a values-based role model amongst international assignees, which for expatriates may constitute an important anchoring point with regard to desirable values in the host country, facilitating in turn cross-cultural adjustment.

Addressing diverse stakeholder demands makes host-country supervisors who demonstrate RL go beyond purely motivational or cognitive processes (Brewer & Kramer, 1985). Their engagement in intergroup behaviors implies a complex process involving values, culture, and social representation (cf. Tajfel & Forgas, 1981), which they seek to reconcile with their own values base. Therefore, RL-conversant host-country supervisors are likely to understand the varied and sometimes subtle facets relevant for successful interaction with stakeholders specifically and the host society in general. In this way, they delineate for expatriates a large repertoire of culturally appropriate and desirable values and behaviors both inside and outside the work setting, which an expatriate alone attempting to adjust to the host-country environment may find difficult to perceive and interpret. Supervisors’ value base and positive virtue foundation, as well as experiences interacting with stakeholders, provide anchoring and orientation for expatriates and thereby support their sense of self-identification with supervisors. Correspondingly, we argue that RL demonstrated by host-country supervisors is likely to support expatriates’ cross-cultural adjustment.

Hypothesis 2: RL is positively associated with cross-cultural adjustment.

Expatriation research has indicated that cross-cultural adjustment is crucial for successful international assignments and that performance and adjustment are closely interlinked (van der Laken et al., 2019), generally suggesting a positive relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate performance (Kraimer et al., 2016; Shay & Baack, 2006; Shi & Franklin, 2014). For example, cross-cultural adjustment is important for managers to implement their multinational corporations' strategies, thus ultimately helping achieve their goals (Shay & Baack, 2006). This is because the ability to function in the new environment, to cooperate with locals, apply competencies and knowledge, cope with uncertainty, and learn depend to a large extent on cross-cultural adjustment (Koveshnikov, Wechtler, & Dejoux, 2014). Therefore, well-adjusted expatriates tend to be comfortable interacting with host-country individuals and are perceived as better performers by their supervisors (Kraimer et al., 2001). Accordingly, we hypothesize a positive effect of cross-cultural adjustment on expatriate performance.

Hypothesis 3: Cross-cultural adjustment is positively associated with expatriate performance.

#### *Affective well-being at work*

Scholarly interest in employee well-being has increased considerably in recent years (Ilies, Aw, & Pluut, 2015). Affective well-being describes the emotional experiences or reactions of individuals regarding life events (Warr, 1990), together with “the frequent experience of positive affects and infrequent experience of negative affects” (Rego et al., 2011, p.525). Affective well-being is considered of increasing importance in the workplace, as it tends to have a predictive effect on employee outcomes (Xu, Xie, & Chung, 2019). It relates to constructs such as job satisfaction, work engagement, and job burnout (Ilies et al., 2015), and is associated with

key work-performance markers of organizational functioning (Russell & Daniels, 2018). These include, for instance, productivity (David, Boniwell, Ayers, 2014) and performance (Dijkhuizen et al., 2018; Khoreva & Wechtler, 2018; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Hence, employee well-being “enables organizations to capitalize on their human capital” (Ilies et al., 2015, p.828).

Despite the importance of expatriate well-being in the success of foreign business, relatively few studies have thoroughly examined it (Ballesteros-Leiva, Poilpot-Rocaboy, & St-Onge, 2017), and even then across rather scattered domains. For example, Lazarova, Westman, and Shaffer (2010) associated adjusted expatriates with an overall sense of well-being, while Shaffer et al. (2012) classified subjective well-being as an intrinsic career outcome. Some expatriation research incorporates well-being in terms of family and personal life aspects (e.g., Mäkelä et al. 2017; Waibel, Aevermann, & Rueger, 2018). For instance, Lämsä et al. (2017) argue that parent companies should see travelling families as stakeholders, and that they need to develop and apply a holistic well-being orientation to show stakeholder responsibility. This indicates the need to identify work-related sources of well-being.

We argue that RL can be a work-related source of expatriates’ affective well-being. Although to date few studies have empirically addressed the impact of RL on employee outcomes (Doh et al., 2011; Haque et al., 2019a; Haque, Fernando, & Caputi, 2019b), He, Morrison, and Zhang (2019) linked RL to millennial employee well-being. Leaders who act responsibly enhance positive affects in employees who tend to participate rather than just follow (Schneider, 2002), and provide resources that enable affective well-being through the shaping of the work environment, rewards, autonomy, skill discretion, and by being a source of support for employees (Inceoglu et al., 2018). Therefore, RL is likely to play an important role in employees’ affective

well-being at work, genuinely supporting and encouraging the development and growth of employees.

According to Hogg and Abrams (2003), the troublesome aspects of intergroup behavior are those that relate to emotions and powerful affect. This is due to negative stereotypes that individuals often hold toward out-groups and the anxiety and discomfort they may experience when interacting with stigmatized out-groups. RL, due to its associations of virtuousness, implies being and doing good (Cameron, 2011), and in this way overcoming these hurdles. In fact, Voegtlin et al. (2020) identified positive affect as an important precondition for the motivation to care for and engage with stakeholders, as positive affect encourages good interpersonal relations (Harvey et al., 2007; Solomon, Mikulincer, & Hobfoll, 1986) and relates to greater social influence and success in negotiations (Chemers, Watson, & May, 2000). From a SIT point of view, these mechanisms are likely to strengthen expatriates' positive feelings of belongingness and group membership (Haque et al., 2019a). In addition, RL requires on the part of leaders self-regulatory processes that align values with intention and action as well as positive psychological states (Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2011). These are important dynamics that may influence, energize, and develop followers' identities. Consequently, due to host-country supervisors' positive affect in relation to stakeholders and expatriates' self-identification with supervisors who exemplify RL, it is likely that positive affective experiences are also generated for expatriates. Based on this discussion, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4: RL is positively associated with affective well-being at work.

As discussed above, the role of well-being in expatriation research has been rather neglected and, if addressed, frequently linked to family and personal life aspects. This is despite studies that indicate clinically significant psychological distress in international assignees during

expatriation (Fonseca et al., 2017). Consequently, little is known about how work-related affective well-being influences performance. We argue that affective well-being, as generated through RL, will positively enhance expatriate performance. The more general HRM literature tends to support this relationship (e.g., Guest, 2017; Huettermann & Bruch, 2019; Khoreva & Wechtler, 2018; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Van De Voorde, Paauwe, and Van Veldhoven (2012) reviewed the conflicting perspectives associated with employee well-being – “mutual gains” versus “conflicting outcomes” – and identified a congruence of employee well-being in terms of happiness, which includes affective components and relationships, with organizational performance. Similarly, HRM with foundations in positive psychology (Cooper et al., 2019) examines the mechanisms through which well-being-oriented practices develop employee resilience and build up performance accordingly. Further, Hu and colleagues (2017) examined subtle affective stimuli in the workplace and found enhancement of employees’ positive affect, which in turn influenced their extra-role performance. We argue that these mechanisms apply equally to the expatriation setting and propose a positive relationship between affective well-being at work and expatriate performance:

Hypothesis 5: Affective well-being at work is positively associated with expatriate performance.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the hypothesized relationships and depicts our conceptual model.

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Figure 1 about here

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## **Method**

### *Data collection procedure*

To test our hypotheses, we collected data through an online questionnaire developed to target expatriates around the world who were currently working in a host country; we obtained fully completed and usable answers from 111 respondents. A non-probability sample, through snowball and convenience sampling, was used, as in previous expatriation studies (e.g., de Eccher & Duarte, 2018; Fan et al., 2018), leveraging platforms such as LinkedIn. A pre-test was made with ten expatriates, and participant feedback incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. The final version included two sections. In the first, we explained the scope of the research as well as the definition of expatriates and the intended target population, followed by the scales of our study variables. In the second, we asked for respondents' demographic data. To control for common-method variance, we protected the respondents' anonymity and used concise and simple items (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, common-method bias was analyzed through the application of an exploratory factor analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The data did not adjust to a single factor model. We could conclude that common-method bias was not a major issue. The questionnaire was available online from March until June 2018.

### *Sample*

Overall, we received 119 questionnaires, of which 111 were complete and were thus included in the sample, as they contained responses for all the questions we deemed usable for statistical analysis; this corresponds with previous expatriation studies' sample sizes (e.g., Dimitrova et al., 2020; Fan et al., 2018). Of the 111 respondents, 49.5% were female and 50.5% male, with most between 30–39 years old (42.3%). As for other age groups, 26.1% were under 30, 21.6% 40–49 years old, and 9.9% 50–59 years old. Most had higher-education qualifications:

41.4% with a Bachelor's degree or equivalent and 44.1% a Master's or equivalent. The remainder (14.5%) fell into other education levels.

Our respondents represented 17 countries of origin, distributed over 28 host countries. The majority were from Portugal (73.9%) and others were from Australia (0.9%), Brazil (0.9%), Canada (1.8%), China (0.9%), Finland (1.8%), France (2.7%), Germany (0.9%), Hungary (1.8%), Kenya (0.9%), Mexico (0.9%), New Zealand (0.9%), Poland (1.8%), Romania (1.8%), Spain (0.9%), the United Kingdom (0.9%), and the USA (6.3%). The host countries represented in our sample were the United Kingdom (22.5%), Algeria (3.6%), Angola (6.3%), Austria (1.8%), Belgium (1.8%), East Timor (9.9%), France (7.2%), Germany (2.7%), Ireland (5.4%), Liechtenstein (1.8%), Mozambique (1.8%), Nicaragua (1.8%), Poland (3.6%), Portugal (3.6%), Spain (6.3%), Switzerland (2.7%), Thailand (2.7%), the United Arab Emirates (1.8%), the USA (1.8%), and Venezuela (3.6%). Other host countries were Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Ethiopia, Russia, Singapore, Tanzania, and Togo (0.9% per country).

The organizational tenure of the respondents was as follows: less than 5 years in the corporation (46.8%), 5–10 years (25.2%), 11–15 years (11.7%), 16–20 years (8.1%), 21–25 years (3.6%), and more than 25 years (4.5%). Time in their current assignment varied from less than 1 year (21.6%) to 1–2 years (27.0%), 3–4 years (25.2%), and more than 5 years (26.1%). Most had had previous international experience (81.1%) in long-term (30.6%) and other short-term assignments (50.5%).

Finally, in terms of professional categories our sample included engineering, production, and operations (18.9%); accounting and finance (13.5%); sales and marketing (13.5%); and human resources and personnel (6.3%). The remainder (47.8%) had professional backgrounds in other areas (such as management, purchasing, and law).

## Measures

*Independent variable:* To measure RL, we used Voegtlin's (2011) validated RL scale as applied in previous RL studies (e.g., Cheng, Wei, & Lin, 2019; Javed et al., 2020). Five items assess RL on a five-point Likert scale ranging from not at all (1) to frequently, if not always (5). Some sample items read: “My direct supervisor demonstrates awareness of relevant stakeholder claims”; “My direct supervisor considers the consequences of decisions for affected stakeholders”; and “My direct supervisor involves affected stakeholders in the decision-making process”.

*Dependent variables:* *Expatriate performance* was assessed as a second-order construct using Caligiuri's (1997) four commonly applied (e.g., Jyoti & Kour, 2017; Shaffer et al., 2006) performance dimensions (overall, technical, contextual/managerial, expatriate-specific), with 13 items in total. Comparable to previous studies (e.g., Singh & Mahmood, 2017), respondents were asked to self-assess their performance across the success domains, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from unsatisfactory or poor (1) to exceptional or outstanding (5). Some sample items read: “your performance in general as an expatriate” – overall performance; “your technical performance on this expatriate assignment” – technical performance; “your effectiveness at supervising and developing host-national subordinates” – contextual/managerial performance; “your effectiveness at transferring information across strategic units” – expatriate-specific performance. The measure of *affective well-being at work* was operationalized as a second-order construct consisting of five first-order factors: anxiety-comfort, depression-pleasure, boredom-enthusiasm, tiredness-vigor, and anger-placidity from Daniels's (2000) validated instrument and as applied by, for instance, Rego and Cunha (2008). This measure includes thirty bi-polar items, ranging from never (1) to always (5). Respondents were asked how often during the last three

months in the organization they experienced the listed feelings. Some sample items read: “comfortable” – anxiety-comfort dimension; “pleased” – depression-pleasure dimension; “enthusiastic” – boredom-enthusiasm dimension; “active” – tiredness-vigor dimension; and “calm” – anger-placidity dimension. *Cross-cultural adjustment* was measured using Black and Stephens's (1989) widely used (e.g., Koveshnikov et al., 2014; Singh & Mahmood, 2017) cross-cultural adjustment scale. It was operationalized as a second-order construct that consisted of three first-order factors: living adjustment, interactional adjustment, and work adjustment, comprising a total of 14 items, on a five-point Likert scale ranging from very unadjusted (1) to perfectly adjusted (5). Respondents were asked to indicate how adjusted they were to the listed aspects of the international assignment experience. Some sample items read: “living conditions in general” – living adjustment; “interacting with host nationals on a day-to-day basis” – interactional adjustment; and “supervisory responsibilities” – work adjustment. Table 1 provides an overview of the study variables and their first-order factors.

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Table 1 about here

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*Control variables:* We controlled for other variables that may affect expatriate performance. Specifically, we accounted for expatriates’ time on current assignment and previous international assignment experience (both measured in number of years).

*Analysis approach and results*

We used partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 3.0. (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015) for the analyses of our data. SmartPLS is particularly useful for analyzing structural relationships among and between latent variables and between latent and observed variables. Since it suffers from the limitation of a lack of parametric significance

testing, we employed SmartPLS's bootstrapping procedure, using 5,000 sub-samples to obtain stable results (Hair et al., 2017).

We opted for PLS-SEM in favor of alternatives such as covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) for several reasons. First, since our study is among the first few to examine RL in the context of international assignments, our analysis approach aligns with the logic of PLS-SEM, which is often associated with exploration, prediction, and development of theory (Hair, Howard, & Nitzl, 2020). Second, PLS-SEM is appropriate when data are not normally distributed (Hair et al., 2020), particularly when sample size is comparably small. In these instances PLS-SEM demonstrates relatively stronger robustness (Hair et al., 2019). We tested for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test (Hair et al., 2012). Both indicated that the data significantly deviates from normal distribution, supporting our deployment of PLS-SEM. Third, PLS-SEM provides a relatively high level of statistical power with small samples (i.e. less than 250) (Reinartz, Haenlein, & Henseler, 2009). Finally, although our model includes constructs that are measured with more than three items (e.g., RL, five-item scale), we used one two-item latent variable (i.e. overall performance) and one single-item latent variable (i.e. technical performance) as well. PLS-SEM can handle constructs with both single- and multi-item measures (Hair et al., 2017).

Our measurement model consists of four reflective constructs (RL, expatriate performance, affective well-being at work, and cross-cultural adjustment). Reflective measurement models include latent constructs where indicators are considered to be caused or influenced by the latent variable (Hair et al., 2020) and items are, therefore, expressed as a function of the construct (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995). In accordance with the use of reflective indicators, the objective of our model is the explanation of the observed measures

(Chin, 1998). We thus used a reflective measurement model, considering that a change in the latent variable is reflected in a change in its respective indicators (Hair et al., 2020). Moreover, it is assumed that reflective indicators measure the same underlying phenomena and are correlated (in contrast to formative indicators) (Chin, 1998).

PLS-SEM is useful to estimate complex models in rather small-sample studies (Barclay et al., 1995; Hair et al., 2017), where it can yield strong levels of statistical power and provide accurate estimates and model convergence (Hair et al., 2020). An often-cited rule of thumb indicates that sample size should be ten times the maximum number of structural paths directed at a latent variable in the structural model (Barclay et al., 1995; Hair et al., 2017). Our study aligns with this guideline since our sample size largely exceeds the maximum number of structural relationships pointing at a latent variable. Moreover, we followed Hair et al.'s (2017) recommendation and conducted statistical power analyses for the measurement and structural models as detailed below.

*Assessment of measurement model:* We examined item reliability of all indicators that measure our reflective constructs through their standardized indicator loadings and t-statistics (Table 1). All indicators retained in the analysis have loadings higher than 0.6 and are statistically significant, indicating good convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Chin, 1998). Due to rather low reliability of some items, we dropped single ones (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012), resulting in the AVE of all retained constructs meeting the threshold value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). To evaluate the measurement model, we examined internal consistency reliability and convergent validity, based on Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliabilities, and average variance extracted (AVE) (Table 1). Cronbach's Alpha values indicate acceptable internal consistency, as all constructs are greater than 0.70, which thus represents good content validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2020).

The composite reliability values exceed the recommended value of 0.7 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Moreover, the AVE values are greater than the reference value of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating that at least 50% of the variance is explained by the latent variable. As a result, all scales demonstrate good convergent validity and reliability. Discriminant validity was assessed applying the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. Evidence of discriminant validity is corroborated by the fact that the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than the correlation between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, the HTMT values are below the threshold value of 0.9 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the study variables' reliabilities, AVE values, HTMT ratio values, and correlations.

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Table 2 about here

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*Model fit:* We evaluated model fit as recommended by Hair et al. (2020), using the explained variance of the endogenous latent variables ( $R^2$ ), the effect size ( $f^2$ ), and the cross-validated redundancy measure ( $Q^2$ ). Additionally, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) introduced by Henseler et al. (2014) was assessed. The model predicted 33.9% of expatriate performance variance, 23.5% of affective well-being at work variance, and 6.3% of cross-cultural adjustment variance. All values exceed the recommended value of 10% for  $R^2$  (Falk & Miller, 1992), except for cross-cultural adjustment.

In order to evaluate the explanatory power of the structural model, in addition to the  $R^2$ , we calculated the effect size ( $f^2$ ) of each independent variable on the endogenous constructs. Using the guidelines for interpretation that Cohen (1988) provides, the effect that RL has on affective well-being at work can be characterized as a medium effect (0.307), the effects on cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate performance as small effects (0.067 and 0.003).

Moreover, the effect of affective well-being at work on expatriate performance can be characterized as a small effect (0.039), and the effect of cross-cultural adjustment on expatriate performance as medium (0.333).

A cross-validated redundancy measure  $Q^2$  above zero for endogenous constructs reveals predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2020). To calculate the cross-validated redundancies, we used a blindfolding procedure containing 7 as omission distance (Hair et al., 2020). All endogenous constructs present cross-validated redundancy  $Q^2$  values superior to zero (affective well-being at work 0.216, cross-cultural adjustment 0.054, expatriate performance 0.312), which supports the model's predictive relevance.

Additionally, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was used to evaluate model fit. Values less than 0.10 are considered to be a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1998). The SRMR is 0.084, which indicates that the model has a good overall fit.

*Structural model estimation:* Our results indicate evidence for a negative but non-significant effect of RL on expatriate performance ( $\beta=-0.052$ ; n.s.), thus not supporting Hypothesis 1. In contrast, RL is positively and significantly associated with cross-cultural adjustment, supporting Hypothesis 2 ( $\beta=0.251$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Our results also suggest that cross-cultural adjustment positively influences expatriate performance, supporting Hypothesis 3 ( $\beta=0.504$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). In a similar vein, RL is positively and significantly associated with affective well-being at work, supporting Hypothesis 4 ( $\beta=0.485$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Moreover, results provide support for Hypothesis 5 ( $\beta=0.192$   $p<0.05$ ) that postulates affective well-being at work to have a positive effect on expatriate performance.



In the above estimations, we controlled for expatriates’ time on current assignment and previous international assignment experience. These controls yielded a positive, non-significant effect of expatriates’ time on current assignment on expatriate performance ( $\beta=0.015$ ; n.s.) and a positive, non-significant effect of previous international assignment experience on expatriate performance ( $\beta=0.134$ ; n.s.). Figure 2 and Table 3 provide an overview of our results.

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Figure 2 about here

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Table 3 about here

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**Discussion and implications**

The scope of expatriation research in terms of leadership dynamics remains limited, and largely focused on traditional leader-follower relationships, as in LMX and transformational leadership theories. This is despite the support potential of expatriate supervisors as an important antecedent of success (van der Laken et al., 2019). It is even more striking that in traditional perspectives focused on leader-follower dyads within organizations, the lived reality of expatriates beyond the work domain vanishes. Research into HCNs (e.g., Kang & Shen, 2018; van Bakel, 2019) or community support (e.g., Caligiuri, 2000; Johnson et al., 2003) underlines this aspect. RL provides a valuable approach that from a leadership perspective incorporates business-society relationships into expatriate management. To the best of our knowledge, we are among the first to examine RL in the setting of international assignments and in relation to frequently-studied expatriate performance. Consequently, our overarching theoretical contribution is to emphasize the supportive role of expatriates’ host-country supervisors who

reconcile micro-focused expatriate considerations with macro-oriented stakeholder issues, based on their personal value base. Our contribution responds to calls for the incorporation of stakeholder perspectives and the broader context in which international assignments take place (cf. Doherty & Dickmann, 2012; Takeuchi, 2010). Equally, the greater importance of the wider impact of international assignments on business and society (Baruch et al., 2016) aligns with the pertinence of a RL lens. We suggest that RL is a worthy framework for addressing these issues. Based on our findings, we derive a number of specific directions where RL may be fruitful for expatriation research.

First, while RL is clearly to be located in the work context, a supervisor embodying RL has the potential to incorporate elements of support that may address non-work domains. In our study, this is exemplified by the positive association we found between RL and affective well-being at work. Extant expatriation research frequently tends to associate well-being with family and personal life (e.g., Mäkelä et al., 2017; Waibel et al., 2018) rather than with work-related leadership. Thus, RL may be viewed as a leadership approach that potentially reconciles various domains of social support. Clearly, a trajectory for future research would be to examine actual degrees and types of support that RL could generate.

Second, our study underlines the importance of host-country supervisor characteristics, accentuated by RL's virtuousness components, relevant for engaging in intergroup behavior vis-à-vis stakeholders inside and outside the organization, and supporting expatriates' self-identification. While we did not focus on supervisors' personal characteristics such as values or moral philosophies *per se*, but instead on expatriates' perceptions thereof, this aspect shows potential for further research. RL literature indicates a number of aspects beyond values and virtues worthy of investigation (Maak & Pless, 2006), such as role identity and motivational

drivers or ethical literacy and responsible mindsets (Pless, 2007; Pless et al., 2011). While these characteristics are potentially relevant for supervisors to facilitate international assignments, they may also be germane for expatriates themselves, in particular considering the steady increase in expatriation involving top-echelon personnel (Baruch et al., 2016), i.e. the kind of person-level RL aspects that help expatriates themselves to be more effective during international assignments and to generate positive impact in the host country. This perspective goes beyond the traditional cross-cultural competencies that expatriation and global leadership research have so far proposed (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016).

Third, and partially related to the previous point, RL is likely to be relevant when it comes to investigating expatriate supervisors and HCN supervisors. Extant literature has identified expatriate supervisors as the “ideal boss” (e.g., Selmer, 1996) whereas other studies have suggested that HCNs are essential to foster expatriate success (Toh & DeNisi, 2007). For example, Bader et al. (2019) concluded that expatriate supervisors may negatively affect HCNs’ affective commitment, which may however be influenced by HCNs’ values. The RL lens has the potential to elucidate these rather opposing views since it goes beyond the leader-follower dyad and centers on the broader context in which expatriation occurs, and in this way focuses on supervisors’ engagement with stakeholders both inside and outside the organization. In this regard, the positive association that we found between RL and cross-cultural adjustment is interesting since it indicates that supervisors who embrace RL constitute an important anchor point for expatriates. Clearly, HCN supervisors may more naturally be able to understand local stakeholder perspectives and attendant tacit cultural facets. However, expatriate supervisors as ‘outsiders’ might be more prone to see broader societal issues and draw from their own expatriation experiences. Through RL, both are considered relevant, which is why ongoing

research into international assignments may benefit from shedding light on both expatriate and HCN supervisors.

Fourth, the “dark side” of expatriation (e.g., Lu et al., 2017; Wurtz, 2018), increasingly attracting more attention, is ready for the adoption of a RL perspective. One particular question is to what extent RL as demonstrated by local supervisors can prevent expatriates from engaging in corrupt practices or help them deal more effectively with value clashes between the home and host countries. Our findings suggest that RL may help address adverse consequences of international assignments, either directly through enhanced affective well-being and greater cross-cultural adjustment, or indirectly through increased expatriate performance. Clearly, future research may extend this perspective by examining how RL might help prevent dysfunctional effects in both work and non-work-related situations.

While our findings suggest that RL is associated positively with cross-cultural adjustment and affective well-being at work, we did not find support for our hypothesis that RL directly enhances expatriate performance. Our interpretation of this is that RL may enhance performance over time; the indirect effects through cross-cultural adjustment and positive affect would support this assumption. In a similar vein, Wang and Varma (2018) proposed a process model of how interpersonal interaction leads to effectiveness of the expatriate-host country relationship, essentially arguing that interactions evolve over time. Since from a RL point of view fruitful interactions with stakeholders are a key defining element, it is likely that for expatriates the RL aspects we postulated to affect performance – such as collaborative interaction or establishment of shared systems – are more likely to be perceptible only over time. Further research adopting longitudinal and qualitative designs may find opportunities to test such a process perspective in more detail. In this regard, considering the pre-assignment and repatriation phases as well would

add additional insight. From a theoretical standpoint, while drawing from intergroup behavior and SIT as the overarching theoretical mechanisms explaining why RL supports international assignees, social capital theory may be germane for more longitudinal research employing a RL lens. Social capital denotes individuals' social networks (Putnam, 1995, 2007), while a social-network perspective is important to facilitate expatriate adjustment (Farh et al., 2010). Both may help understand stakeholder networks from a RL perspective.

### *Limitations*

Our study suffers from a number of caveats. First, its cross-sectional nature limits the possibility of drawing definite causal statements (Shay & Baack, 2006), although other than the direct effect of RL on expatriate performance the data largely tends to support our theoretical reasoning. As this study was conducted based on a single point-in-time observation, it does not capture the longer-term dynamics discussed above that may be relevant in this regard. Therefore, longitudinal designs are recommendable in future research (Kraimer et al., 2016; Rego, 2009; Shay & Baack, 2006). In addition, as indicated above, considerations related to social capital and stakeholder networks may be fruitful.

Second, we assessed expatriate performance based on a self-reported measure, which implies a potential for social desirability bias, whereby participants may present a flattering image of themselves (Haque et al., 2019a). To some extent, this might explain the non-significant relationship between RL and expatriate performance. As suggested by Caligiuri (1997), performance assessment may comprise 360-degree evaluations in order to avoid bias. While for the purposes of our study we deemed expatriates' perceptions sufficient, future work would ideally obtain peer and supervisor evaluations as well. In the light of RL, these designs would

allow for more contextualized and likely more accurate insights of RL outcomes in the international assignment setting.

Third, the majority of respondents were Portuguese. While their host countries were rather diverse and balanced, this may still imply bias. Therefore, more culturally diversified samples would be valuable for future work to elucidate cross-cultural or cross-institutional aspects more thoroughly and specifically.

### *Managerial implications*

Our study provides several practical implications for both managers and organizations. Given the positive associations between RL and expatriates' affective well-being at work and cross-cultural adjustment, it would be worthwhile for managers to deliberately reflect upon their core values and virtues in order to understand better how they might enact RL toward various stakeholders as well as with regard to expatriate subordinates. Furthermore, organizations may systematically support RL development, for example by means of international service learning assignments such as PwC's Ulysses program (Pless et al., 2011). Since our findings indicate that RL may influence expatriate performance over time, it will be important that attempts toward developing RL and leveraging its benefits are understood to require a longer-term lens. This clearly resonates with expatriation in that the entire assignment process should be considered.

### **Conclusion**

This study is among the first attempts to place RL in the setting of international assignments. Our results provide a pathway for understanding how RL may support the overall expatriation process. Therefore, our overarching contribution is to emphasize that RL considers the wider context in which international assignments take place. Overall, we believe that RL has

the potential to provide an insightful perspective on leadership dynamics in the expatriation setting.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

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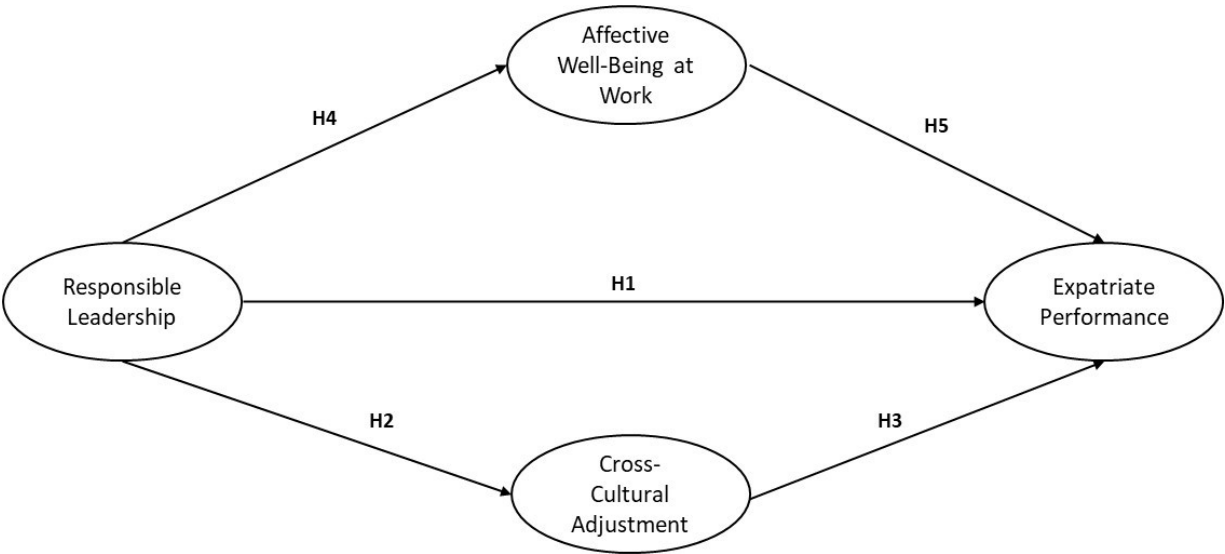
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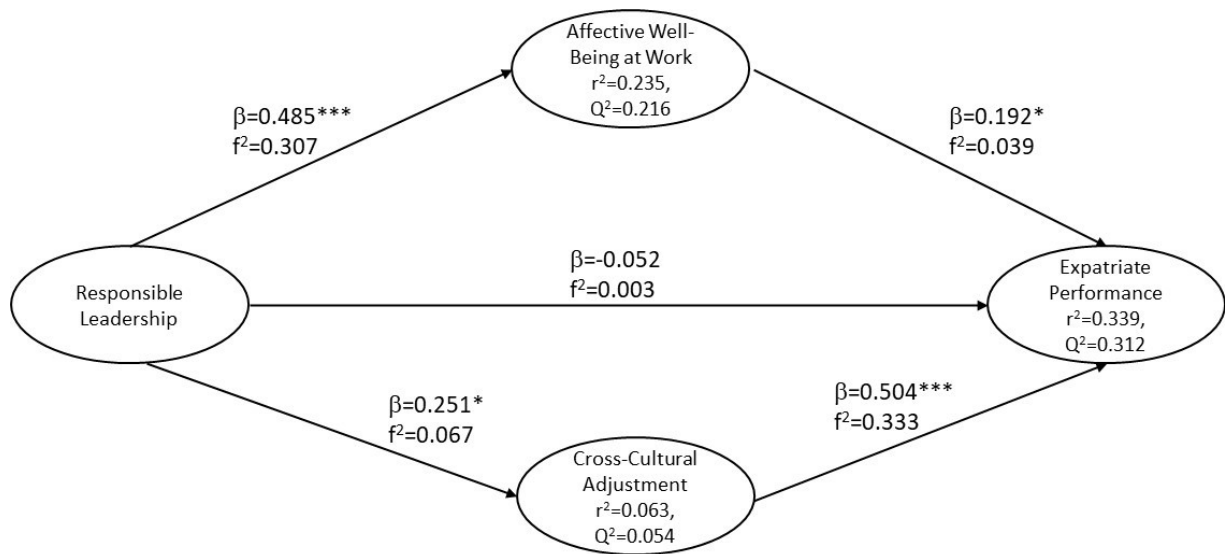


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**Figure 1.** Conceptual model and hypothesized relationships



**Figure 2. Path-coefficients results**



Notes: \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; A two-tailed test was used for all hypotheses.

**Table 1. Study variables and reliabilities**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Loading</b>	<b>t value</b>
<b>Responsible Leadership (<math>\alpha=0.914</math>, <math>CR=0.935</math>, <math>AVE=0.743</math>)</b>		
<b>Expatriate Performance (<math>\alpha=0.904</math>, <math>CR=0.920</math>, <math>AVE=0.511</math>)</b>		
<i>Overall (<math>\alpha=0.839</math>, <math>CR=0.925</math>, <math>AVE=0.861</math>)</i>	0.787	19.830
<i>Technical (<math>\alpha=1.000</math>, <math>CR=1.000</math>, <math>AVE=1.000</math>)</i>	0.770	19.722
<i>Contextual/managerial (<math>\alpha=0.809</math>, <math>CR=0.868</math>, <math>AVE=0.569</math>)</i>	0.935	68.427
<i>Expatriate-specific (<math>\alpha=0.739</math>, <math>CR=0.854</math>, <math>AVE=0.662</math>)</i>	0.863	25.684
<b>Affective Well-Being at Work (<math>\alpha=0.948</math>, <math>CR=0.954</math>, <math>AVE=0.512</math>)</b>		
<i>Anxiety-comfort (<math>\alpha=0.863</math>, <math>CR=0.898</math>, <math>AVE=0.594</math>)</i>	0.880	30.768
<i>Depression-pleasure (<math>\alpha=0.872</math>, <math>CR=0.908</math>, <math>AVE=0.665</math>)</i>	0.937	76.335
<i>Boredom-enthusiasm (<math>\alpha=0.939</math>, <math>CR=0.961</math>, <math>AVE=0.891</math>)</i>	0.883	43.946
<i>Tiredness-vigor (<math>\alpha=0.793</math>, <math>CR=0.906</math>, <math>AVE=0.828</math>)</i>	0.721	14.055
<i>Anger-placidity (<math>\alpha=0.807</math>, <math>CR=0.874</math>, <math>AVE=0.637</math>)</i>	0.804	20.612
<b>Cross-Cultural Adjustment (<math>\alpha=0.887</math>, <math>CR=0.910</math>, <math>AVE=0.533</math>)</b>		
<i>Living adjustment (<math>\alpha=0.811</math>, <math>CR=0.868</math>, <math>AVE=0.569</math>)</i>	0.605	7.897
<i>Interactional adjustment (<math>\alpha=0.901</math>, <math>CR=0.931</math>, <math>AVE=0.772</math>)</i>	0.868	31.852
<i>Work adjustment (<math>\alpha=0.911</math>, <math>CR=0.944</math>, <math>AVE=0.849</math>)</i>	0.850	29.072

Notes:  $\alpha$ = Cronbach's Alpha, CR = composite reliability and AVE = Average variance extracted.

**Table 2. Correlations, square roots of the AVE, and HTMT ratio values**

Latent variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>1. Responsible leadership</b>	<b>0.86</b>	0.27	0.16	0.14	0.39	0.51	0.40	0.52	0.54	0.47	0.38	0.20	0.13	0.23	0.18	0.18	0.10	0.14
<b>2. Cross-cultural adjustment</b>	0.25	<b>0.73</b>	0.71 <sup>a</sup>	0.97 <sup>a</sup>	0.92 <sup>a</sup>	0.39	0.32	0.42	0.37	0.40	0.29	0.65	0.46	0.38	0.66	0.68	0.24	0.08
3. Living adjustment	0.12	0.61 <sup>a</sup>	<b>0.75</b>	0.34	0.51	0.30	0.26	0.29	0.29	0.33	0.20	0.44	0.39	0.27	0.44	0.39	0.07	0.20
4. Interactional adjustment	0.12	0.87 <sup>a</sup>	0.35	<b>0.88</b>	0.59	0.26	0.22	0.27	0.22	0.25	0.19	0.49	0.30	0.24	0.50	0.58	0.28	0.06
5. Work adjustment	0.36	0.85 <sup>a</sup>	0.44	0.54	<b>0.92</b>	0.38	0.30	0.39	0.36	0.37	0.32	0.56	0.45	0.39	0.57	0.54	0.15	0.05
<b>6. Affective well-being at work</b>	0.49	0.36	0.26	0.24	0.36	<b>0.72</b>	0.98 <sup>a</sup>	1.02 <sup>a</sup>	0.91 <sup>a</sup>	0.81 <sup>a</sup>	0.94 <sup>a</sup>	0.38	0.20	0.30	0.38	0.42	0.17	0.09
7. Anxiety-comfort	0.37	0.29	0.19	0.20	0.28	0.88 <sup>a</sup>	<b>0.77</b>	0.86	0.69	0.58	0.88	0.29	0.10	0.28	0.30	0.34	0.18	0.09
8. Depression-pleasure	0.47	0.37	0.27	0.24	0.34	0.94 <sup>a</sup>	0.76	<b>0.82</b>	0.82	0.76	0.80	0.40	0.25	0.30	0.42	0.41	0.11	0.05
9. Boredom-enthusiasm	0.50	0.33	0.26	0.20	0.34	0.88 <sup>a</sup>	0.63	0.80	<b>0.94</b>	0.84	0.66	0.35	0.22	0.28	0.35	0.38	0.10	0.06
10. Tiredness-vigor	0.40	0.33	0.28	0.21	0.31	0.72 <sup>a</sup>	0.49	0.65	0.72	<b>0.91</b>	0.52	0.39	0.27	0.29	0.38	0.41	0.19	0.10
11. Anger-placidity	0.33	0.24	0.12	0.15	0.28	0.80 <sup>a</sup>	0.74	0.67	0.58	0.42	<b>0.80</b>	0.29	0.12	0.21	0.28	0.39	0.19	0.11
<b>12. Expatriate performance</b>	0.17	0.57	0.39	0.44	0.51	0.35	0.25	0.36	0.32	0.33	0.22	<b>0.72</b>	0.89 <sup>a</sup>	0.80 <sup>a</sup>	1.10 <sup>a</sup>	1.06 <sup>a</sup>	0.20	0.20
13. Overall	0.10	0.40	0.33	0.26	0.40	0.17	0.08	0.21	0.20	0.22	0.03	0.79 <sup>a</sup>	<b>0.93</b>	0.72	0.75	0.67	0.20	0.10
14. Technical	0.23	0.36	0.26	0.23	0.37	0.29	0.26	0.28	0.27	0.26	0.19	0.77 <sup>a</sup>	0.66	<b>1.00</b>	0.70	0.65	0.17	0.13
15. Contextual/managerial	0.15	0.56	0.38	0.42	0.48	0.33	0.24	0.36	0.30	0.30	0.21	0.94 <sup>a</sup>	0.62	0.63	<b>0.75</b>	0.87	0.17	0.17
16. Expatriate-specific	0.14	0.54	0.33	0.47	0.44	0.36	0.28	0.33	0.31	0.31	0.30	0.86 <sup>a</sup>	0.53	0.56	0.74	<b>0.81</b>	0.20	0.28
17. Time current assignment	0.00	0.23	0.05	0.26	0.15	0.01	-0.12	0.04	0.10	0.17	-0.07	0.19	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.17	<b>1.00</b>	0.27
18. International experience	0.12	0.01	-0.16	0.05	0.00	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.09	0.00	0.15	0.09	0.13	0.08	0.25	0.27	<b>1.00</b>
<b>Mean</b>	3.81	3.93	3.86	3.78	4.04	3.52	3.19	3.74	3.55	3.53	3.72	3.97	4.08	4.06	3.98	3.86	2.57	2.10
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	0.99	0.92	0.96	1.02	0.89	0.98	1.01	1.00	0.96	0.91	0.97	0.76	0.61	0.65	0.77	0.88	1.10	1.40

Note: Bold scores on the diagonal are the square roots of the AVE; diagonal values beneath are the correlations between latent variables, those above are the HTMT ratio values.

<sup>a</sup> Lower-order components of the higher-order constructs of cross-cultural adjustment, affective well-being at work, and expatriate performance.

**Table 3. Structural model estimations and results**

	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Path Coefficient</b>
H1:	RL is positively associated with expatriate performance.	-0.052
H2:	RL is positively associated with cross-cultural adjustment.	0.251*
H3:	Cross-cultural adjustment is positively associated with expatriate performance.	0.504***
H4:	RL is positively associated with affective well-being at work.	0.485***
H5:	Affective well-being at work is positively associated with expatriate performance.	0.192*
<b>Control variables:</b>		
	Expatriates' time on current assignment	0.015
	Previous international assignment experience	0.134

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; A two-tailed test was used for all hypotheses.