

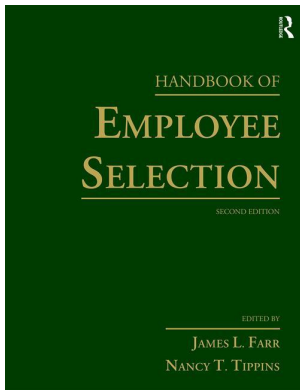
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SELECTION IN MULTINATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

PAULA CALIGIURI AND KAREN B. PAUL

Four concurrent changes created the era of globalization in the early 1990s: (1) the transition to a market economy in many former Soviet-bloc countries, (2) the liberalization of markets and increases in regional economic integration (e.g., NAFTA and the European Union), (3) the advances in technology and communication enabling firms of all sizes to compete globally and share information in real time, and (4) the increases in firms' global reach through foreign direct investment, joint ventures, acquisitions, and the like (Dunning, 2009). Multinational companies (MNCs), in the era of globalization, need to strategically adapt, reconfigure, and acquire the resources needed for the ever-changing global marketplace. A critical resource for strategic advantage within MNCs is its human talent, which, like other resources, needs to be managed and leveraged effectively. Across subsidiaries and operations around the world, the right skills need to be in the right locations when needed. Cascio and Aguinis (2008, p. 135) noted that “the company of the future will call on talent and resources—especially intellectual capital—wherever they can be found around the globe.”

Companies need to attract and select employees globally with the technical skills necessary for ever-expanding international operations. This is a challenge in MNCs as global talent shortages are one of the leading risks affecting MNCs' operational agility, competitiveness, and strategic growth (EY, 2013). One-third of CEOs have had to cancel global strategic initiatives due to talent shortages (PWC, 2012), and the concern is present in almost every country (Manpower, 2011). In addition to finding the right employees with the necessary skill set, MNCs also need culturally agile professionals who can effectively work in different countries and with people from different cultures. CEOs report that there is a dearth of culturally agile leaders who are able to manage the complexity of diverse environments, negotiate cultural challenges, and understand regulatory requirements and stakeholder demands in foreign countries (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2007).

Consistent with these talent-related challenges, this chapter is divided into three major sections applied to employee selection. The first section begins with a discussion of the *strategic alignment of employee selection systems in MNCs*: centralized systems for greater global integration, localized systems for greater local responsiveness, and synergistic or hybrid systems, responsive to both local and global demands (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989; Prahalad & Doz, 1987). The second section covers the specific *challenges in developing MNCs' employee selection systems*. From both the cross-cultural and cross-national systems perspectives, this section will emphasize the importance of the cross-cultural context with respect to the effect of national culture on method of selection and assessment, culture's influence on the candidates' reactions, and cross-national differences in HR systems affecting employee selection methods used (e.g., discrimination and privacy laws, unemployment rates, education systems). The third section focuses on the *selection*

for *culturally agile professionals* who can effectively staff and lead strategic initiatives globally, whether as international assignees, global team members, or business travelers.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT OF EMPLOYEE SELECTION IN MNCs

MNCs and domestic firms differ along two dimensions: *geographic dispersion* and *multiculturalism* (Adler, 2001). Geographic dispersion is the extent to which a firm is operating across borders and must coordinate operations across borders in order to be effective. Multiculturalism is the extent to which the workers, customers, suppliers, etc. are from diverse cultural backgrounds and the extent to which the organization must coordinate the activities of people from diverse cultures in order to be effective. In leveraging both geographic dispersion and multiculturalism, MNCs must achieve a unique balance between the need to be *centralized*, or tightly controlled by headquarters, and the need to be *decentralized*, or operating differently across diverse locations (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989).

The achievement of this balance between centralization and decentralization can happen in various ways. Extreme centralization can provide an organization with a variety of competitive benefits such as economies of scale (and the associated cost controls), improved value chain linkages, product/service standardization, and global branding. Extreme decentralization, however, can also be highly strategic, enabling a firm to modify products or services to fully meet local customer needs, respond to local competition, remain compliant with various governments' regulations in different countries of operation, readily attract local employees, and penetrate local business networks.

In most MNCs, these extremes are not useful strategies organization-wide. To be successful, MNCs (and units within MNCs) should adopt a strategy that "fits" the complexity of its environment and how it competes (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989; Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1990; Ghoshal & Nohria, 1993). When greater *global integration or standardization* is strategically desired, MNCs leverage economies of scale and share costs and investments throughout the organization and have greater control over the systems and functions. When greater *local responsiveness* is desired, MNCs vary their products and services to suit the preferences of clients in each of their diverse markets and allow for foreign subsidiaries to run their operations as needed. When a transnational approach is desired to enable *innovation and learning*, units around the world share approaches and ideas and spend more resources to assimilate approaches to be used globally. Research has found that MNCs' strategy affects their approach to managing human resources (Caligiuri & Colakoglu, 2008; Gomez & Sanchez, 2005).

Global Integration and Employee Selection in MNCs

When MNCs (or units within MNCs) desire greater standardization, key functions and tasks are managed and controlled by headquarters; for example, customer expectations for consistency, such as outstanding quality (e.g., Sony), luxury fashion image (e.g., Louis Vuitton), or global standards for their fast food (e.g., McDonald's). The production workers with Sony must maintain worldwide quality standards, regardless of where they are in the world. The sales agents with Louis Vuitton must provide world-class customer service. The food preparation staff at McDonald's must prepare food to the famous global standards as well as have a janitorial staff to clean restrooms to a global standard of sanitation and hygiene. In all of these cases, the standard is set forth by corporate and the uniformity is a competitive advantage.

To maintain standards and consistency, MNCs will tend to have centrally developed dimensions to be included in selection systems, or possibly even centrally developed selection systems. For example, a global fast-food restaurant chain is competitive, in part, by delivering consistency to its customers in terms of food, service, cleanliness, and restaurant appearance. It follows that this same fast-food restaurant chain would include friendliness and personal hygiene in their selection systems, regardless of country.

In technically oriented roles, in which international consistency is needed, selection dimensions are more objective and relatively easy to maintain across cultures. In 3M, for example,

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a global prehire test for sales representatives has been developed and is currently used in 22 countries. The test originally was developed to be in the local language, as well as to be administered online so that it is available regardless of the time zone where applicants are taking it. The idea was that 3M should develop one test, enabling them to maintain the rights to it; this would obviate some issues in intellectual property regarding test publishing, such as the difficulty of obtaining permission to translate an existing test into a language or move it to a different system. As a result, part of 3M's solution was to create their own test using the sales competencies that were jointly developed with 3M Sales and Marketing. The competency model for sales representatives globally (see Table 36.1) has been integrated into 3M's selection system for potential new hires and also the training and development programs for incumbent sales representatives.

In developing this competency model as the basis for the common test globally, an international job analysis was conducted to assess whether the content domain of the 3M sales representative position was similar around the world. A job analysis questionnaire (JAQ) was administered to sales representative and sales subject matter experts in 10 countries. The JAQ assessed work behaviors from the content domain for 3M sales representatives shown in Table 36.1. In 2006, 3M sales representatives from Brazil, Russia, India, China, and Poland (labeled BRICP) completed the JAQ. In 2007, 3M sales representatives in Australia, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea (labeled APAC) completed the JAQ. The seven most important work behavior dimensions are presented in Table 36.2. For each of these seven dimensions, the average importance rating is shown for both country sets. As Table 36.2 illustrates, the results of this global job analysis found that the job content was the same around the world.

TABLE 36.1
Core Sales Competencies for 3M Sales Representatives

<i>Cluster</i>	<i>Functional Competencies</i>
Selling	Customer Consultation
	Sales Channel Management
	External Organization Acumen
Customer Management	Opportunity Pipeline Management
	Managing Business at Risk
Analysis and Planning	Strategic Sales Planning

TABLE 36.2
Mean Importance Ratings for Work Behavior Dimensions: 3M Sales Representatives' Job Analysis Results Across Two Sets of Countries

<i>Work Behavior Dimensions</i>	<i>Country Set</i>	
	<i>APAC</i>	<i>BRICP</i>
Conduct sales and follow-up	3.7	3.7
Work with others	3.4	3.7
Provide information to customers and distributors	3.7	3.6
Plan, organize, and prioritize	3.5	3.6
Maintain knowledge and skills	3.4	3.5
Negotiate and persuade	3.4	3.5
Document work: keep records	3.3	3.5

APAC country set includes Australia, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan. BRICP country set includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and Poland. Job analysis importance ratings obtained on five-point scale (5 = highly important).

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The greater challenge for global organizations is in maintaining consistency with more subjective dimensions of the type generally found in critical leadership roles (i.e., a global firm's top management team). It is critical for organizations to select leaders who have integrity, can work well in teams, are committed, and are results-oriented. However, the interpretation of these dimensions can vary greatly depending on the culture of the subsidiary location. There are also practical challenges with headquarter-controlled international selection systems. Using the same test across countries may be difficult for reasons ranging from possible culture-based interpretations lowering the validity of the test to the basic logistics of testing. The challenge of maintaining consistency in employee selection is discussed later in this chapter.

Local Responsiveness and Employee Selection in MNCs

MNCs (or units within MNCs) with greater local responsiveness will allow for the greatest level of differentiation within countries such that key decisions are made at the subsidiary level. The benefit of this strategy is that global firms are able to compete locally—and with local knowledge, which may be especially important when a country has a unique infrastructure, market, client base, governmental roles, etc. It follows that the localization of selection systems is best for positions where a localization strategy is being deployed. The weakness of this strategy at the company level is that companies lose the economies of scale and their ability to maintain consistency and standards around the world and the possibility for global talent management. For example, in selection, multiple selection tests would need to be validated, and it would be impossible to have cross-nationally comparable candidates across countries.

Transnational Strategy and Employee Selection in MNCs

When MNCs (or units within MNCs) prefer to compete with a synergistic and interdependent global network of subsidiaries, these units are integral parts of a whole system with both global and local objectives. Each subsidiary makes its unique contribution to the MNC through knowledge sharing, learning, and collaboration. In this context, organizations often prefer employee selection systems that are consistent around the world—based on strategic necessity—but that are also culturally acceptable across the participating countries. Many MNCs aspire to (or believe themselves to follow) this type of transnational business strategy. As such, there is an increased pressure to develop HR systems (and employee selection systems in particular), which are acceptable and integrated across cultures.

In the case of 3M's prehire sales test, their solution was hybrid—to standardize the test (on the basis of the common competency model outlined in Table 36.1) but allow the countries' HR departments the freedom to vary when and how the test was given. For example, in some countries it did not make sense to offer the test at the beginning of the selection process, but rather a little bit later if it was a particularly competitive job market, if it was in a more remote location, and so forth. By working very pragmatically, 3M came up with a variety of different approaches to implement the online test to make sure that the process was helping advance the cause of the country and company rather than something prescribed and imposed from corporate. In the end, 3M's solution to global testing was implemented, and the prehire test for sales representatives was rolled out globally.

CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING MNCs' EMPLOYEE SELECTION SYSTEMS

There are challenges when developing employee selection systems from the transnational perspective. The first challenge is *determining selection constructs* that would be applicable for candidates for the same positions across subsidiaries, regardless of country (Ployhart, Wiechmann, Schmitt, Sacco, & Rogg, 2003). This means that the content domain is comparable across cultures within positions and that the selection systems based on the common content domain would have

validity coefficients generalizable across countries (Lievens, 2007; Salgado & Anderson, 2002). Once the common content domain is determined, *creating conceptual equivalence* in the assessment tools is the next and second challenge. This may include everything from language comparability in selection tests to developing the behavioral indices of various selection dimensions so that raters (e.g., interviewers, assessors in assessment centers) can make cross-culturally comparable ratings or possibly even changing cut scores and norms within countries to appropriate levels. The third and fourth challenges are the *cross-cultural* and *cross-national differences*, the former affecting the types of selection methods that are preferred and the latter affecting the types of selection methods allowed given the legal system in the country.

We will now discuss these challenges in greater detail in the next section—with the caveat that a thorough review of all of the measurement, methodological, and cultural issues embedded in these challenges is beyond the scope of this section.

Determining the Selection Constructs Applicable Across Cultures

As with the development of selection systems in the domestic context, the first step is to determine the broad content domain for a given position—repeating this step across countries for the same position to determine whether the jobs are, in fact, comparable. In validity language, the selection systems (predictors) would need to tap the same performance domain across countries. This step is particularly challenging for more contextual, less technical roles. In leadership roles, the multi-country Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project found that “executives tend to lead in a manner more or less consistent with the leadership prototypes endorsed within their particular culture. In turn, leaders who behave according to expectations are most effective” (Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, Dastmalchian, & House, 2012, p. 504). Leaders’ behaviors—and perceptions of success—can differ from country to country.

In firms transferring people across borders, the conceptual equivalence and validity generalization challenge may be further exacerbated. When an employee is selected in one country and transferred to another country in the same role (where the performance domain may differ), the validity of the original selection system might be lowered (Lievens, 2007). For example, a study of relocating professionals working in public relations and as economic and political analysts found that the tasks involved in the way they performed their jobs changed depending on where they were performing their jobs, even though the jobs did not change (Shin, Morgeson, & Campion, 2007). In more collectivist cultures, their jobs required more relationship-oriented tasks (e.g., coordinating, team-building) than when they were performed in more individualistic cultures. The exception to this can be found, depending on the level of specificity and topic, in companies with strong cultures and in more technical roles where constructs and behaviors are heavily communicated and reinforced. “Setting the Agenda,” a common leadership behavior, and “Territory Management,” a common sales behavior, both can be endorsed as occurring or not and its relative importance to the role. Yet, how both are operationalized can differ due to culture. Measuring items and tasks at the right level is crucial if generalizability is desired. (This issue is addressed again in the last section of the chapter when international assignments are discussed.)

Many MNCs have driving corporate cultural values that appear in managerial selection systems around the world. These corporate values may include dimensions such as managing with integrity, taking appropriate risks, being customer-focused, being results-oriented, and the like. After these broad performance dimensions are named, the challenge turns to creating conceptual equivalence for each dimension across cultures. Once this equivalence is established, selection systems to assess candidates against these dimensions are created.

Creating Conceptual Equivalence Across Cultures

Cultural values are socialized in each individual through various agents such as nationality, religion, family, education, company, and profession. This foundation of individuals’ culture can

influence the sphere of work. Thus, individuals' work-related values are formed when their overarching cultural values are applied to the work situation (Hofstede, 1980). Comparative management researchers have found that individuals within one country will have more values in common compared to individuals from different countries (Hofstede, 1980), especially when corporate or professional cultures are weak. In the context of this chapter, culturally laden work values can affect the weight that one places on a particular selection dimension or the actual interpretation of the applicants' behaviors, creating a challenge for assessing candidates through a single cultural lens. Applied psychologists and HR practitioners working internationally have been grappling with the challenge of developing assessment and measurement methods that are conceptually comparable across cultures—beyond a mere translation of words (see Hult et al., 2008 for a summary). In this context, the goal is to create enough conceptual equivalence for comparisons of candidates to be meaningful.

The past decade has brought us a plethora of published articles with a goal of establishing the cross-cultural conceptual equivalence of various constructs of interest. By definition, conceptual equivalence occurs when constructs have similar meanings across cultures. For example, customer service orientation may translate into “complete attention to customers' needs” in Japan, where anticipating needs is important. However, in Italy, where shopkeepers with exquisite taste are highly valued, customer service may mean “providing honest feedback.” In this example, “customer service orientation” lacks conceptual equivalence. However, in both Japan and Italy, the construct “expending effort for clients” may be defined as working hard to find a desired item or to help a client resolve a problem. In this example, “expending effort for clients” does possess conceptual equivalence. Maximizing conceptual equivalence may be especially problematic when constructs in the content domain are more subjective and less objective.

Some examples of the challenges of conceptual equivalence also happen at the item level. For an item written through the lens of the 3M HR team in the United States, the alternative involved the appropriateness of inviting a new client to lunch. The assumption of taking a new client to lunch is within acceptable standard operating procedures for most U.S. sales representatives—yet in a different cultural context, the same activity conveys a level of familiarity that is inconsistent with establishing a new relationship, hence, making the response option cross-culturally less viable. In countries such as Brazil, inviting a person to lunch implies a deeper level of the relationship that had not yet been established between the potential new client and the sales representative. The option would not be selected as written and was ultimately rewritten to reflect a universally appropriate response.

Cultural Differences and Employee Selection

Once the dimensions to be included in the selection system have been established, the next cross-cultural concern would be the appropriateness of the assessment method and the logistics of those methods in a given cross-cultural context. With respect to testing methods, it is important to understand whether certain selection methods are perceived more (or less) favorably by applicants around the globe. In a meta-analysis of applicant reactions to various selection methods, Anderson, Salgado, and Hülshager (2010) found that, across 17 countries, the most preferred methods were work samples and interviews, followed by résumés, cognitive tests, references, biodata, and personality inventories. The least preferred methods across countries were honesty tests and personal contacts. The picture might be more refined than an overall conclusion that certain methods have a universal appeal. For example, one study comparing perceptions of selection methods in Singapore and the United States found that Singaporeans rated personality tests more favorably than did Americans (Phillips & Gully, 2002).

Although applicant reactions to selection methods may be generally similar across countries, their usage is not. Multicountry survey-based studies found that countries did vary significantly in terms of employee selection procedures used (Ryan, McFarland, Baron, & Page, 1999; Shackleton & Newell, 1997). Ryan et al. (1999) found that national-level cultural values, such as uncertainty avoidance, predicted what selection procedures were more likely to be used across countries. Countries higher in risk aversion were more likely to rely more heavily on

interviews and testing, presumably as a way of reducing hiring risks. Further research in the area of cross-cultural differences in use and acceptance of selection methods is important to further understanding of global employee selection methods and, hopefully, to reduce resistance to them (for a review, see Lievens, 2007).

Even in situations where the same employee selection method is used, culture might affect the validity of the approach or the way in which it is used. In employee interviews, for example, Manroop, Boekhorst, and Harrison (2013) suggest that when interviewers from one country are interviewing candidates from another, differences in self-promotion, verbal and nonverbal behaviors can influence the interviewer's judgment of the interviewee. They noted that, for example,

when foreign-born job candidates from collectivistic cultures perceive an absence of behavioral mirroring on the part of the interviewers, they may infer a lack of rapport, and hence become anxious and experience psychological stress, which may, in turn, hinder their performance in the interview.

(p. 3524)

Even within regions of the world, subtle cross-national differences exist. Tixier (1996) noted differences in the qualities viewed as valuable for managerial candidates to possess across the Nordic countries of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, suggesting that the content in résumés, cover letters, and interviews should reflect differences.

With respect to logistics, testing assumptions need to be questioned cross-culturally. For example, when 3M was rolling out their prehire sales test globally, one of the basic assumptions made was that testing would be done in a room with multiple computers and a fairly controlled environment so that multiple applicants could simultaneously take the online test. As it turned out, this was easier thought than done. First, for many of the 3M subsidiaries around the world, they did not have an available testing room (i.e., an empty room with multiple computers each with Internet connections). Second, some of the subsidiaries had sales territories that covered vast regions. If 3M was looking for sales representatives for a given region, they needed to be able to connect with candidates in their remote locations. In Russia, for example, 3M needed to be able to connect with candidates in more remote places such as Siberia. Practically, decisions needed to be made regarding the appropriate distance for a candidate to need to travel to even take the prehire test. Third, as 3M learned, the idea to have multiple applicants taking the test simultaneously in some countries was flawed. For some cultures, and in highly competitive job markets, it was undesirable and discouraging for applicants to see how many people are competing. Furthermore, in some cultures this kind of testing is culturally unacceptable. Even the idea of a controlled testing room with a closed door in some small subsidiaries or in predominantly open-floor plans such as Japan raised cross-national challenges.

National Differences and Employee Selection

HR systems vary from country to country depending on some relatively fixed dimensions, including the given country's work systems (Begin, 1992). These country-level factors may affect the practice of employee selection across given countries as they affect employment laws, workforce competence, and availability of talent. Although not intended to be comprehensive, this section offers some illustrative examples of the way in which countries' work systems affect employee selection.

Countries differ with respect to laws governing the practice of employee selection. (See chapters in this volume for more details about national differences in legal issues concerning employee selection.) For example, the United States has a body of laws stemming from the initial fair nondiscriminatory employment legislation covered in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. As in the United States, laws exist in almost every country that define the type of firm that must abide by the given law prohibiting discrimination (e.g., size of the firm, public or private sector) and define who is considered protected under the given law (e.g., race, sex age, sexual orientation).

In India, for example, Article 15 of the Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of caste. Across these laws around the world, most state that an employee selection system cannot discriminate against a target protected group; however, the way in which discrimination is adjudicated and the penalty for the violation of the law varies greatly from country to country.

Another legal issue affecting international selection is data privacy. For example, the European Union (EU) Directive on Data Protection prohibits the transfer of personal information from Europe to other countries unless an adequate protection of privacy, notice, and consent is given. This EU Directive affects selection practices globally in the way data are collected and shared. Countries also have their own privacy laws, as illustrated in the example of 3M in Poland. To implement the prehire assessment sales test to representatives in Poland, 3M had some added challenges. The Polish Labor Code limits, in Article 22, the personal data that might be required by an employer from the candidate for employment. Those data are limited mainly to such items as name, surname, date of birth, candidate education, and history of previous employment. In order not to be even remotely viewed as risking violation, 3M chose not to require candidates to provide personal data other than those specifically outlined in Article 22 of the Polish Labor Code. For compliance to the Polish Act on Personal Data Protection, additional adjustments were made to comply with all regulations in terms of demographics collected. For example, given that some information would reside on the U.S.-based server, names needed to be removed from the information collected. Furthermore, changes were required given that the test was processed on a U.S. server, such as written (not electronic) informed consents to be signed and collected before the start of the testing of each applicant. These steps, among others, are examples of how cross-national differences in laws may affect the logistics of the testing situation.

Countries vary in terms of their workforce competence, which, in turn, has an influence on competence and readiness of candidates. Organizations such as the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Archive of Education Data (IAED) report large differences in literacy rates, education levels, and test scores across countries, which, in turn, have implications for the quality of a given country's workforce. For example, Germany is considered to have one of the best-trained workforces in the world, with an extensive apprenticeship program in which employers help train students on their intended trades and professions.

Within-country selection systems rely on an ample supply of qualified talent against the organization's demand for talent for a given job. Given that countries differ in labor economics, the availability of talent will influence selection ratios, making selection systems more or less effective across the entire workforce strategy with the country. The general labor economics of a given country or city affects the size and quality of the applicant pools. Supply of talent also affects the concern companies will have for candidate reactions to their (even validated) selection methods. For example, in both India and Poland, skilled labor is in high demand. Often a hiring manager just wants someone to fill a position, without the extra hurdle of giving applicants a test, which increases the time needed to make a hiring decision and could result in losing some viable candidates. One of the ways that 3M accommodated this high demand for skilled labor in Poland and India was to change the placement of testing in the selection process to be a later hurdle in the process. The goal was to keep more qualified candidates in the pipeline for the interpersonally interactive aspects of the selection system, such as the interview, and not turn them off with the testing process. Testing was conducted after the relationship with 3M was built, which also ensured that top talent was selected.

SELECTION FOR CULTURALLY AGILE PROFESSIONALS

Our chapter thus far has focused on employee selection systems and the challenges present for MNCs developing selection systems consistent with business strategy and the cultural context. We now shift our focus from selection for the purpose of staffing globally to selecting those who can lead key strategic initiatives globally, specifically global leaders and international assignees.

Selecting Global Leaders¹

Whether leading a global business, a virtual global team, or people from different countries or in different countries, a global leader is “an individual who inspires a group of people to willingly pursue a positive vision in an effectively organized fashion while fostering individual and collective growth in a context characterized by significant levels of complexity, flow and presence” while doing so in an international or cross-cultural context (Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, & Osland, 2012, p. 500). Studies have found that effective global leaders share certain competencies (i.e., predictors of their success), which sort into three categories: self-management, relationship management, and business management (Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, & Oddou, 2010). Competency-based selection systems for global leaders should include an assessment of these dimensions, broadly defined.

With respect to *self-management*, certain competencies affect the leaders’ ability to maintain their composure and adjust to the ambiguity of working in multicultural and intercultural environments (Bird et al., 2010; Caligiuri, 2012). Cross-cultural competencies such as tolerance of ambiguity and self-efficacy improve global leaders’ self-management, enabling them to work quickly and comfortably in different cultures and with people from different cultures. In regards to *relationship management*, global leadership competencies include those affecting an individual’s multicultural and intercultural interactions at the group level and ability to build strong dyadic relationships with people from different cultures (Bird et al., 2010; Caligiuri, 2012). Global leaders with cross-cultural competencies such as perspective taking and rapport building are better able to develop relationships in different cultures and with people from different cultures. With respect to *business management*, these competencies affect the leaders’ abilities to take an enterprise-wide mindset and operate from an international strategic perspective (Bird et al., 2010; Caligiuri, 2012). Global leaders need to be able to integrate a wide range of dynamic factors from the organization and the local environment. This requires a high level of cognitive complexity, which enables leaders to understand and integrate broader bases of knowledge and balance the demands of global integration with local responsiveness (Dragoni & McAlpine, 2012; Levy, Beechler, Taylor, & Boyacigiller, 2007). Global leaders with cross-cultural competencies such as cognitive complexity and the ability to think creatively are more effective in their global roles.

Identifying the tasks of global leaders through a job analytic approach, one more dimension emerges—response management. Research suggests that global leaders need to have a variety of cultural responses available to them and that some tasks require different, if not opposite, responses (Caligiuri, 2012; Levy, Beechler, Taylor, & Boyacigiller, 2007). For example, tasks such as “interacting with external clients from other countries” and “maintaining a budget globally” might require opposite responses—the former requiring adaptation and the latter, possibly, requiring that the leader maintain an organizational standard while minimizing the effects of culture (Caligiuri, 2006). Response management means that leaders respond with cultural agility, rather than always adapting to behavioral norms of the cultural context. Cultural adaptation is only one possible response and not always the correct one. At times, leaders might also use cultural minimization to communicate and influence in order to minimize the differences across cultures and maintain some necessary standard (e.g., safety, quality, and ethics). In other situations, such as leading a team, the situation might dictate the use of cultural integration, where team and facilitation skills help create an entirely new approach, one that represents no individual’s culture completely.

Selecting International Assignees²

There are many challenges when developing selection systems for international assignee candidates who will be living and working outside of their own national borders. International assignees are nationals of one country who are sent by a parent organization to live and work in another country. The definition of international assignees, for the purpose of this chapter, is those who are sent by their organizations for an assignment (rather than a self-initiated

relocation) to another country for at least one year. This section will describe the individual-level antecedents that are most important for inclusion in international assignee selection systems and then discuss the process issues for international assignee candidate selection.

When thinking about international assignee selection, unlike traditional selection, we are considering ways to predict success within the job context (i.e., working in a foreign country), rather than job content in the traditional sense. In the research literature on international assignees, cross-cultural adjustment is most often considered an important dependent variable when considering selection across assignee types given that adjustment (psychological comfort living and working in another country) is important for almost all expatriates.

In meta-analysis of antecedents and consequents of expatriate adjustment, Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, and Luk (2005) found language ability, previous overseas experience, withdrawal cognitions, job satisfaction, and spousal adjustment were predictors of cross-cultural adjustment. In another meta-analysis, Hechanova, Beehr, and Christiansen (2003) found self-efficacy, frequency of interaction with host nationals, and family support were predictors of cross-cultural adjustment. These meta-analyses also suggest that greater cross-cultural adjustment in international assignees generally predicted greater job satisfaction, less strain, and higher levels of organizational commitment. Another meta-analysis examining personality as predictors of expatriate performance (Mol, Born, Willemssen, & Van Der Molen, 2005) found that extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were predictive of expatriate performance. This same meta-analysis also found cultural sensitivity and local language ability to be predictive. Across these meta-analyses, three categories of *individual-level antecedents* seem to emerge as predictors of cross-cultural adjustment that would lend themselves to international assignee selection systems. They are personality characteristics, language skills, and prior experience living in a different country (see Caligiuri & Tarique, 2006, for a review).

Personality Characteristics

Extensive research has found that well-adjusted and high-performing international assignees tend to share certain personality traits (e.g., Mol et al., 2005; Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, & Ferzandi, 2006). Personality characteristics enable international assignees to be open and receptive to learning the norms of new cultures, to initiate contact with host nationals, to gather cultural information, and to handle the higher amounts of stress associated with the ambiguity of their new environments (Shaffer et al., 2006)—all important for international assignee success.

Each of the Big Five personality characteristics relate to international assignee success in a unique way (Shaffer et al., 2006) and should be included in a selection system for international assignees for different reasons (see Van Vianen, De Pater, & Caligiuri, 2005, for a review). On the basis of the meta-analysis conducted by Mol et al. (2005), the estimated true population effect size for the relationship between conscientiousness and international assignee success is positive ($\rho = .17$), reflecting the cognitive complexity of working in a host country. Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al.'s meta-analysis (2005) found that relational skills, which aid in social learning in the host country, are positively related to cross-cultural adjustment ($\rho = .32$). The meta-analytic results from Mol and colleagues (2005) found the estimated true population effect size for the relationship of international assignee success to the relationship-oriented personality characteristics, extraversion and agreeableness, to be positive ($\rho = .17$ and $.11$, respectively).

Given that stress is often associated with living and working in an ambiguous and unfamiliar environment (Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005), it is not surprising that the meta-analysis conducted by Mol et al. (2005) found that the estimated true population effect size for the relationship between emotional stability and international assignee success is positive ($\rho = .10$). Lastly, openness should be related to international assignee success because individuals who are higher in this personality characteristic will have fewer rigid views of appropriate and inappropriate contextual behavior and are more likely to be accepting of the new culture. Mol et al.'s meta-analysis (2005) found that the estimated true population effect size for the relationship between openness and

international assignee success is positive ($\rho = .06$); however, this relationship was not significant, as the confidence interval included zero. The authors noted that “moderated support was found for the relationship of openness” (p. 608), which is consistent with other research. For example, Caligiuri (2000) found moderated support for openness as a personality characteristic relating to expatriate adjustment, such that greater contact with host nationals was positively related to cross-cultural adjustment when an individual possesses the personality trait of openness.

Collectively, these personality characteristics should be included in any selection program for international assignees (Van Vianen et al., 2005). It is important to note that this type of employee assessment would predict those who will do well adjusting to a cross-cultural job context. However, this assessment does not predict success in the actual job tasks. Likewise, the absolute level of each personality characteristic may be contingent upon the type of international assignment under consideration. For example, the necessary level of relational skills might be important for all international assignees but higher for more senior executives who may need to network with, persuade, and influence host nationals, media, government officials, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to be successful, compared with technical assignees, who may interact with host nationals mostly around tasks with computer systems or equipment.

Language Skills

Many have noted a positive relationship between language skills and international assignee success (Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999). In their meta-analytic studies, Mol et al. (2005) and Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005) found that local language ability is a positive predictor of international assignee success (as generally defined by adjustment; $\rho = .19$ and $.22$).

Prior International Experience

From a social learning perspective, the more contact international assignees have with host nationals and the host culture, the greater their cross-cultural adjustment (Toh & DeNisi, 2007), provided the past experience does not reinforce previously held stereotypical beliefs or foster negative, unrealistic expectations of the foreign culture. Past experience might be most helpful in predicting success on an expatriate assignment when the experience provides an accurate and realistic representation of the host countries’ norms, customs, values, etc. Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al.’s meta-analytic results (2005) found that prior international experience was a weak but positive predictor of interaction adjustment and work adjustment ($\rho = .13$ and $.06$, respectively). It is likely that the quality of the prior international experience is an important factor.

Practices in International Assignee Selection

While the aforementioned individual difference variables—personality, language skills, and prior experience—can be used as the basis for an expatriate selection system, Brookfield Global Relocation Trends 2015 survey of global firms found that only about 20% use selection tools to assess expatriate candidates. Traditional selection methods are often challenging to employ in situations when the expatriates’ skills are scarce and necessary to fill important skills gaps in host countries. Expatriate candidates’ willingness to relocate has been—and continues to be—the most frequently cited selection criterion. In the early 1980s, Rosalie Tung’s seminal work found that the vast majority of firms (over 90%) named “interest in overseas work” to be used as a criterion for selection (Tung, 1981). Nearly 80% of firms today use the same predictor—an individual’s willingness to go on an international assignment—in selection (Brookfield, 2015).

A “willingness to relocate” might be a sufficient predictor for more technical assignments designed to fill a skills gap, but it will not be sufficient for managerial or organizational

development. Getting the right expatriates into key developmental opportunities will have a longer-term benefit for the organization. For this to occur, selection (especially for personality characteristics) is critical. This has become particularly important recently as the number of expatriates being sent abroad to fill critical skills gaps is shrinking compared to the number of expatriates being sent abroad for organizational or leadership development (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016). This trend is evident in the increase in the number of firms adopting expatriate selection systems (Brookfield, 2015) and the increased number of firms integrating global mobility and talent management functions (Cerdin & Brewster, 2014; Collings, 2014).

Another trend is the increased use of self-assessment for better decision making. Given that the demographic, personal, and family situations of the international assignee candidates will vary, self-assessment (or self-selection) has been found to be an effective method for sharing realistic assessments in a tailored way (Caligiuri & Phillips, 2003). For example, an unmarried person who is a candidate for an international assignment might have a different set of concerns compared with a married candidate with a family and elderly parents (Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi, & Bross, 1998). With the use of expatriate self-assessment tools, expatriate candidates self-assess their fit with the personality and lifestyle requirements of the assignment and help candidates make a thoroughly informed and realistic decision about the assignment (Caligiuri & Phillips, 2003). Many firms have found that this self-assessment step fosters the creation of a candidate pool of potential international assignees. This candidate pool can be organized to include the following pieces of information: the availability of the employee (when and to what countries), languages the employee speaks, countries preferred, technical knowledge, skills, and abilities, etc. Caligiuri and Phillips (2003) found that providing realistic previews prior to international assignments did not change candidates' interest in possible assignments but did increase candidates' self-efficacy for an international assignment.

Most multinational companies acknowledge that the wrong person in an expatriate assignment can result in poor job performance, early repatriation, anxiety or other emotional problems, and personal and professional upheaval for accompanying family members. With the risks so high, expatriate selection (designed to identify who will have the greater likelihood of success) is critical. The efficacy of expatriate selection programs is challenged when transnational firms report (as they often do) that there are not enough people to fill current expatriate assignments. The natural reaction, in this case, is to believe that expatriate selection would not apply. However, ignoring proper selection is extremely shortsighted given the risks to the firm and the individual if the global assignment is unsuccessful. This reaction is especially limited given that when selection is thorough, firms cast wider nets for possible candidates and generally find multiple candidates with a higher probability of success. These comprehensive selection systems generally have four distinct phases including (1) the creation of a candidate pool, (2) self-assessment, (3) technical and managerial selection, and (4) placement. The placement in a host country will be most successful when agreement is mutual among the candidate, the candidate's family, the sending unit, and the host national unit.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter covered the many challenges of developing international selection systems, the challenges of construct development with respect to cross-cultural comparability, and selection of culturally agile employees. As the need for strategically oriented and conceptually equivalent international selection systems continues to grow, so do the demands on HR professionals and applied psychologists to respond to this complex need.

There are many dynamic changes happening today that will increase the need for and the ease of adopting internationally integrated selection systems. For example, increasingly strong worldwide corporate cultures, where employees globally share values and norms, may diminish the influence of national cultures. Strong global corporate cultures create a common frame-of-reference for more subjective constructs and ease the integration of international selection systems. Subjective constructs, such as "integrity," "teamwork," and "trust," will have a company-driven understanding leveling any nationally driven cultural differences. This move to

stronger corporate cultures will increasingly ease integrating international selection systems. For instance, 3M was able to define generalizable tasks due to its strong company culture with low between-country variability on many work-related issues. In fact, as seen in Table 36.2, widely different country cultures and countries at different economic stages perform similarly due to company culture and approach having a much bigger impact on the job than the country the role resides within.

Although the technical issues of employee selection are important, the implementation of selection systems globally requires more than merely validating employee selection tests in different countries. Employee selection tests are created and adopted by HR professionals located around the world. These HR professionals, from different cultures and with different levels of knowledge of the science and practice of employee selection, ultimately affect whether a given selection system can be integrated globally. As described in this chapter, the concept of testing—and the very idea of individual differences—varies from country to country. Likewise, the science of testing and the level of acceptance of U.S.-oriented industrial-organizational psychology standards for practice also vary from country to country. In some cultures, testing is rooted in education (not industrial-organizational psychology), where teachers create and give tests, assigning grades accordingly. Test validation, in these cultures, would seem like a burdensome and unnecessary process. Creating standards for practice for a company's HR professionals globally is an important step to developing selection systems that can be validated and accepted globally.

The future success of international employee selection may also rely on headquarters-based HR professionals' and industrial-organizational psychologists' abilities to manage relationships cross-nationally. Developing relationships with in-country HR leaders and line managers is critical for successful integration of selection systems. The in-country HR professionals will likely be the first to identify any country-specific problems and ways to eventually solve those problems. Because this willingness to help relies on the goodwill of in-country HR professionals (some of whom may initially need to be convinced that testing is appropriate), the ability for headquarters-based testing professionals to develop respectful, collegial, and lasting relationships is critical.

Lastly, the future success of international employee selection may be determined by whether the employee selection systems are integrated as part of a whole strategic HR system (or high-performance work system). HR professionals would be addressing only part of the picture if they developed employee selection systems in isolation. Ideally, selection and assessment should be integrated with training and development, performance management, and reward systems. Collectively, when these systems globally reinforce the predictors of performance in a comprehensive manner, the needle moves much quicker toward a high-performing globally competitive organization.

NOTES

1. Ideas in the section are abstracted from Caligiuri, P. M., & Dragoni, L. (2015). Global leadership development. Invited chapter for D. Collings, G. Wood, & P. Caligiuri (Eds.). *Companion to International Human Resource Management* (Routledge). Please refer to that chapter for more information.
2. For more information, please see Caligiuri, P. M., & Bücken, J.J.L.E. (2015). Selection for international assignments. In D. Collings, G. Wood, & P. Caligiuri (Eds.). *Companion to International Human Resource Management* (Routledge).

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